

Dynamics of Economic Well-Being: Program Participation, 1996 to 1999 Who Gets Assistance?

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The August 1996 passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), also known as welfare reform, gave states considerable flexibility and greater responsibility in formulating and implementing initiatives to reduce welfare dependency and to encourage employment for members of low-income families with children. Under the PRWORA, most welfare recipients face a 60-month time limit in federal funding and must meet certain work requirements to receive assistance. Even prior to the enactment of PRWORA, however, several states modified their welfare programs under waivers granted by the federal government, which allowed them to implement innovative demonstration projects to move people from welfare to work.

Changes in the welfare system, both under waivers and the PRWORA legislation, have increased the interest in information about the degree to which certain groups of people are involved in assistance programs; about the characteristics of program participants; about the kinds of programs they use; and about the intensity and extent of their participation. Of particular interest is how people's participation extends over time.

This report focuses on participation and on the characteristics of participants in the following major means-tested public-assistance programs:¹

¹ Means-tested programs are those that require income and/or assets of the individual or family to be below specified thresholds in order to qualify for benefits. These programs provide cash and noncash assistance to eligible individuals and families.

- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- General Assistance (GA)
- Food stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid
- Housing assistance.

The data cover calendar years 1996 through 1999,² a time just before and after federal welfare reform was enacted. The data provide a set of baseline estimates for the study of the effects of the reforms.³

The data come from the 1996 panel of the Survey of Income and Program

² The longitudinal estimates presented here are based on people who were interviewed in all waves of the reference period, or for whom imputed information exist. Efforts were made during the life of the panel to ensure that the sample remained representative of the noninstitutional population of the United States. People who moved were followed to their new address. If the people included in the estimates have different experiences in program participation than the people who did not respond initially, left the sample, or missed two or more consecutive waves, these longitudinal estimates may be biased. The panel consists of four rotations interviewed in consecutive months. For rotations with missing data at the beginning of 1996 or end of 1999, imputations were made on the basis of the closest month of data available. Rotation 3 had 1 month of data imputed in 1996, rotation 4 had 2 months imputed in that year, and rotation 1 had 1 month of imputed data in 1999.

³ Part of the PRWORA law directed the Census Bureau to field a new survey, whose purpose is to collect the data necessary to evaluate the impact of the change. To carry out that directive, the Census Bureau began conducting the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD). The SPD simultaneously describes the full range of state welfare programs along with social, economic, demographic, and family changes that will help or limit the effectiveness of the reforms. The Census Bureau collected data for households previously interviewed in SIPP from 1992-1994 or 1993-1995 for each of the 6 years from 1996 through 2002. Cross-sectional data from SPD were released after the 1997, 1998, and 1999 surveys. The first longitudinal file from SPD was released in the summer of 2001 covering 1992-1994 and 1996-1997 and the second longitudinal file was released in the fall of 2002 covering 1992-1994 and 1996-1999. Other releases are planned. For more information about SPD, see the SPD Web site, at www.sipp.census.gov/spd/.

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Participation (SIPP).⁴ SIPP is a longitudinal survey, which means that, unlike periodic point-in-time surveys, such as the Current Population Survey, SIPP follows the same people over time, or longitudinally.⁵

This longitudinality enables SIPP to study a subject from two perspectives. First, it can look back at the history of a group of people over a span of time. Second, it can take cross-sectional views of a population of interest at regular intervals, such as monthly. SIPP is analogous to a video cassette recorder with a freeze-frame function.

SIPP's historical perspective is useful for examining a variety of concepts. One is gross activity levels, such as how many people *ever* used a particular assistance program in a given year, even though not all of them used it at any particular time. Another is cumulative amounts, such as the number of months within a time period that an individual participated in one or more assistance programs. Yet another approach is to examine the number, timing, and duration of flows of people into and out of particular situations within a given time span, such as the length of time an individual continuously participates in a particular program or in assistance in general. SIPP's cross-sectional perspective captures changes over

time in the level of an activity, such as in the proportion of the populations, or segments of populations, existing at selected points in time.

The first section of the report examines the degree and scope of the involvement of groups of people in assistance programs. The second section looks at the duration of attachment to assistance and at the monthly benefits of program participants. Appendix A displays some of the detailed statistical tables analyzed in this report.

Highlights

- About 36 (± 0.5) million people or 13 (± 0.3) percent of the population participated in major means-tested assistance programs in each month, on average, in 1999.⁶
- In 1999, individuals were more likely to participate in Medicaid than in any of the other programs examined. Ten percent (± 0.3) of individuals participated in Medicaid in an average month in 1999.
- The poor, in 1999, were much more likely to receive at least one type of major means-tested benefit than individuals who were not in poor families. Fifty seven (± 0.2) percent of the poor received benefits in at least 1 month in 1999 compared with only 10 (± 0.5) percent of the nonpoor.
- Differences in the participation rates among various demographic groups are largely associated with differences in their poverty rates.

⁶ 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 values because of sampling variation or other factors. All comparisons made in this report have statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent level unless otherwise noted.

- Individuals in households maintained by women were approximately five times as likely to participate in means-tested programs, in an average month in 1999, as individuals in married-couple households 37 (± 1.2) percent versus 7 (± 0.3) percent; and more than twice as likely as households maintained by men 16 (± 1.6) percent.
- Adults (people age 18 and over) without a high school diploma were more than twice as likely as high school graduates, and more than five times as likely as those with at least some college, to participate in some type of means-tested programs in an average month in 1999 (participation rates were 26 (± 1.2) percent, 11 (± 0.5) percent, and 5 (± 0.3) percent, respectively, for these groups).
- Unemployed people were much more likely to receive means-tested benefits in an average month in 1999 than were people with full-time jobs, 26 (± 2.8) percent compared with 4 (± 0.2) percent.
- Children (people under 18 years of age) and people 65 years and older were more likely than people in the 18-64 year old age group to be long-term recipients of assistance programs ("long-term" being defined as participating in all 48 months of the 1996-1999 period examined in this report).⁷
- Recipients of means-tested programs participated in the Supplemental Security Income program for a longer period of time (median duration of 11.2 (± 0.7) months) than they did in

⁷ There is no statistical difference in long-term program participation between persons less than 18 years old and persons over 65 years old.

⁴ The sample of households in SIPP is divided into four interview groups called rotation groups. Each month, one of the four rotation groups is interviewed about the previous 4 months (the reference period). The 1996 SIPP panel covered the period from January 1996 to December 1999. Data for all four rotation groups (the full sample) are available only for 48 continuous reference months, the calendar months of January 1996 through December 1999. The data in this report were collected from April 1996 through March 2000. The population represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States.

⁵ To ensure that the sample remains representative of the noninstitutionalized population of the United States, the survey attempts to follow people in the panel who move.

food stamps or Medicaid in the 1996-1999 period.

- Within selected demographic groups (such as age groups and family types), higher average monthly program participation rates tended to be associated with the receipt of higher median family benefits.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

The focus in this section is on groups of people in the population at large. The discussion investigates their degree of involvement in assistance programs using three concepts, each of which explores a

different aspect of program participation.⁸

- The **"average monthly program participation rate"**: These are annual-average rates — one for each of the years 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999. The rate represents a weighted average of the 12 monthly

⁸ A person is considered to participate in a program if the person receives benefits from the program or is covered under the allotment of another person. If, for example, in a given month two people in a household received food stamps and two additional people in the household were covered by the food stamp program, then the number of people from that household who participated in the food stamp program for that month would be counted as "four."

(cross-sectional) measurements taken in the specified year of the proportion of people in the group who participated in assistance programs. Each of the component monthly rates in the average corresponds to the population existing in the month the measurement was taken. The measure tells what share of the group is on assistance, on average, in any given month during the year in question.

- The percentage of a group who **"participated 1 or more months in a (specified) year"**: These percentages are presented

Description of Concepts

Average monthly participation rate for (a specified year): this is an annual-average measure of the monthly percentage of people who participated in at least one major means-tested program; it represents a weighted average of the 12 monthly participation rates for the year. People who participated in more than one program in a month are only counted once in the total number of participants for that month.

Participated 1 or more months in (a specified year): the percentage of people who ever participated at any time in at least one major means-tested program during a specified year.

Participated between 1 and 11 months: the percentage of people who participated in at least one program or another for a total of between 1 and 11 months (not necessarily consecutive) during the January 1996-December 1999 period.

Participated 12 or more months: the percentage of people who participated in at least one program or another for a total of 12 or more months (not necessarily consecutive) during the January 1996-December 1999 period, including people who participated in all 48 months of the period.

Participated all 48 months: the percentage of people who participated in at least one program or another for all 48 months of the January 1996-December 1999 period.

Spell of participation: an uninterrupted period of months in which an individual receives means-tested assistance, and which is preceded by 1 or more months of nonparticipation; a month is included in a spell if the individual receives assistance for all or any part of the month.

Median spell duration: that value for spell length that divides the distribution of spells by duration in half, one half being shorter and one half longer than the median.

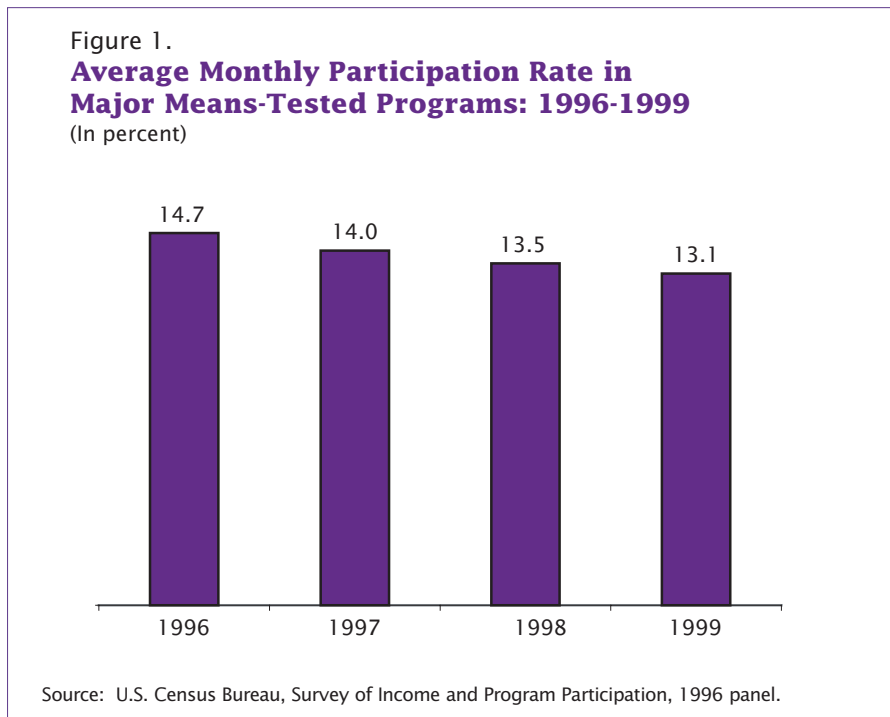
Median monthly family benefit: that value that divides in half the distribution of the recipients of assistance, by their monthly family benefit amount in a specified year: one half of the people in the distribution have benefits below the median, the other half have benefits above it. The monthly family benefit amount for an individual in a given year represents the amount for the last month in that year for which the family's receipt of the benefit was reported (not necessarily December); if the family participated in a program for only part of that month, then the benefit amount could underestimate the usual monthly benefit received by the family from that program.

for each year, 1996-1999. The measure represents the proportion of people in a group who ever took part in any program at any time in a year. It is a measure of gross activity, and corresponds to the population existing at the end of the year in question. The figure represents the share of the group that participated in assistance **at some time during the specified year.**

- The percentage of the population that **"participated for a (specified) number of months in the 48-month period between January 1996 and December 1999"**— This measure is based on the number of accumulated (not necessarily consecutive) months spent in assistance programs throughout the entire 48-month time span. It relates to the population existing at the end of the 48 months.

Program Usage: 1996 to 1999

Of the estimated 272 million noninstitutionalized civilians living in the United States in 1999,



approximately 36 million, or 13.1 percent, participated in one or more major means-tested assistance programs, on average, during each of the months of 1999. As Figure 1 shows, the average monthly participation rate decreased from about 14.7 percent in 1996 to 13.1 percent in 1999.

A small proportion of the population participated in means-tested programs on a long-term basis, with 6.5 percent having participated in each month of the period (Figure 2). Only 0.4 percent of welfare (AFDC/TANF or GA) participants received benefits in all 48 months; this was the lowest of the five

