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RECENT HISTORY AND FUTURE
DEVELOPMENTS**

No. 232

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U. S. Department of Commerce BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

The Survey of Income and Program Participation – Recent History and Future Developments

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Washington, DC 20233-8500

January 1999

Abstract

Longitudinal monthly data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) enable researchers to examine key dynamic events. This paper reports on recent Census Bureau initiatives that have made the SIPP data easier to use, possible changes in SIPP's design to make it a viable source of official income and poverty statistics, some recent research findings within the context of the overall research program, and some of the remaining challenges the Census Bureau faces.

Key Words: surveys, survey research, income, program participation, poverty

The Survey of Income and Program Participation – Recent History and Future Developments

I. INTRODUCTION

Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) provide a truly unique perspective on economic behavior. SIPP's design enables researchers to examine key dynamic events. It tells us what happened in each household month by month, something no other survey can do with accuracy.¹ Because of its short recall period (four months with monthly accounting), its longitudinal design that follows initial respondents for more than two years (up to four), and the survey's concomitant ability to capture intra-year variations in economic and demographic characteristics, policy analysts have used SIPP data to examine many relevant policy issues, including:

- , Program eligibility and participation rates in the food stamps program, including analysis of dynamics (used in the simulation of proposed changes to the food stamps program);
- , The gain or loss of health insurance (used in the development of and debate on President Clinton's health care reform initiative, especially regarding the availability of health insurance to workers losing their jobs, and in development of the Kassenbaum-Kennedy bill to improve health insurance portability);
- , Income and poverty changes over both short (month-to-month) and multiyear periods (for example, documenting that most minimum-wage workers do not stay at that wage level);
- , Welfare program participation (used in the development of and debate on the President Clinton's welfare reform initiative, most particularly to understand the effects of limiting the time on welfare);
- , The income replacement role of unemployment compensation and its effects on reemployment (used by the recent Presidential Commission on Unemployment Compensation); and
- , The dynamics of health insurance coverage of children (used in debates over establishment of the Child Health Insurance Program).

The SIPP also has an important role to play in the next several years, as social transfer programs undergo large-scale change.

SIPP will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996;

SIPP will continue to be the only data available to evaluate how the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 affects the employment and incomes of the disabled;

Consistent with the recent National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report on poverty measurement, SIPP may become the official source of income and poverty estimates in the U.S.;

Because SIPP provides the most accurate picture of eligibility and participation in social transfer programs of any household survey, it, along with the Survey of Program Dynamics,² will let researchers examine what happens to people as they leave welfare because of the reforms enacted in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996; and

SIPP is the only survey that allows us to understand the short-term relationship between demographic change (e.g., marriage, childbirth, divorce, widowhood, and other life-course events) and economic change.

Besides its strengths as a longitudinal survey, SIPP is the only regular source for valuable cross-section data such as the cost of child care, nonincome measures of economic hardship, child disability, the relationship between adult disability and economic well-being, pension coverage, housing affordability, and financial assistance for education. Additionally, it is one of the few sources of data on household wealth (assets and liabilities).

Section II of this paper discusses recent Census Bureau initiatives that have made the SIPP data easier to use. Section III focuses on possible changes in SIPP's design in response to a desire to make SIPP the source of official income and poverty statistics. Section IV presents some recent research findings and lays out the Census Bureau's overall research program. Finally, Section V presents some of the remaining challenges the Census Bureau faces for SIPP.

II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE EASED DATA ACCESS

SIPP data files have had the reputation of being hard to use. This has, to a great extent, been true. Even in the future, using SIPP data will require more effort and time than simple, cross-sectional data. To researchers used to manipulating the annual March Current Population Survey (CPS) data with ease, longitudinal data by person by month are unfamiliar. In addition, the Census Bureau issued the first SIPP cross-section (wave) data (1984-1988 panels) in a relatively sophisticated relational data base that used a hierarchy of households, families, and individuals -- a format unfamiliar to many data users. Because of user requests, it has issued the 1990 and subsequent panel wave data in "person-month" format.

The Census Bureau has been undertaking a number of additional projects in recent years to improve data accessibility, and many improvements will come on-line soon (described further below). Nevertheless, an investment of time and effort by the new user will always be necessary to reap the benefits of SIPP data.

