



United States Department of Agriculture

The Next Generation Data Platform

Linking Administrative Data from State-Level USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs with Census Household Surveys and Administrative Records from Other State and Federal Programs

Making the Most of Federal Data: Combining Data for Economic Analysis
AAEA Post-Conference Workshop
August 8, 2018

The findings and conclusions in this preliminary presentation have not been formally disseminated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and should not be construed to represent any agency determination or policy. This research was supported by the intramural research program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.



The Next Generation Data Platform

- A strategic partnership between USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Economic Research Service (ERS), and the U.S. Census Bureau (Census)
- A long-term effort to acquire state-level administrative data on USDA nutrition assistance programs
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC)



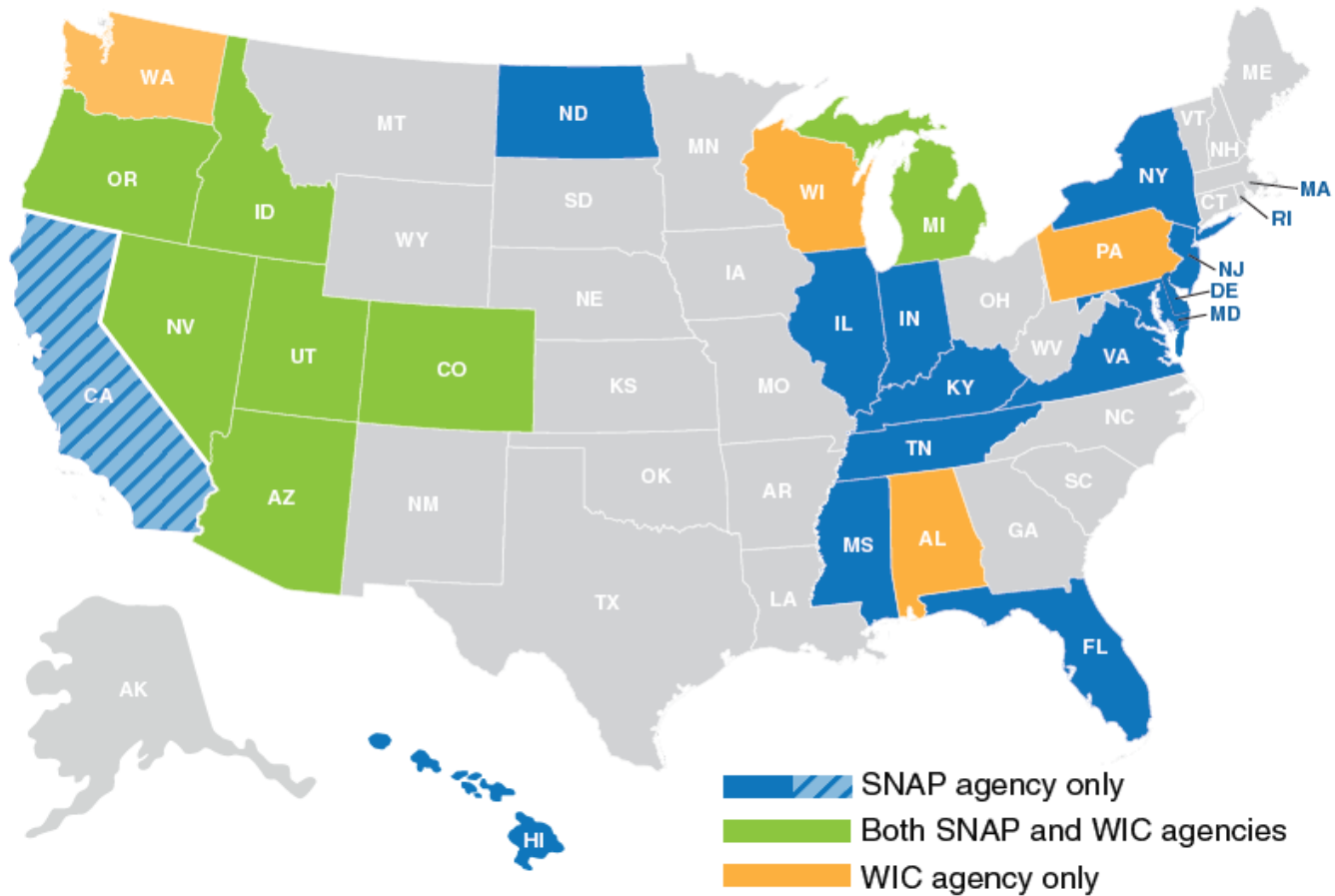
Next Gen Data Platform (cont.)

