

Insights from other countries

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Agenda on Food Insecurity

- Food insecurity as one form of material hardship
- Food insecurity and public policy



Food insecurity as one form of material hardship

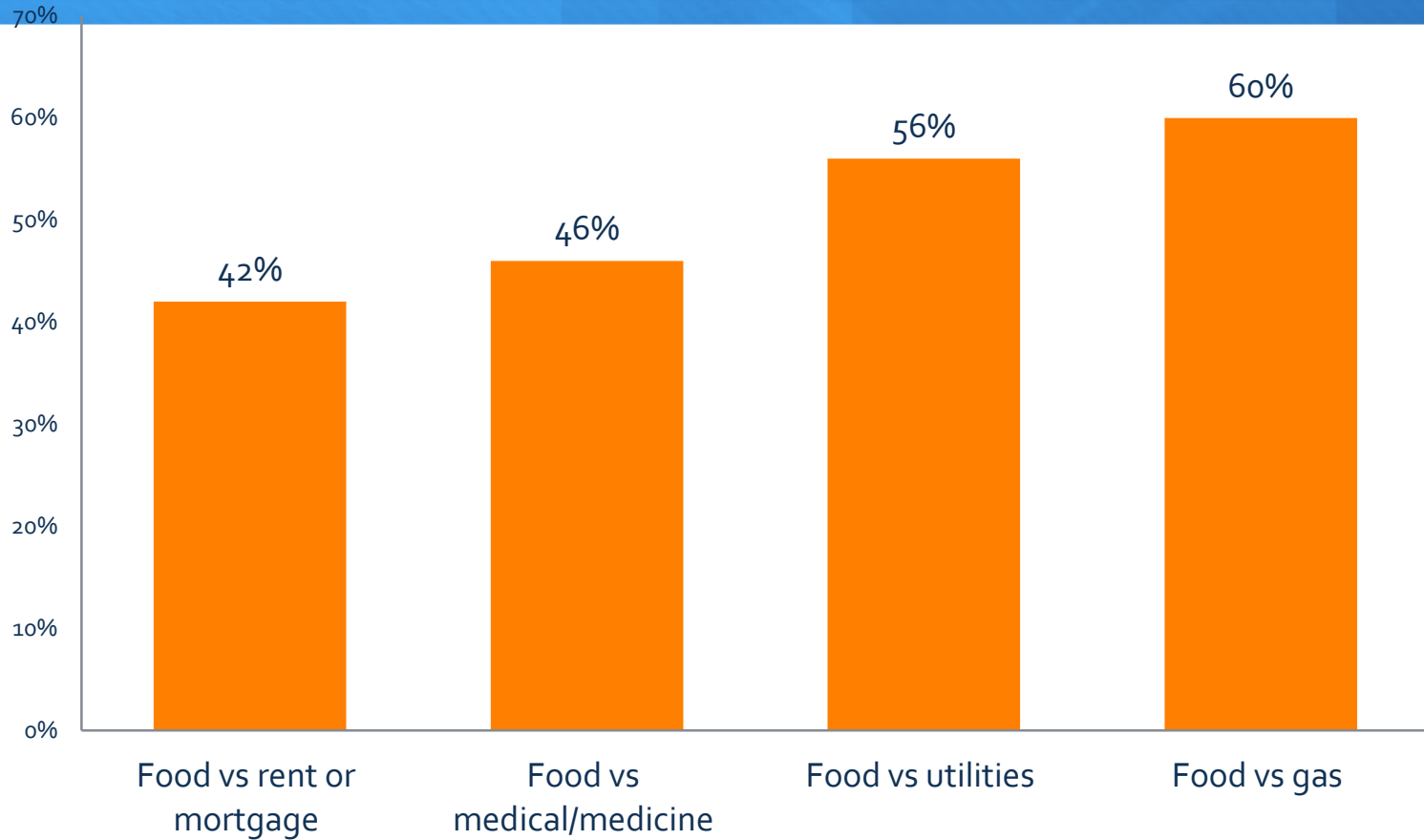
Families that report child hunger have difficulty meeting other essential needs:

- Housing costs
- Utility costs
- Medical costs
- Transportation needs



Food Trade-Offs

Missouri Food Pantry Client Survey (Hermsen et al. 2012: Table 3)





Unique aspects of food insecurity

1. Sensitive to small income fluctuations
2. Often very short duration
3. Need is recurrent
4. Demand fluctuates
5. Not experienced uniformly within household



Trade-offs with other essential needs: What do we need to know?

