

Fertility and Program Participation in the United States: 1996

Issued May 2002

Household Economic Studies

P70-82

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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

1996 Program coverage: AFDC, Food Stamps, WIC, and Medicaid

This report presents data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) about the fertility and socioeconomic characteristics of mothers in 1996 related to participation in four programs: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); food stamps; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and Medicaid (see the definition box at the end of the report). Information on mothers' participation in public assistance programs from three

Census Bureau statistical briefs based on SIPP data in 1993¹ have been extended to mothers in 1996. Expanding the scope of the previously released briefs, 1996 data on mothers' participation in Medicaid have been included. Because this report focuses on the fertility differences between mothers in their child-bearing ages, its findings are limited to women 15 to 44 years old in 1996 who had given birth to one or more children.

These data take on added importance because in 1996 Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA).² So, the 1996 SIPP data provide a pre-welfare reform benchmark from which to study the impact of this legislative change on mothers' fertility and socioeconomic characteristics at the national level. Subsequent SIPP data providing information similar to that found in this report was collected in 2001 and will be available for future analysis. In addition, the Census Bureau is conducting the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD), a longitudinal survey specifically designed to evaluate welfare reform. More detailed information on the effect of PRWORA and changes in program participation and family characteristics will

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. *Mothers Who Receive AFDC Payments: Fertility and Socioeconomic Characteristics*, SB/95-2. Washington, DC, 1995; *Mothers Who Receive Food Stamps: Fertility and Socioeconomic Characteristics*, SB/95-22. Washington, DC, 1995; *Mothers Who Receive WIC Benefits: Fertility and Socioeconomic Characteristics*, SB/95-29. Washington, DC, 1995.

² U.S. Congress, Public Law 104-193: *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*: H.R. 3734, 1996.

Current Population Reports

By Jane Lawler Dye

Demographic Programs

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Table 1.
Children Ever Born Per 1,000 Mothers¹ by Program Participation Status: 1993 and 1996

Program status	1996			1993		
	Children ever born per 1,000 mothers	90-percent confidence interval		Children ever born per 1,000 mothers	90-percent confidence interval	
		Lower bound	Upper bound		Lower bound	Upper bound
All mothers	2,136	2,118	2,154	2,171	2,153	2,189
Program Participants²						
AFDC.....	2,543	2,409	2,677	2,586	2,469	2,703
Food stamps.....	2,505	2,408	2,602	2,577	2,481	2,673
WIC	2,083	1,880	2,286	2,228	2,090	2,366
Nonparticipants³						
AFDC.....	2,100	2,079	2,121	2,123	2,101	2,145
Food stamps.....	2,074	2,050	2,098	2,101	2,077	2,125
WIC	2,138	2,119	2,157	2,167	2,147	2,187

¹Mothers are defined as women 15 to 44 who have had one or more births.

²For comparison purposes with the 1993 data, Medicaid participation is not included in the 1996 data in this table.

³Nonparticipants are mothers not participating in the specified program only.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1993 and Wave 2 1996.

be available when these data files are released.

FERTILITY CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Lifetime fertility rates declined from 1993 to 1996.

Childbearing data are presented for mothers participating in each public assistance program at the time of their interviews in 1993 and 1996, as well as for mothers who were not participants when interviewed. Fertility data are shown for mothers only,³ since much of the legislative interest in these programs is focused on child and family well-being.

Lifetime fertility rates for mothers 15 to 44 years old declined slightly between 1993 and 1996. Mothers

³ Childless but pregnant women may also receive WIC benefits. The SIPP, however, does not collect information on the pregnancy status of respondents, so WIC participants who are childless are excluded from this analysis.

in 1996 averaged about 2.1 births⁴ during their lifetime to date, different from the 1993 average of 2.2 children ever born (Table 1).⁵ Furthermore, in both years, non-participants generally had a lower average number of children ever born than did mothers participating in public assistance programs, except for mothers participating in the WIC program, where no differences were found between participants and nonparticipants.

Both 1993 and 1996 data show that mothers receiving AFDC and food stamps averaged about 2.5 to 2.6 children each, higher than the 2.1 to 2.2 range of births per

⁴ The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual (population) values because of sampling variation, or other factors. All statements made in this report have undergone statistical testing and meet Census Bureau standards for statistical accuracy.

⁵ Based on demographic convention, fertility rates in the tables are presented as births or children ever born per 1,000 mothers in the group being studied. In the text, fertility rates are expressed as an average number of births per mother.

mother for mothers who were WIC participants. However, AFDC and food stamp participants were older than WIC participants and, hence, had more years of cumulative childbearing experience. In 1996, 48 percent of AFDC participants and 53 percent of food stamp participants were 30 to 44 years old, compared with only 22 percent of WIC participants.⁶

More than one in five mothers in 1996 were program participants.

In 1996, 8 million mothers 15 to 44 years old participated in at least one of the four public assistance programs highlighted in this report, or 22 percent of the 35.5 million mothers in the childbearing age group (Table 2). The participation of mothers in one program often overlapped with eligibility and participation in other programs. Figure 1 shows, in

⁶ Detailed tabulations by age for participants in different programs can be found on the internet at www.census.gov. Click on "People" then "Fertility."

