Abstract

This report summarizes research findings from the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Small Grants Program. The Economic Research Service created the program in 1998 to stimulate new and innovative research on food assistance and nutrition issues and to broaden the participation of social science scholars in these issues. The report includes summaries of the research projects that were awarded 1-year grants in summer and fall 2002. The results of these research projects were presented at the November 2003 Small Grants Program conference. The projects focus on food assistance and child well-being, food insecurity and hunger, the dynamics of food assistance program participation, obesity, and the role of community factors in dietary intake and food security. Some projects focus on specific populations, such as people living in the rural South and those living on American Indian reservations.

Keywords: Food assistance, nutrition, vulnerable populations, food security, food insecurity, hunger, hungry, food assistance, food spending, well-being, Food Stamp Program, food stamps, National School Lunch Program, WIC, Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program
Contents

Preface .................................................................iv

Introduction .........................................................1

Executive Summaries

Food Assistance and Child Well-Being
  Medicaid at Birth, WIC Takeup and Children's Outcomes ..........5
    Marianne Bitler and Janet Currie

  Exploring the Influence of the National School Lunch Program on Children Using The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study .............7
    Rachel Dunifon and Lori Kowaleski-Jones

Food Insecurity and Hunger

  Ineligible Parents, Eligible Children: Food Stamps Receipt, Allotments, and Food Insecurity Among Children of Immigrants ..........9
    Jennifer Van Hook and Kelly Stamper Balistreri

  The Relationship Between Food Assistance, the Value of Food Acquired, and Household Food Security .............11
    Beth Osborne Daponte and Melvin Stephens

  Dietary Intake and Food Security Among Migrant Farm Workers in Pennsylvania .............13
    Katherine L. Cason, Sergio Nieto Montenegro, America Chavez Martinez, Nan Lv, and Anastasia Snyder

  The Role of Food Assistance Programs and Household Employment in Helping Food-Insecure Families Avoid Hunger ..........15
    Nader S. Kabbani and Mira Yazbeck

  Household Food Insecurity, Food Assistance Program Participation, and the Use of Preventive Medical Care ..........17
    Gail G. Harrison

Dynamics of Program Participation and Food Insecurity

  Who Exits the Food Stamp Program After Welfare Reform? ..........19
    Colleen M. Heflin

  Public Assistance and Working Poor Families: Has the Nation Become More Like The Rural South? .............21
    Bradford Mills, Brian Whitacre, and Christiana Hilmer
The Interaction Between Food Stamps and Welfare Programs: An Empirical Model of Program Dynamics in the Cleveland Metropolitan Area, 1992-2003 ........................................23
Laura Leete and Neil Bania

Obesity

Assessing the Prevalence of Childhood Obesity Among Limited-Resource Latino and Non-Latino Families in Virginia ..............................25
Elena L. Serrano and Ruby H. Cox

The Food Insecurity-Obesity Paradox in Women .............................27
Christine M. Olson and Myla S. Strawderman

Community Attitudes Toward Traditional Tohono O'odham Foods ........................................29
Daniel Lopez, Tristan Reader, and Mary Paganelli

The Incidence of Overweight and Obesity in Southern Adolescents ........................................31
Mellie L. Warner

Community Factors, Dietary Intake, and Health

Retail Concentration, "Food Deserts," and Food-Disadvantaged Communities ................................33
Troy C. Blanchard and Thomas A. Lyson

Nutrition Assessment and Education for the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa ........................................35
Debra Parrish

Assessing the Relationship Between Food Insecurity Events and Food Assistance Programs in Two Different Housing Communities ........................................36
Mesfin Bezuneh and Zelealem Yiheyis

Community Capacity and Food Insecurity in the Era of Welfare Reform ........................................38
Domenico Parisi, Duane A. Gill, and Deborah Harris
Preface

The Economic Research Service’s (ERS) Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Small Grants Program offers grants to social science scholars to stimulate new and innovative research on food and nutrition assistance and to broaden participation in research on these issues. To administer the program, ERS partners with five academic institutions that competitively award grants for 1-year research projects. Most grants are for $20,000 to $40,000. The program seeks to give junior scholars an opportunity to gain experience in conducting research on food security and food and nutrition assistance programs and to encourage more senior scholars to apply their skills and knowledge in these areas. The program also seeks to nurture the development of strong networks of scientists who interact and work collaboratively on critical food and nutrition challenges that cross local or State borders.

This report presents summaries of the research findings from the fifth set of small grants, which were awarded in summer and fall 2002. Preliminary findings were presented at a conference at ERS in Washington, DC, in November 2003, and the research projects were completed in December 2003. More information about the Small Grants Program partners and many of the completed research papers can be found on the web sites of the administering institutions, listed below:

Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Focus: The Effects of food assistance programs on food security, income security, and other indicators of well-being on low-income individuals and families.
Web address: http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/smgrants/smhome.htm

Irving B. Harris School of Public Policy Studies, University of Chicago
Focus: Interactions between food assistance programs and other welfare programs, and the effects of the macroeconomy on the need for food assistance, the level of participation, and costs of food assistance programs.
Web address: http://harrisschool.uchicago.edu/funding/foodassistance/

The American Indian Studies Program, University of Arizona
Focus: The relationship between food assistance programs on reservations and family poverty.
Web address: http://w3.arizona.edu/~aisp/foodassistance/foodassistance1.htm

The Department of Nutrition at the University of California, Davis
Focus: The impact of food assistance programs on nutritional risk indicators (anthropometric, biochemical, clinical, and dietary), food purchasing practices, and food insecurity.
Web address: http://nutrition.ucdavis.edu/USDAERS/

Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State University
Focus: Food assistance research issues impacting vulnerable rural people, families, and communities in the South.
Web address: http://srdc.msstate.edu/focusareas/health/food.htm