

Partnering with State Agencies to Acquire and Use Administrative Records

Session A-2: When the Rubber Hits the Road: Practicalities of Integrating Alternative Data Sources

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FCSM Research and Policy Conference
October 22, 2024

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Administrative Records

- Administrative Records are existing records created by federal, state, and commercial agencies as they administer their programs.
- Integrating survey data with administrative records data can allow us to produce timely and relevant statistics despite falling survey responses rates.
- The process of acquiring and linking administrative data can be complex and time intensive.

Examples of Administrative Records

Federal	State/Local	Commercial/Third Party
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Internal Revenue Service (IRS)- Social Security Administration (SSA)- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)- United States Postal Service (USPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mortgage/address data- Property and tax foreclosure

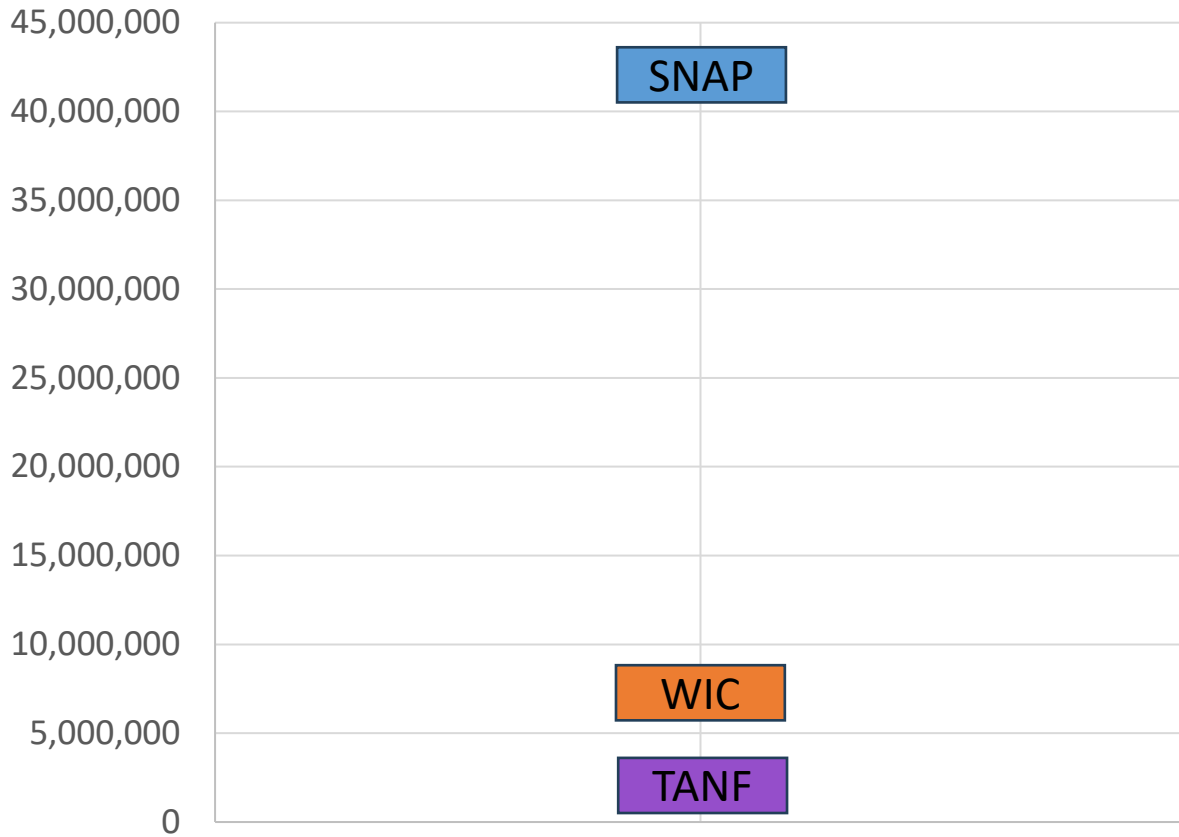
SNAP, WIC, and TANF

- Federal programs distributed by state departments, examples: Department of Human Services, Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Department for Children and Families

- SNAP** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- WIC** Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
- TANF** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families



