



# SNAP Matters for People with Disabilities

July 28, 2015

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July 2015



**FRAC**  
Food Research  
& Action Center

[FRAC.org](http://FRAC.org)

# Today's Presenters

**Introduction:** Jim Weill, President, Food Research & Action Center

**Food Research & Action Center**

Melanie Meisenheimer, Emerson National Hunger Fellow

**USDA Economic Research Service**

Alisha Coleman-Jensen, Social Science Analyst

**Center for American Progress**

Rebecca Vallas, Director of Policy for the Poverty to Prosperity Program

**Hunger Solutions New York**

David Reynolds, Director of NOEP Field Operations

**Easter Seals**

Jennifer Dexter, Assistant Vice President for Government Relations

# Today We Will Cover:

- “SNAP Matters for People with Disabilities,” a new report from FRAC
- Food insecurity among people with disabilities
- Key points about the federal safety net for people with disabilities
- Best practices for SNAP outreach to people with disabilities
- How anti-hunger advocates can be more inclusive of the needs and voices of people with disabilities



# SNAP Matters for People with Disabilities

- 25 years after the ADA, poverty and food insecurity continue to disproportionately affect Americans with disabilities
  - **1 in 3** households with an adult with a disability who is out of the labor force are food insecure
- SNAP promotes food security, health, and economic security
  - “SNAP and Public Health”  
[http://frac.org/pdf/snap\\_and\\_public\\_health\\_2013.pdf](http://frac.org/pdf/snap_and_public_health_2013.pdf)
- SNAP is a key component of the safety net for people with disabilities

# What is SNAP?

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
  - Largest federal nutrition program
  - Provides monthly benefits through EBT to eligible low-income households
- Entitlement structure allows SNAP to respond to need when it occurs, without waiting lists



## SNAP Program Supports for People with Disabilities

### SNAP Policies & Rules that Benefit People with Disabilities

- Can deduct out-of-pocket medical expenses that exceed \$35/month
- Authorized Representatives
- Exempt from the time limits imposed on Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)
- Different methods for applying

## SNAP Program Supports for People with Disabilities

### State Options that Benefit People with Disabilities

- **Standard Medical Deduction**
  - Reduces paperwork and caseworker workload, increases benefits  
(AL, AR, ID, IL, IA, KS, MA, MO, NH, ND, RI, SD, TX, VT, VA, WY)
- **SSI Combined Application Projects**
  - CAPs close gap between SSI and SNAP
  - Simplify process for applicants and agencies  
(AZ, FL, KY, LA, MD, MA, MI, MS, NJ, NY, NC, PA, SC, SD, TX, VA, WA)
- **Recertification Interview Waiver**
  - Reduces vulnerability to “churn”  
(CA, CT, KS, LA, MA, NE, NJ, NM, OK, PA, TX)



FRAC.org

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## Connect With FRAC



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# ***Food Insecurity Among Households With Working-Age Adults With Disabilities***

**Alisha Coleman-Jensen**

Economic Research Service, USDA

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Presentation for the Food Research and Action Center  
July 28, 2015