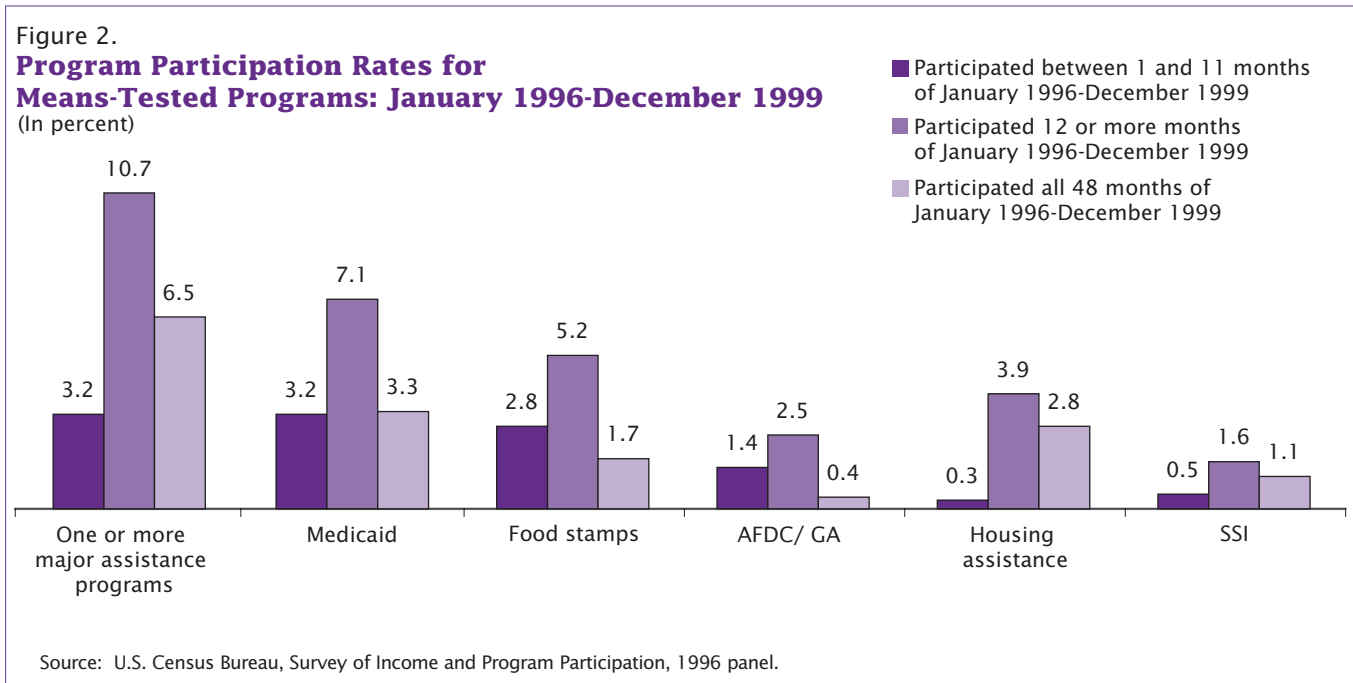
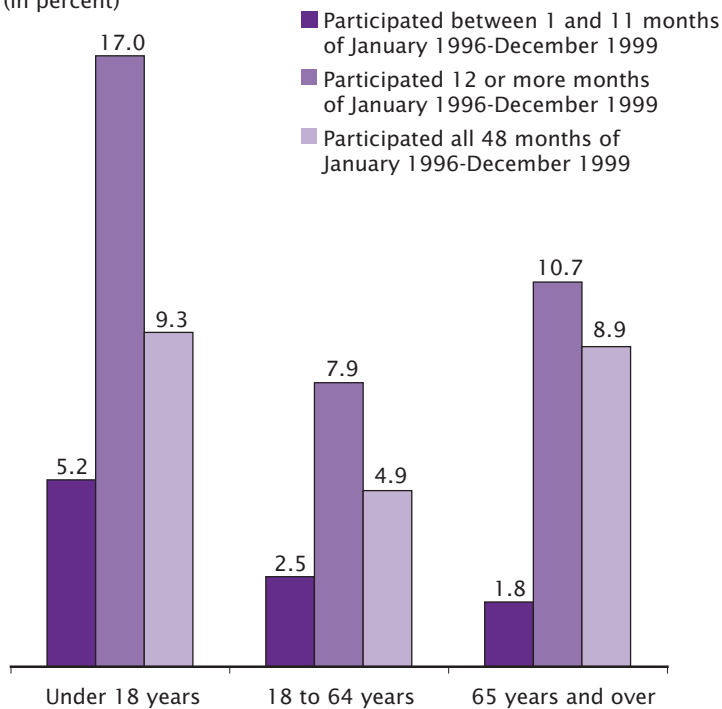


Figure 3.
Program Participation Rates for Major Means – Tested Programs by Age: January 1996-December 1999

(In percent)



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

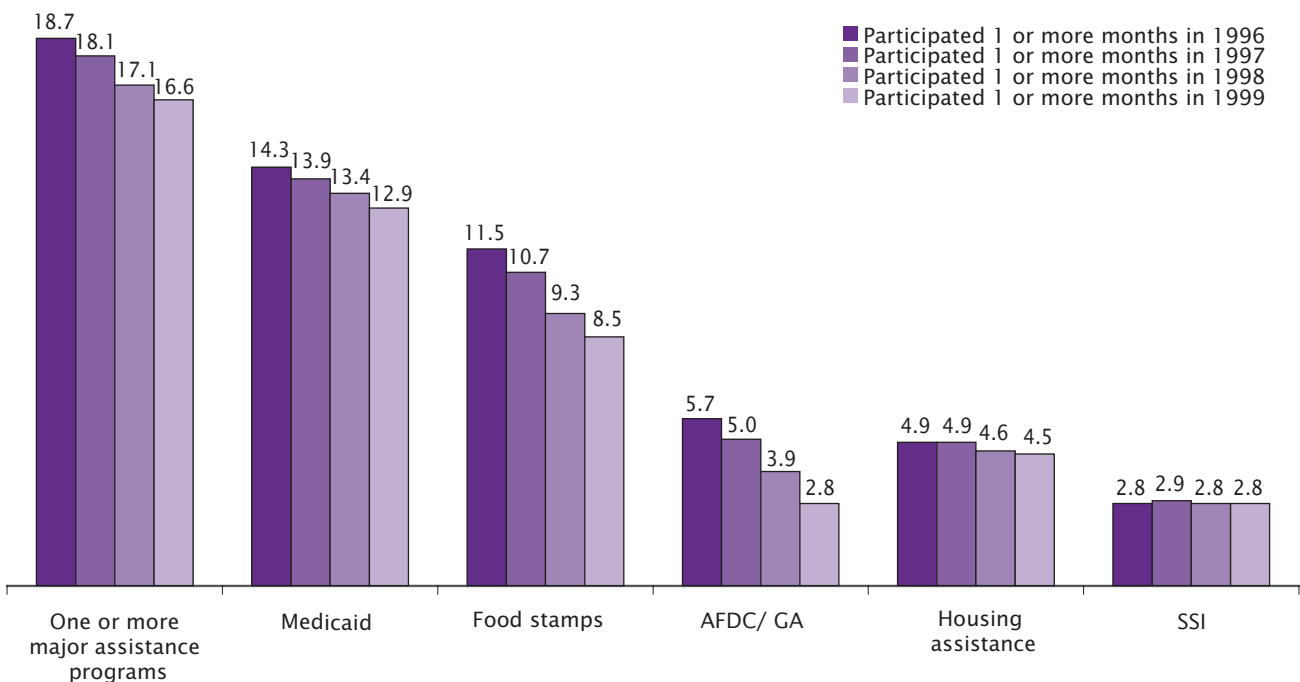
programs studied. About 9.3 percent of people under 18 years old participated each month of the 1996-1999 period, compared with 4.9 percent of people 18 to 64 years old, and 8.9 percent of people 65 years and older (Figure 3).

Medicaid has the highest participation rate.

As Figure 4 illustrates, individuals were more likely to participate in Medicaid than in any of the other programs examined in this report. In 1996, 14.3 percent of the population participated in Medicaid in at least 1 month; higher than in 1997, 1998, or 1999 (13.9, 13.4, and 12.9 percent respectively, Figure 4). The 1996 participation rates were greater for Medicaid, food stamps, AFDC/TANF or GA, and housing assistance than in 1999; the rate for SSI did not change. The average monthly participation rate in 1999 for Medicaid (9.7 percent) was higher than that

Figure 4.
Program Participation Rates for Means-Tested Programs: 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999

(In percent)

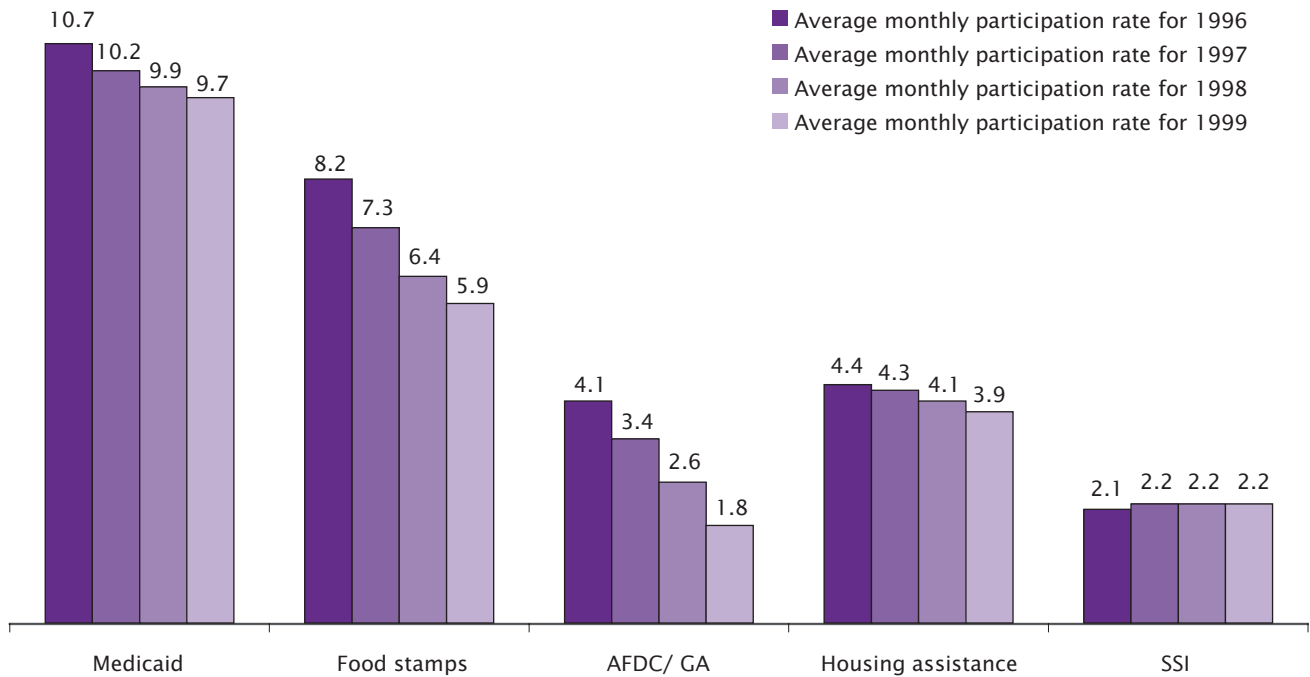


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 panel.

Figure 5.

Average Monthly Participation Rates for Means-Tested Programs: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)

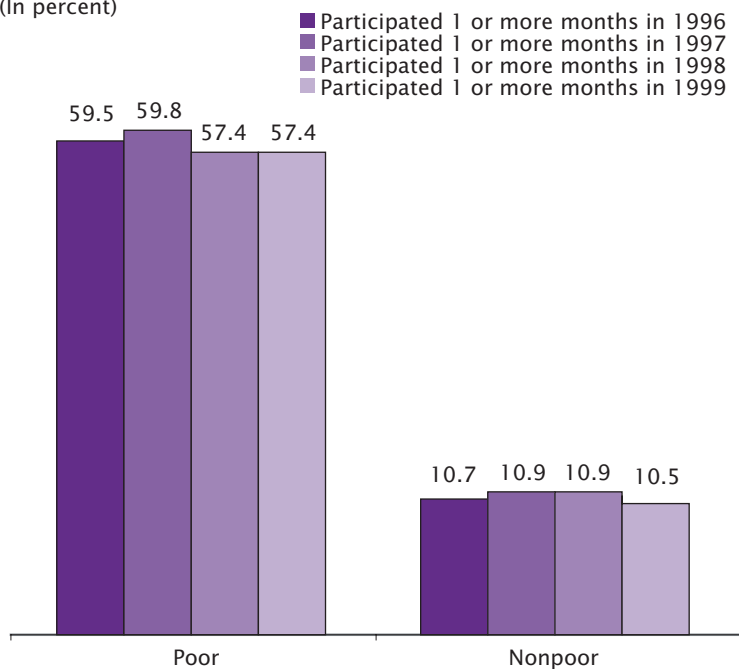


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 panel.

Figure 6.

Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Poverty Status: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)



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

for AFDC/TANF or GA, food stamps, housing assistance, or SSI (Figure 5). More people (about 3.3 percent of the population) participated in Medicaid in all 48 months than in any other program (Figure 2).

An estimated 27 million people received Medicaid benefits in an average month of 1999; about 12 million of these recipients were children. In fact, 16.9 percent of children under age 18 received Medicaid, compared with 6.5 percent of people 18 to 64 years, and 10.3 percent of people 65 years old and over (see Appendix A, Table A-5).

Between half and three-quarters of the poor receive means-tested assistance.

Figure 6 shows that there was a small decline, from 59.5 percent in 1996 to 57.4 percent in 1999, in the proportion of the poor (those with family incomes under the

poverty thresholds), who received benefits during at least 1 month, compared with 10.7 percent and 10.5 percent of the nonpoor.⁹ Additionally, 48.7 percent of the poor received at least one type of major means-tested benefit in an average month of 1999, compared with 7.8 percent of the nonpoor (Figure 7).

The poor also tended to be long-term participants in means-tested programs: 43.0 percent of the poor, compared with 4.6 percent of the nonpoor, participated in 12 or more months; and 27.2 percent of the poor, compared with 2.6 percent of the nonpoor, participated in all 48 months during the 1996-1999 period (Figure 8).

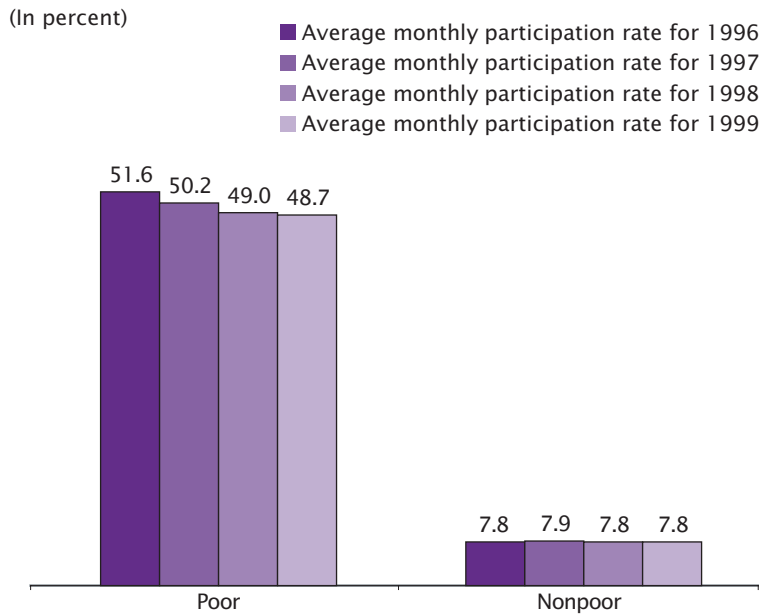
Program participation varies by race and ethnic origin.

The likelihood of receiving means-tested assistance and of being in the programs for various times differed among racial groups. In 1999, 36.4 percent of Blacks and 10.6 percent of non-Hispanic Whites participated in a means-tested program for at least 1 month (Figure 9). In 1999, the average monthly participation rate for Blacks, 30.7 percent, was almost four times that of non-Hispanic Whites, 7.9 percent (Figure 10).

