

Examination of Cash Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits in Puerto Rico

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

Overview

Puerto Rico operates the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) under a block grant, issuing 25 percent of monthly benefits in the form of cash and the remaining noncash portion through electronic benefit transfer (EBT). Insight conducted a congressionally mandated study to assess the effects of discontinuing the cash portion of the NAP benefit, supporting the four main components of the study as follows:

1. Obtained information on the history and purpose of distributing the cash portion of benefits through a review of legislation, policy documents, internal and external studies, and through meetings with government and program experts
2. Conducted a stakeholder analysis including focus groups with NAP participants and interviews with retailers, community-based organizations, and group residential facilities to collect information on participant access to certified retailers, barriers to being certified, use of cash benefits to purchase nonfood items, and potential adverse effects of discontinuing the cash portion of the NAP benefit by key subgroups
3. Conducted a survey of NAP participants to quantify responses on participant access to retailers, their use of cash benefits for nonfood purchases, and potential adverse effects of discontinuing the cash portion by whether they reside in urban or rural locations and by key subgroups.



4. Used extant data on NAP participants, EBT transactions, and retailers to assess the geographic access of NAP participants to certified retailers, examine redemption patterns of NAP participants, and examine participation in other programs

Products

- Final report, *Examination of Cash Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits in Puerto Rico* (August 2015), available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ops/PuertoRico-Cash.pdf>
- Report to Congress (August 2015)