

Measuring Welfare Reform: Questions from Four Census Bureau Surveys

Present at the Midwest Welfare Peer Assistance Network (WELPAN) Meeting,

Washington, DC, February 24-25, 2000

Jennifer Hess

Pat Doyle

Ed Welniak

Table of Contents Page

Housing and Energy Assistance Questions

Food Assistance Questions

Cash Assistance Questions

Non-cash Benefits Questions

Work Training Questions

Measuring Welfare Reform: Questions from Four Census Bureau Surveys

WELPAN Meeting (February 24-25, 2000)

The Census Bureau conducts three major surveys to collect income and government program participation data. These include the Survey of Income Program Participation (SIPP), the Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Demographic Survey (also known as the CPS March Supplement), and the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD). Each of these surveys collects data on earnings, a full range of income sources, and government program participation. In addition to these surveys, the Census Bureau is conducting an experimental survey, referred to as the SIPP Methods Panel, to test new questions for the core SIPP interview.

The attached table compares question wording across these four surveys for welfare-related cash and non-cash assistance including the following: housing and energy assistance, food assistance, cash assistance, non-cash benefits, and welfare to work activities.

Below is a brief description of the four surveys contained in this table:

SIPP 2000:

The "core" SIPP survey is designed to collect source and amount of income, labor force information, program participation and eligibility data, and general demographic characteristics to measure the effectiveness of existing federal, state, and local programs; to estimate future costs and coverage for government programs, such as food stamps; and to provide improved statistics on the distribution of income in the country. This is a three-year longitudinal survey. Households are contacted every four months, and the reference period is the preceding four months. In addition to the core survey, "topical modules" are conducted periodically to provide a broader context for analysis. Topics covered by the modules include personal history, child care, wealth, program eligibility, child support, disability, school enrollment, taxes, and annual income.

SIPP Methods Panel:

The SIPP Methods panel is a research and development project geared toward producing a revised and improved SIPP questionnaire for use in 2004. It is designed to test, in a field environment, a fully functional alternative instrument that incorporates the latest in questionnaire design approaches and minimizes respondent burden. The series of welfare-related questions is designed to capture additional forms of assistance that may be missed by the standard set of welfare-related questions contained in other surveys.

CPS March Supplement:

The Annual Demographic Survey or CPS March Supplement is the primary source of detailed information on income and work experience in the United States. The Annual Demographic Survey is used to generate the annual Population Profile of the United States, reports on geographical mobility and educational attainment, and detailed analysis of money income and poverty status. The labor force and work experience data from this survey are used to profile the U.S. labor market and to make employment projections. Households are interviewed in March and the reference period is the preceding calendar year.

SPD:

The SPD is a 10-year longitudinal survey mandated by Congress as part of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act and will provide data for 1992-2001. The survey follows a sub-set of people included in the 1992 and 1993 SIPP panels and interviews their households annually through 2002 providing data before, during, and after welfare reform. The "core" SPD contains data on a wide variety of welfare-related topics such as employment, income, program participation and eligibility, disability, health care utilization, health insurance, educational enrollment, work training, food security. Many of these topics are also covered for children. In addition to the core survey, the 1998 and 2001 SPD contain an adolescent self administered questionnaire, the 1999 and 2002 SPD contain extended measures of children's well-being, and the 2000 SPD contains a children's residential history. Households are interviewed once a year sometime between May and June. For most questions, the reference period is the preceding calendar year.