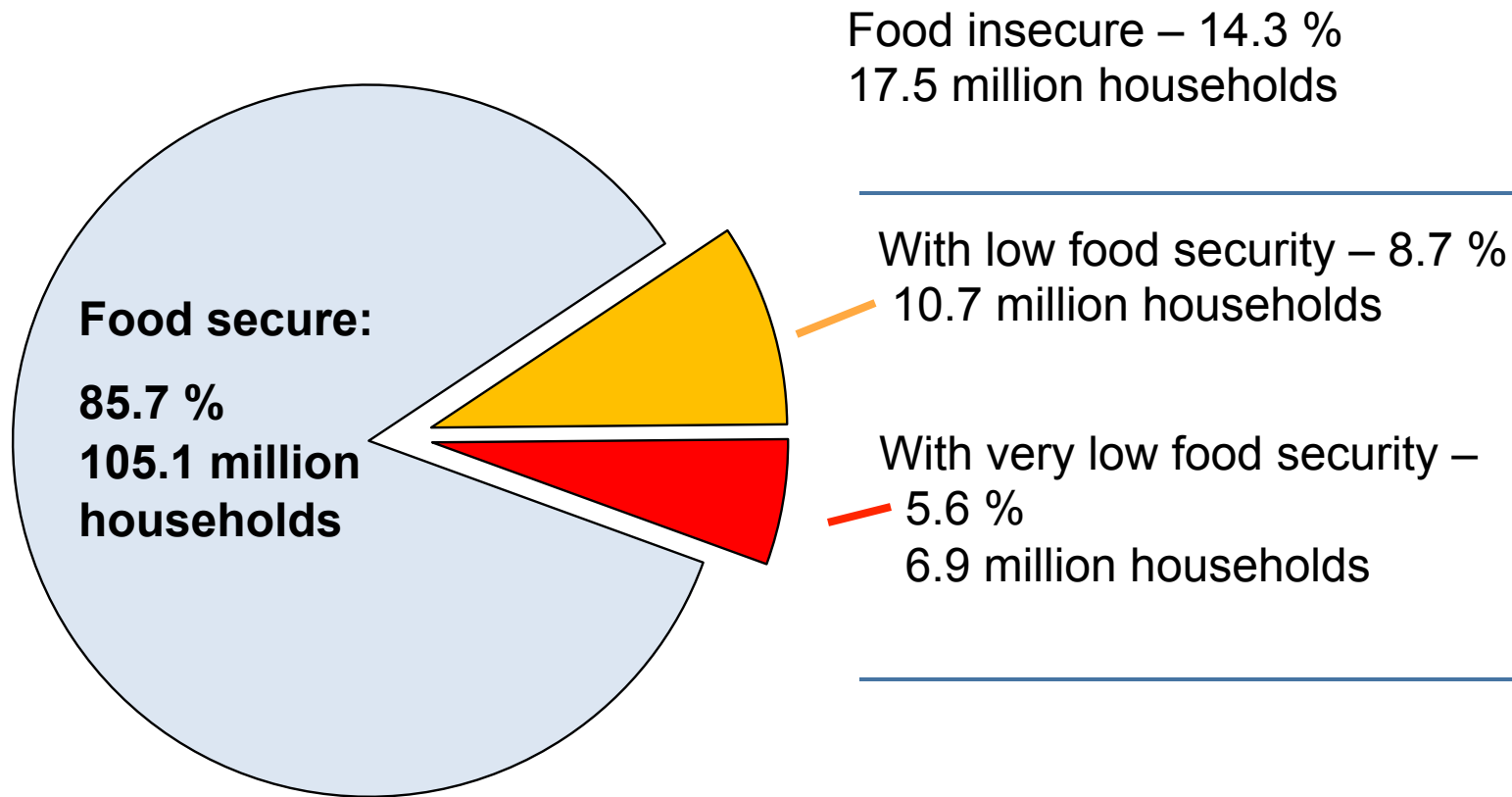
The views expressed are those of the author(s) and should not be attributed to the Economic Research Service or USDA.



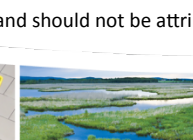
**Economic Research Service**  
[www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)



# U.S. Households by Food Security Status, 2013



Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2013 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.



# Food Insecurity and Very Low Food Security Definitions

**Food Insecure Households:** unable, at some time during the year, to provide adequate food for one or more household members due to a lack of resources

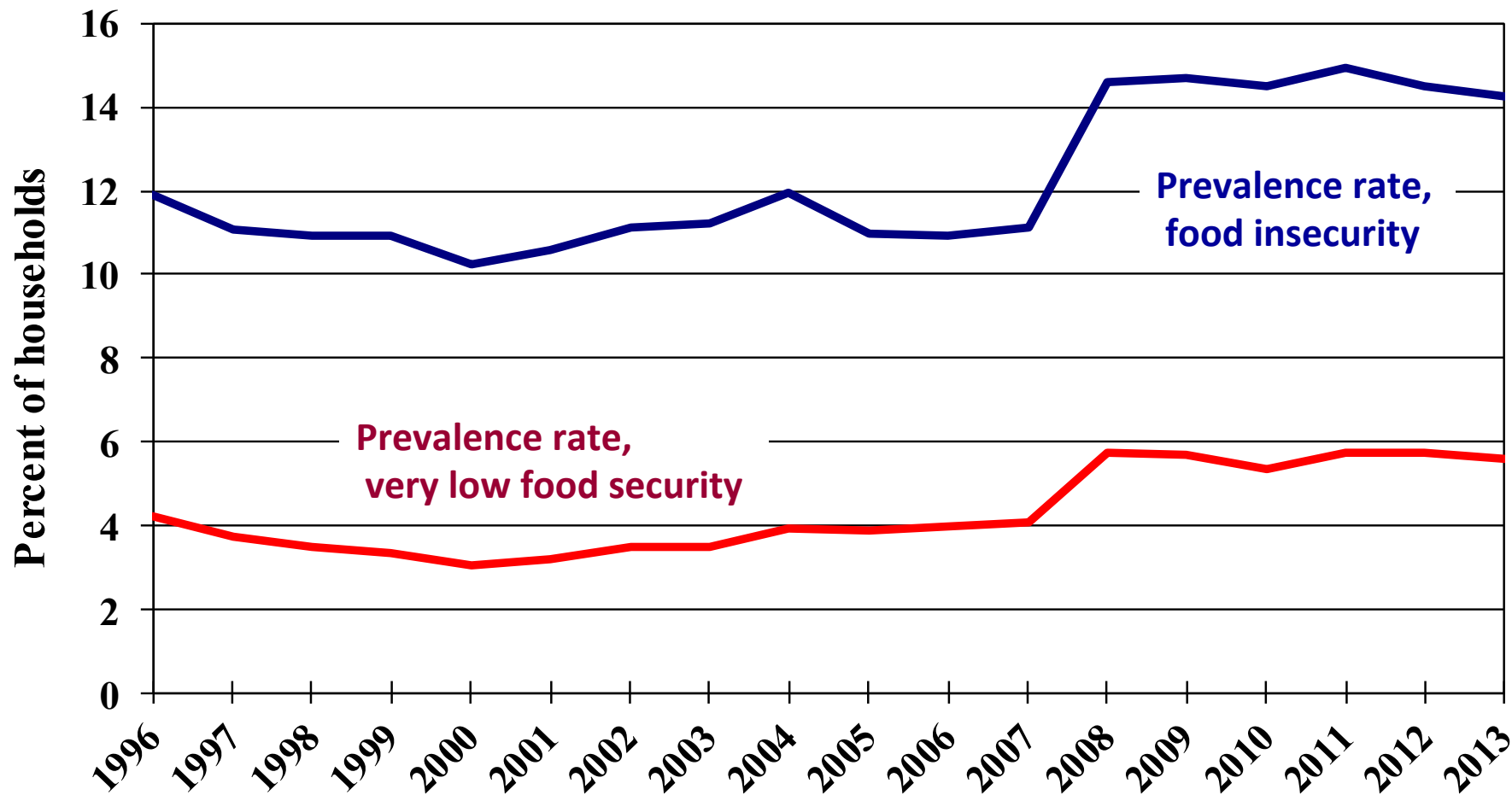
**Very Low Food Secure Households:** normal eating patterns of some household members were disrupted at times during the year and their food intake reduced below levels they considered appropriate





