

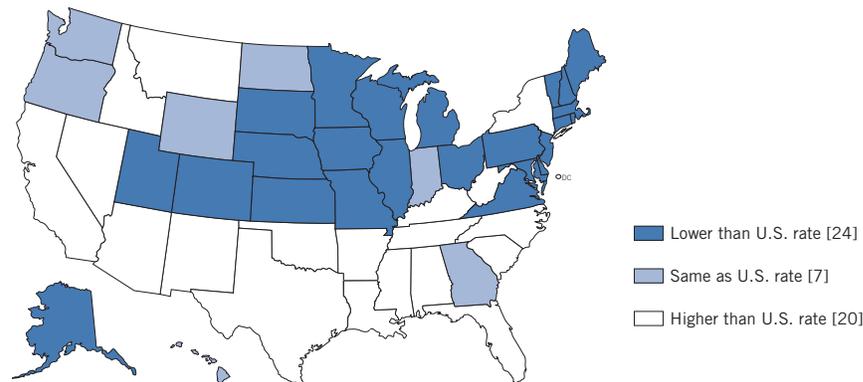


Receipt of Government Supports Varies Widely by State¹

(SEPTEMBER 2004)

Low-income families face very different access to government programs depending on the states in which they live.² State choices in implementation of federal policy can encourage or restrict access to government programs that offer important supports to low-income families. At the same time, although 37 percent of U.S. children live in low-income families, the low-income rate varies tremendously across states. For example, the state with the lowest percent of children in low-income families is Maryland at 20 percent. The state with the highest percent is Arkansas at 53 percent (see Table).³

Map 1: Children in low-income families



The map shows differences between states and the U.S. rate that are statistically significant at the .10 level.

Government Supports Vary Across States

There are several federal and state government programs that provide important supports to low-income families, such as food stamps, public health insurance, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); however, states have wide discretion over how these programs are implemented. This discretion can lead to vastly different levels in the use of these programs by low-income families.

¹ Estimates in this fact sheet were prepared by Heather Koball and Ayana Douglas-Hall of NCCP based on the U.S. Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement for March 2001-2003; final figures represent the average data over calendar years 2000, 2001, and 2002. Rates of receipt of public benefits derived from CPS data are not comparable to those derived from administrative data sources (e.g., the figures reported in NCCP's 50-State Policy Database).

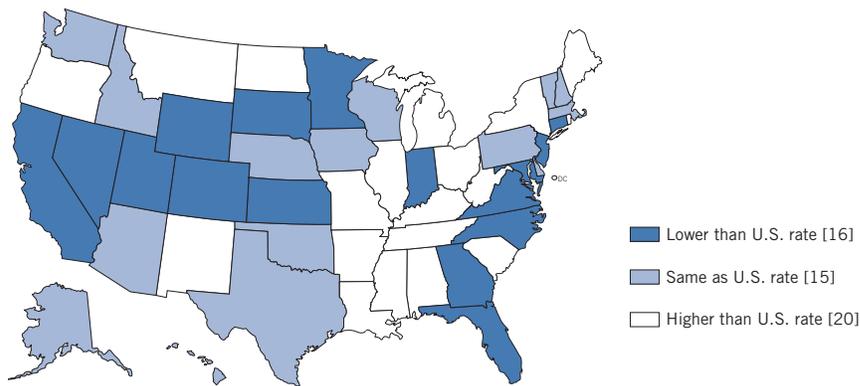
² Low-income is defined as income below twice the poverty level, which research suggests is the minimum necessary to meet basic needs. The federal poverty level was \$18,850 for a family of four in 2004.

³ Koball, H. & Douglas-Hall, A. (2004). *Rate of children in low-income families varies widely by state*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health <www.nccp.org>.

Food Program

The food stamps program is subject to federal eligibility rules; however, states have wide discretion over application and recertification procedures, which impacts enrollment in this program. Nationwide, 28 percent of children in low-income families receive food stamps, but this rate varies from a low of 13 percent in Nevada to a high of 40 percent in West Virginia (the District of Columbia is higher at 49 percent) (see Table). There is no clear pattern of food stamp use across states (see Map 2). Much of the southeast has high rates of food stamp participation with the exception of North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, and Florida. Many western states have low rates of food stamp enrollment, with the exception of Oregon, Montana, and North Dakota.