Additional information on these surveys is available at the following web addresses:

SIPP: <http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/>

CPS: <http://www.bls.census.gov/cps/cpsmain.htm>

SPD: <http://www.sipp.census.gov/spd/>

Census Bureau home page: <https://www.census.gov>

Census Bureau panel members and contact information:

Pat Doyle, (301) 457-3822, patricia.j.doyle@ccmail.census.gov

Jenny Hess, (301) 457-3230, jennifer.c.hess@ccmail.census.gov

Stephanie Shipp, (301) 457-3246, stephanie.s.shipp@ccmail.census.gov

Ed Welniak, (301) 457-3243, edward.j.welniak.jr@ccmail.census.gov

Housing and Energy Assistance Questions

SIPP Methods Panel	SIPP 2000	CPS March Supplement	SPD
Is this public housing - that is, is it owned by a local housing authority or other public agency?	Is this residence in a public housing project, that is, is it owned by a local housing authority?	Is this public housing, that is, is it owned by a local housing authority or other public agency?	Is this residence in a public housing project, that is, is it owned by a local housing authority?
Is the rent here lower because the Federal, State, or local government is paying part of the cost?	Is the Federal, State, or local government paying part or all of the rent for this residence?	Are you paying lower rent because the Federal, State, or local government is paying part of the cost?	Is the Federal, State or local government paying part or all of the rent for this residence?
Is this through Section 8 or through some other government program?	Is this through Section 8 or through some other government program?	Is this through Section 8 or through some other government program?	Is this through Section 8 or some other government program?
Has this household received any energy assistance from the Federal, state, or local	Has this household received any energy assistance from the Federal, state, or local government from (fill MONTH1+) 1st to	The government has an energy assistance program which helps pay heating costs. This assistance can be received directly by the household or it can be	The government has an energy assistance program that helps pay heating costs. During the past 12 months, has this household received

government since (MONTH) 1 st ?	the end of (fill MONTH4+)?	paid directly to the electric company, gas company, or fuel dealer. Since October 1, 1999, (have you/has this household) received assistance of this type from the federal, state, or local government? Do you remember receiving an additional or unexpected check that was sent during the winter to help pay heating costs? Was it used to pay heating costs?	any energy assistance of this type?
At any time since (MONTH) 1 st , did (NAME) receive any assistance to help pay for housing (, other than energy assistance)?			

Food Assistance

SIPP Methods Panel	SIPP 2000	CPS March Supplement	SPD
Since (MONTH) 1 st , was (NAME) authorized to receive Food Stamps?	Was (NAME) (or his/her spouse) authorized to receive Food Stamps?	Did (you/anyone in this household) get food stamps at any time during 1999?	Did anyone in this household get Food Stamps at any time during 1999?
At any time since (MONTH) 1 st , did (NAME) receive benefits from WIC - the Women, Infants, and	Is (NAME) on WIC, the Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program?	At any time during 1999, (were you/was anyone in this household) on WIC, the Women, Infants,	Did anyone in the household receive WIC in 1999? ⁽¹⁾

Children nutrition program?		and Children Nutrition Program?	
Since (MONTH) 1 st , did any of the children in this household usually get the lunch that their school offers?	From [MONTH1+] 1st to the end of [MONTH4+], did any of the children in this household usually get a lunch offered at school?	During 1999 which of the children ages 5 to 18 in this household usually ate a complete lunch offered at school?	During 1999, which children ages 5 to 18 in this household usually ate lunch offered at school?
Which children usually got the school lunch?	Were any of the lunches free or reduced price because (this child/these children) qualified for the Federal School Lunch Program?	During 1999 which of the children in this household received free or reduced price lunches because they qualified for the Federal School Lunch program?	During 1999, did any of the children in this household receive free or reduced-price lunches or breakfasts because they qualified for the Federal School Lunch Program?
Were any of the lunches free or reduced price because these children qualified for the National School Lunch Program?	Were they free or reduced price?		
Were they free or reduced price?	From [fill MONTH1+] 1st to the end of [fill MONTH4+], did any of the children in this household usually get breakfast at school under the Federal School Breakfast Program?		
Since (MONTH) did any of the children in this household usually get the breakfast that their school offers?	Were any of the breakfasts free or reduced-price because (this child/these children) qualified for the National School Breakfast Program?		
Which children usually got the school breakfast?	Were they free or reduced- price?		
Were any of the breakfasts free of reduced-price because these children qualified			

for the School Breakfast Program?			
Did (NAME) receive any food assistance (other than Food Stamps, WIC, or school meals) since (MONTH) 1 st ? (2)			In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever get emergency food from a church, a food pantry, or food bank? (3)
			In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever eat any meals at a soup kitchen?