Average Monthly Participants in FY 2023

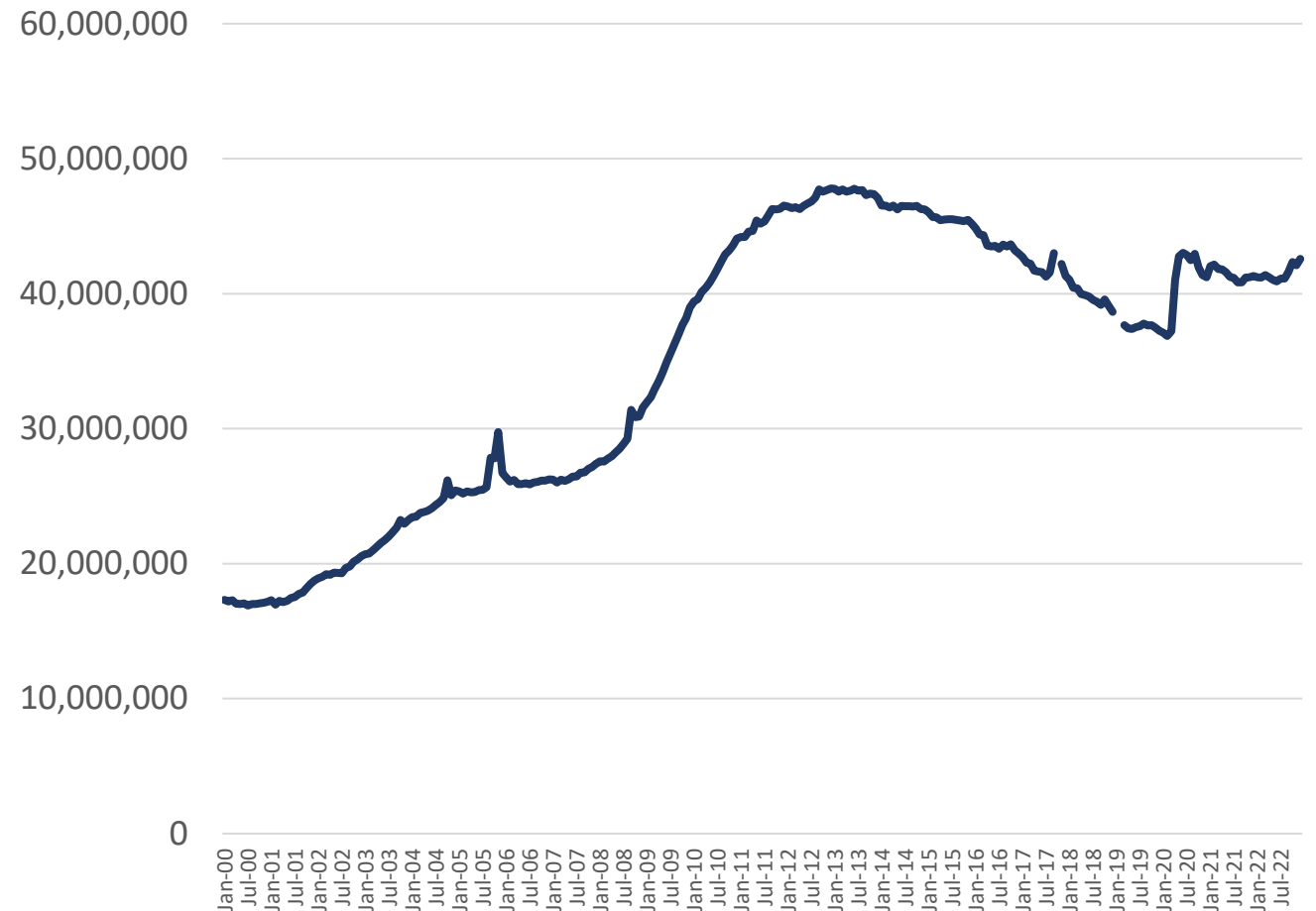


Source: [SNAP National Data Bank estimates available from USDA](#); [WIC Data Tables | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](#); [State TANF Data and Reports | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Quick overview: SNAP

- SNAP is the largest program aimed at reducing domestic hunger by providing low-income households with benefits that can be used to purchase food at authorized retailers
- In Fiscal Year 2023, SNAP reached an average of 42 million participants each month