Table 2.
Fertility Characteristics of Mothers by Program Participation Status: 1996

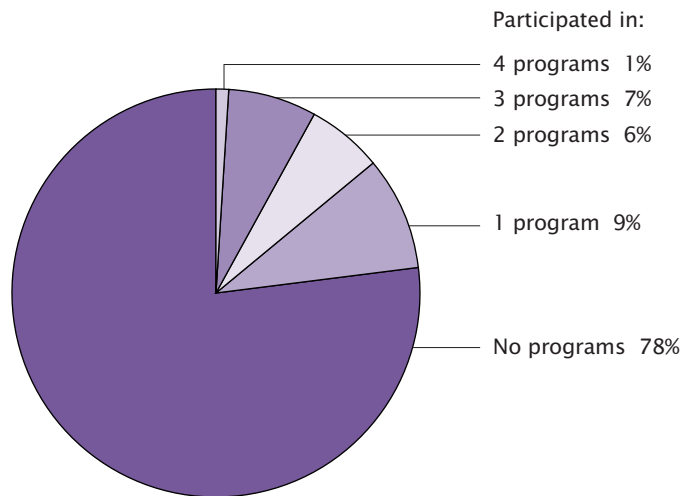
Type of program	Total (in thousands)	Percent of all mothers	Children ever born per 1,000 mothers	Percent with birth in the last year	Percent with nonmarital first birth
All mothers	35,492	100.0	2,136	10.9	32.2
Program Participants					
Total	7,952	22.4	2,361	19.7	58.5
AFDC	2,888	8.1	2,543	15.5	70.8
Food stamps	5,104	14.4	2,505	16.0	64.4
WIC	1,080	3.0	2,083	57.3	56.3
Medicaid	6,805	19.2	2,377	18.7	60.1
Nonparticipants					
Total ¹	27,540	77.6	2,071	8.3	24.7

¹Mothers not participating in any of the four specified programs.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1996.

Figure 1.
**Mothers Age 15 to 44 by Participation in
 Public Assistance Programs: 1996**

(Percent of all mothers)



Note: The four public assistance programs included are AFDC, food stamps, WIC, and Medicaid. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1996.

detail, that 9 percent of all mothers age 15 to 44 were enrolled in one program, 6 percent were in two programs, 7 percent received assistance from three programs, and 1 percent were in all four programs. Almost everyone who received AFDC also enrolled in

Medicaid, and almost everyone getting food stamps got Medicaid, as well. However, there was no complete overlap of participation in more than one program by any of the participants.⁷ Of the

⁷ The internet tables show details for participation in specific individual programs.

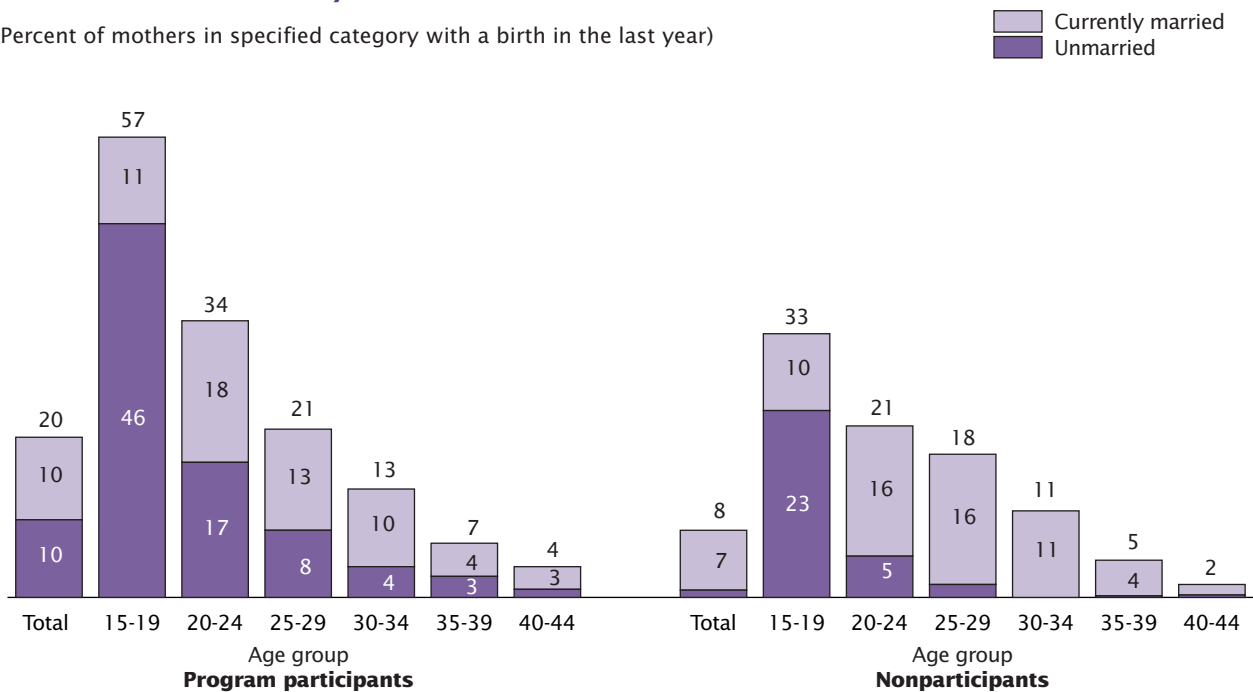
8 million mothers who received assistance from one or more of these programs, 6.8 million were in Medicaid, 5.1 million mothers received food stamps, 2.9 million received AFDC, and only 1.1 million received assistance through WIC (Table 2).

It is important to note that the SIPP data represent program participation at one point in time — the fall of 1996. They do not represent annual caseloads or the total number of people who may have participated in these programs at any time during the year.⁸

⁸ Differences may be noted between program participation shown in this report and the estimates presented from agency reports which administer these programs. In addition to different universe definitions of participants (this analysis includes only mothers 15 to 44 years old), the SIPP data are based on participation at one point in time, rather than total participation in a calendar year. For example, administrative data show that there were 4.6 million families on AFDC during the 1996 calendar year and 1.6 million women receiving WIC benefits. U.S. House of Representatives, *1998 Green Book: Background Material and Data on Programs within the Jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means*: WMCP 104-14, 1998. (Table 7-6).

Figure 2.
Mothers by Program Participation Status and Age, Who Had a Birth in the Last Year by Current Marital Status: 1996

(Percent of mothers in specified category with a birth in the last year)



Note: The percent currently married and the percent unmarried may not add to the total percent with a birth in the last year because of rounding.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1996.