Cash Assistance

SIPP Methods Panel	SIPP 2000	CPS March Income Supplement	SPD
Since (MONTH) 1 st , did (NAME) receive any cash assistance from a state or local welfare office, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME), or what used to be called AFDC?	Did (NAME) (or his/her children) receive any government payments, such as any assistance from a state or local welfare office? Did (NAME) receive:	At any time during 1999, even for one month, did (anyone in this household/you) receive any CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME)? Just to be sure, in 1999, did anyone receive CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, on behalf of CHILDREN in the household?	At any time during 1999, even for only one month, did anyone in this household receive any CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME)? Just to be sure, in 1999, did anyone receive CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program on behalf of CHILDREN in this household?
How about General Assistance or General Relief since (MONTH) 1 st ?	1. Public assistance payment - formerly called AFDC/ADC 2. General Assistance or General Relief	From what type of program did	From what type of program did (NAME) receive the CASH assistance? Was it (STATE PROGRAM NAME), General

	<p>3. Energy Assistance Program</p> <p>4. Transportation assistance, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help registering, repairing, or insuring a car?</p> <p>5. Child care service or assistance so you could go to work or school or training</p> <p>6. Any short-term cash assistance to tide you over when you needed it, to help you stay off welfare, or for an emergency</p> <p>7. Any other assistance from the government?</p>	<p>(NAME/YOU) receive the CASH assistance? Was it (STATE PROGRAM NAME), General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, or some other program?</p> <p>Was the cash assistance for adults AND children in the household, or JUST children?</p> <p>(Who/Which children) in your household was the cash assistance for?</p>	<p>Assistance, Emergency Assistance, or some other program?</p> <p>Was the cash assistance for adults AND children in the household, or JUST children?</p> <p>Who in your household/Which children in the household was the cash assistance for?</p>
<p>Did (NAME) receive any short-term cash assistance since (MONTH) 1st to tide (him/her) over when (he/she) needed it to help (him/her) stay off welfare, or for an emergency?</p> <p>What's the name of this program, so I'll know how to refer to it later?</p>		<p>During 1999, did (anyone/you) in this household receive income from: any severance pay, welfare, emergency assistance, foster child care payments, or any other money income not already covered?</p>	
<p>Since (MONTH) 1st, did (NAME) receive any child</p>	<p>Did (NAME) receive ANY child support as a bonus</p>		<p>During 1999, were the payments sent to (NAME) by the welfare</p>

support as a bonus or pass through from a state or local welfare office?	or pass through from public assistance, from a state or local welfare office?	or child support agency, by a court, directly from (CHILD'S NAME)'s (father/mother), from (his/her) place of employment, or were they sent some other way?
--	---	--

Non-cash Benefits

SIPP Methods Panel	SIPP 2000	CPS March Income Supplement	SPD
<p>People in need don't always receive unrestricted cash payments from the government - they may receive money for specific activities or other kinds of help.</p> <p>Since (MONTH) 1st, did (NAME) receive any transportation assistance to help (him/her) get to work or school or training, such as gas vouchers, bus passes or help registering a car?</p>	<p>How about any other kinds of government assistance, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help registering, repairing, or insuring his/her car, reduced price child care services, or short-term cash assistance to tide his/her over?</p> <p>What did (NAME) receive?</p> <p>1) Transportation assistance</p> <p>2) Child care assistance</p> <p>3) Short-term assistance</p> <p>4) Other, specify</p>	<p>At any time during 1999, did anyone in this household receive any of the following types of assistance from a state or county welfare agency or a case manager:</p> <p>Transportation assistance to help them get to work or school or training, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help repairing a car?</p>	<p>At any time during 1999, did anyone in this household receive any of the following types of assistance from a state or county welfare agency or a case manager:</p> <p>Transportation assistance to help them get to work or school or training, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help repairing a car?</p>
<p>How about child care services or assistance since (MONTH) 1st so (he/she) could go to work, or school, or training?</p>		<p>Any child care services or assistance in 1999 so they could go to work or school or training?</p>	<p>Any child care services or assistance in 1999 so they could go to work or school or training?</p>
<p>Did (NAME) receive any food assistance (other than Food Stamps or WIC or</p>			