The percentage of Blacks receiving assistance in all 48 months of the 1996-1999 period was far greater than the percentage of non-Hispanic Whites, 18.4 percent compared with 3.5 percent (Figure 11). The corresponding figures for 12 or more months of participation were

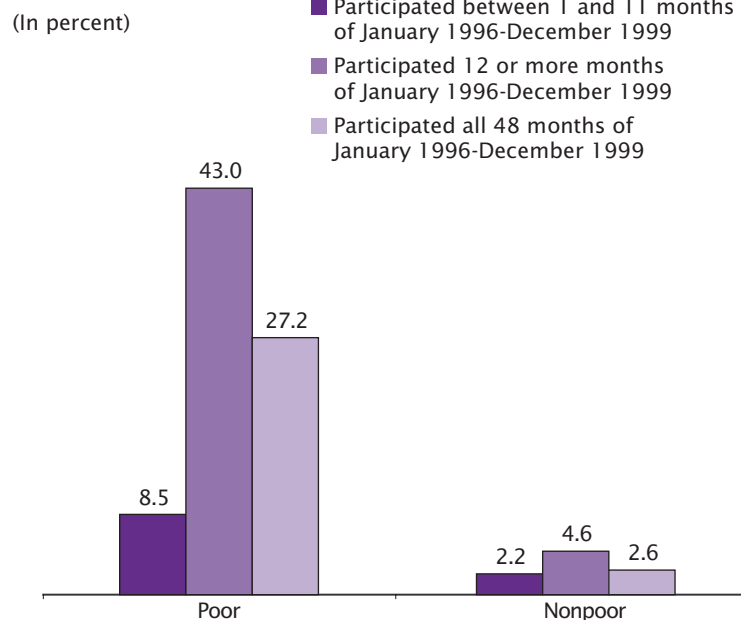
⁹ The poverty threshold for a family of three with one related child was \$12,629 in 1996, \$12,919 in 1997, \$13,120 in 1998, and \$13,410 in 1999. Data on poverty thresholds by family size and number of related children under 18 years for the reported years can be found at: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/pover-ty/threshld.html>.

Figure 7.
Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Poverty Status: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999



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

Figure 8.
Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs: January 1996-December 1999



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

27.7 percent for Blacks and 6.3 percent for non-Hispanic Whites.

The likelihood of receiving means-tested assistance also varied by Hispanic-origin¹⁰ status. Individuals of Hispanic origin were nearly three times as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to receive benefits for at least 1 month in 1999, 29.2 percent of Hispanics participated for at least 1 month in a program compared with 10.6 percent of non-Hispanic Whites (Figure 9). Similarly, the average monthly participation rate in 1999 for people of Hispanic origin, 23.0 percent, was about three

times that of non-Hispanic Whites, 7.9 (Figure 10). As shown in Figure 11, people of Hispanic origin were much more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be long-term participants, with 11.9 percent of Hispanics participating all 48 months compared with only 3.5 percent of non-Hispanic Whites.

Although Blacks and Hispanics have significantly higher program participation rates than non-Hispanic Whites, the actual number of non-Hispanic Whites receiving means-tested assistance exceeded the separate numbers of Blacks and Hispanics. In 1999, about 13 million Blacks and 9 million Hispanics participated in a program for at least 1 month, compared with 21 million non-Hispanic Whites. Similarly, during the 1996-1999 period, approximately 9 million Blacks and 5 million Hispanics

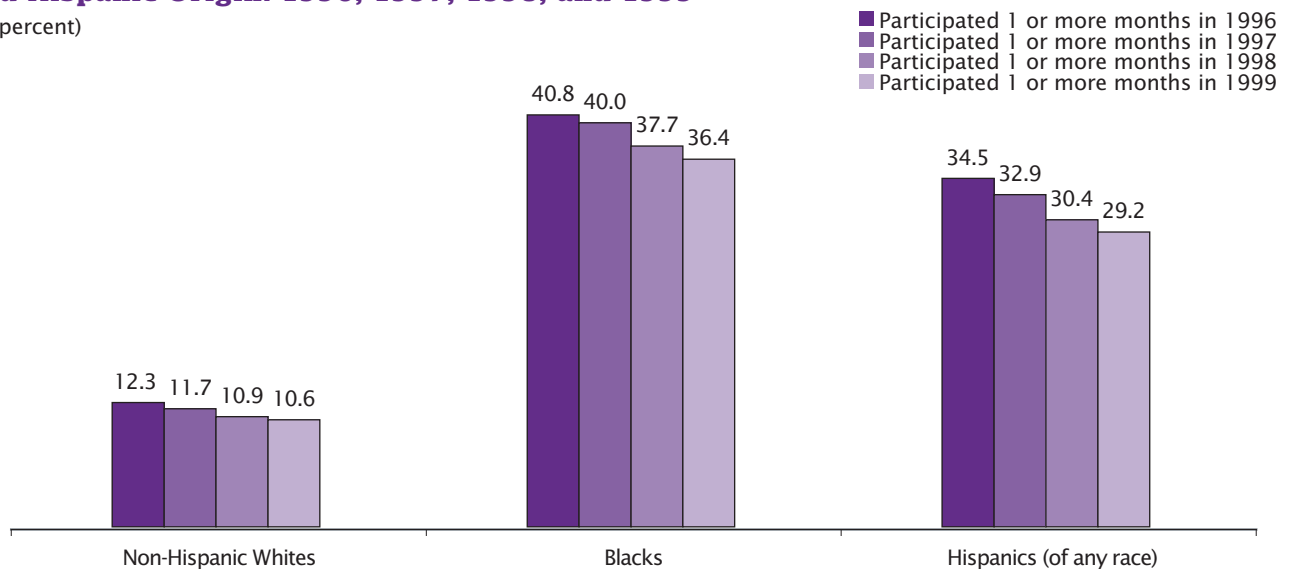
received means-tested assistance for 12 or more months, compared with 11 million non-Hispanic Whites.¹¹

Differences among the racial and Hispanic-origin groups in program participation can, in part, be explained by differences in poverty rates. Poverty and participation in major means-tested assistance programs are closely related (Figures 7 and 8). In 1999, the average monthly poverty rates for Blacks, 24.8 percent, and for people of Hispanic origin, 24.7 percent, were about three times the poverty rate for non-Hispanic Whites, 8.7 percent (Figure 12). Moreover,

¹⁰ Because Hispanics may be of any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black population. Based on data in the 1996 SIPP panel and using the panel weight, 3.5 percent of the Black population was of Hispanic origin. Data for Asians and Pacific Islanders and American Indians and Alaska Natives are not shown in this report because of their small sample sizes.

¹¹ There is no statistical difference in the number of Hispanics receiving means-tested assistance in 1999 and the number of Blacks receiving means-tested assistance for 12 or more months during the 1996-1999 period.

Figure 9.
Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999
(In percent)

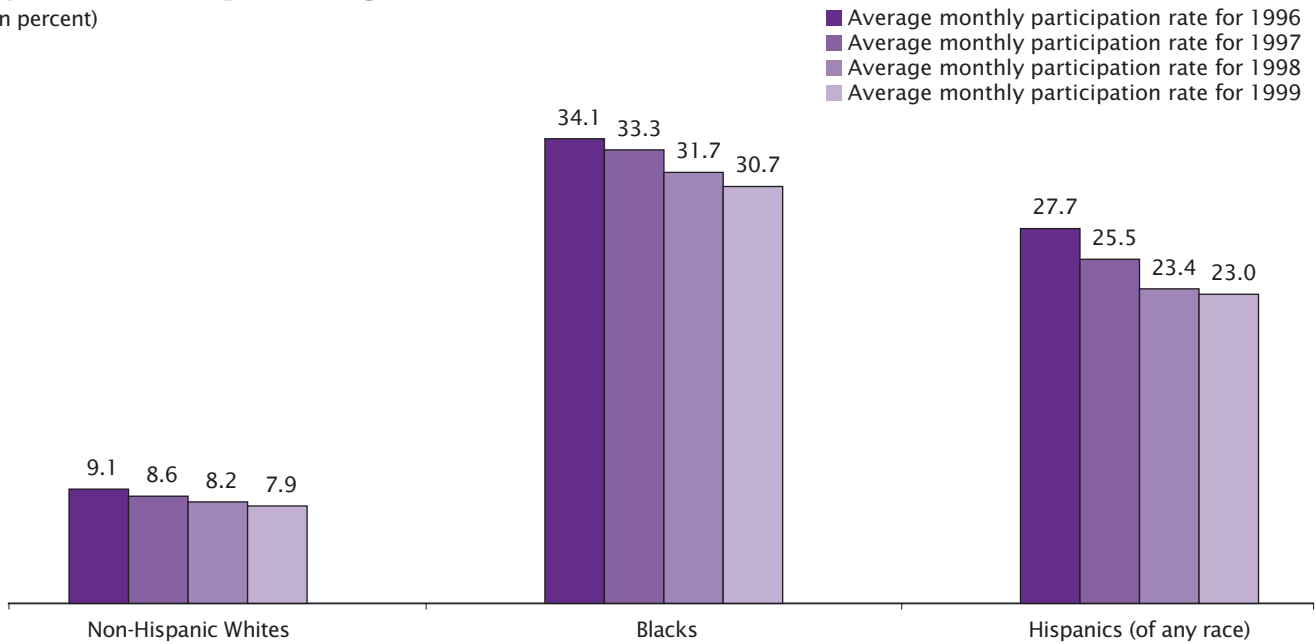


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 panel.

Figure 10.

Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)

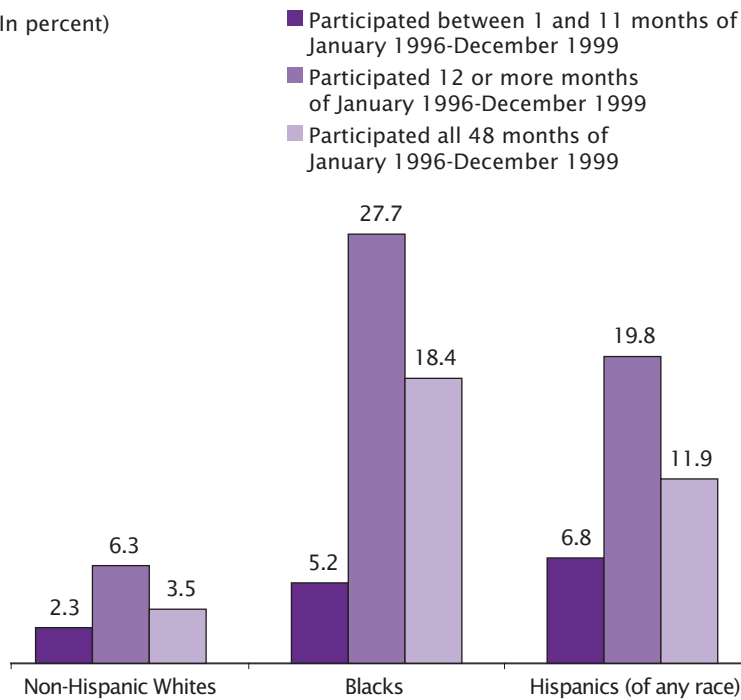


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 panel.

Figure 11.

Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs: January 1996-December 1999

(In percent)



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

Figure 13 illustrates that Blacks (5.1 percent) and people of Hispanic origin (5.6 percent) were more likely than non-Hispanic Whites (1.0 percent) to be poor for all 48 months of 1996-1999.¹²

Children under 18 years are more likely to receive means-tested assistance than people in other age groups.

Figure 14 illustrates that children under 18 years of age were far more likely to receive means-tested benefits as people in the other age groups. In an average month during 1999, 20.9 percent (15 million) of children received some type of means-tested benefit, compared with 9.7 percent (16 million) of people aged 18 to 64 years old and 13.2 percent (4 million) of people 65 years and older. Children also

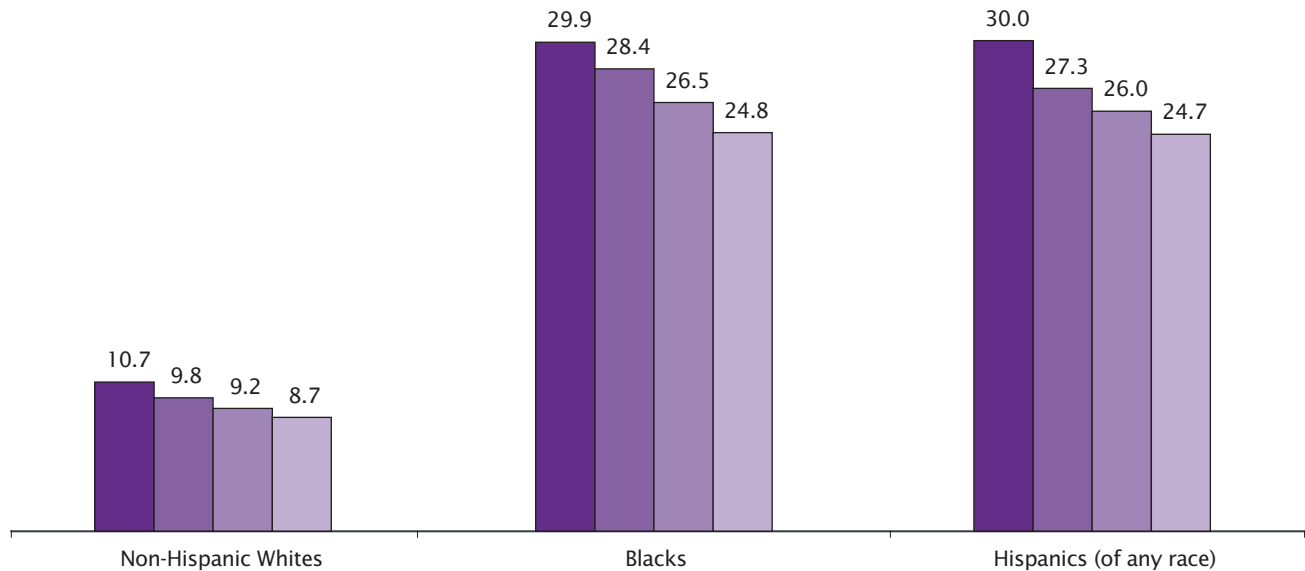
¹² There is no statistical difference between Black and Hispanic poverty rates in 1999; or between the percent of Blacks and Hispanics who were poor for all 48 months of 1996-1999.

Figure 12.

Average Monthly Poverty Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)

- Average monthly participation rate for 1996
- Average monthly participation rate for 1997
- Average monthly participation rate for 1998
- Average monthly participation rate for 1999



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

tended to be long-term participants, with 17.0 percent (12 million) collecting benefits in 12 or more months, and 9.3 percent (6 million) collecting benefits in all 48 months of the 1996-1999 period (Figure 3).¹³

Families maintained by women have higher participation rates.