Several years ago the Census Bureau established a special outreach staff to oversee development of "SIPP On-Call" (SOC).³ SOC (now Surveys On-Call) provides free Internet access to the pre-1996 panel microdata through a menu-driven "Data Extraction System" faster than any other mechanism (including official tape releases). Since then, the Census Bureau has totally redesigned the microdata access system to make it easier to use and accessible through a more user-friendly Internet site (<<http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/>>). As SIPP use has grown, however, it has outstripped the ability of the outreach staff to keep pace. One challenge, therefore, is to continue to nurture the users while making entry to the SIPP data-user fraternity even easier. The specific activities listed below are scheduled for completion in 1998 and 1999.

Updating and Improving the SIPP Users' Guide. A third edition of the SIPP Users' Guide has been issued and become a dynamic resource, available and continuously updated in electronic format. In addition, the new Users' Guide will contain several specific enhancements, based on feedback the Census Bureau has received from users over the years. These include sections on commonly found problems along with their solutions, sections on how to match files (with examples), and information on specific measurement issues (such as attrition and seam problems).

Developing Processing Documentation. The documentation of post-data collection processing procedures (edits, imputations, etc.) is being verified and made more accessible to researchers. Routine SIPP processing operations will now produce, for each wave, a set of "Data Quality Profile" tabulations to simplify analysts' review. They will also be available to all other users as part of the data file documentation. With these wave-by-wave tabulations, users can answer certain questions easily, and quickly determine how the SIPP sample behaves over time. The Census Bureau hopes that the systematizing of data quality reviews will help increase the speed of data delivery, but longitudinal data products will continue to take longer to produce than cross-sectional wave files as longitudinal editing has built-in delays, such as "backward" editing -- using data from wave "t+1" to edit wave "t".

Creating a Comprehensive SIPP Bibliography. A comprehensive bibliography of all journal articles, research papers, and working papers based upon SIPP

data has been made available to the user community. Moreover, the bibliography is available through the Internet and will eventually have keyword search and update capabilities (with hot links to relevant documents).

Developing a PC-based Tutorial. A personal computer-based tutorial will instruct users on the basics of SIPP. It will be modular, so that, for example, new users could go through the entire tutorial, while experienced users could use the tutorial to brush up on specific areas of interest (such as longitudinal weighting).

Updating the SIPP Quality Profile. The SIPP Quality Profile has been one of the more useful SIPP data products. However, as the result of resource constraints, this series is out of date. The third edition of the Quality Profile, covering up to the 1990-1993 SIPP panels, was issued in 1998. A fourth edition of the Quality Profile to cover, in addition, the 1996 SIPP panel, is planned for 1999. It will focus on the many changes that took place as SIPP changed from paper to computer-assisted interviewing in April 1996.

Creating State-level Weights. State-level weights for selected larger states will enable users to produce reliable estimates of population measures such as poverty and program participation, though sample sizes will still limit more detailed estimates.

A few other dissemination and outreach projects are worth noting as well:

Collecting and Codifying Welfare Program Characteristics. As the country's welfare system evolves from a national system to individual state systems, national surveys are increasingly at a disadvantage since no central data base on the detailed characteristics of these state (and sometimes, county or local) plans exists. While states have to submit their plans to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), these submissions are not standard and often lack the detail required for use in questionnaire design or analysis. For that reason, the Census Bureau has commissioned the Institute for Research on Poverty to do a detailed profile of the welfare systems of each state, both before and after welfare reform.⁴

Expanding the Base of Sophisticated SIPP Users. The Census Bureau has begun a “small grants program,” administered by the University of Chicago-Northwestern University Poverty Research Center, to foster innovative uses of SIPP data. The Center awarded six grants in 1997 and another five in 1998.

Providing and Documenting the SIPP Instrument. The Census Bureau is investigating how best to provide the actual SIPP computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) instrument to the user, along with full documentation. The focus of the Census Bureau’s efforts is an attempt to integrate the documentation process within CASES (the CAPI software language).⁵

Finally, the plan is rapidly expand use of new Internet data access tools, such as the Federal Electronic Research and Review Extraction Tool (FERRET), the data server for 1996 panel microdata and metadata.