school meals) since (MONTH) 1st?			
Since (MONTH) 1 ST , did (NAME) receive any clothing assistance or clothes, such as assistance to buy uniforms, or work clothes (,or school or winter clothes for children)?			
At any time since (MONTH) 1 st , did (NAME) receive any assistance to help pay for housing (, other than energy assistance)?			
Since (MONTH) 1 st , did (NAME) receive any other type of welfare program assistance (for himself/herself) (or on behalf of any of the children in this household)?			

Work Training

SIPP Methods Panel	SIPP 2000	CPS March Income Supplement	SPD
At any time since (MONTH) 1 st , did a state of local welfare office have (NAME) do any of the following activities: Attend GED classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills?	At any time since (MONTH) 1st, did (NAME) attend schooling or training because social services or a welfare office paid for, referred, or sent (NAME) there?	At any time during 1999, did anyone in this household do any of the following training activities: Attend GED classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills?	Between June 1999 and May 2000, did (NAME) attend GED classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills? Did (NAME) do that because the welfare or social service office required it or because

			(NAME) chose to do it, or for both reasons?
Attend job readiness training to learn about resume writing, job interviewing, or building self-esteem?		Did anyone in this household attend job readiness training to learn about resume writing, job interviewing, or building self-esteem?	Between June 1999 and May 2000, did (NAME) attend job readiness training to learn more about resume writing, job interviewing or building self esteem?
Attend a job search program or job club, or use a job resource center to get lists of jobs and employers, to schedule job interviews, or to fill out job applications?	At any time since (MONTH) 1 st , did social service or a welfare office provide job training, a Job Club, a job search program, or anything else to help (NAME) try to find a job?	Did anyone in this household attend a job search program or job club, OR use a job resource center to get lists of jobs and employers, to schedule job interviews, or to fill out job applications?	Between June 1999 and May 2000, did (NAME) receive any help in looking for a job such as job search training, a job club or a placement service? Did (NAME) participate in job search training or placement service because the welfare or social service office required it or because (NAME) chose to do it, or for both reasons?
Attend a training program to learn a specific job skill such as computer word processing, auto mechanics, nursing, providing child care, or a skill for some other job or vocation?		Did anyone in this household attend a training program to learn a specific job skill such as computer word processing, auto mechanics, nursing, providing child care, or a skill for some other job or vocation?	At any time between June 1999 and May 2000, did (NAME) attend a training program to learn a specific job skill such as computer word processing, auto mechanics, nursing, providing child care, or a skill for some other job or vocation? Between June 1999 and May 2000 did (NAME) receive training designed to improve job skills or learn a new job?

			Did (NAME) do that because the welfare or social service office required it or because (NAME) chose to do it, or for both reasons?
Work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called a community service or volunteer job, or work experience position?	At any time since (MONTH) 1 st , did the state or local welfare office have (NAME) do any community service, work in an unpaid job, or do any other work-related or job training activities?	Did anyone in this household participate in a work experience program such as a community service job in order to receive cash assistance?	Between June 1999 and May 2000, did (NAME) work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called community service or volunteer job, or a work experience position?
Did the government give your employer any money to cover all or part of your hiring, training, or wages?			

1. SPD question on WIC asked as part of series regarding non-cash assistance.
 2. This question is included in series on non-cash assistance. It is listed here for reference only.
 3. This question and the following one on soup kitchens are part of a larger series of questions on food security.
-