# Trends in food insecurity

(2-year averages 1996-2001, single-year rates 2002-13)



Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.



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## Food Insecurity Among Households With Working-Age Adults With Disabilities

Alisha Coleman-Jensen  
Mark Nord



<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err144.aspx>



# Motivation

- Persons with disabilities more likely to experience hardships
- Food insecurity may be particularly detrimental for those with disabilities or health impairments
- **Previous research on work-limiting disabilities and food insecurity**
  - What about other types of disability?
- **What about participation in SNAP and disability assistance programs and food security?**



# Measurement: Disability Status

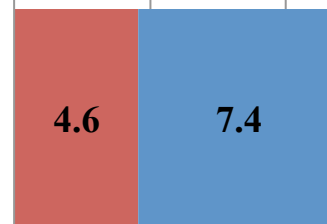
- *Not in labor force-Disabled:* Adults age 18-64 unable to work due to disability
- *Other reported disabilities (6 standard disability items):* Adults age 18-64 with a disability and no indication that they are unable to work due to disability
  - Types of disability identified:
    - hearing, vision, mental, physical, self-care, or going-outside home disability
- *Households with no working-age adults with disabilities:* No adults age 18-64 with disabilities (may have elderly members with disabilities or children with special needs)



# Prevalence of Food Insecurity by Disability

Status (2009-2010)

Households with no working-age adult with disabilities

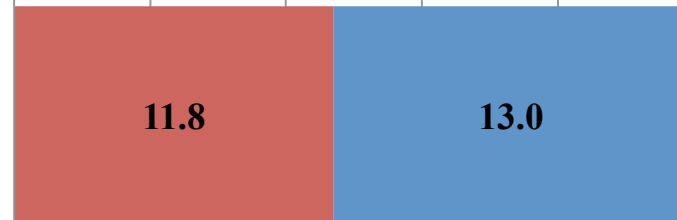


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Very Low Food Security  
Low Food Security

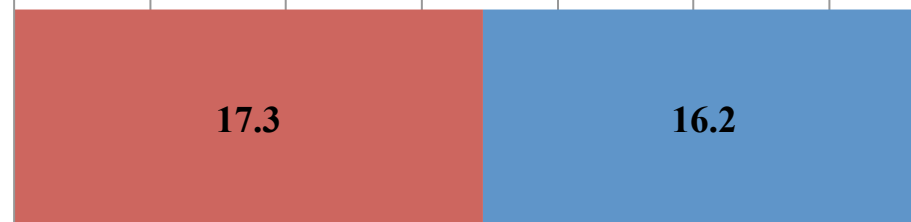
Percent Food Insecure

Households with a member (age 18-64) with other reported disabilities



24.8

Households with a member (age 18-64) not in labor force-disabled



33.5

0.0 5.0 10.0 15.0 20.0 25.0 30.0 35.0 40.0

Percent of Households

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2009 (MIS 5-8) and December 2010 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

