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Effect of the Reevaluated Thrifty Food Plan and Emergency Allotments on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits and Poverty

Created with ATTIS

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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nutritional cornerstone of the nation's safety net, providing monthly benefits to help millions of Americans to purchase food. In this brief, we examine the individual and combined effects of two policies affecting SNAP benefits in the fourth quarter of 2021: (1) a reevaluation of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) that increased the maximum SNAP benefit 21 percent, and (2) "emergency allotments," a temporary measure enacted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that provides SNAP participants in participating states with the maximum SNAP benefit for their family size. We estimate the effects of these policies on SNAP benefits and quarterly poverty using the Urban Institute's Analysis of Transfers, Taxes, and Income Security (ATTIS) microsimulation model.

We estimate that the SNAP benefit increases from the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments substantially reduced poverty in the fourth quarter of 2021 relative to the estimated poverty rate in that quarter without these policies. The higher benefits from the reevaluated TFP will continue to have important antipoverty effects, but the emergency allotments are temporary measures in response to

the pandemic. Emergency allotments have ended in some states and will end nationwide following the end of the federally declared COVID-19 public health emergency.[1]

We focus on the fourth quarter of 2021 because the higher benefits from the reevaluated TFP took effect in October 2021 and emergency allotments were still in effect in all but eight states. We project data to reflect 2021 from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) because actual ACS data for 2021 are not yet available. We assess poverty with the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which incorporates the value of SNAP and other noncash benefits. Key findings from our projected data include the following:

- The increase in SNAP benefits from the reevaluated TFP kept nearly 2.3 million people out of poverty in the fourth quarter of 2021, reducing poverty by 4.7 percent relative to a scenario without TFP reevaluation in which SNAP benefits were lower. Child poverty was reduced by 8.6 percent, and the greatest decrease was among Black, non-Hispanic[2] children for whom poverty fell by 12.2 percent.
- The reevaluated TFP would have had larger antipoverty effects in October to December 2021 if two major pandemic-related benefits, emergency allotments and the advance child tax credit (CTC), had not been in effect. Without the poverty reduction achieved by emergency allotments and the advance CTC, we estimate that the higher SNAP benefits from the reevaluated TFP would have kept 2.9 million people out of poverty.
- We estimate that emergency allotments kept 4.2 million people out of poverty in the fourth quarter of 2021, reducing poverty by 9.6 percent in states with emergency allotments, relative to a scenario in which emergency allotments were eliminated. Child poverty was reduced by 14.0 percent in states with emergency allotments and was reduced most among Black, non-Hispanic children, falling by 18.4 percent.
- The combined effect of the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments reduced poverty by 14.1 percent in states with emergency allotments and reduced child poverty by 21.8 percent relative to a scenario without these benefit expansions.
- The emergency allotments and the reevaluated TFP reduced poverty among all racial and ethnic groups, and the greatest reductions in poverty occurred among Black, non-Hispanic people and Hispanic people, narrowing the difference in poverty rates of these groups relative to white, non-Hispanic people. The estimated effect for non-Hispanic Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders is less than the effect for non-Hispanic white people, slightly increasing the estimated difference in poverty rates between these two groups.

We provide additional details about the poverty measure, the reevaluated TFP, emergency allotments, and the estimated effects of these policies in the sections below.

Poverty Measure

We use the ATTIS model to estimate the effect of emergency allotments and the reevaluated TFP on poverty in the fourth quarter of 2021. Because household survey data used for poverty estimates are not yet available for 2021, we project data from the 2018 ACS to reflect 2021 (see box 1).

We use the SPM, an expanded poverty measure that uses a broad measure of family resources. The SPM considers not only a family's cash income but also their tax payments, child care, other work-related expenses, medical out-of-pocket expenses, tax credits, and in-kind benefits such as housing subsidies and nutrition help. The SPM counts a dollar of SNAP benefits as equivalent to a dollar of cash, increasing the family's resources by the dollar amount of the family's SNAP benefit. A family is counted as living in poverty if their resources are below a given threshold based on family size; number of children; geographic location; and whether the family rents, owns their home with a mortgage, or owns their home without a mortgage.

We base our approach on the Census Bureau's SPM methodology (Fox 2019; Fox, Glassman, and Pacas 2020) and adapt it for use with projected ATTIS data for the fourth quarter of 2021. To calculate quarterly resources for the SPM, we count each family's projected income and benefits for the fourth quarter of 2021, assume perfect withholding of federal and state income taxes, and subtract taxes paid on fourth-quarter income from family resources. We count the advance CTC payments distributed in October to December 2021 as income but do not count other refundable tax credits or stimulus checks received in earlier months of the year.

To develop the 2021 projected SPM thresholds, we begin with the 2019 SPM thresholds developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for renters and for owners with and without a mortgage, adjust for inflation between 2019 and 2021, apply the Census Bureau's adjustments for family size and number of children, and apply the geographic adjustments developed by the Census Bureau.[3] We then assign the thresholds to families in the projected 2021 data.

The average projected 2021 annual SPM poverty threshold is $13,667 for a one-person family, $24,516 for a family with one adult and two children, and $33,183 for a married couple with three children.[4] The projected thresholds are lowest for families in rural Arkansas who own their home without a mortgage, at $9,733 for a one-person family, $17,437 for a family with one adult and two children, and $23,394 for a married couple with three children. The projected thresholds are highest for families who own their own home, are paying a mortgage, and live in the San Jose–Sunnyvale–Santa Clara, California, metropolitan area. These families have projected thresholds of $21,845 for a one-person family, $39,135 for a family with one adult and two children, and $52,505 for a married couple with three children. We divide the annual poverty threshold by four to obtain a quarterly amount for use in determining a family's poverty level in October to December 2021.

BOX 1

Analytic Approach

We model the effects of emergency allotments and the reevaluated Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) using the Urban Institute's Analysis of Transfers, Taxes, and Income Security (ATTIS) microsimulation model.[a] ATTIS is a powerful tool that provides national and state estimates using data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).[b] The model simulates eligibility and benefits for public programs and assigns participation to eligible households so the size and characteristics of the simulated caseload match those of the actual caseload. Rules governing eligibility and benefits for various public assistance programs are coded into the model, so it can simulate the effects of changes in any of those rules.

For this analysis, we use 2018 ACS data that have been modified to represent projected employment, income, and safety net program eligibility and participation in 2021. We use projected data because 2021 ACS survey data are not yet available. We build on our previously released 2021 annual projections (Wheaton, Giannarelli, and Dehry 2021), updating them to reflect SNAP eligibility rules and participation levels in the fourth quarter of 2021.[c] Our SNAP projections match Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) data[d] for the average monthly number of participating SNAP households in October to December 2021 by state, exceed FNS data for the number of participating people by 7 percent, and exceed FNS data for distributed SNAP benefits by 3 percent. We project that 35 percent of SNAP benefits paid in October to December 2021 are emergency allotments, close to the approximately 33 percent paid as emergency allotments according to FNS data.

[a] "ATTIS Microsimulation Model," Urban Institute, https://www.urban.org/research-methods/attis-microsimulation-model.

[b] We use the version of the ACS made available by the University of Minnesota's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series project (Ruggles et al. 2020).

[b] See Giannarelli, Wheaton, and Acs (2020) for additional background regarding the ATITS model's approach to poverty projection.

[c] "January 2022 Keydata Report," USDA Food and Nutrition Services, accessed April 18, 2022, https://www.fns.usda.gov/data/keydata-report.

Policies Analyzed

We model the individual and combined effects of two policies affecting SNAP benefits in the fourth quarter of 2021: (1) a reevaluation of the TFP that increased the maximum SNAP benefit 21 percent (increasing benefits for all recipients, including those receiving less than the maximum benefit); and (2) emergency allotments, a response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the federal public health emergency. Without emergency allotments, a family's SNAP benefit is phased out as their income rises. Emergency allotments provide all eligible families with the maximum benefit for their family size and guarantee a monthly increase of at least $95 for families that are already at or near the maximum benefit. We provide additional details about the TFP and emergency allotments below.

