

SNAP and WIC State Administrative Data

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Renuka Bhaskar
U.S. Census Bureau



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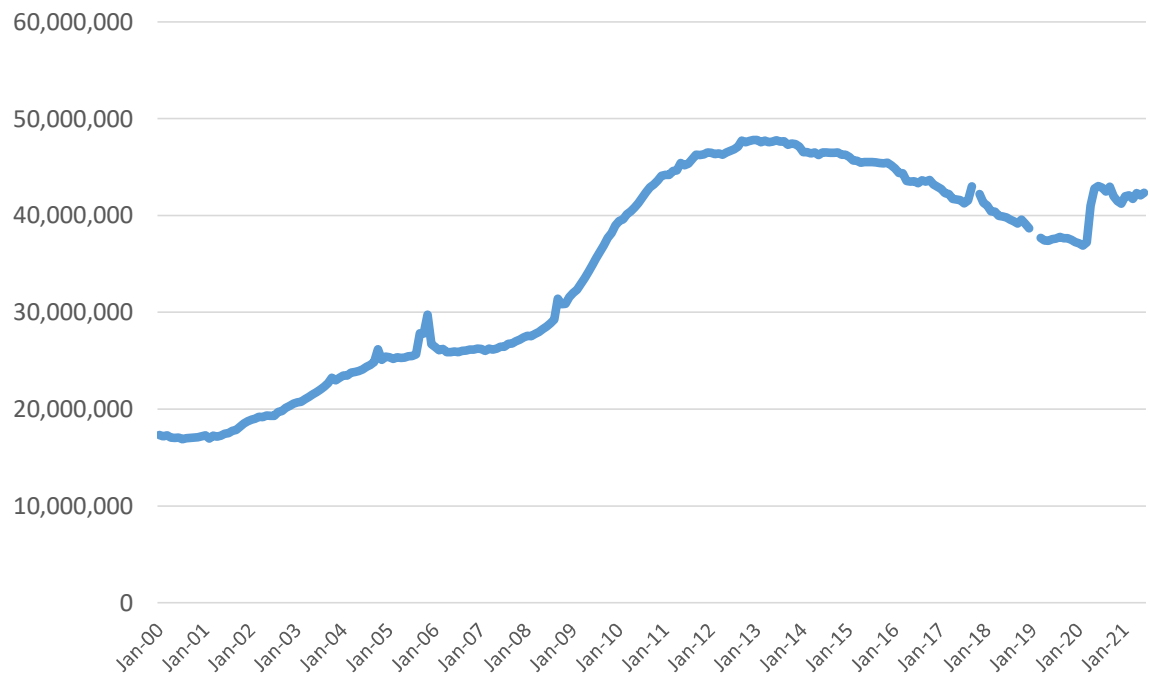
State SNAP and WIC data

- The U.S. Census Bureau acquires data from states on participants of two food nutrition assistance programs
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP)
 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- SNAP and WIC data for some states may be accessible for approved researchers through Federal Statistical Research Data Centers (FSRDCs)

Quick overview: SNAP

SNAP is the largest program aimed at reducing domestic hunger by providing low-income households with benefits that can be used to purchase food at authorized retailers

