

The Use of Microsimulation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

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

Overview

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the cornerstone of the nutrition safety net for Americans with low incomes. It has been the largest federal nutrition assistance program for decades. Given the size and breadth of SNAP, it is critically important to accurately and quickly predict the effects of potential changes in SNAP policy as they relate to program eligibility, participation, and benefit amounts. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), which oversees SNAP, relies on microsimulation models and their databases to provide these predictions.

This 5-year project provides FNS with specialized microsimulation and related analysis to estimate the impact of proposed changes to SNAP policy, updates and improves microsimulation models and their databases, as well as detailed legislative and policy research to inform FNS's policy decisions affecting SNAP.

Specifically, Insight partners with Mathematica Policy Research in leading efforts to—

- Provide quick-response reform simulations, tabulations, and other analyses



- Produce annual reports on SNAP household characteristics to inform researchers and policymakers on demographic characteristics and economic circumstances
- Prepare edited SNAP Quality Control (QC) system datafiles for use in microsimulation models
- Collect information on SNAP rules, update file development parameter files, assess data quality, and prepare documentation
- Estimate national SNAP participation rates using SNAP QC and Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement data

Products

Final reports, tabulations, and coding