Thrifty Food Plan

The TFP is designed to provide healthy meals prepared at home and is the lowest cost of the four food plans by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) that describe the cost of a healthy diet (USDA 2021). Each year's June TFP defines the maximum monthly SNAP benefit for the following federal fiscal year. The maximum SNAP benefit is based on the June TFP for a reference family of four people, consisting of

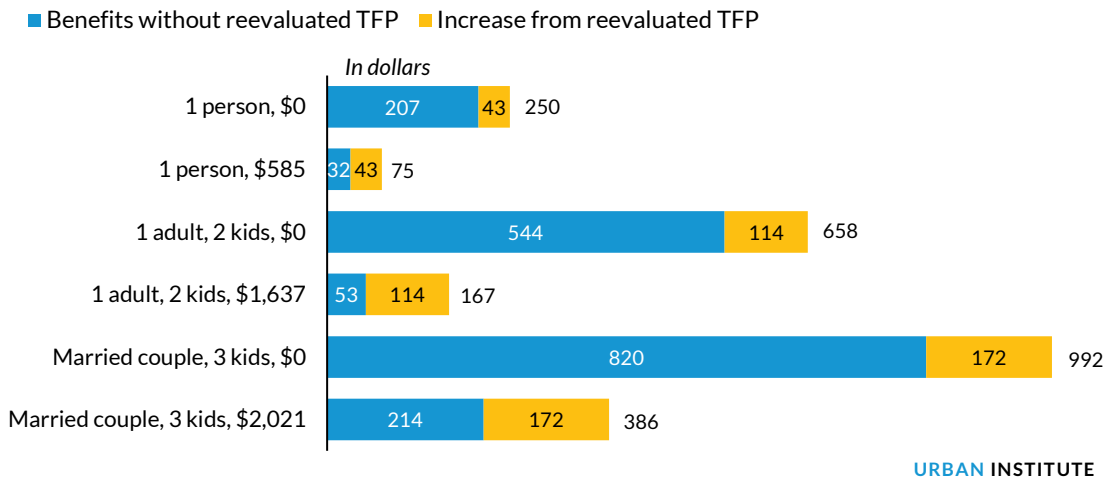
a man and woman ages 20 to 50, one child between ages 6 and 8, and one child between ages 9 and 11. The maximum SNAP benefit is then adjusted for differences in family size. The maximum SNAP benefit is adjusted at the beginning of the federal fiscal year (October) based on the June TFP and remains unchanged until the following October.

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334, the 2018 Farm Bill) required that the USDA reevaluate the TFP by 2022 and repeat the reevaluation every five years. Prior updates to the TFP required that updates be cost neutral after adjusting for inflation. The 2021 TFP was reevaluated based on current dietary guidance, consumption patterns, food composition data, and current food prices, without requiring cost neutrality. The resulting June 2021 TFP of $835.57 per month for the reference family is 21 percent higher than if it had been based on the prior TFP when adjusted for inflation. The TFP is the same for the contiguous 48 states and the District of Columbia and is determined separately for Alaska and Hawaii to reflect the higher price of food in these states. The USDA made a temporary adjustment to the TFP for Alaska and Hawaii in 2021 and plans to fully update the Alaska and Hawaii TFPs in 2022.

FIGURE 1

Effect of Reevaluated TFP on Monthly SNAP Benefit for Hypothetical Families

By family size and monthly net income level, federal fiscal year 2022



Source: Authors' calculations.

Notes: SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan. Benefit levels are for families in the contiguous US.

Figure 1 illustrates the effect of the TFP reevaluation on SNAP benefits for three example families: a single individual, an adult with two children, and a married couple with three children. We show the SNAP benefit without the TFP reevaluation, the increase in the benefit amount from the TFP reevaluation, and the total benefit. The examples are for federal fiscal year 2022 (October 2021 through September 2022) and reflect the amounts that would be received in states in the contiguous US that do not have emergency allotments. We show benefits for families without income who receive the

maximum benefit for their family size and for families whose monthly income makes them eligible for a smaller benefit.[5]

A single individual without income would have received $207 per month in SNAP benefits in federal fiscal year 2022 without the TFP reevaluation. They receive an additional $43 from the TFP reevaluation, bringing their total monthly benefit to $250.

SNAP benefits generally decrease as family income increases because the SNAP benefit is calculated by subtracting 30 percent of net monthly income (income after deductions) from the maximum SNAP benefit for the family's size.[6] A single individual with net monthly income of $585 would receive $32 in monthly SNAP benefits without the TFP reevaluation, calculated by subtracting 30 percent of $585 ($175) from the maximum SNAP benefit of $207 for a single individual. Because the reevaluated TFP increases the maximum SNAP allotment for a single individual by $43, the single individual with net monthly income of $585 also receives a $43 increase in their monthly SNAP benefit, bringing their total monthly benefit to $75.

The reevaluated TFP increases the SNAP benefit by $114 per month for a single adult with two children, increasing the monthly benefit from $544 to $658 for a family without income and from $53 to $167 for a family with $1,637 in monthly net income. A married couple with three children receives $172 in additional benefits per month from the reevaluated TFP, increasing the SNAP benefit from $820 to $992 for a family without income, and from $214 to $386 for a family with $2,021 in monthly net income.

Emergency Allotments

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 allows states to request waivers to provide the maximum SNAP allotment to all households based on their household size. Because the SNAP benefit formula reduces the SNAP benefit by $0.30 for each additional dollar of net income, emergency allotments provide the largest benefit increase to relatively higher-income SNAP households who receive the lowest benefits under the standard benefit rules. Before April 2021, households that were already eligible for the maximum benefit did not receive any additional benefit from emergency allotments. Beginning in April 2021, all SNAP households are guaranteed a monthly benefit increase of at least $95 in states with emergency allotments.[7]

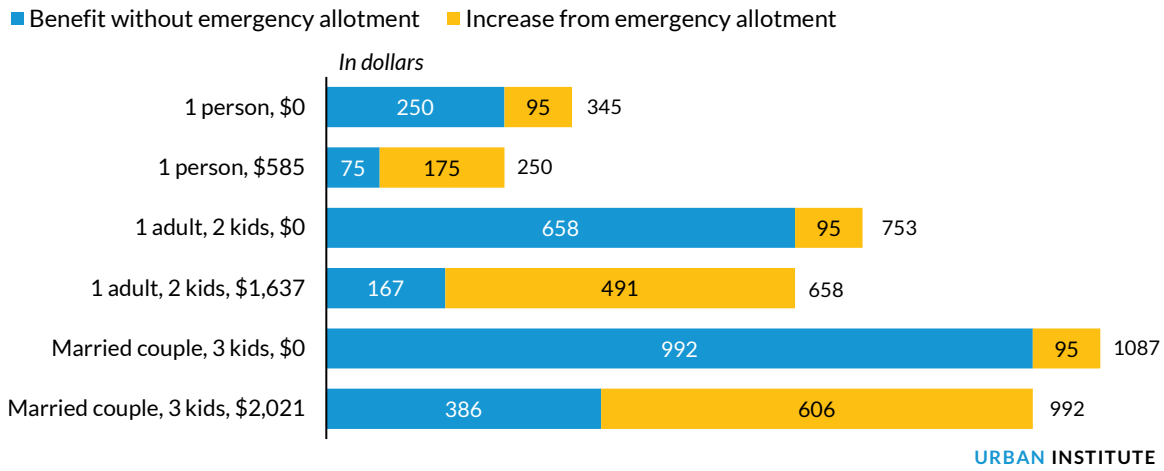
States can continue to provide emergency allotments so long as a federal government COVID-19 public health emergency declaration is in effect and the state has issued an emergency or disaster declaration.[8] All but eight states—Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota—provided emergency allotments in the fourth quarter of 2021.[9] Since January 31, 2020, the federal government public health emergency declaration has been extended for successive 90-day intervals and was most recently renewed on July 15, 2022.[10]

Figure 2 illustrates the effect of the emergency allotment on the same three example families as described in figure 1. SNAP benefits are calculated using the actual fiscal year 2022 values (incorporating the effect of the reevaluated TFP) and are shown without and with emergency allotments.

FIGURE 2

Effect of Emergency Allotment on Monthly SNAP Benefit for Hypothetical Families

By family size and monthly net income level and with reevaluated TFP, federal fiscal year 2022



Source: Authors' calculations.

Notes: SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan. Benefit levels are for families in the contiguous US.

Without emergency allotments, families without income receive the maximum benefit for their family size. Emergency allotments increase the benefits for families without income by $95 per month, raising the SNAP benefit from $250 to $345 for a single individual without income, from $658 to $753 for a family with one adult and two children without income, and from $992 to $1,087 for a married couple and three children without income.

