



# Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

**A**ccess to food and adequate nutrition are keys to an active, healthy life. Women who are food insecure and have limited or uncertain access to enough food to sustain a healthy lifestyle are prone to poor health and related problems. Food insecure women also face emotional stress and anxiety concerning their food supply and often engage in compromising behaviors such as choosing lower cost, less nutritious food or choosing to buy food rather than paying rent or buying medicine.<sup>1</sup>

The California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) asked women aged 18 and older questions regarding their access to food. In addition, the CWHS compiled detailed demographic information on women's employment status. The hunger and access to food module in the CWHS is based on a six-question severity scale that was derived from an 18-item U.S. Department of Agriculture module to produce estimates of food insecurity.

The rate of food insecurity among California women varied widely according to their employment status. The highest rates of food

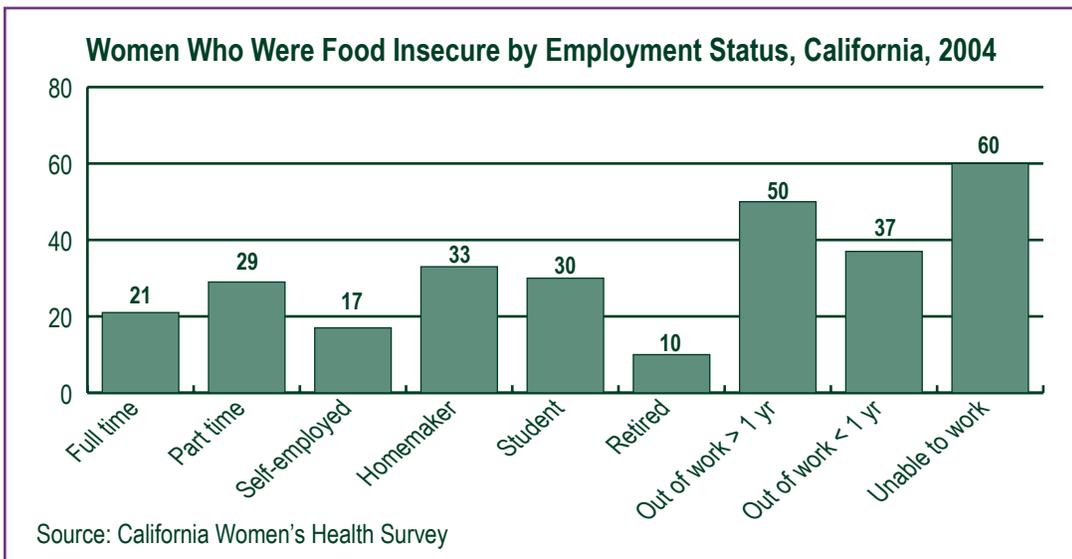
insecurity were among women who were out of work or unable to work. The next highest rates were among homemakers and students, where almost one-third of those women were food insecure. In 2004, the CWHS showed the following:

- The rates of food insecurity among women who were out of work greater than one year was 49.7 percent, out of work less than one year, 36.8 percent, and unable to work, 60.3 percent.
- Homemakers and students had the next highest rates of food insecurity, 33.5 percent and 29.5 percent, respectively.
- Employed women differed in the amount of food insecurity they experienced by type of employment: part-time workers had the highest rate, 29.0 percent, followed by full-time workers, 21.2 percent, and self-employed workers, 16.7 percent.
- Retired women had the lowest rate of food insecurity, 9.7 percent.

## Women Who Were Food Insecure by Employment Status, 2004

Department of Social Services  
Research and Evaluation Branch

**Public Health Message:**  
*Women who were out of work or unable to work are the most likely to be food insecure. However, food supplemental programs need to be aware that homemakers and students, compared with other women, are also more likely to be food insecure.*



Issue 4, Summer 2006, Num. 2

***Women Who Were  
Food Insecure by  
Employment Status,  
2004***

- 1 Bickel G, Nord M, Price C, Hamilton W, Cook J. A Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000. USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation, March 2000.

Department of Social  
Services  
Research and Evaluation  
Branch

Submitted by: Nikki Baumrind and Sheila Dumbauld, California Department of Social Services, Research and Evaluation Branch, (916) 654-1327, skl1@cox.net

For additional copies of CWHS 2003-2004 Data Points please contact the Office of Women's Health:

Download copies at the Office of Women's Health website

[www.dhs.ca.gov/director/owh](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/director/owh)

or contact OWH staff at P.O. Box 997413, MS 0027, Sacramento, CA 95899-7413 or call (916) 440-7626.