Families maintained by women with no spouse present have higher poverty rates and lower incomes than married-couple families. During 1999, families maintained by women had an average monthly poverty rate of 30.4 percent, compared with an average monthly poverty rate of 7.0 percent for

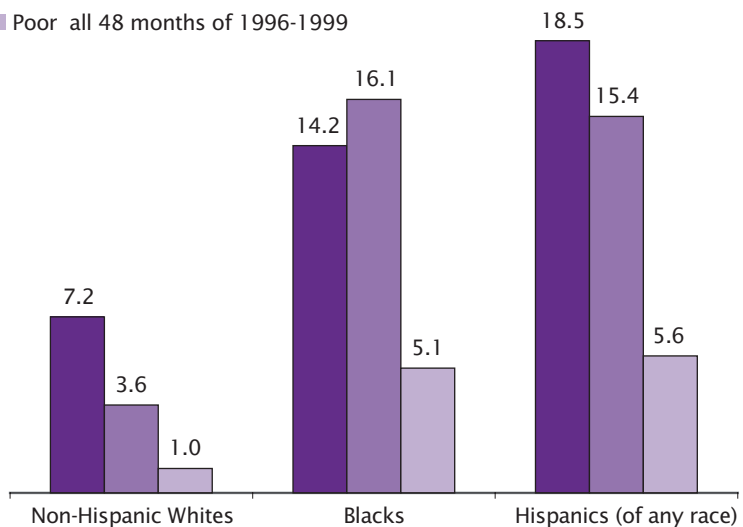
¹³ There is no statistical difference between the percent of persons 18-64 years old receiving any means-tested benefits in an average month in 1999 and the number of persons under 18 years old who received benefits for all 48 months of 1996-1999.

Figure 13.

Poverty Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1996-1999

(In percent)

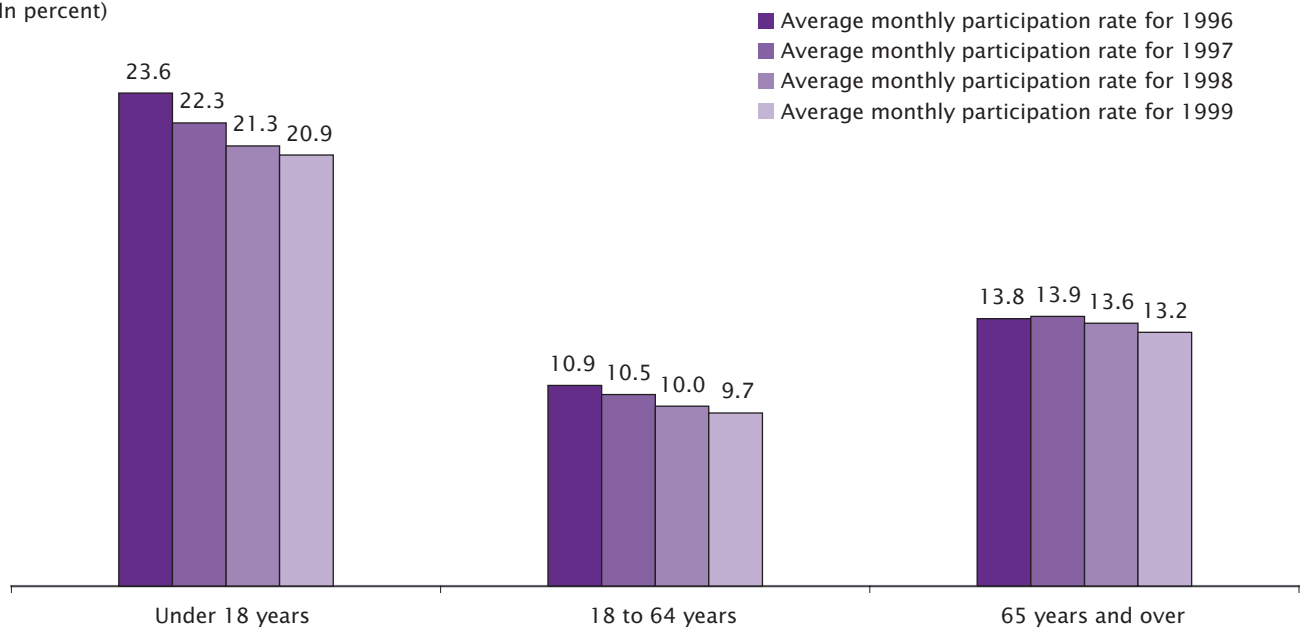
- Poor between 1 and 11 months of 1996-1999
- Poor 12 or more months of 1996-1999
- Poor all 48 months of 1996-1999



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

Figure 14.
Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Age of Individual: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)

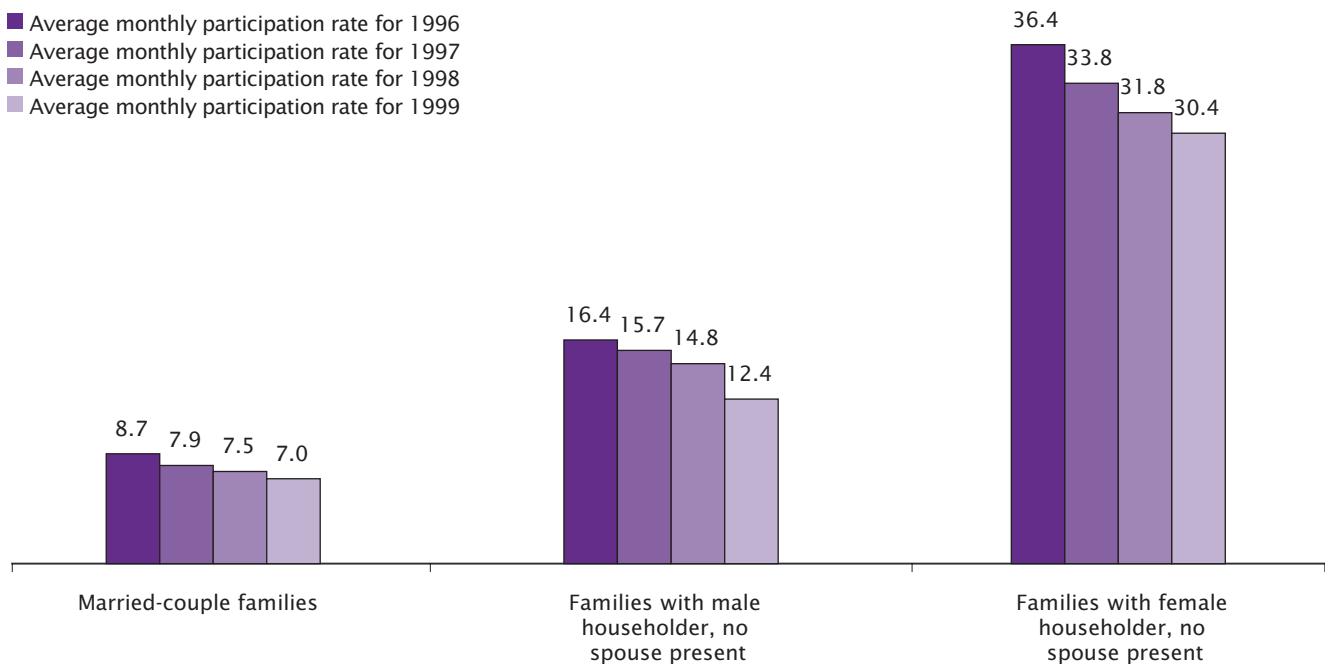


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 panel.

Figure 15.
Average Monthly Poverty Rates by Family Type: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)

■ Average monthly participation rate for 1996
 ■ Average monthly participation rate for 1997
 ■ Average monthly participation rate for 1998
 ■ Average monthly participation rate for 1999



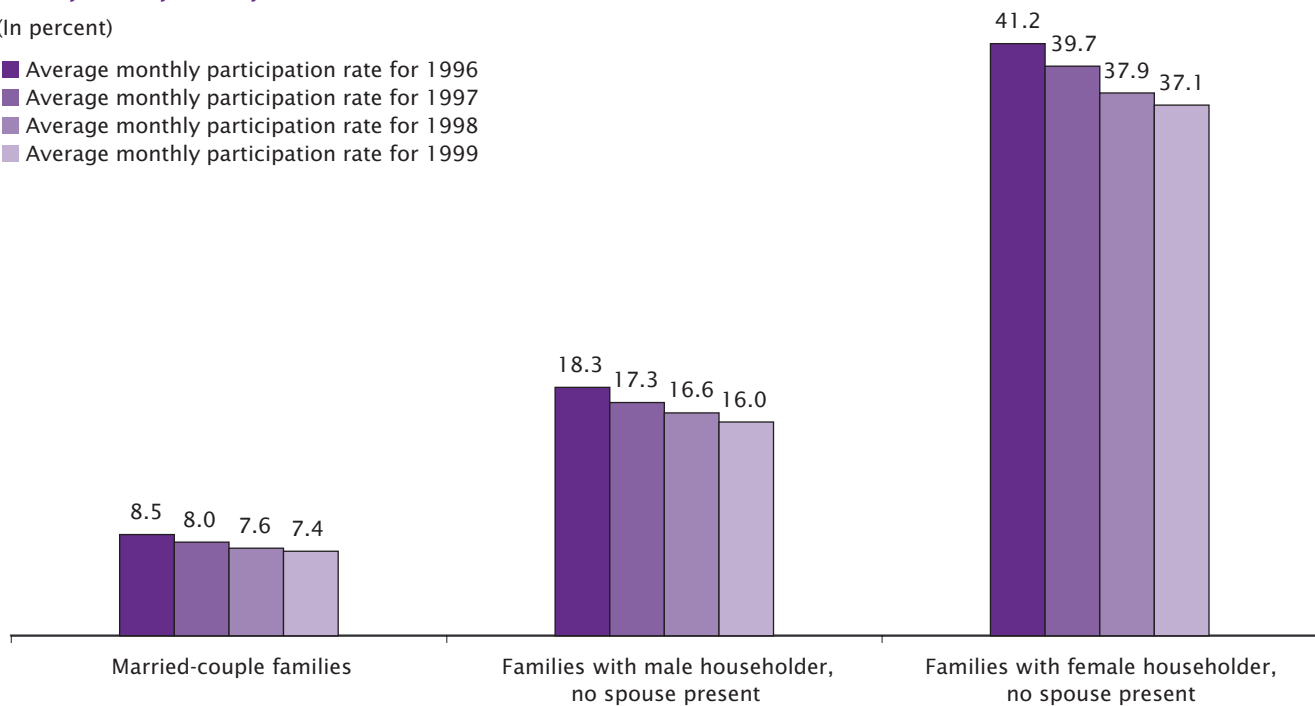
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 panel.

Figure 16.

Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Family Type: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)

- Average monthly participation rate for 1996
- Average monthly participation rate for 1997
- Average monthly participation rate for 1998
- Average monthly participation rate for 1999



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

people in married-couple families (Figure 15). Reflecting this finding, individuals in female-maintained families were much more likely to participate in major means-tested programs, in an average month in 1999, than were people in married-couple families—37.1 percent compared with 7.4 percent (Figure 16). Similarly, 43.8 percent of individuals in families maintained by women participated in means-tested programs for at least 1 month of 1999, in contrast with 10.3 percent of individuals in married-couple families (Figure 17). Furthermore, individuals in families maintained by women were about eight times as likely as individuals in married-couple families to receive benefits in all 48 months of the 1996-1999 period—21.7 percent compared with 2.8 percent (Figure 18).

Those with less education have higher participation rates.

For people age 18 and over, lower educational attainment was associated with greater program participation. The percentage of individuals with less than 4 years of high school receiving benefits in at least 1 month of 1999 (32.3 percent) was more than double the corresponding percentage of high school graduates (14.2 percent), and five times as large as the percentage of college entrants, (6.4 percent), (Figure 19). During an average month of 1999, 26.4 percent of people with less than 4 years of high school received means-tested benefits, compared with 10.7 percent of high school graduates and 4.6 percent of individuals with at least 1 year of college (Figure 20). Individuals who did not graduate from high school also were more likely than high school graduates

and people with at least some college to receive benefits during the entire 48-month period of 1996-1999—16.9 percent compared with 5.2 percent and 1.9 percent (Figure 21).

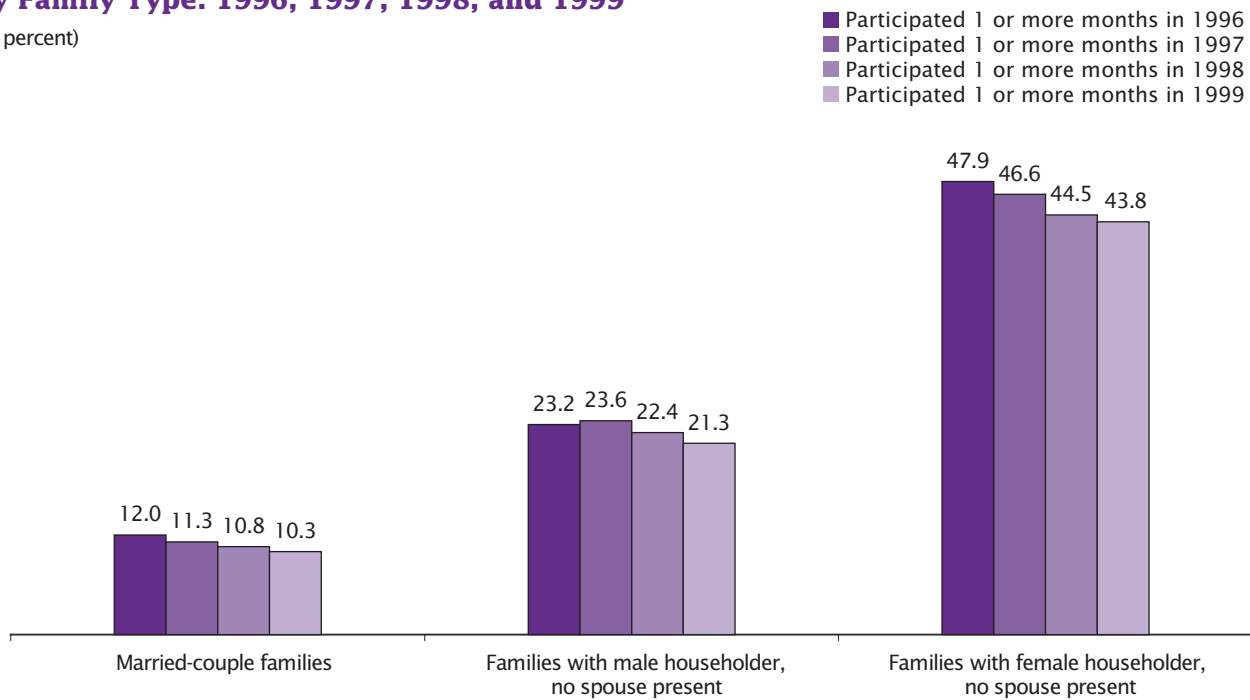
The unemployed and those out of the labor force are more likely than the employed to receive means-tested benefits.