Without emergency allotments, families who have positive monthly net income receive less than the maximum benefit for their family size. Emergency allotments increase the benefits for the example families up to the maximum benefit amount for their family size, raising the benefit from $75 to $250 for a single individual with $585 in net monthly income, from $167 to $658 for a single adult with two children who has $1,637 in net monthly income, and from $386 to $992 for a married couple with three children who has $2,021 in net monthly income.[11]

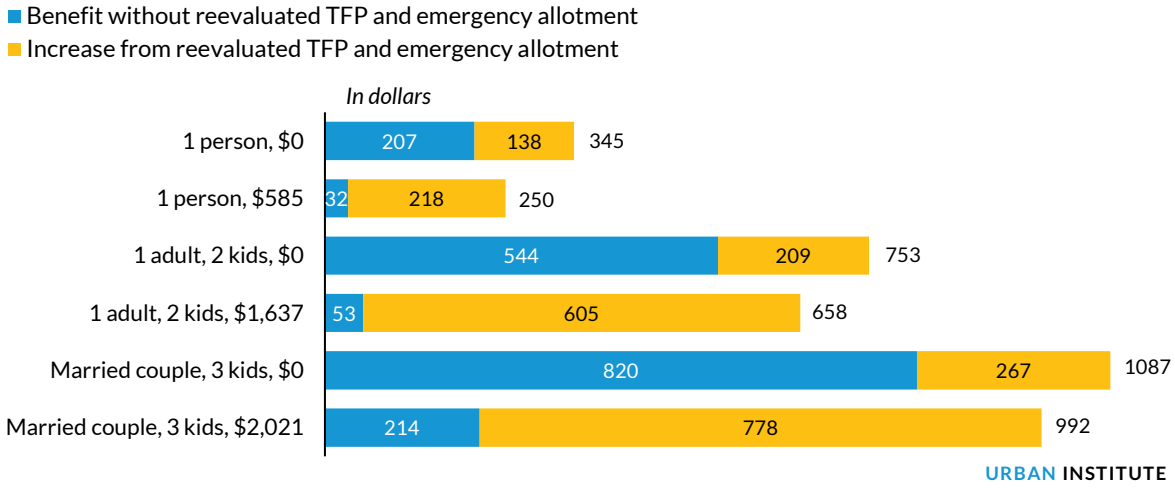
Figure 3 illustrates the combined effect of the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments on the example families shown in figures 1 and 2. Without the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments, a single person with no income would receive $207 in monthly benefits. The combined effect of the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments increases their benefit by $138 to a total $345 in monthly benefits. The combined effect of the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments is much larger for families with income than for families without income. The combination of these two changes increases the monthly benefit for a single person with $585 in monthly net income from $32 per month to $250 per month, an increase of $218, whereas a single person without income receives a benefit increase of $138. The monthly benefit for a married couple with three children and $2,021 in net monthly income increases from $214 per month without the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments to $992 per

month, an increase of $778 per month. By comparison, a married couple with three children and no income receives a benefit increase of $267 per month, raising their monthly benefit from $820 to $1,087.

FIGURE 3

Combined Effect of Reevaluated TFP and Emergency Allotment on Monthly SNAP Benefit for Hypothetical Families

By family size and monthly net income level, federal fiscal year 2022



Source: Authors' calculations.

Notes: SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan. Benefit levels are for families in the contiguous US.

Effect of the Thrifty Food Plan Reevaluation

We estimate that the increase in SNAP benefits arising from the reevaluated TFP kept nearly 2.3 million people out of poverty in the fourth quarter of 2021, reducing the number of people with resources below the SPM poverty threshold by 4.7 percent (table 1). This poverty reduction arose from an estimated additional $1.8 billion per month distributed because of the reevaluated TFP, equivalent to $37 per person receiving SNAP per month.[12] We estimate that the number of people with resources below half of the SPM poverty threshold (deep poverty) fell by 4.1 percent. The increased benefits from the reevaluated TFP also reduced the depth of poverty among SNAP recipient families who remained below poverty despite the benefit increase. The "poverty gap," or amount needed to raise resources for these families up to the SPM poverty threshold, fell from an average monthly amount of $318 per person to $285 per person, for an average reduction of 10.3 percent. We estimate that the higher SNAP benefits from the TFP reevaluation reduced the number of children below poverty by 8.6 percent, with adults ages 18 to 59 years old and adults ages 60 and older experiencing smaller reductions at 3.9 percent and 2.9 percent, respectively.

Black, non-Hispanic people had the highest estimated percentage reduction in poverty of the groups examined (6.9 percent). However, more white, non-Hispanic people were removed from poverty than in the other groups (843,000), reflecting the relatively larger size of the white, non-Hispanic population. Hispanic people had a 5.1 percent estimated poverty reduction, and white, non-Hispanic

people had a 4.0 percent estimated poverty reduction. The smallest estimated effect is among non-Hispanic Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (a 2.0 percent poverty reduction). Because of data limitations, we group together Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. However, people who identify as Asian American or Pacific Islander are diverse and reflect many countries of origin and different economic circumstances (Budiman and Ruiz 2021; Kochhar and Cilluffo 2018).[13]

TABLE 1

Estimated Effect of TFP Reevaluation on SNAP and Quarterly SPM Poverty

October to December 2021, numbers in thousands except per person averages

	Without Reevaluated TFP	With Reevaluated TFP	Change	Percent Change
Households receiving SNAP	21,434	21,660	226	1.1%
People receiving SNAP	43,494	44,428	934	2.1%
Total monthly SNAP benefits	$8,485,516	$10,326,145	$1,840,629	21.7%
Average monthly SNAP per person	$195	$232	$37	19.1%
People with income below poverty	48,029	45,753	-2,276	-4.7%
SPM poverty rate	14.9%	14.2%	-0.7%	-4.7%
SPM child poverty rate (<18)	14.7%	13.4%	-1.3%	-8.6%
Below 50% of SPM poverty level	15,569	14,929	-640	-4.1%
Deep poverty rate	4.8%	4.6%	-0.2%	-4.1%
Average monthly per person poverty gap (in families with SNAP)	$318	$285	-$33	-10.3%
People experiencing poverty				
Age				
Less than 18 years old	10,612	9,697	-915	-8.6%
18 to 59 years old	26,347	25,308	-1,039	-3.9%
60 years or older	11,069	10,748	-321	-2.9%
Race and ethnicity (all)				
White, non-Hispanic	20,932	20,089	-843	-4.0%
Black, non-Hispanic	7,681	7,154	-527	-6.9%
Hispanic	14,172	13,454	-718	-5.1%
AAPI, non-Hispanic	3,351	3,283	-68	-2.0%
Race and ethnicity (under 18)				
White, non-Hispanic	3,127	2,856	-271	-8.7%
Black, non-Hispanic	1,805	1,584	-221	-12.2%
Hispanic	4,497	4,154	-343	-7.6%
AAPI, non-Hispanic	558	540	-18	-3.2%

Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.

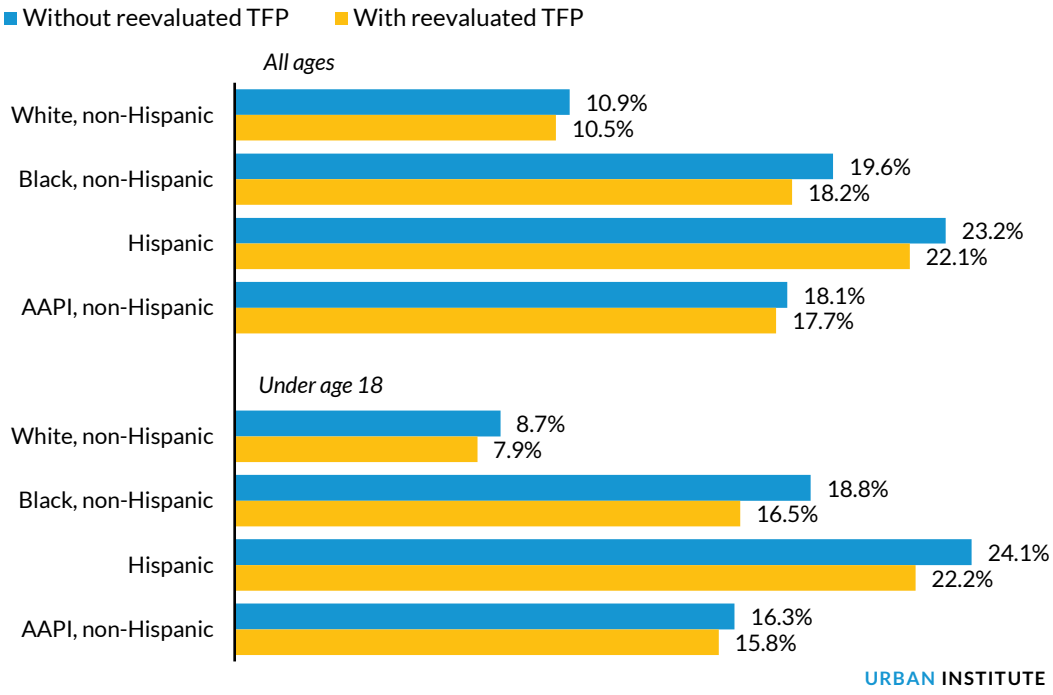
Note: AAPI = Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan.

