

The Use of Microsimulation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Policy Analysis

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

Overview

As the cornerstone of the nutrition safety net for Americans with low incomes, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has been the largest federal nutrition assistance program for decades. Given the size and breadth of SNAP, it is important to accurately and quickly predict the effects of potential changes in SNAP policy. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) relies on microsimulation models and their databases to estimate the effects of changes in SNAP policies on program eligibility, participation, and benefit amounts to support FNS policy decisions. This study provides FNS with microsimulation and related analysis to estimate the effects of proposed changes to SNAP policy, update and improve microsimulation models and their databases, and conduct research to inform FNS policy decisions affecting SNAP.

In support of this project, Insight—

- Provides quick-response reform simulations, tabulations, and other analyses
- Provides subject matter expertise in drafting specifications for the analyses
- Produces memos describing the results of quick-response analyses
- Produces annual reports on SNAP household characteristics to inform researchers and policymakers about the SNAP population
- Prepares edited SNAP Quality Control (QC) system datafiles used in microsimulation models to examine and produce annual reports on SNAP household characteristics



- Collects information on SNAP rules, updates file development parameter files, and assesses data quality
- Estimates national SNAP participation rates using SNAP QC and Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement data
- Collects parameters to update SNAP participation rates, drafting reports on participation rates and updating report tables

Products

Memoranda summarizing results of microsimulation and other quick-response analyses; SNAP QC file technical documentation; reports on SNAP household characteristics; SNAP participation rate reports; SAS file development parameter programs