

Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach

Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University
2040 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60208

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Margaret Walker Alexander Professor, School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (September 2017 – present).

Faculty Co-Director, Early Childhood Research Alliance of Chicago (EC-REACH).

Director, Institute for Policy Research (September 2017 – July 2023).

Courtesy appointment, Department of Economics.

Professor, School of Education and Social Policy, September 2016 – August 2017.

Associate Professor, School of Education and Social Policy, July 2010 – August 2016.

Research Associate, National Bureau of Economic Research (September 2012 – present).

Faculty research fellow (April 2009 – September 2012).

Faculty Affiliate, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin (September 2011 – present).

Nonresident Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution, Washington, DC (August 2017 – present).

Senior Fellow (August 2015 – August 2017).

Senior Advisor to the President for Academic Excellence and Associate Provost, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL (August 2023 – August 2024).

Visiting Professor.

Director, The Hamilton Project, Washington, DC (August 2015 – August 2017).

Visiting Scholar, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago (July 2005 – June 2020; September 2023 – present).

Assistant Professor, Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL (July 2004 – June 2010).

Scholar in Health Policy Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, University of California-Berkeley (August 2002 – July 2004).

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Princeton University, November 2002.

M.A., Economics, Princeton University, November 1999.

A.B., magna cum laude, Economics and Religion, Wellesley College, June 1995.

PUBLICATIONS

- “The Effects of Lump-Sum Food Vouchers on Spending, Hardship and Health,” with Lauren Bauer and Krista Ruffini. Forthcoming, *Journal of Public Economics*.
- “Raising State Minimum Wages, Lowering Community College Enrollment,” with Julia A. Turner and Sarah Turner. Forthcoming, *Review of Economics and Statistics*.
- “Impact of the Chicago Universal Pre-Kindergarten Expansion: Effects on Pre-kindergarten Capacity and Enrollment and Implications for Quality,” with Kathryn Gonzalez and Terri J. Sabol. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Special Issue “Equitable Access to Early Care and Education in the United States,” 154-165, 4th Quarter 2024.
- “Recent Trends in the School Lunch Program: Selection, Nutrition, Health and Achievement,” with Therese Bonomo. *Food Policy* 124: 102608, April 2024.
- “Work and Poverty Over the Past Quarter Century,” with Lisa Barrow and Bea Rivera. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 711(1): 100-120, January 2024.
- “Employment and Labor Supply Responses to the Child Tax Credit Expansion: Theory and Evidence,” with Michael R. Strain. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 710(1): 141-156, November 2023.
- “Suffering, the Safety Net and Disparities during COVID-19,” with Marianne Bitler and Hilary Hoynes. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 9(3): 32-59, May 2023.
- “Limited Supply and Lagging Enrollment: Production Technologies and Enrollment Changes at Community Colleges during the Pandemic,” with Sarah Turner. *Journal of Public Economics* 212 (2022): 104703.
- “Does Money Still Matter? Attainment and Earnings Effects of Post-1990 School Finance Reforms,” with Jesse Rothstein. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 40(S1): S141-S178, 2022.
- “Employment Effects of the Earned Income Tax Credit: Taking the Long View,” with Michael Strain. *Tax Policy and the Economy*. 35 (2020), pp. 87-129.
- “The Social Safety Net in the Wake of COVID-19,” with Marianne Bitler and Hilary Hoynes. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Summer 2020, pp. 119-145.
- “Supporting Development through Child Nutrition,” with Betsy Thorn. *The Future of Children* 30(2). Fall 2020.
- “Exploring Options to Improve the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 686, no. 1 (2019): 204-228.

- “Understanding Recent Trends in Childhood Obesity in the United States,” with Patricia Anderson and Kristin Butcher. *Economics and Human Biology* 34:16-25 (2019).
- “Safety Net Investments in Children,” with Hilary W. Hoynes. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Spring 2018, 89-132.
- “School Finance Reform and the Distribution of Student Achievement,” with Julien Lafortune and Jesse Rothstein. *American Economic Journal – Applied Economics*. 10(2): 1-26. April 2018.
- “Adequate (or Adipose?) Yearly Progress: Assessing the Effect of ‘No Child Left Behind’ on Children’s Obesity,” with Patricia Anderson and Kristin Butcher. *Education Finance and Policy*. 12(1): 54-76. Winter 2017.
- “Long-run Impacts of Childhood Access to the Safety Net,” with Hilary Hoynes and Douglas Almond. *American Economic Review* 106(4): 903-934. April 2016.
- “First in the Class? Age and the Education Production Function,” with Elizabeth Cascio. *Education Finance and Policy*. 11(3): 225-250. Summer 2016.
- “Beyond Income: What Else Predicts Very Low Food Security Among Children?” with Patricia Anderson, Kristin Butcher and Hilary Hoynes. *Southern Economic Journal* 82(4): 1078-1105. April 2016.
- “Changes in Safety Net Use During the Great Recession,” with Patricia Anderson and Kristin Butcher. *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings* 105(2): 161-165. May 2015.
- “The Impact of Chicago’s Small High School Initiative,” with Lisa Barrow and Amy Claessens. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 87: 100-113. May 2015.
- “The Impacts of Expanding Access to High-Quality Preschool Education,” with Elizabeth Cascio. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 2013.2: 127-192. 2013.
- “Experimental Evidence on the Effect of Childhood Investments on Postsecondary Attainment and Degree Completion,” with Susan Dynarski and Joshua Hyman. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 32(4):692-717. September 2013.
- “Work Incentives and the Food Stamp Program,” with Hilary Hoynes. *Journal of Public Economics* 96(1-2): 151-62. February 2012.
- “How Does Your Kindergarten Classroom Affect Your Earnings? Evidence from Project STAR,” with Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, Nathaniel Hilger, Emmanuel Saez, and Danny Yagan. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126(4): 1593-1660. November 2011.
- “Is Being in School Better? The Impact of School on Children’s BMI when Starting Age is Endogenous,” with Patricia Anderson, Kristin Butcher and Elizabeth Cascio. *Journal of Health Economics* 30(5): 977-986. September 2011.