People without jobs—unemployed or out of the labor force—were much more likely to receive means-tested benefits in an average month of 1999 than were either full-time workers or part-time workers. For people 18 years and older, 26.0 percent of the unemployed received means-tested benefits in an average month of 1999, compared with 20.1 percent of those out of the labor force, 3.8 percent of full-time workers, and 10.0 percent of part-time workers (Figure 22).

Figure 17.

Program Participation for 1 or More Months in Major Means-Tested Programs by Family Type: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)



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

In addition to receiving means-tested benefits, the unemployed may also receive unemployment compensation. In an average month of 1999, only 14.7 percent of the unemployed received unemployment compensation, but 4.6 percent received AFDC/TANF or GA, 1.6 percent received SSI, 14.4 percent received food stamps, 16.7 percent received Medicaid, and 9.6 percent received housing assistance.¹⁴

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

This section looks at the characteristics of the recipients of assistance. Two concepts are examined:

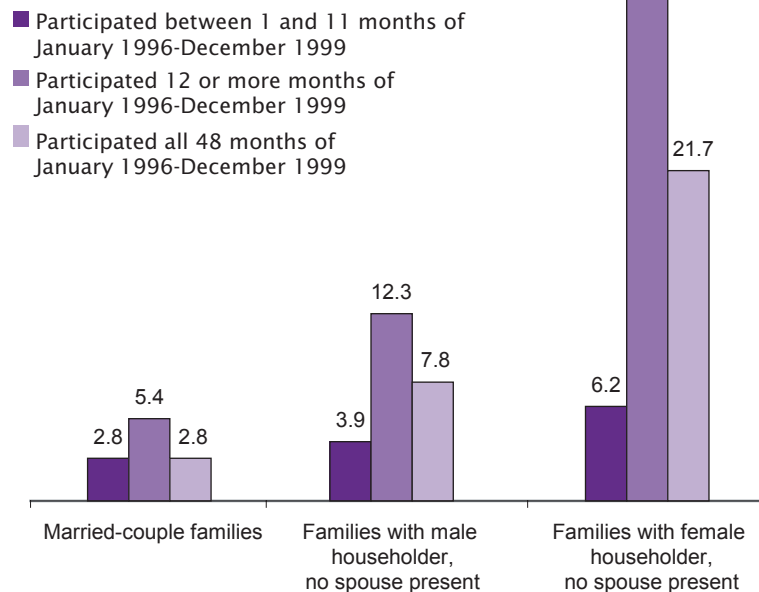
- **Median duration of spells of program participation for the 1996-1999 period** — A spell is

¹⁴ There is no statistical difference between the percent of unemployed persons participating in Medicaid, food stamps, or who receive unemployment compensation.

Figure 18.

Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Family Type: January 1996-December 1999

(In percent)

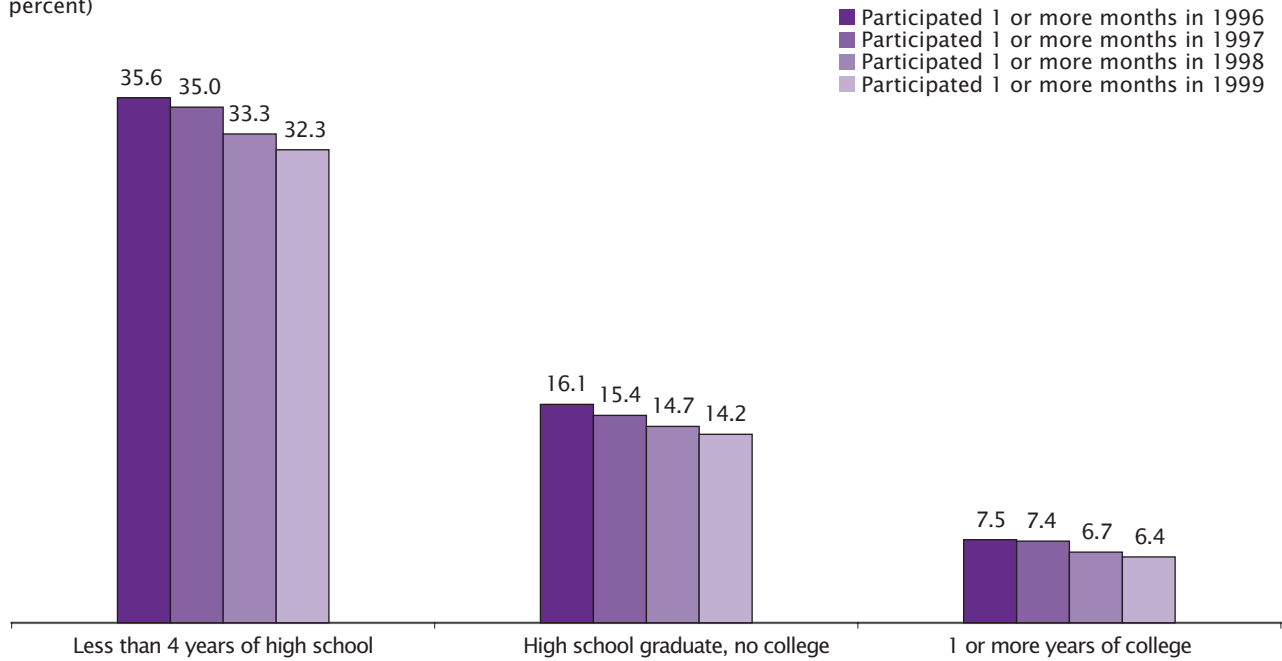


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 panel.

Figure 19.

Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs for People 18 Years and Older by Educational Attainment: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)

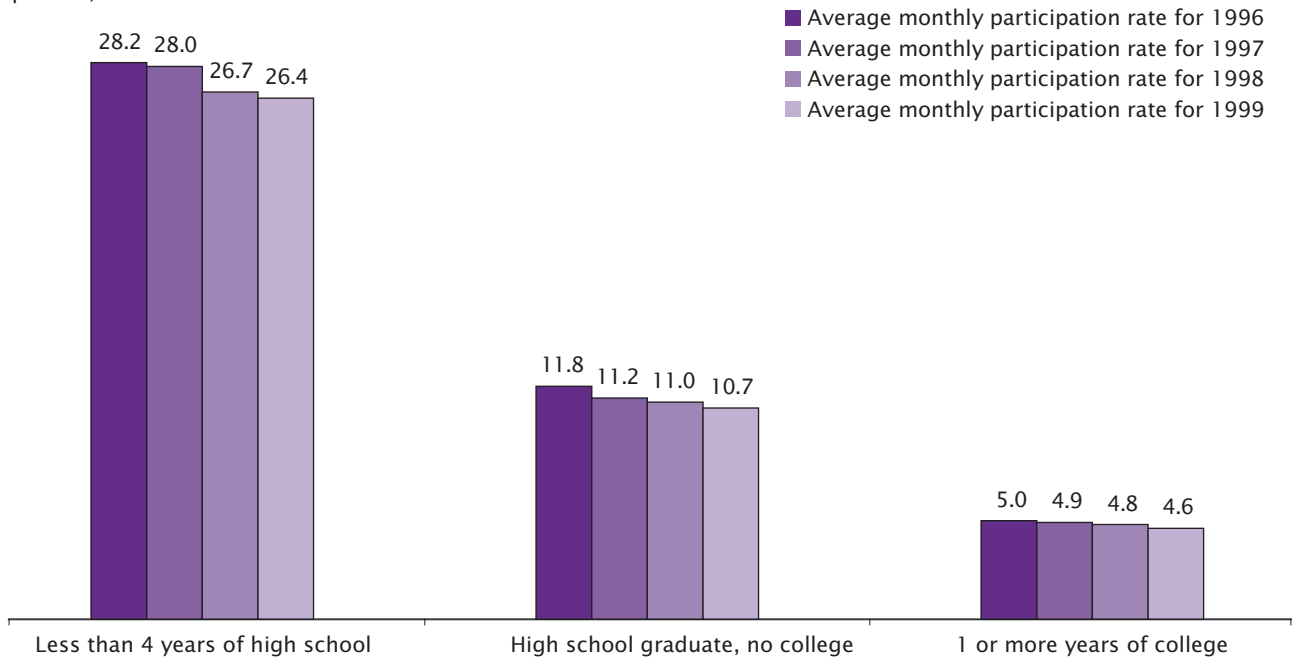


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 panel.

Figure 20.

Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs for People 18 Years and Older by Educational Attainment: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

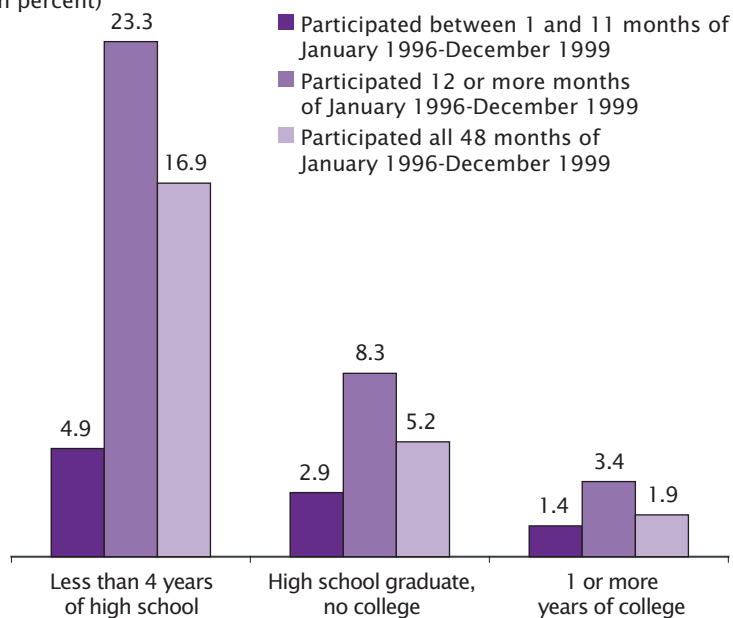
(In percent)



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

Figure 21.

Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs for People 18 Years and Older by Educational Attainment: January 1996-December 1999
(In percent)



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

an uninterrupted period of time (measured in months) in which an individual receives means-tested assistance, and which is preceded by a month or more of nonparticipation. Each recipient has one or more such spells. The measure examines all the spells throughout the 48-month period of the recipients in the population existing at the end of the period. The median is the value for spell length that divides the distribution of spells (not recipients) into two equal parts.¹⁵ The data address the question: "how long, on average, do recipients stay in programs continuously once they enter them?"

¹⁵ The median for a group of recipients cannot be computed when more than half of the spells for the group are continuing in the 48th month.

- **Median monthly family benefits in specified year**—The monthly benefit amount for each recipient represents the amount of the benefit received by the individual's family in the last month for which they reported that they received benefits.¹⁶ The median is the amount which divides recipients into two equally sized groups, one consisting of those whose monthly family benefit falls below the median, the other of recipients whose benefit rises above it.

¹⁶ It is not known how the data are affected by families who do not participate in the program for the entire last month for which they report that they received benefits from the program. If partial-month participation is associated with partial receipt of benefits, then the use of such partial amounts to represent an "average" or "usual" monthly benefit would result in an underestimate.

The data refer to the population of recipients living in families existing at the end of the year specified.

Median duration of participation differs by program.

For people who received assistance during the 1996-1999 period, Table A-7 in Appendix A presents data on the median duration of spells of program participation over the course of the 48 months, by type of program and selected demographic characteristics of participants.

As shown in Figure 23, among all program participants, the median spell length for participation in general was 7.0 months. The median spell length for SSI was 11.2 months, significantly longer than that for food stamps, AFDC/TANF or GA, or Medicaid (5.9, 5.6 and 7.5 months, respectively).¹⁷

Within specific groups of participants, SSI was the longest continuously used program for Hispanics (11.9 months), persons without a high school diploma (15.4 months), persons with a work disability (15.0 months), and people not in the labor force (15.2 months).¹⁸

Spell duration also differs by demographic group.

Table A-7 also reveals that the median spell length for participation in means-tested assistance programs varied by demographic group. People under 18 years old

¹⁷ There is no statistical difference between the median spell duration for AFDC/TANF and food stamps.

¹⁸ There is no statistical difference between the median spell durations of SSI for persons who did not complete high school and the medians for persons with a work disability, or persons not in the labor force.

had the highest median duration, 7.6 months, compared with 5.9 months for people aged 18 to 64 years, and 3.9 months for people 65 years and older. People aged 65 years and older who received SSI had a median spell duration of 19.7 months, the longest on any program. By education, individuals who did not graduate from high school remained on means-tested programs longer (7.3 months) than high school graduates (5.9 months) and people with at least some college (3.9 months).¹⁹

People in families maintained by females, with no spouse present,

¹⁹ There is no statistical difference between the median spell duration for persons under 18 years and persons who did not graduate from high school. The medians for persons 18-64 years old and persons who graduated from high school do not differ statistically. Medians for persons 65 years and older and persons with 1 or more years of college do not differ statistically.

had a median spell duration of 7.6 months, which was greater than the 5.7²⁰ months for people in married-couple families. Not surprisingly, the median for people who were not in the labor force (7.3 months) was greater than that for people employed full-time (3.9 months).

Variations across demographic groups in median spell durations were evident as well for specific programs. Persons 18 to 64 years old remained on food stamps for 4.9 months, shorter than people under 18 years old and people 65 years and over (7.2 and 8.0 months, respectively).

By race and Hispanic origin, non-Hispanic Whites had shorter stays on SSI and food stamps

²⁰ The medians for female headed families, with no spouse present, did not differ significantly from persons who were not in the labor force.