Program participants had higher fertility rates than other mothers.

Table 2 indicates that fertility was higher among program participants than among mothers who did not receive assistance (an average of 2.4 births compared with 2.1 births per mother, respectively). Mothers who were program participants were also more likely to have given birth to three or more children (39 percent) compared with mothers who were nonparticipants (26 percent).⁹ The percentage of mothers who had a nonmarital first-birth was more than twice as high for program participants (59 percent) as for nonparticipants (25 percent).

⁹ Based on author's tabulations not shown in tables.

Young mothers with infants were more likely in need of assistance.

Twenty percent of mothers receiving assistance had given birth within a year of the interview, compared with 8 percent of nonparticipants (Figure 2). Forty-one percent of mothers with infants were receiving public assistance in 1996. Program participants with a recent birth were also less likely to be married at the time of the survey than nonparticipants — one-half compared with one-eighth. Furthermore, nonmarital childbearing was more prevalent among younger women, regardless of program participation status, than among older women. These data suggest that when mothers have an infant to care for and particularly when they are young themselves and unmarried, they may be more likely to need public assistance.

MARITAL STATUS AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Unmarried mothers are exposed to a greater risk of poverty than married mothers.¹⁰ Therefore, policy makers want to track marriage and fertility patterns, to facilitate the planning and evaluation of public assistance programs.

Almost half of program participants were currently married, but many had an absent husband.

In 1996, 48 percent of mothers who received public assistance were currently married (Table 3). However, 26 percent of these

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau; "Historical Tables (Table 4) Poverty Status of Families, by Type of Family, Presence of Related Children, Race and Hispanic Origin: 1959 to 1999;" updated Jan 18, 2001; <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/histpov/hstpov4.html>.

3.8 million married mothers receiving assistance did not live in the same households as their husbands. In contrast, 81 percent of mothers who were not receiving assistance were married, and only 5 percent of these 22.3 million mothers were not living with their spouses. Never-married mothers tend to be younger and especially vulnerable to economic insecurity: 36 percent of mothers who were program participants had never been married, compared with only 7 percent of nonparticipants. Regardless of marital status, fertility rates were higher among program participants than nonparticipants.

More than half of program participants were unmarried when they had their first child.

While high levels of nonmarital first-births occurred in 1996 across all socioeconomic groups, the proportion of mothers who had a nonmarital first-birth was generally higher among mothers receiving public assistance. Fifty-nine percent of program participants were unwed when they had their first child, compared with 25 percent of nonparticipants.

Higher than average proportions of nonmarital first-births for program participants were also found among mothers who were 20 to 24 years old (70 percent), Black (85 percent), in poverty (64 percent), not high school graduates (64 percent), or living in central cities of metropolitan areas (67 percent).

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Household composition, such as the ratio of working-age adults to children, directly affects family economic well-being. One way to

determine the potential needs of families is to look at their living arrangements.

Program participants tended to have more dependents under the age of 18.

Families or households with larger numbers of children generally require more income and a greater expenditure of time by parents or other adults to provide for the children's well-being. Some families include children who are not the biological children of the householder, such as foster children, or the children of other relatives or adults in the household. In 1996, mothers receiving public assistance were more likely to have three or more children living with them (36 percent) than were mothers not receiving assistance (19 percent). In addition, program participant mothers were three times as likely as nonparticipants to be the only adult living in the household (Figure 3).

Program participants were more likely to live with related adults and unmarried partners.

Mothers living with an adult relative (other than a spouse) may receive additional support or, conversely, increased strain on family resources. For example, some households include a grandparent who helps the parent by providing financial or in-kind support, such as childcare, while in other households the grandparent may require additional resources and care because of old age or disability. Figure 3 shows that significant proportions of mothers lived with relatives: 24 percent of all mothers participating in a program had one or more adult relatives residing with them, compared with 12 percent of all nonparticipant mothers.

Cohabitation is an increasingly common living arrangement.¹¹ In 1996, 1.5 million mothers age 15 to 44 lived with an unmarried partner, which decreases the dependency ratio of children to adults. Figure 3 shows that those who participated in one or more programs were more likely than nonparticipating mothers to cohabit with an unmarried partner (7 percent and 3 percent, respectively). Program participants living with an unmarried partner had a higher average number of births (2.4 children ever born) than mothers who were not program participants (2.0 children ever born). They were also more likely to have had three or more births. Twenty-seven percent of the 591,000 program participants living with an unmarried partner had three or more children in 1996 compared with 8 percent of the 941,000 nonparticipants with unmarried partners. Finally, mothers receiving assistance and living with an unmarried partner were more likely to have had a nonmarital first-birth compared to nonparticipants with an unmarried partner (75 percent and 53 percent, respectively).

The living arrangements of women with infants are of particular interest because these mothers may be more likely to need family support and public assistance. In 1996, 24 percent of program participant mothers who lived with a spouse had given birth within the last year, not significantly different from mothers who were living with an unmarried partner (27 percent). Among nonparticipant mothers,

¹¹ Data from decennial censuses indicates that the number of unmarried-partner households increased significantly in the past decade. Tavia Simmons and Grace O'Neill. "Households and Families." *Census 2000 Brief*, C2KBR/01-8. U.S. Census Bureau: Washington, DC, 2001.