- “Inside the War on Poverty: The Impact of the Food Stamp Program on Birth Outcomes,” with Douglas Almond and Hilary Hoynes. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 93(2): 387-403. May 2011.
- “Consequences of SCHIP Expansions for Household Well-Being,” with Lindsey Leininger and Helen Levy. *Forum for Health Economics & Policy* 13:1 (Frontiers in Health Policy Research), Article 3, 2010.
- “Left Behind by Design: Proficiency Counts and Test-Based Accountability” with Derek Neal. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 92(2): 263-283. May 2010.
- “Consumption Responses to In-Kind Transfers: Evidence from the Introduction of the Food Stamp Program,” with Hilary Hoynes. *American Economic Journal – Applied Economics* 1(4): 109-139. October 2009.
- “Does the Federal School Lunch Program Contribute to Childhood Obesity?” *Journal of Human Resources* 44(3): 684-709. Summer 2009.
- “Selection Bias in College Admissions Test Scores,” with Melissa Clark and Jesse Rothstein. *Economics of Education Review* 28(3): 295-307. June 2009.
- “Time Use and Food Consumption,” with Marianne Bertrand. *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings* 99(2): 170-176. May 2009.
- “The Impact of Children’s Health Insurance Expansions on Educational Performance,” with Phillip Levine. *Forum for Health Economics & Policy* 12:1 (Frontiers in Health Policy Research), Article 1, 2009.
- “The Economic Costs of Childhood Poverty in the United States,” with Harry Holzer, Greg Duncan and Jens Ludwig. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 14(1): 41-51. March 2008.
- “What Have Researchers Learned from Project STAR?” *Brookings Papers on Education Policy*, 2007.
- “Resource and Peer Impacts on Girls’ Academic Achievement: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment.” *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings*, 95(2): 199-203. May 2005.
- “The Effect of Attending a Small Class in the Early Grades on College-Test Taking and Middle School Test Results: Evidence from Project STAR,” with Alan B. Krueger. *Economic Journal*, 111(468): 1-28. January 2001.
- “The Impact of Welfare Reform on the AFDC Caseload,” with Phillip B. Levine. *National Tax Association Proceedings – 1997*. Washington, DC: National Tax Association, pp. 24-33.

BOOK CHAPTERS

- “Long-term Impacts of Class Size Reduction.” In Peter Blatchford, et al., eds., *International Perspectives on Class Size*. London: Routledge, 2016.

- “U.S. Food and Nutrition Programs,” with Hilary Hoynes. In Robert Moffitt, ed., *Means Tested Transfer Programs, Volume II*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. (Also available as NBER Working Paper 21057).
- “SNAP and Food Consumption,” with Hilary Hoynes and Leslie McGranahan. In Judith Bartfeld, Craig Gundersen, Timothy M. Smeeding, and James P. Ziliak, eds., *SNAP Matters: How Food Stamps Affect Health and Well Being*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- “Current Themes in Education Policy in the United States.” In John Karl Scholz, Hyungpyo Moon, and Sang-Hyop Lee, eds., *Social Policies in an Age of Austerity: A Comparative Analysis of the U.S. and Korea*, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015.
- “Class Size.” In James Wright, ed., *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, London: Elsevier, 2015.
- “Education and the Poor,” with Lisa Barrow. In Philip N. Jefferson, ed., *Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Poverty*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- “School Policies and Children’s Obesity” with Patricia Anderson and Kristin Butcher. In Daniel Slottje and Rusty Tchernis, eds., *Current Issues in Health Economics (Contributions to Economic Analysis)*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2010.
- “The Economics of Class Size,” in *International Encyclopedia of Education*, Baker, E., McGaw, B. & Peterson, P., eds. Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishers, 2010.
- “Child Disadvantage and Obesity: Is Nurture Trumping Nature?” with Patricia Anderson and Kristin Butcher. In Jonathan Gruber, ed., *The Problems of Disadvantaged Youth: An Economic Perspective*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- “Would Smaller Classes Help Close the Black-White Achievement Gap?” with Alan Krueger. In John E. Chubb and Tom Loveless, eds., *Bridging the Achievement Gap*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, November 2002.

OTHER ACADEMIC WRITING

- “Help Boys, but First Do No Harm,” and “Minding the (Achievement) Gap.” Point-Counterpoint, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 43(2): 623-628. Spring 2024.
- “How Food Purchase Restrictions and Incentives May Impact Diet Quality.” Research Editorial. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 124(5): 565-568. May 2024.
- “Understanding SNAP: An Overview of Recent Research.” *Food Policy* 114 (January 2023): 102397. Editor’s introduction to special issue on “The Economics of the U.S. Food Stamp/SNAP Program.”

“Can Benefits and Incentives Promote Work?” and “Employment Policies Should Work with the Labor Market.” Point-Counterpoint, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 37(4): 903-911. 2018.

“Early Life Impacts on Later Life Health and Economic Outcomes.” *Journal of Law & Policy*. 57(1): 103-116. January 2018.

“Consumer Credit Trends by Income and Geography 2001-2012,” with Gene Amromin and Leslie McGranahan. *Chicago Fed Letter* 342. 2015.

“Limitations of Experiments in Education Research.” *Education Finance and Policy* 7(2): 219-232. Spring 2012.

“Who would be affected by soda taxes?” with Leslie McGranahan. *Chicago Fed Letter* 284. 2011.