Monthly SNAP Participation, 2000-2021

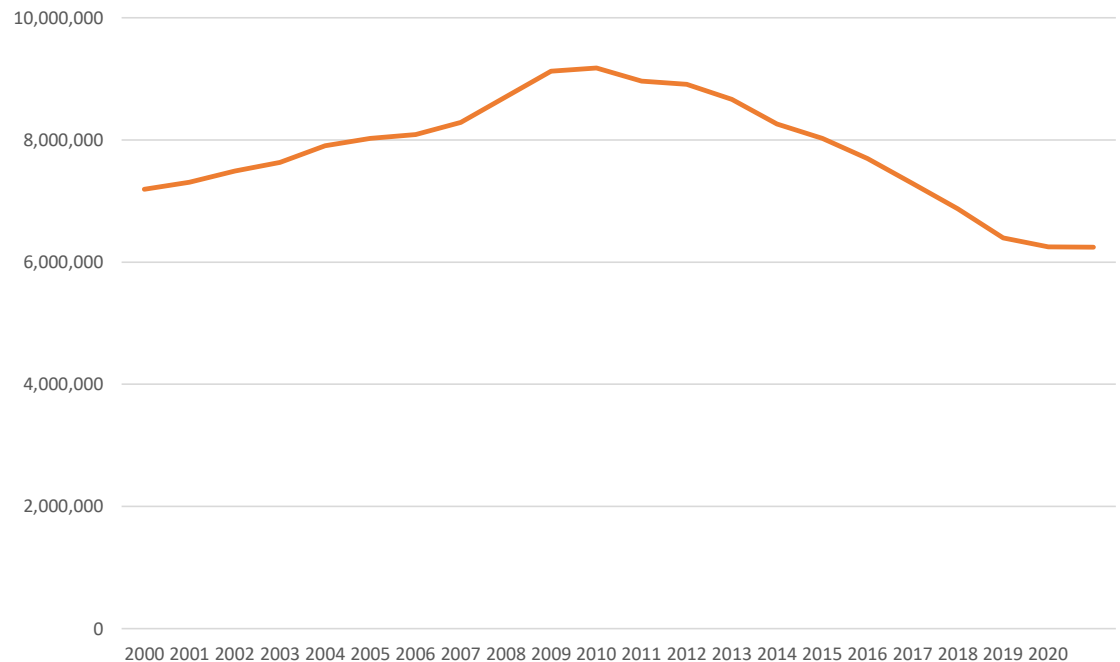


Source: [SNAP National Data Bank estimates available from USDA](#)

Quick overview: WIC

- WIC provides food, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care and social services to nutritionally at-risk, low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to age 5
- In Fiscal Year 2021:
 - 1.4 million women
 - 1.5 million infants
 - 3.4 million children

Average Annual WIC Participation, 2000-2021



Source: [SNAP National Data Bank estimates available from USDA](#)

State data available

WIC

State	Years
Colorado	2017-2020
Connecticut	2016-2021
Illinois	2017-2019
Kansas	2013-2020
Maine	2009-2020
Montana	2012-2020
South Dakota	2015-2020

SNAP

State	Years
California - LA County only	2017-2020
Connecticut	2004-2015
Illinois	2017
Iowa	2011-2020
Maryland	2017-2019
Montana	2012-2020
Nebraska	2018-2020
Nevada	2017-2020
North Carolina	2014-2020
South Carolina	2004-2020
South Dakota	2015-2020
Wyoming	2004-2020

Guides to variables

- “Guide to variables” documents available through the ERS grants website provides a list of variables available for each state for an example year.
- Note that number and types of files, variables, and documentation varies by state and the variables shown may not be the same for all years

Unique identifiers in SNAP and WIC data

- The Census Bureau uses personally identifiable information in the state data (name, date of birth, Social Security Number, address, etc) to assign unique person and address identifiers
 - Person identifiers: Protected Identification Keys (PIKs)
 - Address identifiers: MAFIDs
- PIKs and MAFIDs allow for linkages to other Census Bureau data sources
- See Wagner and Layne (2014) for more information
<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2014/adrm/carra-wp-2014-01.pdf>

State SNAP data

- Case- versus client-level
 - Case-level files contain information for the SNAP case
 - Client-level files contain information for individuals in the SNAP case
 - Files often have case and client identification numbers
- Other variables may include
 - Benefit month and monthly benefit amount
 - Information collected to determine eligibility (income, deductions)
 - Household size and relationship to primary participant
 - Demographic information on participants
 - Certification time periods, denial information
- Some files are combined with information on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients

State WIC data

- Usually 1 file with variables from state and 1 file with Census unique identifier information
- Variables may include:
 - Client and household identification numbers
 - Benefit month, monthly benefits received and/or benefits redeemed
 - Information collected to determine eligibility (income amounts and sources)
 - Relationship to householder
 - Demographic information on participants
 - Category of recipient: Infant, child, pregnant, or breastfeeding