III. SIPP’S DESIGN MUST ADAPT TO NEW NATIONAL NEEDS

SIPP began in late 1983 and was intended to correct the deficiencies of the March CPS in collecting income data, and to expand the data collected on transfer programs (only superficially dealt with by the March CPS beginning in 1980). The original design tried to compromise between the twin goals of collecting accurate cross-section and longitudinal data on income and program participation by having a multiple-panel overlapping design. This design proved difficult for the Bureau to implement effectively, leading to unacceptable delays in data dissemination and unsatisfactory data for most users (difficulty in combining multiple panels for cross-section users, and insufficient sample sizes and too-short panels for longitudinal data users). After a large-scale user survey, discussions with many potential users, and a report by a NAS panel on SIPP (Citro and Kalton, 1993), the Bureau decided in 1992 to redesign the SIPP. The new design, which began in April 1996, focuses primarily on providing accurate and useful longitudinal data by using abutting four-year panels.⁶ In addition, the Census Bureau planned to ameliorate the concerns of cross-section data users through development of statistical techniques for correcting attrition bias.

Meanwhile, a separate NAS panel (Citro and Michael, 1995) recommended in 1995 that the SIPP become the source of official income and poverty statistics. The Clinton administration has endorsed this goal, and funds to do research and expand the SIPP were included in the FY 1999 budget request (turned down by the Congress) and are likely to be included in the FY 2000 budget request. Meeting the goal, however, requires us to refocus the SIPP on providing a good time series of cross-section estimates, a standard by which the 1996 design fails. Further, attempts to develop new field, weighting, and estimation procedures to attenuate or correct for attrition bias have not yet shown full success. Unfortunately, attrition from the 1996 panel has substantially exceeded predictions and has already topped 25 percent (the original goal for four years) well before the end of the third year.

The Census Bureau convened an internal working group to examine the adaptability of the SIPP to meet this new cross-section goal of poverty measurement while maintaining the ability of the SIPP to meet the strongly expressed needs for longitudinal data. It recommended starting supplementary

three-year panels of 11,400 households each, one to start in each year that the larger, longitudinally focused panel of 36,700 households does not. This design would provide, through pooling of data from three panels, estimates of income and poverty of comparable reliability to the March CPS at the national level for year-to-year changes. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in consultation with other federal agencies, Congress, and the public, will decide whether to make changes in the current official measures, pending the results of research conducted by the Census Bureau and other agencies.

As has been true in the past, meeting these multiple, conflicting goals will be difficult for SIPP. A contractor has recently interviewed a large fraction of the government and nongovernment SIPP user community and gathered their suggestions for how the Census Bureau should adapt the SIPP to the changing policy environment (Smith and Jabine, 1998). While lack of people and time preclude major changes immediately, serious suggestions have been put forward, both for the 2000 panel (e.g., shortening it three years), and for later panels (e.g., drawing state-based samples for the 2003 and later SIPP).

The Census Bureau 's current working plan for future SIPP panels is shown in Table 1, assuming the FY 2000 budget initiative is included in the President's budget and approved. (These plans are presented to encourage discussion of alternatives and are subject to modification; historical data are presented for comparison purposes.) First, note that the Census Bureau has delayed the beginning of the second large panel from 2000 to 2001 because of operational considerations associated with the 2000 decennial census. Second, the 2004 (and subsequent) panels will be state-representative, though not necessarily state-reliable unless some additional sample can be included both to compensate for the loss of efficiency for national estimates and if equal reliability were required in each state.

Table 1. Description of Actual and Proposed SIPP Panels

Panel	Start/End Dates	Waves	Households Interviewed in Wave 1
1984	Oct 1983 - Jul 1986	9	19,878
1985	Feb 1985 - Aug 1987	8	13,349
1986	Feb 1986 - Apr 1988	7	11,513
1987	Feb 1987 - May 1989	7	11,689
1988	Feb 1988 - Jan 1990	6	11,774
1989	Feb 1989 - Jan 1990	3 ^a	11,892
1990	Feb 1990 - Sep 1992	8	21,907
1991	Feb 1991 - Sep 1993	8	14,316
1992	Feb 1992 - May 1995	10	19,582
1993	Feb 1993 - Jan 1996	9	19,864
1995	Feb 1995 - Sep 1995	2 ^b	6,846
1996	Apr 1996 - Mar 2000	12	36,800
2000	Feb 2000 - Jan 2003	9	11,400 ^c
2001	Feb 2001 - Jan 2004	9	36,700 ^c
2002	Feb 2002 - Jan 2005	9	11,400 ^c
2003	Feb 2003 - Jan 2006	9	11,400 ^c
2004	Feb 2004 - Jan 2007	9	36,700 ^c

Notes:

a. 1989 panel discontinued in order to increase the size of the 1990 panel (low-income households from the 1989 panel were included in the 1990 panel).

b. 1995 panel used as a “dress rehearsal” for the 1996 panel.

c. Samples sizes for 2000 and later panels are proposed.