WORKING PAPERS

“Impacts of Universal Pre-kindergarten on the Local Early Care and Education Market: Evidence from Chicago,” with Terri J. Sabol, Kathryn Gonzalez, Tianshi Wang, Zina Noel, Julia Honoroff and Sothène Guei.

“Food Insecurity as an Economic Indicator: Evidence from the Great Recession,” with Patricia Anderson, Kristin Butcher and Hilary Hoynes. Mimeo.

“The Impact of the Earned Income Tax Credit on Food Consumption Patterns,” with Emma LaGuardia and Leslie McGranahan.

“Expanding the School Breakfast Program: Impacts on Children’s Consumption, Nutrition and Health,” with Mary Zaki. NBER Working Paper #20308.

RESTING PAPERS

“The Effect of Court-Ordered Hiring Guidelines on Teacher Composition and Student Achievement,” with Cynthia DuBois. NBER Working Paper #24111.

“The Earned Income Tax Credit and Food Consumption Patterns,” with Leslie McGranahan. Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Working Paper #2013-14.

“What Are Food Stamps Worth?” Princeton University Industrial Relations Section Working Paper #468.

“Teen Motherhood, Labor Market Involvement and the Receipt of Public Assistance,” with Phillip B. Levine. *Joint Center for Poverty Research Working Paper* #84, November 1997.

“Experimental Estimates of Peer Effects.” Mimeo.

“Assessing the Impacts on Students of Closing Persistently Failing Schools,” with Lisa Barrow and Kyung Park. Mimeo.

SELECTED POLICY BRIEFS

- “The Impact of Chicago’s Universal Prekindergarten Expansion on Access to School-Based Pre-K,” with Terri Sabol. Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University Rapid Research Report, May 2023.
- “The Impact of SNAP Emergency Allotments on SNAP Benefits and Food Insufficiency.” Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University Rapid Research Report, January 27, 2023.
- “SNAP Supports Rural Families.” American Enterprise Institute, April 2022.
- “The Effect of Pandemic EBT on Measures of Food Hardship,” with Lauren Bauer, Abigail Pitts and Krista Ruffini. The Hamilton Project, Economic Analysis, July 30, 2020.
- “Why the Safety Net Might Not Respond as Effectively to COVID-19 As It Should,” with Marianne Bitler and Hilary Hoynes. *The Milbank Quarterly*, April 30, 2020.
- “Policies to Strengthen Our Nation’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” with Hilary Hoynes. In *Vision 2020: Evidence for a Stronger Economy*, Washington Center for Equitable Growth.
- “Who Would Be Affected by Proposed Changes to SNAP?” *Econofact*, August 1, 2019.
- “Strengthening SNAP as an Automatic Stabilizer,” with Hilary Hoynes. In Boushey, Heather, Ryan Nunn, and Jay Shambaugh, eds., *Recession Ready: Fiscal Policies to Stabilize the American Economy*. The Hamilton Project at Brookings and Washington Center for Equitable Growth.
- “Food Support Programs and their Impacts on Very Young Children,” with Betsy Thorn. Health Policy Brief, *Health Affairs*, March 28, 2019.
- “Work Requirements and Safety Net Programs,” with Lauren Bauer and Jay Shambaugh. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, October 2018.
- “Most Workers in Low-Wage Labor Market Work Substantial Hours, in Volatile Jobs,” with Kristin Butcher. Center on Budget & Policy Priorities: Policy Futures. July 24, 2018.
- “The Future of SNAP: Continuing to Balance Protection and Incentives.” In *Agricultural Policy in Disarray: Reforming the Farm Bill*, American Enterprise Institute, November 2017.
- “The Recent Decline in Women’s Labor Force Participation,” with Sandra Black and Audrey Breitwieser. In *The 51%: Driving Growth through Women’s Economic Participation*, The Hamilton Project, October 2017.
- “What Does the Seattle Experience Teach Us About Minimum Wages?” with Jesse Rothstein. *Econofact*, August 7, 2017.
- “Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten? ‘Redshirting’ May Do More Harm than Good,” with Stephanie Howard Larson. *Education Next*, 17(3), Summer 2017.

- “In Order That They Might Rest Their Arguments on Facts: The Vital Role of Government-Collected Data,” with Nicholas Eberstadt, Ryan Nunn, and Michael R. Strain. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution and AEI, March 2017.
- “If You Build It: A Guide to the Economics of Infrastructure Investment,” with Ryan Nunn and Greg Nantz. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, February 2017.
- “Money Lightens the Load,” with Ryan Nunn, Megan Mumford, and Lauren Bauer. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, December 2016.
- “Lessons for Broadening School Accountability under the Every Student Succeeds Act,” with Lauren Bauer and Megan Mumford. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, October 2016.
- “Seven Facts on Noncognitive Skills from Education to the Labor Market,” with Ryan Nunn, Lauren Bauer, Megan Mumford, and Audrey Breitwieser. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, October 2016.
- “The Long-Term Impact of the Head Start Program,” with Lauren Bauer. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, August 2016.
- “Twelve Facts about Food Insecurity and SNAP,” with Lauren Bauer and Greg Nantz. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, April 2016.
- “Who Has Access to Charter Schools?” with Megan Mumford and Lauren Bauer. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, March 2016.
- “Can school finance reforms improve student achievement?” with Jesse Rothstein and Julien Lafortune. *Washington Center for Equitable Growth Policy Brief*, March 16, 2016.
- “Expanding Preschool Access for Disadvantaged Children,” with Elizabeth Cascio, in Melissa S. Kearney and Benjamin H. Harris, eds., *Policies to Address Poverty in America*, The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, June 2014.
- “Does Class Size Matter?” Policy brief, National Education Policy Center. February 2014.
- Strengthening SNAP for a More Food-Secure, Healthy America*. Discussion paper, The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, December 2013.
- “The Safety Net: An Investment in Kids,” with Hilary Hoynes. *Spotlight on Poverty*. July 2013.
- “\$320,000 Kindergarten Teachers.” *Phi Delta Kappan* 92(3): 322-25. November 2010
- “Leaving children behind ... by design.” *Milken Institute Review* Quarter 1 2008, pp. 18-25.
- “Many U.S. Children are Left Behind by Design,” with Derek Neal. *VoxEU.org*, August 2007.

