



United States Department of Agriculture

Using Administrative Data to Examine Cross-program Participation in SNAP and WIC

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Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the author(s) and should not be construed to represent any official USDA or U.S. Government determination or policy.



WIC Background

- WIC provides nutritious foods, nutrition counseling, and health referrals
- Target group: Low-income (<185% FPL) pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5
- Growing body of evidence that WIC is associated with improved dietary intake among children
- Growing concerns about declines in WIC participation

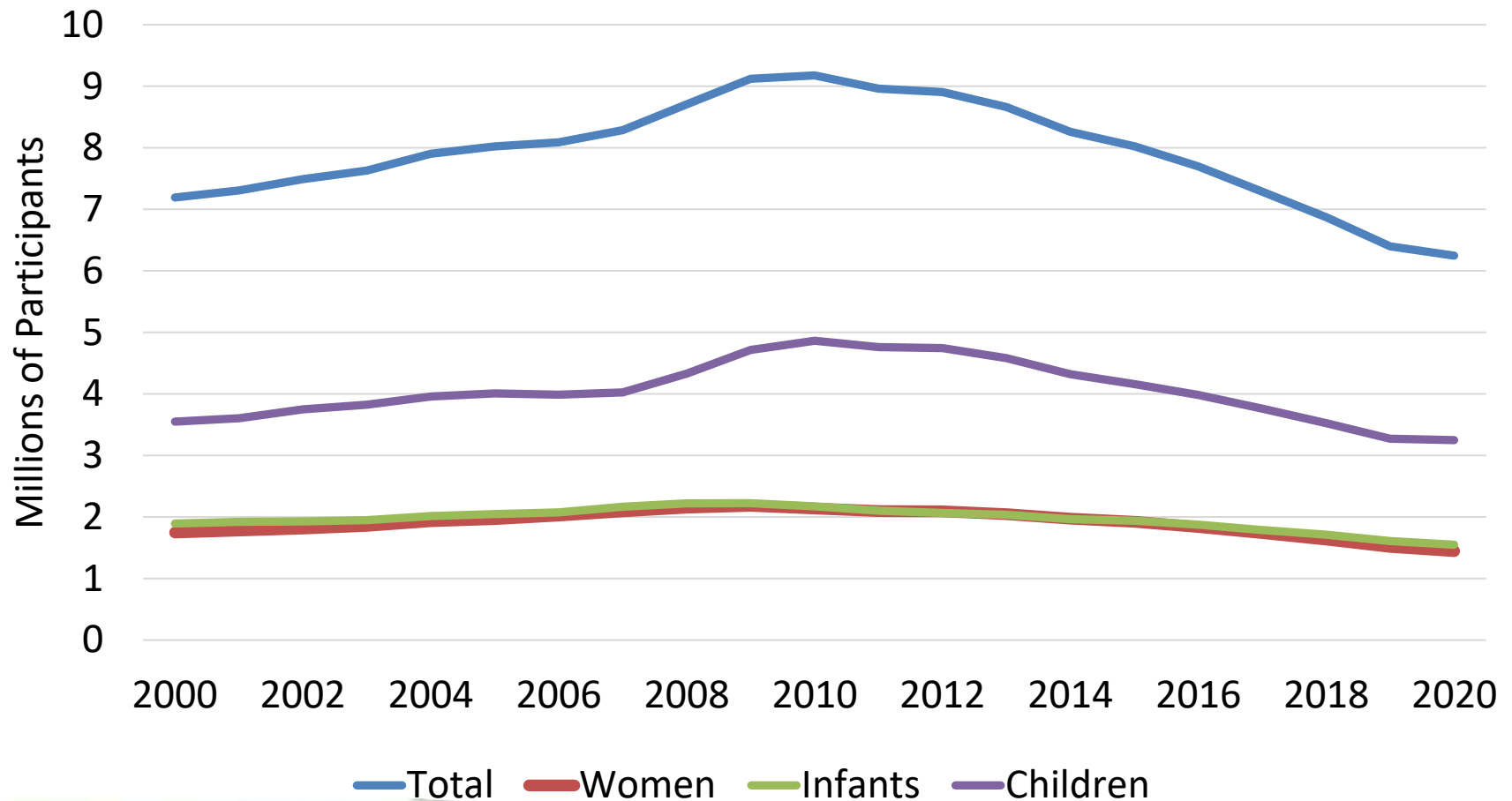


SNAP Background

- SNAP provides households with means to purchase healthy and nutritious foods via an EBT card
- Target group: SNAP is available to all households that meet the program's income and asset criteria, subject to certain work and immigration status requirements
- Like WIC, not all eligible individuals participate (coverage rate is about 82%)
- SNAP participants are adjunctively eligible for WIC