Monthly SNAP Participation, 2000-2022

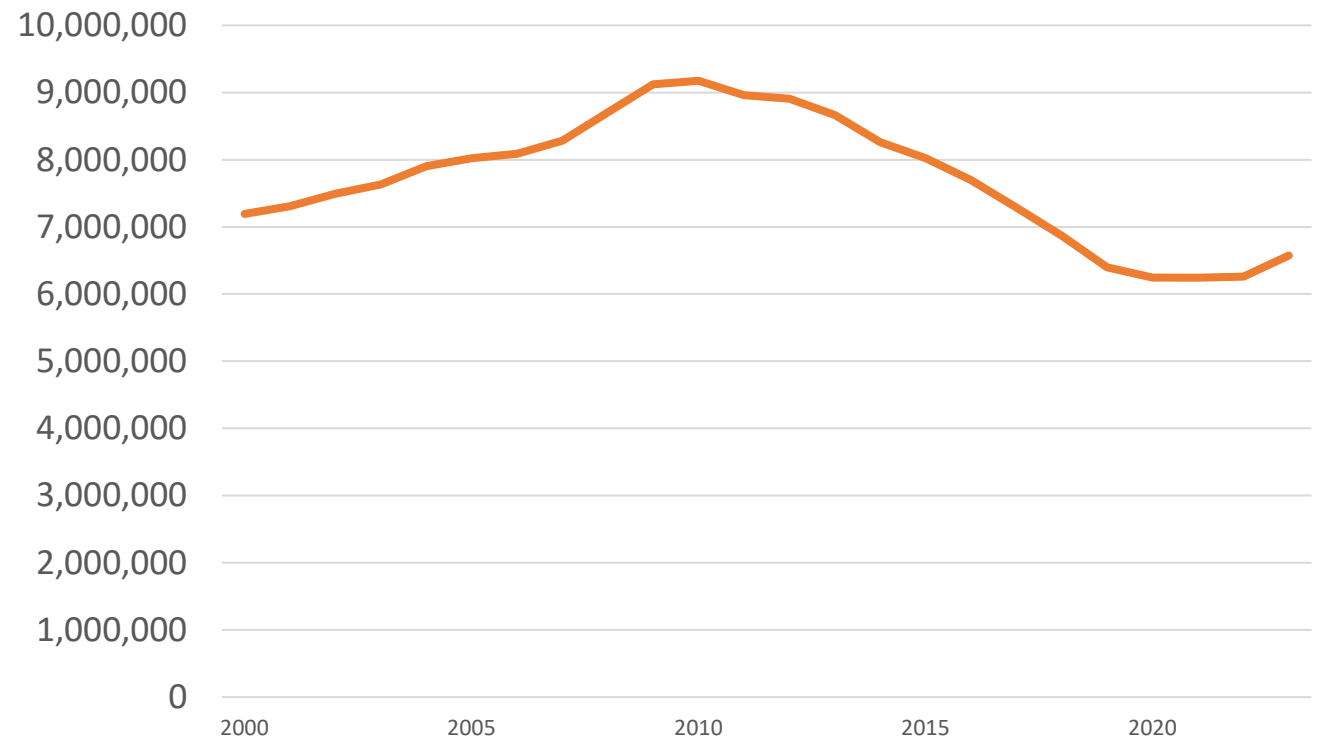


Source: [SNAP National Data Bank estimates available from USDA](#)