- Links person-level administrative records with Census household survey data
 - American Community Survey (ACS)
 - Current Population Survey (CPS)
 - March Annual and Social Economic Supplement (ASEC)
 - December Food Security Supplement [coming soon!]
 - Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)
- Expanding number of States
 - 20 State SNAP agencies have signed data-sharing agreements
 - 11 State WIC agencies
- Adding Federal Partners



GROWING THE PARTNERSHIP

State SNAP and WIC agencies participating in the Next-Generation Data Platform (June 1, 2017)



Benefits of Next-Gen Data Platform

- Replaces error-prone measure of SNAP receipt in Census surveys
- Augments administrative records with richer individual- and household-level information from survey data
- Supplements administrative records with information on (potentially eligible) non-participants from survey data



Benefits of Next-Gen Platform (cont.)

- Enhances survey measures of SNAP receipt
 - Number (and timing) of months of program receipt over survey reference period
 - Dollar amount of program benefits received
 - Identify which individuals in the survey household received benefits



Research Possibilities

- Revisiting old research questions with more accurate measures of SNAP receipt
- Revisiting old research questions with more data
 - e.g., examine SNAP participation dynamics over a longer time period than is possible with Census survey data
- Doing more with existing data
 - Enhancing measure of SNAP in ACS



Research using the Next-Gen Platform



United States Department of Agriculture

Economic
Research
Service

Economic
Research
Report
Number 186

May 2015

Improving the Assessment of SNAP Targeting Using Administrative Records

Erik Scherpf, Constance Newman, and Mark Prell



- How well does SNAP reach households with the lowest (annual) income?
- Prior study relied on ACS alone, measuring ever-in-the-year SNAP receipt
- Linked ACS data that measured “intensity of receipt” (total benefits, number of months) showed better targeting to poorer households

