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**TRENDS IN
FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
PARTICIPATION RATES:
1994 TO 2000**

Final Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Food Stamp Program (FSP) helps needy individuals purchase food so that they can obtain a nutritious diet. Individuals are eligible for the program if their financial resources fall below certain income and asset thresholds. Not all of those who are eligible participate in the program, however. Some choose not to participate, while others are unaware that they are eligible. The food stamp participation rate—the percentage of eligible people who actually participate in the FSP—is an important measure of how well the program is reaching its target population. In 2000, FSP participation rates rose slightly from 58 percent to 59 percent after declining for five consecutive years.¹

Participation rates are affected by changes in the economy, program rules, trends in other public assistance programs, and the participation decisions of eligible people.² The strong economy in the middle and late 1990's increased job opportunities for low-income families, thus affecting eligibility for and participation in the FSP. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) also affected the program by disqualifying many noncitizens from the FSP and imposing time limits for some non-disabled childless adults unless they work.³ In addition, PRWORA replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and added a new focus on moving people from welfare to work. The increased emphasis on work and the reduced TANF

¹ The estimates of participation rates presented in this report are based on estimates of the number of individuals eligible for the FSP and the number of FSP participants. Since these estimates are based on a sample of the population, they are subject to statistical sampling error.

² See the *Technical Appendices* to this report at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm for a description of specific economic and policy influences on FSP participation rate trends.

³ Some of these individuals regained eligibility through the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA).

caseload affected FSP participation rates because households not receiving public assistance are less likely to participate in the FSP.⁴

This report presents participation rate estimates for September 2000 and examines change in these rates over time. It also examines trends in participation rates among subgroups of the eligible population, such as children, elderly, and employed adults. The estimates in this report are based on data from the March Current Population Survey (CPS) and FSP administrative data.⁵

RECENT TRENDS IN OVERALL PARTICIPATION RATES

Participation rates fell each year from 1994 through 1999 before rising in 2000 (Table 1). From 1994 to 1999, the participation rate for eligible individuals dropped 17 points, from 75 to 58 percent.⁶ During this period, the number of people eligible for benefits fell by more than five million while the number of participants fell by more than nine million (Figure 1). Because the number of participants dropped more than the number of eligible individuals, the participation rate fell.

From 1999 to 2000, both the number of eligible individuals and the number of participants continued to fall, consistent with the continuing strong economy, increased employment, and lower poverty rates that persisted through the end of 2000. However, the decline in the number

⁴ Individuals who receive TANF are categorically eligible for the FSP. While most individuals who leave TANF still qualify for food stamps, that eligibility is no longer automatic. As a result some individuals are unaware that they are still eligible for the FSP and others choose not to apply.

⁵ See Appendix C for a description of the methodology used.

⁶ This report focuses on trends since 1994 for two reasons. First, methodological improvements introduced in 1994 make subsequent estimates not comparable to previous estimates. Second, 1994 represents the peak year in the time series.

TABLE 1

MONTHLY NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE AND PARTICIPATING INDIVIDUALS, HOUSEHOLDS AND BENEFITS, AND PARTICIPATION RATES

1976-2000^a
(Thousands)

	Eligible (CPS)			Participating (Program Operations)			Participation Rates (%)		
	Individuals	Households	Benefits	Individuals	Households	Benefits	Individuals	Households	Benefits ^b
Sept. 1976	50,061	16,282	\$1,075,819	15,880	5,308	\$375,461	31.1	32.6	34.9
Feb. 1978	40,175	13,984	934,427	15,387	5,286	398,066	38.3	37.8	42.6
Aug. 1980	36,567	14,042	1,108,330	20,185	7,372	689,381	55.2	52.5	62.2
Aug. 1982	39,364	14,538	1,352,251	20,548	7,487	785,658	52.2	51.5	58.1
Aug. 1984	38,591	14,194	1,386,231	19,990	7,324	841,442	51.8	51.6	60.7
Aug. 1986	40,061	15,273	1,544,833	19,069	7,102	860,472	47.6	46.5	55.7
Aug. 1988	38,166	14,896	1,646,310	18,358	7,016	907,117	48.1	47.1	55.1
Aug. 1990	37,631	14,523	1,905,141	20,396	7,973	1,188,808	54.2	54.9	62.4
Aug. 1991	40,989	15,574	2,229,403	23,364	9,204	1,471,406	57.0	59.1	66.0
Aug. 1992	43,474	16,627	2,491,671	25,759	10,238	1,749,058	59.3	61.6	70.2
Aug. 1993	45,241	17,031	2,515,761	27,260	10,900	1,839,469	60.3	64.0	73.1
Aug. 1994(o)	44,327	17,040	2,473,299	27,207	11,005	1,873,953	61.4	64.6	75.8
Sept. 1994(r)	35,053	15,305	2,028,290	26,229	10,659	1,747,990	74.8	69.6	86.2
Sept. 1995	34,665	14,994	2,017,983	25,213	10,374	1,751,560	72.7	69.2	86.8
Sept. 1996	34,478	15,264	2,060,242	23,874	9,934	1,706,230	69.2	65.1	82.8
Sept. 1997	31,818	14,692	1,913,367	20,365	8,446	1,407,148	64.0	57.5	73.5
Sept. 1998	30,350	14,024	1,836,184	18,152	7,606	1,253,632	59.8	54.2	68.3
Sept. 1999	29,502	13,723	1,779,829	17,081	7,280	1,199,679	57.9	53.0	67.4
Sept. 2000	28,198	13,453	1,654,552	16,714	7,160	1,193,118	59.3	53.2	72.1
Change (1999 to 2000)	-4.4%	-2.0%	-7.0%	-2.1%	-1.6%	-0.5%	1.4 points	0.2 points	4.7 points

Source: FSP Program Operations data, FSPQC data, and March CPS data for the years shown.

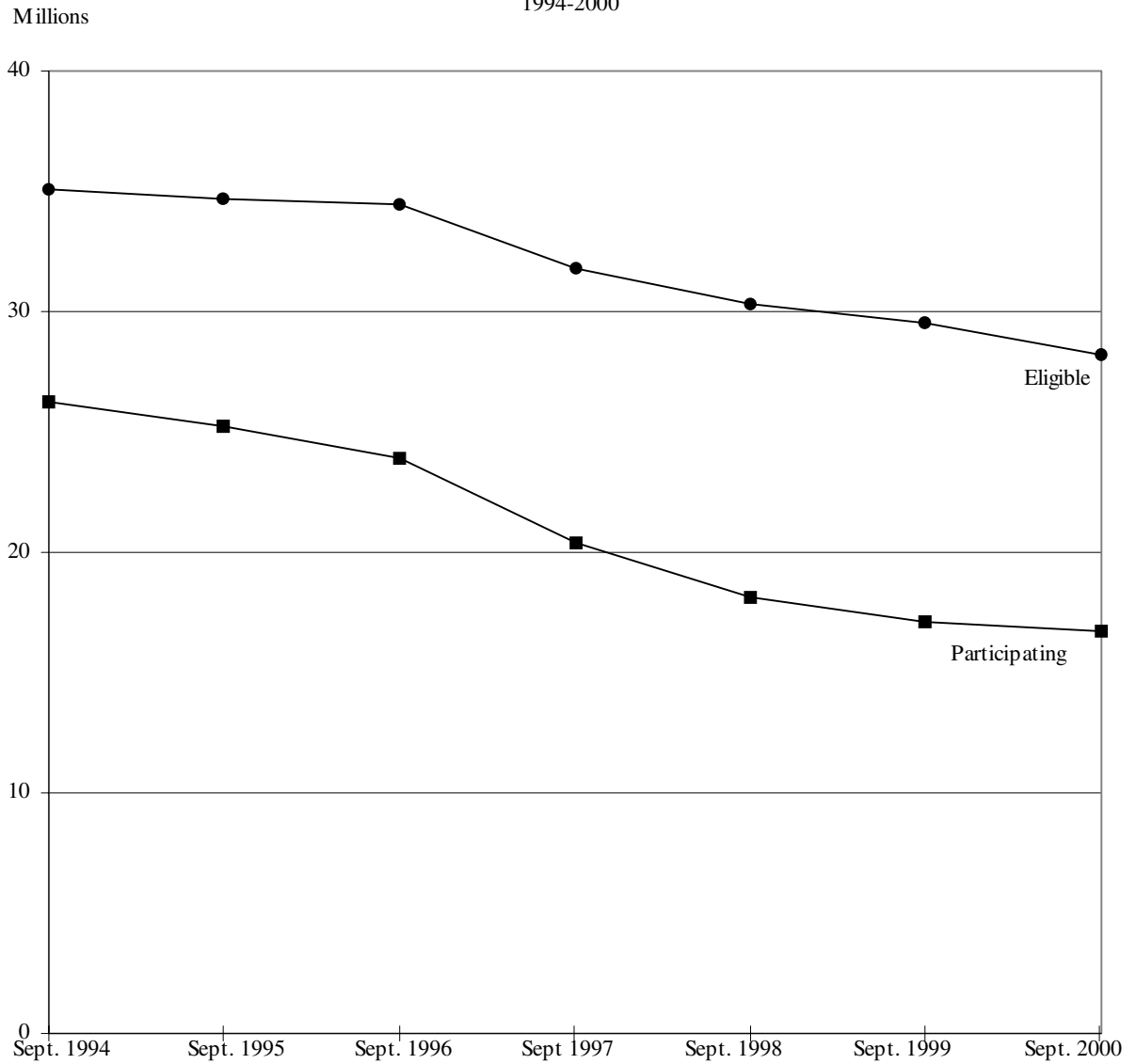
Note: In this report, the rates for 1994 through 1999 differ slightly from previously published rates. See Appendix C for more information.