Table 3.
Mothers 15 to 44 Years Old by Program Participation Status and Selected Characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Program participants					Nonparticipants					Percent of all mothers who are program participants
	Total (in thousands)	Percent of program participants	Children ever born per 1,000 mothers	Percent with birth in the last year	Percent with non-marital first birth	Total (in thousands)	Percent of nonparticipants	Children ever born per 1,000 mothers	Percent with birth in the last year	Percent with non-marital first birth	
Total	7,952	100.0	2,361	19.7	58.5	27,540	100.0	2,071	8.3	24.7	22.4
Age											
15 to 19 years	479	6.0	1,251	56.9	88.8	203	0.7	1,139	32.6	80.4	70.2
20 to 24 years	1,708	21.5	1,664	34.3	70.3	1,579	5.7	1,440	21.2	56.2	52.0
25 to 29 years	1,749	22.0	2,339	20.8	61.6	3,868	14.0	1,719	17.8	31.8	31.1
30 to 34 years	1,596	20.1	2,631	13.3	53.6	6,446	23.4	2,022	11.3	24.7	19.8
35 to 39 years	1,397	17.6	2,868	6.7	45.6	7,778	28.2	2,225	4.6	19.4	15.2
40 to 44 years	1,023	12.9	2,971	3.8	44.9	7,666	27.8	2,288	1.6	18.4	11.8
Marital Status											
Currently married	3,826	48.1	2,582	21.1	35.4	22,321	81.0	2,139	9.1	18.0	14.6
Married, husband present	2,818	35.4	2,508	23.9	31.1	21,165	76.9	2,141	9.2	17.5	11.7
Married, husband absent ¹	1,008	12.7	2,789	13.2	47.5	1,156	4.2	2,109	6.9	27.9	46.6
Divorced	1,144	14.4	2,529	7.4	32.7	2,947	10.7	1,917	1.4	22.7	28.0
Widowed	93	1.2	(B)	(B)	(B)	223	0.8	2,480	0.0	21.4	29.4
Never married	2,890	36.3	1,977	23.2	100.0	2,049	7.4	1,501	10.7	100.0	58.5
Household Characteristics											
Number of people under 18 in the household ²											
One	2,332	29.3	1,386	17.6	58.3	8,915	32.4	1,378	8.7	25.9	20.7
Two	2,336	29.4	2,162	18.2	55.9	10,272	37.3	2,114	7.4	20.0	18.5
Three or more	2,841	35.7	3,359	23.6	60.1	5,275	19.2	3,312	11.9	25.8	35.0
No other person 18 years and over present											
Other adult present ³	2,542	32.0	2,475	10.4	69.0	2,806	10.2	1,793	2.6	39.7	47.5
Living with spouse	5,410	68.0	2,308	24.1	53.6	24,734	89.8	2,102	9.0	23.0	17.9
Living with adult relative(s)	2,818	35.4	2,508	23.9	31.1	21,165	76.9	2,141	9.2	17.5	11.7
Living with an unmarried partner	1,926	24.2	2,150	21.9	73.2	3,360	12.2	2,089	7.1	44.8	36.4
Living with other adult nonrelative(s)	591	7.4	2,352	27.0	74.7	941	3.4	1,951	7.9	53.3	38.6
.....	384	4.8	1,934	28.0	78.5	692	2.5	1,814	5.9	47.3	35.7
Race and Ethnicity											
White	5,154	64.8	2,313	22.2	47.5	23,028	83.6	2,075	8.6	20.0	18.3
Non-Hispanic	3,948	49.6	2,203	22.0	45.6	20,920	76.0	2,038	8.6	19.1	15.9
Black	2,374	29.9	2,427	14.8	84.6	3,195	11.6	2,050	6.5	58.9	42.6
Hispanic (of any race)	1,325	16.7	2,670	21.9	56.6	2,261	8.2	2,454	8.5	29.8	36.9
Place of Birth											
Native ⁴	6,714	84.4	2,302	18.9	61.5	24,161	87.7	2,051	8.2	24.4	21.7
Foreign born	1,238	15.6	2,682	24.0	42.8	3,379	12.3	2,211	9.2	26.5	26.8
Naturalized citizen	182	2.3	(B)	(B)	(B)	1,209	4.4	2,110	7.7	19.8	13.1
Not a citizen	1,056	13.3	2,648	23.2	42.7	2,169	7.9	2,268	10.0	30.2	32.8
Labor Force Status											
Had a job during last 4 months	3,822	48.1	2,228	15.6	57.9	21,981	79.8	2,025	7.4	25.3	14.8
No job last 4 months	4,130	51.9	2,484	23.6	59.1	5,559	20.2	2,251	11.9	22.1	42.6
Unable to find work	314	4.0	2,291	8.8	72.3	187	0.7	(B)	(B)	(B)	62.6
Not able to work due to disability	537	6.8	2,580	7.3	62.1	208	0.8	2,163	1.2	27.7	72.1
Educational Attainment											
Not a high school graduate	2,753	34.6	2,676	21.9	64.3	2,851	10.4	2,511	7.6	41.7	49.1
High school, 4 years	2,980	37.5	2,233	20.7	57.7	8,881	32.2	2,073	6.1	28.2	25.1
College, 1 or more years	2,219	27.9	2,143	15.6	52.5	15,809	57.4	1,990	9.7	19.6	12.3
Job Training											
Received job training in past 12 months	671	8.4	2,248	12.1	65.0	1,295	4.7	1,940	6.7	28.7	34.1
Sponsored by the government	384	4.8	2,396	10.6	69.3	148	0.5	(B)	(B)	(B)	72.2

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3.
Mothers 15 to 44 Years Old by Program Participation Status and Selected Characteristics: 1996Con.