Quick overview: WIC

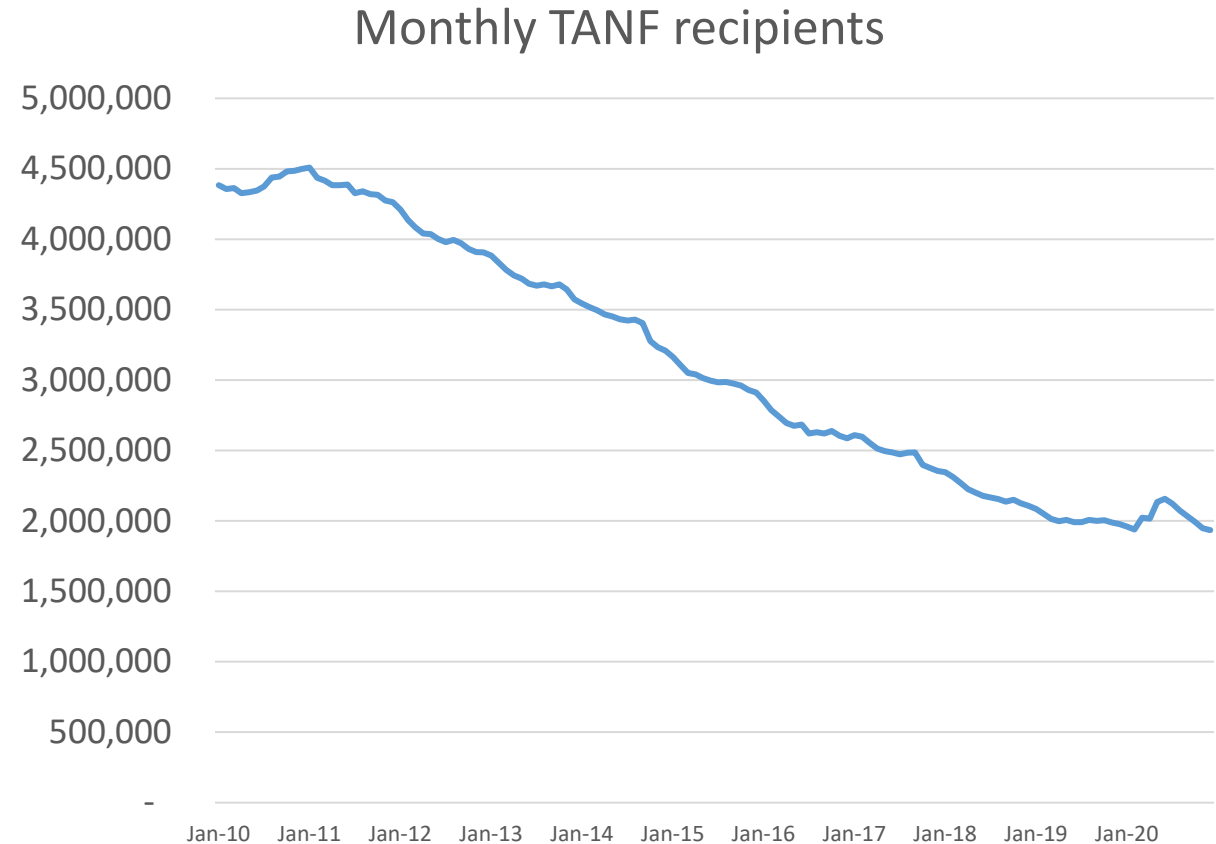
- WIC provides food, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care and social services to nutritionally at-risk, low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to age 5
- In Fiscal Year 2023, WIC reached an average of 6.6 million people each month:
 - 1.5 million women
 - 1.5 million infants
 - 3.6 million children

