

## **Food Stamp Program Rules Database Documentation**

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## Food Stamp Program Rules Database Documentation

State policy options in the Food Stamp Program (FSP) have expanded since the mid 1990s, but research on the use and effects of these options has been hampered by the absence of a central data source that provides information across time, states, and policy. The Food Stamp Program Rules Database and the documentation for it, both prepared by the Urban Institute with funding from the Economic Research Service, helps fill this gap.

The FSP Rules Database includes 59 program rules that fall into 10 categories:

1. Asset Rules
2. Immigrant Rules
3. Standard Utility Allowance
4. Recertification Periods
5. Reporting Requirements
6. ABAWD Rules
7. Cash Assistance
8. Issuance
9. Outreach
10. Biometric Technology

Data on these FSP rules are provided for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Where possible, we provide data for each month from January 1996 through December 2004, although we were only able to do this for a subset of variables. Information on months of availability is provided in the documentation.<sup>1</sup>

The data are provided in state-month format, so each record represents a state-month combination (e.g., Alabama in January 1996). There are four identifying variables (state name, state FIPS code, month, and year), which are described at the beginning of the documentation. The data are provided in Stata format; the variable names identified in this document match the variable names in the Stata database. This document also provides details for each variable included in the database, including a brief description, data sources, months available, variable type, and variable range. Information on estimation procedures, assumptions, and other notes are provided where necessary to guide the user. Specific sources for each variable are listed in a brief format, with full citations in the reference section. In addition to specific sources, we used the following three general sources: (1) the Food Stamp Act, as amended (7 USC 2011-2036), (2) the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR 273.1-283.32), and (3) the FNS State Waiver Database.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In cases where source data are not available for each month, user of this database could impute data for months with missing data using the subset of months for which source data are available. Ratcliffe, McKernan, and Finegold (2007), for example, fill in the months of missing data using the closest available data.

<sup>2</sup> The Food Stamp Act is available at [http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode07/usc\\_sup\\_01\\_7\\_10\\_51.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode07/usc_sup_01_7_10_51.html); the Code of Federal Regulations is available at [http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_06/7cfrv4\\_06.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_06/7cfrv4_06.html); the FNS State Waiver Database is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/rules/Waivers/docs/Certdatabase.zip>. All accessed October 24, 2006.

## **I. Identifying Variables**

### **1. *State***

Description: All state names including the District of Columbia  
Variable type: String (i.e., text)  
Notes: All states are capitalized and there is a space in between state names such as New York.

### **2. *StateFIPS***

Description: State FIPS code  
Variable type: Integer  
Variable range: 1 to 56  
Notes: FIPS codes available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics  
<http://www.bls.gov/lau/lausfips.htm> (accessed March 12, 2007)

### **3. *Year***

Description: Calendar year  
Variable type: Integer  
Variable range: 1996 to 2004

### **4. *Month***

Description: Calendar month  
Variable type: Integer  
Variable Range: 1 to 12  
Note: 1 represents January, 2 represents February, etc.

## **II. Asset Rules**

### ***1. VehicleOnePerUnitExempt***

Description: One vehicle per unit exempt from asset rules  
Sources: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2001-2005); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b); FNS waiver documentation  
Months Available: January 1996-June 2001, October 2001, February 2002, February 2003, January 2004; January 1996-September 2001 (Connecticut); February 1996-December 2003 (Montana)  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: An option to apply vehicle rules from TANF or other low-income programs, if they were more liberal than the standard FSP rules, was extended to all states as of July 2001. Prior to July 2001, states could apply for waivers. On the basis of waiver documentation we received from FNS, three states are coded as exempting one vehicle per unit before July 2001: Connecticut (January 1996 through September 2001), Michigan (January 1996 through September 1999), and Montana (February 1996 through December 2003). All other states are coded as zero for January 1996 through June 2001.  
Ignores special provisions for vehicles used to earn a living (for example, taxicabs and delivery trucks).