^aThere are two estimates for August 1994 due to revised methodologies for determining food stamp eligibility and for determining the number of participants. The new methodology for determining eligibility incorporates a new asset test algorithm, an improved food stamp unit definition, and an enhanced pure PA unit definition. The new methodology for determining the number of participants make adjustments for benefits issued in error. The original estimate (o) is based on the methodology employed in all previous trends studies, while the revised estimate (r) is based on the new methodology.

^bThe benefit rate for 1976 and 1978 is based on the net benefit (maximum benefits-purchase requirement). Hence, the benefit rates are consistent over all years.

FIGURE 1

TRENDS IN THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE AND PARTICIPATING INDIVIDUALS
1994-2000



Source: FSP Program Operations data, FSPQC data, and March CPS data for the years shown.

of participants (367,000) was less than the decline in the number of eligible individuals (1.3 million) for the first time in five years, resulting in an increase in the overall participation rate.

This pattern of falling participation rates during the late 1990's followed by an increase in participation rates in 2000 is true for both the individual participation rate and the benefit participation rate (Figure 2).⁷ While the household participation rate also decreased from 1994 to 1999, it remained relatively constant in 2000. Because those eligible for high benefits are more likely to participate than those eligible for low benefits, the benefit rate is consistently higher than the individual or household rates. In 2000, the FSP paid out 72 percent of the benefits that would have been paid out had every eligible household participated. Since 1994, the individual rate has been slightly higher than the household rate, although still lower than the benefit participation rate. In 2000, the individual participation rate was 59 percent and the household participation was 53 percent.

LONG-TERM TRENDS IN INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES

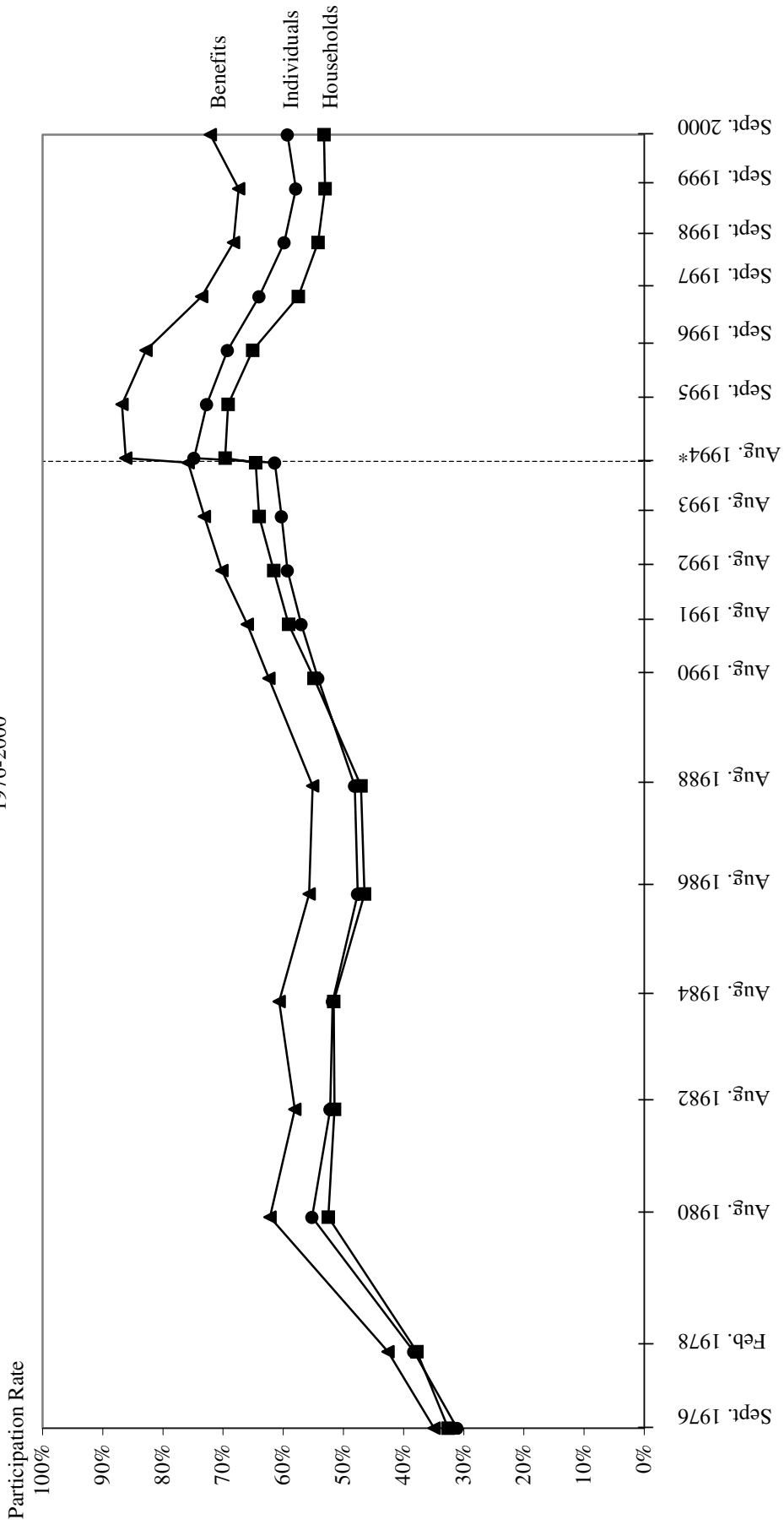
Individual participation rates increased substantially in the late 1970's, from 31 percent in 1976 to 55 percent in 1980. Participation rates then leveled off, declining slightly to 48 percent by 1988. Through the late 1980's and early 1990's, participation rates rose rapidly, peaking in 1994 before beginning a five-year decline.⁸ In 2000, participation rates rose slightly, perhaps signaling the beginning of a new rising trend in FSP participation rates.⁹

⁷ The benefit participation rate measures the amount of benefits received as a proportion of total benefits that would be paid out if every eligible household participated.

⁸ See Appendix Table B.1 for the change in individual participation rates from 1988 to 2000.

⁹ We know that the number of food stamp participants rose in 2001. If the number of individuals eligible for food stamps rises more slowly than the number of participants (or continues to fall), then participation rates will continue to rise in 2002. Estimates of the number of individuals eligible for the FSP and participation rates for 2001 will be available in spring 2003.

FIGURE 2
TRENDS IN MONTHLY FSP PARTICIPATION RATES
1976-2000



Source: FSP Program Operations data, FSPQC data, and March CPS data for the years shown.
*There is a break in the time series in August 1994 due to revisions in the methodology for determining eligibility.

PARTICIPATION RATES AND TRENDS IN PARTICIPATION RATES FOR SUBGROUPS

FSP participation rates vary by demographic and economic subgroup. Historically, participation rates have been relatively high for TANF and SSI recipients, individuals in households with very low incomes, and children. Conversely, participation rates historically have been relatively low for citizen children living with noncitizens adults, individuals in households with incomes above poverty, and the elderly. This pattern remained true in 2000 (Table 2).

We examine trends in individual participation rates among subgroups to determine how well the FSP is reaching various types of households.¹⁰ Trends in participation rates for many major subgroups are similar to the trend in the overall participation rate. However, participation rates for some subgroups have followed different trends. Table 3 provides a summary of subgroup trends.¹¹

For most subgroups, participation rates rose in 2000 after declining for four to five years. However, the 2000 rate increase was substantially higher for some subgroups than for the overall population, as indicated below.

- **Children.** The participation rate for children rose in 2000 (by four points) after falling from 1994 to 1999 (Table 4).
- **Non-Elderly Adults.** The participation rate for adults rose in 2000 (by two points) after falling from 1994 to 1999

¹⁰ Individual participation rates for subgroups are presented in Appendix A for 2000 and in the *Technical Appendices* to this report at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm for 1994 through 1999.

¹¹ Household and benefit participation rates for subgroups are presented in Appendix Tables A.7 and A.8 for 2000 and the *Technical Appendices* to this report at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm for 1994 through 1999.

