

Dynamics of Economic Well-Being: Participation in Government Programs, 2001 Through 2003 Who Gets Assistance?

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Household Economic Studies

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Current Population Reports

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

Changes in the welfare system, under waivers and the PRWORA, have increased interest in information about the use of programs, the characteristics of participants, the length of participation, and benefit amounts.

This report focuses on the characteristics and participation of people who received benefits from any of the following means-tested assistance programs:¹

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- General Assistance (GA)
- Food stamps

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

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid
- Housing assistance

The data cover calendar years 2001 through 2003² and provide a set of baseline estimates to study the effects of the reforms.³

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 exists. Efforts were made during the life of the panel to ensure that the sample remained representative of the noninstitutionalized population of the United States by attempting to follow people who moved to new addresses. If the people included in the estimates have different experiences in program participation than those 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 individuals in the fourth rotation group, monthly data were collected for January 2001 through December 2003. For individuals interviewed in rotations 1, 2, and 3, monthly data were not collected for all months at the end of 2003. For rotations with missing data at the end of 2003, imputations were made on the basis of the closest month of data available and then moved forward. For example, individuals interviewed in rotation 3 had 1 month (December) of data imputed in 2003; rotation 2 had 2 months (November and December) imputed in 2003; and rotation 1 had 3 months (October, November, and December) of imputed data in 2003.

³ Part of the PRWORA directed the U.S. Census Bureau to field a new survey to collect the data necessary to evaluate the impact of welfare reform. To carry out that directive, the Census Bureau created the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD). The SPD collected data on state welfare programs and the social, economic, demographic, and family changes that may affect outcomes of the reforms. For each of the 6 years from 1996 through 2002, the Census Bureau collected data from households previously interviewed in the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) from 1992–1994 or 1993–1995. Cross-sectional data from the SPD were released after the 1997, 1998, 2001, and 2003 surveys. The first longitudinal file from the SPD was released in the summer of 2001 and the second longitudinal file was released in the fall of 2002. The third longitudinal file was released in March 2006. For more information about SPD, see the SPD Web site at <www.sipp.census.gov/spd/>.

The data come from the 2001 panel of the Survey of Income and Program 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. This longitudinal quality allows examination of the SIPP sample from two perspectives.

First, the same people can be observed over a span of time. The number of months within a period of time when individuals received benefits from one or more means-tested assistance programs can be examined, and entry and exit activity levels can be measured. For example, the number, timing, and duration of people moving into and out of a particular situation within a period of time can be studied, such as the length of time an individual continuously receives program benefits.

Second, a population of interest can be analyzed at single points of time over regular intervals measuring gross activity levels. This cross-sectional perspective captures changes over time in the level of an activity, such as the proportion of the population receiving assistance from a particular program at selected points in time.

⁴ The data in this report were collected from February 2001 through January 2004 in all 9 waves (interviews) of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The population represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The sample of households in the SIPP is divided into four interview groups called rotation groups. Each month, 1 of the 4 rotation groups is interviewed about the previous 4 months (the reference period). The 2001 SIPP panel covered the period from January 2001 to December 2003. Data for all four rotation groups (the full sample) are available for 36 continuous reference months, the calendar months of January 2001 through December 2003.

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 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 for a total of between 1 and 11 months (not necessarily consecutive) during the January 2001–December 2003 period.

Participated 12 or more months: the percentage of people who participated in at least one program for a total of 12 or more months (not necessarily consecutive) during the January 2001–December 2003 period, including people who participated in all 36 months of the period.

Participated all 36 months: the percentage of people who participated in at least one program for all 36 months of the January 2001–December 2003 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 of the spells have a shorter duration and one-half of the spells have a longer duration 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 and 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 part of that month, then the benefit amount could underestimate the usual monthly benefit received by the family from that program.

The first section of this report examines means-tested program participation rates and the extent to which the programs are used. The second section looks at spells of program use by participant characteristics. The detailed statistical tables analyzed in this report are provided at the end of the report.

Highlights

- About 44 million ($\pm 337,000$) people, or 15.4 (± 0.3) percent of the population, participated in major means-tested assistance programs in each month, on average, in 2003.⁵
- In 2003, individuals were more likely to participate in Medicaid than in any of the other programs examined. Twelve (± 0.3) percent of individuals participated in Medicaid in an average month in 2003.
- Individuals with a family income level below their poverty threshold in 2003 were more likely to receive at least one type of major means-tested benefit than individuals who were not in poor families. About 50.8 (± 1.2) percent of individuals in poverty received benefits in at least 1 month in 2003 compared with 9.7 (± 0.3) percent of the nonpoor.

⁵ The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

- Individuals in households maintained by women with no husband present were more likely to participate in means-tested programs in an average month in 2003 than were individuals in married-couple households (40.1 [± 1.1] percent compared with 9.8 [± 0.3] percent) or households maintained by men with no wife present (19.5 [± 1.7] percent).
- Adults (people 18 and older) who did not graduate from high school were more likely than high school graduates or those with some college to participate in means-tested programs in an average month in 2003. Participation rates were 25.6 (± 1.1) percent, 11.7 (± 0.6) percent, and 5.2 (± 0.3) percent, respectively, for these groups.
- Unemployed people were more likely to receive means-tested benefits in an average month in 2003 than people with full-time jobs (25.0 [± 1.5] percent compared with 4.3 [± 0.3] percent).
- Children (people under 18 years of age) and people 65 and older were more likely than people in the 18–64-year-old age group to receive benefits from at least one means-tested assistance program in all 36 months of the 2001–2003 period examined in this report.
- Recipients of benefits from means-tested programs participated in the SSI program for a longer period of time (median duration of 15.0 [± 1.3] months) than they did in the food stamp program or Medicaid in the 2001–2003 period.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

This section investigates the degree of involvement in means-tested assistance programs using the following three concepts, each of which explores a different aspect of program participation.⁶

- The **“average monthly program participation rate”**: These are annual-average rates—one for each of the years 2001, 2002, and 2003. The rate represents a weighted average of the 12 monthly (cross-sectional) measurements taken in the specified year of the proportion of people in the group who participated in means-tested assistance programs. Each monthly rate in the average corresponds to the cross-sectional population in the month the measurement was taken. The measure represents the share of the group receiving 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 for each year from 2001 through 2003. The measure represents the proportion of people in a group who ever took part in any means-tested assistance program at any time in a

⁶ 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.”

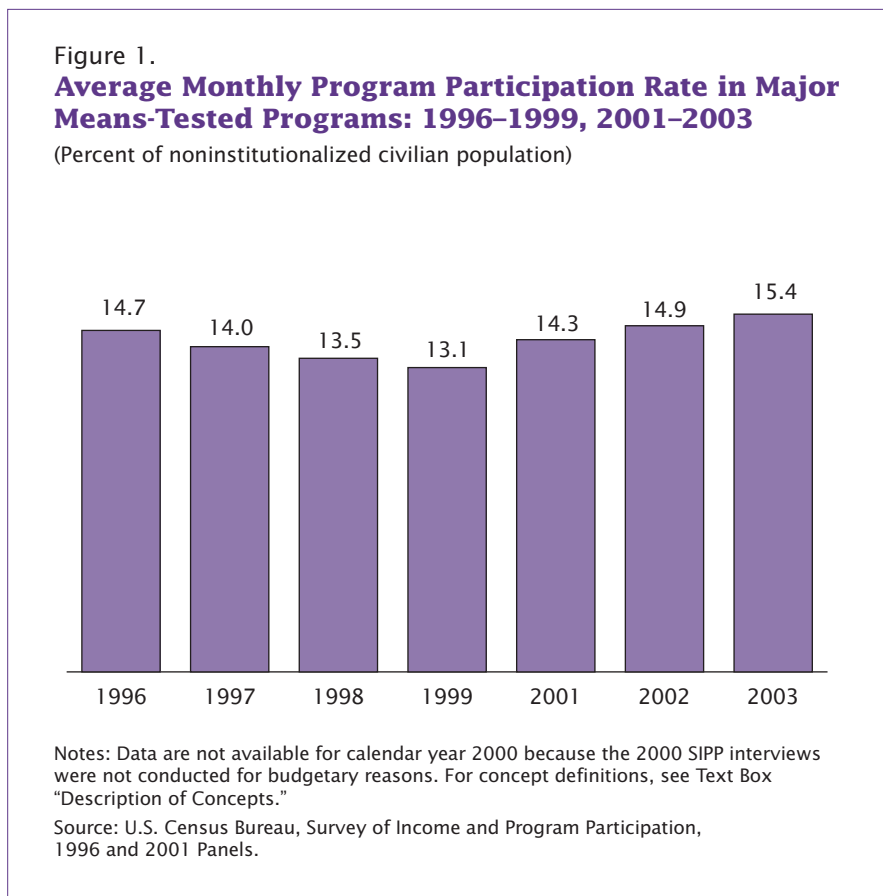
year. It is a measure of gross activity and corresponds to the population existing at the end of the year in question. The proportion represents the share of the group that participated in any assistance program at some time during the specified year.

- The percentage of the population that **“participated for a (specified) number of months in the 36-month period between January 2001 and December 2003”**: This measure is based on the number of accumulated (not necessarily consecutive) months spent in means-tested assistance programs throughout the entire 36-month time span. It describes the population receiving assistance at the end of the 36 months.

Program Usage: 2001 Through 2003

Of the estimated 286 million non-institutionalized civilians living in the United States in 2003, approximately 44 million, or 15.4 percent, participated in one or more major means-tested assistance programs during each month of 2003. As Figure 1 shows, the average monthly participation rate increased from 14.3 percent in 2001 to 15.4 percent in 2003.

Among the population, 6.4 percent participated in means-tested programs in each month of the 2001–2003 period (Figure 2). About 10.7 percent of people under 18 years old participated in one or more major means-tested assistance programs for each month of the 2001–2003 period, compared with 4.6 percent of people 18 to 64 years old and 6.6 percent of people 65 and older (Figure 3). About 0.2 percent of



welfare (TANF or GA) participants received benefits in all 36 months; this was the lowest proportion among the five programs studied.

Participation Rates

As Figure 4 illustrates, individuals were more likely to participate in Medicaid than in any of the other programs examined in this report. The participation rates for TANF or GA and housing assistance declined continuously from 2001 through 2003; the rates for SSI did not change statistically. The average monthly participation rate in 2003 for Medicaid (12.0 percent) was higher than that for TANF or GA, food stamps, housing assistance, or SSI (Figure 5). A higher proportion of people (about 3.7 percent of the population) participated in Medicaid

in all 36 months than in any other program (Figure 2).