1. We need to better understand the prioritization of essential needs
2. We need to understand variability in prioritization process.
 - Life course variation
3. Family expenditure/resource records needed.



Food insecurity and public policy

- ✔ Participation in social safety net can reduce food insecurity
 - ✔ Program participation reduces food insecurity by varying amounts depending on the program.
- ✔ Participation in social safety net can also cause economic instability and lead to food insecurity.
 - ✔ Aging out of WIC eligibility at 60 months
 - ✔ Administrative churn
 - ✔ Timing of SNAP receipt and ER visits



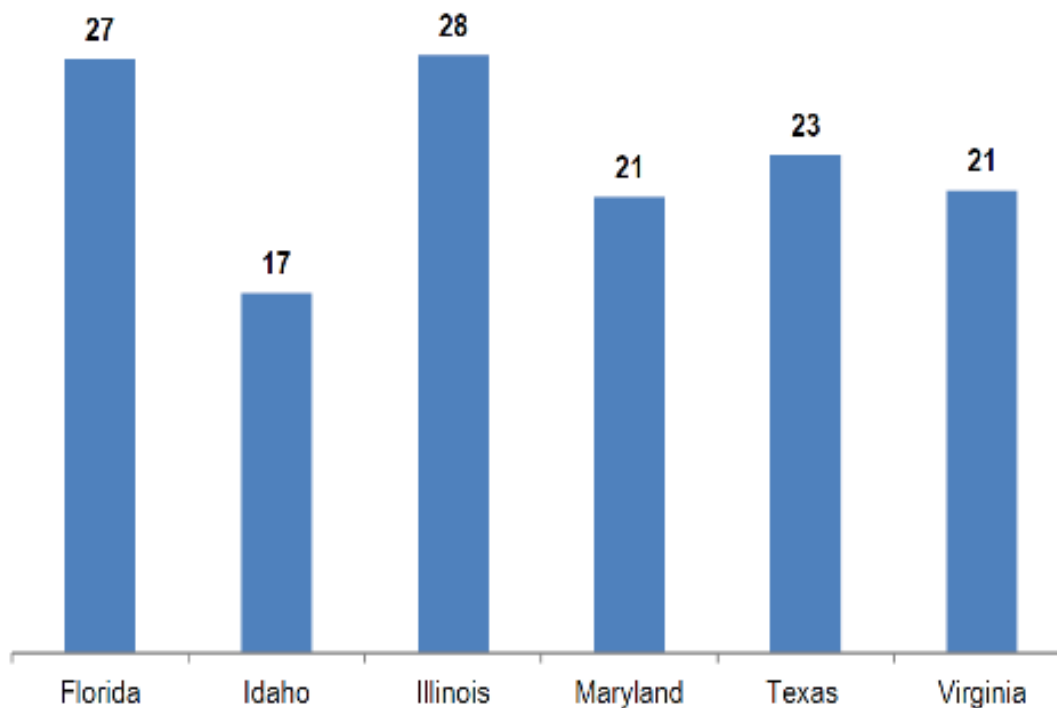
Aging out of WIC Program Eligibility at 60 months

- Children have access to WIC through age 5 and then are able to access school-based food and nutrition program upon kindergartner entry.
- Aging out of WIC before school entry increases the risk of household food insecurity (Arteaga, Heflin, and Gable 2016).
- Entering kindergarten and accessing school-based programs is associated with a decline in the risk of household food insecurity (Arteaga and Heflin 2015).
- The length of the gap between WIC coverage loss and school entry is associated with negative cognitive and behavioral outcomes at school entry (Arteaga and Heflin 2016).



SNAP Administrative Churn (gaps in program coverage due to administrative delays in processing information)

Figure 2. Rate of Churn by State, FY 2011



Mills et al. 2014 Understanding the Rates, Causes, and Costs of Churning in SNAP. Prepared by Urban Institute for the USDA, FNS.