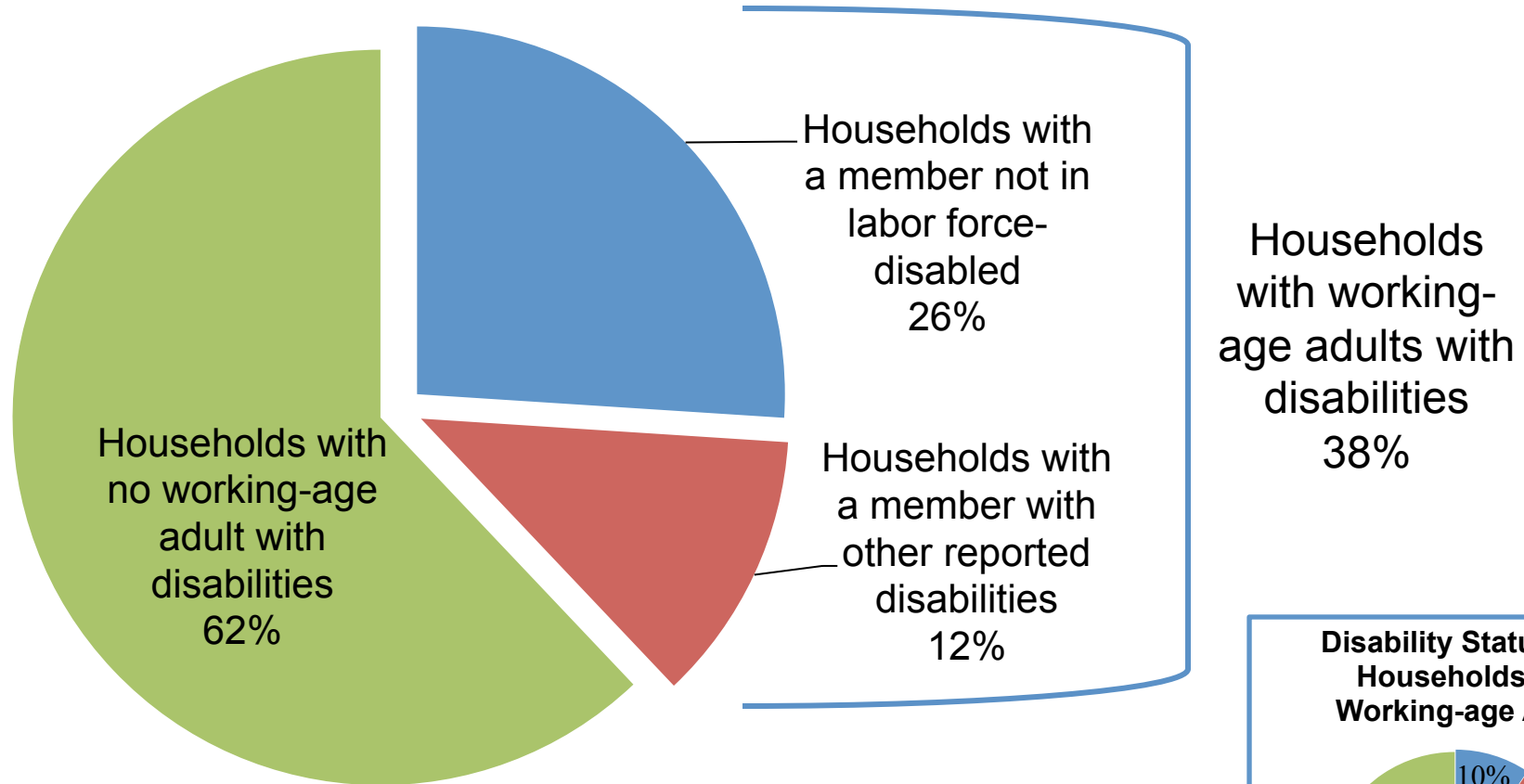


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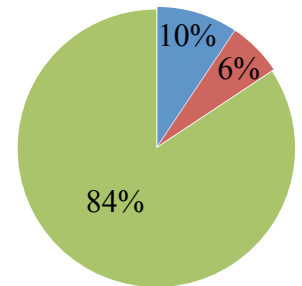