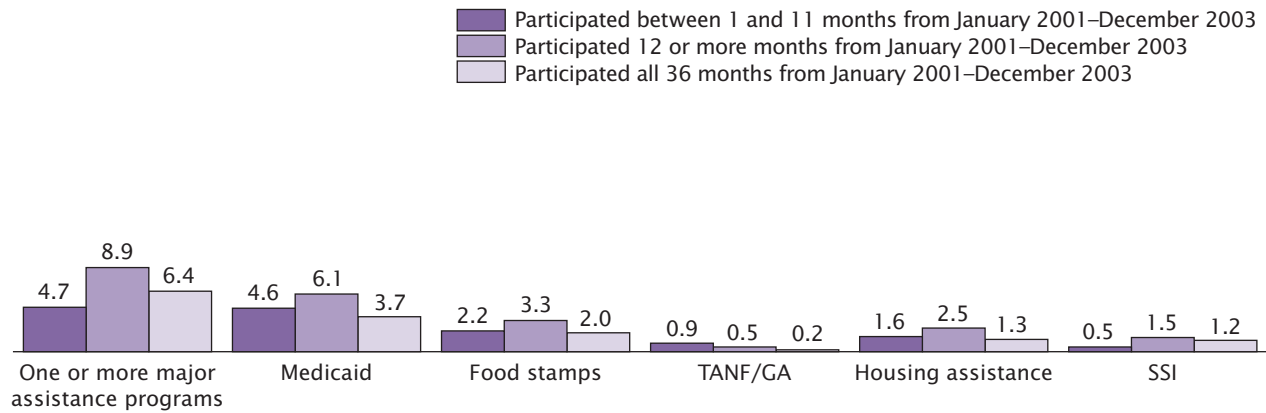
An estimated 34 million people received Medicaid benefits in an average month in 2003; about 18 million of these recipients were children. About 25.0 percent of children under age 18 received Medicaid, compared with 7.2 percent of people 18 to 64 years old, and 9.4 percent of people 65 and older (Table A-5).

Participation by Poverty Threshold

Figure 6 shows the proportion of those with family income below their poverty thresholds who received benefits during at least 1 month of 2001 and the corresponding proportion in 2003 (59.0 percent). Similarly, the proportion

Figure 2.
**Program Participation Rates for Major Means-Tested Programs:
 January 2001–December 2003**

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 3.
**Program Participation Rates for Major Means-Tested
 Programs by Age: January 2001–December 2003**

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

of those with a family income at or above their poverty threshold was near 13.9 percent.⁷ Additionally, 50.8 percent of those in poverty received at least one type of major means-tested benefit in an average month of 2003, compared with 9.7 percent of those not in poverty (Figure 7).

Those in poverty also tended to be long-term participants in means-tested programs—36.7 percent of those with family incomes under their poverty threshold participated in 12 or more months, compared with 4.5 percent of those with a family income at or above

⁷ The poverty threshold for a family of three with one related child was \$14,255 in 2001, \$14,480 in 2002, and \$14,810 in 2003. Data on poverty thresholds by family size and number of related children under 18 years old for the reported years can be found at <www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/threshld.html>.

Figure 4.

Program Participation Rates for Major Means-Tested Programs: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



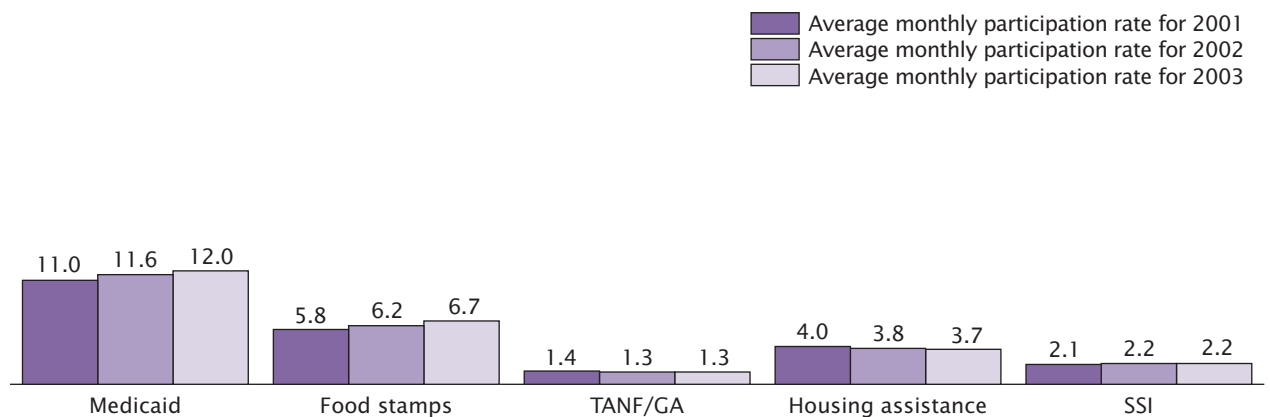
Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 5.

Average Monthly Participation Rates for Major Means-Tested Programs: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



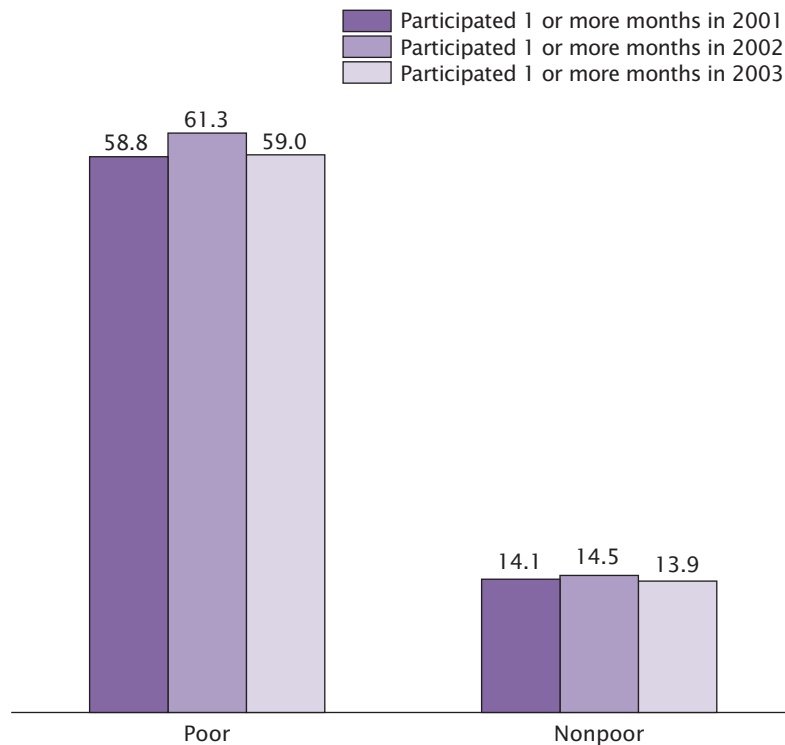
Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 6.

Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Poverty Status: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

their poverty threshold; and 28.6 percent of those in poverty participated in all 36 months of the 2001–2003 period, compared with 2.9 percent of those not in poverty (Figure 8).

Participation by Race and Hispanic Origin

The likelihood of receiving means-tested assistance and the length of benefit receipt differed among racial groups. In 2003,

41.1 percent of Blacks, 18.5 percent of Asians or Pacific Islanders, and 13.0 percent of non-Hispanic Whites participated in a means-tested program for at least 1 month (Figure 9). In 2003, the average monthly participation rate for Blacks, 33.7 percent, was higher than that for non-Hispanic Whites, 9.7 percent. The average monthly participation rate for Asians or Pacific Islanders was 13.4 percent (Figure 10).

The percentage of Blacks receiving assistance in all 36 months of the 2001–2003 period was larger than the percentage of Asians or Pacific Islanders and of non-Hispanic Whites, 17.5 percent compared with 6.3 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively (Figure 11). The corresponding figures for 12 or more months of participation were 23.3 percent for Blacks, 8.9 percent for Asians or Pacific Islanders, and 5.2 percent for non-Hispanic Whites.

The likelihood of receiving means-tested assistance also varied by Hispanic origin.⁸ Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to receive benefits for at least 1 month in 2003—35.7 percent of Hispanics participated in a program for at least 1 month compared with 13.0 percent of non-Hispanic Whites (Figure 9). Similarly, the average monthly participation rate in 2003 for Hispanics, 27.0 percent, was higher than that for non-Hispanic Whites, 9.7 percent (Figure 10). As shown in Figure 11, Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be long-term participants, with 10.8 percent of Hispanics participating in all 36 months, compared with 3.6 percent of non-Hispanic Whites.

⁸ Because Hispanics may be any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black population. Based on data in the 2001 SIPP Panel and using the panel weight, 3.5 percent of the Black population was Hispanic. Data for American Indians and Alaska Natives are not shown in this report because of their small sample size in the survey.

While Blacks and Hispanics had higher program participation rates than non-Hispanic Whites, the number of non-Hispanic Whites receiving means-tested assistance exceeded the separate numbers of Blacks and Hispanics. In 2003, about 15 million Blacks and 14 million Hispanics participated in a program for at least 1 month, compared with 25 million non-Hispanic Whites. Similarly, during the 2001–2003 period, approximately 8 million Blacks and 5 million Hispanics received means-tested assistance for 12 or more months, compared with 10 million non-Hispanic Whites.

Receipt of Means-Tested Assistance by Age

Figure 12 illustrates that children under 18 years of age were more likely to receive means-tested benefits than were people in other age groups. In an average month during 2003, 28.2 percent (20 million) of children received some type of means-tested benefit, compared with 10.8 percent (19 million) of people aged 18 to 64 and 12.3 percent (4 million) of people 65 and older. Children also tended to be long-term participants, with 15.7 percent (11 million) collecting benefits in 12 or more months and 10.7 percent (8 million) collecting benefits in all 36 months of the 2001–2003 period (Figure 3).