The relatively higher estimated poverty rate reductions for Black, non-Hispanic people and for Hispanic people narrow the historical disparities in poverty rates between these groups and white, non-Hispanic people.[14] The poverty rate for white, non-Hispanic people falls from 10.9 percent without the reevaluated TFP to 10.5 percent with the reevaluated TFP, while the poverty rate for Black, non-Hispanic people falls from 19.6 percent to 18.2 percent (figure 4). Without the reevaluated TFP, the estimated poverty rate for Black, non-Hispanic people is 8.7 percentage points above the rate for white, non-Hispanic people (19.6 for Black, non-Hispanic people minus 10.9 for white, non-Hispanic people). This difference narrows to 7.7 percentage points with the reevaluated TFP. The reevaluated TFP reduces the estimated poverty rate for Hispanic people from 23.2 percent to 22.1 percent, narrowing the gap between their rate and the rate for white, non-Hispanic people from 12.3 to 11.6 percentage points. The estimated poverty rate for non-Hispanic Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders falls from 18.1 percent to 17.7 because of the reevaluated TFP. This 0.4 percentage point reduction matches the percentage point reduction for white, non-Hispanic people, so the 7.2 percentage point difference in the poverty rate for these two groups remains the same.

FIGURE 4

Estimated Effect of Higher SNAP Benefits from the Reevaluated TFP on Quarterly SPM Poverty Rate

By subgroup, October to December 2021



Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.

Notes: AAPI = Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan.

The estimated percentage reduction in child poverty is greatest for Black, non-Hispanic children (12.2 percent). A higher number of Hispanic children are estimated to be kept out of poverty than in other groups shown here (343,000), reflecting the fact that more Hispanic children are estimated to have resources below the SPM poverty threshold than children in any other racial or ethnic group. The

reevaluated TFP reduces the estimated poverty rate for Black, non-Hispanic children from 18.8 percent to 16.5 percent and for Hispanic children from 24.1 percent to 22.2 percent.

The reevaluated TFP narrows the difference in the estimated Black, non-Hispanic child poverty rate and white, non-Hispanic child poverty rate from 10.1 percentage points to 8.6 percentage points. The gap for Hispanic children relative to white, non-Hispanic children narrows from 15.4 percentage points to 14.3 percentage points. The antipoverty effect of the reevaluated TFP has a smaller effect on the poverty rate for non-Hispanic Asian American and Pacific Islander children than among non-Hispanic white children, so the difference in the estimated poverty rates of these groups increases slightly from 7.6 percentage points to 7.9 percentage points because of the reevaluated TFP.

The antipoverty effect of the reevaluated TFP is likely to be greatest in states where a relatively high share of people below the poverty threshold receive SNAP benefits and have resources just below the poverty threshold.[15] Our projected data suggest that the antipoverty effect of the reevaluated TFP in October to December 2021 was greatest in Oklahoma (with a poverty reduction of 8.2 percent), New Mexico (with a poverty reduction of 9.4 percent), and Rhode Island (with a poverty reduction of 10.2 percent; table 2). We estimate that the antipoverty effect was smallest in Vermont and Wyoming (with a poverty reduction of 2.4 percent and 1.8 percent, respectively).

TABLE 2

Estimated Effect of TFP Reevaluation on Quarterly SPM Poverty

By state, October to December 2021

	Poverty Rate without Reevaluated TFP	Poverty Rate with Reevaluated TFP	Change (Number in Poverty)[a]	Percent Change
Alabama	14.1%	13.3%	-39	-5.7%
Arizona	15.8%	15.1%	-54	-4.6%
Arkansas	17.0%	16.1%	-26	-5.2%
California	18.4%	17.8%	-248	-3.5%
Colorado	13.3%	12.9%	-24	-3.1%
Connecticut	12.2%	11.7%	-15	-3.7%
Delaware	14.9%	14.5%	-4	-2.6%
District of Columbia	14.4%	13.4%	-7	-6.9%
Florida	20.4%	19.6%	-172	-3.9%
Georgia	14.7%	13.9%	-93	-6.0%
Idaho	13.6%	13.2%	-7	-3.0%
Illinois	13.3%	12.3%	-122	-7.5%
Indiana	13.4%	12.8%	-40	-4.6%
Iowa	9.9%	9.5%	-14	-4.7%
Kansas	13.2%	12.9%	-10	-2.6%
Kentucky	14.9%	14.1%	-32	-5.0%
Louisiana	16.5%	15.5%	-46	-6.3%
Maine	10.8%	10.4%	-5	-3.6%
Maryland	12.2%	11.4%	-49	-6.8%
Massachusetts	12.6%	12.0%	-42	-5.0%

	Poverty Rate without Reevaluated TFP	Poverty Rate with Reevaluated TFP	Change (Number in Poverty)[a]	Percent Change
Michigan	13.6%	12.8%	-69	-5.2%
Minnesota	10.6%	10.2%	-20	-3.4%
Mississippi	15.8%	14.7%	-31	-7.0%
Missouri	13.6%	12.8%	-48	-5.9%
Montana	14.2%	13.7%	-5	-3.3%
Nebraska	11.6%	11.3%	-6	-2.7%
Nevada	16.6%	16.0%	-20	-3.8%
New Hampshire	10.2%	9.9%	-4	-3.2%
New Jersey	14.8%	14.1%	-61	-4.7%
New Mexico	16.6%	15.1%	-32	-9.4%
New York	16.8%	16.1%	-129	-4.1%
North Carolina	13.6%	12.7%	-89	-6.3%
North Dakota	11.7%	11.3%	-2	-2.8%
Ohio	11.5%	10.8%	-74	-5.6%
Oklahoma	12.4%	11.3%	-39	-8.2%
Oregon	14.1%	13.3%	-33	-5.6%
Pennsylvania	12.5%	11.8%	-90	-5.8%
Rhode Island	11.3%	10.2%	-12	-10.2%
South Carolina	15.0%	14.2%	-36	-4.7%
South Dakota	13.1%	12.3%	-7	-6.0%
Tennessee	14.3%	13.6%	-49	-5.0%
Texas	16.7%	16.0%	-203	-4.2%
Utah	10.4%	10.1%	-9	-2.6%
Vermont	11.8%	11.5%	-2	-2.4%
Virginia	13.6%	13.0%	-51	-4.5%
Washington	11.8%	11.3%	-37	-4.2%
West Virginia	13.7%	12.8%	-15	-6.5%
Wisconsin	9.7%	9.1%	-33	-6.0%
Wyoming	12.6%	12.4%	-1	-1.8%

Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.
Notes: SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan. Included are the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.
[a] Number in thousands.

Effect of Thrifty Food Plan Reevaluation without Emergency Allotments and Advance Child Tax Credit

The increase in SNAP benefits from the reevaluated TFP occurred at a time when two major pandemic-related benefits were in effect. All but eight states were providing SNAP emergency allotments, and many families with children received monthly advance CTC payments of up to $300 per child under age 6 and $250 per child ages 6 to 17. The advance CTC, a temporary measure enacted by the American Rescue Plan, ended in December 2021, and emergency allotments will end nationwide after the end of the federal COVID-19 public health emergency. However, the effect of the TFP reevaluation will continue to contribute to higher SNAP benefits and alleviate poverty.

TABLE 3

Estimated Effect of TFP Reevaluation on SNAP and Quarterly SPM Poverty, without Emergency Allotments and Advance CTC

October to December 2021, numbers in thousands except per person averages

	Without Reevaluated TFP	With Reevaluated TFP	Change	Percent Change
Households receiving SNAP	21,434	21,660	226	1.1%
People receiving SNAP	43,494	44,428	934	2.1%
Total monthly SNAP benefits	$5,109,413	$6,698,328	$1,588,915	31.1%
Average monthly SNAP per person	$117	$151	$33	28.3%
People with income below poverty	61,314	58,463	-2,851	-4.6%
SPM poverty rate	19.0%	18.2%	-0.9%	-4.6%
SPM child poverty rate (<18)	24.0%	22.1%	-1.9%	-7.6%
Below 50% of SPM poverty level	20,226	19,074	-1,152	-5.7%
Deep poverty rate	6.3%	5.9%	-0.4%	-5.7%
Average monthly per person poverty gap (in families with SNAP)	$290	$260	-$30	-10.3%
People experiencing poverty				
Age				
Less than 18 years old	17,343	16,025	-1,318	-7.6%
18 to 59 years old	31,837	30,638	-1,199	-3.8%
60 years or older	12,134	11,800	-334	-2.8%
Race and ethnicity (all)				
White, non-Hispanic	25,623	24,582	-1,040	-4.1%
Black, non-Hispanic	10,876	9,998	-878	-8.1%
Hispanic	18,465	17,756	-709	-3.8%
AAPI, non-Hispanic	3,754	3,692	-63	-1.7%
Race and ethnicity (under 18)				
White, non-Hispanic	5,212	4,812	-399	-7.7%
Black, non-Hispanic	3,508	3,066	-442	-12.6%
Hispanic	6,843	6,480	-363	-5.3%
AAPI, non-Hispanic	715	697	-18	-2.6%

Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.

Note: AAPI = Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; CTC = child tax credit; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan.