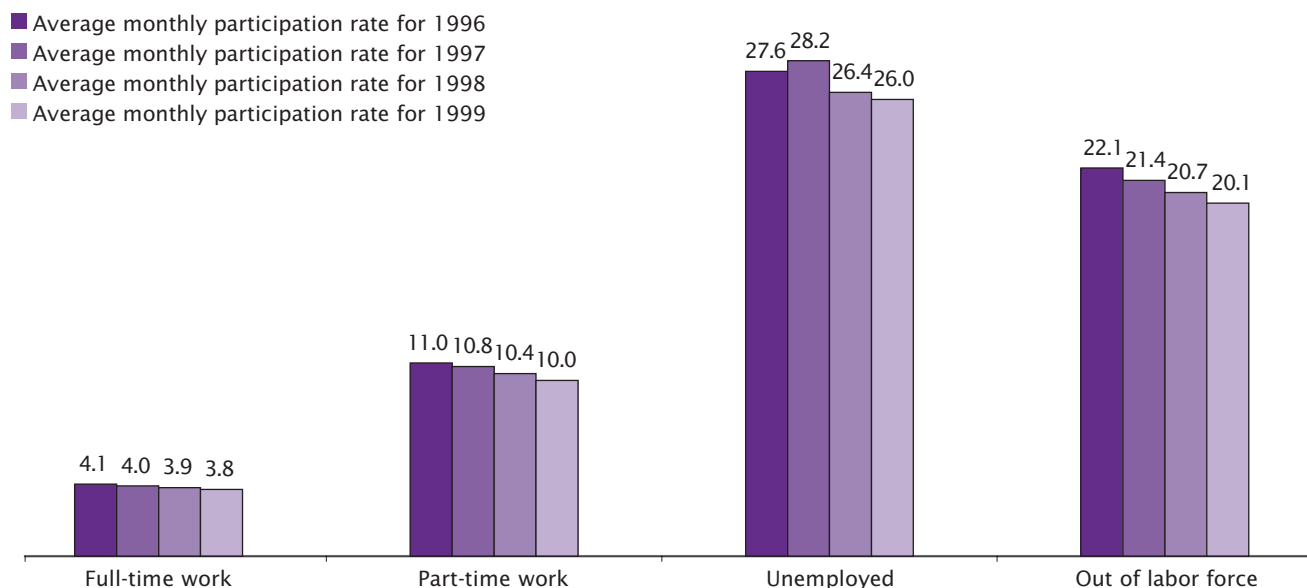
(7.9 months and 4.8 months, respectively) than did Blacks (11.3 months and 7.4 months) or Hispanics (11.9 months and 7.0 months).²¹

By educational attainment, people with at least a year of college spent less time than people with lower educational levels in the Medicaid program. The median spell duration of SSI for those with at least a year of college education was 7.2 months, compared with 15.4 months and 11.2 months for those who did not graduate from high school and those who graduated from high school but no college. The median spell length of food stamps for people with at least

²¹ There is no statistical difference between the median spell durations for SSI for white non-Hispanics and Blacks receiving food stamps. The medians for Blacks receiving SSI and Hispanics receiving SSI did not differ statistically.

Figure 22.
Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs for People 18 Years and Older by Employment Status: 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

(In percent)



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

Changes in Employment Status and Family Income of 1996 TANF/AFDC Recipients: 1997 to 1999

People who received AFDC/TANF or GA in December of 1996, but did not receive assistance in subsequent Decembers, had markedly different income and employment outcomes compared to those remaining on the programs. By December 1999, 6.7 million people had exited the programs, while only 2.7 million still remained. By employment status, 50.8 percent of people 18 years and over that had exited these programs worked full- or part-time, compared to only 26.3 percent of people who still remained. In December 1999, the monthly median family income of those who had exited was \$1,515; 56.2 percent higher than those who still remained, \$970. Between December of 1997 and 1999, the median family income of people who had exited rose 13.6 percent from \$1,333 to \$1,515, while the change in median family income of those still receiving AFDC/TANF or GA rose 8.3 percent from \$896 to \$970.¹

Note: December 1997-1999 observations are only for persons who were still in the survey for those months.

Persons receiving AFDC/TANF or GA.

(In thousands)

	December 1996	December 1997	December 1998	December 1999
Continued receiving after 1996	10,568	5,726	3,446	2,702
Worked*	959	572	312	230
Median monthly family income**	\$860	\$896	\$894	\$970
Stopped receiving after 1996		4,170	6,046	6,730
Worked*		986	1,612	1,887
Median monthly family income**		\$1,333	\$1,472	\$1,515

* People 18 years and over

**Adjusted to 1999 dollars using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U)

¹ The median family incomes of people still participating in AFDC/TANF in 1997 and 1999 are not significantly different.

some college was 3.9 months, shorter than the medians for those who did not graduate from high school and high school graduates (7.3 months and 4.9 months, respectively).²²

Individuals in families maintained by female householders, no spouse present, remained on food stamps (7.3 months), longer than their counterparts in married-couple families (4.8 months).

²² The medians for Medicaid for persons with some college and food stamps for persons with some college do not differ significantly. The medians for Medicaid do not differ significantly between people with no high school and those with a high school diploma but no college. Also, the median for persons with no high school diploma do not differ significantly between Medicaid and food stamps.

Higher monthly benefit amounts are associated with higher average monthly participation.

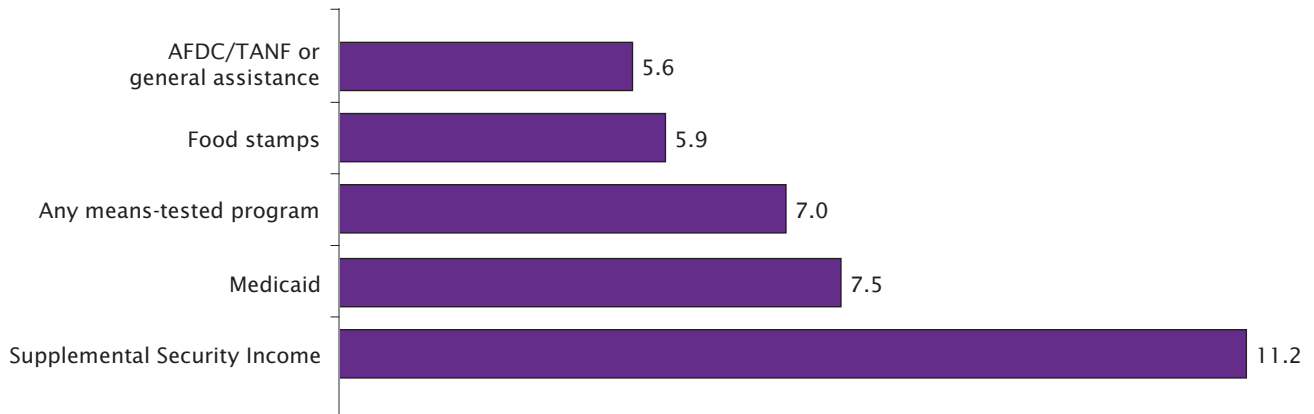
Table A-8 shows the median monthly family benefit amounts received in 1996-1999 by the groups of program participants listed in Table A-1.²³ For many of the groups, higher average monthly participation rates for assistance programs in general were associated with higher median monthly family benefits in 1999, a consequence, per-

²³ Median monthly benefit amounts include AFDC/TANF or GA, SSI, and food stamps only. The Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is used to express the 1996, 1997, and 1998 monthly benefit amounts in terms of 1999 dollars.

haps, of the likely relationship of both of these measures to lower family incomes and higher poverty rates. For example, Figure 24 shows that in 1999, Blacks, whose average monthly participation rate was 30.7 percent had a median monthly family benefit of \$406, significantly greater than the \$320 for non-Hispanic Whites, whose average monthly participation rate was 7.9 percent. Likewise, children under 18 years old, whose average monthly participation rate was 20.9 percent, received a median monthly family benefit of \$429, significantly greater than the \$269 for the elderly whose average monthly participation rate was 13.2 percent. In 1999, people in families with a female householder, no spouse

Figure 23.

Median Spell Length in Months by Program: January 1996 - December 1999



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

present, had an average monthly participation rate of 37.1 percent and received a median monthly family benefit of \$429; in comparison, people in married-couple families had an average monthly participation rate of only 7.4 percent and median monthly benefits of \$385.²⁴

SOURCE OF THE DATA

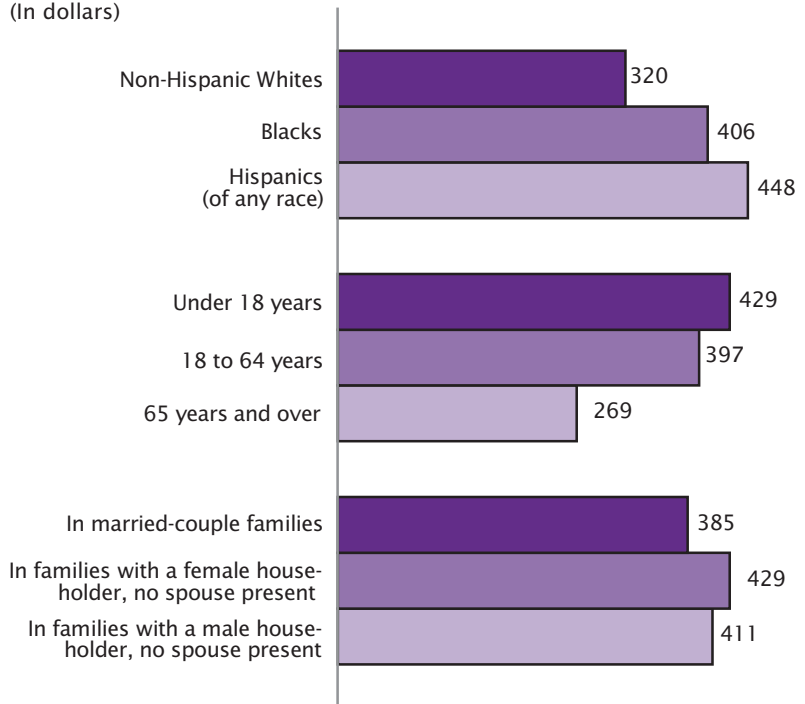
The population represented (the population universe) in the 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States. SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals by the Census Bureau. The data in this report were collected from April 1996 through March 2000. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in

²⁴ The medians do not differ significantly for persons less than 18 years old and for persons in female-headed families, with no spouse present.

Figure 24.

Median Monthly Benefits in 1999 for People Receiving Benefits by Selected Characteristics

(In dollars)



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

correctional institutions and nursing homes (91.0 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized population in the Census 2000).

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. This means the 90-percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports to minimize these errors.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation weighting procedure uses ratio estimation whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on the sources of the data and accuracy of the estimates including standard errors and confidence intervals, go to http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A96_030228.Long.pdf or contact David Hall of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division on the internet at david.warren.hall@census.gov.

COMMENTS FROM DATA USERS

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

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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Program Participation 1996-1999
Who Gets Assistance?
Current Population Reports,
P70-94.*
U.S. Census Bureau,
Washington DC 2003

APPENDIX A.

Table A-1.
Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Any Means-Tested Programs by Selected Characteristics: 1996-1999

Characteristic	Program participation rates (in percent)							
	Any means-tested programs ¹							
	1996	Standard error	1997	Standard error	1998	Standard error	1999	Standard error
Total number of recipients²	38,900	249	37,539	273	36,285	282	35,646	296
As percent of the population	14.7	0.2	14.0	0.2	13.5	0.2	13.1	0.2
Race and Hispanic Origin³								
White	11.2	0.2	10.6	0.2	10.1	0.2	9.8	0.2
Not of Hispanic origin	9.1	0.2	8.6	0.2	8.2	0.2	7.9	0.2
Black	34.1	0.6	33.3	0.7	31.7	0.7	30.7	0.8
Hispanic origin	27.7	0.7	25.5	0.7	23.4	0.8	23.0	0.8
Not of Hispanic origin	13.1	0.2	12.6	0.2	12.2	0.2	11.8	0.2
Age								
Under 18 years	23.6	0.4	22.3	0.4	21.3	0.4	20.9	0.4
18 to 64 years	10.9	0.2	10.5	0.2	10.0	0.2	9.7	0.2
65 years and over	13.8	0.4	13.9	0.5	13.6	0.5	13.2	0.5
Sex								
Men	12.8	0.2	12.3	0.2	11.8	0.2	11.5	0.2
Women	16.4	0.2	15.7	0.3	15.0	0.3	14.6	0.3
Educational Attainment (people 18 years and over)								
Less than 4 years of high school	28.2	0.6	28.0	0.6	26.7	0.6	26.4	0.7
High school graduate, no college	11.8	0.3	11.2	0.3	11.0	0.3	10.7	0.3
1 or more years of college	5.0	0.2	4.9	0.2	4.8	0.2	4.6	0.2
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)								
With a work disability	35.0	0.8	35.3	0.9	35.1	0.9	34.9	1.0
With no work disability	8.3	0.2	8.2	0.2	7.9	0.2	7.8	0.2
Residence								
Metropolitan	14.0	0.3	13.3	0.2	12.7	0.2	12.3	0.2
Central city	20.9	0.5	20.0	0.4	19.1	0.5	18.5	0.5
Noncentral city	9.7	0.3	9.2	0.3	8.8	0.3	8.5	0.3
Nonmetropolitan	17.6	0.6	17.0	0.5	16.4	0.5	16.2	0.5
Region								
Northeast	14.4	0.4	14.4	0.4	13.8	0.4	13.4	0.4
Midwest	12.0	0.3	11.2	0.3	10.6	0.3	10.2	0.3
South	15.3	0.3	14.5	0.3	14.0	0.3	13.7	0.3
West	16.9	0.4	16.2	0.4	15.3	0.4	14.9	0.4
Family Status								
In families	14.7	0.2	14.0	0.2	13.4	0.2	13.0	0.2
In married-couple families	8.5	0.2	8.0	0.2	7.6	0.2	7.4	0.2
In families with a female householder, no spouse present	41.2	0.6	39.7	0.6	37.9	0.6	37.1	0.7
In families with a male householder, no spouse present	18.3	0.9	17.3	1.0	16.6	1.0	16.0	1.0
Unrelated individuals	14.4	0.4	14.0	0.4	14.0	0.5	13.6	0.5
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 years and over)								
Employed full-time	4.1	0.1	4.0	0.1	3.9	0.1	3.8	0.1
Employed part-time	11.0	0.4	10.8	0.4	10.4	0.4	10.0	0.4
Unemployed	27.6	1.3	28.2	1.5	26.4	1.7	26.0	1.7
Not in labor force	22.1	0.4	21.4	0.4	20.7	0.4	20.1	0.4
Marital Status (people 18 years and over)								
Married	6.6	0.2	6.2	0.2	5.9	0.2	5.7	0.2
Separated, divorced, or widowed	19.8	0.5	19.0	0.5	18.3	0.5	17.6	0.5
Never married	16.6	0.4	16.2	0.4	15.6	0.5	15.3	0.5
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio								
Under 1.00	51.6	0.6	50.2	0.7	49.0	0.7	48.7	0.8
1.00 and over	7.8	0.1	7.9	0.1	7.8	0.1	7.8	0.2

¹Major means-tested programs include Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), General Assistance (GA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, Medicaid, and housing assistance.