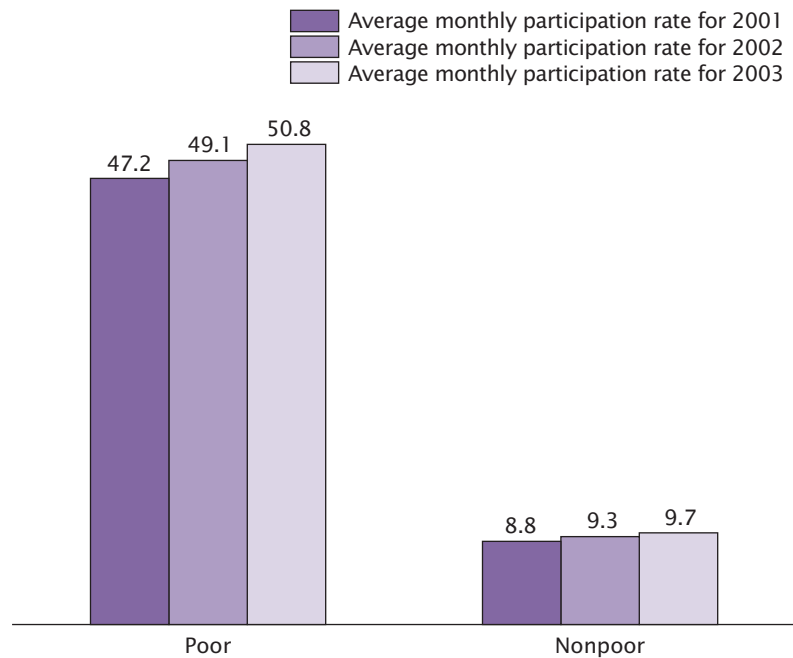
Participation Rates by Family Type

Families maintained by women with no husband present had lower incomes, on average, than married-couple families.⁹ Reflecting this finding, individuals in female-maintained families were

⁹ The term “no husband or wife present” describes householders who were not residing with their spouses during the period of investigation, regardless of their marital status.

Figure 7.
Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Poverty Status: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



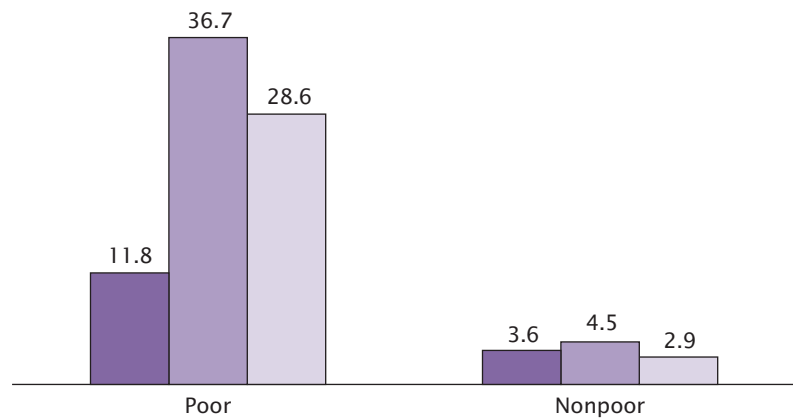
Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 8.
Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Poverty Status: January 2001–December 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)

Legend:
 - Participated between 1 and 11 months from January 2001–December 2003
 - Participated 12 or more months from January 2001–December 2003
 - Participated all 36 months from January 2001–December 2003



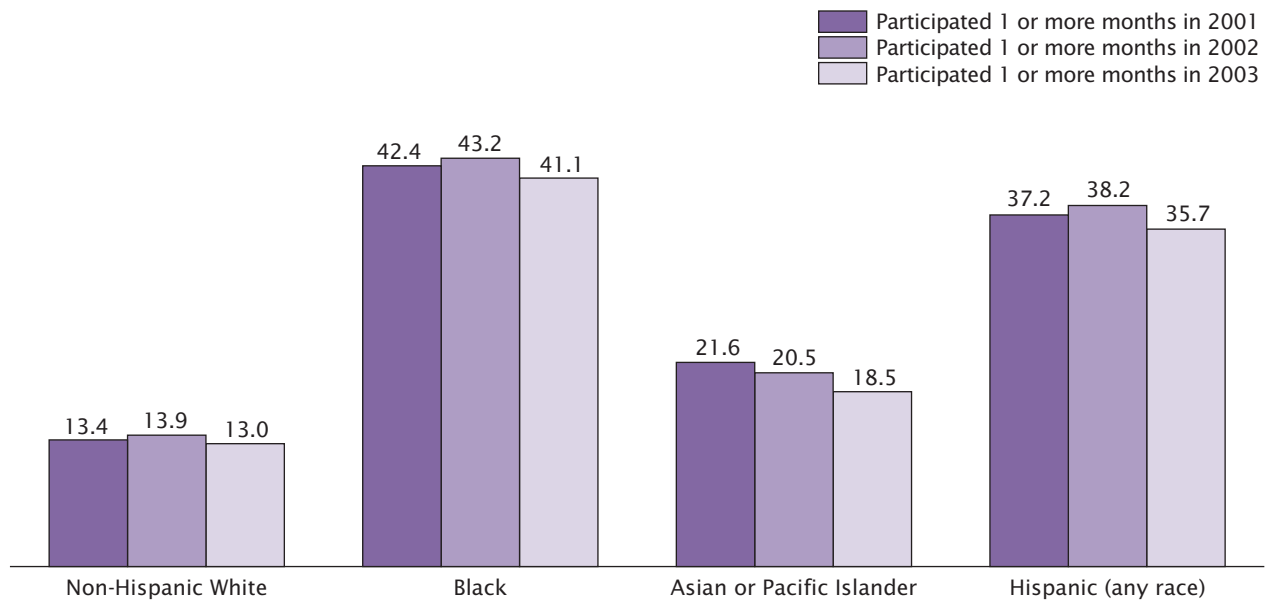
Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 9.

Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



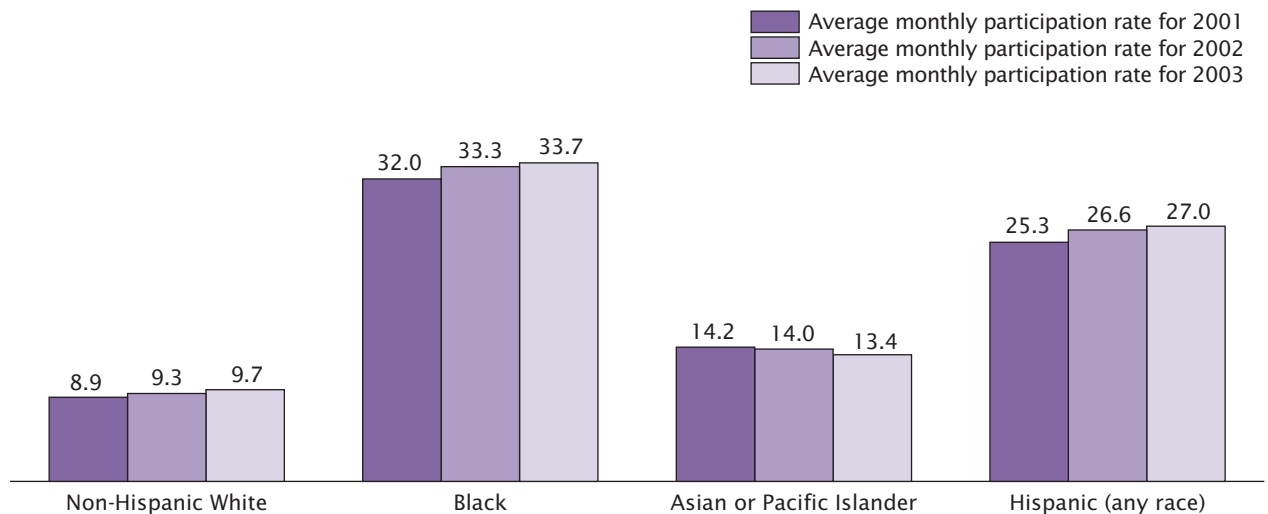
Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 10.

Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



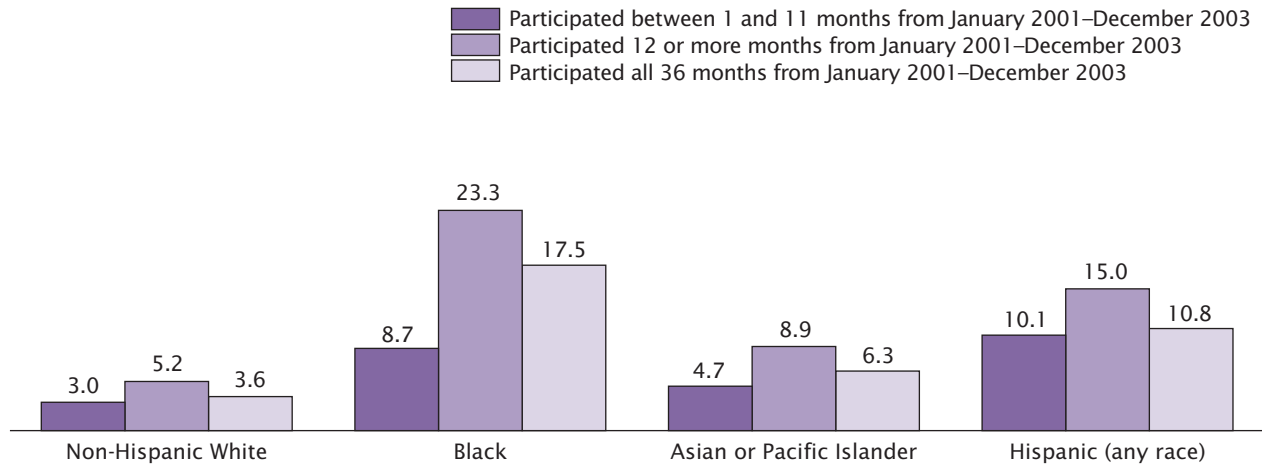
Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 11.

Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Race and Hispanic Origin: January 2001–December 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”

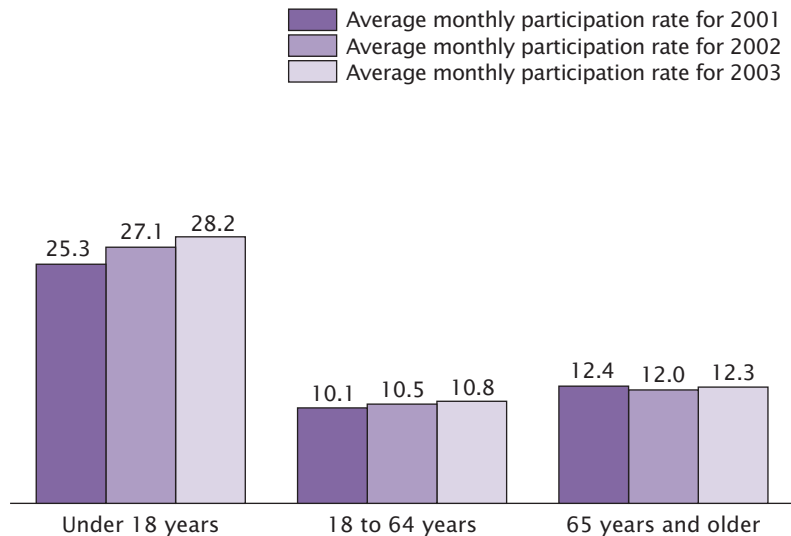
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

more likely to participate in major means-tested programs in an average month in 2003 than were people in married-couple families—40.1 percent compared with 9.8 percent (Figure 13). Similarly, 48.0 percent of individuals in families maintained solely by women participated in means-tested programs for at least 1 month of 2003, in contrast with 13.7 percent of individuals in married-couple families (Figure 14). Individuals in families maintained solely by women were over seven times as likely as individuals in married-couple families to receive benefits in all 36 months of the 2001–2003 period—21.1 percent compared with 2.9 percent (Figure 15).

Figure 12.

Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Age of Individual: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



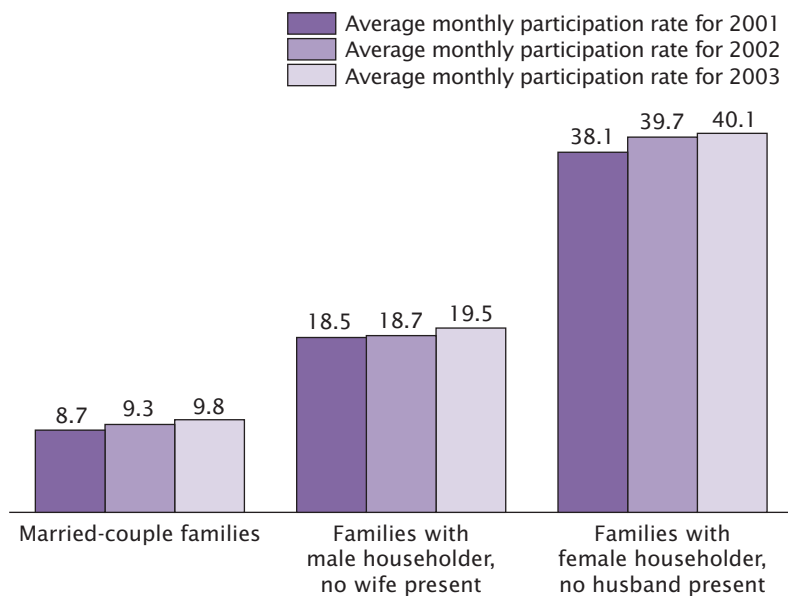
Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 13.

Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Family Type: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)

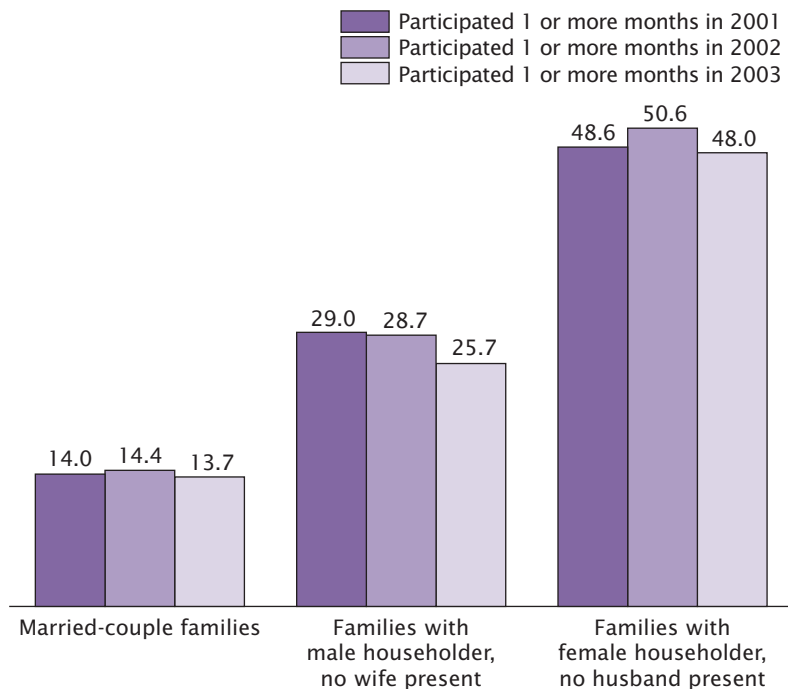


Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 14.

Program Participation for 1 or More Months in Major Means-Tested Programs by Family Type: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)



Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Participation Rates by Education

For people aged 18 and older, lower educational attainment was associated with higher program participation rates. The percentage of individuals who did not graduate from high school and received benefits in at least 1 month of 2003 (32.8 percent) was higher than the corresponding percentages of high school graduates (15.8 percent) and those with some college (7.5 percent, Figure 16). During an average month of 2003, 25.6 percent of people who did not graduate from high school received means-tested benefits, compared with 11.7 percent of high school graduates and 5.2 percent of individuals with some college (Figure 17). Individuals who did not graduate from high school were more likely than high school graduates and people with some college to receive benefits during the entire 36-month period of 2001–2003—15.2 percent compared with 5.1 percent and 1.8 percent, respectively (Figure 18).

Receipt of Means-Tested Benefits by Employment Status

People without jobs—those who are unemployed or out of the labor force—were more likely to receive means-tested benefits in an average month of 2003 than were either full-time or part-time workers. For people 18 years and older, 25.0 percent of the unemployed received means-tested benefits in an average month of 2003, compared with 20.5 percent of those out of the labor force, 11.1 percent of part-time workers, and 4.3 percent of full-time workers (Figure 19).

In addition to receiving means-tested benefits, the unemployed may also be qualified to receive unemployment compensation. In an average month of 2003,

22.2 percent of the unemployed received unemployment compensation, 2.6 percent received TANF or GA, 1.3 percent received SSI, 15.9 percent received food stamps, 15.2 percent received Medicaid, and 7.3 percent received housing assistance.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

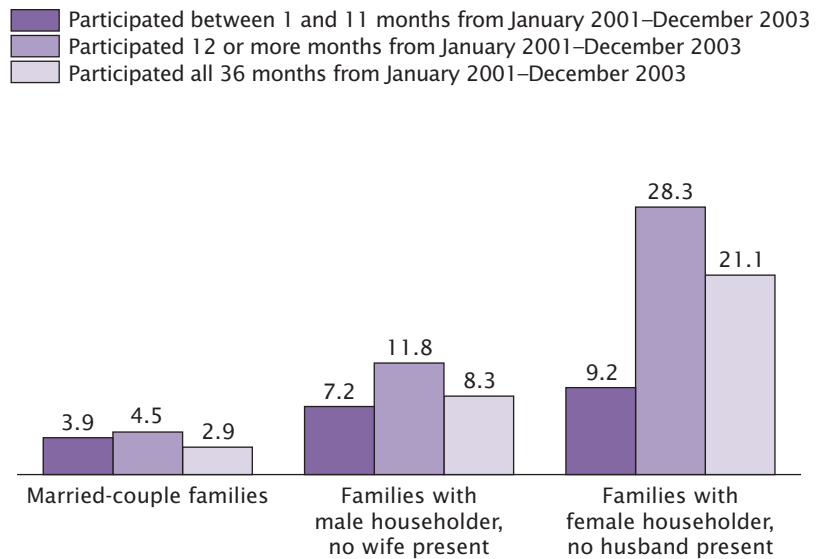
This section looks at the characteristics of the recipients of assistance. Two concepts are examined:

- Median duration of spells of program participation for the 2001–2003 period:** A spell is an uninterrupted period of time (measured in months) in which an individual receives means-tested assistance, which is preceded by a month or more of nonparticipation. Each recipient has one or more such spells. The measure examines median spells throughout the 36-month period for recipients in the population receiving assistance at the end of the period. The median is the value of the spell length that divides the distribution of spells (not recipients) into two equal parts.¹⁰ The data address the question “how long, on average, do recipients stay in programs continuously once they enter them?”

¹⁰ The median for a group of recipients cannot be computed when more than half of the spells for the group were continuing in the 36th month.

Figure 15.
Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Family Type: January 2001–December 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population)

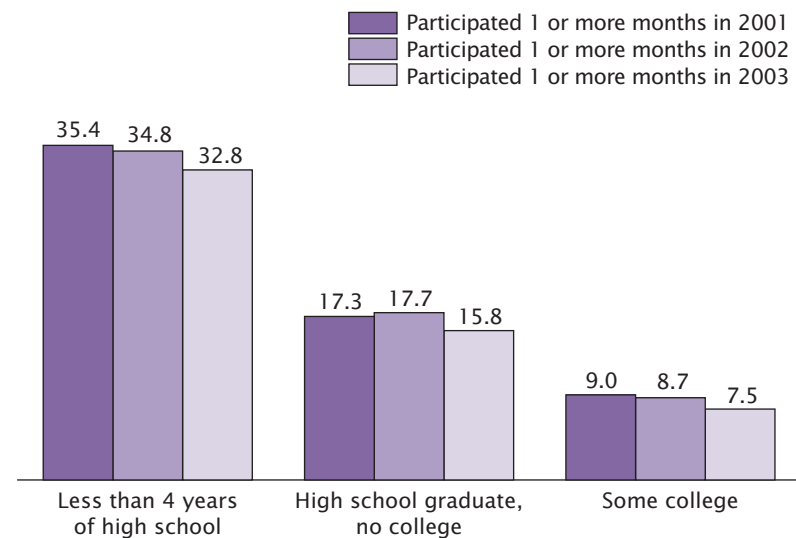


Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 16.
Program Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Educational Attainment: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population. People 18 years and older)

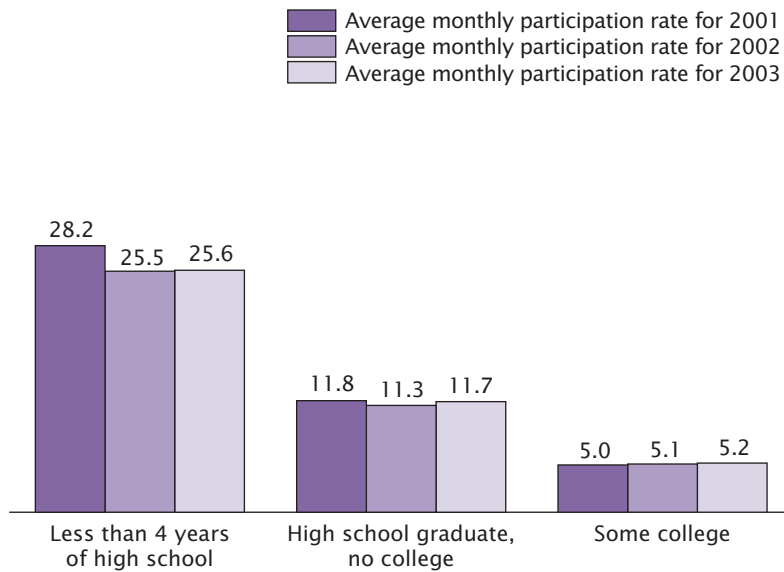


Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box “Description of Concepts.”