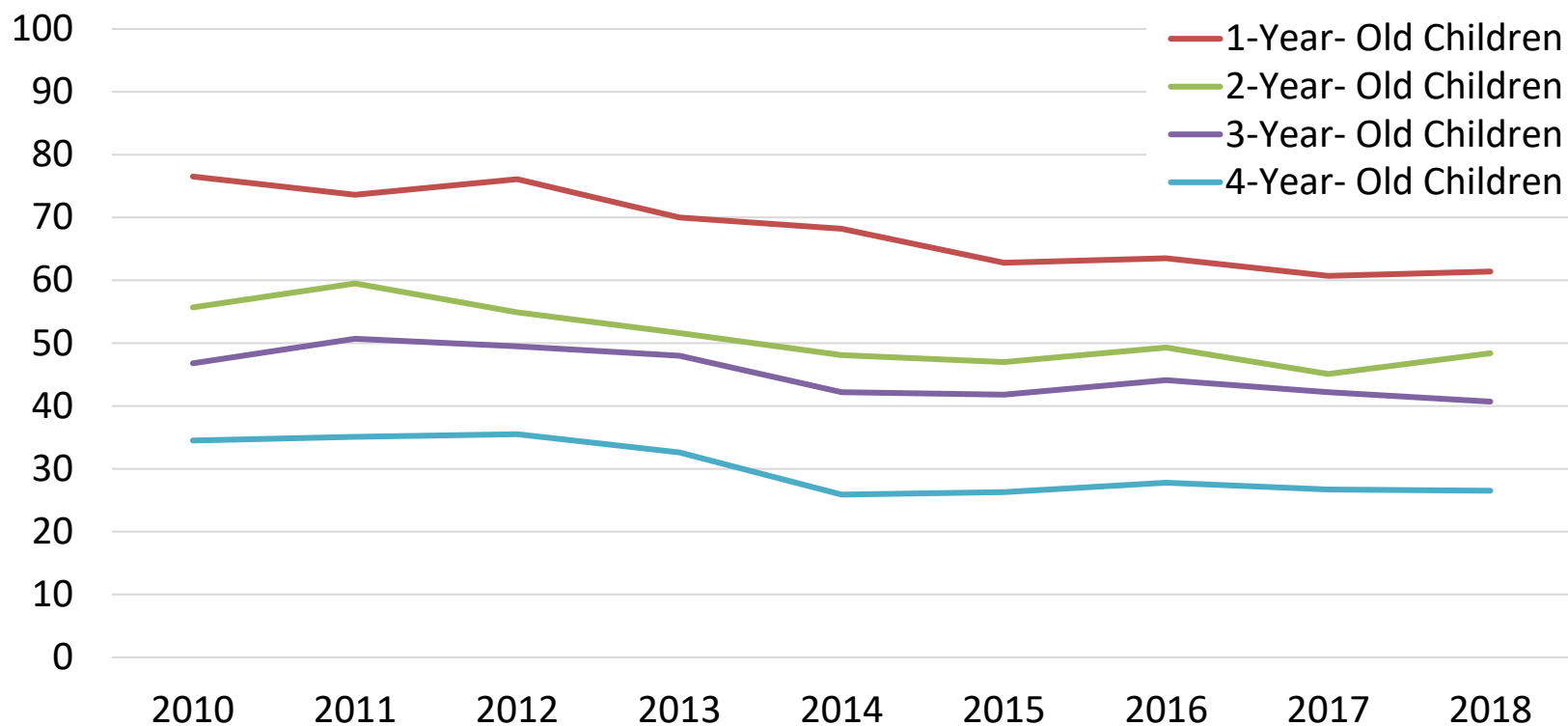


WIC Participation Has Been Declining for a Decade



Not a Fertility Story...