### ***2. VehicleOnePerAdultExempt***

Description: One vehicle per adult in unit exempt from asset rules  
Sources: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2001-2005); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: January 1996-June 2001, October 2001, February 2002, February 2003, January 2004; January 1996-September 2001 (Connecticut); February 1996-December 2003 (Montana)  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: See note under #1. Based on waiver documentation, all states are coded as zero for January 1996 through June 2001.  
Ignores special provisions for vehicles used to earn a living (for example, taxicabs and delivery trucks)  
Includes policies that provide additional exemptions for children who require a car for employment, training, or school.

### ***3. VehicleAllExempt***

Description: All vehicle in unit exempt from asset rules  
Sources: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2001-2005); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: January 1996-June 2001, October 2001, February 2002, February 2003, January 2004; January 1996-September 2001 (Connecticut); February 1996-December 2003 (Montana)  
Variable type: Binary

Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: See note under #1. Based on waiver documentation, all states are coded as zero for January 1996 through June 2001.  
Ignores special provisions for vehicles used to earn a living (for example, taxicabs and delivery trucks)  
Maine had different policies for households with and without children under 18 (in October 2001, February 2002, February 2003, and January 2004). We use the policy for households with children under 18 (so Maine is coded as exempting all vehicles).

#### **4. *VehicleAssetLimit***

Description: Fair market vehicle asset limit in dollars if no automobile is exempt  
Sources: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2001-2005); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: January 1996-June 2001, October 2001, February 2002, February 2003, January 2004; January 1996-September 2001 (Connecticut); February 1996-December 2003 (Montana)  
Variable type: Continuous (in nominal dollars)  
Variable range: 4,600 to 15,000  
Notes: Coded as -9999 if at least one vehicle exempt.  
Ignores special provisions for vehicles used to earn a living (for example, taxicabs and delivery trucks)  
Assumptions: Vehicle equity is converted to fair market value by adding \$3,100.

#### **5. *VehicleAssessmentMethod***

Description: Method of assessing value of nonexempt vehicles  
Sources: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2001-2005); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: January 1996-June 2001, October 2001, February 2002, February 2003, January 2004; January 1996-September 2001 (Connecticut); February 1996-December 2003 (Montana)  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (fair market), 1 (equity)  
Notes: Coded as -9999 if at least one vehicle exempt.  
Ignores special provisions for vehicles used to earn a living (for example, taxicabs and delivery trucks)

### **III. Immigrant Rules**

#### **6. *NoncitizenChildrenFullyEligible***

Description: All legal immigrant noncitizen children (age < 18) who meet other program requirements are eligible for federal benefits or state-funded food assistance

Sources: USDA (1997-2004); PL 104-193, 104-208, 105-185, 107-71; Zimmerman and Tumlin (1999); National Immigration Law Center (2002); Schwartz and Haywood (2002)

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Binary

Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

Notes: Measures the combined effect of statutes governing eligibility for federal benefits and the availability of state-funded food assistance. All states are coded Yes for the period before January 1997, when the citizenship restrictions in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 took effect, and for the period beginning in October 2003, when the 2002 Farm Bill restored eligibility for all legal immigrant noncitizen children regardless of date of entry into the U.S..

#### **7. *NoncitizenChildrenPartEligible***

Description: Some, but not all, legal immigrant noncitizen children (age < 18) who meet other program requirements are eligible for federal benefits or state-funded food assistance

Sources: USDA (1997-2004); PL 104-193, 104-208, 105-185, 107-71; Zimmerman and Tumlin (1999); National Immigration Law Center (2002); Schwartz and Haywood (2002)

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Binary

Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

Notes: Measures the combined effect of statutes governing eligibility for federal benefits and the availability of state-funded food assistance. All states are coded No for January-December 1996 and October 2003-December 2004 because children in all states were fully eligible in these periods. Because the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 restored eligibility to all children lawfully residing in the U.S. on August 22, 1996, all states are coded Yes from November 1998 through September 2003 unless state-funded benefits provided full eligibility.