Third, core content is now undergoing a thorough examination, based on user comments and the Census Bureau’s own investigations. Possible changes will be pretested, using a separate methods panel, with implementation targeted to the 2004 panel.⁷ Topical modules will need to get the same thorough treatment; a split-panel test is being planned for the 2000 panel to determine whether shortening the questionnaire by eliminating most topical modules will reduce nonresponse.

In the aftermath of radical changes in income support programs related to welfare reform, SIPP faces the challenge of adapting its questions as soon as possible to capture information about programs that vary among different states and localities, and that change over time. The Census Bureau is also evaluating questions needed to implement a possible new poverty measure in SIPP, such as one recommended by the NAS. One example of questions that would need to be added is one or more on indicators of out-of-pocket medical expenditures. In addition, new program requirements and evolving policy concerns may create a need to rapidly develop and test new questions and topical modules for inclusion in SIPP before 2004.

IV. RESEARCH HAS RESOLVED KEY ISSUES BUT OTHERS REMAIN

The goals of the SIPP research and evaluation program are many; the status of achieving those goals are presented below.

Improve cross-section and longitudinal estimation methods. The Census Bureau and contractors conducted extensive research to improve longitudinal weighting methods, but identified no methodology superior to the current method for longitudinal weighting. Some minor adjustments have been made to both cross-section and longitudinal weighting because of the research and because of sample design changes, but the basic methodologies for cross-section and longitudinal weighting have not changed since the (original) 1984 panel.

To further improve the effectiveness of the noninterview weighting adjustments in compensating for nonresponse bias (due in part to attrition, but also to initial nonresponse), the Census Bureau is investigating new methodologies and procedures for reducing nonresponse, using administrative sources in weighting, and increasing knowledge about nonrespondents using follow-up studies and reporting by Field Representatives (interviewers). A follow-up mail survey of 1996 panel wave 1 nonrespondents is currently being analyzed. Once done, the Census Bureau will know better whether the information is useful in weighting, imputation, or possibly as a supplement in the wave 1 interviewed data set.

The 1997 Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD) offers a unique opportunity to measure the effects of attrition and possibly develop adjustment models. The Census Bureau will compare a number of cross-sectional SPD estimates to the comparable data estimated from the March 1997 CPS. This research is possible because the 1997 SPD used the CPS instrument and attempted to reinterview 1992 and 1993 SIPP panel respondents, and its estimates will obviously be affected by attrition.

Improve cross-section and longitudinal imputation methods. Based on research on alternative longitudinal imputation methods for missing interviews, the Census Bureau has implemented a new carry-over imputation approach for people missing up to two interviews and bounded by complete interviews. The Census Bureau has also used the results of the longitudinal imputation research to improve the cross-section imputations for the 1996 panel. Further, the switch to CAPI has allowed the increased use of information from prior interviews (dependent interviewing), reducing the length of the interview and ensuring more consistency. The Census Bureau is also working on imputing missing month data for 1995 for the 1993 panel (which ended in January 1996) and for 1996 for the 1996 panel (which began late due to government furloughs). The Census Bureau also plans to evaluate the type Z (noninterviewed person in an interviewed household) imputation procedures as the 1996 wave 2 data become available in the hope that such imputation can be improved.

Improve response rates and reduce attrition rates. Attrition rates for the 1996 panel are higher than expected at this point in the panel’s life (see Table 2). Through the years the Census Bureau has tested different measures to improve response rates, such as giving a calculator to sample households. Both monetary and nonmonetary gifts appear to reduce nonresponse. Evidence from the test of monetary incentives in wave 1 of the 1996 panel is encouraging; nonresponse is reduced, especially among low-income households (see James, 1998 and Mack et al., 1999). The Census Bureau is still monitoring the attrition effects of giving that wave 1 monetary incentive over the life of the 1996 panel. An additional test of a “booster” incentive is underway in wave 7. If results of using incentives remain positive (reduce nonresponse), the Census Bureau may be able to obtain OMB approval to use incentives in the 2000 and later panels. The Census Bureau also tested offering incentives to wave 7 nonrespondents in an attempt to regain them for the SIPP in wave 8.