²In thousands.

³People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

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

Table A-2.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Aid to Families with Dependent Children or General Assistance by Selected Characteristics: 1996-1999

Characteristic	Program participation rates (in percent)							
	Aid to Families with Dependent Children/General Assistance							
	1996	Standard error	1997	Standard error	1998	Standard error	1999	Standard error
Total number of recipients¹	10,838	142	9,171	146	7,021	134	4,936	119
As percent of the population	4.1	0.1	3.4	0.1	2.6	0.1	1.8	0.1
Race and Hispanic Origin²								
White	2.7	0.1	2.2	0.0	1.6	0.1	1.1	0.1
Not of Hispanic origin	1.9	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.0	0.1	0.6	0.0
Black	12.3	0.4	10.7	0.4	8.1	0.4	5.6	0.4
Hispanic origin	8.6	0.4	7.3	0.4	5.9	0.4	4.5	0.4
Not of Hispanic origin	3.5	0.1	2.9	0.1	2.2	0.1	1.5	0.1
Age								
Under 18 years	9.0	0.2	7.7	0.3	6.0	0.2	4.7	0.2
18 to 64 years	2.7	0.3	2.2	0.1	1.6	0.1	0.9	0.1
65 years and over	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0
Sex								
Men	3.1	0.1	2.6	0.1	2.0	0.1	1.5	0.1
Women	5.1	0.1	4.2	0.1	3.2	0.1	2.1	0.1
Educational Attainment (people 18 years and over)								
Less than 4 years of high school	5.5	0.3	4.7	0.3	3.6	0.3	2.1	0.2
High school graduate, no college	2.5	0.1	1.9	0.1	1.4	0.1	0.8	0.1
1 or more years of college	1.0	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.0
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)								
With a work disability	5.4	0.4	4.9	0.4	3.8	0.4	2.0	0.3
With no work disability	2.4	0.1	2.0	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.0	0.1
Residence								
Metropolitan	4.2	0.2	3.6	0.1	2.8	0.1	2.0	0.1
Central city	7.0	0.3	6.2	0.3	5.0	0.3	3.6	0.2
Noncentral city	2.5	0.2	2.1	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.0	0.1
Nonmetropolitan	3.6	0.3	2.6	0.2	1.8	0.2	1.2	0.2
Region								
Northeast	4.2	0.2	3.9	0.2	3.2	0.2	2.4	0.2
Midwest	3.8	0.2	3.0	0.2	2.0	0.1	1.4	0.1
South	3.3	0.1	2.6	0.1	1.9	0.1	1.1	0.1
West	5.6	0.2	4.8	0.2	3.9	0.2	2.9	0.2
Family Status								
In families	4.7	0.1	3.9	0.1	3.0	0.1	2.1	0.1
In married-couple families	1.6	0.1	1.3	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.6	0.1
In families with a female householder, no spouse present	18.7	0.5	15.5	0.5	12.0	0.4	8.5	0.4
In families with a male householder, no spouse present	3.7	0.4	3.0	0.4	2.8	0.4	1.7	0.4
Unrelated individuals	0.8	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.1
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 years and over)								
Employed full-time	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0
Employed part-time	2.3	0.2	1.9	0.2	1.6	0.2	0.9	0.1
Unemployed	11.0	0.9	10.2	1.0	8.2	1.0	4.6	0.8
Not in labor force	4.6	0.2	3.8	0.2	2.7	0.2	1.6	0.1
Marital Status (people 18 years and over)								
Married	1.0	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.0
Separated, divorced, or widowed	3.6	0.2	3.1	0.2	2.2	0.2	1.2	0.2
Never married	4.3	0.2	3.5	0.2	2.6	0.2	1.6	0.2
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio								
Under 1.00	19.2	0.4	16.6	0.5	13.0	0.5	9.7	0.4
1.00 and over	1.3	0.1	1.2	0.1	1.0	0.1	0.6	0.0

¹In thousands.²People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

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

Table A-3.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Supplemental Security Income by Selected Characteristics: 1996-1999

Characteristic	Supplemental Security Income							
	1996	Standard error	1997	Standard error	1998	Standard error	1999	Standard error
Total number of recipients¹	5,546	103	5,945	118	5,968	124	6,000	131
As percent of the population	2.1	0.1	2.2	0.1	2.2	0.1	2.2	0.1
Race and Hispanic Origin²								
White	1.6	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.6	0.1
Not of Hispanic origin	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.1
Black	4.8	0.3	5.0	0.3	4.9	0.3	5.0	0.4
Hispanic origin	2.6	0.2	3.0	0.3	3.0	0.3	2.9	0.3
Not of Hispanic origin	2.0	0.1	2.1	0.1	2.1	0.1	2.1	0.1
Age								
Under 18 years	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1
18 to 64 years	2.2	0.1	2.3	0.1	2.3	0.1	2.3	0.1
65 years and over	5.5	0.3	5.9	0.3	5.9	0.4	5.7	0.4
Sex								
Men	1.8	0.1	1.9	0.1	1.9	0.1	1.9	0.1
Women	2.3	0.1	2.5	0.1	2.5	0.1	2.5	0.1
Educational Attainment (people 18 years and over)								
Less than 4 years of high school	9.0	0.4	9.9	0.4	9.9	0.4	9.8	0.5
High school graduate, no college	2.3	0.1	2.5	0.2	2.5	0.2	2.6	0.2
1 or more years of college	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.8	0.1
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)								
With a work disability	16.7	0.6	17.8	0.7	17.9	0.7	18.1	0.8
With no work disability	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.1	0.8	0.1
Residence								
Metropolitan	1.9	0.1	2.0	0.1	2.0	0.1	2.0	0.1
Central city	2.8	0.2	3.0	0.2	2.9	0.2	2.9	0.2
Noncentral city	1.4	0.1	1.4	0.1	1.4	0.1	1.4	0.1
Nonmetropolitan	2.8	0.3	3.1	0.2	3.1	0.2	3.0	0.2
Region								
Northeast	2.1	0.1	2.3	0.2	2.3	0.2	2.3	0.2
Midwest	1.7	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.6	0.1
South	2.4	0.1	2.5	0.1	2.5	0.1	2.5	0.1
West	2.1	0.1	2.2	0.2	2.2	0.2	2.2	0.2
Family Status								
In families	1.6	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.7	0.1
In married-couple families	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.1
In families with a female householder, no spouse present	3.6	0.2	3.9	0.2	3.9	0.3	3.9	0.3
In families with a male householder, no spouse present	3.0	0.4	3.0	1.3	3.1	0.5	3.0	0.5
Unrelated individuals	4.9	0.2	5.1	0.3	5.1	0.3	5.2	0.3
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 years and over)								
Employed full-time	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0
Employed part-time	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.1	1.0	0.1	1.2	0.2
Unemployed	1.4	0.3	1.7	0.4	1.5	0.5	1.6	0.5
Not in labor force	7.8	0.2	8.2	0.3	8.3	0.3	8.1	0.3
Marital Status (people 18 years and over)								
Married	1.1	0.1	1.3	0.1	1.3	0.1	1.3	0.1
Separated, divorced, or widowed	5.9	0.3	6.2	0.3	6.0	0.3	5.9	0.3
Never married	4.1	0.2	4.2	0.2	4.2	0.3	4.2	0.3
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio								
Under 1.00	6.3	0.3	7.0	0.3	7.4	0.4	7.7	0.4
1.00 and over	1.3	0.1	1.4	0.1	1.4	0.1	1.4	0.1

¹In thousands.²People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

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

Table A-4.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Food Stamps by Selected Characteristics: 1996-1999

Characteristic	Program participation rates (in percent)							
	Food stamps							
	1996	Standard error	1997	Standard error	1998	Standard error	1999	Standard error
Total number of recipients¹	21,788	196	19,505	207	17,345	205	16,001	209
As percent of the population	8.2	0.1	7.3	0.1	6.4	0.1	5.9	0.1
Race and Hispanic Origin²								
White	5.9	0.1	5.1	0.1	4.5	0.1	4.0	0.1
Not of Hispanic origin	4.6	0.1	3.9	0.1	3.5	0.1	3.0	0.1
Black	22.2	0.5	20.6	0.6	18.0	0.6	16.7	0.6
Hispanic origin	16.5	0.6	13.9	0.6	11.6	0.6	11.1	0.6
Not of Hispanic origin	7.2	0.1	6.5	0.1	5.8	0.1	5.2	0.1
Age								
Under 18 years	14.5	0.3	12.7	0.3	11.3	0.3	10.2	0.3
18 to 64 years	6.3	0.1	5.5	0.1	4.8	0.1	4.4	0.1
65 years and over	4.1	0.3	4.2	0.3	4.1	0.3	3.9	0.3
Sex								
Men	6.9	0.2	6.1	0.2	5.4	0.2	4.9	0.2
Women	9.5	0.2	8.4	0.2	7.4	0.2	6.8	0.2
Educational Attainment (people 18 years and over)								
Less than 4 years of high school	15.3	0.4	14.2	0.5	12.3	0.5	12.0	0.5
High school graduate, no college	6.2	0.2	5.4	0.2	4.9	0.2	4.4	0.2
1 or more years of college	2.3	0.1	2.1	0.1	1.9	0.1	1.7	0.1
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)								
With a work disability	17.1	0.6	16.3	0.7	14.8	0.7	14.5	0.7
With no work disability	4.9	0.1	4.4	0.1	3.9	0.1	3.5	0.1
Residence								
Metropolitan	7.7	0.2	6.8	0.2	5.9	0.2	5.4	0.2
Central city	12.3	0.4	11.0	0.4	9.8	0.3	8.9	0.3
Noncentral city	4.8	0.2	4.2	0.2	3.6	0.2	3.2	0.2
Nonmetropolitan	10.5	0.5	9.3	0.4	8.4	0.4	7.8	0.4
Region								
Northeast	7.5	0.3	7.1	0.3	6.3	0.3	5.7	0.3
Midwest	7.1	0.2	6.1	0.2	5.3	0.2	4.8	0.2
South	9.3	0.2	8.3	0.2	7.5	0.2	7.0	0.2
West	8.3	0.3	7.1	0.3	6.2	0.3	5.5	0.3
Family Status								
In families	8.5	0.1	7.6	0.1	6.6	0.1	6.1	0.1
In married-couple families	4.0	0.1	3.5	0.1	2.9	0.1	2.6	0.1
In families with a female householder, no spouse present	28.5	0.5	25.4	0.6	22.7	0.6	21.0	0.6
In families with a male householder, no spouse present	9.2	0.7	7.5	0.7	6.2	0.6	6.4	0.7
Unrelated individuals	6.4	0.3	5.8	0.3	5.5	0.3	4.8	0.3
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 years and over)								
Employed full-time	1.9	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.5	0.1
Employed part-time	5.9	0.3	5.5	0.3	5.0	0.3	4.2	0.3
Unemployed	20.4	1.1	19.4	1.3	16.2	1.4	14.4	1.4
Not in labor force	11.2	0.3	10.1	0.3	8.9	0.3	8.5	0.3
Marital Status (people 18 years and over)								
Married	3.3	0.1	3.0	0.1	2.5	0.1	2.3	0.1
Separated, divorced, or widowed	10.4	0.4	9.4	0.4	8.5	0.4	7.8	0.4
Never married	8.7	0.3	7.7	0.3	6.7	0.3	6.2	0.3
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio								
Under 1.00	37.6	0.5	34.7	0.6	32.1	0.6	30.5	0.7
1.00 and over	2.8	0.1	2.7	0.1	2.4	0.1	2.2	0.1

¹In thousands.²People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

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

Table A-5.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Medicaid by Selected Characteristics: 1996-1999

Characteristic	Program participation rates (in percent)							
	Medicaid							
	1996	Standard error	1997	Standard error	1998	Standard error	1999	Standard error
Total number of recipients¹	28,460	219	27,221	240	26,584	248	26,511	262
As percent of the population	10.7	0.1	10.2	0.1	9.9	0.2	9.7	0.2
Race and Hispanic Origin²								
White	8.2	0.1	7.7	0.1	7.5	0.1	7.4	0.2
Not of Hispanic origin	6.7	0.1	6.3	0.1	6.1	0.1	5.9	0.2
Black	24.4	0.6	23.2	0.6	22.0	0.6	21.5	0.7
Hispanic origin	20.2	0.6	18.5	0.7	17.6	0.7	17.6	0.7
Not of Hispanic origin	9.6	0.1	9.1	0.2	8.8	0.2	8.7	0.2
Age								
Under 18 years	18.9	0.3	17.4	0.4	16.8	0.4	16.9	0.4
18 to 64 years	7.2	0.1	6.9	0.2	6.7	0.2	6.5	0.2
65 years and over	10.6	0.4	10.7	0.4	10.5	0.5	10.3	0.5
Sex								
Men	9.1	0.2	8.8	0.2	8.5	0.2	8.4	0.2
Women	12.3	0.2	11.5	0.2	11.1	0.2	11.0	0.2
Educational Attainment (people 18 years and over)								
Less than 4 years of high school	20.6	0.5	20.9	0.6	20.3	0.6	20.0	0.6
High school graduate, no college	7.6	0.2	7.2	0.3	7.2	0.3	7.2	0.3
1 or more years of college	3.1	0.1	3.0	0.1	3.0	0.1	2.8	0.1
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)								
With a work disability	28.6	0.7	29.1	0.8	29.1	0.9	29.1	0.9
With no work disability	5.0	0.1	4.9	0.1	4.9	0.1	4.9	0.1
Residence								
Metropolitan	10.2	0.2	9.7	0.2	9.3	0.2	9.1	0.2
Central city	15.3	0.5	14.6	0.4	13.9	0.4	13.7	0.4
Noncentral city	7.2	0.3	6.7	0.2	6.5	0.2	6.3	0.2
Nonmetropolitan	12.7	0.5	12.3	0.5	12.0	0.5	12.0	0.5
Region								
Northeast	10.9	0.3	10.7	0.3	10.4	0.4	10.2	0.4
Midwest	8.7	0.3	7.9	0.3	7.5	0.3	7.3	0.3
South	10.4	0.2	9.9	0.3	9.6	0.3	9.6	0.3
West	13.3	0.3	12.7	0.4	12.3	0.4	12.1	0.4
Family Status								
In families	10.9	0.2	10.2	0.2	9.8	0.2	9.7	0.2
In married-couple families	6.0	0.1	5.7	0.1	5.5	0.1	5.5	0.2
In families with a female householder, no spouse present	31.9	0.5	29.6	0.6	28.1	0.6	27.9	0.6
In families with a male householder, no spouse present	13.7	0.8	12.7	0.8	12.3		11.3	0.9
Unrelated individuals	9.9	0.3	9.9	0.4	10.0	0.4	9.8	0.4
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 years and over)								
Employed full-time	1.5	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.6	0.1
Employed part-time	6.9	0.3	6.6	0.3	6.6	0.4	6.4	0.4
Unemployed	17.5	1.1	18.4	1.3	17.7	1.4	16.7	1.5
Not in labor force	17.4	0.3	16.9	0.3	16.5	0.4	16.0	0.4
Marital Status (people 18 years and over)								
Married	3.9	0.1	3.8	0.1	3.8	0.2	3.7	0.2
Separated, divorced, or widowed	14.2	0.4	13.7	0.4	13.1	0.5	12.7	0.5
Never married	11.9	0.4	11.6	0.4	11.2	0.4	11.0	0.4
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio								
Under 1.00	40.0	0.6	38.1	0.6	37.7	0.7	38.0	0.7
1.00 and over	5.3	0.1	5.5	0.1	5.4	0.1	5.5	0.1