GRANTS AND FUNDED PROJECTS

- “Early Childhood Research Alliance of Chicago,” co-Principal Investigator, \$1,100,000 combined from Start Early and Anonymous Foundation.
- “Studying the Impact of Chicago’s Universal Prekindergarten Expansion,” co-Principal Investigator, \$787,500 combined from Peter G. Peterson Foundation, CME Group Foundation, Arie and Ida Crown Memorial Foundation, Steans Family Foundation, Anonymous Foundation, and Administration for Children and Families.
- “A Policy Agenda for Improving Child Outcomes,” Principal Investigator, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, \$730,700, 2019-2020.
- “The Impacts of School Lunch Reforms on Student Outcomes,” Principal Investigator, Research, Innovation, and Development Grant in Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture (administered by University of Wisconsin), \$39,932, 2015-2016.
- “School Finance Reform and the Distribution of Student Achievement,” Principal Investigator, Spencer Foundation, \$305,469, 2014-2016.
- “Multidisciplinary Program in Education Sciences,” Principal Investigator, Institute for Educational Sciences, Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences Grant, \$3,908,332, 2014-2019.
- “New Evidence on Why Children’s Food Security Varies across Households with Similar Incomes,” Principal Investigator, University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research, *Research Program on Childhood Hunger*, \$244,254, 2012-2014.
- “Understanding Food Insecurity During the Great Recession,” Principal Investigator, Russell Sage Foundation, \$146,614, 2011-2013.
- “Assessing the Impacts on Students of Closing Persistently Failing Schools,” Principal Investigator, Smith Richardson Foundation, Grant, \$60,000, 2008-2011.
- “Evaluating the Impact of SCHIP Expansions on Household Spending and Consumption using Consumer Expenditure Survey Data,” Co-Investigator, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization, \$124,694, 2008-2009.
- “Identifying Behavioral Economics Factors Affecting Food Consumption,” Principal Investigator, Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP), US Department of Agriculture, \$399,773, 2007-2009.
- “Assessing the Effectiveness of Chicago’s Small High School Initiative,” Principal Investigator, Institute for Educational Sciences, Research on High School Reform Grant, \$336,664, 2006-2008.
- “The Effect of School Accountability Policies on Childhood Obesity,” Principal Investigator, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Healthy Eating Research Grant, \$74,995, 2006-2008.

“Measuring the Impacts of Stigma and Time Cost in the Food Stamp Enrollment Decision,” Principal Investigator, Research, Innovation, and Development Grant in Economics, US Department of Agriculture (administered by University of Wisconsin), \$29,921, 2006-2007.

“The Introduction of the Food Stamp Program: Impacts on Food Consumption and Family Well-Being,” Principal Investigator, Research, Innovation, and Development Grant in Economics, US Department of Agriculture (administered by University of Chicago), \$37,748, 2005-2006.

“Does Accountability Promote General or Test-Specific Skills?” Principal Investigator, NICHD University of Chicago Population Research Center pilot award, \$8000, 2005-2006.

“Advancing Education Improvement by Improving Child Health: An Analysis of NAEP Data,” Principal Investigator, NAEP Secondary Analysis Grant, US Department of Education, \$99,912, 2005-2006.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Elected Member, National Academy of Social Insurance, 2020
- Elected Member, National Academy of Education, 2019
- Raymond Vernon Memorial Award, 2013
- Excellence in Refereeing Award, *American Economic Review*, 2012
- Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, Princeton University, 2000-2002
- Peggy Howard Fellowship, Wellesley College, 2001
- National Science Foundation Traineeship in the Economics of Education, 1997-2000
- Social Science Research Council Program in Applied Economics, 1998

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Board Memberships

- Start Early, 2022-present.
- Greater Chicago Food Depository, 2019-present.
- Food Research and Action Center, 2021-2024.
- Chicago HOPES for Kids, 2018-2022.
- Hamilton Project Advisory Council, 2017-present.

Editorial Service

- Editorial Advisory Board, *Food Policy*, 2022-present.
- Editorial Advisory Board, *Milbank Quarterly*, 2020-2023.
- Coeditor, *Journal of Human Resources*, 2018-2021.
- Associate Editor, *Journal of Human Resources*, 2014-2018.
- Editorial Board Member, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2016-present.
- Editorial Board Member, *American Economic Journal – Applied Economics*.

National Committee Service

- Food and Nutrition Board, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, Member, 2024-.
- Technical Work Group, Designing a Pilot to Measure the Impact of Restricting SNAP Purchases, Member, 2024.
- National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine Committee on the Review of Federal Policies that Contribute to Racial and Ethnic Health Inequities, Member, 2022-2023.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Policies for Action, National Advisory Committee, Chair, 2016-2020.
- Institute of Medicine CNSTAT Panel on Improving USDA's Consumer Data for Food and Nutrition Policy Research, Member, 2018-2020.
- Society for Research in Education Effectiveness, Program Committee for 2017 Annual Meeting.
- Society of Labor Economists, Program Committee for 2016, 2017 Annual Meetings.
- American Economic Association, Program Committee for 2015 Annual Meeting.
- Institute of Medicine Committee on Examination of the Adequacy of Food Resources and SNAP Allotments, Member, 2011-13.
- Technical Work Group, Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) Evaluation, Member, 2010-13.