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF FSP PARTICIPATION RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS, 2000

	Participation Rate
Non-Disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration ^a	27.1
Elderly Individuals	30.7
Individuals in Households with Income Slightly Above Poverty	31.2
Citizen Children Living with Noncitizen Adults ^b	38.1
Noncitizens ^c	44.7
Individuals in Households with Earnings	50.5
Individuals in All Households	59.3
Children	71.8
Individuals in Households with Single Parents	90.7
Individuals in Households with Elderly SSI	92.0
Individuals in Households with Very Low Income	93.2
Individuals in Households with Non-elderly SSI ^d	107.3
Individuals in Households with AFDC/TANF ^d	157.5

Source: FSP Program Operations Data, FSPQC Data, and CPS Data for the years shown

^a Referred to as ABAWDs in previous reports, these individuals are age 18 to 49, not disabled, not living with children under age 18, and subject to work registration. With some exceptions, these individuals must meet work requirements or face time limit

^b Citizen children living with a noncitizen adult in the household, regardless of the FSP-participation of the adult.

^c Noncitizens who are eligible and/or participating. This row does not include noncitizens who are outside the food stamp unit but reside in the same household.

^d Participation rates over 100 percent are due to reporting errors in the CPS (see Appendix C).

TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF TRENDS IN INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES, 1994-2000

Subgroup	Participation Rate Trend
Overall Population	Falling, then rose in 2000
Age of Individual	
Children	Similar to overall rate
Non-Elderly Adults	Similar to overall rate
Elderly	Rising, then fell in 2000
Disabled Non-elderly Adults	Fluctuating
Citizenship	
Noncitizens	Falling
Citizen Children Living with Noncitizen Adult	Stable (since 1997)
Individuals in Households Without Any Noncitizens or Non-Disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration.	Similar to overall rate
Household Composition	
With Children	Similar to overall rate
With Single Adult and Children	Similar to overall rate
Household Income Source	
Earnings	Similar to overall rate
TANF	Rising
Non-elderly SSI	Rising
Individuals in Households with Very Low Income	Similar to overall rate
Individuals in Households with High Benefits	Similar to overall rate

TABLE 4

FSP PARTICIPATION RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS, BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, 1994-2000

	Participation Rates					Eligible Individuals		Participating Individuals			
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	1994	2000		
	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)		
Individuals in All Households	74.8	72.7	69.2	64.0	59.8	57.9	59.3	35,053	28,198	26,229	16,714
Age of Individual											
Children	89.6	86.8	85.6	75.7	70.7	67.9	71.8	15,022	11,885	13,463	8,529
Non-elderly Adults (18 to 59 years)	74.2	71.2	68.7	65.8	60.3	58.1	59.9	14,578	10,865	10,821	6,513
Elderly Individuals	35.7	36.1	29.7	29.8	30.9	32.9	30.7	5,453	5,447	1,944	1,671
Disabled Non-Elderly Adults	49.0	53.6	49.0	54.1	52.5	59.3	53.1	3,733	3,606	1,830	1,914
Non-Disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration ^a	47.7	41.3	37.0	40.1	24.4	24.9	27.1	1,745	1,186	832	321
Noncitizens ^b	66.8	66.0	64.5	77.7	63.0	49.4	44.7	2,712	1,339	1,810	599
Citizen Children Living with Noncitizen Adults ^c	80.5	59.8	58.3	38.7	39.3	45.6	38.1	2,354	2,481	1,895	946
Individuals in Households Without Any Noncitizens or Non-Disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration	76.0	75.9	72.3	63.8	61.4	60.4	61.8	28,635	24,488	21,765	15,144
Household Composition											
Households with Children	87.2	84.4	82.7	74.6	69.8	67.1	70.7	24,567	18,324	21,427	12,959
Single-Parent	98.9	100.8	96.3	86.3	84.6	81.4	90.7	13,461	9,322	13,319	8,457
Married Couple	67.6	61.6	62.1	62.1	52.3	45.6	47.1	8,182	5,398	5,535	2,544
Other Multiple Adults	89.0	73.6	75.2	78.1	67.3	73.7	67.0	2,225	1,888	1,981	1,265
Children Only	78.1	62.9	80.3	36.6	36.6	44.5	39.9	698	1,715	545	685
Households without Children	45.8	45.3	40.3	40.6	38.6	39.4	38.0	10,486	9,874	4,802	3,755

Source: FSP Program Operations Data, FSPQC Data, and CPS Data for the years shown

^a Referred to as ABAWDs in previous reports, these individuals are age 18 to 49, not disabled, not living with children under age 18, and subject to work registration.

With some exceptions, these individuals must meet work requirements or face time limit

^b Noncitizens who are eligible and/or participating. This row does not include noncitizens who are outside the food stamp unit but reside in the same household.^c Citizen children living with a noncitizen adult in the household, regardless of the FSP-participation of the adult.

- ***Individuals In Single Parent Households.*** The participation rate for these individuals rose sharply in 2000 (by nine points) after falling from 1995 to 1999.¹²
- ***Individuals In Households With Earnings.*** The participation rate for individuals in households with earnings rose in 2000 (by seven points) after two years of decline (Table 5).
- ***Individuals In Households With Very Low Income (1 – 50 Percent of Poverty).*** The participation rate for very low-income individuals rose in 2000 (by ten points) after falling from 1995 to 1999.
- ***Individuals in Households With High Benefits (51 – 99 Percent of Maximum Benefit).*** The participation rate for these individuals rose in 2000 (by eight points) after falling from 1994 to 1999.
- ***Individuals in Households Without Any Noncitizens or Non-disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration.*** The participation rate for these individuals rose in 2000 (by one point) after falling from 1994 to 1999.¹²

Some subgroups have followed trends that differ from the overall trends. For example, the rates for some subgroups fell in 2000, while rates for others have been rising for several years.

The following subgroups have participation rates that differ from the overall rate.

- ***Elderly.*** The participation rate for elderly individuals fell slightly in 2000 (by two points) after rising slowly from 1996 through 1999
- ***Disabled Non-Elderly Adults.*** The participation rate for disabled non-elderly adults fluctuated, ending with a drop in 2000 (by six points).
- ***Noncitizens.*** The participation rate for noncitizens fell sharply since 1997 (continuing to fall by 5 points in 2000).
- ***Citizen Children Living In Households With Noncitizen Adults.*** The participation rate for this subgroup remained stable at a low level after dropping dramatically from 1994 through 1997.
- ***Individuals in Households With TANF.*** After remaining stable for several years, the participation rate for individuals in households with TANF rose steeply from 1997 through 2000 (rising by 18 points in 2000).
- ***Individuals In Households With Non-elderly SSI.*** The participation rate for individuals in households with non-elderly SSI rose from 1995 through 2000 (rising by 3 points in 2000).

¹² See Appendix Tables B.2 and B.3 for participation rates of subgroups of these individuals.

TABLE 5

FSP PARTICIPATION RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS, BY ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS, 1994-2000

	Participation Rates								Eligible Individuals			Participating Individuals						
	1994		1995		1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		1994		2000	
	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)
Individuals in All Households	74.8	72.7	69.2	64.0	59.8	57.9	59.3	35,053	28,198	26,229	16,714							
Household Income Source																		
Earnings	57.2	49.5	52.6	52.9	49.9	43.1	50.5	13,421	13,144	7,676	6,634							
AFDC/TANF	126.1	127.5	128.2	127.2	130.6	139.8	157.5	10,593	3,724	13,353	5,863							
Elderly SSI	88.2	101.5	71.3	77.0	87.9	99.5	92.0	1,431	1,152	1,262	1,060							
Non-elderly SSI	95.8	93.5	94.8	100.0	97.8	104.3	107.3	3,607	2,836	3,457	3,042							
Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level																		
No Income	46.5	47.4	37.7	27.5	34.2	32.7	29.8	3,537	3,636	1,645	1,082							
1 to 50%	101.3	105.4	103.3	93.6	83.7	82.8	93.2	9,363	5,308	9,485	4,947							
51 to 100%	91.9	89.9	87.2	82.3	75.3	78.7	76.6	13,573	11,118	12,470	8,517							
101 to 130%	37.0	28.8	29.4	30.7	28.9	25.6	31.2	6,816	6,639	2,525	2,070							
130%+	5.9	4.1	3.7	3.9	7.1	5.2	6.5	1,764	1,497	104	98							
Household Benefit as a Percentage of Maximum Benefit																		
1 to 50%	50.9	46.3	45.2	48.2	46.6	45.2	45.6	13,659	13,891	6,950	6,339							
51 to 99%	98.6	97.8	95.0	92.5	81.9	78.9	86.4	14,815	8,708	14,610	7,527							
100%	71.0	74.7	68.0	47.6	47.9	51.7	50.9	6,579	5,600	4,669	2,847							

Source: FSP Program Operations Data, FSPQC Data, and CPS Data for the years shown

Note: Participation rates over 100 percent are due to reporting errors in the CPS (see Appendix C).

SUMMARY

While fewer people are now eligible for food stamps, a higher proportion of those eligible chose to participate. As a result, overall FSP participation rates rose in 2000 after five years of decline. Participation rates also rose for most but not all major subgroups. Rates dropped in 2000 for citizen children living with noncitizen adults, disabled non-elderly adults, and the elderly.