After receiving data access

- Talk to FSRDC administrators about whether additional data documentation exists
- Comparisons to publicly available counts of monthly WIC and SNAP participants can be useful to make sure you are defining participants correctly
 - SNAP: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>
 - WIC: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wic-program>

Product reviews

- All statistical results derived from the SNAP and WIC data must follow Census Bureau disclosure avoidance guidelines and are subject to disclosure review
- Prior to public release, any papers or presentations are subject to review by the state SNAP and WIC agency

Examples of previous uses of the data

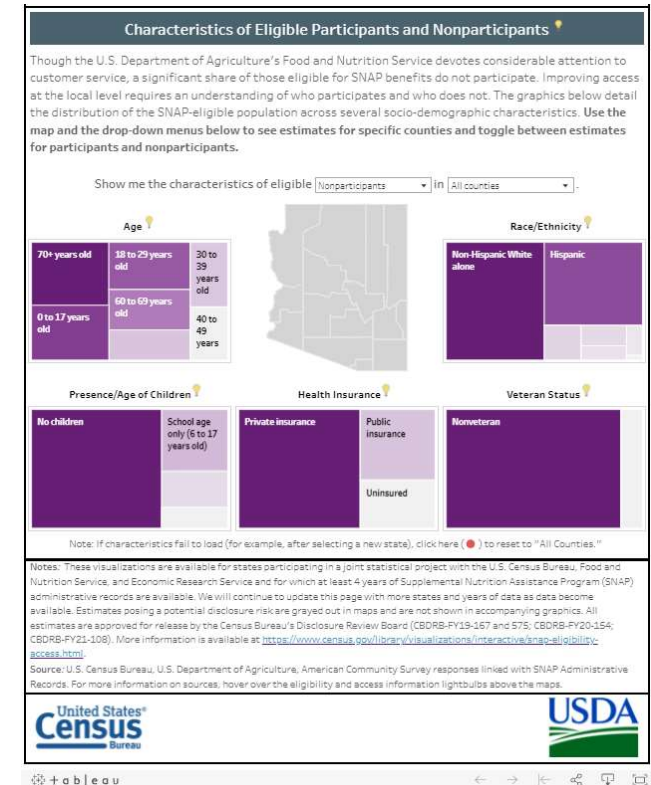
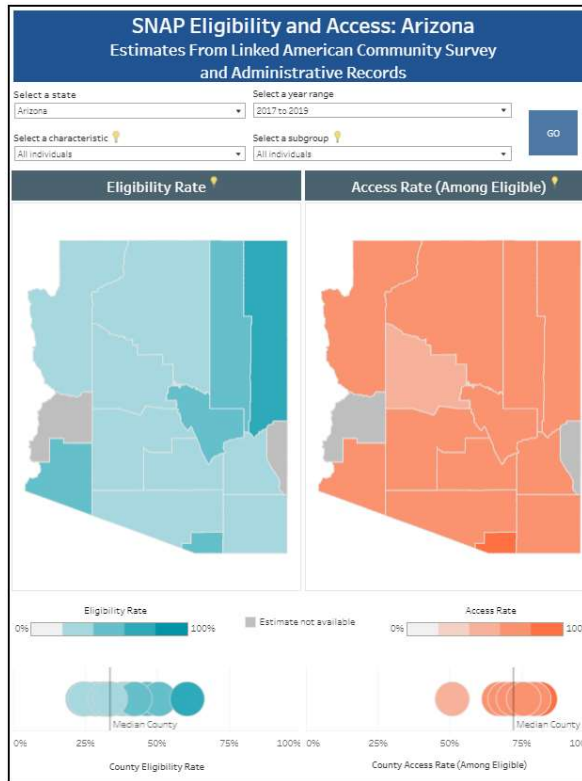
- Linkages of state SNAP data to survey data to evaluate survey response of SNAP program receipt
 - <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2014/adrm/carra-wp-2014-05.pdf>
 - <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2017/demo/SEHSD-WP2017-03.pdf>
- Linkages of state SNAP data to survey data to better understand poverty measurement
 - <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/newsroom/press-kits/2022/assa/assa-jan2022-paper-fixing%20errors-in-a-snap.pdf>
 - <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2017/demo/SEHSD-WP2017-49.pdf>
 - https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25907/w25907.pdf
- Assessment of quality of state SNAP administrative records
 - <https://www.mathematica.org/publications/assessment-of-the-quality-of-state-snap-administrative-data>