Table 2. SIPP Sample Loss Rates, 1992, 1993, and 1996 SIPP panels

Panel:	1992	1993	1996	Panel:	1992	1993	1996
Wave				Wave			
1	9.3%	8.9%	8.4%	6	21.6%	22.2%	27.4%
2	14.6	14.2	14.5	7	23.0	24.3	29.9
3	16.4	16.2	17.8	8	24.7	25.5	31.3
4	18.0	18.2	20.9	9	26.2	26.9	32.8
5	20.3	20.2	24.6	10	26.6	N/A	34.0

N/A = not applicable

Reduce response error. The Census Bureau has done extensive research to estimate response error and investigate seam bias in SIPP data using administrative records.⁸ Comparison of SIPP data with administrative records showed that response errors were rare (Marquis and Moore, 1990). Unfortunately, the Census Bureau clearly identified no basic causes (such as telescoping or memory decay); this frustrates improvements because there are no clear fixes. This research also found that although seam bias exists, over a longitudinal period the underreporting within a wave and the overreporting between waves, together with the SIPP staggered interviewing pattern, essentially offset the seam bias errors. However, there is a hope that conducting interviews in a computer-assisted environment will reduce seam bias errors through collecting information on current status (the “fifth” month) and dependent interviewing.

Reduce sampling error. Efforts to reduce sampling error are now focusing on investigating the use of Internal Revenue Service (tax return) aggregate controls in SIPP longitudinal weighting. Results to date show that oversampling of low-income households in the 1990 panel and oversampling of housing units likely to contain low-income households in the 1996 panel were successful in reducing the variance for poverty and program participation estimates, without serious adverse effects on most of the other important SIPP estimates, which was the goal. The Census Bureau plans to continue to use oversampling of low-income groups in future panels.

Improve population coverage. Two SIPP-funded projects explored different approaches to improving within-household coverage in demographic surveys. The Living Situation Survey, conducted by Research Triangle Institute with funding from the Census Bureau, found improved within-household coverage for total and Hispanic households using an expanded set of roster probes which targeted undercounted and marginally attached persons (Sweet, 1994). A survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Corporation found increases in coverage of Black males with anonymous interviewing (Tourangeau, 1997). Further research is needed to examine the feasibility of anonymous interviewing in a longitudinal survey with its need to keep track of individuals; this may be done in conjunction with the methods panel mentioned above.

Improve methods for analysis of longitudinal data. The Census Bureau has focused its attention on two areas to develop and improve analytical methods -- spell length analysis, and adapting some standard analytical procedures for complex designs. The Census Bureau expects to complete the methodological work for both projects in 1999, followed by development of software, procedures, and guidance for analysts.

Benchmark income data. The Census Bureau has begun a follow-up study to benchmark SIPP (and March CPS) income data for calendar year 1996 against independent estimates (from the National Income and Product Accounts and elsewhere); see Weinberg et al. (1999) for preliminary results. Similar studies were done for calendar years 1984 (Vaughan, 1993) and 1990 (Coder and Scoon-Rogers, 1996). Analysts will begin by looking at aggregate wages, since in the past there has been a tendency to report net rather than gross pay, and changes to the labor force section of the 1996 SIPP questionnaire were intended to ameliorate that problem. The Census Bureau will also attempt to develop procedures to use administrative records to examine transfer program reciprocity and amounts. Eventually, the Census Bureau anticipates using the results to develop experimental nonsampling adjustments for underreporting.

Measure program eligibility. Over the next several years, the Census Bureau plans to develop formal estimates of program eligibility for major transfer programs from the SIPP data. The estimates will become part of routine SIPP processing and be included in the public use file when complete.

Improve methods of poverty measurement. A major effort to apply the NAS poverty panel's recommended methods and examine other alternative poverty measures using the SIPP is underway. A joint research paper with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Short et al., 1998) applied their suggested methods to the SIPP for the first time (and presented a time series of experimental estimates from the CPS). That and several other research papers on the subject (both Census Bureau and external) are on the poverty measurement web site.⁹ Further work is underway and will be published in early 1999.