The general pattern of participation is unchanged. Participation in the FSP remains high for individuals in households with single parents, on public assistance or receiving high benefits. Participation rates are low for citizen children living with noncitizen adults, the elderly and individuals eligible for small benefits.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPATION RATES IN 2000

TABLE A.1

INDIVIDUAL, HOUSEHOLD, AND BENEFIT PARTICIPATION RATES, 2000

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals	16,713,571	28,197,705	59.27%
Food Stamp Household Benefits	7,159,839	13,453,025	53.22%
Average Food Stamp Household Size	1,193,117,652	1,654,551,904	72.11%
Average Per Capita Benefit	2.33	2.10	
	71.39	58.68	

TABLE A.2

HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION RATES BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 2000

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Household Size			
1 Person	3,033,436	6,629,708	45.76%
2 People	1,455,081	3,083,713	47.19%
3 People	1,120,875	1,688,309	66.39%
4 People	840,518	1,113,749	75.47%
5 People	424,143	556,083	76.27%
6 or More People	285,787	381,462	74.92%
Total Households	7,159,839	13,453,025	53.22%

TABLE A.3

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, 2000

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals in All Households	16,713,571	28,197,705	59.27%
Age of Individual			
Children Under Age 18	8,529,050	11,885,443	71.76%
Preschool	2,833,416	3,725,137	76.06%
School-age	5,695,634	8,160,306	69.80%
Adults Age 18 to 59	6,513,203	10,865,296	59.95%
Elderly	1,671,317	5,446,966	30.68%
Living Alone	1,175,577	3,093,784	38.00%
Living with Others	495,740	2,353,182	21.07%
Disabled Non-elderly Adults	1,914,297	3,605,694	53.09%
Non-disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration	321,460	1,186,144	27.10%
Noncitizens	599,265	1,339,290	44.75%
Citizen Children Living with Noncitizen Adults	945,887	2,481,186	38.12%
Employment Status of Non-elderly Adults			
Employed	1,791,338	3,824,134	46.84%
Unemployed	474,910	792,551	59.92%
Not in the Labor Force	4,246,955	6,248,610	67.97%
Individuals by Race/Ethnicity of Head of Household			
White Nonhispanic Head	7,014,559	12,494,507	56.14%
Black Nonhispanic Head	5,981,824	7,914,676	75.58%
Hispanic Head	2,922,783	6,634,367	44.06%
Other Head	794,405	1,154,155	68.83%
Individuals by Household Composition			
Households with Children	12,958,663	18,324,033	70.72%
Single-Parent	8,457,160	9,322,337	90.72%
Married Couple	2,543,782	5,398,441	47.12%
Other Multiple Adults	1,265,446	1,887,975	67.03%
Children Only	685,191	1,715,279	39.95%
Unknown	7,084	0	
Households without Children	3,754,908	9,873,672	38.03%
Gender of Individual			
Male	6,744,196	11,953,047	56.42%
Female	9,969,375	16,244,658	61.37%
Metropolitan Status			
Urban	12,594,690	21,737,369	57.94%
Rural	4,118,880	6,460,336	63.76%

TABLE A.4

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS, 2000

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals in All Households	16,713,571	28,197,705	59.27%
Individuals by Household Income Sources			
No Earnings	10,079,876	15,053,793	66.96%
Earnings	6,633,695	13,143,912	50.47%
No AFDC/TANF	4,776,584	11,712,106	40.78%
AFDC/TANF	1,857,111	1,431,806	129.70%
AFDC/TANF	5,863,441	3,723,845	157.46%
Unemployment Compensation	535,370	257,011	208.31%
Non-elderly SSI Benefits	3,041,803	2,835,583	107.27%
Elderly SSI Benefits	1,059,964	1,152,363	91.98%
Individuals by Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	14,545,948	20,061,734	72.51%
No Income	1,081,967	3,635,528	29.76%
>0-50%	4,946,509	5,307,745	93.19%
51-100%	8,517,471	11,118,461	76.61%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	2,167,623	8,135,971	26.64%
101-130%	2,069,906	6,639,394	31.18%
131% or More	97,716	1,496,577	6.53%
Individuals by Monthly Household Benefit			
\$10 or Less	956,093	3,857,494	24.79%
\$11-25	427,628	1,089,921	39.23%
\$26-50	747,932	1,675,877	44.63%
\$51-75	802,246	1,770,663	45.31%
\$76-100	931,171	1,728,585	53.87%
\$101-150	2,537,456	4,462,392	56.86%
\$151-200	1,746,090	2,384,121	73.24%
\$ 201 or More	8,564,954	11,228,653	76.28%
Benefit as a Percentage of Maximum Benefit			
Low Benefits (1 - 50%)	6,339,101	13,890,519	45.64%
1 - 25%	2,718,235	7,918,851	34.33%
26 - 50%	3,620,866	5,971,668	60.63%
High Benefits (51 - 99%)	7,527,109	8,707,664	86.44%
51 - 75%	4,054,403	5,267,707	76.97%
76 - 99%	3,472,706	3,439,957	100.95%
100%	2,847,361	5,599,522	50.85%

TABLE A.5A

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, 2000
Households with Children

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals in Households with Children	12,958,663	18,324,033	70.72%
Age of Individual			
Child under 18	8,528,140	11,885,443	71.75%
Adult age 18-59	4,348,788	6,123,874	71.01%
Elderly age 60 or over	81,735	314,716	25.97%
Individuals by Household Income Sources			
No Income	699,663	2,161,086	32.38%
No Earnings	6,641,066	6,934,754	95.76%
Earnings	6,317,597	11,389,278	55.47%
AFDC/TANF	5,797,901	3,537,194	163.91%
Earnings	1,852,058	1,366,430	135.54%
No Earnings	3,945,842	2,170,764	181.77%
No AFDC/TANF	7,160,762	14,786,839	48.43%
Earnings	4,465,538	10,022,848	44.55%
No Earnings	2,695,224	4,763,991	56.57%
Social Security	1,086,697	1,691,195	64.26%
Individuals by Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	11,304,008	13,759,422	82.15%
No Income	699,663	2,161,086	32.38%
>0-50%	4,488,095	4,283,059	104.79%
51-100%	6,116,250	7,315,277	83.61%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	1,654,655	4,564,611	36.25%
101-130%	1,617,515	4,195,769	38.55%
131% or More	37,140	368,842	10.07%
Individuals by Household Earnings as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	12,102,563	15,060,727	80.36%
No Earnings	6,641,066	6,934,754	95.76%
>0-50%	2,525,792	2,412,341	104.70%
51-100%	2,935,705	5,713,631	51.38%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	856,100	3,263,306	26.23%
101-130%	847,312	3,125,102	27.11%
131% or More	8,787	138,204	6.36%

TABLE A.5B

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, 2000
Households with Single-Parent and Children

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals in Households with a Single-Parent and Children	8,457,160	9,322,337	90.72%
Age of Individual			
Child under 18	5,783,078	6,202,897	93.23%
Adult age 18-59	2,627,412	3,024,716	86.86%
Elderly age 60 or over	46,670	94,724	49.27%
Individuals by Household Income Sources			
No Income	527,923	1,367,077	38.62%
No Earnings	4,931,402	4,802,962	102.67%
Earnings	3,525,758	4,519,376	78.01%
AFDC/TANF	4,209,685	2,602,056	161.78%
Earnings	1,177,228	786,749	149.63%
No Earnings	3,032,457	1,815,307	167.05%
No AFDC/TANF	4,247,475	6,720,281	63.20%
Earnings	2,348,531	3,732,627	62.92%
No Earnings	1,898,945	2,987,655	63.56%
Social Security	667,883	815,114	81.94%
Individuals by Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	7,562,023	7,405,584	102.11%
No Income	527,923	1,367,077	38.62%
>0-50%	3,205,652	2,748,263	116.64%
51-100%	3,828,449	3,290,244	116.36%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	895,137	1,916,753	46.70%
101-130%	857,997	1,605,679	53.44%
131% or More	37,140	311,074	11.94%
Individuals by Household Earnings as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	8,043,776	8,034,121	100.12%
No Earnings	4,931,402	4,802,962	102.67%
>0-50%	1,518,499	1,051,750	144.38%
51-100%	1,593,875	2,179,410	73.13%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	413,385	1,288,216	32.09%
101-130%	404,597	1,158,933	34.91%
131% or More	8,787	129,283	6.80%

TABLE A.5C

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, 2000
Households with Married Couple and Children

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals in Households with Married Couple and Children	2,543,782	5,398,441	47.12%
Age of Individual			
Child under 18	1,397,103	3,047,704	45.84%
Adult age 18-59	1,128,353	2,199,797	51.29%
Elderly age 60 or over	18,325	150,940	12.14%
Individuals by Household Income Sources			
No Income	68,391	445,003	15.37%
No Earnings	758,878	1,208,084	62.82%
Earnings	1,784,904	4,190,357	42.60%
AFDC/TANF	659,639	701,413	94.04%
Earnings	343,941	422,893	81.33%
No Earnings	315,699	278,521	113.35%
No AFDC/TANF	1,884,143	4,697,028	40.11%
Earnings	1,440,963	3,767,464	38.25%
No Earnings	443,180	929,563	47.68%
Social Security	255,808	518,951	49.29%
Individuals by Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	2,066,789	3,592,038	57.54%
No Income	68,391	445,003	15.37%
>0-50%	595,777	758,191	78.58%
51-100%	1,402,620	2,388,844	58.72%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	476,993	1,806,403	26.41%
101-130%	476,993	1,763,219	27.05%
131% or More	0	43,184	0.00%
Individuals by Household Earnings as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	2,223,993	4,029,267	55.20%
No Earnings	758,878	1,208,084	62.82%
>0-50%	546,277	728,078	75.03%
51-100%	918,838	2,093,105	43.90%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	319,789	1,369,174	23.36%
101-130%	319,789	1,364,297	23.44%
131% or More	0	4,877	0.00%

