



When States Coordinate between Social Welfare Programs: Considering the Child Support Income Exclusion for SNAP

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**INCREASING FAMILY INCOME THROUGH CHILD SUPPORT:
LESSONS FROM RECENT RESEARCH**

Research Question

- Given the complex patchwork of social safety net programs in the United States, what state-level factors are associated with coordination across programs?
- We explore the adoption of the child support income exclusion (CSIE) for SNAP eligibility.
 - Default: child support paid by a non-custodial parent is deducted from income when calculating household net income.
 - Beginning in 2002, states were given the option of excluding child support income paid from the gross income test, which results in more non-custodial parents qualifying for SNAP.
- From 2002-2018, 31 states adopt option, 20 state revoke it, and 1 state adopts, revokes and then re-adopts the option. (20 states never adopt.)

Methods

We use state-year data to explore the following explanations:

- H1: Economic well-being of state (unemployment rate and state revenue per capita)
- H2: Democratic party leadership (% of lower chamber that is Democratic)
- H3: State per capita administrative costs of SNAP (ln administrative costs/SNAP caseload)

We estimate event history models for the probability of adoption and revocation.

We also estimate the probability of having the CSIE in place (logit) and the changes in the CSIE (fixed effects).

Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Model 1: EHM – First Adoption	Model 2: EHM – Revocation	Model 3 - Logit	Model 4 – FE Logit
State unemployment rate (t-1)	0.807 (10.489) [0.001]	-0.173 (31.341) [-0.001]	-5.240 (8.267) [-0.014]	-22.478 (16.048) [-0.018]
State revenue per capita (in millions) (t-1)	-0.083 (0.101) [-0.011]	0.002 (0.040) [0.000]	-0.015 (0.039) [-0.020]	-0.009 (0.022) [-0.007]
House Democrat	3.506 (2.085) [.030]	-4.549 (3.802) [-.040]	5.224* (2.157) [0.128]	11.951** (3.812) [0.112]
Ln per capita SNAP administrative costs (t-1)	-0.636 (0.679) [-.013]	0.313 (1.281) [.010]	-1.369 (0.804) [-0.082]	-3.877* (1.600) [-0.119]
Sample size	627	211	852	512

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01

Policy Implications

- Collaboration across social programs is more common when Democrats are more represented in State House and when the costs of collaboration, in terms of administrative costs, are lower.
- Average administrative costs for SNAP fell by half from 1999 to 2016.
 - The state adoption of broad based categorical eligibility (BBCE) is associated with a 7 percent reduction in administrative costs.
 - Proposal to eliminate BBCE will increase state (and federal) administrative costs and reduce coordination across social programs.