Food Insecurity Among Undocumented Immigrants in California

More than half a million children and adults without legal permanent resident status (described throughout as "undocumented") live in households with limited or uncertain access to enough food, according to a policy brief based on California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) data.

More than **2 in 5** (45%) undocumented immigrants are affected by food insecurity

Nearly **2 in 3** (64%) undocumented children are affected by food insecurity

Percent of undocumented immigrants with low income who are affected by food insecurity

By age

- **0–17 years old**: 64%
- **18–26 years old**: 36%
- **27–49 years old**: 46%
- **50+ years old**: 42%
- **All ages**: 45%

Immigrants who avoided public programs in 2019 for fear that participation would negatively impact immigration status*

**1 in 4** (25%) low-income immigrant adults in California

Percent of immigrant adults with low income who were affected by food insecurity in 2019

- **54%** of those who avoided public programs
- **36%** of those who did not avoid public programs

*Data cited from separate study: [https://ucla.in/3brelXz](https://ucla.in/3brelXz)

Read the study: Food Insecurity Among Undocumented Immigrants in California & Exclusion from Nutrition Assistance Programs

Source: 2017–2020 pooled California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) data

The CHIS category “non-citizens without legal permanent resident status” includes all undocumented immigrants but is not exclusive to undocumented immigrants. For instance, this category includes individuals such as refugees and asylees.