SNAP Administrative Churn

Table 4. Distribution of Churners by Months off SNAP and Average Length of Churn Spell by State, FY 2011

State	Churners by months off SNAP (%)				Average length of churn spell (months)
	One month or less	Two months	Three months	Four months	
Florida	74	11	8	7	1.3
Idaho	62	15	12	11	1.5
Illinois	67	19	8	6	1.5
Maryland	68	15	9	8	1.4
Texas	79	10	7	5	1.1
Virginia	77	9	7	6	1.3

Source: Urban Institute tabulations of State administrative data for FY 2011.

Notes: Data are presented combining spells of less than one month with one-month spells due to data limitations. Illinois' data classifies some prorated months as missing months, which will tend to overstate churn spell lengths. For the calculation of average churn spell length, spells of less than one month are counted as 0.5 months.



SNAP Administrative Churn

Table 8. Experiences of SNAP Households at Recertification by State, FY 2011 (%)

State	Successfully recertify	Churn	Leave program without churn	Total
Florida	68	18	14	100
Idaho	72	12	16	100
Illinois	57	26	17	100
Maryland	74	13	13	100
Texas	63	19	18	100
Virginia	77	12	11	100

Source: Urban Institute tabulations of State administrative data for FY 2011.

Notes: Recertification refers to the point at which a household must fully recertify or submit a periodic report. Households are counted more than once if they recertify more than once during FY 2011. Households that leave SNAP without churn may exit the program permanently or may return more than four months later.



Timing of SNAP Issuance and ER Visits

- Research on food insecurity and public programs in the US often focuses on obesity (and other diseases with a long time horizon)
- What are the health implications of within month variation of food resources?
- Linked SNAP administrative records to Medicaid benefits to track date of food benefit issuance with emergency room visits for Missouri 2010-2013.
 - Missouri issues food benefits over 22 calendar days depending on the last name of the household head and social security number



Timing of SNAP Issuance Matters

Table 1. Marginal Effects of Calendar Week on ER Claims for Pregnancy Related Conditions, by Week of SNAP Benefit Disbursement

Variables	Benefits in Week 1	Benefits in Week 2	Benefits in Week 3
Week 1	— ^a	— ^a	— ^a
Week 2	-0.0021 (0.0015)	-0.0021 (0.0015)	-0.0019 (0.0014)
Week 3	-0.0013 (0.0015)	-0.0033* (0.0014)	-0.0038** (0.0015)
Week 4	-0.0026 (0.0016)	-0.0009 (0.0015)	-0.0041** (0.0015)
Observations	881,056	929,670	928,847

Notes Results are from probit regression models controlling for SNAP benefit amount, race, ethnicity, age, household size, and year of ER visit. ^aReference category. Average marginal effects shown with robust standard errors shown in parentheses, *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.



Higher SNAP Benefits Amounts are Protective for Health

Table 3. Probability of ER Visit for Hypoglycemia by Benefit Amount

	Average Marginal Effect	SE
SNAP Benefit Amount	-0.0000051 ***	0.0000009
	Average Marginal Effect at...	SE
\$75	-0.0000060 ***	0.0000012
\$175	-0.0000053 ***	0.0000010
\$275	-0.0000047 ***	0.0000008
\$375	-0.0000042 ***	0.0000006
\$475	-0.0000037 ***	0.0000004
\$575	-0.0000032 ***	0.0000003
\$675	-0.0000028 ***	0.0000002

Notes Results are from probit regression models controlling for sex, race, ethnicity, age, and year of ER visit. Average marginal effects shown with robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.



Evaluations of public programs

- Primary focus on evaluations of single programs
 - But low-income households experience programs in bundles
 - Do not often consider cross-program effects (how food assistance may improve health outcomes)
- Primary assumption that public programs improve outcomes
 - Implementation decisions may create economic instability in low-income households



Works Cited

- ✔ Irma Arteaga, Colleen Heflin and Sara Gable. 2016. "The Impact of Aging out of WIC on Food Security in Households with Children." *Children and Youth Services Review*, 69, 82-96. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.07.015>
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- ✔ Arteaga, Irma and Colleen Heflin. 2014. "The National School Lunch Program and Food Security: An Analysis of Transitions into Kindergarten." *Children and Youth Services Review*, 47(3): 224-230.