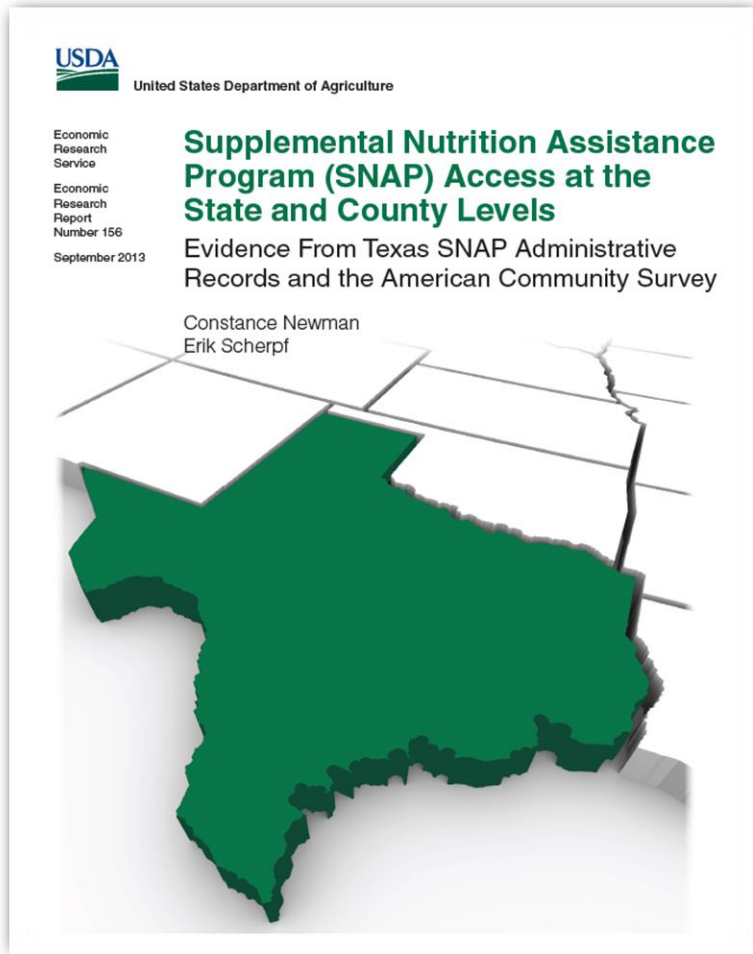


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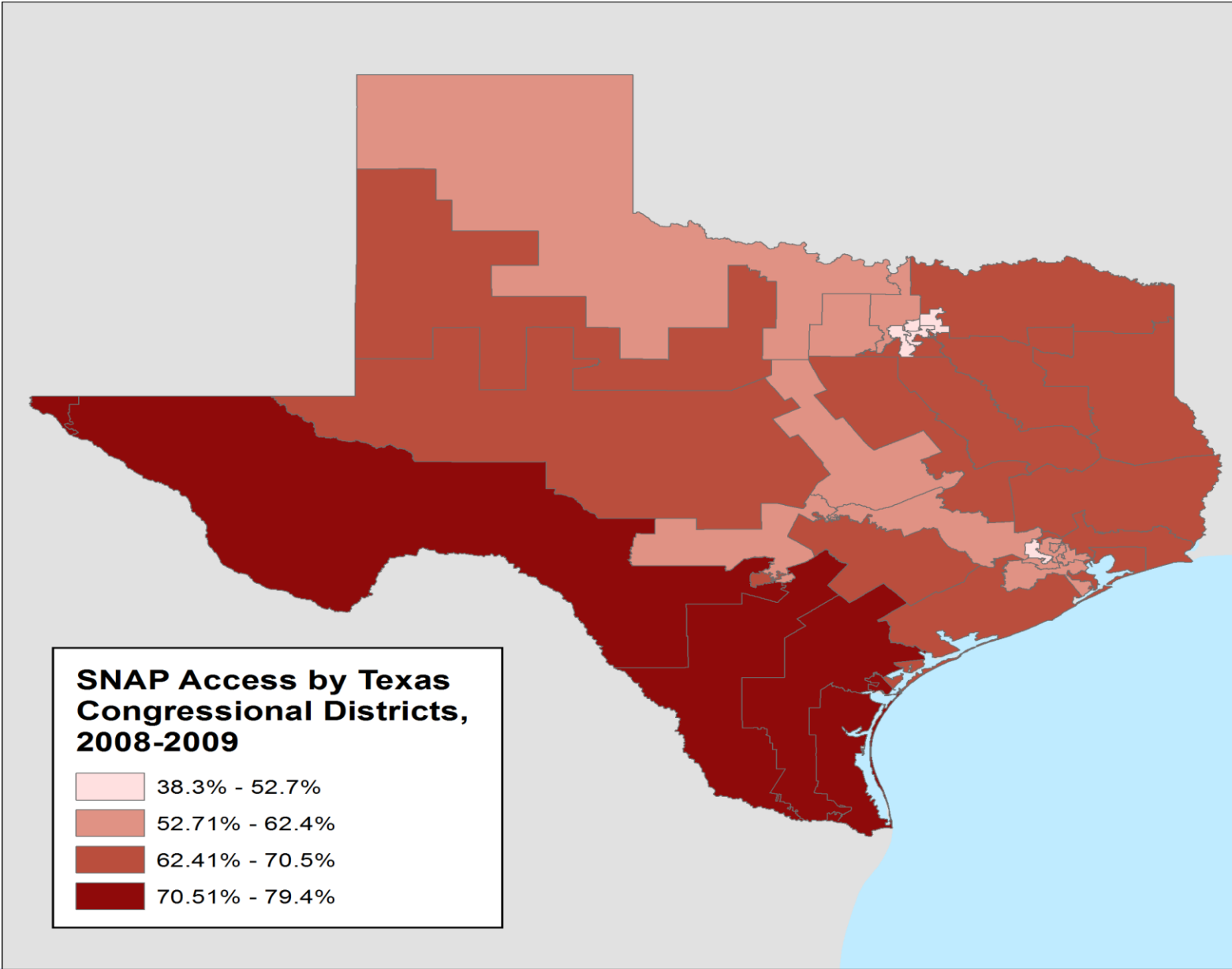


Research (cont.)



- Who does SNAP reach—and not reach—at the sub-state level?
- Estimated household SNAP eligibility using the ACS
- SNAP participants identified using linked admin records
- Linked microdata allowed us to derive participation rates for detailed demographic subgroups





Challenges

- Biggest challenge has been acquiring state data
 - Project relies on the willingness of states to share their admin records
- Record Linkage
 - We benefit from Census' expertise in record linkage; they benefit from our program expertise
 - Census uses PII on admin records to create a Protected Identification Key (PIK) for each individual in the records
 - SNAP records contain SSNs, which ensures high PIK rate (~98-99%)
 - Census household surveys do not, so PIK rates are lower on the survey side (~90%)



Summary

- Unique data linkage that brings together data, resources, and expertise from multiple federal and state partners
- Yield data products valued by policymakers and program stakeholders
- Project is scaling up to more states and programs
- Academic researchers can apply for data access through Federal Statistical Research Data Centers (FSRDCs)



Questions?

escherpf@ers.usda.gov