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 17.
**Average Monthly Participation Rates
 in Major Means-Tested Programs by Educational
 Attainment: 2001, 2002, and 2003**

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population. People 18 years and older)

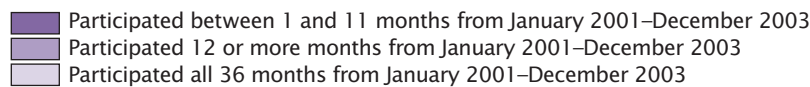


Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 18.
**Program Participation Rates in Major
 Means-Tested Programs by Educational Attainment:
 January 2001–December 2003**

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population. People 18 years and older)



Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

- 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.¹¹ The median is the amount that 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. The data refer to the population of recipients living in families participating at the end of the year specified.

Median Duration of Participation by Program

For people who received assistance during the 2001–2003 period, Table A-7 presents data on the median duration of spells of means-tested program participation over the course of the 36 months by type of program and selected demographic characteristics of participants.

As shown in Figure 20, among all program participants, the median spell length for participation in general was 7.2 months. The median spell length for SSI was 15.0 months, longer than the 7.7 months for food stamps, the 7.6 months for Medicaid, and the 4.9 months for TANF or GA.

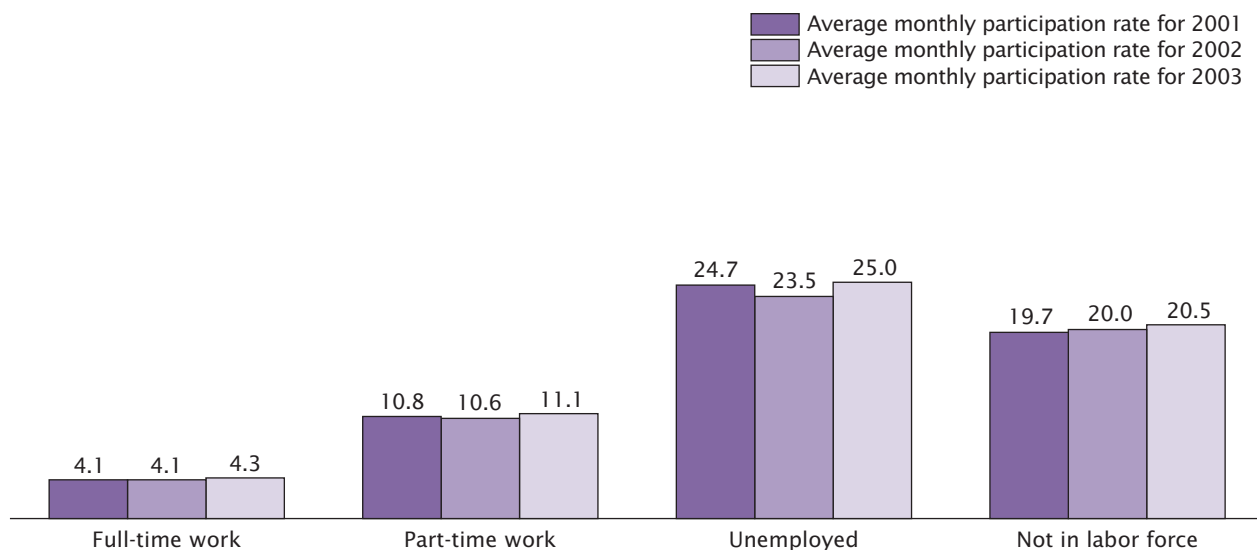
Within specific groups of participants, SSI was the program used for the longest continuous time by Hispanics (22.3 months), people

¹¹ It is not known how the data are affected by families who did not participate in the program for the entire last month for which they reported 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 a downward bias in the data.

Figure 19.

Average Monthly Participation Rates in Major Means-Tested Programs by Employment Status: 2001, 2002, and 2003

(Percent of noninstitutionalized civilian population. People 18 years and older)



Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

with a work disability (19.3 months), and people not in the labor force (19.0 months) (Table A-7).

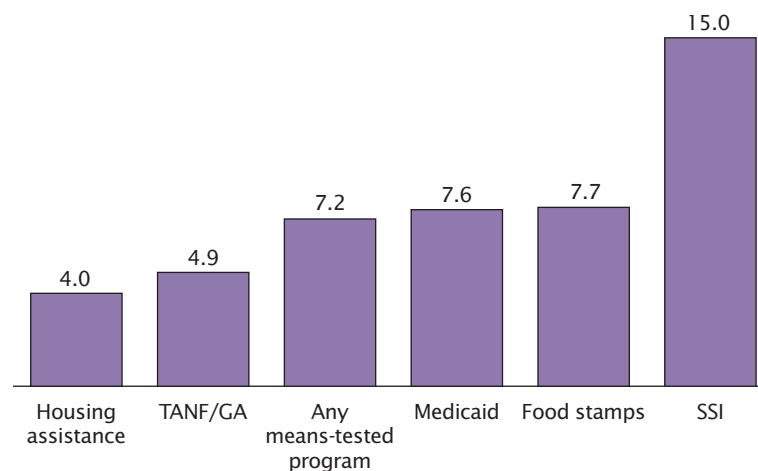
Spell Duration by Demographic Group

Table A-7 reveals that the median spell length for participation in means-tested assistance programs varied by demographic group. People under 18 years old had the highest median duration, 7.9 months, compared with 5.4 months for people aged 18 to 64 and 4.0 months for people 65 and older. People aged 65 and older who received food stamps had a median spell duration of 19.8 months, the longest on any program. People who did not graduate from high school remained on means-tested programs longer (7.4 months) than high school graduates (5.6 months) and those with some college (3.9 months).

Figure 20.

Median Spell Length by Program: January 2001–December 2003

(In months)

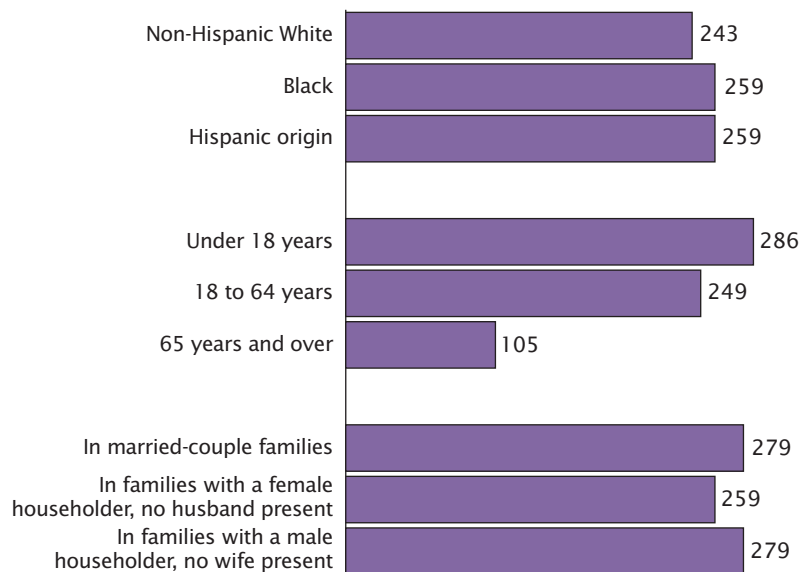


Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Figure 21.
Median Monthly Benefit Amount in 2003 for People Receiving Benefits by Selected Characteristics

(In dollars)



Note: For concept definitions, see Text Box "Description of Concepts."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

The median for people who were not in the labor force was longer than that for people employed full-time (7.2 months compared with 3.8 months, respectively).

Variations across demographic groups in median spell durations were evident as well for specific programs. People 18 to 64 years old remained on food stamps for 7.1 months, shorter than the duration for people under 18 years old and people 65 and older (8.8 months and 19.8 months, respectively).

By race and Hispanic origin, Asians or Pacific Islanders had longer stays on TANF or GA (11.4 months) than did non-Hispanic Whites (4.0 months) or Whites (4.0 months).

By educational attainment, people who did not graduate from high

school spent more time than people with higher educational levels in the housing assistance program. The median spell duration of SSI for those with some college education was 7.9 months, compared with 19.7 months for those who did not graduate from high school.

People in families maintained by women with no husband present remained on housing assistance for a median length of 7.6 months, longer than their counterparts in married-couple families, whose median was 3.8 months.

Monthly Benefit Amounts by Monthly Participation

For many of the groups, higher average monthly participation rates for assistance programs in general were associated with higher median monthly family

benefits in 2003.¹² For example, Figure 21 shows that in 2003, Blacks, whose average monthly participation rate was 33.7 percent, had a median monthly family benefit of \$259, higher than the \$243 for non-Hispanic Whites, whose average monthly participation rate was 9.7 percent. Children under 18 years old, whose average monthly participation rate was 28.2 percent, received a median monthly family benefit of \$286, higher than the \$105 for those 65 and older, whose average monthly participation rate was 12.3 percent. In 2003, people who were employed full-time had an average monthly participation rate of 4.3 percent and received a median monthly family benefit of \$224; in comparison, people who were unemployed had an average monthly participation rate of 25.0 percent and median monthly benefits of \$278.

Source of the Data

The population represented (the population universe) in the 2001 SIPP is the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States. The SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals. The data in this report refer to the period from January 2001 through December 2003. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized population in Census 2000).