Characteristic	Program participants					Nonparticipants					Percent of all mothers who are program participants
	Total (in thousands)	Percent of program participants	Children ever born per 1,000 mothers	Percent with birth in the last year	Percent with non-marital first birth	Total (in thousands)	Percent of nonparticipants	Children ever born per 1,000 mothers	Percent with birth in the last year	Percent with non-marital first birth	
Monthly Family Income⁵											
Less than \$500	1,323	16.6	2,237	18.8	71.5	467	1.7	1,965	7.8	37.9	73.9
\$500 to \$1,499.....	3,476	43.7	2,463	16.8	60.4	2,690	9.8	2,003	5.3	43.4	56.4
\$1,500 and over.....	2,945	37.0	2,309	21.7	49.3	24,087	87.5	2,082	8.6	21.9	10.9
Child Support⁶											
Received payments.....	1,151	14.5	2,389	13.4	59.0	2,852	10.4	1,998	3.4	32.2	28.8
Did not receive payments ...	3,924	49.3	2,317	17.7	76.5	3,934	14.3	1,961	6.1	55.0	49.9
Poverty Level⁵											
Below poverty level.....	4,253	53.5	2,578	17.8	64.2	2,021	7.3	2,322	7.7	41.1	67.8
100 to 199 percent of poverty level.....	2,372	29.8	2,215	19.6	51.7	5,658	20.5	2,311	7.7	34.6	29.5
200 percent of poverty level or higher	1,120	14.1	1,879	22.1	48.3	19,565	71.0	1,977	8.6	19.6	5.4
Metropolitan Residence											
Metropolitan	6,029	75.8	2,359	20.0	60.8	22,230	80.7	2,055	8.8	25.3	21.3
In central city	3,311	41.6	2,387	17.5	67.0	6,956	25.3	2,058	9.9	33.9	32.2
Not in central city.....	2,718	34.2	2,325	23.1	53.2	15,274	55.5	2,054	8.3	21.3	15.1
Nonmetropolitan.....	1,923	24.2	2,369	18.8	51.5	5,310	19.3	2,137	6.4	22.1	26.6

B Base less than 200,000 is too small to show derived statistics.

¹Includes separated women.

²Numbers may not add to total since category excludes mothers whose children are 18 years and over or who live elsewhere.

³Categories under "Other adult present" are not mutually exclusive.

⁴Includes people born in U.S. outlying areas and abroad to parents who are U.S. citizens.

⁵Excludes those who did not report income.

⁶Data only shown for mothers who were not married or not living with a spouse.

Note: Participation status is defined as participating in at least one program (AFDC, food stamps, WIC or Medicaid) or participating in none.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1996.

the percent who had given birth during the last year was lower, compared with participants, for both mothers living with a spouse (9 percent) and mothers living with an unmarried partner (8 percent).

TEENAGE CHILDBEARING

Teenage childbearing was identified as both a significant social issue and a factor associated with long-term receipt of public assistance in

PRWORA. Having a child as a teenager may interrupt a young woman's educational pursuits and put her at risk of economic hardship. In addition, early childbearing can lead to higher levels of lifetime fertility by the end of a woman's reproductive life. Larger family size may increase the financial burdens of the household, and increase the likelihood of receiving public assistance in later years.

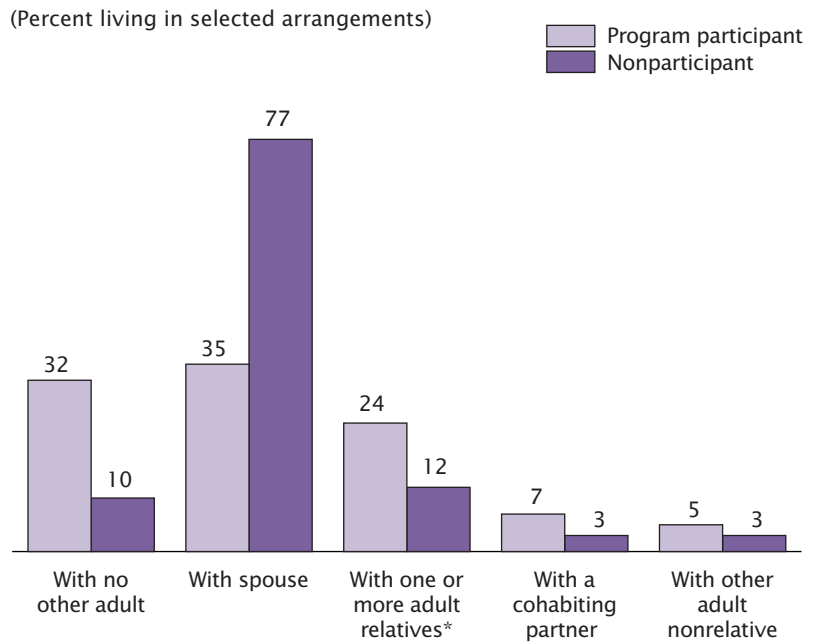
The majority of teenage mothers were program participants.

Of the estimated 682,000 teenage mothers in 1996, 70 percent were enrolled in one or more of the public assistance programs examined in this report (Table 3). Six percent of participant mothers were teenagers compared with 1 percent of nonparticipant mothers. Adolescent mothers were less

likely than older mothers to be married at the time of their first birth, regardless of their program participation status. Among program participants, 89 percent of teen mothers had a nonmarital first-birth, not statistically different from that of nonparticipant teen mothers (80 percent).¹² In addition, teenage mothers may have greater need for public assistance if they have very young children, which is commonly the case. Fifty-seven percent of teen mothers receiving public assistance had a child within 1 year of the survey, compared with 33 percent receiving no assistance.

¹² These proportions are not statistically different because there are large standard errors associated with estimates based on small samples (89 percent of 479,000 teen program participants and 80 percent of 203,000 teen nonparticipants).

Figure 3.
Mothers Living in Selected Living Arrangements by Program Participation Status: 1996



* Excluding spouses.
Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100 percent because more than one type of adult may live in a household.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1996.

Table 4.
Living Arrangements of Teenage Mothers by Program Participation Status: 1996

(Percent)

Type of living arrangement	Program participants	90-percent confidence interval		Nonparticipants	90-percent confidence interval	
		Lower bound	Upper bound		Lower bound	Upper bound
Number of mothers (in thousands)	479	418	540	203	163	243
Total	100.0	-	-	100.0	-	-
No adult present	12.8	8.5	17.1	6.3	1.5	11.1
Adult present ¹	87.2	82.9	91.5	93.7	88.9	98.5
Living with spouse	16.0	11.3	20.7	27.7	18.9	36.5
Other related adult(s) in the household ²	56.4	50.0	62.8	59.4	49.7	69.1
Living with an unmarried partner	7.3	4.0	10.6	5.6	1.1	10.1
Living with other adult nonrelative(s) ³	11.9	7.7	16.1	16.4	9.1	23.7

- Represents or rounds to zero.