Keynote Addresses

- Economics of Child Nutrition Workshop, University of London, June 2024.
- C. Woody Thomson Memorial Lecture, Midwest Economics Association, March 2024.
- Educational Resources and Student Performance, Oslo, Norway, August 2022.
- Kuyper Lecture, Calvin University, April 2022.
- Sulzberger Distinguished Lecture Series, Duke University, November 2020.
- Association for Education Finance and Policy 44th Annual Conference, Kansas City, MO, March 2019.
- BKK Bureau Kwaliteit Kinderopvang "Creating Opportunities" Conference, Berlin, Germany, November 2018.
- VATT Institute for Economic Research, Helsinki, Finland, October 2018.
- International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education, Catanzaro, Italy, 2018.
- Early Childhood Education Impact Evaluation Workshop, World Bank, Abu Dhabi, 2018.
- Hunger Action Summit, Second Harvest Food Bank, 2017.
- Early Childhood Inequality Workshop, Nuremberg Germany, 2016.
- Dennis Hastert Center, Wheaton College, 2014.
- Calderwood Lecture, Wellesley College, 2014.

- Illinois Education Research Council, 2012.
- Francis Marion University, Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty, 2011.

Congressional Testimony

- “Recognizing and Building on the Success of Pandemic Relief Programs,” U.S. House of Representatives Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, September 22, 2021.
- “Ending Hunger in America: Challenges, Opportunities, and Building the Political Will to Succeed,” U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Rules, April 28, 2021.
- “Nutrition Programs: Perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill,” U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, September 14, 2017.
- “Exploring Opportunities to Strengthen Education Research While Protecting Student Privacy,” U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, June 28, 2017.
- “Pros and Cons of Restricting SNAP Purchases,” U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, February 16, 2017.

University Committee Service

- Strategic Enrollment Committee, September 2023-June 2024.
- Civil Discourse Committee, 2023.
- Program Review Council, 2022-2023.
- Committee on Honorary Degrees, 2020-2023.
- Search Committee, Executive Director of the Buffett Institute for Global Studies, 2018.
- Executive Committee, Institute for Policy Research, 2014-2023.
- Executive Committee, School of Education and Social Policy, 2013-15.

Program Reviews

- Department of Economics, Wellesley College, October 2023.
- Marketing Department, Northwestern University, October 2022.
- Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, June 2022.
- Department of Economics, Georgetown University, March 2019.

Referee: *American Economic Review, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, The B.E. Journals in Economic Analysis and Policy, Canadian Journal of Economics, Developmental Psychology, Economic Inquiry, Economic Journal, Economics and Human Biology, Economics of Education Review, Economics Letters, Education Finance and Policy, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Health Economics, Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Journal of Health Economics, Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Labor Economics, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Journal of*

Political Economy, Journal of Public Economics, Labour Economics, Oxford University Press, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics, Review of Economic Studies, Scandinavian Journal of Economics, Science, State and Local Government Review, Social Science Quarterly, Social Service Review, Southern Economic Journal.

Grant Reviewer: U.S. Department of Agriculture; National Institutes of Health; National Science Foundation; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Smith Richardson Foundation; Spencer Foundation.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Florida (2024)

Public Economics (PhD course)

Northwestern University (2010 to 2023)

Economics of Social Policy (Undergraduate course)

Quantitative Methods I (PhD course)

Education Policy (PhD course)

Labor Economics (PhD course)

Contemporary Issues in Education (Undergraduate course)

University of Chicago (2004 to 2010)

Statistical Methods for Policy Research (Graduate course)

Economics of Education Policy (Graduate course)

Education Policy & Reform (Graduate course)

Program Evaluation (Graduate course)

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Economic Counselor, Sebago Associates, Inc., Santa Monica, CA, September 1998–August 2001.

Research Assistant, Council of Economic Advisers, Washington, D.C., April 1996–May 1997.

Research Assistant, Survey of Consumer Finances, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, D.C., August 1995–April 1996.

Truth in Testimony Disclosure Form

In accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)* of the *Rules of the House of Representatives*, witnesses are asked to disclose the following information. Please complete this form electronically by filling in the provided blanks.

Committee: _____

Subcommittee: _____

Hearing Date: _____

Hearing :

Witness Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Witness Type: Governmental Non-governmental

Are you representing yourself or an organization? Self Organization

If you are representing an organization, please list what entity or entities you are representing:

FOR WITNESSES APPEARING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

Are you a fiduciary—including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent—of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing? If so, please list the name of the organization(s) or entities.

Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the hearing's subject matter that you or the organization(s) you represent have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

Please list any contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government and related to the hearing's subject that you or the organization(s) you represent have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

- I have attached a written statement of proposed testimony.
- I have attached my curriculum vitae or biography.

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5), of the U.S. House of Representatives provides:

(5)(A) Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof.

(B) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include— (i) a curriculum vitae; (ii) a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (iii) a disclosure of whether the witness is a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing.

(C) The disclosure referred to in subdivision (B)(ii) shall include— (i) the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (ii) the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(D) Such statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness appears.

**Testimony of
Dr. Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach
Margaret Walker Alexander Professor of Human Development and Social Policy,
and of Economics, Northwestern University
on the subject of “The Power of Work: Expanding Opportunity through SNAP”
before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture
April 8, 2025**

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Craig, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today at this hearing on SNAP.

My name is Diane Schanzenbach, I am the Margaret Walker Alexander Professor of Human Development and Social Policy at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. For more than two decades, I have conducted and published numerous peer-reviewed research studies and book chapters on SNAP and other safety net programs, and their impacts on employment, consumption and well-being. I am also a member of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine. My testimony today draws primarily from research that I have conducted or reviewed that considers the role of SNAP and other influences on employment and economic well-being.