TABLE A.5D

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, 2000
Households with Other Multiple Adults and Children

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals in Households with Other Multiple Adults and Children	1,265,446	1,887,975	67.03%
Age of Individual			
Child under 18	657,843	919,564	71.54%
Adult age 18-59	590,873	899,361	65.70%
Elderly age 60 or over	16,730	69,051	24.23%
Individuals by Household Income Sources			
No Income	35,316	186,130	18.97%
No Earnings	568,020	539,878	105.21%
Earnings	697,426	1,348,097	51.73%
AFDC/TANF	525,733	233,724	224.94%
Earnings	194,020	156,788	123.75%
No Earnings	331,713	76,936	431.15%
No AFDC/TANF	739,712	1,654,251	44.72%
Earnings	503,406	1,191,309	42.26%
No Earnings	236,307	462,942	51.04%
Social Security	151,427	353,974	42.78%
Individuals by Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	1,025,404	1,380,987	74.25%
No Income	35,316	186,130	18.97%
>0-50%	450,374	398,237	113.09%
51-100%	539,714	796,620	67.75%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	240,042	506,989	47.35%
101-130%	240,042	492,405	48.75%
131% or More	0	14,584	0.00%
Individuals by Household Earnings as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	1,155,496	1,578,203	73.22%
No Earnings	568,020	539,878	105.21%
>0-50%	284,289	404,870	70.22%
51-100%	303,187	633,455	47.86%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	109,950	309,772	35.49%
101-130%	109,950	305,728	35.96%
131% or More	0	4,044	0.00%

TABLE A.5E

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, 2000
Households with No Children

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals in Households with No Children	3,754,908	9,873,672	38.03%
Age of Individual			
Child under 18	0	0	
Adult age 18-59	2,164,749	4,741,422	45.66%
Elderly age 60 or over	1,590,159	5,132,250	30.98%
Individuals by Household Income Sources			
No Income	382,305	1,474,442	25.93%
No Earnings	3,438,810	8,119,039	42.35%
Earnings	316,098	1,754,633	18.02%
AFDC/TANF	65,541	186,651	35.11%
Earnings	5,053	65,376	7.73%
No Earnings	60,488	121,275	49.88%
No AFDC/TANF	3,689,367	9,687,021	38.09%
Earnings	311,045	1,689,258	18.41%
No Earnings	3,378,322	7,997,764	42.24%
Social Security	1,702,796	5,402,831	31.52%
Individuals by Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	3,241,940	6,302,313	51.44%
No Income	382,305	1,474,442	25.93%
>0-50%	458,415	1,024,686	44.74%
51-100%	2,401,221	3,803,184	63.14%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	512,968	3,571,360	14.36%
101-130%	452,391	2,443,625	18.51%
131% or More	60,576	1,127,735	5.37%
Individuals by Household Earnings as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
Total 100% of Poverty or Less	3,707,588	9,167,412	40.44%
No Earnings	3,438,810	8,119,039	42.35%
>0-50%	179,763	421,829	42.62%
51-100%	89,016	626,543	14.21%
Total Greater Than 100 % of Poverty	47,319	706,261	6.70%
101-130%	45,469	552,906	8.22%
131% or More	1,850	153,355	1.21%

TABLE A.6

PARTICIPATION RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS IN HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ANY NONCITIZENS OR NON-DISABLED CHILDLESS ADULTS SUBJECT TO WORK REGISTRATION, 2000

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Individuals in Households Without Any Noncitizens or Non-disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration	15,144,133	24,488,068	61.84%
Age of Individual			
Children	7,915,670	10,537,689	75.12%
Non-Elderly Adults	5,749,858	8,825,775	65.15%
Elderly Adults	1,478,605	5,124,605	28.85%
Disabled Non-elderly Adults	1,829,450	3,354,547	54.54%
Individuals by Household Composition			
Single-Parent and Children	8,057,910	8,966,635	89.87%
Married Couple and Children	2,076,012	4,527,502	45.85%
No Children	3,156,863	8,049,563	39.22%
Individuals by Household Income Sources			
Earnings	5,897,191	10,997,558	53.62%
No Earnings	9,246,942	13,490,510	68.54%
AFDC/TANF	5,326,417	3,507,807	151.84%
Individuals by Household Benefit as a Percentage of Maximum Benefit			
1-50%	5,786,070	12,306,287	47.02%
51- 99%	6,910,086	7,589,179	91.05%

TABLE A.7

HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION RATES, 2000

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Households with Elderly	1,489,718	4,727,048	31.51%
Households with Children	3,835,765	5,520,537	69.48%
Households with Disabled Non-Elderly Adults	1,828,154	3,269,482	55.92%
Households by Composition			
Households with Children	3,834,159	5,520,537	69.45%
Single-Parent and Children	2,669,112	3,091,471	86.34%
Married Couple and Children	546,903	1,196,318	45.72%
Other Multiple Adults and Children	285,386	431,329	66.16%
Children Only	332,758	801,420	41.52%
Households with No Children	3,325,680	7,932,488	41.92%
Households by Income Source			
Earnings	1,970,045	4,540,714	43.39%
AFDC/TANF	1,829,318	1,173,794	155.85%
SSI	2,262,856	2,370,989	95.44%
Households with Noncitizens	406,414	820,781	49.52%
Households with Non-disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration	296,245	977,048	30.32%
Households by Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
No Income	618,552	1,957,483	31.60%
>0-50 %	1,751,337	2,074,389	84.43%
51-100%	3,902,784	5,247,964	74.37%
>100% of Poverty	887,166	4,173,189	21.26%

TABLE A.8

BENEFIT PARTICIPATION RATES, 2000

	Participating (QC)	Eligible (CPS)	Participation Rate (QC/CPS)
Benefits for Elderly	93,182,897	261,999,199	34.11%
Benefits for Children	947,783,887	1,144,280,547	79.44%
Benefits for Disabled Non-Elderly Adults	172,363,177	337,576,402	48.97%
Benefits by Household Composition			
Households with Children	947,188,419	1,144,280,547	79.39%
Single-Parent and Children	646,698,946	642,520,531	96.53%
Married Couple and Children	154,664,235	281,571,148	52.68%
Other Multiple Adults and Children	85,659,231	105,801,009	77.65%
Children Only	60,166,007	114,387,858	50.44%
Households with No Children	245,929,233	510,271,357	46.22%
Benefits by Household Income Source			
Earnings	403,225,865	634,101,166	60.99%
AFDC/TANF	439,087,396	234,090,347	179.89%
SSI	213,389,858	172,637,305	118.54%
Benefits for Households with Noncitizens	79,258,741	132,700,064	57.28%
Benefits for Households with Non-disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration	41,150,108	121,495,553	32.48%
Benefits by Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level			
No Income	133,778,147	412,840,851	32.40%
>0-50 %	505,519,887	515,399,934	98.08%
51-100%	496,620,939	578,539,107	85.84%
>100% of Poverty	57,198,679	147,772,013	38.71%

APPENDIX B

SELECTED HISTORIC PARTICIPATION RATES

TABLE B.1
CHANGE IN INDIVIDUAL FSP PARTICIPATION RATES
1988 to 2000

Time Period	Change in Participation Rate	Change in Participants	Change in Eligible Individuals
1988-1990	6.1 points	11.1%	-1.4%
1990-1991	2.8 points	14.6%	8.9%
1991-1992	2.3 points	10.3%	6.1%
1992-1993	1.0 points	5.8%	4.1%
1993-1994	1.1 points	-0.2%	-2.0%
1994-1995	-2.1 points	-3.9%	-1.1%
1995-1996	-3.5 points	-5.3%	-0.5%
1996-1997	-5.2 points	-14.7%	-7.7%
1997-1998	-4.2 points	-10.9%	-4.6%
1998-1999	-1.9 points	-5.9%	-2.8%
1999-2000	1.4 points	-2.1%	-4.4%

Source: FSP Program Operations data, FSPQC data, and March CPS data for the years shown.

