

The Extent of Trafficking in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: 2009–2011

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

Project Overview

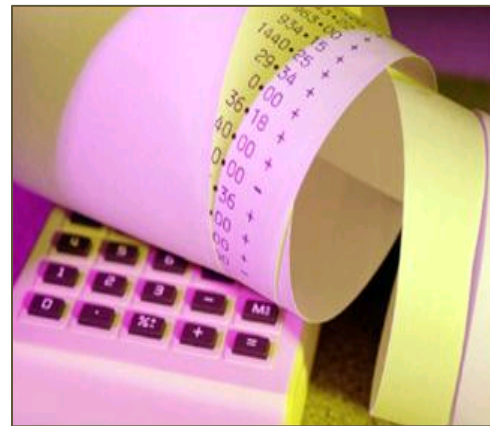
The trafficking of program benefits has been a longstanding concern in the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Trafficking, the exchange of SNAP benefits for cash rather than for food, is not only illegal, but also diverts resources from achieving the goal of the program, which is to impact the nutritional status of needy individuals. This study produced updated estimates using the extant statistical raking methodology; it also developed recommendations for new and improved methodologies to produce national and subnational estimates of SNAP trafficking.



The study had 4 objectives:

1. Produce original, revised, and current SNAP retailer trafficking estimates for 2009–2011.
2. Produce SNAP retailer trafficking estimates by store characteristics for 2009–2011.
3. Explore alternative methods for generating SNAP retailer trafficking estimates that would improve the estimation methodology presently being used.
4. Determine the feasibility of producing original, revised, and current estimates at the State level.

As a subcontractor to ICF International, Insight produced a data file of store characteristics data merged with ZIP Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA)-level data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to produce current estimates of trafficking. Insight also led the implementation and coordination of a Technical Working Group comprised of experts from various disciplines to advise the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) on improved methods of trafficking estimation. Finally, Insight supported development of the key components of the final report submitted to FNS.



Core Activities

Literature Reviews; Secondary Data Analysis; Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination of Advisory Committees and Technical Expert Panels; Policy Analysis; Report Development and Presentation

Products

The final report is entitled “The Extent of Trafficking in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: 2009–2011” (August 2013) and is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/extent-trafficking-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-2009-2011-august-2013>.