As a labor economist, I am deeply concerned about the long-term decline in our nation’s labor force participation rate, and study the causes, consequences and remedies to this long-term trend that is occurring in the U.S. and in many other advanced economies. Improving employment rates and job opportunities is a goal we all share. However, increasing SNAP mandatory work requirements will not improve employment outcomes.

SNAP Mandatory Work Requirements Do Not Help, but Cause Harm

SNAP has three kinds of work requirements or work tests. The first is the general SNAP work requirement that applies to most SNAP participants aged 16-59, unless they meet an exemption such as people with disabilities. These requirements include accepting a suitable job offer and not quitting a job or voluntarily reducing their weekly hours below 30. Second, states create SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) programs designed to be responsive to local conditions and needs. They refer SNAP participants to the state’s SNAP E&T program, which can include training, job search, workfare, or other components. These programs can be compulsory and result in the loss of food benefits if individuals do not comply. SNAP work programs can also be designed and offered to individuals who want to participate, typically skill-based training or education programs. Most states do not have enough slots to provide services to all SNAP participants subject to the work requirement and therefore target their programming on individuals and services that are of high priority to the state (Bauer & East, 2025).

There is third additional work requirement that applies to “able-bodied adults without dependents,” or ABAWDs, ages 18 to 54. Those subject to the ABAWD work requirements lose their SNAP benefits if they are not working at least 20 hours per week. Research evidence indicates that neither type of work requirement is effective at improving employment outcomes.

In fact, new research evidence shows that if SNAP applicants are denied SNAP, they have worse earnings and employment in the medium run than if they are granted benefits. In most of the testimony that follows, I will focus on the ABAWD work requirement which currently is receiving more policy attention.

About 6 percent of individuals receiving SNAP are ABAWDs. They are typically—but not always—living in one-person households. About half are women, and over one-third report a disability that affects their ability to work but does not classify them as disabled according to SNAP (Bauer, Hardy & Howard, 2025). ABAWDs are eligible for modest benefits, with a maximum benefit amount of \$292 per month and average benefits of approximately \$199 per month, or \$6.50 per day. If an individual's only resources come from SNAP, the maximum benefit level allows them to consume at a level equal to 21 percent of the poverty threshold. In most of the United States, SNAP is the only safety net program available to ABAWDs (Rosenbaum, 2013). Many of those subject to the time limit face substantial barriers to employment, including low levels of education and criminal records (Bolen & Dean, 2018).

Research evidence does not find that work requirements improve employment outcomes

SNAP can serve to identify and connect those in need of career assistance to job training, placement, and other forms of help, but this should be done in a way that preserves their access to food support. Using punitive work requirements in SNAP as leverage to compel unemployed or underemployed participants to work does not help with the problems faced by low-wage workers. Work requirements do not address their barriers to work, and penalize the unemployed.

In normal economic times, the ABAWD work requirement means that they are allowed only three months of eligibility for SNAP unless they are employed for at least 20 hours per week or is engaged in a workfare or training activity. Job search does not count toward this 20-hour requirement. The ABAWD work requirements can be waived for certain geographic areas under some circumstances when there is a weak labor market. As a result, there has been variation in exposure to work requirements that researchers have used to estimate the impact of these policies. There have been a number of recent, high-quality studies using comprehensive administrative data, which I summarize in Table 1, below. These new studies have found that SNAP work requirements have no positive impact on work-related outcomes, as measured by employment, earnings, or hours worked. On the other hand, they substantially reduce the likelihood that an individual receives SNAP.

Table 1. Summary of Recent High-Quality Studies of SNAP Work Requirements

Study	Setting	Impact on SNAP participation	Impact on Labor Market Outcomes
Studies using Administrative Data			
Cook & East (2024)	SNAP general work requirements in Western Mountain state	56% decline in months on SNAP	No impact on employment or earnings.
Gray et al. (2023)	ABAWDS in Virginia	53% decline in SNAP participation	No improvement in earnings or employment after 18 months.
Stacy, Scherpf & Jo (2018)	ABAWDs nationally	15% decline in SNAP participation	No impact on employment or hours worked.
Studies using Survey Data			
Han (2022)	American Community Survey; ABAWDS nationally	9% decline	No impact on employment or full-time work. Less than 1 hour decline in usual hours worked/week.
Harris (2021)	American Community Survey; ABAWDS nationally; 2010-17	10% decline	1.5% increase in employment.
Cuffey, Beatty & Mykerezi (2021)	Current Population Survey; ABAWDS nationally; high school dropouts only	Not estimated	Implied increase in employment from 34% to 47%, likelihood of working 20+ hours/week up from 30% to 43%.

Other studies using survey data tend to find similar impacts: work requirements result in sharp declines in SNAP participation, and little to no impact on employment outcomes. One exception is a 2021 study limited to high school dropouts which finds more sizeable impacts on employment among this narrow group with low likelihoods of employment.

Earlier research on the impact of SNAP on employment found effects ranging from zero to modest negative effects (Hoynes & Schanzenbach, 2012; East, 2018). That research studied effects for people receiving benefits between the 1960s and the 1990s. The labor market, and employment among groups like women overall and single mothers has increased dramatically since then (Black, Schanzenbach & Breitwieser, 2017). Fortunately, we have more contemporary evidence for today’s SNAP population and low-wage labor market, as described in Table 1 above.

Why do SNAP work requirements fail to improve employment outcomes? They do not address the problems these individuals can have in obtaining stable employment. They often have limited education, health problems, and other challenges that make it difficult for them to find and maintain consistently 20 hours a week of employment. Taking away their food benefits makes these challenges worse, not better.