WIC Coverage Rates by Participant Category: CY 2005–CY 2018

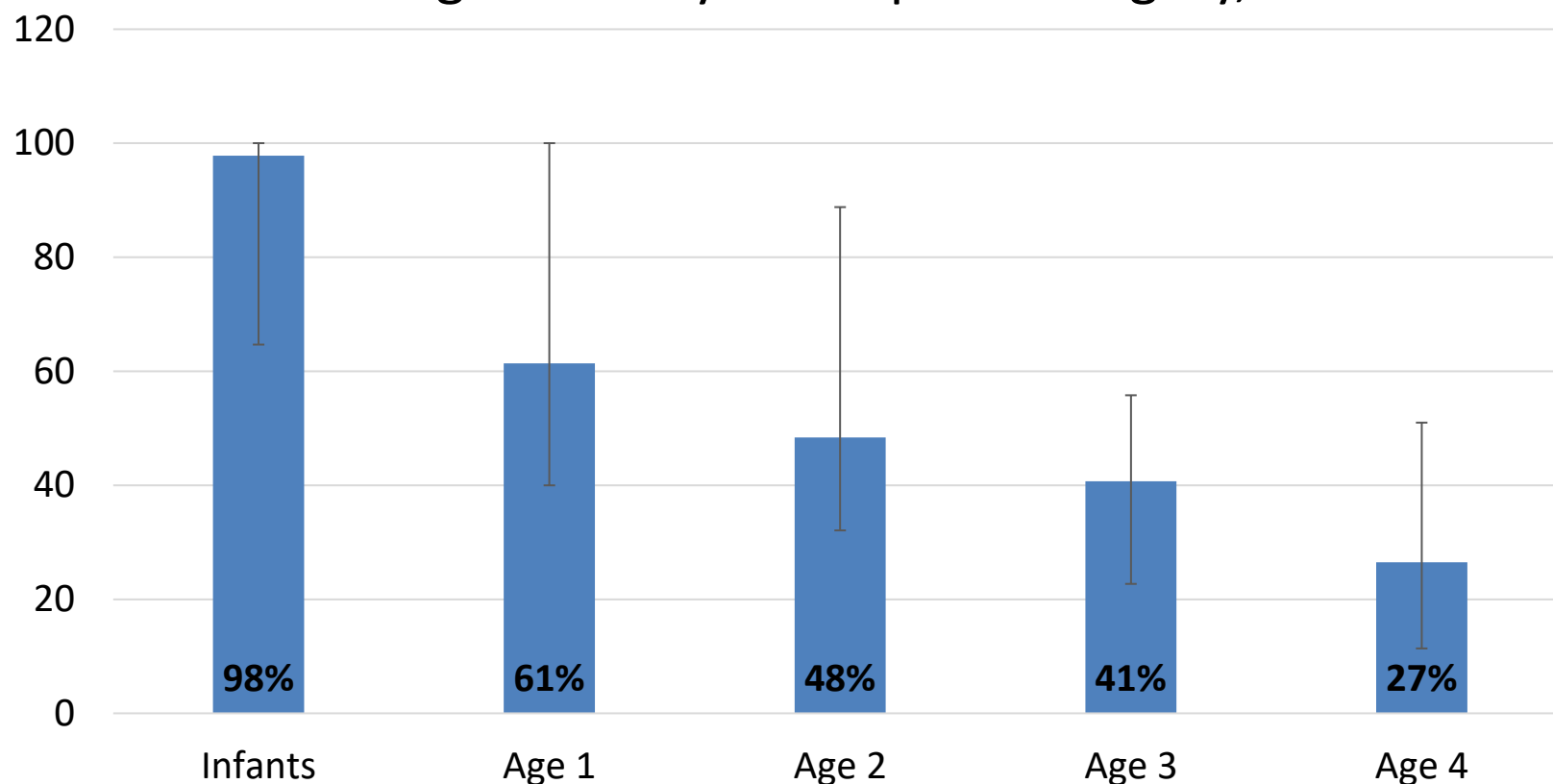


- Source. Gray, K.F., K.M. Mathieu, P. Johnson, and L. Giannarelli. 2021. "National- and State-Level Estimates of WIC Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2018 With Updated Estimates for 2016 and 2017 Volume I." USDA, FNS and Insight Policy Research. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/WICEligibles2018-VolumeI.pdf>



WIC Participation Declines as Children Age

Coverage Rates by Participant Category, 2018



- Source. Gray, K.F., K.M. Mathieu, P. Johnson, and L. Giannarelli. 2021. "National- and State-Level Estimates of WIC Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2018 With Updated Estimates for 2016 and 2017 Volume I." USDA, FNS and Insight Policy Research. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/WICEligibles2018-VolumeI.pdf>



Reasons for Non-Participation in WIC

- [Tiehen & Jacknowitz, 2008] Pregnant women who participate in WIC are more likely
 - to be non-Hispanic black or Hispanic
 - to have less than a high school education
 - to be younger
 - to have never been married
 - to participate in other assistance programs
 - and to have income below the poverty line
- [Jacknowitz & Tiehen, 2010] Women who exited from WIC
 - Breastfed for shorter durations (<6 mos.)
 - Reported that it was too much effort and/or benefits were not worth the time (25%)
 - Reported lack of transportation and/or scheduling issues (9%)



Reasons for Non-Participation in WIC

- Recent work from LA County (Whaley et al. 2017) and FNS's [ITFPS-2 reports](#) supports findings from prior work
- Continued participation associated with
 - Prenatal participation in WIC
 - Breastfeeding duration
 - More than one family member on WIC (parity)
 - Medicaid enrollment
 - Access to WIC education online
- Exists associated with
 - Beliefs about ineligibility
 - Feelings that WIC is inconvenient
 - Perceptions of no longer needing WIC



Current Study

1. What percentage of infants and children in SNAP participant households also participate in WIC, and how do these percentages vary across children's age groups?
[Descriptive Analyses]
2. How do the characteristics of infants and children who participated in both SNAP and WIC differ from those who participated in only one program?
[Regression Analyses]
3. What was the effect of the decline of the real value of SNAP benefits that were temporarily boosted by the 2009 ARRA on WIC participation?
[Difference-in-Differences]



Data

- Next-Generation Data Platform
- SNAP and WIC participation data from 3 states
 - Covers approximately 5% of WIC and SNAP participants in 2020
 - Cross-section analysis includes all 3 states
 - Longitudinal analysis focuses on 1 state over 10-year period