¹² Median monthly benefit amounts include TANF or GA, SSI, and food stamps. The Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is used to express the 2001 and 2002 monthly benefit amounts in 2003 dollars.

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 is 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 U.S. Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of the surveys, the wording of questions, the review of the work of interviewers and coders, and the statistical review of reports to minimize these errors.

The SIPP 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 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.¹³

For further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates, including standard errors and confidence intervals, go to <www.bls.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A-2_SIPP2001_w1tow9_20050214.pdf> or contact Mahdi Sundukchi, Demographic Statistical Methods Division, at <Mahdi.S.Sundukchi@census.gov>.

¹³ For a more detailed discussion of SIPP sampling and weighting, see <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sam_and_wt.html>.

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User Comments

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of users of its data and reports. If you have any suggestions or comments, please send an e-mail inquiry to <hhes-info@census.gov>.

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Census Bureau, Washington, DC
20023

Table A-1.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Any Major Means-Tested Programs by Selected Characteristics: 2001–2003

Characteristic	Any means-tested program participation rates ¹ (in percent)					
	2001	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2002	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2003	90-percent confidence interval (±)
Total number of recipients²	39,874	798	41,959	926	44,014	337
As percent of the population	14.3	0.3	14.9	0.3	15.4	0.3
Race and Hispanic Origin³						
White	11.2	0.3	11.7	0.3	12.3	0.3
Not Hispanic	8.9	0.3	9.3	0.3	9.7	0.3
Black	32.0	1.0	33.3	1.2	33.7	1.2
Asian or Pacific Islander	14.2	1.5	14.0	1.6	13.4	1.5
Hispanic	25.3	1.2	26.6	0.3	27.0	1.3
Not Hispanic	12.6	0.3	13.1	0.3	13.5	0.3
Age						
Under 18 years	25.3	0.7	27.1	0.8	28.2	0.8
18 to 64 years	10.1	0.3	10.5	0.4	10.8	0.4
65 years and older	12.4	0.8	12.0	0.9	12.3	0.9
Sex						
Men	12.5	0.4	13.2	0.5	13.7	0.4
Women	15.9	0.4	16.5	0.5	17.0	0.5
Educational Attainment (people 18 and older)						
Less than high school graduate	25.4	1.0	25.5	1.2	25.6	1.1
High school graduate, no college	11.1	0.6	11.3	0.6	11.7	0.6
Some college	5.1	0.3	5.1	0.3	5.2	0.3
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)						
With a work disability	35.1	1.4	34.7	1.7	35.4	1.7
With no work disability	7.8	0.3	8.5	0.3	9.2	0.3
Residence						
Metropolitan	13.3	0.4	13.9	0.5	14.3	0.5
Central city	19.4	0.7	20.0	1.0	20.5	0.9
Noncentral city	9.8	0.4	10.4	0.6	10.8	0.5
Nonmetropolitan	18.5	0.8	18.9	1.2	19.7	1.1
Region						
Northeast	14.6	0.7	14.8	0.8	15.1	0.7
Midwest	11.4	0.6	11.9	0.6	12.7	0.6
South	14.9	0.5	15.8	0.6	16.5	0.6
West	15.9	0.6	16.7	0.7	16.5	0.7
Family Status						
In families	14.4	0.3	15.2	0.4	15.7	0.4
In married-couple families	8.7	0.3	9.3	0.3	9.8	0.3
In families with a female householder, no husband present	38.1	1.1	39.7	1.2	40.1	1.1
In families with a male householder, no wife present	18.5	1.6	18.7	1.8	19.5	1.7
Unrelated individuals	13.5	0.7	13.6	0.8	13.7	0.8
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 and older)						
Employed full-time ⁴	4.1	0.2	4.1	0.3	4.3	0.3
Employed part-time	10.8	0.7	10.6	0.8	11.1	0.8
Unemployed	24.7	2.5	23.5	2.4	25.0	2.4
Not in labor force	19.7	0.6	20.0	0.7	20.5	0.7
Marital Status (people 18 and older)						
Married	5.9	0.3	6.2	0.4	6.7	0.3
Separated, divorced, or widowed	17.7	0.8	17.8	0.9	17.9	0.9
Never married	15.3	0.7	15.8	0.8	15.9	0.8
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio⁵						
Under 1.00	47.2	1.1	49.1	1.3	50.8	1.2
1.00 and over	8.8	0.3	9.3	0.3	9.7	0.3

¹ Major means-tested programs include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, Medicaid, and housing assistance.

² In thousands.

³ Hispanics may be any race.

⁴ Full-time and part-time employment reflect the monthly employment status.

⁵ Family income-to-poverty threshold ratio reflects the monthly poverty status. A ratio of under 1.00 indicates that a person is in poverty, whereas a ratio of higher than or equal to 1.00 indicates that a person is not in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Table A-2.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or General Assistance by Selected Characteristics: 2001–2003

Characteristic	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/General Assistance participation rates (in percent)					
	2001	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2002	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2003	90-percent confidence interval (±)
Total number of recipients¹	3,935	275	3,584	298	3,667	291
As percent of the population	1.4	0.3	1.3	0.1	1.3	0.1
Race and Hispanic Origin²						
White	0.9	0.1	0.8	0.1	0.8	0.1
Not Hispanic	0.6	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.1
Black	4.2	0.4	3.8	0.5	3.7	0.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.0	0.6	1.8	0.6	1.5	0.5
Hispanic	2.9	0.4	2.7	0.5	2.7	0.5
Not Hispanic	1.2	0.1	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.1
Age						
Under 18 years	3.7	0.3	3.3	0.3	3.4	0.3
18 to 64 years	0.7	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.7	0.1
65 years and older	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Sex						
Men	1.2	0.1	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.1
Women	1.6	0.1	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.2
Educational Attainment (people 18 and older)						
Less than high school graduate	1.7	0.3	1.6	0.3	1.4	0.3
High school graduate, no college	0.6	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.1
Some college	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)						
With a work disability	2.1	0.4	1.6	0.4	1.5	0.4
With no work disability	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.1
Residence						
Metropolitan	1.4	0.1	1.3	0.2	1.3	0.2
Central city	2.5	0.3	2.3	0.4	2.3	0.3
Noncentral city	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.8	0.2
Nonmetropolitan	1.3	0.2	1.2	0.3	1.1	0.3
Region						
Northeast	1.6	0.2	1.4	0.3	1.5	0.3
Midwest	1.2	0.2	1.1	0.2	1.1	0.2
South	1.0	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.1
West	2.1	0.3	2.0	0.3	1.9	0.3
Family Status						
In families	1.6	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.1
In married-couple families	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.1
In families with a female householder, no husband present	6.5	0.5	5.8	0.6	5.6	0.5
In families with a male householder, no wife present	1.4	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.3	0.5
Unrelated individuals	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 and older)						
Employed full-time ³	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Employed part-time	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.2
Unemployed	3.2	1.0	2.7	0.9	2.6	0.9
Not in labor force	1.2	0.2	1.2	0.2	1.1	0.2
Marital Status (people 18 and older)						
Married	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1
Separated, divorced, or widowed	0.9	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.2
Never married	1.2	0.2	1.2	0.2	1.1	0.2
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio⁴						
Under 1.00	7.2	0.7	6.7	0.6	6.1	0.6
1.00 and over	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.1

¹ In thousands.² Hispanics may be any race.³ Full-time and part-time employment reflect the monthly employment status.⁴ Family income-to-poverty threshold ratio reflects the monthly poverty status. A ratio of under 1.00 indicates that a person is in poverty, whereas a ratio of higher than or equal to 1.00 indicates that a person is not in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Table A-3.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Supplemental Security Income by Selected Characteristics: 2001–2003

Characteristic	Supplemental Security Income (SSI) participation rates (in percent)					
	2001	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2002	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2003	90-percent confidence interval (±)
Total number of recipients¹	5,775	331	6,097	387	6,350	381
As percent of the population	2.1	0.1	2.2	0.1	2.2	0.1
Race and Hispanic Origin²						
White	1.6	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.8	0.1
Not Hispanic	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.6	0.1
Black	4.4	0.5	4.7	0.5	4.8	0.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.0	0.7	3.0	0.8	3.0	0.8
Hispanic	2.7	0.3	2.9	0.5	3.0	0.5
Not Hispanic	2.0	0.1	2.1	0.1	2.1	0.1
Age						
Under 18 years	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.1
18 to 64 years	2.3	0.2	2.4	0.2	2.4	0.2
65 years and older	4.5	0.5	4.7	0.6	5.0	0.6
Sex						
Men	1.8	0.2	1.8	0.2	1.9	0.2
Women	2.4	0.2	2.5	0.2	2.5	0.2
Educational Attainment (people 18 and older)						
Less than high school graduate	8.2	0.6	8.2	0.7	7.8	0.7
High school graduate, no college	2.5	0.3	2.7	0.3	2.8	0.3
Some college	0.9	0.1	1.0	0.2	1.1	0.2
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)						
With a work disability	18.1	1.2	18.8	1.4	19.4	1.4
With no work disability	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.1
Residence						
Metropolitan	1.9	0.1	2.0	0.2	2.1	0.2
Central city	2.9	0.3	3.0	0.4	3.1	0.4
Noncentral city	1.4	0.2	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.2
Nonmetropolitan	2.6	0.3	2.7	0.5	2.7	0.4
Region						
Northeast	2.4	0.3	2.5	0.3	2.6	0.3
Midwest	1.6	0.2	1.7	0.3	1.7	0.2
South	2.3	0.2	2.4	0.2	2.4	0.2
West	2.0	0.2	2.1	0.3	2.1	0.3
Family Status						
In families	1.5	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.6	0.1
In married-couple families	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.1	1.1	0.1
In families with a female householder, no husband present	3.4	0.4	3.6	0.5	3.7	0.4
In families with a male householder, no wife present	2.5	0.6	2.9	0.8	3.3	0.8
Unrelated individuals	4.7	0.4	5.1	0.5	5.2	0.5
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 and older)						
Employed full-time ³	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
Employed part-time	1.0	0.2	0.9	0.2	1.0	0.3
Unemployed	1.3	0.6	0.8	0.5	1.3	0.6
Not in labor force	7.7	0.4	8.0	0.5	8.0	0.5
Marital Status (people 18 and older)						
Married	1.1	0.1	1.2	0.2	1.2	0.2
Separated, divorced, or widowed	6.0	0.5	6.1	0.6	6.2	0.6
Never married	3.7	0.4	4.0	0.4	3.9	0.4
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio⁴						
Under 1.00	6.6	0.6	6.8	0.6	7.1	0.6
1.00 and over	1.3	0.1	1.4	0.1	1.4	0.1