Emergency allotments and the advance CTC could either reduce or increase the antipoverty effect of the reevaluated TFP. Some SNAP recipients are already removed from poverty by emergency allotments or the advance CTC. Although they receive higher SNAP benefits from the reevaluated TFP, this does not affect the estimated poverty rate because they are already above the poverty threshold. For other families, emergency allotments and the advance CTC increase resources so that they are close enough to the poverty threshold that the additional benefits from the reevaluated TFP are enough

to raise them above the poverty threshold. Without the emergency allotments and advance CTC, they would be further below the poverty threshold, and the reevaluated TFP might not be enough on its own to raise them above the threshold.

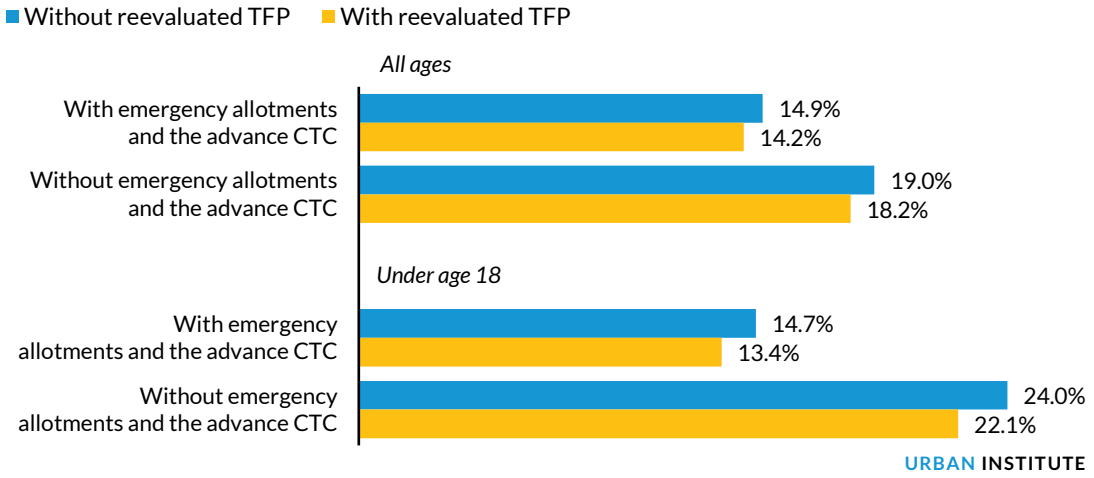
To investigate the potential effect of the reevaluated TFP without emergency allotments and the advance CTC, we recalculate the October to December 2021 SPM quarterly poverty rate under a scenario in which SNAP benefits are calculated with and without the reevaluated TFP, but without emergency allotments and without including advance CTCs in the poverty measure.

Without the poverty reduction already achieved by emergency allotments and the advance CTC, 2.9 million people would have been removed from poverty by the reevaluated TFP in the fourth quarter of 2021 (table 3), over half a million more than the 2.3 million kept out of poverty by the reevaluated TFP when counting emergency allotments and the advance CTC (table 1). The reevaluated TFP would have reduced the overall poverty rate (calculated without emergency allotments and without the advance CTC) from 19.0 to 18.2, a reduction of 0.8 percentage points (figure 5). This is close to the 0.7 percentage point reduction in the estimated poverty rate from the reevaluated TFP when emergency allotments and the advance CTC are in place. The reevaluated TFP reduces the estimated poverty rate for children from 24.0 to 22.1 percent when not counting emergency allotments and the advance CTC. This 1.9 percentage point reduction is slightly higher than the 1.3 percentage point reduction from the reevaluated TFP when emergency allotments and the advance CTC are in effect.

FIGURE 5

Estimated Effect of Higher SNAP Benefits from the Reevaluated TFP on Quarterly SPM Poverty Rate, with and without Emergency Allotments and the Advance CTC

October to December 2021



Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.

Notes: CTC = child tax credit; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan.

Effect of Emergency Allotments

We estimate that emergency allotments kept 4.2 million people out of poverty in the fourth quarter of 2021, reducing the number of people with resources below the poverty threshold by 9.6 percent in states with emergency allotments (table 4). This poverty reduction arose from an estimated $3.6 billion distributed per month in emergency allotments, equivalent to an average additional $92 per month for each person receiving SNAP benefits.[16] We estimate that the number of people with resources below half of the poverty threshold (deep poverty) fell by 6.2 percent in states with emergency allotments. The additional benefits reduced the poverty gap among SNAP recipient families who remained below the SPM poverty threshold by an average of $71 per person per month, reducing the average poverty gap for people in these families by 20.8 percent.

We estimate that emergency allotments reduced the number of children below poverty by 14.0 percent in states with emergency allotments, with adults ages 18 to 59 years old and adults ages 60 and older experiencing 8.3 percent and 8.6 percent reductions, respectively. Black, non-Hispanic people have the highest estimated percentage reduction in poverty of the groups examined (13.0 percent). More white, non-Hispanic people are estimated to be removed from poverty than in any other group (1.7 million), reflecting the relatively larger size of their population. Emergency allotments are estimated to have the smallest effect on non-Hispanic Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (a 4.2 percent poverty reduction).

The relatively higher estimated poverty reductions for Black, non-Hispanic people and for Hispanic people slightly reduce disparities between these groups and white, non-Hispanic Americans in the states with emergency allotments. The estimated poverty rate for white, non-Hispanic people falls from 11.2 percent without emergency allotments to 10.2 percent with emergency allotments in states with emergency allotments (figure 6). The estimated poverty rate for Black, non-Hispanic people falls from 20.1 percent to 17.4 percent, and the estimated poverty rate for Hispanic people falls from 24.0 percent to 21.6 percent. Without emergency allotments, the estimated poverty rate for Black, non-Hispanic people in these states is 8.9 percentage points above the rate for white, non-Hispanic people. This gap narrows to 7.2 percentage points with emergency allotments. The estimated poverty rate among Hispanic people in these states is 12.8 percent above the estimated rate for white people without emergency allotments and narrows to an 11.4 percentage point difference with emergency allotments. The estimated poverty rate for non-Hispanic Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in states with emergency allotments falls from 18.3 percent to 17.6 because of emergency allotments. This 0.7 percentage point reduction is slightly lower than the 1.0 percentage point reduction for white, non-Hispanic people. As a result, the difference between the estimated poverty rate for non-Hispanic Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and white, non-Hispanic people slightly increases with emergency allotments, rising from 7.1 percentage points to 7.4 percentage points.

TABLE 4

Estimated Effect of Emergency Allotments on SNAP and Quarterly SPM Poverty in States with Emergency Allotments

October to December 2021, numbers in thousands except per person averages

	Without EA	With EA	Change	Percent Change
Households receiving SNAP	19,275	19,275	0	0.0%
People receiving SNAP	39,607	39,607	0	0.0%
Total monthly SNAP benefits	$5,994,254	$9,621,849	$3,627,595	60.5%
Average monthly SNAP per person	$151	$243	$92	60.5%
People with income below poverty	43,742	39,530	-4,212	-9.6%
SPM poverty rate	15.3%	13.9%	-1.5%	-9.6%
SPM child poverty rate (<18)	15.1%	13.0%	-2.1%	-14.0%
Below 50% of SPM poverty level	13,697	12,853	-844	-6.2%
Deep poverty rate	4.8%	4.5%	-0.3%	-6.2%
Average monthly per person poverty gap (in families with SNAP)	$342	$271	-$71	-20.8%
People experiencing poverty				
Age				
Less than 18 years old	9,777	8,413	-1,364	-14.0%
18 to 59 years old	24,041	22,049	-1,992	-8.3%
60 years or older	9,923	9,067	-856	-8.6%
Race and ethnicity (all)				
White, non-Hispanic	18,801	17,110	-1,691	-9.0%
Black, non-Hispanic	6,979	6,069	-910	-13.0%
Hispanic	12,980	11,711	-1,270	-9.8%
AAPI, non-Hispanic	3,240	3,103	-136	-4.2%
Race and ethnicity (under 18)				
White, non-Hispanic	2,817	2,409	-408	-14.5%
Black, non-Hispanic	1,607	1,311	-296	-18.4%
Hispanic	4,239	3,698	-541	-12.8%
AAPI, non-Hispanic	548	514	-34	-6.2%

Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.

Note: AAPI = Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; EA = Emergency Allotments; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure.