Strengths



Overcomes issues
of underreporting
of program
participation



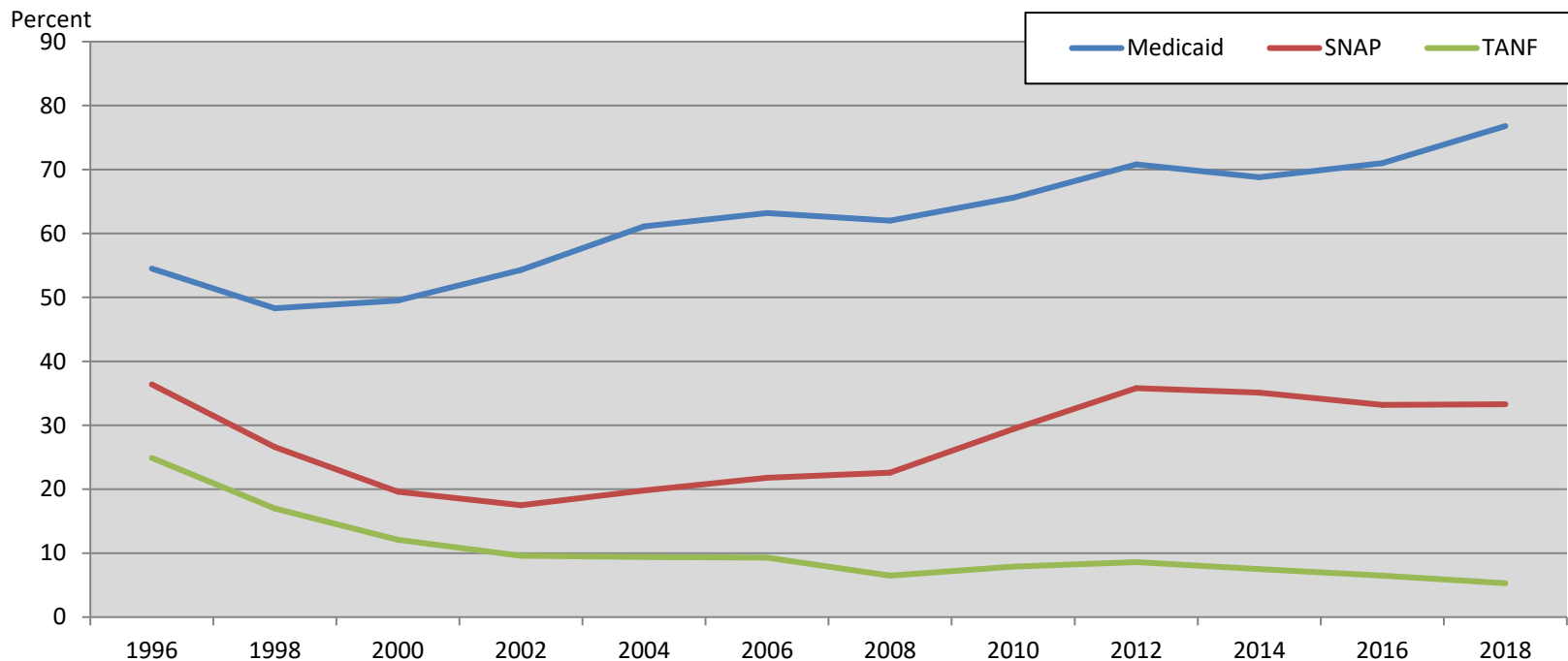
Capture variation in
participation rates
at substate level



Easily identify
eligible non-
participants



Percent of WIC participants reporting participation in Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF at certification, 1994 - 2018



Note: SNAP refers to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP values may underestimate SNAP participation at certification because once an individual being certified reports participating in Medicaid--which confers adjunctive eligibility to WIC--WIC clinics may not always follow up and ask about participating in SNAP.

Source: Bartlett et al., (2002), Bartlett et al., (2007), Johnson et al., (2013), Kline et al. (2020).



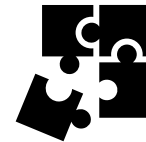
Challenges



Limited
information



Detail and
quality of
measures
varies



May not have
all household
members



Summary & Conclusions

- WIC is an integral component of the USDA programs that promote nutrition security
- Rates of participation among eligible populations have been declining over the past decade.
- Our research will provide valuable information on the WIC participation rates of SNAP participants