#### **8. *NoncitizenElderlyFullyEligible***

Description: All legal immigrant noncitizen elderly (age ≥ 65) who meet other program requirements are eligible for federal benefits or state-funded food assistance

Sources: USDA (1997-2004); PL 104-193, 104-208, 105-185, 107-71; Zimmerman and Tumlin (1999); National Immigration Law Center (2002); Schwartz and Haywood (2002)

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: Measures the combined effect of statutes governing eligibility for federal benefits and the availability of state-funded food assistance. All states are coded Yes for the period before January 1997, when the citizenship restrictions in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 took effect.

### **9. *NoncitizenElderlyPartEligible***

Description: Some, but not all, legal immigrant noncitizen elderly (age  $\geq 65$ ) who meet other program requirements are eligible for federal benefits or state-funded food assistance  
Sources: USDA (1997-2004); PL 104-193, 104-208, 105-185, 107-71; Zimmerman and Tumlin (1999); National Immigration Law Center (2002); Schwartz and Haywood (2002)  
Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: Measures the combined effect of statutes governing eligibility for federal benefits and the availability of state-funded food assistance. All states are coded No for January-December 1996 because the elderly in all states were fully eligible in this periods. Because the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 restored eligibility to all persons who were at least 65 and lawfully residing in the U.S. on August 22, 1996, all states are coded Yes from November 1998 through December 2004 unless state-funded benefits provided full eligibility.

### **10. *NoncitizenAdultsFullyEligible***

Description: All legal immigrant noncitizen adults (age 18-64) who meet other program requirements are eligible for federal benefits or state-funded food assistance  
Sources: USDA (1997-2004); PL 104-193, 104-208, 105-185, 107-71; Zimmerman and Tumlin (1999); National Immigration Law Center (2002); Schwartz and Haywood (2002)  
Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: Measures the combined effect of statutes governing eligibility for federal benefits and the availability of state-funded food assistance. All states are coded Yes for the period before January 1997, when the citizenship restrictions in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 took effect.

### **11. *NoncitizenAdultsPartEligible***

Description: Some, but not all, legal immigrant noncitizen adults (age 18-64) who meet

other program requirements are eligible for federal benefits or state-funded food assistance

Sources: USDA (1997-2004); PL 104-193, 104-208, 105-185, 107-71; Zimmerman and Tumlin (1999); National Immigration Law Center (2002); Schwartz and Haywood (2002)

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Binary

Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

Notes: Measures the combined effect of statutes governing eligibility for federal benefits and the availability of state-funded food assistance. Because the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 restored eligibility to all disabled adults who were lawfully residing in the U.S. on August 22, 1996, all states are coded Yes from November 1998 through December 2004 unless state-funded benefits provided full eligibility.

#### **IV. Standard Utility Allowance**

##### ***12. StandardUtilityAllowance***

Description: Standard utility allowance for family of three  
Sources: FNS Standard Utility Allowances (SUA) Charts  
Months Available: October 1998 to December 2004  
Variable type: Continuous (in nominal dollars)  
Variable range: \$118 to \$500  
Notes: FNS documents provide SUA data by fiscal year. We apply the standard utility allowance to each month in the fiscal year, with the exception of a few cases where footnotes available in these documents provide information about changes within a fiscal year.

## **V. Recertification Periods<sup>3</sup>**

### **Recertification Period For Units With Earnings**

#### **13. *CertPeriodEarnersMean***

Description: Mean recertification period for units with earnings  
Sources: FSP Quality Control (QC) data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 3.04 to 14.93  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.  
Notes: Includes elderly units with earnings.

#### **14. *CertPeriodEarnersMedian***

Description: Median recertification period for units with earnings  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 3.0 to 13.0  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.  
Notes: Includes elderly units with earnings.

#### **15. *CertPeriodEarnersMode***

Description: Modal recertification period for units with earnings  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Integer  
Variable range: 3 to 13  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.  
Notes: Includes elderly units with earnings.

#### **16. *CertPeriodEarners0103***

Description: Percentage of units with earnings with 1-3 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 0.93  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.  
Notes: Includes elderly units with earnings. Equivalent to “frequent recertification rate” in Kornfeld (2002).