# Disability Status of Households with Very Low Food Security

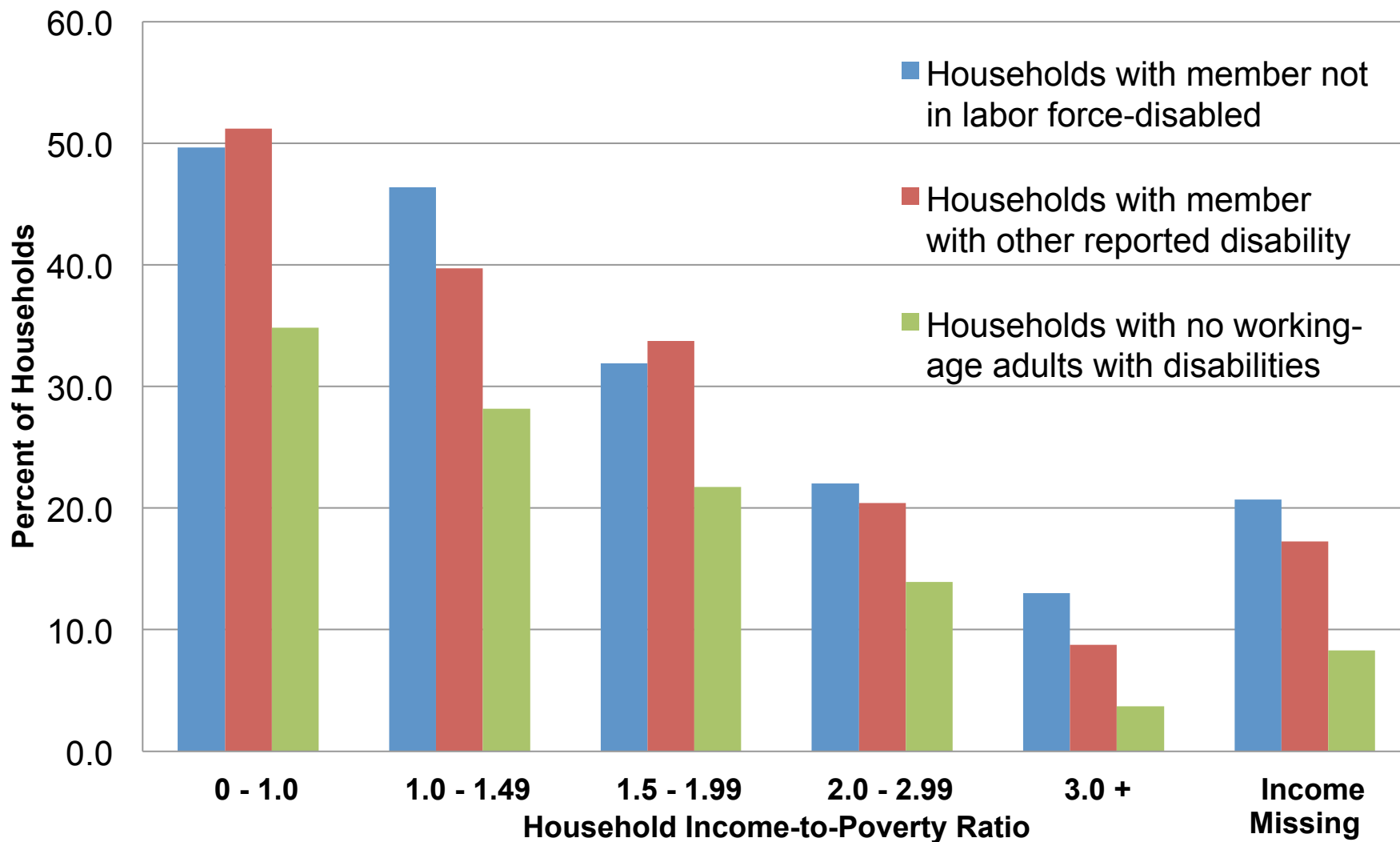


Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2009 (MIS 5-8) and December 2010 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

**Disability Status of all Households with Working-age Adults**



# Prevalence of Food Insecurity by Disability Status and Household Income-to-Poverty Ratio



Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2009 (MIS 5-8) and December 2010 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement



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# Multivariate results

- Households with someone *not in labor force-disabled* 1.58 times as likely to be food insecure as households with a full-time worker and no one *NILF-disabled*
  - Unadjusted odds ratio: 6.4
  - Income and employment mediate effects
- Vision, mental, and physical disabilities related to higher likelihood of food insecurity than hearing, self-care, and going-outside-home disabilities





# Multivariate results Continued

- Having a work disability *and* specified disability related to even higher odds of food insecurity
- Households with multiple disabled adults are more likely to be food insecure than households with one adult with disabilities
- In households with adults with disabilities, having another member working full-time is protective against food insecurity



# Summary of Findings

- Whether a disability prevents work is important
- Costs associated with disability are important
- SNAP participation is high among those with disabilities, but food insecurity is also high
- Food insecurity is more prevalent among households with adults with disabilities receiving disability assistance than among those not receiving assistance
  - Participation in disability assistance programs is related to severity of disability



For more info:  
[acjensen@ers.usda.gov](mailto:acjensen@ers.usda.gov)

<http://ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us.aspx>

Thank you!