¹Adults includes all people 18 years and over plus spouses and unmarried partners 15 years and over.

²Excludes spouses.

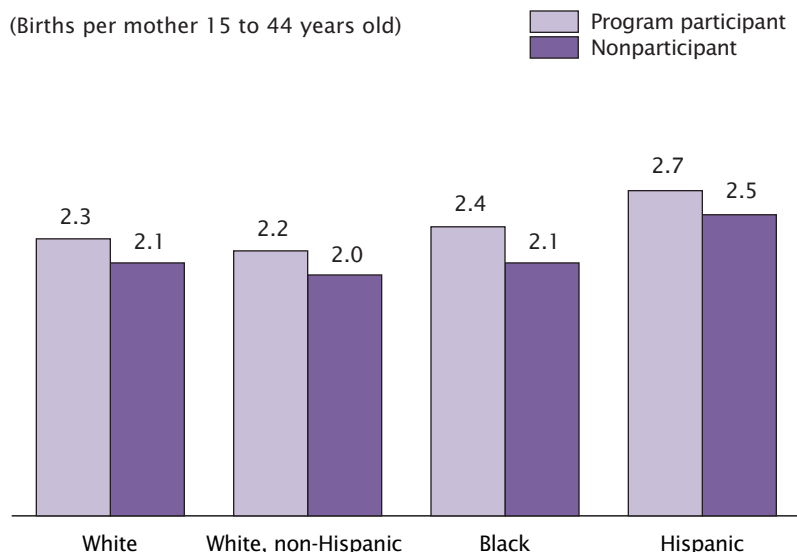
³Excludes unmarried partners.

Note: Teen mothers who were program participants and living with related adults, an unmarried partner, or other adult nonrelative were not significantly different than teen mothers who were nonparticipants in these living arrangements.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1996.

Figure 4.
Average Number of Lifetime Births to Mothers by Race, Hispanic Origin and Program Participation Status: 1996

(Births per mother 15 to 44 years old)



Note: Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1996.

Most teen mothers lived with an adult relative.

The living arrangements of teenage mothers in 1996 differed slightly by their program participation status: 13 percent of teen mothers receiving public assistance lived with no one else age 18 or older, while only 6 percent of teenage nonparticipants lived with no other adults (Table 4). Sixteen percent of teen mothers participating in programs were living with a spouse, compared with 28 percent of nonparticipant teen mothers. The majority of teen mothers lived with one or more adult relatives — 56 percent of program participants and 59 percent of nonparticipants — differences which are not statistically significant. On average, among participants and nonparticipants, only a small proportion of teen mothers lived with an unmarried

partner (about 7 percent), while around 14 percent of teen mothers lived with an adult nonrelative who was not an unmarried partner, usually a roommate or housemate.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND NATIVITY

Regardless of program participation status, Hispanic mothers had the highest average number of births.

Receipt of public assistance among mothers in 1996 differed by race and Hispanic origin.¹³ One-half of the mothers who received public

¹³ Data for American Indian and Alaska Native and Asian and Pacific Islander populations are not shown in this report because of the small sample size in the SIPP. Based on the population of women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the Wave 2, 1996 Panel, 11.8 percent of the White population, and 3.3 percent of the Black population were also of Hispanic origin.

assistance but three-fourths of the mothers who did not receive assistance were White, non-Hispanic (Table 3). Recipients were much more likely to be Black (30 percent) or Hispanic (17 percent) than mothers who did not receive assistance (12 percent and 8 percent, respectively).¹⁴

Overall, Black mothers and Hispanic mothers had higher average numbers of births per mother than White, non-Hispanic mothers in 1996. Among program participants, Black mothers averaged 2.4 births, while Hispanic mothers averaged 2.7 births (Figure 4). White, non-Hispanic mothers receiving assistance had an average of 2.2 births. Among nonparticipants, the average number of births to White, non-Hispanics and Blacks were not significantly different from each other (2.0 and 2.1 births, respectively), but were less than the average number of births among Hispanic mothers who were nonparticipants (2.5 births).

Blacks were more likely to have had a nonmarital first-birth (85 percent of program participants and 59 percent of nonparticipants) than were White, non-Hispanic mothers (46 percent and 19 percent, respectively) (Table 3). The percentage of Hispanic mothers who had a nonmarital first-birth was 57 percent among program participants and 30 percent among nonparticipants.

Program participants were only slightly more likely to be foreign-born.

Fertility is generally higher among foreign-born mothers than among native mothers, and program

¹⁴ Hispanic mothers may be of any race.

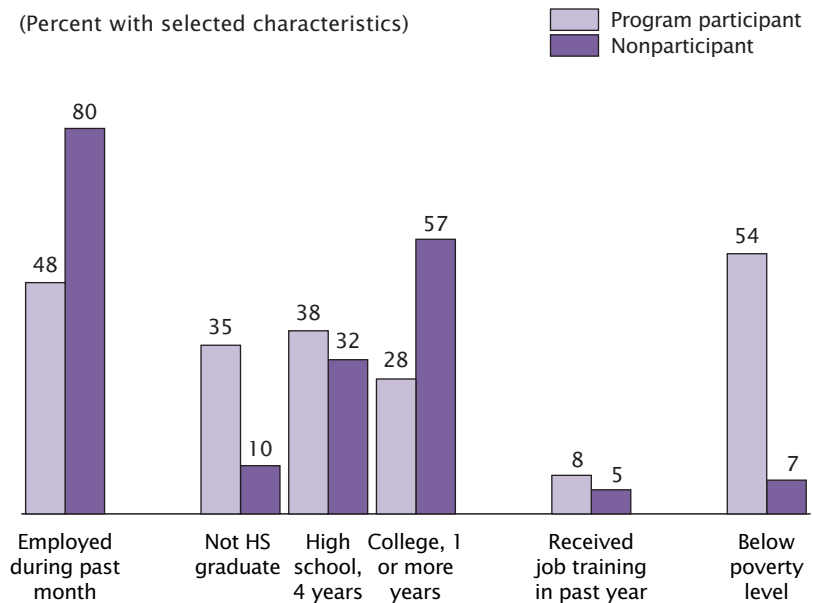
participants were slightly more likely than nonparticipants to be foreign-born (16 percent and 12 percent, respectively). Foreign-born mothers with higher fertility may be more likely to need financial help and public assistance. Foreign-born mothers participating in programs averaged 2.7 total births compared with 2.2 births among foreign-born nonparticipants. The difference was smaller for native mothers, who had an average of 2.3 births among mothers receiving assistance and 2.1 births among nonrecipients.