¹In thousands.²People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

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

Table A-6.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Housing Assistance by Selected Characteristics: 1996-1999

Characteristic	Program participation rates (in percent)							
	Housing assistance							
	1996	Standard error	1997	Standard error	1998	Standard error	1999	Standard error
Total number of recipients¹	11,784	148	11,408	162	10,997	166	10,657	173
As percent of the population	4.4	0.1	4.3	0.1	4.1	0.1	3.9	0.1
Race and Hispanic Origin²								
White	2.9	0.1	2.7	0.1	2.6	0.1	2.4	0.1
Not of Hispanic origin	2.2	0.1	2.1	0.1	2.0	0.1	1.9	0.1
Black	13.8	0.4	13.4	0.5	12.8	0.5	12.4	0.5
Hispanic origin	7.8	0.4	7.2	0.4	7.0	0.5	6.4	0.4
Not of Hispanic origin	4.0	0.1	3.9	0.1	3.7	0.1	3.6	0.1
Age								
Under 18 years	7.1	0.2	6.8	0.2	6.4	0.2	6.1	0.3
18 to 64 years	3.3	0.1	3.2	0.1	3.1	0.1	3.0	0.1
65 years and over	4.2	0.3	4.2	0.3	4.0	0.3	3.9	0.3
Sex								
Men	3.7	0.1	3.5	0.1	3.4	0.1	3.2	0.1
Women	5.2	0.1	5.0	0.2	4.8	0.2	4.6	0.2
Educational Attainment (people 18 years and over)								
Less than 4 years of high school	7.8	0.3	7.7	0.4	7.4	0.4	7.3	0.4
High school graduate, no college	3.7	0.2	3.5	0.2	3.4	0.2	3.2	0.2
1 or more years of college	1.7	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.6	0.1
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)								
With a work disability	8.7	0.4	9.0	0.5	8.9	0.5	8.8	0.6
With no work disability	2.7	0.1	2.6	0.1	2.6	0.1	2.5	0.1
Residence								
Metropolitan	4.5	0.2	4.3	0.1	4.2	0.1	4.0	0.1
Central city	7.6	0.3	7.4	0.3	7.0	0.3	6.9	0.3
Noncentral city	2.6	0.2	2.5	0.1	2.5	0.1	2.2	0.1
Nonmetropolitan	4.2	0.3	4.0	0.3	3.7	0.3	3.6	0.3
Region								
Northeast	5.7	0.2	5.8	0.3	5.6	0.3	5.6	0.3
Midwest	3.6	0.2	3.4	0.2	3.3	0.2	3.1	0.2
South	4.2	0.2	4.0	0.2	3.8	0.2	3.6	0.2
West	4.7	0.2	4.4	0.2	4.1	0.2	3.9	0.2
Family Status								
In families	4.2	0.1	4.1	0.1	3.9	0.1	3.7	0.1
In married-couple families	1.7	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.4	0.1
In families with a female householder, no spouse present	15.5	0.4	14.8	0.5	14.2	0.5	13.7	0.5
In families with a male householder, no spouse present	3.5	0.4	3.8	0.5	4.2	0.5	3.8	0.5
Unrelated individuals	5.7	0.3	5.5	0.3	5.3	0.3	5.3	0.3
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 years and over)								
Employed full-time	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.6	0.1
Employed part-time	3.5	0.2	3.4	0.2	3.3	0.3	3.3	0.3
Unemployed	9.6	0.8	9.6	1.0	9.6	1.1	9.6	1.2
Not in labor force	6.1	0.2	5.9	0.2	5.5	0.2	5.3	0.2
Marital Status (people 18 years and over)								
Married	1.5	0.1	1.4	0.1	1.4	0.1	1.3	0.1
Separated, divorced, or widowed	6.7	0.3	6.3	0.3	6.2	0.3	5.9	0.3
Never married	5.6	0.3	5.4	0.3	5.2	0.3	5.2	0.3
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio								
Under 1.00	17.5	0.4	17.4	0.5	16.5	0.5	16.2	0.6
1.00 and over	2.0	0.1	2.0	0.1	2.1	0.1	2.1	0.1

¹In thousands.²People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

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

Table A-7.
Median Duration of Program Participation by Program: 1996-1999

(In months)

Characteristic	Any Means-tested programs ¹		AFDC/GA		Supplemental Security Income		Food stamps		Medicaid		Housing assistance ²	
	Median	Standard error	Median	Standard error	Median	Standard error	Median	Standard error	Median	Standard error	Median	Standard error
All recipients³	7.0	0.1	5.6	0.6	11.2	0.4	5.9	0.4	7.5	0.1	(X)	(X)
Race and Hispanic Origin												
White	6.2	0.6	5.4	0.7	8.0	0.2	5.2	0.4	7.4	0.1	(X)	(X)
Not of Hispanic origin ⁴	5.5	0.5	5.2	0.6	7.9	0.3	4.8	0.4	7.3	0.1	(X)	(X)
Black	7.4	0.2	6.3	2.1	11.3	0.6	7.4	0.2	7.6	0.2	(X)	(X)
Hispanic origin	7.4	0.2	7.1	0.4	11.9	1.1	7.0	0.2	7.7	0.2	(X)	(X)
Not of Hispanic origin	6.6	0.7	5.3	0.6	11.1	0.5	5.8	0.4	7.4	0.1	(X)	(X)
Age⁵												
Under 18 years	7.6	0.2	5.7	0.8	7.8	0.7	7.2	0.2	7.8	0.1	(X)	(X)
18 to 64 years	5.9	0.4	5.4	0.8	7.9	0.2	4.9	0.3	7.5	0.1	(X)	(X)
65 years and over	3.9	0.0	(B)	(B)	19.7	0.9	8.0	0.3	3.9	0.0	(X)	(X)
Sex												
Men	5.7	0.7	5.0	0.8	12.5	14.1	5.2	0.5	7.4	0.1	(X)	(X)
Women	7.2	0.1	5.8	0.7	7.9	0.2	7.0	0.2	7.5	0.1	(X)	(X)
Educational Attainment (people 18 years and over)												
Less than 4 years of high school	7.3	0.2	7.1	0.2	15.4	0.6	7.3	0.2	7.6	0.1	(X)	(X)
High school graduate, no college	5.9	0.6	5.6	1.1	11.2	0.8	4.9	0.6	7.4	0.1	(X)	(X)
1 or more years of college	3.9	0.0	3.8	0.2	7.2	0.3	3.9	0.1	4.5	0.9	(X)	(X)
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)												
With a work disability	8.1	1.8	7.3	0.3	15.0	0.7	7.9	0.3	11.1	0.4	(X)	(X)
With no work disability	4.9	0.5	4.5	0.8	3.9	0.1	4.0	0.4	7.1	0.1	(X)	(X)
Residence												
Metropolitan	7.0	0.1	6.5	1.2	11.1	0.5	6.5	0.8	7.4	0.1	(X)	(X)
Central city	7.3	0.2	7.1	0.2	11.6	0.7	7.1	0.2	7.6	0.1	(X)	(X)
Noncentral city	5.8	0.8	5.3	1.1	7.8	0.3	5.6	0.6	7.3	0.1	(X)	(X)
Nonmetropolitan	7.0	0.2	3.9	0.1	11.6	0.7	5.3	0.6	7.6	0.2	(X)	(X)
Region												
Northeast	7.1	0.2	7.3	0.4	11.7	1.4	7.3	0.2	7.7	0.2	(X)	(X)
Midwest	5.1	0.8	4.7	1.0	7.6	0.4	4.4	0.5	7.2	0.2	(X)	(X)
South	7.0	0.1	5.6	1.0	11.6	0.5	7.0	1.0	7.4	0.1	(X)	(X)
West	7.3	0.2	5.2	1.9	12.7	11.1	5.3	1.0	7.7	0.2	(X)	(X)
Family Status												
In families	7.0	0.1	5.5	0.6	7.9	0.2	5.9	0.4	7.5	0.1	(X)	(X)
In married-couple families	5.7	0.5	4.0	0.1	7.9	0.3	4.8	0.4	7.2	0.1	(X)	(X)
In families with a female householder, no spouse present	7.6	0.2	7.1	0.2	7.8	0.3	7.3	0.2	8.0	0.1	(X)	(X)
In families with a male householder, no spouse present	7.2	0.4	4.0	0.3	11.2	1.3	5.7	2.1	7.6	0.5	(X)	(X)
Unrelated individuals	7.0	0.2	6.6	2.4	35.1	1.0	6.8	1.7	7.4	0.2	(X)	(X)
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 years and over)												
Employed full-time	3.9	0.0	3.6	0.1	7.0	0.3	3.7	0.1	4.3	1.2	(X)	(X)
Employed part-time	4.7	0.8	4.4	1.1	4.0	0.1	4.0	0.1	7.0	0.2	(X)	(X)
Unemployed	5.4	1.1	4.2	2.5	(B)	(B)	5.2	0.9	7.1	0.4	(X)	(X)
Not in labor force	7.3	0.1	7.2	0.2	15.2	0.4	7.7	0.2	7.5	0.1	(X)	(X)
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio												
Under 1.00	8.0	0.1	7.1	0.2	19.3	0.6	7.7	0.1	8.5	0.8	(X)	(X)
1.00 and over	4.6	0.6	3.9	0.1	7.7	0.2	4.0	0.1	7.1	0.1	(X)	(X)

B The sample size is too small for analysis. X Not applicable.

¹Major means-tested programs include Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), General Assistance (GA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, Medicaid, and housing assistance.

²Median duration cannot be computed when more than half of the spells are continuing in the last month of data collection. (This situation is especially likely to occur for elderly recipients whose incomes from other sources are unlikely to rise over time.)

³Median duration for each program is derived only for those who begin participating in each program at the start of the survey, while those who are already in the program at the start of the survey (i.e., the left-censored cases) are excluded from the analysis.

⁴Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

⁵Age, educational attainment, and other variables are measured at the time the spells begin, except that, for those who are already on programs at the start of the survey, these characteristics are measured at the first interview.

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

Table A-8.

Median Monthly Family Benefits of Program Participants by Selected Characteristics: 1996-1999

Characteristic	Monthly family benefits (in 1999 dollars) ¹							
	1996		1997		1998		1999	
	Median	Standard error	Median	Standard error	Median	Standard error	Median	Standard error
All recipients	333	1.0	456	3.0	418	3.0	394	4.5
Race and Hispanic Origin²								
White	320	2.0	409	4.5	392	5.0	355	5.0
Not of Hispanic origin	326	1.5	358	4.5	331	3.5	320	2.5
Black	341	2.5	481	6.0	430	4.5	406	7.0
Hispanic origin	314	1.5	518	3.0	504	3.5	448	6.5
Not of Hispanic origin	338	0.0	435	3.0	398	5.5	374	2.0
Age								
Under 18 years	333	2.0	522	4.0	469	7.0	429	4.5
18 to 64 years	312	2.5	433	4.5	417	4.0	397	4.5
65 years and over	463	6.5	255	7.5	277	6.0	269	8.5
Sex								
Men	342	2.0	473	3.5	433	5.5	408	7.0
Women	325	1.0	445	4.5	408	0.0	380	5.0
Educational Attainment (people 18 years and over)								
Less than 4 years of high school	358	3.5	436	5.5	426	4.5	399	5.5
High school graduate, no college	309	3.5	387	4.5	353	9.5	360	9.0
1 or more years of college	297	4.5	343	7.5	348	7.5	304	8.0
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)								
With a work disability	416	5.0	501	1.0	493	3.0	483	5.5
With no work disability	290	1.5	393	4.0	373	4.5	338	4.0
Residence								
Metropolitan	333	1.5	497	2.5	465	3.5	435	4.5
Central city	333	2.5	514	2.5	500	3.0	469	3.0
Noncentral city	334	2.5	458	4.5	408	0.0	386	7.0
Nonmetropolitan	329	2.5	337	3.0	326	2.0	299	2.0
Region								
Northeast	326	2.5	527	2.5	508	3.0	467	2.0
Midwest	325	2.5	454	7.0	374	8.5	363	8.0
South	338	2.0	348	5.0	327	1.5	314	4.0
West	337	0.5	591	4.5	575	5.0	559	7.5
Family Status								
In families	334	1.5	486	2.0	452	4.5	416	3.5
In married-couple families	338	0.0	414	1.5	408	1.5	385	7.0
In families with a female householder, no spouse present	331	1.0	522	2.0	487	4.5	429	4.5
In families with a male householder, no spouse present	337	7.0	501	4.5	510	5.5	411	23.5
Unrelated individuals	316	1.5	242	4.5	218	6.0	240	8.0
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 years and over)								
Employed full-time	229	4.5	248	3.5	248	5.0	224	5.0
Employed part-time	264	5.0	310	2.5	306	4.0	287	7.0
Unemployed	306	7.5	458	14.0	500	12.5	418	24.5
Not in labor force	385	4.0	471	4.5	454	5.5	432	6.5
Marital Status (people 18 years and over)								
Married	333	3.5	376	7.0	395	9.0	373	7.0
Separated, divorced, or widowed	331	4.0	335	5.5	317	4.5	300	3.5
Never married	330	3.0	469	6.0	458	8.5	411	8.0
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio								
Under 1.00	333	1.0	483	4.0	432	3.0	411	5.5
1.00 and over	333	4.0	408	5.5	401	8.0	359	7.5

¹Median monthly family benefits are calculated only for recipients who have reported or imputed amounts for AFDC, General Assistance (GA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and food stamps only and are expressed in 1999 dollars using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).

²People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

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

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