A better approach is engaging SNAP participants who need help finding employment in high-quality, evidence-based SNAP E&T programs without the threat of benefit loss. The evidence supports this approach. For example, a pilot program of SNAP E&T work-based learning programs found that, after three years, participants were five percentage points more likely to be employed, they worked more hours and had higher earnings. Other evaluations of SNAP E&T pilot programs have built evidence on the characteristics of program success, such as partnering with community colleges and providing support services to help address individuals' barriers to steady employment. These lessons are being shared across states to continue to improve SNAP E&T.

Proposals to expand work requirements would cause harm

There have been proposals to expand the three-month time limit work requirement to all parents, or to parents of school-aged children. These proposals would apply work requirements to individuals, so for example both parents of a seven-year-old would each have to meet a work requirement or be subject to sanction. Like other punitive work requirements, this approach would likely remove participants from SNAP without improving their employment prospects. It would also harm children.

To put a human face on this, I would like to share the story of Veronica Cox, age 37, who was interviewed by a colleague of mine when she visited the Chosen Tabernacle food pantry in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago. Veronica has three children, ages 15, 9 and 7, and is a single mom. For 10 years she worked in security but had to stop due to debilitating pain in her hips that was only recently diagnosed as a “deformity” that has been there since birth. She cannot stand or sit for long periods of time without pain and needs to regularly stretch and do other treatments to keep the pain manageable. So far, her claims for disability benefits have been denied, but she has another hearing next month. She and her kids lived in a shelter for a while but recently moved into an apartment thanks to a program she was connected to through the shelter.

Her only income is child support and SNAP, and she says that on such a tight budget it takes a lot of planning and portion control to get through the month. She says that “SNAP plays a huge role in me being able to feed my children.” If she lost SNAP benefits because she was unable to meet the work requirement, she says: “Honestly, I don’t know what I’d do. It definitely would hurt. It would cause damage.” She has been looking for at-home jobs but has not yet had success. She is also brainstorming any other work she can possibly do given her standing and sitting limitations. “It bothers me not being able to support my family. I had a game plan. I went to college.” (She has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice.) “I didn’t want this.”

Imposing a work requirement to receive SNAP on Veronica or others like her will not make them try harder to find a job. It will, however, raise the likelihood that they lose access to an important source of support used to buy food.

The Low-Wage Labor Market is Volatile

Those who count on SNAP to help afford their groceries tend to be engaged in the low-wage labor market, and the jobs in this sector are different than those that are typically held by middle-class workers. SNAP participants generally work low-wage jobs, in occupations with higher unemployment rates and more common job displacements (Butcher & Schanzenbach, 2017; Bauer, East & Howard, 2025). The jobs are more likely to be seasonal. Workers in these occupations experience a lot of volatility in employment and earnings across months and years. These jobs have seen little real wage growth in recent decades, and do not tend to lead to a career ladder with better job titles and higher future earnings. Even when workers are engaged in what I would term “substantial” employment—working more than 30 hours per week for at least half of the year—nearly 3 in 10 do not earn enough to be above the poverty line.

There are some important recent studies that investigate the dynamics surrounding new spells of SNAP participation or falling into poverty. Immediately prior to applying to SNAP, applicants generally have experienced a sharp decrease in their likelihood of employment or their earnings. In other words, they apply for SNAP precisely because they have experienced an economic shock like a job loss, or a divorce or death in the family (Cook & East 2023; Blank et al. 2024). SNAP helps them get back on their feet. New evidence finds that within a year, SNAP recipients are more likely to be employed and have higher earnings than they would have had without help from the program (Cook & East 2023).

In summary, the low-wage labor market is unstable—you might even call it “broken.” But SNAP did not cause this, and SNAP cannot fix it. Instead, SNAP helps soften the blow when workers in the low-wage sector see their hours cut back or lose their jobs. When facing both a work requirement and the reality of their job markets, many SNAP recipients simply cannot meet stringent work requirements due to the nature of their jobs, not due to a shortcoming of their own efforts (Bauer, Schanzenbach & Shambaugh, 2018). Unfortunately, the system is set up so that if they miss three months of employment, they will be barred from receiving SNAP for the next three years. Imagine the harmful consequences if such an approach were extended to families with children. This policy is not effective for those currently facing SNAP work requirements, and expanding the requirements to more cover SNAP participants would harm even more people.

SNAP is a Vital Economic Stabilizer

SNAP benefits the wider economy by ensuring that recipients remain able to purchase enough food when they experience economic hardships. By doing so, it provides a highly effective economic stimulus during economic downturns. Under the design it has had for more than 50 years, SNAP can very quickly adapt to economic recessions. As more households become eligible for the program—for example, due to job loss—they can be quickly enrolled, with total program outlays essentially automatically increasing to respond to increased need. SNAP funds are then spent rapidly, with 80% of benefits spent within two weeks of receipt and 97% spent

within a month (Bernstein & Spielberg, 2016). This spending helps the economy in their local community, including the retail, wholesale, and transportation systems that deliver the groceries purchased. According to the Congressional Budget Office, SNAP is one of the three programs (along with unemployment insurance and Medicaid) that provide most of the automatic stabilization from federal spending (Russek & Kowalewski, 2015). SNAP’s entitlement structure, therefore, is one of its greatest strengths as a crucial economic stabilizer.