#### **17. *CertPeriodEarners0406***

Description: Percentage of units with earnings with 4-6 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data

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<sup>3</sup> The recertification period variables were constructed using both certification period and recertification period lengths. We use “recertification period” as shorthand.

Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 1  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.  
Notes: Includes elderly units with earnings.

**18. *CertPeriodEarners0712***

Description: Percentage of units with earnings with 7-12 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 1  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.  
Notes: Includes elderly units with earnings.

**19. *CertPeriodEarners1399***

Description: Percentage of units with earnings with recertification periods of 13 months or more  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 0.63  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.  
Notes: Includes elderly units with earnings.

***Recertification Period For Nonearning, Nonelderly Units<sup>4</sup>***

**20. *CertPeriodNonearnersMean***

Description: Mean recertification period for nonearning, nonelderly units  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 4.5 to 17.2  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

**21. *CertPeriodNonearnersMedian***

Description: Median recertification period for nonearning, nonelderly units  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 3.0 to 13.0  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

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<sup>4</sup> A “nonelderly unit” is defined as a unit that does not include an elderly member (elderly if age  $\geq$  60).

**22. *CertPeriodNonearnersMode***

Description: Modal recertification period for nonearning, nonelderly units  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Integer  
Variable range: 3 to 24  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

**23. *CertPeriodNonearners0103***

Description: Percentage of nonearning, nonelderly units with 1-3 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 0.70  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

**24. *CertPeriodNonearners0406***

Description: Percentage of nonearning, nonelderly units with 4-6 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 0.90  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

**25. *CertPeriodNonearners0712***

Description: Percentage of nonearning, nonelderly units with 7-12 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 1  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

**26. *CertPeriodNonearners1399***

Description: Percentage of nonearning, nonelderly units with recertification periods of 13 months or more  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 0.70  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

## **Recertification Period For Nonearning Elderly Units<sup>5</sup>**

### **27. *CertPeriodElderlyMean***

Description: Mean recertification period for nonearning elderly units  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 7.4 to 26.2  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

### **28. *CertPeriodElderlyMedian***

Description: Median recertification period for nonearning elderly units  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 6.0 to 24.0  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

### **29. *CertPeriodElderlyMode***

Description: Modal recertification period for nonearning elderly units  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Integer  
Variable range: 3 to 36  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

### **30. *CertPeriodElderly0103***

Description: Percentage of nonearning elderly units with 1-3 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 0.40  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

### **31. *CertPeriodElderly0406***

Description: Percentage of nonearning elderly units with 4-6 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 0.64  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

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<sup>5</sup> An “elderly unit” is defined as a unit that includes at least one elderly member (elderly if age  $\geq$  60).

**32. *CertPeriodElderly0712***

Description: Percentage of nonearning elderly units with 7-12 month recertification periods  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 1  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

**33. *CertPeriodElderly1399***

Description: Percentage of nonearning elderly units with recertification periods of 13 months or more  
Sources: FSP QC data  
Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: 0.0 to 0.91  
Estimation procedure: Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

## **VI. Reporting Requirements**<sup>6</sup>

### **Reporting Requirements for Earners**

#### **34. *Reporting Earners Simplified***

Description: Simplified (i.e. semi-annual) reporting for earners  
Sources: USDA (2002b, 2002d); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: January 1996-January 2001, August 2001, January 2002, April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: Simplified reporting for earners was not an option from January 1996-January 2001, so coded as zero for all states in these months.

#### **35. *Reporting Earners Quarterly***

Description: Quarterly reporting for earners  
Sources: USDA (2002b, 2002d); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b); FNS Waiver Database  
Months Available: January 1996-June 1999, August 2001, January 2002, April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: Waivers approved before 1996 allowed Alabama, Arkansas, New York, Oregon, and West Virginia to provide quarterly reporting for earners. For all other states, quarterly reporting for earners was not an option from January 1996 through June 1999, so coded as zero in these months. California (August 2001) had quarterly reporting in some counties but was mostly monthly, so coded as 0.