¹ In thousands.² Hispanics may be any race.³ Full-time and part-time employment reflect the monthly employment status.⁴ Family income-to-poverty threshold ratio reflects the monthly poverty status. A ratio of under 1.00 indicates that a person is in poverty, whereas a ratio of higher than or equal to 1.00 indicates that a person is not in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Table A-4.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Food Stamps by Selected Characteristics: 2001–2003

Characteristic	Food stamp participation rates (in percent)					
	2001	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2002	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2003	90-percent confidence interval (±)
Total number of recipients¹	16,096	540	17,467	637	19,274	643
As percent of the population	5.8	0.2	6.2	0.2	6.7	0.2
Race and Hispanic Origin²						
White	4.1	0.2	4.4	0.2	4.9	0.2
Not Hispanic	3.2	0.2	3.4	0.2	3.8	0.2
Black	16.2	0.8	17.5	1.0	18.5	1.0
Asian or Pacific Islander	4.0	0.8	4.2	0.9	4.0	0.9
Hispanic	9.9	0.6	10.6	0.9	10.9	0.9
Not Hispanic	5.2	0.2	5.5	0.2	6.1	0.2
Age						
Under 18 years	10.2	0.5	11.0	0.6	11.8	0.6
18 to 64 years	4.4	0.2	4.8	0.3	5.3	0.3
65 years and older	3.2	0.4	3.4	0.5	3.7	0.5
Sex						
Men	4.8	0.3	5.3	0.3	5.7	0.3
Women	6.7	0.3	7.1	0.3	7.7	0.3
Educational Attainment (people 18 and older)						
Less than high school graduate	11.3	0.7	11.7	0.9	12.2	0.8
High school graduate, no college	4.4	0.4	4.9	0.4	5.5	0.5
Some college	1.8	0.2	1.9	0.2	2.1	0.2
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)						
With a work disability	14.4	1.1	14.6	1.2	15.7	1.3
With no work disability	3.3	0.2	3.8	0.2	4.3	0.2
Residence						
Metropolitan	5.1	0.2	5.5	0.3	6.0	0.3
Central city	8.2	0.5	8.8	0.7	9.5	0.7
Noncentral city	3.4	0.2	3.6	0.4	4.0	0.3
Nonmetropolitan	8.3	0.6	9.0	0.9	9.7	0.8
Region						
Northeast	5.4	0.4	5.3	0.5	5.8	0.5
Midwest	5.0	0.4	5.4	0.4	6.0	0.5
South	6.7	0.4	7.6	0.4	8.4	0.4
West	5.3	0.4	5.6	0.5	5.6	0.4
Family Status						
In families	5.9	0.2	6.5	0.3	7.0	0.3
In married-couple families	2.6	0.2	3.0	0.2	3.3	0.2
In families with a female householder, no husband present	20.6	0.9	21.4	1.0	22.7	1.0
In families with a male householder, no wife present	6.4	1.0	7.0	1.2	7.7	1.2
Unrelated individuals	4.8	0.4	4.9	0.5	5.4	0.5
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 and older)						
Employed full-time ³	1.5	0.1	1.6	0.2	1.9	0.2
Employed part-time	4.4	0.5	4.6	0.5	5.0	0.5
Unemployed	14.7	2.0	13.9	2.0	15.9	2.1
Not in labor force	7.9	0.4	8.3	0.5	9.0	0.5
Marital Status (people 18 and older)						
Married	2.3	0.2	2.7	0.2	3.0	0.2
Separated, divorced, or widowed	7.5	0.6	7.7	0.7	8.2	0.7
Never married	6.1	0.5	6.5	0.6	7.1	0.6
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio⁴						
Under 1.00	28.2	1.0	30.1	1.2	32.1	1.1
1.00 and over	2.1	0.1	2.3	0.2	2.7	0.2

¹ In thousands.² Hispanics may be any race.³ Full-time and part-time employment reflect the monthly employment status.⁴ Family income-to-poverty threshold ratio reflects the monthly poverty status. A ratio of under than 1.00 indicates that a person is in poverty, whereas a ratio of higher than or equal to 1.00 indicates that a person is not in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Table A-5.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Medicaid by Selected Characteristics: 2001–2003

Characteristic	Medicaid participation rates (in percent)					
	2001	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2002	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2003	90-percent confidence interval (±)
Total number of recipients¹	30,679	718	32,742	839	34,334	826
As percent of the population	11.0	0.3	11.6	0.3	12.0	0.3
Race and Hispanic Origin²						
White	8.7	0.3	9.3	0.3	9.7	0.3
Not Hispanic	7.0	0.3	7.3	0.3	7.6	0.3
Black	23.2	0.9	24.7	1.1	25.1	1.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	11.9	1.3	11.7	1.5	11.4	1.4
Hispanic	19.6	1.1	21.3	1.2	21.8	1.2
Not Hispanic	9.7	0.3	10.2	0.3	10.4	0.3
Age						
Under 18 years	21.9	0.7	23.9	0.8	25.0	0.8
18 to 64 years	6.8	0.3	7.1	0.3	7.2	0.3
65 years and older	9.4	0.7	9.2	0.8	9.4	0.8
Sex						
Men	9.6	0.4	10.3	0.4	10.7	0.4
Women	12.3	0.4	12.9	0.4	13.3	0.4
Educational Attainment (people 18 and older)						
Less than high school graduate	18.6	0.9	18.9	1.0	19.0	1.0
High school graduate, no college	7.3	0.5	7.5	0.5	7.7	0.5
Some college	3.3	0.2	3.3	0.3	3.3	0.3
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)						
With a work disability	29.3	1.4	29.2	1.6	29.8	1.6
With no work disability	4.9	0.2	5.5	0.3	5.9	0.3
Residence						
Metropolitan	10.2	0.3	10.9	0.5	11.3	0.4
Central city	14.7	0.6	15.5	0.9	16.0	0.8
Noncentral city	7.7	0.4	8.3	0.5	8.5	0.5
Nonmetropolitan	14.2	0.8	14.5	1.1	15.1	1.0
Region						
Northeast	11.3	0.6	11.8	0.7	11.9	0.7
Midwest	8.8	0.5	9.3	0.6	9.8	0.6
South	11.0	0.4	11.7	0.5	12.2	0.5
West	12.9	0.6	13.7	0.7	13.8	0.6
Family Status						
In families	11.3	0.3	12.0	0.3	12.5	0.3
In married-couple families	6.8	0.3	7.4	0.3	7.7	0.3
In families with a female householder, no husband present	29.8	1.0	31.2	1.1	31.7	1.1
In families with a male householder, no wife present	15.2	1.4	15.4	1.7	16.4	1.6
Unrelated individuals	9.4	0.6	9.7	0.7	9.6	0.7
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 and older)						
Employed full-time ³	1.8	0.2	1.9	0.2	1.9	0.2
Employed part-time	7.0	0.6	6.7	0.6	6.9	0.6
Unemployed	15.6	2.1	15.3	2.0	15.2	2.0
Not in labor force	15.5	0.6	15.7	0.6	16.1	0.6
Marital Status (people 18 and older)						
Married	3.7	0.2	3.9	0.3	4.2	0.3
Separated, divorced, or widowed	12.6	0.7	12.7	0.8	12.8	0.8
Never married	11.1	0.6	11.4	0.7	11.5	0.7
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio⁴						
Under 1.00	37.0	1.1	39.0	1.2	40.3	1.2
1.00 and over	6.7	0.2	7.1	0.2	7.4	0.2

¹ In thousands.² Hispanics may be any race.³ Full-time and part-time employment reflect the monthly employment status.⁴ Family income-to-poverty threshold ratio reflects the monthly poverty status. A ratio of under 1.00 indicates that a person is in poverty, whereas a ratio of higher than or equal to 1.00 indicates that a person is not in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Table A-6.

Average Monthly Program Participation Rates for Housing Assistance by Selected Characteristics: 2001–2003

Characteristic	Housing assistance participation rates (in percent)					
	2001	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2002	90-percent confidence interval (±)	2003	90-percent confidence interval (±)
Total number of recipients¹	11,160	455	10,770	509	10,572	486
As percent of the population	4.0	0.2	3.8	0.2	3.7	0.2
Race and Hispanic Origin²						
White	2.6	0.1	2.5	0.2	2.4	0.2
Not Hispanic	2.0	0.2	1.9	0.2	1.9	0.1
Black	12.6	0.7	12.2	0.8	11.9	0.8
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.8	0.8	3.1	0.8	3.1	0.8
Hispanic	6.5	0.5	6.1	0.7	5.6	0.7
Not Hispanic	3.6	0.2	3.5	0.2	3.4	0.2
Age						
Under 18 years	6.1	0.4	5.8	0.4	5.6	0.4
18 to 64 years	3.1	0.2	3.0	0.2	2.9	0.2
65 years and older	4.2	0.5	3.9	0.5	3.8	0.5
Sex						
Men	3.3	0.2	3.1	0.2	3.0	0.2
Women	4.7	0.2	4.5	0.3	4.4	0.3
Educational Attainment (people 18 and older)						
Less than high school graduate	7.6	0.6	7.4	0.7	7.0	0.6
High school graduate, no college	3.5	0.3	3.3	0.4	3.2	0.3
Some college	1.7	0.2	1.7	0.2	1.6	0.2
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)						
With a work disability	8.8	0.8	8.6	1.0	8.6	1.0
With no work disability	2.5	0.2	2.5	0.2	2.5	0.2
Residence						
Metropolitan	4.0	0.2	3.8	0.3	3.7	0.3
Central city	7.0	0.5	6.6	0.6	6.2	0.5
Noncentral city	2.2	0.2	2.2	0.3	2.2	0.3
Nonmetropolitan	4.1	0.4	3.9	0.6	3.9	0.5
Region						
Northeast	5.7	0.4	5.2	0.5	5.1	0.5
Midwest	3.3	0.3	3.2	0.4	3.2	0.3
South	3.7	0.3	3.6	0.3	3.4	0.3
West	3.7	0.3	3.7	0.4	3.5	0.3
Family Status						
In families	3.6	0.2	3.5	0.2	3.4	0.2
In married-couple families	1.5	0.1	1.4	0.1	1.3	0.1
In families with a female householder, no husband present	13.6	0.8	13.4	0.8	12.8	0.8
In families with a male householder, no wife present	2.8	0.7	2.1	0.7	1.7	0.6
Unrelated individuals	5.7	0.5	5.3	0.5	5.2	0.5
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 and older)						
Employed full-time ³	1.6	0.2	1.4	0.2	1.4	0.2
Employed part-time	3.6	0.4	3.2	0.5	3.1	0.4
Unemployed	9.0	1.6	7.4	1.5	7.3	1.5
Not in labor force	5.4	0.4	5.5	0.4	5.3	0.4
Marital Status (people 18 and older)						
Married	1.5	0.2	1.4	0.2	1.4	0.2
Separated, divorced, or widowed	6.2	0.5	5.9	0.6	5.6	0.5
Never married	5.2	0.4	5.2	0.5	4.9	0.5
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio⁴						
Under 1.00	15.7	0.8	15.2	0.9	15.2	0.9
1.00 and over	2.1	0.1	2.0	0.1	1.8	0.1

¹ In thousands.² Hispanics may be any race.³ Full-time and part-time employment reflect the monthly employment status.⁴ Family income-to-poverty threshold ratio reflects the monthly poverty status. A ratio of under 1.00 indicates that a person is in poverty, whereas a ratio of higher than or equal to 1.00 indicates that a person is not in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Table A-7.