Estimates of SNAP and WIC eligibility and access

- FNS estimates of eligibility and participation among eligible for SNAP and WIC
 - SNAP: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/reaching-those-need-estimates-state-2018>
 - WIC: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/WICEligibles2019-Volume1.pdf>
- Building on the work of Newman and Scherpf (2013), the Census Bureau links state SNAP data to American Community Survey data to estimate eligibility and access
 - <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=45139>

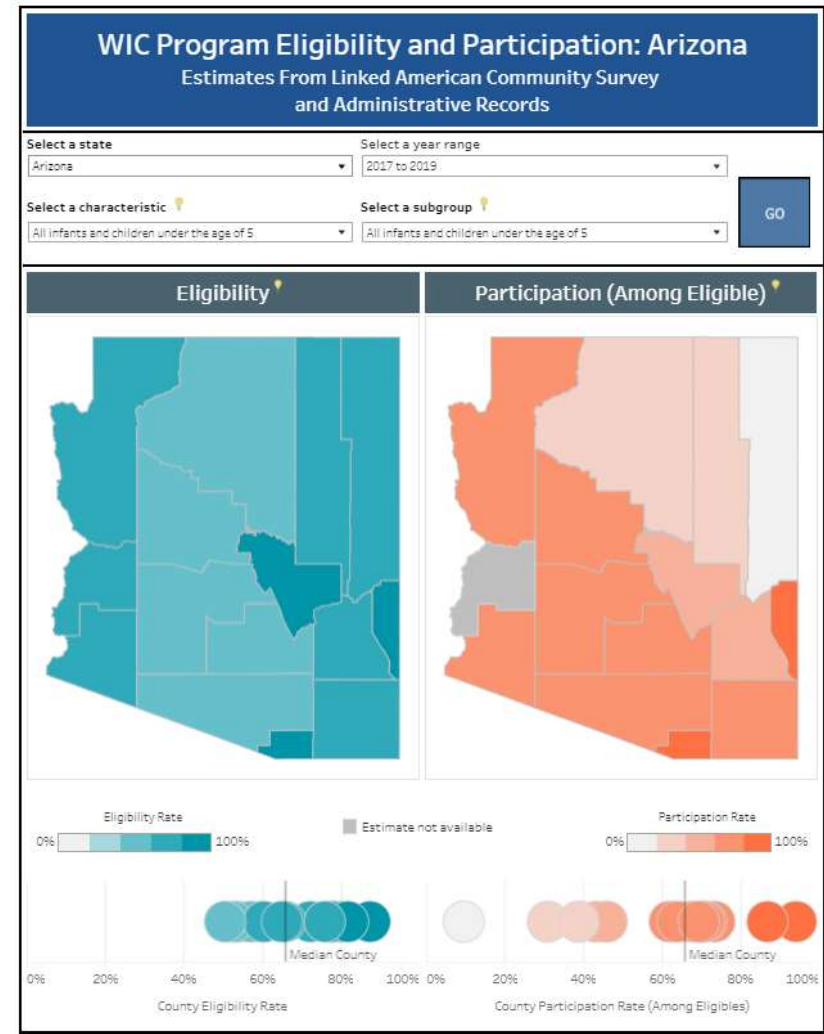
SNAP data visualization

- County-level eligibility and access rates, by characteristics
- Characteristics of participants and non-participants



WIC data visualization

- WIC eligibility and participation among infants/children
- WIC participation among women (not shown in visualization)



Source: <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/wic-eligibility-participation.html>

Thank you!