# **An Overview of Social Security's Disability Programs**

Rebecca Vallas

Director of Policy, Poverty to Prosperity  
Center for American Progress

FRAC – July 28, 2015

## Social Security: Purpose

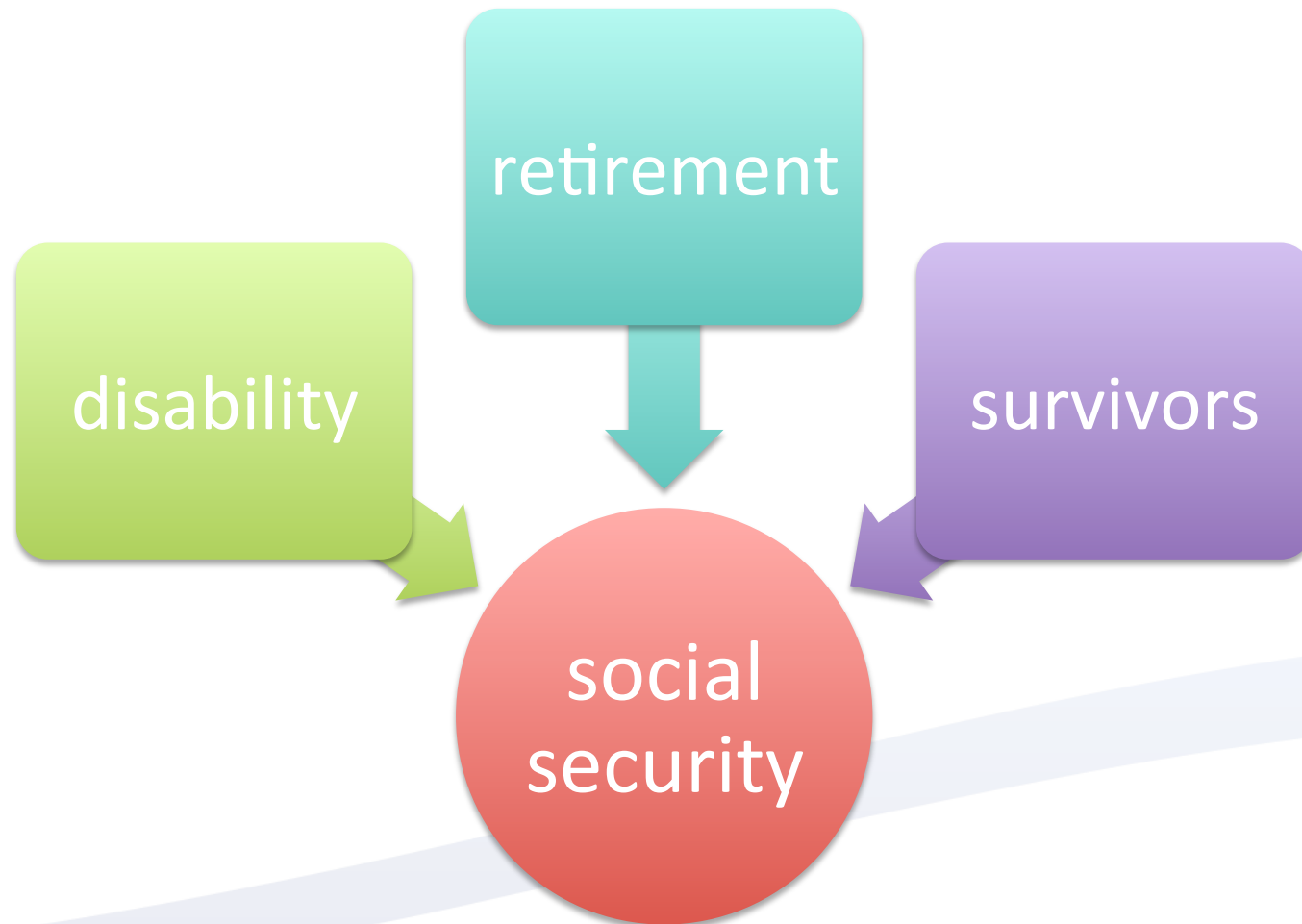
“...security of the men, women, and children of the nation against certain hazards and vicissitudes of life.”

--Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 17, 1935



*Signing the Social Security Act of 1935.*

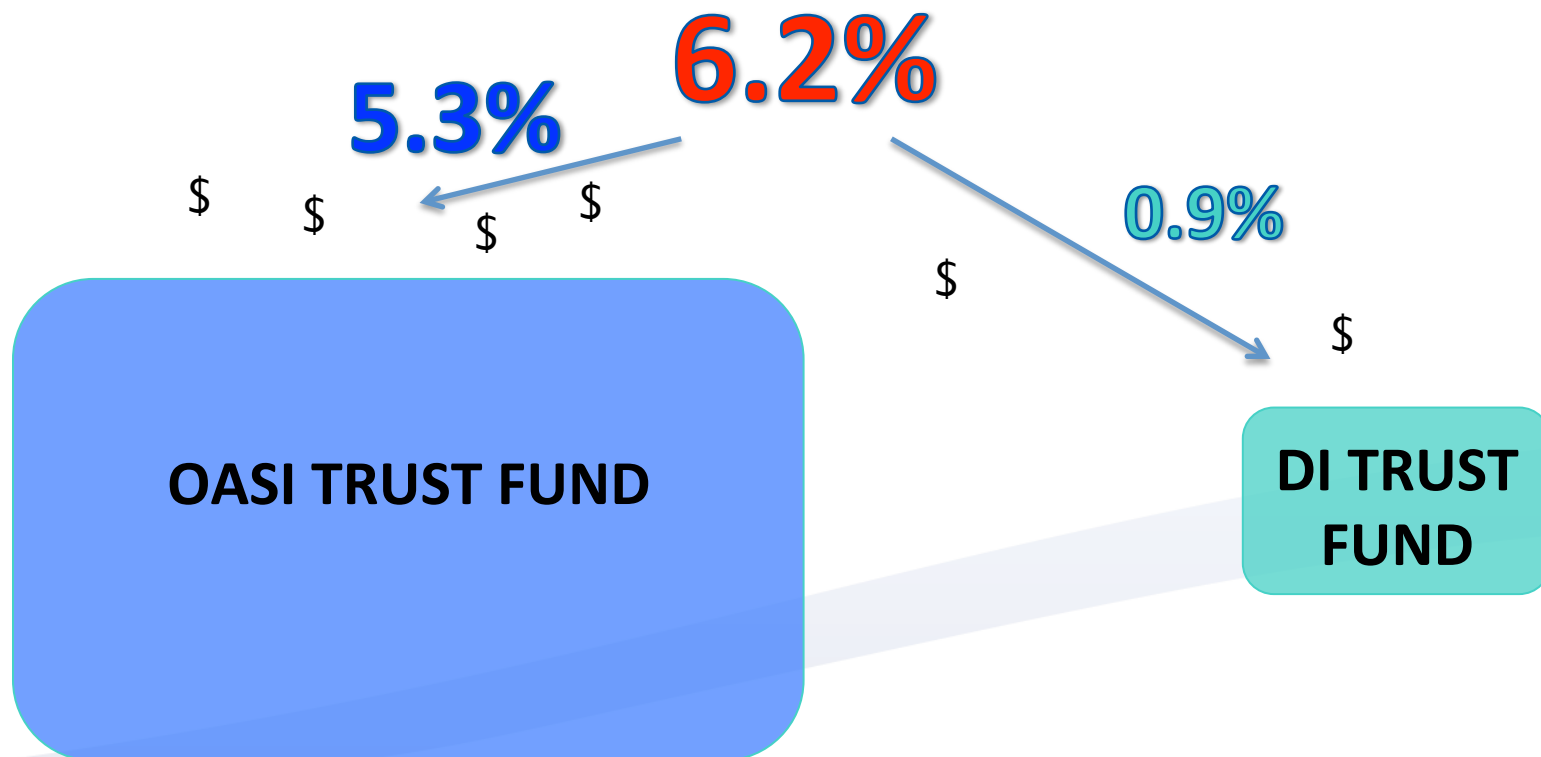
## A suite of insurance



# Who pays for Social Security?

Worker and employer  
payroll tax contributions

*Up to a cap  
of \$118,500  
(for 2015)*



## Who are DI beneficiaries?

### **8.9 million disabled workers**

- plus: 146,000 spouses
- 1.8 million children

### **DI beneficiaries include:**

- 1 million military veterans
- 4.4 million women
- 1.8 million African-Americans
- 1 million Hispanics

### **Compare:**

**316 million**  
*US population*

**57 million, or**  
*1 in 5 Americans*  
*live with disabilities*



## How much are DI benefits?

Avg. disabled worker benefit:

**\$1,165 per month**

**\$291 per week**

**\$41 per day**

Compare: FPL for an individual: **\$981/mo**

*DI replaces less than half of pre-disability earnings for the typical worker.*

Even with DI:

1 in 5 beneficiaries live in poverty and most are low-income (<200% FPL).

18% are poor enough that they qualify for SSI.

Beneficiaries are twice as likely as non-beneficiaries to be unable to meet essential expenses.

# Supplemental Security Income

Signed into law in 1972 by President Nixon

“Building on the present Social Security program, it would create a new federal program administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA), designed to provide a positive assurance that the nation's aged, blind, and disabled people would no longer have to subsist on below poverty level incomes.”

— *U.S. Senate, Committee on Finance, Sept. 26, 1972*

## Supplemental Security Income

- *Serves very low-income seniors and people with disabilities who are not 'insured' for DI*
- Same disability standard as SSDI
- Asset limits: \$2,000 / \$3,000 – unchanged since 1989

Approximately **8.3 million** SSI beneficiaries:

- 4.9 million disabled adults 18 to 64
- 1.3 million disabled children under 18
- 2.1 million seniors 65+

Concurrent Social Security / SSI beneficiaries:

- **2.8 million**, all ages

# How much are SSI benefits?

## Maximum benefit (“federal benefit rate”)

– \$733/mo (individual) / \$1,100/mo (couple)

## Most beneficiaries receive less

– Average benefit = \$541/mo (2015, all ages)

## Benefits comprise most/all of a majority of beneficiaries’ income

- Over **57%** of SSI beneficiaries have **no other source of income**
- While the SSI benefit is not sufficient on its own to protect an individual from poverty, SSI **reduces the depth of poverty**

# DI, SSI beneficiaries: impairments

A diverse group, including people with:

**Severe illnesses.** Heart disease, end stage renal failure, advanced cancers, MS, Rheumatoid Arthritis.

**Mental impairments.** Significant intellectual disabilities, severe mental illnesses.

**Severe physical disabilities.** Post-polio syndrome, severe cerebral palsy.

**Sensory disabilities.** Deafness, blindness.

## Social Security definition of disability

Unable to engage in **any substantial gainful activity (SGA)**:

- by reason of any **medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s)**
- which have lasted / will last for a continuous period of no less than **12 mos.** or **result in death.**



Must be “insured” – significant work history requirement.