In addition, foreign-born mothers who are not naturalized citizens may experience more economic hardship in adjusting to life in a new country than either native mothers, who do not have to make this adjustment, or foreign-born mothers who have become naturalized citizens and typically have lived in the United States for several years. As a result, they may depend more on public assistance programs. Of the 3.2 million foreign-born mothers who were not citizens in 1996, 1.1 million (33 percent) were enrolled in public assistance programs. However, among the 1.4 million foreign-born mothers who had become naturalized citizens, the level of program participation was only 13 percent. In comparison, the proportion of native mothers enrolled in one or more public assistance programs was 22 percent of 30.9 million.

Among program participants, native mothers were more likely than foreign-born mothers to have had a nonmarital first-birth (62 percent and 43 percent, respectively). Among nonparticipants, however, the percentage of women with a nonmarital first-birth did not differ significantly by nativity status (24 percent of native mothers versus 27 percent of foreign-born mothers).

Figure 5.
Selected Employment, Educational, and Economic Characteristics of Mothers by Program Participation Status: 1996

(Percent with selected characteristics)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2 1996.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMIC STATUS

Families obtain their economic support through various sources of income. These sources can include mother's earnings, husband's earnings, child support, public assistance, and other sources of income, including help from relatives and friends. In general, mothers receiving public assistance had lower family incomes, lower levels of labor force participation, and less education than nonparticipant mothers.

Almost half of the program participants in 1996 were employed.

Almost half of program participants and four-fifths of nonparticipants were working during the 4 month reference period (Figure 5). Among the 4.1 million program participants who did not have a job, 8 percent

reported being unable to find work and 13 percent were not able to work due to a disability (Table 3). Among nonparticipants, less than 4 percent of unemployed mothers reported either one of these problems.

Fertility rates were higher among mothers who were not working. For program participants, mothers who were not working had an average of 2.5 births, while employed participant mothers had an average of 2.2 births. A similar pattern existed for nonrecipients, where the average mother who was not working had 2.3 births, and the average employed mother had 2.0 births.

More than one-quarter of the program participants had some college education.

Figure 5 shows that 35 percent of mothers receiving assistance had not completed high school, compared with only 10 percent of

nonparticipant mothers. However, 28 percent of mothers who were participating in a public assistance program had completed 1 or more years of college. The proportion of nonparticipant mothers with some college education was twice as high, 57 percent.

Mothers with less education tend to have higher fertility rates. In 1996, mothers with less than a high school diploma had the highest fertility rates. Among them, program participants had about 2.7 births while those who were nonparticipants had about 2.5 births (Table 3). Participant and nonparticipant mothers with 1 or more years of college had lower fertility rates (2.1 and 2.0 births, respectively) than mothers who did not graduate from high school or mothers with a high school diploma and no college who had an average of 2.2 births for participants and 2.1 births for nonparticipants.

The proportion of program participant mothers who had a nonmarital first-birth differed by educational attainment. Sixty-four percent of mothers who were receiving assistance and did not graduate from high school had a nonmarital first-birth, compared with 58 percent of program participant mothers who finished high school and 53 percent who had 1 or more years of college. The range in nonmarital fertility by educational attainment was wider among nonparticipant mothers: 42 percent of nonparticipant mothers who did not complete high school had a nonmarital first-birth, compared with only 20 percent of nonparticipant mothers with 1 or more years of college.

A small proportion of mothers had recent job training.

Only 8 percent of mothers receiving public assistance and 5 percent of nonparticipant mothers had been in

job training in the 12 months preceding their interview in 1996 (Figure 5). The government funded more than half (57 percent) of the 671,000 job-training slots used by program participants and 11 percent of the 1.3 million used by nonparticipants (Table 3).

No fertility differences exist among mothers with incomes above poverty by participation status.

Mothers who participated in 1 or more programs were highly likely to have family incomes below the federal poverty level: 54 percent of program participants were in poverty compared with only 7 percent of nonparticipants (Figure 5). Fertility rates tended to be higher among mothers living in poorer economic conditions, regardless of program participation status. Program participant mothers with incomes below the poverty level averaged 2.6 births, compared with an average of 1.9 births for program participant mothers with incomes of at least 200 percent of the poverty level. Similarly, among nonparticipant mothers, the fertility rates were higher for mothers in poverty compared with mothers with incomes of at least 200 percent of the poverty level (2.3 and 2.0, respectively). These figures reveal that, while fertility rates tend to be higher among mothers on public assistance, fertility rates were not statistically different between nonparticipant mothers and participant mothers who had incomes above the poverty line (Table 3).

Child support was an important source of income.

Economic support from fathers is another important source of income for mothers who were not married or not living with a spouse. Only 23 percent of participant mothers and 42 percent of nonparticipant

mothers not living with a spouse were receiving child support in 1996.¹⁵ One-half of the mothers who did not receive child support were receiving public assistance.