#### **36. *Reporting Earners Monthly***

Description: Monthly reporting for earners

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<sup>6</sup> Values for variables 34-37 and 39-42 were particularly problematic for three states:

- Massachusetts: The USDA sources for August 2001, January 2002, and April 2002 show Massachusetts as using both monthly and quarterly reporting. Similarly, the USDA sources for February 2003, October 2003, and September 2004 show Massachusetts as using both monthly and simplified (six-month) reporting. On the basis of state regulations and discussion with a policy advocate, we coded Massachusetts as using quarterly reporting for earners in August 2001, January 2002, and April 2002; simplified reporting for earners in February 2003, October 2003, and September 2004; and change reporting for nonearners in February 2003, October 2003, and September 2004, the three data points for which change reporting data is available for all states.
- Oregon: The USDA sources for October 2003 and September 2004 show Oregon as using both monthly and simplified (six-month) reporting. On the basis of state documents, we coded Oregon as using simplified reporting for earners and monthly reporting for nonearners in both months.
- South Carolina: The USDA sources for August 2001 and January 2002 show South Carolina as using universal quarterly reporting, but additional details in these sources and the FSP Waiver Database suggest this applied to earners only. For nonearners, the state is coded in both these months as not using quarterly or simplified reporting, and as missing for monthly and change reporting.

Sources: USDA (2002b, 2002d); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: August 2001,<sup>7</sup> January 2002,<sup>8</sup> April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: California (August 2001) had quarterly reporting in some counties but was mostly monthly, so coded as 1.

### **37. *ReportingEarnersChange***

Description: Change reporting for earners  
Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture 2003a, 2003b, and 2004b  
Months Available: February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

### **38. *ReportingThresholdEarned***

Description: Amount of change in earned income that recipient is required to report if state has change reporting  
Sources: USDA (2002b, 2002d); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: August 2001, January 2002, April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous (in nominal dollars)  
Variable range: \$25 to \$100  
Notes: Coded as -9999 if state does not use change reporting (i.e., state uses simplified, quarterly, or monthly reporting).

## **Reporting Requirements for Nonearners**

### **39. *ReportingNonearnersSimplified***

Description: Simplified (i.e., semi-annual) reporting for nonearners  
Sources: USDA (2002b, 2002d); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: January 1996-September 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: Simplified reporting for nonearners was not an option from January 1996-September 2002, so coded as zero for all states in these months.

### **40. *ReportingNonearnersQuarterly***

Description: Quarterly reporting for nonearners  
Sources: USDA (2002b, 2002d); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a,

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<sup>7</sup> Data documents we obtained do not provide information for all states in this month.

<sup>8</sup> Data documents we obtained do not provide information for all states in this month.

2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: January 1996-December 2000, August 2001, January 2002, April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: Quarterly reporting for nonearners was not an option from January 1996 through December 2000, so coded as zero for all states in these months. California (August 2001) had quarterly reporting in some counties but was mostly monthly, so coded as 0

#### **41. ReportingNonearnersMonthly**

Description: Monthly reporting for nonearners  
Sources: USDA (2002b, 2002d); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: August 2001,<sup>9</sup> January 2002,<sup>10</sup> April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)  
Notes: California (August 2001) had quarterly reporting in some counties but was mostly monthly, so coded as 1.

#### **42. ReportingNonearnersChange**

Description: Change reporting for nonearners  
Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture 2003a, 2003b, and 2004b  
Months Available: February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

#### **43. ReportingThresholdUnearned**

Description: Amount of change in unearned income that recipient is required to report if state has change reporting  
Sources: USDA (2002b, 2002d); USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b)  
Months Available: August 2001, January 2002, April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Continuous (in nominal dollars)  
Variable range: \$25 to \$50  
Notes: Coded as -9999 if state does not use change reporting (i.e., state uses simplified, quarterly, or monthly reporting). In April 2002, Nevada, Virginia, and Wyoming had waivers to average unearned income across months. These states are coded as using the standard federal reporting threshold for unearned income, which was \$25 at that time.