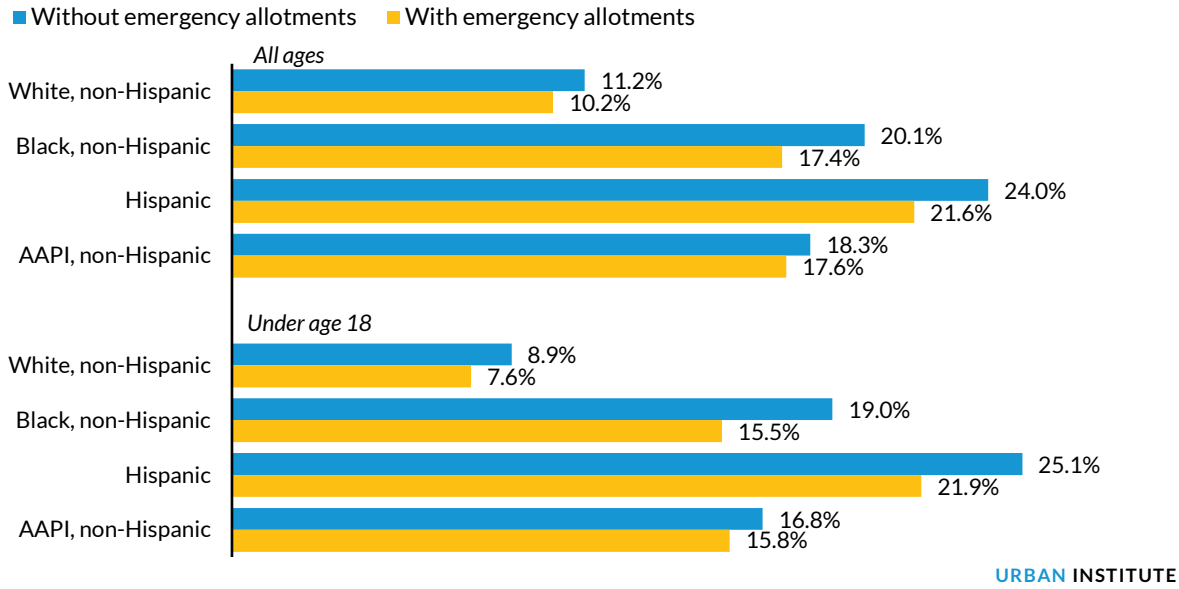
The estimated percentage reduction in child poverty is greatest for Black, non-Hispanic children (18.4 percent). A higher number of Hispanic children are estimated to be kept out of poverty than in the other groups (541,000), reflecting the higher overall number of Hispanic children with resources below the poverty threshold. Emergency allotments reduce the estimated poverty rate for Black, non-Hispanic children from 19.0 percent to 15.5 percent in states with emergency allotments and reduce the estimated poverty rate for Hispanic children from 25.1 percent to 21.9 percent. Emergency allotments narrow the difference in the estimated Black, non-Hispanic child poverty rate and white, non-Hispanic child poverty rate from 10.1 percentage points to 7.9 percentage points. The gap for Hispanic children relative to white, non-Hispanic children narrows from 16.2 percentage points to 14.3 percentage points.

Emergency allotments have a smaller effect on poverty among non-Hispanic Asian American and Pacific Islander children than among non-Hispanic white children, and the difference in the estimated poverty rates of these groups increases slightly, from 7.9 percentage points to 8.2 percentage points because of emergency allotments in states with emergency allotments.

FIGURE 6

Estimated Effect of Emergency Allotments on Quarterly SPM Poverty Rate in States with Emergency Allotments

October to December 2021



Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.
Notes: AAPI=Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure.

TABLE 5

Estimated Effect of Emergency Allotments on Quarterly SPM Poverty

October to December 2021, by state

	Poverty Rate without EA	Poverty Rate with EA	Change (Number in Poverty)[a]	Percent Change
Alabama	15.1%	13.3%	-87	-12.0%
Alaska	13.4%	12.4%	-7	-7.3%
Arizona	16.5%	15.1%	-105	-8.6%
California	19.2%	17.8%	-542	-7.4%
Colorado	13.8%	12.9%	-51	-6.5%
Connecticut	12.6%	11.7%	-32	-7.4%
Delaware	15.7%	14.5%	-11	-7.2%
District of Columbia	15.5%	13.4%	-14	-13.4%

	Poverty Rate without EA	Poverty Rate with EA	Change (Number in Poverty)[a]	Percent Change
Georgia	15.7%	13.9%	-199	-12.0%
Hawaii	15.6%	14.4%	-17	-7.9%
Illinois	14.2%	12.3%	-236	-13.6%
Indiana	13.9%	12.8%	-74	-8.1%
Iowa	10.3%	9.5%	-27	-8.5%
Kansas	13.5%	12.9%	-17	-4.5%
Kentucky	15.6%	14.1%	-65	-9.6%
Louisiana	18.0%	15.5%	-112	-13.9%
Maine	11.4%	10.4%	-14	-9.3%
Maryland	13.1%	11.4%	-101	-13.0%
Massachusetts	13.4%	12.0%	-91	-10.2%
Michigan	14.2%	12.8%	-133	-9.6%
Minnesota	11.1%	10.2%	-49	-7.9%
Mississippi	17.1%	14.7%	-70	-14.3%
Nevada	17.5%	16.0%	-48	-8.7%
New Hampshire	10.4%	9.9%	-7	-5.1%
New Jersey	15.4%	14.1%	-114	-8.5%
New Mexico	18.3%	15.1%	-66	-17.5%
New York	17.6%	16.1%	-280	-8.6%
North Carolina	14.5%	12.7%	-182	-12.1%
Ohio	12.1%	10.8%	-140	-10.2%
Oklahoma	13.5%	11.3%	-85	-16.2%
Oregon	15.7%	13.3%	-96	-14.8%
Pennsylvania	13.2%	11.8%	-179	-11.0%
Rhode Island	12.1%	10.2%	-20	-16.1%
South Carolina	15.8%	14.2%	-78	-9.7%
Tennessee	15.1%	13.6%	-102	-10.0%
Texas	17.4%	16.0%	-425	-8.4%
Utah	10.7%	10.1%	-18	-5.3%
Vermont	12.6%	11.5%	-7	-9.2%
Virginia	14.3%	13.0%	-106	-8.9%
Washington	12.6%	11.3%	-95	-10.0%
West Virginia	14.8%	12.8%	-34	-13.3%
Wisconsin	10.4%	9.1%	-73	-12.4%
Wyoming	12.8%	12.4%	-2	-2.8%

Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.

Notes: EA = Emergency Allotments; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure. States excluded that did not have emergency allotments in October to December 2021 are Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

[a] Number in thousands.

We estimate that the antipoverty effect of emergency allotments is smallest in Kansas and Wyoming, reducing the number of people with resources below the poverty threshold by 4.5 percent

and 2.8 percent, respectively (table 5). The estimated antipoverty effect of emergency allotments is highest in New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island, with estimated poverty reductions of 17.5 percent, 16.2 percent, and 16.1 percent, respectively.

Combined Effect of Emergency Allotments and Reevaluated TFP

We estimate that the combined effect of emergency allotments and the TFP reevaluation reduced the number of people with resources below the poverty level by 14.1 percent in October to December 2021 in states with emergency allotments and reduced the number of children in poverty by 21.8 percent in these states (table 6). On average, SNAP participants received $125 more in SNAP benefits per person per month than they would have received without these policy changes. The additional benefits reduced the poverty gap among people in SNAP recipient families who remained below the SPM poverty level by an average of $103 per person per month, or 27.5 percent.

We estimate that Black, non-Hispanic people experienced the greatest percentage reduction in poverty from the combination of emergency allotments and the TFP reevaluation in states with emergency allotments, with a 19.7 percent reduction in poverty overall and a 29.6 percent reduction in poverty among children. A larger number of white, non-Hispanic people are estimated to rise above the poverty level because of the two policies (2.5 million) than in any other single racial or ethnic group. More Hispanic children (875,000) are estimated to rise above the poverty level than children in any other racial or ethnic group.

In states with emergency allotments, emergency allotments and the reevaluated TFP reduced the estimated poverty rate for white, non-Hispanic people by 1.5 percentage points and for Black, non-Hispanic people by 4.3 percentage points (figure 7). The substantially larger effect for Black, non-Hispanic people relative to white, non-Hispanic people reduces the difference in poverty rates for Black, non-Hispanic people relative to white, non-Hispanic people from 10.0 percentage points to 7.2 percentage points. This reduction is even more pronounced for children; the combined effect of the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments reduces the difference in estimated poverty rates of Black, non-Hispanic children relative to white, non-Hispanic children from 12.3 percentage points to 7.9 percentage points. The combined effect of emergency allotments and the reevaluated TFP reduces the difference in the estimated poverty rate for Hispanic people relative to white, non-Hispanic people from 13.5 percentage points to 11.4 percentage points overall, and from 17.2 percentage points to 14.3 percentage points for children. The combined effect of emergency allotments and the reevaluated TFP reduces poverty to a greater extent among white, non-Hispanic people than among non-Hispanic Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, slightly increasing the difference in estimated poverty rates for these groups in states with emergency allotments.