Unable to do *any* work that exists in sig. #'s in the nat'l economy.

SGA: earnings over \$1,090 per month (roughly \$270 per week.)

Most applicants are denied.  
**Fewer than 4 in 10** are ultimately approved after all levels of appeal.

## SSA definition of disability

The **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development**, or **OECD**, describes the U.S. disability system—along with those of Korea, Japan, and Canada—as having:

**“the most stringent eligibility criteria, including the most rigid reference to all jobs available in the labor market.”**

## DI, SSI beneficiaries: health

### **Poor health.**

3 in 4 (73%) report fair, poor, or very poor health.

### **Worsening health.**

Nearly half (42%) report their health is worse compared to last year.

### **Terminally ill.**

1 in 5 male, and nearly 1 in 6 female DI beneficiaries die within 5 years of receiving benefits.

**Beneficiaries are more than 3 times more likely to die than others their age.**



## Snapshot of economic insecurity among people with disabilities

**Half** of all working-age adults who experience at least one year of poverty have a disability, and nearly **two-thirds** of those experiencing longer-term poverty have a disability.

Working-age adults w/disabilities are nearly **three times** as likely to be **poor**: 34.5% vs. 12.2% (2013)

Working-age adults w/disabilities are more than **twice** as likely to be **economically insecure**: 61.2% vs. 28.8% (2013)

Also **nearly twice** as likely to lack **precautionary savings**:

*70% report that they “certainly” or “probably” could not come up with \$2,000 in 30 days to meet an unexpected expense, vs. 37% of people without disabilities*

## Helpful resources

[www.americanprogress.org](http://www.americanprogress.org)

Social Security Disability Insurance: A Bedrock of Security for American Workers

The Facts on Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income

Maintaining and Strengthening Supplemental Security Income for Children with Disabilities

A Fair Shot for Workers with Disabilities

## Questions?

Rebecca Vallas  
Director of Policy  
Poverty to Prosperity Program  
Center for American Progress  
[rvallas@americanprogress.org](mailto:rvallas@americanprogress.org)

# Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP)

- Conducts SNAP outreach and community presentations
- Provides free prescreenings for SNAP and application assistance
- 74 NOEP Coordinators across NYS
- Annually assists 30,000 households to receive SNAP benefits
- Annually assists 6,000 households with a disability to receive SNAP benefits

# Persons with a disability include:

- Veterans
- Children born with a disability
- Persons with illness
- Older adults
- Injured from an accident
- Mental health
- Cognitive disability

Meet clients where they are at

“Person with a disability”

VS

“Disabled person”

# Meet clients where they are at

- VA Hospitals and Veteran Community Centers
- Vocational and educational programs
- Nonprofit organizations
- Mental health agencies
- Transportation services
- Home healthcare services
- Senior centers

# Trusted Messengers

- Family members
- Caretakers
- Social workers
- Mental health counselors
- Physical and occupational therapists
- Medical point persons
- Nutritionists
- Community case managers



# Best Practices for Outreach

- Larger font size (at least 14)
- Avoid decorative fonts
- Avoid centered texts
- Simpler language (especially for individuals with a cognitive disability)
- Reference “You or a loved one”
- Sensitivity in photos



## SNAP. It's Accessible.



Many New Yorkers with disabilities buy groceries with SNAP. And with the help of your Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) Coordinator, applying for SNAP is easier and more convenient than ever.

Find out if you or someone you know may be eligible for SNAP. Contact your NOEP Coordinator today. It's free and confidential.

**Agency Name & County (Upstate only)**  
**NOEP Phone Number (with Area Code)**

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# SNAP Application Assistance

- Home visits
- Transportation
- Accessibility needs
- Completing the application
- Medical deductions
- Knowing community resources

# Thank you!

You can contact me for more information at:

[David.Reynolds@hungersolutionsny.org](mailto:David.Reynolds@hungersolutionsny.org)

Or

518-436-8757 x.) 117



# **Incorporating The Perspectives and Needs of People with Disabilities in Anti-Hunger Work**

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Easter Seals  
Assistant Vice President, Government Relations

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202-347-3066

# Incorporating The Perspectives and Needs of People with Disabilities in Anti-Hunger Work

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- “Nothing About Us Without Us”
- Develop partnerships with people themselves, providers, families and others.
- Go to where people with disabilities are.
- Ask for feedback on messaging early and often.
- Connect access to food to independence.
- Hunger is one of many priorities that people with disabilities may face. Remember they are also fighting for access to housing, transportation, services and supports, rights and healthcare. Work in that context.

# Questions?

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