TABLE B.2

PARTICIPATION RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS IN SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

	Participation Rates										Eligible Individuals		Participating Individuals	
											1994	2000	1994	2000
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	
Individuals in All Single-Parent Households	98.9	100.8	96.3	86.3	84.6	81.4	90.7	13,461	9,322	13,319	8,457			
Household Income Source														
Earnings	73.3	69.4	68.3	69.6	71.8	63.6	78.0	4,179	4,519	3,064	3,526			
AFDC/TANF	85.7	67.3	67.2	78.5	98.9	95.7	149.6	1,214	787	1,040	1,177			
No AFDC/TANF	68.3	70.4	68.8	66.4	63.0	56.4	62.9	2,965	3,733	2,024	2,349			
No Earnings	110.5	117.5	112.2	97.1	95.1	97.2	102.7	9,282	4,803	10,254	4,931			
AFDC/TANF	133.9	147.3	140.5	131.9	127.6	142.2	167.0	6,545	1,815	8,765	3,032			
No AFDC/TANF	54.4	59.3	66.4	53.1	61.4	65.0	63.6	2,737	2,988	1,489	1,899			
AFDC/TANF	126.4	131.7	123.8	119.5	119.5	129.2	161.8	7,760	2,602	9,806	4,210			
Household Income as a Percentage of Poverty Level														
No Income	35.3	40.4	32.4	23.2	37.9	37.5	38.6	1,183	1,367	418	528			
1 to 50%	116.2	127.8	122.7	103.7	101.0	95.3	116.6	5,503	2,748	6,396	3,206			
51 to 100%	125.0	120.0	119.9	116.1	109.4	114.3	116.4	4,522	3,290	5,652	3,828			
101 to 130%	47.0	43.4	38.0	50.6	45.8	46.6	53.4	1,715	1,606	806	858			
130%+	8.7	1.6	5.3	1.3	8.4	2.7	11.9	538	311	47	37			
Household Earnings as a Percentage of Poverty Level														
No Earnings	110.5	117.5	112.2	97.1	95.1	97.2	102.7	9,282	4,803	10,254	4,931			
1 to 50%	122.7	100.2	91.1	89.6	121.2	96.7	144.4	941	1,052	1,155	1,518			
51 to 100%	81.7	74.0	77.3	78.2	64.1	64.4	73.1	1,894	2,179	1,547	1,594			
101%+	30.9	35.9	36.4	34.0	40.9	35.5	41.7	1,344	1,288	362	413			

Source: FSP Program Operations Data, FSPQC Data, and CPS Data for the years shown

TABLE B.3

PARTICIPATION RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS IN HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ANY NON-DISABLED CHILDLESS ADULTS SUBJECT TO WORK REGISTRATION OR NONCITIZENS

	Participation Rates					Eligible Individuals		Participating Individuals			
						1994	2000	1994	2000		
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	(000s)	(000s)		
Individuals in Households Without Any Non-Disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration or Noncitizens	76.0	75.9	72.3	63.8	61.4	60.4	61.8	28,635	24,488	21,765	15,144
Age of Individual											
Children	89.9	89.3	88.2	74.5	70.6	70.7	75.1	12,861	10,538	11,567	7,916
Non-Elderly Adults	80.4	79.8	76.9	68.2	65.6	63.4	65.1	10,706	8,826	8,605	5,750
Elderly Individuals	31.4	31.2	26.8	28.2	30.0	30.5	28.9	5,068	5,125	1,594	1,479
Disabled Non-Elderly Adults	50.3	53.8	50.0	53.5	52.4	60.1	54.5	3,385	3,355	1,702	1,829
Household Composition											
Single-Parent and Children	95.6	97.4	94.5	85.7	84.9	80.5	89.9	12,512	8,967	11,959	8,058
Married Couple and Children	71.1	71.6	68.3	58.3	51.2	42.8	45.9	5,663	4,528	4,024	2,076
No Children	43.3	44.2	40.0	39.2	40.6	41.1	39.2	7,829	8,050	3,393	3,157
Household Income Source											
Earnings	61.1	53.9	57.7	53.6	51.2	47.2	53.6	10,160	10,998	6,203	5,897
No Earnings	84.2	89.5	81.2	71.0	69.3	71.0	68.5	18,475	13,491	15,563	9,247
AFDC/TANF	121.5	127.8	126.1	123.5	130.4	132.3	151.8	9,443	3,508	11,471	5,326
Household Benefit as a Percentage of Maximum Benefit											
1 to 50%	51.1	47.7	47.2	48.1	47.5	45.6	47.0	11,497	12,306	5,871	5,786
51 to 99%	101.2	102.7	99.1	92.2	83.2	84.2	91.1	12,154	7,589	12,305	6,910

Source: FSP Program Operations data, FSPQC data, and March CPS data for the years shown.

APPENDIX C
METHODOLOGY

APPENDIX C

The participation rates reported here rely on estimates of individuals eligible for food stamps and individuals participating in the FSP. The estimates of eligible individuals are derived from a model that uses March Current Population Survey (CPS) data to simulate the FSP.¹ The estimates of participants are based on FSP Program Operations data from September of each year. The resulting participation rates provide a snapshot of the percentage of individuals eligible for the FSP that participate in the sample month of September.²

In this report, the participation rates from 1994 through 1999 differ slightly from rates published previously. To more accurately estimate the number of eligible individuals, we simulate SSI receipt in the one state, California, where SSI recipients are ineligible for the FSP.

The CPS eligibility file is updated each year with the following:

- The FSP gross income screen, net income screen and maximum benefit amounts are updated to reflect the fiscal year FSP regulations.
- The regression equation used to estimate FSP net income is updated using the fiscal year FSPQC data.

¹ The March CPS provides income and program participation information for the previous calendar year. A summary of changes in the March CPS over time is presented in the *Technical Appendices* to this report at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm.

² Nationwide, a relatively small number of people who are eligible for the FSP are also eligible for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). Individuals who choose to participate in the FDPIR may not participate in the FSP at the same time. However, because the number of individuals who are participating in the FDPIR can be estimated only with substantial sampling error, they are included in the number of FSP-eligible individuals in this report. Because FDPIR participants are included in the number of eligible individuals, but not in the number of FSP participants, the FSP participation rates are slightly underestimated.

We use the CPS-based rates to estimate both the levels and the trends in participation rates. CPS-based estimates have always provided a good measure of trends, but prior to 1995, CPS-based estimates provided biased measures of levels. The pre-1995 rates were biased downward because of limitations in the CPS data. In 1995, we improved the methodology used to estimate participation rates to account for this downward bias.³

Estimates based on the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) can also be used to measure participation rates. SIPP data contain more of the information needed to estimate eligibility for the FSP, and the methodology used to estimate eligibility with SIPP data more closely replicates the actual FSP eligibility determination process. However, the SIPP data series covers a shorter period than the CPS data series, and certain types of SIPP data needed to estimate eligible individuals are available only for a limited number of years.

Historically, the trends identified through the CPS-based data have been consistent with those identified through SIPP-based data (Figure C.1). The change in methodology implemented in the August 1995 report shifted the CPS-based rates up, so that both the trend and the level of the CPS-based rates are in line with the SIPP-based rates.

However, the levels of participation rates for some subgroups are still biased, due to under-reporting problems in the CPS (these problems also exist in the SIPP). Specifically, because public assistance is under-reported in the CPS, the participation rate for food stamp households with public assistance is too high. Typically, the number of households reporting TANF receipt in the March CPS is around 80 percent of the Administrative estimates. The number reporting SSI receipt is around 75 percent of the Administrative estimates. Because the amount of under-

³ For a complete discussion of the changes in methodology, see Cody and Trippe, 1997.

reporting has stayed relatively constant over time, trends in the participation rates for these subgroups are still accurate.

The remainder of this appendix describes the methodology used to calculate the September participation rates.

A. DETERMINING FSP-ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS

We estimate the number of eligible individuals with a model that uses March CPS data to simulate the FSP in September of the previous calendar year. In the simulation procedure, FSP eligibility guidelines that were in effect in September of the previous calendar year are applied to each household in the CPS.⁴ The FSP guidelines include unit formation rules, asset limits, and income limits. Because several types of information needed to determine FSP eligibility are missing from the CPS data, we impute some information to improve the model estimates of the number of eligible households. This estimation procedure is explained below.

1. Simulating the Composition of the Food Stamp Unit

In the FSP, the food stamp unit is based on shared living quarters and who purchases and prepares food together. While the CPS defines the dwelling unit based on shared living quarters, it does not identify who purchases and prepares food together. As a result, we simulate the formation of food stamp units within each household. For most households, we simulate all household members to be in the same food stamp unit. For some households with certain compositions (e.g., multiple family households, households with unrelated individuals, etc.) we may simulate two or more groups of people to form separate food stamp units. The probability

⁴ Trippe, et al (1992) includes a detailed discussion of our model of the FSP eligibility process.

that a household will form multiple units is based on observed rates for similar households from FSPQC data. We also use the following rules in identifying food stamp units:

- We exclude SSI recipients who receive cash instead of food stamps in SSI cashout states (California).⁵
- We exclude all individuals living in group quarters.