SUMMARY

This report has examined fertility among mothers according to their participation in selected public assistance programs. Of the 35.5 million mothers 15 to 44 years old in 1996, 8 million (22 percent) were participants in either AFDC, food stamps, WIC, or Medicaid programs. More than half of mothers participating in any of these assistance programs were enrolled in two or more programs.

Mothers enrolled in assistance programs tended to have relatively high fertility rates and many supported and cared for several children, a large proportion of whom were infants. Among the mothers with babies under 1 year old, 41 percent were program participants. Many mothers relying on public assistance were solely responsible for caring for these children. Only 35 percent of mothers participating in programs were currently married and living with their spouse, compared with 77 percent of mothers not enrolled in any programs. One out of every nine teenage mothers was living with no other adult in the household. Furthermore, half of the mothers not living with a spouse and not receiving child support were receiving public assistance.

Mothers receiving assistance were more likely than other mothers to live with an adult relative, which could be a benefit or a drain on the household's resources.

¹⁵ Mothers who are not married or not living with a spouse in this section of the report are defined as being divorced, widowed, married spouse absent, or never married.

Program participants were also more likely than nonparticipant mothers to live with an unmarried partner (7 percent and 3 percent, respectively), potentially putting them at greater risk of having another baby.

Program participants in 1996 were racially and ethnically diverse. Fifty percent of mothers receiving assistance were White, non-Hispanic, while Blacks made up 30 percent and Hispanics made up 17 percent of program participants. However, Black and Hispanic mothers were more likely than White, non-Hispanic mothers to rely on public assistance. Hispanic program participants had the highest average number of births per mother (2.7 births), followed by Black participants (2.4 births) and White, non-Hispanic participants (2.2 births).

Foreign-born program participants had a higher average number of births per mother (2.7 births) than native mothers (2.3 births), but were much less likely to have had a nonmarital first-birth (43 percent and 62 percent, respectively). In 1996, foreign-born mothers who were not naturalized citizens were particularly vulnerable to economic hardship leading one-third of these mothers to participate in public assistance programs.

A sizable proportion of mothers receiving assistance were employed and had some college education,

but at lower levels than nonparticipant mothers. Factors driving mothers to participate in public assistance programs included not having another adult in the household, and not having enough education, employment or child support. For many of these mothers, participation in public assistance programs represented a transitional time in their lives when they needed financial help.¹⁶

SOURCE OF DATA

The estimates in this report come from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals, and are based on data collected from August through November of 1996 by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data highlighted in this report come primarily from the core and the fertility history topical module in the second interview (wave) of the 1996 SIPP panel. Data from the 1993 SIPP panel also were collected in the second wave for the 4-month period from June to September 1993. Although the main focus of the SIPP is information on labor force participation, jobs, income, and participation in federal assistance programs,

¹⁶ The median duration female householders with children spent on AFDC, Food Stamps, and Medicaid programs in the early 1990s was about 12 months (see Jan Tin. *Dynamics of Economic Well-Being: Program Participation, 1992-1993*. Current Population Reports, Series P70-58. U.S. Census Bureau: Washington, DC, 1999, Table B).

information on other topics is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

All statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling error and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling error in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpreted questions, how able and willing respondents were to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers were coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including: the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The SIPP employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to under coverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are

PROGRAM COVERAGE

The following descriptions explain federal programs as they existed at the time the SIPP data were collected in 1996.¹ Passage of the PRWORA in 1996 required states subsequently to change many elements of public assistance programs.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was a program administered and funded by both federal and state governments to provide financial assistance to needy families. Participant families in 1996 had to meet certain financial hardship criteria determined by the state and to have a dependent child under 18 living in the household. To qualify, the child must have been (1) deprived of financial support from one of his or her parents due to the parent's death, continued absence, incapacity, or unemployment, (2) a resident of the state, and (3) a U.S. citizen or an alien who was permanently and lawfully residing in the United States.

Food Stamps

The Food Stamp Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides low-income households with access to a low-cost diet. The value

of food stamps received by eligible households is based on the stipulation that people are expected to contribute about 30 percent of their income to the purchase of food. In 1996, people who were eligible for AFDC were, in general, automatically eligible for food stamps, although not all AFDC participants received food stamps.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides nutritional assistance to low-income pregnant and postpartum women, their infants, and their children under 5 years of age. To be eligible, recipients must have had family incomes at or below 185 percent of poverty (\$23,155 for a family of three in 1996) and must have been nutritionally at risk. Benefits included food assistance (actual food items or vouchers for specific food items), nutritional screening and education, and breast-feeding support.

Medicaid

Medicaid provides access to health care for significant numbers of low-income families. In 1996, states were required to provide Medicaid to families receiving AFDC. Medicaid covered pregnant women and children under age 6 with family incomes up to 133 percent of the poverty level (\$16,646 for a family of three in 1996). Furthermore, states had the option of covering pregnant women and infants with incomes up to 185 percent of the poverty level.

¹ More detailed information on the eligibility requirements for these programs can be found in U.S. House of Representatives, *1996 Green Book: Background Material and Data on Programs within the Jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means*: WMCP 104-14, 1996.

missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

Please contact Earl Letourneau of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via Internet e-mail at earl.j.letourneau@census.gov for information on the source of the data, the accuracy of the estimates, the use of standard errors, and the computation of standard errors.

MORE INFORMATION

The report as well as four additional detailed tables are available on the Internet (www.census.gov); search for this report by clicking on the word "People" on the Web page and selecting "Fertility."

CONTACTS

For additional information on fertility and program participation, contact the author of this report in the Fertility and Family Statistics Branch, on 301-457-2416, or by e-mail.

Jane Lawler Dye
jane.l.dye@census.gov

USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

Chief, Population Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233 or send e-mail to: pop@census.gov

SUGGESTED CITATION

Dye, Jane Lawler, 2001. *Fertility and Program Participation in the United States: 1996*. Current Population Reports, P70-82. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

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