Average Annual WIC Participation, 2000-2023



Quick overview: TANF

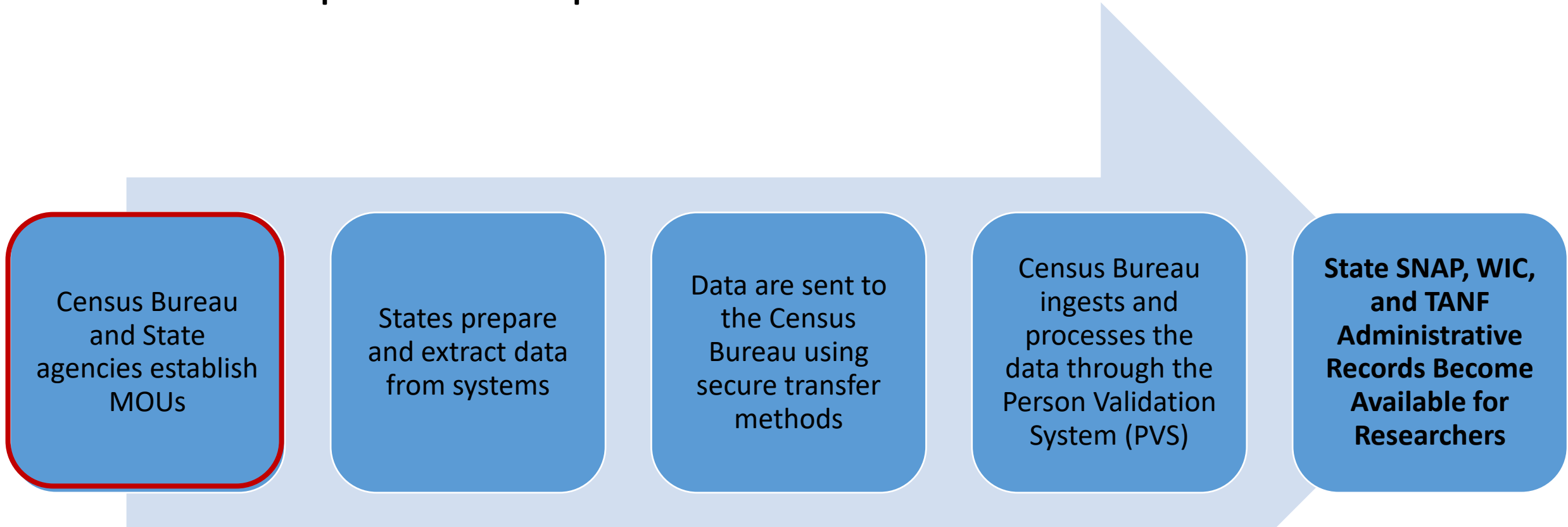
- TANF provides block grants to states that use funds to provide income support to low-income families with children. States have flexibility to also use funds to provide a wide range of services.
- In Fiscal Year 2023, TANF benefits reached an average of 1.9 million people each month.



Engaging with state agencies

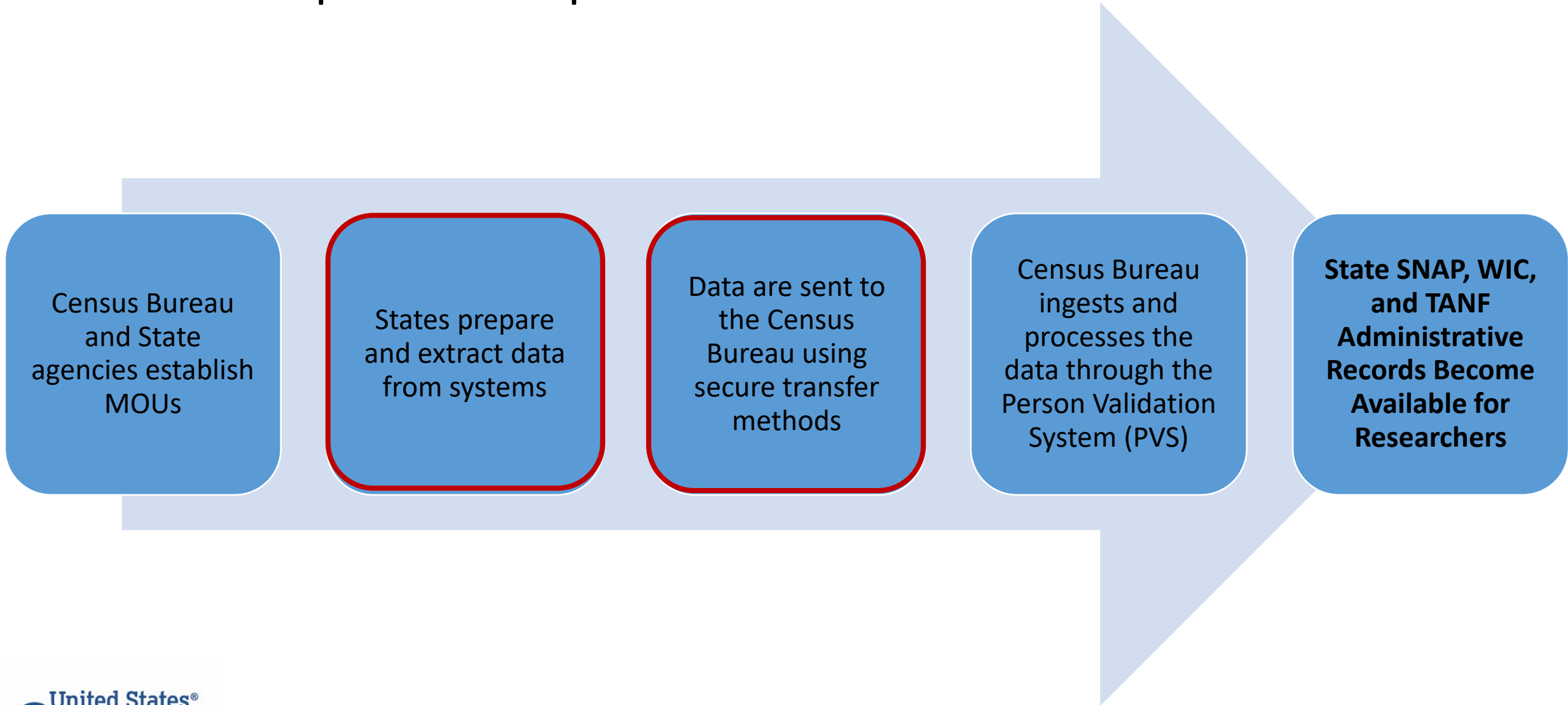
- The Census Bureau has entered into agreements with state agencies to receive administrative data on SNAP, WIC, and TANF participants. This effort is supported by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Economic Research Service (ERS).
- Initial outreach to state agencies involves:
 - Direct outreach by the Census Bureau to state agencies and/or governors offices
 - USDA FNS communication and grants
 - Participation in conferences with state program directors and FNS organized webinars
- Stakeholder engagement is a critical part of the process
 - Continued communication throughout process
 - Development of data products for states
 - Send research proposals and products to states
 - Engage efforts to renew agreements