2. Identifying Eligible Noncitizens and Non-disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration in the Post-Welfare Reform Era

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) made most noncitizens ineligible and required many non-disabled childless adults to work or face time limits on benefit receipt. However, not all noncitizens and non-disabled childless adults were made ineligible by welfare reform. Some noncitizens remained eligible through exemptions, and some had their eligibility restored by the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act (AREERA) of 1998. Likewise, some non-disabled childless adults retained their eligibility through exemptions or by meeting the work requirements. As a result, our estimate of eligible individuals must include eligible noncitizens and non-disabled childless adults. Because the CPS does not track all of the information needed to identify eligible noncitizens and non-disabled childless adults, we make assumptions about how many and which

⁵ Since SSI is under-reported in the CPS, we exclude too few individuals in California, thus artificially increasing the number of eligible individuals and lowering the participation rate. (In other states, the under-reporting may affect benefit levels, but is not as likely to affect the number of eligible individuals.) To obtain the most accurate number of eligible individuals as possible, we simulate SSI receipt in California for each year.

of these individuals remain eligible. In order to retain sample size, we implement our eligibility assumptions for these populations through weighting adjustments.⁶

a. Identifying Noncitizens

The citizenship status tracked in the CPS only distinguishes between citizens and noncitizens. Because FSP eligibility rules in 1997 through 2000 are different for refugees than they are for legal resident aliens, we must impute a more detailed citizenship status. In September 2000, any refugee who entered the United States after 1993 was eligible for food stamps; any refugee who entered during or prior to 1993 was subject to the same restrictions as legal resident aliens. Therefore, we only impute citizenship status for those noncitizens who entered the United States after 1993. Based on estimates from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, we assume 17 percent of noncitizens who entered the United States after 1993 are refugees. We assume that the remaining 83 percent of noncitizens who entered after 1993 and 100 percent of the noncitizens who entered the United States during or before 1993 are legal resident aliens and subject to the restrictions detailed below. We use a similar methodology to determine the number of legal resident aliens and refugees in 1997 through 1999.

b. Identifying Eligible Noncitizens

Although PRWORA made most noncitizens ineligible, there are a number of exceptions. Most recently, effective November 1, 1998, AREERA restored eligibility to some legal resident

⁶ The weighting adjustments reflect the probability that a household of a certain composition is eligible for food stamps. For example, if a household has one noncitizen, we duplicate the record for that household. In the first copy of the record, we retain the noncitizen and multiply the household weight by the probability that the noncitizen is eligible for food stamps. In the second copy of the record, we exclude the noncitizen and multiply the household weight by the probability that the noncitizen is ineligible. This methodology is used to implement the assumptions for refugees, eligible noncitizens and eligible non-disabled childless adults subject to work registration.

aliens who were living in the United States when PRWORA was enacted. Specifically, AREERA restored eligibility to the following populations:

- children who are under age 18 and who were lawfully in the United States on August 22, 1996
- elderly who were lawfully in the United States and at least 65 years old on August 22, 1996
- disabled individuals who were lawfully in the United States on August 22, 1996

The CPS file tells us when noncitizens arrived. We use this information to determine which children, elderly, and disabled noncitizens were in the United States in or prior to August 1996, and thus had their eligibility restored by AREERA.

In addition, under PRWORA some noncitizens are eligible if they have 40 quarters of work history in the United States or are veterans of the Armed Forces. Because the work history and veteran status information in the CPS is insufficient for determining which individuals are eligible, we impute this information using 1997 Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) data. Based on these data, we assume that 20 percent of income-eligible noncitizens are legal noncitizens that meet the exemption criteria in 1997 and 1998.⁷ For 1999 and 2000, we estimate that 18 percent of the remaining noncitizens (after exempting AREERA-eligible noncitizens and refugees who arrived after 1992) are legal noncitizens that meet the exemption criteria. We also account for undocumented and temporary noncitizens by excluding them from the eligible pools for 1994 through 1996.⁸

⁷ Because any legal resident alien who is the spouse or child of an exempt individual is also exempt, we apply these exemptions at the household level to all legal resident aliens in a household.

⁸ Because undocumented noncitizens are less likely to participate in a government survey, they are undercovered in the CPS. Since we do not know the extent of this undercoverage, any attempt to impute whether a noncitizen is undocumented likely overestimates the number of

The remaining noncitizens are assumed to be ineligible. We exclude them from the food stamp unit before determining whether that unit is eligible.

c. Identifying Non-disabled Childless Adults Subject to Work Registration

Referred to as ABAWDs in past reports, these individuals are age 18 to 49, not disabled, not living with children under age 18, and subject to work registration. With some exceptions, these individuals must meet work requirements to participate in the FSP. If they fail to meet the work requirements, they are limited to three months of benefit receipt in any 36-month period. They may be exempt from these requirements if they live in an area with high unemployment or insufficient jobs (waiver area), participate in an employment and training program, or are covered by their state's 15 percent exemption.

We identify non-disabled childless adults subject to work registration by looking at basic demographic characteristics in the CPS.⁹ However, we cannot determine which of these individuals remain eligible because they have not reached the time limit. Likewise, we cannot identify which of them remain eligible because they live in a waiver area. As a result, we impute this information.

(continued)

undocumented aliens. To the extent that undocumented noncitizens are systematically different from other noncitizens, the estimates of noncitizens may be biased.

⁹ The population of non-disabled childless adults subject to work registration does include some eligible legal resident aliens.

d. Identifying Exempt Non-disabled Childless Adults

We determine the proportion of non-disabled childless adults in each state who have not reached the time limit based on data from the FY 1996 FSPQC database.¹⁰ We use federal and state administrative data to estimate the proportion of non-disabled childless adults who are eligible due to the 15 percent exemption, participation in an employment and training program, or because they live in waiver areas. We impute exemption status for non-disabled childless adults living in waived areas at the household level because if one household member lives in a waived area, the entire household must live in a waived area. The target proportions for those within the time limit and those living in waived areas in 1997 through 2000 are available in the *Technical Appendices* to this report at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm.

3. Determining Asset Eligibility

A food stamp unit is eligible for FSP benefits if its countable assets are less than \$2,000. If the unit contains an elderly person, the asset limit is \$3,000. Since asset balances are not included in the CPS database, we use an equation to impute the probability that non-pure public assistance (PA) units will pass the asset test. Pure PA units (units in which every member receives AFDC/TANF, GA, or SSI) are automatically eligible for food stamps and are thus not affected by the asset test. If we do not apply the asset test, we will grossly overestimate the number of eligible individuals in any given month.

¹⁰ Specifically, we estimate the proportion that has received no more than three months of benefits, using separate estimates for current participants and for non-participants.

4. Determining Income Eligibility

Food stamp units must also meet income limits in order to be eligible for benefits. Non-pure PA food stamp units that do not contain elderly or disabled members must have a gross income below 130 percent of the monthly FSP net income guidelines. There is no gross income limit for units that contain elderly or disabled members. In addition, all non-pure PA food stamp units must have a net income below 100 percent of the FSP net income guidelines.

Before determining each household's income eligibility, we estimate monthly income and household net income as follows:

- ***Estimating Monthly Income.*** The CPS database includes information on annual income, but eligibility for the FSP is determined according to monthly income. Therefore, we distribute annual income to months on the basis of patterns of income receipt shown by SIPP data and number of weeks worked shown in CPS data. We then sum the monthly income allocated to September for each person in the household to determine each household's gross income for September. Simply dividing annual income by 12 would underestimate the number of eligible individuals in any given month.
- ***Estimating Net Income.*** The CPS database does not include information on the expenses that are deducted from gross income to compute net income. Therefore, we model net income as a function of the household's earnings, unearned income, gross income, and geographic location for each year. This model is based on patterns observed in the August and September 2000 FSPQC data. The estimated relationships (coefficients) are presented in the *Technical Appendices* to this report at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm.

We use the food stamp gross and net income screens and the maximum benefit amounts to reflect September regulations for each year.¹¹ We then determine eligibility for each household

¹¹ These parameters, along with other FSP eligibility criteria, are presented in Table C.1 for 2000 and the *Technical Appendices* to this report at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm for 1976 to 1999. FSP guidelines for deductions from gross income in determining FSP net income are implicitly captured in the net income equation.

based on these regulations. The unweighted counts of eligible households, along with the original sample sizes for the March CPS files, are listed in Table C.2.

B. DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF FSP PARTICIPANTS

The number of participants for the participation rate comes from the FSP Statistical Summary of Operations (Program Operations) data for September. This database provides counts of individuals and households that were issued benefits and the total dollar value of these benefits in each month. We use this database because FSP participation is under-reported in the CPS data.

We distribute the total number of individuals, households, and benefits across subgroups of the population according to the distribution in the sample of food stamp case records in the Food Stamp Program Quality Control (FSPQC) data.¹² This is done by multiplying a two-month average of the number of participants in an extract of the FSPQC data by the ratio of the Program Operations total to the FSPQC weighted total for individuals, households, and benefits. We adjust the estimate of FSP participants by the percent of total participants that are ineligible, as determined by Program Operations.

Since the alien provisions of PRWORA were not completely in effect in August 1997, more aliens were eligible to participate in August 1997 than in September 1997. As a result, a straight average of the number of aliens in August and September (the two months used for the FSPQC average) would overestimate the number of aliens participating in September. We reduce the number of aliens participating in August such that the average equals the number participating in September. No similar adjustments needed to be made to the 1998 or later files because all welfare reform provisions were in effect.

¹² The FSPQC is a sample of close to 50,000 food stamp households.

Because of an administrative change in how citizenship data were collected in the FSPQC, naturalized citizens, legal resident aliens and individual classifications of legal resident aliens cannot be identified in the 1999 and 2000 files. Therefore, for consistency, this report presents participation rates for all noncitizens from 1994 through 2000, without separating out legal resident aliens.

