

Puerto Rico SNAP Feasibility Study

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

Project Overview

This study assessed the feasibility and effects of providing nutrition assistance to Puerto Rico under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) instead of through Puerto Rico’s Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP), which is funded by the annual block grant it has received for the past 2 decades. This study was mandated by the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act.



The purpose of the study was to:

- Inform Congress of the similarities and differences between Puerto Rico’s NAP and SNAP with respect to policies, operations, and performance.
- Identify changes that would be necessary if Puerto Rico rejoined SNAP.
- Identify the potential impact of the changes on low-income residents of Puerto Rico.
- Estimate the benefit and administrative costs involved.

Specifically, this study assessed the potential impact of SNAP implementation on eligibility standards, benefit determination, operational procedures, administrative burden, and costs to both the U.S. Government and the government of Puerto Rico.

To address these questions, the study employed 6 complementary analytic methods:

1. **Document and Literature Review.** This provided a comprehensive understanding of the history of Puerto Rico’s NAP.
2. **Descriptive Analysis of the Socioeconomic Conditions in Puerto Rico Versus the United States.** This used relevant data sources to present a descriptive analysis and identify recent trends in the data that helped to project future changes.
3. **Operations/Systems Change Analysis.** This 1) identified the similarities and differences between NAP and SNAP and 2) forecasted the potential administrative changes that would be necessary to reestablish SNAP in Puerto Rico.
4. **Stakeholder Analysis.** This identified the potential impact of such a change on stakeholders.
5. **Microsimulation of Impact on Eligibility and Benefits.** This determined benefit shifts and participation gains and losses.
6. **Cost Assessment.** This provided an estimate of the change in costs for Puerto Rico to convert from NAP to SNAP, including both benefits and administrative costs of such a change.

Core Activities

Literature Reviews and Environmental Scans; Site Visits; Qualitative Research; Report Development and Presentation; Secondary Data Analysis; Microsimulation; Administrative Cost Analysis; Policy Analysis



Products

- The FNS Issue Brief is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ORA/menu/Published/SNAP/FILES/ProgramDesign/PuertoRicoSummary.pdf>.
- The final report is entitled “Implementing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Puerto Rico: A Feasibility Study” (June 2010) and is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/Published/snap/FILES/ProgramDesign/PuertoRico.pdf>.