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<sup>9</sup> Data documents we obtained do not provide information for all states in this month.

<sup>10</sup> Data documents we obtained do not provide information for all states in this month.

## *Proxy Variables for Reporting Requirements Based on QC Data*

### ***44. ReportingEarnersFrequent***

Description: Proxy for use of monthly reporting for units with earners (indicator of whether state uses long recertification periods for units with earnings)

Sources: FNS QC data

Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004

Variable type: Binary

Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

Estimation procedure: Variable set to 1 if more than 75 percent of units with earnings have recertification periods of 12 months or more. Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

Notes: Proxy for use of monthly reporting for units with earners. Created because there are many months of missing data in the variable “ReportingEarnersMonthly.” Kabbani and Wilde (2003) assume that having long recertification periods indicates that the state uses monthly reporting.

### ***45. ReportingNonearnersFrequent***

Description: Proxy for use of monthly reporting for nonearning, nonelderly units (indicator of whether state uses long recertification periods for nonelderly units without earnings)

Sources: FNS QC data

Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004

Variable type: Binary

Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

Estimation procedure: Variable set to 1 if more than 75 percent of units without earnings have recertification periods of 12 months or more. Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

Notes: Proxy for use of monthly reporting for nonearning, nonelderly units. Created because there are many months of missing data in the variable “ReportingNonearnersMonthly.” Kabbani and Wilde (2003) assume that having long recertification periods indicates that the state uses monthly reporting.

### ***46. ReportingElderlyFrequent***

Description: Proxy for use of monthly reporting for nonearning elderly units. (indicator of whether state uses long recertification periods for elderly units without earnings)

Sources: FNS QC data

Months Available: January 1996 to September 2004

Variable type: Binary

Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

Estimation procedure: Variable set to 1 if more than 75 percent of elderly units without earnings have recertification periods of 12 months or more. Computed as retrospective six-month moving average.

Notes:

Proxy for use of monthly reporting for nonearning elderly units. Kabbani and Wilde (2003) assume that having long recertification periods indicates that the state uses monthly reporting.

## **VII. ABAWD Rules**

### ***47. ABAWDET***

Description: Percentage of available federal funds spent on Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) workfare and employment and training activities

Sources: National Databank Public Elements; FNS data on allocation of funds across states

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Continuous number

Variable range: 0.01 to 1.4

Notes: Values occasionally exceed 1 (i.e., 100 percent) because states can carry funds over to a subsequent fiscal year.  
Sources provide data by fiscal year. We apply the percentage to each month in the fiscal year.

## **VIII. Cash Assistance**

### **48. *CashAsstCompDisqualification***

Description: State disqualifies recipient for failure to meet requirements of another program (usually TANF)  
Sources: USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b); Gabor and Botsko (1998)  
Months Available: January 1996-August 1996, November 1997-December 1997,<sup>11</sup> April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

### **49. *CashAsstExpCatEligibility***

Description: State uses expanded categorical eligibility (i.e., receipt of TANF services, with or without cash assistance, makes unit automatically eligible for food stamp benefits)  
Sources: USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b); Federal Register (2000); USDA (1999)  
Months Available: January 1996-June 1999, April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no), 1 (yes)

### **50. *CashAsstTransBenefits***

Description: Number of months of transitional benefits to TANF leavers  
Sources: USDA State Options Reports (2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b); Office of the Governor of New York (2001); Rosenbaum (2003)  
Months Available: January 1996-April 2002, February 2003, October 2003, September 2004; May 2002-November 2003 (New Mexico)  
Variable type: Integer  
Variable range: 0-5

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<sup>11</sup> Data documents we obtained do not provide information for all states in these months.

## **IX. Issuance**

### **51. *IssuanceAuthDocs***

Description: Percentage of dollar value of FSP benefits issued by authorized documents (participant receives authorization card in mail, presents card to receive coupons from authorized issuer)

Sources: National Databank Public Elements

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Continuous number

Variable range: -0.05 to 1

Notes: Values occasionally fall below 0 due to corrections and returns.