TABLE 6

Estimated Effect of Emergency Allotments and Reevaluated TFP on SNAP and Quarterly SPM Poverty in States with Emergency Allotments

October to December 2021, numbers in thousands except per person averages

	Without EA and Reevaluated TFP	With EA and Reevaluated TFP	Change	Percent Change
Households receiving SNAP	19,070	19,275	205	1.1%
People receiving SNAP	38,757	39,607	850	2.2%
Total monthly SNAP benefits	$4,574,473	$9,621,849	$5,047,376	110.3%
Average monthly SNAP per person	$118	$243	$125	105.8%
People with income below poverty	45,997	39,530	-6,468	-14.1%
SPM poverty rate	16.1%	13.9%	-2.3%	-14.1%
SPM child poverty rate (<18)	16.7%	13.0%	-3.6%	-21.8%
Below 50% of SPM poverty level	14,387	12,853	-1,534	-10.7%
Deep poverty rate	5.0%	4.5%	-0.5%	-10.7%
Average monthly per person poverty gap (in families with SNAP)	$373	$271	-$103	-27.5%
People experiencing poverty				
Age				
Less than 18 years old	10,758	8,413	-2,345	-21.8%
18 to 59 years old	25,023	22,049	-2,974	-11.9%
60 years or older	10,216	9,067	-1,149	-11.2%
Race and ethnicity (all)				
White, non-Hispanic	19,633	17,110	-2,522	-12.8%
Black, non-Hispanic	7,558	6,069	-1,488	-19.7%
Hispanic	13,636	11,711	-1,926	-14.1%
AAPI, non-Hispanic	3,310	3,103	-207	-6.2%
Race and ethnicity (under 18)				
White, non-Hispanic	3,118	2,409	-709	-22.7%
Black, non-Hispanic	1,863	1,311	-551	-29.6%
Hispanic	4,573	3,698	-875	-19.1%
AAPI, non-Hispanic	571	514	-57	-9.9%

Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.

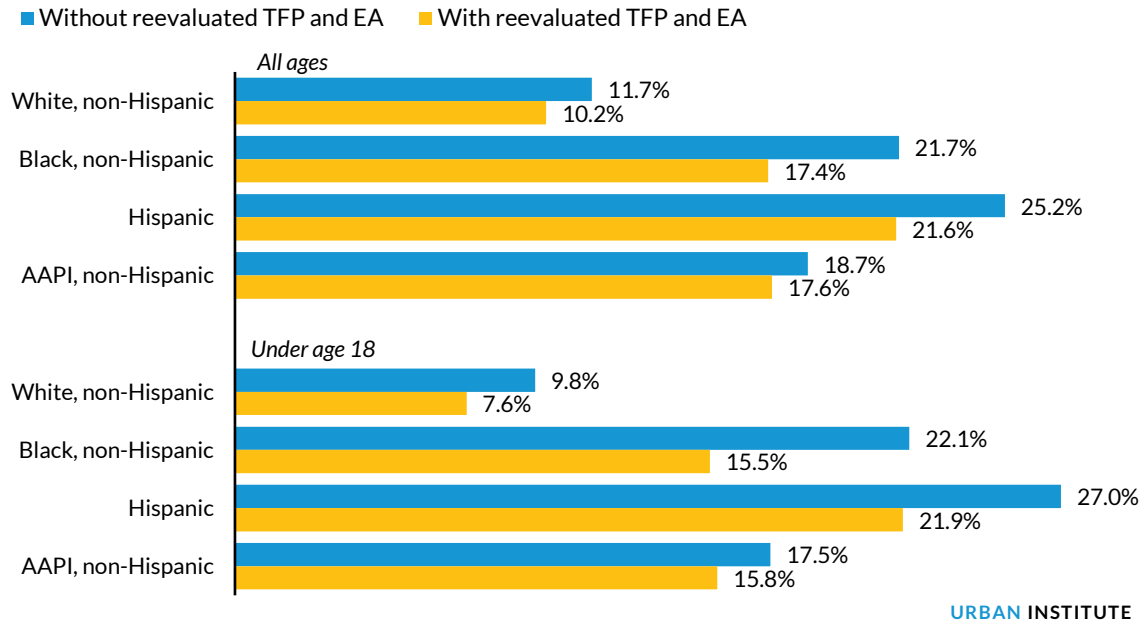
Notes: AAPI = Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; EA = Emergency Allotments; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan. States excluded that did not have emergency allotments in October to December 2021 are Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

We estimate that the combined antipoverty effect of the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments (among states with emergency allotments, and excluding Alaska and Hawaii) was smallest in Kansas, Utah, and Wyoming, reducing the number of people with resources below the poverty threshold by 7.8 percent, 7.4 percent, and 5.3 percent, respectively (table 7).[17] The estimated combined antipoverty effect of the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments is highest in Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, with estimated poverty reductions of 21.1 percent, 26.4 percent, and 22.2 percent, respectively.

FIGURE 7

Estimated Effect of Emergency Allotments and Reevaluated TFP on Quarterly SPM Poverty in States with Emergency Allotments

By subgroup, October to December 2021



Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.

Notes: AAPI = Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; EA = emergency allotments; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan.

TABLE 7

Estimated Effect of Emergency Allotments and Reevaluated TFP on Quarterly SPM Poverty

October to December 2021, by state

	Poverty Rate without EA and Reevaluated TFP	Poverty Rate with EA and Reevaluated TFP	Change (Number in Poverty)[a]	Percent Change
Alabama	16.3%	13.3%	-147	-18.7%
Arizona	17.2%	15.1%	-156	-12.3%
California	19.9%	17.8%	-797	-10.5%
Colorado	14.4%	12.9%	-84	-10.3%
Connecticut	13.3%	11.7%	-54	-11.8%
Delaware	16.0%	14.5%	-14	-9.3%
District of Columbia	16.3%	13.4%	-19	-17.6%
Georgia	16.7%	13.9%	-299	-17.0%
Illinois	15.0%	12.3%	-334	-18.2%
Indiana	14.4%	12.8%	-110	-11.5%
Iowa	10.9%	9.5%	-43	-13.0%

	Poverty Rate without EA and Reevaluated TFP	Poverty Rate with EA and Reevaluated TFP	Change (Number in Poverty)[a]	Percent Change
Kansas	13.9%	12.9%	-31	-7.8%
Kentucky	16.6%	14.1%	-109	-15.0%
Louisiana	19.7%	15.5%	-186	-21.1%
Maine	12.0%	10.4%	-21	-13.5%
Maryland	13.7%	11.4%	-139	-17.2%
Massachusetts	14.1%	12.0%	-137	-14.7%
Michigan	15.0%	12.8%	-208	-14.3%
Minnesota	11.6%	10.2%	-74	-11.5%
Mississippi	18.5%	14.7%	-110	-20.8%
Nevada	18.3%	16.0%	-73	-12.7%
New Hampshire	10.7%	9.9%	-12	-8.2%
New Jersey	16.1%	14.1%	-175	-12.5%
New Mexico	20.5%	15.1%	-112	-26.4%
New York	18.3%	16.1%	-413	-12.1%
North Carolina	15.6%	12.7%	-301	-18.5%
Ohio	12.9%	10.8%	-239	-16.2%
Oklahoma	14.6%	11.3%	-126	-22.2%
Oregon	16.6%	13.3%	-136	-19.7%
Pennsylvania	14.0%	11.8%	-278	-16.1%
Rhode Island	12.8%	10.2%	-27	-20.5%
South Carolina	16.8%	14.2%	-129	-15.1%
Tennessee	16.1%	13.6%	-169	-15.5%
Texas	18.3%	16.0%	-664	-12.5%
Utah	10.9%	10.1%	-26	-7.4%
Vermont	13.1%	11.5%	-10	-12.2%
Virginia	14.9%	13.0%	-160	-12.8%
Washington	13.2%	11.3%	-139	-13.9%
West Virginia	16.2%	12.8%	-58	-20.9%
Wisconsin	10.9%	9.1%	-105	-16.8%
Wyoming	13.1%	12.4%	-4	-5.3%

Source: Urban Institute ATTIS model applied to the 2018 American Community Survey data with employment, population, and incomes projected to 2021.
Notes: EA = Emergency Allotments; SPM = Supplemental Poverty Measure; TFP = Thrifty Food Plan. States excluded that did not have emergency allotments in October to December 2021 are Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Alaska and Hawaii are excluded from the table because TFP reevaluation had not yet occurred for these states at the time of the analysis.
[a] Number in thousands.

Discussion

The additional SNAP benefits from the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments each substantially reduce poverty. We estimate that the percentage reduction in poverty in the fourth quarter of 2021 is highest for Black, non-Hispanic people and for Hispanic people, helping to reduce

disparities between these groups and non-Hispanic white people. This reduction in disparities is of particular interest given current efforts by the USDA to identify areas to advance equity.[18] The findings demonstrate that both a temporary SNAP increase through emergency allotments and the permanent increase from the reevaluated TFP help reduce differences in poverty rates that arise from broader structural and historic factors. Although these policies reduce disparities, all racial and ethnic groups benefit from the policy changes, and more white, non-Hispanic people are removed from poverty than people in any other single racial or ethnic group examined. Children experience a greater percentage reduction in poverty than adults under these policies. More Hispanic children are removed from poverty by the reevaluated TFP and emergency allotments than children in any other racial and ethnic group.