We define non-disabled childless adults subject to work registration as individuals who are age 18 to 49, not disabled, not exempt from work registration, and who do not live in households with children under age 18. With some exceptions (for example, those in waiver areas or receiving state exemptions), these individuals must meet work requirements or face time limits on food stamp benefit receipt.

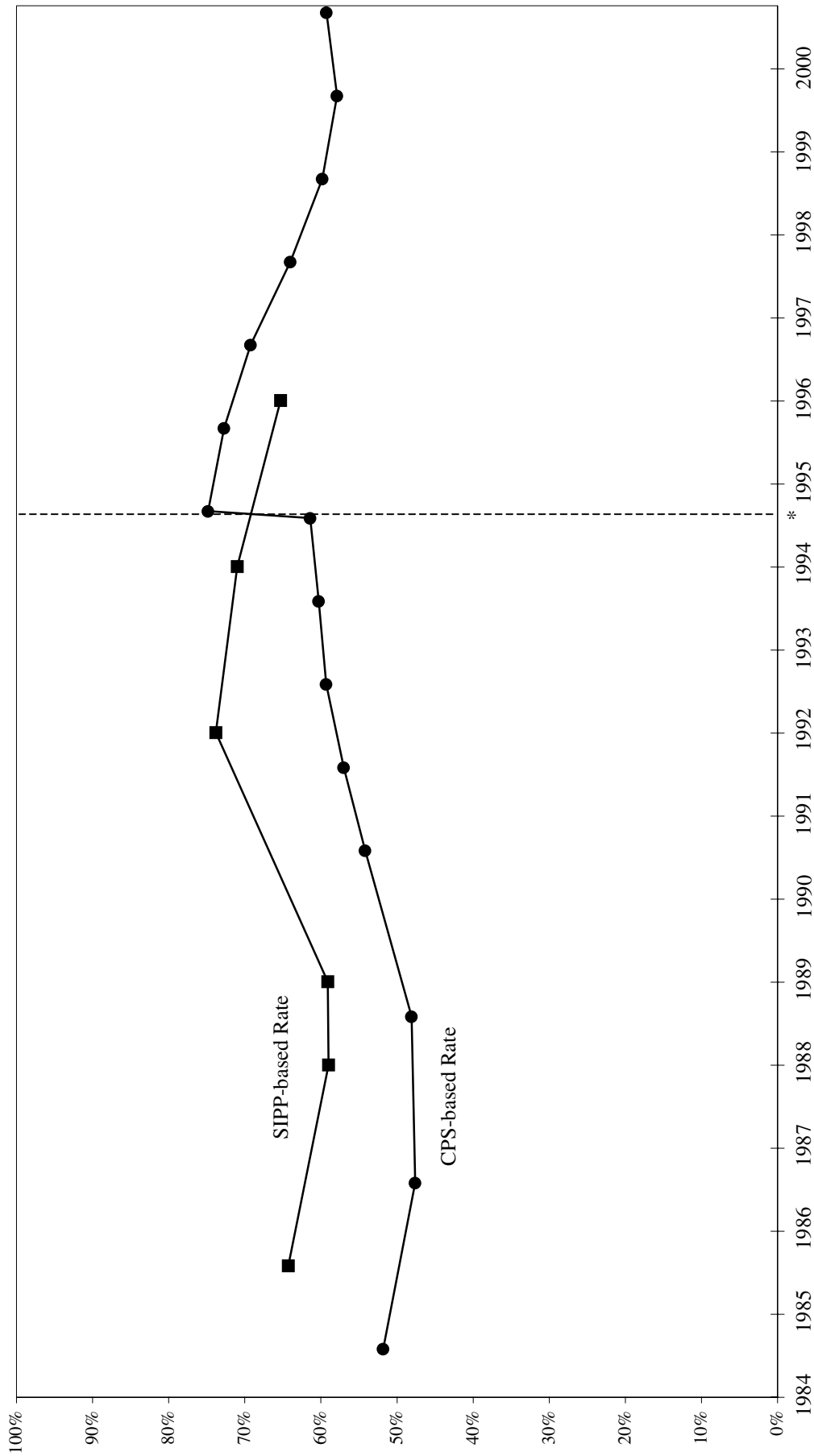
The sample sizes of participating households in the FSPQC datafiles are listed in Table C.3.

C. CALCULATING FSP PARTICIPATION RATES

We estimated aggregate participation rates by dividing the number of participants recorded in the adjusted Program Operations data by the number of eligible individuals simulated on the basis of CPS data. The numbers of participants and eligible individuals used to calculate participation rates are presented in Appendix A for 2000 and in the *Technical Appendices* to this report at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm for 1994 through 1999.

FIGURE C.1

TRENDS IN INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY DATA SOURCE, 1984-2000



Source: FSP Program Operations data, FSPQC data, SIPP data, and March CPS data for the years shown.

*There is a break in the time series in August 1994 due to revisions in the methodology for determining eligibility.

TABLE C.1

FISCAL YEAR 2000 FSP ELIGIBILITY PARAMETERS

Countable Assets Screen	\$2,000 for households without elderly members \$3,000 for households with elderly members			
Gross Income Screen	130 percent of the 1999 DHHS Poverty Guidelines			
Net Income Screen	100 percent of the 1999 DHHS Poverty Guidelines			
Monthly Poverty Guidelines	<u>Unit Size</u>	<u>Continental US</u>	<u>Alaska</u>	<u>Hawaii</u>
	1	\$ 687	\$ 860	\$ 791
	2	922	1,154	1,061
	3	1,157	1,447	1,331
	4	1,392	1,740	1,601
	5	1,627	2,034	1,871
	6	1,862	2,327	2,141
	7	2,097	2,620	2,411
	8	2,332	2,914	2,681
	Each Additional	+ 235	+ 270	+ 270
Standard Deduction		<u>Continental US</u>	<u>Alaska</u>	<u>Hawaii</u>
		\$134	\$229	\$189
Maximum Dependent Care Deduction	\$200 for dependents under age 2, \$175 for dependents age 2 and over			
Excess Shelter Deduction		<u>Continental US</u>	<u>Alaska</u>	<u>Hawaii</u>
		\$275	\$478	\$393
Benefit Calculation	Benefit = Maximum benefit – 30 percent of Net Income			
Maximum Monthly Benefit	<u>Unit Size</u>	<u>Continental US</u>	<u>Alaska</u>	<u>Hawaii</u>
	1	\$127	\$158	\$199
	2	234	290	365
	3	335	415	523
	4	426	528	664
	5	506	627	789
	6	607	752	947
	7	671	831	1,047
	8	767	950	1,196
	Each Additional	+ 96	+ 119	+ 150
Minimum Monthly Benefit	<u>Unit Size</u>			
	1 - 2	\$10		
	3+	\$ 0		
Categorically Eligible	Receipt of cash or in-kind TANF benefits, SSI, or GA			
SSI Cashout States	California only			

NOTE: Eligibility parameters are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Puerto Rico is excluded from data for 1976 and 1978 in order to be consistent with other years, and Guam and the Virgin Islands are excluded for all years.

TABLE C.2
UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZES FOR THE CPS

Analysis Year ^a	Eligible Households ^b	Eligible Units ^b	All Households
1976	12,276	12,276	68,294
1978	10,122	10,122	68,455
1980	11,372	11,372	81,451
1982	10,335	10,335	73,195
1984	9,719	9,719	74,568
1986	9,953	9,953	73,843
1988	8,751	8,751	70,454
1990	9,348	9,348	75,076
1991	9,714	9,714	74,236
1992	10,280	10,280	73,878
1993	10,172	10,172	73,126
1994 (o)	9,992	9,992	72,152
1994 (r)	9,075	10,424	72,152
1995	7,962	9,175	63,339
1996	8,077	9,266	64,046
1997	7,890	9,242	64,659
1998	7,545	8,747	65,377
1999	7,279	8,487	64,944
2000	6,901	7,949	64,362

^aThere are two estimates for 1994 due to the revised methodology for determining food stamp eligibility. This new methodology incorporates a new asset test algorithm, an improved food stamp unit definition, and an enhanced pure PA unit definition. The original estimate (o) is based on the methodology employed in all previous trends studies, while the revised estimate (r) is based on the new methodology.

^bThe sample sizes of eligible households and of eligible units are identical under the methodology employed from 1976 until 1994(o) because only one unit could exist per household. Under the revised methodology used in 1994(r) and later, some households are simulated to form multiple units.

TABLE C.3

UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZES FOR THE FSPQC CASE RECORDS

Month/Year	FSPQC Case Records
September 1976	11,038
February 1978	14,211
August 1980	4,140
August 1982	7,224
August 1984	6,918
July/August 1986	11,010
July/August 1988	10,695
July/August 1990	10,639
July/August 1991	10,602
July/August 1992	9,586
July/August 1993	9,389
August/September 1994	8,933
August/September 1995	8,313
August/September 1996	8,304
August/September 1997	7,907
August/September 1998	7,336
August/September 1999	7,558
August/September 2000	7,610