### **52. *IssuanceDirectAccess***

Description: Percentage of dollar value of FSP benefits issued by direct access (authorized issuer can check FSP records without need for authorization card)

Sources: National Databank Public Elements

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Continuous number

Variable range: -0.02 to 0.99

Notes: Values occasionally fall below 0 due to corrections and returns.

### **53. *IssuanceDirectMail***

Description: Percentage of dollar value of FSP benefits issued by direct mail (coupons mailed directly to participant)

Sources: National Databank Public Elements

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Continuous number

Variable range: -0.02 to 1.00

Notes: Values occasionally fall outside the 0 to 1 (i.e., 0 to 100 percent) range due to corrections and returns.

### **54. *IssuanceOverCounter***

Description: Percentage of dollar value of FSP benefits issued over the counter (benefits issued by state or local Food Stamp Program office, not separate authorized issuer)

Sources: National Databank Public Elements

Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004

Variable type: Continuous number

Variable range: -0.56e-8 to 0.43

Notes: Values occasionally fall below 0 due to corrections and returns.

### **55. *IssuanceDirectDelivery***

Description: Percentage of dollar value of FSP benefits issued by direct delivery (participants picks up authorization card and receives coupons from same

authorized issuer)  
Sources: National Databank Public Elements  
Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: -0.0001 to 0.88  
Notes: Values occasionally fall below 0 due to corrections and returns.

**56. IssuanceEBT**

Description: Percentage of dollar value of FSP benefits issued by EBT (electronic benefits transfer)  
Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004  
Variable type: Continuous number  
Variable range: -0.0001 to 1.05  
Notes: Values occasionally fall outside the 0 to 1 (i.e., 0 to 100 percent) range due to corrections and returns. The category for this variable is called "Other/EBT."

## **X. Outreach**

### **57. OutreachSpending**

Description:	Combined federal, state, and grant outreach spending
Sources:	National Databank Public Elements; USDA (2001, 2002a, 2004a, 2004c)
Months Available:	January 1996 to December 2004
Variable type:	Continuous (in nominal dollars)
Variable range:	-\$97,832 to \$812,975
Estimation procedure:	Sum of FSP outreach federal outlays, FSP outreach nonfederal outlays, and FNS outreach grant awards to nonprofits in state.
Notes:	The source data for this variable was available annually and quarterly and we spread these dollars equally over the relevant months. Outreach efforts from grants to nonprofits are spread equally over months in the fiscal year of award and quarterly federal and nonfederal grants are spread evenly over months in the quarter of award. The FNS source data includes negative values in certain months for some states due to spending adjustments across quarters.
Assumptions:	Outreach dollars from grants to nonprofits are assumed spent in the state in which the nonprofit organization is located.

### **58. OutreachSpendingPerPerson**

Description:	Outreach spending (combined federal, state, and grants) per low-income non-FSP participant in the state
Sources:	National Databank Public Elements; USDA (2001, 2002a, 2004a, 2004c); Current Population Survey (for state poverty data)
Months Available:	January 1996 to December 2004
Variable type:	Continuous (in nominal dollars)
Variable range:	-\$0.1 to \$2.9
Estimation procedure:	We divide the “OutreachSpending” variable by population below 150 percent of federal poverty threshold minus FSP participants.
Notes:	The population below 150 percent of federal poverty threshold minus FSP participants is a measure of the target outreach population. The population below 150 percent of federal poverty threshold is an annual figure assumed constant in all months of the calendar year in which it is reported. The FNS source data includes negative values in certain months for some states due to spending adjustments across quarters.

## **XI. Biometric Technology**

### **59. *Biometric technology***

Description: State uses biometric technology (such as fingerprint imaging)  
Sources: Sticha et al. (1999); California State Auditor (2003)  
Months Available: January 1996 to December 2004  
Variable type: Binary  
Variable range: 0 (no biometric technology), 1 (uses biometric technology)  
Assumptions: The most recent data identified was in 2003. We assume no change in state policies since January 2003.

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