V. CONCLUSION

SIPP is a unique member of the Federal government's portfolio of household surveys. It is invaluable to policy makers and academic researchers and provides insights not available from any other household survey. Many policy analysts have used the data to inform important policy issues, and as it becomes the source of official income and poverty statistics it will become even more important. The Census Bureau is confident about its ability to make the value of SIPP clear to its constituents and is committed to making SIPP the key source of economic and policy-relevant statistics about households.

Nevertheless, the Census Bureau faces many challenges in current SIPP operations that it is addressing.

1. *Pretest instruments more systematically and extensively.* The use of an automated instrument (questionnaire) provides many enhancements to improve data collection. In particular, the questionnaire takes advantage of automated skip patterns and built-in edits for range checks and inconsistencies, and it improves the display, accuracy, and timeliness of data which aids respondent's recall. However, there are no simple "pen and ink" changes to CAPI instruments. If a problem is found in the instrument during production, it normally takes two months to fix and field the changes after the Census Bureau discovers the problem. As the instrument becomes stabilized over time, these problems are resolved.

2. *Encourage better respondent cooperation.* Interviewers, at least, perceive declining cooperation as related to questionnaire length. Questionnaire length, in turn, is a function of the many topics about which SIPP is being asked to collect information. When asked specifically about the apparent trade-off between questionnaire length and response, members of the OMB SIPP Interagency Advisory Committee said clearly that the information was so valuable that they would rather accept the lower response rate than reduce the content. Nevertheless, the Census Bureau will continue to search for ways to improve response, such as increased use of financial incentives. The 2000 SIPP panel is being designed to provide evidence on the effect of questionnaire length on cooperation.

3. *Continue to have a strong methodological research program.* The Census Bureau has resolved many of the research issues worrying SIPP analysts in the early years of the survey. On the other hand, there is no easy answer for attrition bias, one of the main problems that SIPP (and other longitudinal surveys) must deal with. The commitment to preparing the SIPP to become the source of official income and poverty statistics will give a clear research focus for the next several years.

4. *Improve the timeliness of SIPP data products.* Unfortunately Census Bureau SIPP staff are over committed due to earlier budget cuts and the upcoming decennial census. Delay in data

delivery and report production has been the necessary price to pay to field the waves of the 1996 panel on time. The Census Bureau has begun reengineering of the microdata and reports production processes that should eventually improve timeliness.

5. *Continue to improve user support.* The Census Bureau has made major strides in improving access to the data and documentation. These steps should improve the use and value of the SIPP microdata. The Census Bureau intends to explore additional ways of keeping in touch with its user community on a regular basis, such as a newsletter.

SIPP is no longer a toddler, it is a teenager (15 last October). As many teenagers do, it is showing signs of maturity, but clearly SIPP still has a way to go. Having a high profile goal -- providing official income and poverty statistics -- will help it grow quickly into a responsible adult member of the federal government's survey community.

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NOTES

* The author is Chief of the Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division at the U.S. Census Bureau. This paper reports the results of research and analysis undertaken by Census Bureau staff. It has undergone a more limited review than official Census Bureau publications. This report is released to inform interested parties of research and to encourage discussion. The author wishes to thank the following individuals for their comments and contributions to this paper: Evan Davey, Pat Doyle, Nancy Gordon, Vicki Huggins, Robert Kominski, Elizabeth Martin, Michael McMahon, Charles Nelson, and Karen Wheelless.

1. Few annual surveys ask about monthly behaviors, and even if they do, are likely to have recall bias.
2. The Survey of Program Dynamics is a follow-on survey to the 1992 and 1993 SIPP panels, designed to measure the effects of the 1996 welfare reform legislation. For more details on the SPD, see <http://www.sipp.census.gov/spd/> or Weinberg et al. (1997).
3. SIPP On-Call was the successor to SIPP Access, founded by Professor Martin David at the University of Wisconsin but discontinued when funding ended.
4. A similar project by the Urban Institute's Assessing New Federalism Project can be found at <http://newfederalism.urban.org/nfdb/index.htm>.
5. The Census Bureau has issued a qualitative assessment of the effects of CAPI on surveys (Doyle et al., 1998).
6. The NAS panel also recommended four-year panels, but beginning every two years.
7. The methods panel will design and evaluate alternative measurement approaches for core SIPP items through research on existing data and in field and cognitive tests.
8. Seam bias is the tendency of interviewed households to report events as occurring in month 1 of a four-month recall period.
9. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/povmeas.html>.