We estimate that non-Hispanic Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders experience the smallest percentage reduction in poverty of the groups examined. This is consistent with our earlier finding that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were less likely than other racial and ethnic groups to be removed from poverty by safety net and pandemic response policies in 2021 (Wheaton, Giannarelli, and Dehry 2021). Possible contributing factors are that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders with resources below the SPM poverty threshold are less likely than other people with low income to be in families with children and are more likely to live in higher-cost states and metropolitan areas, where more resources are needed to be lifted out of poverty. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders with incomes below the poverty threshold are also more likely than other non-Hispanic people with low income to be immigrants and therefore may be less likely to be eligible for SNAP benefits. Even among people eligible for SNAP benefits, noncitizens are less likely than citizens to participate in SNAP (Lauffer and Vigil 2021).

Our estimates do not account for the high inflation of food prices in 2021 and 2022,[19] which erode the purchasing power of SNAP benefits. SNAP benefit levels are adjusted for inflation, but this occurs only once per year in October. In the meantime, families may find that their benefits do not extend as far as in prior months. The additional benefits from emergency allotments help families purchase food, but these benefits have ended in a growing number of states. In addition to the eight states without emergency allotments in the fourth quarter of 2021, Mississippi and Tennessee stopped providing allotments at the end of 2021, Iowa stopped providing allotments after March 2022, and Arizona, Kentucky, and Wyoming stopped providing emergency allotments after April 2022.[20]

Emergency allotments were implemented as a temporary measure and will no longer be available in any state after the end of the federally declared COVID-19 public health emergency. Although emergency allotments will end, the higher SNAP benefits from the reevaluated TFP will continue to reduce poverty and help families purchase food. The extent of the antipoverty effect may rise or fall depending on levels of SNAP participation and economic circumstances, but the reevaluated TFP has increased SNAP benefits to a level that can better meet the needs of resource-constrained Americans.

Notes

[1] "Renewal of Determination That a Public Health Emergency Exists," Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, last updated July 15, 2022, https://aspr.hhs.gov/legal/PHE/Pages/covid19-15jul2022.aspx.

[2] We use the term "Hispanic" throughout this brief, as this is the primary terminology used by the US Census Bureau in the underlying ACS, which this analysis is based on. Survey respondents are asked to report race and ethnicity, including whether or not they identify as being of "Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin."

[3] We obtained the 2019 SPM thresholds from "2019 Research Experimental Supplemental Poverty Measures Thresholds," US Bureau of Labor Statistics, last updated September 9, 2020, https://www.bls.gov/pir/spm/spm_thresholds_2019.htm.

We use geographic adjustments developed by the Census Bureau as part of their work to adapt the SPM to the ACS (Fox, Glassman, and Pacas 2020). There are over 300 geographic adjustments, including identifiable metropolitan areas, combined residual metropolitan areas within state, and combined nonmetropolitan areas within state.

[4] The threshold for a family of a given size and number of children varies by geographic location and whether the family owns their home with a mortgage, owns without a mortgage, or rents. We calculate the average national threshold for a family of a given size and number of children by calculating the weighted mean of thresholds assigned to families of that size and number of children.

[5] The example families have gross income equal to 126 percent of the poverty guideline used for SNAP eligibility determination, just below the federal limit of 130 percent of poverty for families without a member age 60 or older or with a disability. We assume that the single individual has temporary disability income of $1,359 per month, the adult with two children has a combination of unemployment compensation and child support income equal to $2,303 per month, and the married couple with three children has earnings of $3,247 per month. We apply the standard deduction for each example family and calculate the earned income deduction for the family with earnings. We calculate the excess shelter expense deduction for each family, assuming rent of $850 per month for the single individual and $1,200 for the two example families with children, and we assume a standard utility allowance of $353 per month for each example family. We subtract the deductions from gross income to calculate net income.

[6] Net income is calculated by subtracting the following deductions from the family's gross income: a 20 percent deduction from earned income, a standard deduction of $177 for households of one to three people and $184 for households with four people (and higher for larger households and households in Alaska and Hawaii), a dependent care deduction, out-of-pocket medical expenses that exceed $35 per month for household members age 60 or older or with a disability, and a shelter expense deduction equal to the amount by which shelter costs exceed half of the household's income after other deductions. Some states also deduct legally owed child support payments and have a shelter deduction for homeless households (not modeled in this analysis). "SNAP Eligibility," US Department of Agriculture, accessed May 26, 2022, https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility.

[7] See "USDA Increases Emergency SNAP Benefits for 25 Million Americans; Ensures COVID-19 Relief Reaches Those Struggling Most," news release, US Department of Agriculture, April 1, 2021, https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/04/01/usda-increases-emergency-snap-benefits-25-million-americans-ensures.

[8] "States Are Using Much-Needed Temporary Flexibility in SNAP to Respond to COVID-19 Challenges," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, last updated October 4, 2021. https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/states-are-using-much-needed-temporary-flexibility-in-snap-to-respond-to.

[9] We obtained SNAP waiver information from the Food and Nutrition Service website on February 15, 2022. See "SNAP COVID-19 Emergency Allotments Guidance," US Department of Agriculture, last updated April 8, 2022. https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/covid-19-emergency-allotments-guidance.

[10] "Renewal of Determination That a Public Health Emergency Exists," Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, July 15, 2022, https://aspr.hhs.gov/legal/PHE/Pages/COVID19-15jul2022.aspx.

[11] Emergency allotments increase a family's monthly SNAP benefit by the greater of $95 or the difference between the calculated benefit and the maximum allotment for their family size. Therefore, a family whose income makes them ineligible for the maximum allotment but whose calculated SNAP benefit is less than $95 below the

maximum allotment for their family size will receive $95 in emergency allotments, raising their total SNAP benefit to higher than the maximum allotment for their family size.

[12] In August 2021, the Food and Nutrition Service projected that SNAP participants would receive an average of $36 more per person in fiscal year 2022 (October 2021 to September 2022) from the TFP reevaluation, not counting the effect of pandemic-related benefits. We estimate an average increase of $37 per person in October to December 2021, when simulated with state emergency allotments in effect, and an average increase of $33 per person in October to December 2021, when simulated without state emergency allotments in effect. See "USDA Modernizes the Thrifty Food Plan, Updates SNAP Benefits," Food and Nutrition Service, US Department of Agriculture, August 16, 2021, https://www.fns.usda.gov/news-item/usda-0179.21.

[13] Kochhar and Cilluffo found that income inequality is greater among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders than among any other racial or ethnic group within the US (Kochhar and Cilluffo 2018).

[14] A study by Iceland (2019) finds that racial and ethnic disparities in poverty rates are influenced by differences in educational attainment, nativity, and family structure. These factors explain a growing share of the difference among groups during the 1959 to 2015 period covered by his study, and in general, racial and ethnic disparities in poverty decreased over this period. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of the difference in poverty rates cannot be explained by these factors, especially for Black people and American Indians. Iceland cites literature suggesting that ongoing racial discrimination, higher incarceration rates for Black men, historical inequalities, intergenerational transmission of economic status, and social and cultural factors all likely contribute to continued disparities. Further, differences in educational attainment and family structure may themselves be influenced by these structural factors. For additional perspective on the role of structural factors in influencing outcomes across racial and ethnic groups, see "Structural Racism in America," Urban Institute, https://www.urban.org/features/structural-racism-america.

[15] The extent to which a state's population is just below the poverty threshold and receives SNAP is influenced by the extent to which people who are eligible for assistance apply for and receive SNAP and the extent to which SNAP (prior to TFP reevaluation) in combination with other resources moves the state's population close to but not over the SPM poverty threshold. Changes in income, benefits, and taxes over time can affect the share of people only slightly below the poverty threshold in a state. Differences in poverty thresholds by geographic area may affect the extent to which a state's SNAP recipients are concentrated near the poverty threshold, and sampling variability can also influence results.

[16] Our estimates do not capture the fact that some people who participated in SNAP in the fourth quarter of 2021 might not have chosen to participate without the higher benefits provided by emergency allotments. Including this effect would likely increase the estimated antipoverty effect of emergency allotments.

[17] We exclude Alaska and Hawaii from the table of state results for the reevaluated TFP because the TFP reevaluation for these two states had not yet occurred. FNS used a temporary adjustment for these states in federal fiscal year 2022.

[18] Thomas J. Vilsac, "USDA Equity Action Plan," US Department of Agriculture, February 2, 2022, https://www.usda.gov/equity/action-plan.

[19] "Summary Findings: Food Price Outlook, 2022," Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture, last updated June 24, 2022, https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook/summary-findings/.

[20] We have not investigated which states end emergency allotments after May 2022. See "SNAP COVID-19 Emergency Allotments Guidance," Food and Nutrition Service, US Department of Agriculture, last updated June 29, 2022, https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/covid-19-emergency-allotments-guidance.

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