Map 2: Low-income children receiving food stamps

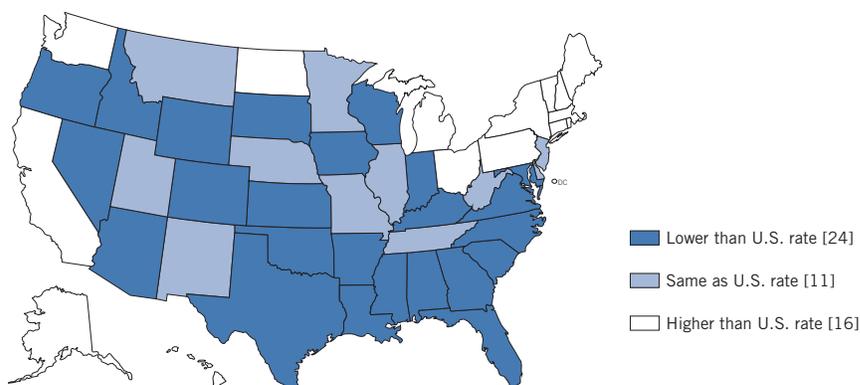


The map shows differences between states and the U.S. rate that are statistically significant at the .10 level.

Cash Assistance

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance is primarily a state-run program, although it is subject to some federal rules. TANF receipt is quite low among children in low-income families, only 12 percent of children nationwide receive TANF. Again, this varies quite dramatically across states, from 3 percent in Idaho to 25 percent in Rhode Island (the District of Columbia is higher at 35 percent) (See Table). Interestingly, the lowest rates of TANF receipt are concentrated in southeastern states, where there is a fairly high rate of food stamp use. On the other hand, many of the western states with low food stamp use also have the lowest rates of TANF receipt. Northeastern states show the highest rates of TANF receipt (see Map 3).

Map 3: Low-income children receiving TANF



The map shows differences between states and the U.S. rate that are statistically significant at the .10 level.

	Percent of children in low-income families (<200% FPL)	Percent of low-income children who receive food stamps	Percent of low-income children who receive TANF	Percent of low-income children who have public insurance
NATIONAL	37%	28%	12%	47%
ALABAMA	43%	37%	7%	47%
ALASKA	30%	27%	21%	53%
ARIZONA	44%	26%	9%	43%
ARKANSAS	53%	39%	9%	50%
CALIFORNIA	42%	24%	18%	48%
COLORADO	29%	18%	7%	27%
CONNECTICUT	24%	19%	16%	44%
DELAWARE	30%	31%	11%	49%
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	49%	49%	35%	70%
FLORIDA	41%	22%	6%	44%
GEORGIA	39%	24%	8%	41%
HAWAII	35%	29%	21%	38%
IDAHO	41%	26%	3%	45%
ILLINOIS	35%	30%	11%	44%
INDIANA	36%	23%	7%	32%
IOWA	30%	25%	8%	40%
KANSAS	34%	21%	8%	37%
KENTUCKY	40%	34%	8%	47%
LOUISIANA	49%	38%	6%	52%
MAINE	35%	32%	21%	56%
MARYLAND	20%	19%	5%	30%
MASSACHUSETTS	31%	30%	20%	60%
MICHIGAN	31%	31%	17%	51%
MINNESOTA	24%	20%	12%	41%
MISSISSIPPI	49%	34%	9%	63%
MISSOURI	30%	35%	13%	53%
MONTANA	45%	31%	11%	42%
NEBRASKA	33%	27%	13%	50%
NEVADA	39%	13%	5%	27%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	23%	24%	14%	45%
NEW JERSEY	25%	21%	10%	45%
NEW MEXICO	51%	32%	12%	59%
NEW YORK	39%	32%	17%	58%
NORTH CAROLINA	40%	24%	6%	46%
NORTH DAKOTA	39%	38%	18%	41%
OHIO	33%	32%	15%	47%
OKLAHOMA	48%	29%	6%	44%
OREGON	37%	36%	7%	44%
PENNSYLVANIA	32%	27%	14%	45%
RHODE ISLAND	28%	33%	25%	61%
SOUTH CAROLINA	39%	36%	7%	53%
SOUTH DAKOTA	32%	24%	6%	39%
TENNESSEE	41%	35%	13%	60%
TEXAS	46%	26%	7%	39%
UTAH	34%	23%	11%	41%
VERMONT	35%	30%	19%	64%
VIRGINIA	26%	21%	6%	30%
WASHINGTON	35%	27%	17%	56%
WEST VIRGINIA	49%	40%	12%	60%
WISCONSIN	30%	28%	6%	48%
WYOMING	37%	19%	4%	43%