



Social-insurance Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF)

Possible Policy Memo Topics

- How much of the SSI participation variation in Chicago across census tracts is related to economic and demographic differences? [Sample]
- What regions have the most SSI (or SSDI) participation? Have these patterns varied over time?
- Have SSI applications increased during the COVID pandemic?
- What fraction of total income does Social Security provide to older Americans? How does this vary by the Social Security amount?
- Do SSI (SSDI) reciprocity rates vary by race or ethnicity? Has this changed over time?
- What are the most common disabilities for SSI (or SSDI) recipients? Does this vary by time or region?
- Do states that offer an SSI supplement have more SSI caseloads?
- What fraction of children benefit from (live in households that receive) SSI (or SSDI or Social Security)? Does this vary by (race/time/region)?
- By how much does income from SSI crowd-out SNAP benefits (in billions of \$)?
- On average, how much would a full-time minimum wage worker pay for and earn in Social Security benefits?
- Consider three married couples where the primary earners have incomes of \$30,000, \$70,000, and \$150,000. At what incomes would their spouses start to benefit from claiming on their own income (as opposed to spousal benefits)? Why is this important?
- Do any states provide assistance for people waiting for a disability application to be processed? If so, how much is provided during this time?
- If SSI benefits were adjusted using the chained CPI-W (as opposed to non-chained CPI-W), Social Security would have saved how much?
- SNAP provides how much total assistance to Social Security beneficiaries? Does this vary by region?
- Where do people receiving Social Security live within the Chicago area?