Median Duration of Participation in Major Means-Tested Programs by Program: 2001–2003 (in months)

Characteristic	Any means-tested programs ¹		TANF/GA		Supplemental Security Income		Food stamps		Medicaid		Housing assistance ²	
	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)
All recipients³	7.2	0.2	4.9	1.5	15.0	1.3	7.7	0.3	7.6	1.6	4.0	0.0
Race and Hispanic Origin⁴												
White	7.1	0.2	4.0	0.2	15.0	1.5	7.4	0.5	7.6	1.6	3.9	0.0
Not Hispanic	7.0	0.2	4.0	2.1	11.7	0.8	7.5	0.5	7.6	1.6	3.9	0.0
Black	7.5	0.3	6.5	5.1	11.8	0.8	8.6	2.5	7.9	3.3	7.5	0.3
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.9	0.2	11.4	0.8	(X)	(X)	7.1	0.8	7.0	4.9	3.7	0.2
Hispanic	7.2	0.3	4.0	0.2	22.3	2.6	7.0	0.7	7.7	0.3	3.9	0.2
Not Hispanic	7.2	0.2	5.4	1.6	11.9	0.5	7.8	0.3	7.6	0.2	4.0	0.0
Age⁵												
Under 18 years	7.9	0.2	6.3	13.0	11.3	0.8	8.8	1.2	9.7	2.5	7.0	0.3
18 to 64 years	5.4	1.2	4.0	0.2	15.0	1.8	7.1	0.3	7.4	0.2	3.9	0.0
65 years and older	4.0	0.2	(B)	(B)	15.7	1.3	19.8	2.1	4.9	31.1	7.9	0.8
Sex												
Men	7.0	0.2	5.7	2.0	15.2	1.3	7.2	0.5	7.7	0.2	3.9	0.0
Women	7.3	0.2	4.4	1.3	12.0	0.7	8.2	1.2	7.6	0.2	5.0	3.9
Educational Attainment (people 18 and older)												
Less than high school graduate	7.4	0.3	4.3	2.0	19.7	3.3	10.2	7.1	7.7	0.3	7.2	0.5
High school graduate, no college	5.6	1.8	3.9	0.3	16.2	11.5	7.0	1.0	7.2	0.2	3.9	0.2
Some college	3.9	0.0	3.9	0.3	7.9	0.8	5.2	1.5	5.0	3.1	3.8	0.2
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)												
With a work disability	7.8	0.5	4.0	0.3	19.3	1.5	11.6	1.3	9.3	6.6	7.6	0.7
With no work disability	4.5	1.3	4.0	0.2	7.8	0.5	6.5	0.8	7.1	0.2	3.8	0.0
Residence												
Metropolitan	7.1	0.2	5.9	1.8	11.9	0.5	7.6	0.3	7.6	0.2	4.0	0.0
Central city	7.1	0.2	6.9	5.3	11.9	0.7	7.8	0.5	7.6	0.2	4.4	3.9
Noncentral city	7.2	0.2	5.6	1.6	13.4	13.2	7.3	0.5	7.6	0.2	3.9	0.2
Nonmetropolitan	7.4	0.3	3.8	0.2	19.0	2.0	7.9	0.5	7.9	0.3	3.9	0.2
Region												
Northeast	7.2	0.3	7.2	0.7	15.6	3.5	9.0	2.1	7.6	0.3	4.0	0.2
Midwest	7.3	0.3	5.3	4.1	11.7	1.5	7.7	0.7	7.8	0.3	7.3	0.7
South	7.2	0.2	3.8	0.2	12.9	14.8	8.0	0.5	7.6	0.2	3.9	0.2
West	7.0	0.3	5.1	2.1	11.5	2.1	6.1	1.2	7.6	0.3	3.9	0.2
Family Status												
In families	7.2	0.2	4.9	1.5	11.5	0.5	7.6	0.3	7.7	0.2	4.0	0.0
In married-couple families	6.9	1.6	3.9	0.2	11.5	1.0	6.0	1.6	7.3	0.2	3.8	0.0
In families with a female householder, no husband present	7.7	0.3	5.8	1.6	11.3	0.8	8.8	1.5	9.9	2.0	7.6	0.3
In families with a male householder, no wife present	7.3	0.7	3.8	0.3	15.7	1.3	8.4	2.0	7.8	0.7	3.8	0.2
Unrelated individuals	5.2	3.5	4.6	2.3	(X)	(X)	9.5	3.1	7.6	0.3	3.9	0.2
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 and older)												
Employed full-time ⁶	3.8	0.0	3.7	0.3	3.9	0.2	3.9	0.2	3.9	0.0	3.7	0.0
Employed part-time	6.6	0.8	3.7	0.3	11.6	1.2	6.3	0.7	7.3	0.3	4.0	0.2
Unemployed	7.2	0.5	3.9	0.3	(B)	(B)	8.4	10.2	7.5	0.5	5.1	3.1
Not in labor force	7.2	0.2	4.7	1.6	19.0	1.2	11.4	1.0	7.5	0.2	7.3	0.5
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio⁷												
Under 1.00	10.0	1.8	5.9	1.3	(X)	(X)	11.5	1.0	11.4	0.5	7.6	0.3
1.00 and over	6.0	1.0	3.9	0.2	11.3	0.7	5.8	0.8	7.3	0.2	3.8	0.0

See footnotes on next page.

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

¹ Major means-tested programs include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance (GA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, Medicaid, and housing assistance.

² Median 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.)

³ Median 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 are excluded from the analysis.

⁴ Hispanics may be any race.

⁵ Age, 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.

⁶ Full-time and part-time employment reflects the average employment status.

⁷ Family income-to-poverty threshold ratio reflects the monthly poverty status. A ratio of under 1.00 indicates that a person is in poverty, whereas a ratio of higher than or equal to 1.00 indicates that a person is not in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

Table A-8.
Median Monthly Family Benefits of Program Participants by Selected Characteristics: 2001–2003

Characteristic	Monthly family benefits ¹ (in 2003 dollars)					
	2001		2002		2003	
	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)	Median	90-percent confidence interval (±)
All recipients	256	0.8	260	1.6	255	0.8
Race and Hispanic Origin²						
White	250	3.3	252	4.1	249	1.6
Not Hispanic	248	3.3	248	4.1	243	4.9
Black	267	4.1	267	3.3	259	5.8
Asian or Pacific Islander	365	14.0	291	24.7	257	7.4
Hispanic	255	1.6	263	4.1	259	4.9
Not Hispanic	257	1.6	259	0.8	252	4.1
Age						
Under 18 years	279	3.3	289	4.1	286	4.9
18 to 64 years	255	1.6	259	1.6	249	0.0
65 years and older	109	7.4	110	10.7	105	8.2
Sex						
Men	271	4.1	273	4.1	270	5.8
Women	249	3.3	255	4.1	247	1.6
Educational Attainment (people 18 and older)						
Less than high school graduate	225	6.6	233	7.4	235	3.3
High school graduate, no college	247	3.3	251	4.9	234	6.6
Some college	244	8.2	246	6.6	229	4.9
Disability Status (people 15 to 64 years old)						
With a work disability	249	4.1	246	6.6	238	7.4
With no work disability	256	0.8	259	0.8	249	3.3
Residence						
Metropolitan	262	4.1	264	4.9	255	1.6
Central city	258	1.6	271	2.5	259	2.5
Noncentral city	267	2.5	259	0.8	255	0.8
Nonmetropolitan	247	1.6	250	1.6	239	4.1
Region						
Northeast	257	2.5	250	4.1	249	0.0
Midwest	256	0.0	268	6.6	255	0.8
South	256	0.8	257	3.3	255	1.6
West	269	1.6	279	4.9	255	2.5
Family Status						
In families	269	0.0	271	2.5	265	4.1
In married-couple families	295	7.4	280	6.6	279	3.3
In families with a female householder, no husband present	260	2.5	271	2.5	259	3.3
In families with a male householder, no wife present	287	26.3	285	14.8	279	19.7
Unrelated individuals	124	3.3	135	2.5	130	3.3
Employment and Labor Force Status (people 18 and older)						
Employed full-time ³	225	4.1	228	5.8	224	9.9
Employed part-time	247	4.9	234	5.8	229	4.1
Unemployed	276	9.0	296	21.4	278	12.3
Not in labor force	231	3.3	239	4.1	231	4.1
Marital Status (people 18 and older)						
Married	269	1.6	261	0.8	255	0.8
Separated, divorced, or widowed	156	10.7	162	9.9	149	4.1
Never married	257	1.6	261	4.9	254	3.3
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio⁴						
Under 1.00	256	0.8	259	0.8	255	0.0
1.00 and over	257	1.6	261	3.3	249	1.6

¹ Median monthly family benefits are calculated only for recipients who have reported or imputed amounts for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance (GA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and food stamps, and are expressed in 2003 dollars using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).

² Hispanics may be any race.

³ Full-time and part-time employment reflect the monthly employment status.

⁴ Family income-to-poverty threshold ratio reflects the monthly poverty status. A ratio of under 1.00 indicates that a person is in poverty, whereas a ratio of higher than or equal to 1.00 indicates that a person is not in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel.

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