Figure 1. SNAP Participation and the Unemployment Rate, 1980-2024

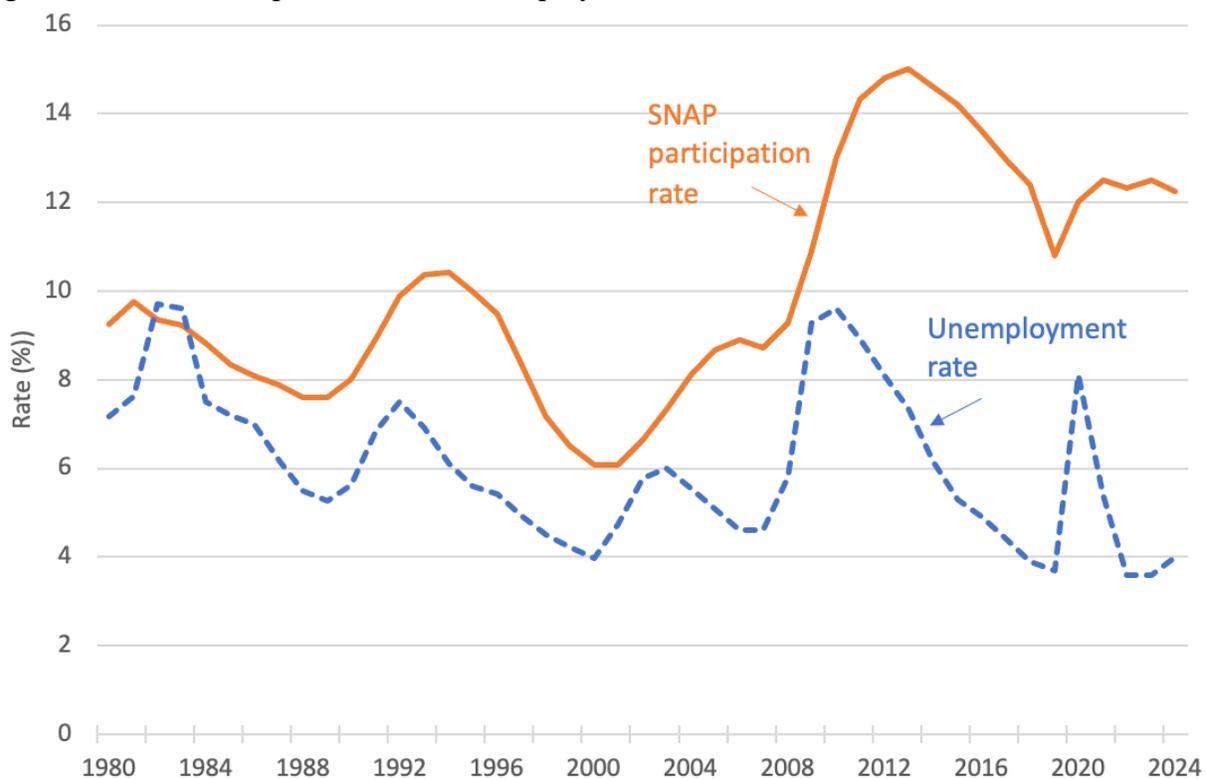


Figure 1, above, shows SNAP participation (as a share of the population) and the unemployment rate since 1980. Consistent with its role as an economic stabilizer, SNAP participation tends to increase rapidly when the unemployment rate rises. During periods of economic recovery, SNAP participation falls more slowly than the overall unemployment rate, in part reflecting the fact that employment among workers with lower levels of education recovers more slowly. The Congressional Budget Office’s projections indicate that the SNAP participation rate will fall by another 2 percentage points over the next decade under their January 2025 baseline projections.

Although SNAP has been a vital economic stabilizer during economic downturns, some recent proposals would undermine SNAP’s effectiveness during recessions. During this time, as analysts are predicting an increasing likelihood of a recession in the coming months, we should be shoring up our tools to fight recessions, not undercutting them.

It is critical to the American economy and American workers that work requirements are suspended or waived when there are not enough jobs available—during recessions and their aftermath. Congress deserves substantial credit for having suspended work requirements during

the past two recessions on a bipartisan basis. Further, states have been able to request waivers under a range of criteria that indicate an area has a cyclically weak labor market. A recent study confirms that SNAP work requirement waiver usage is countercyclical (Burkhauser et al., 2024). I have previously proposed that Congress adopt an automatic trigger to immediately suspend SNAP work requirements without delay when certain economic conditions occur, indicating the onset of a recession (Hoynes and Schanzenbach, 2019). Some have proposed policies that would move in the opposite direction—that is, to weaken SNAP’s response during an economic downturn, such as eliminating or further limiting the ability to waive SNAP work requirements. This would be a mistake, especially now as analysts report an increasing probability of a recession in coming months, we should not hamper SNAP’s ability to help people and stabilize the economy in the event of a recession.

Another deeply concerning proposal would be the notion of introducing a cost-sharing provision with states for SNAP benefits (as some have proposed) would fundamentally undermine its stabilizing impact on the macro-economy. During and after recessions, state governments experience declines in tax revenues and increases in demand for programs. But because states typically are required to balance their budgets each year, these forces pressure states to raise taxes, cut programs, or both (Fiedler, Furman & Powell, 2019). If a portion of SNAP benefits were newly moved to state budgets, it would exacerbate this existing problem, reduce SNAP’s counter-cyclical responsiveness, and increase the severity of economic downturns.

SNAP is Effective

SNAP is a highly efficient and effective program. It supplements a family’s cash resources, so that between SNAP and their other income they can afford to buy a sufficient diet. Average monthly benefits in 2024 amounted to \$187.54 per person—or about \$6.15 per person per day. SNAP kept at least 3.4 million people out of poverty in 2023 (the most recent data available), including 1.3 million children (Shrider, 2024). SNAP is targeted to families who need benefits the most, reduces the likelihood that families have trouble affording food, and serves as crucial automatic fiscal stabilizer in times of economic downturns. And there are better ways to promote employment outcomes than terminating SNAP benefits for those who cannot find adequate work.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering any questions you have.

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