Data acquisition process

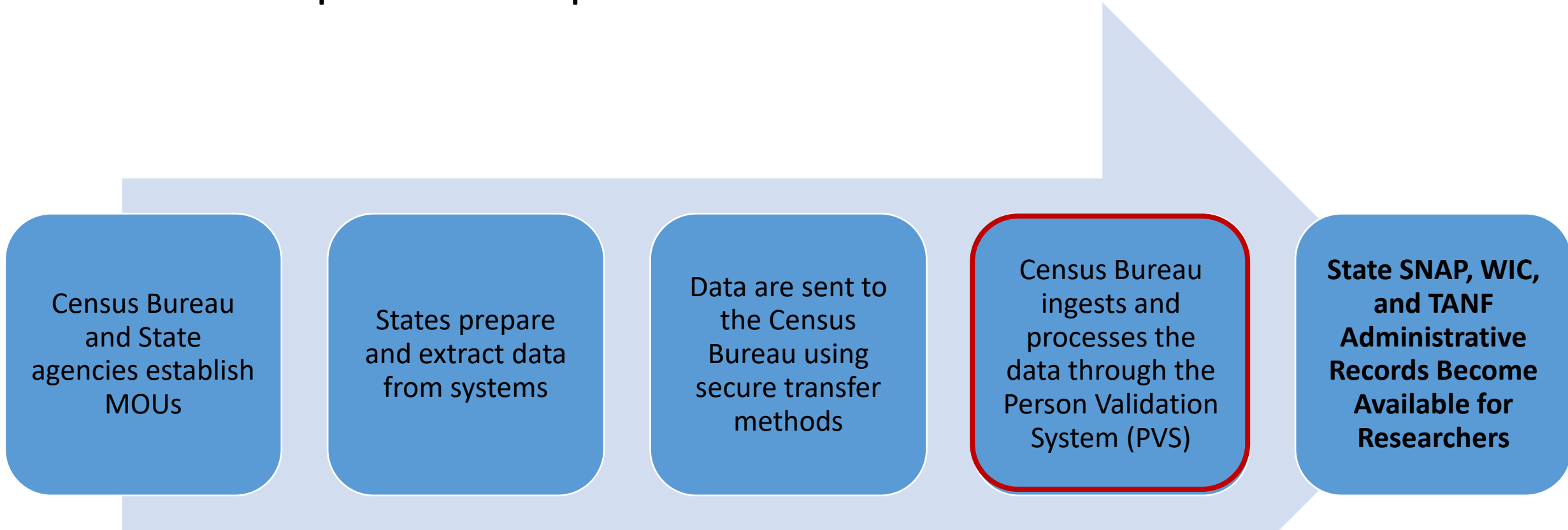


- Use of this data is governed by interagency agreements between the Census Bureau and data providing agencies

Data acquisition process

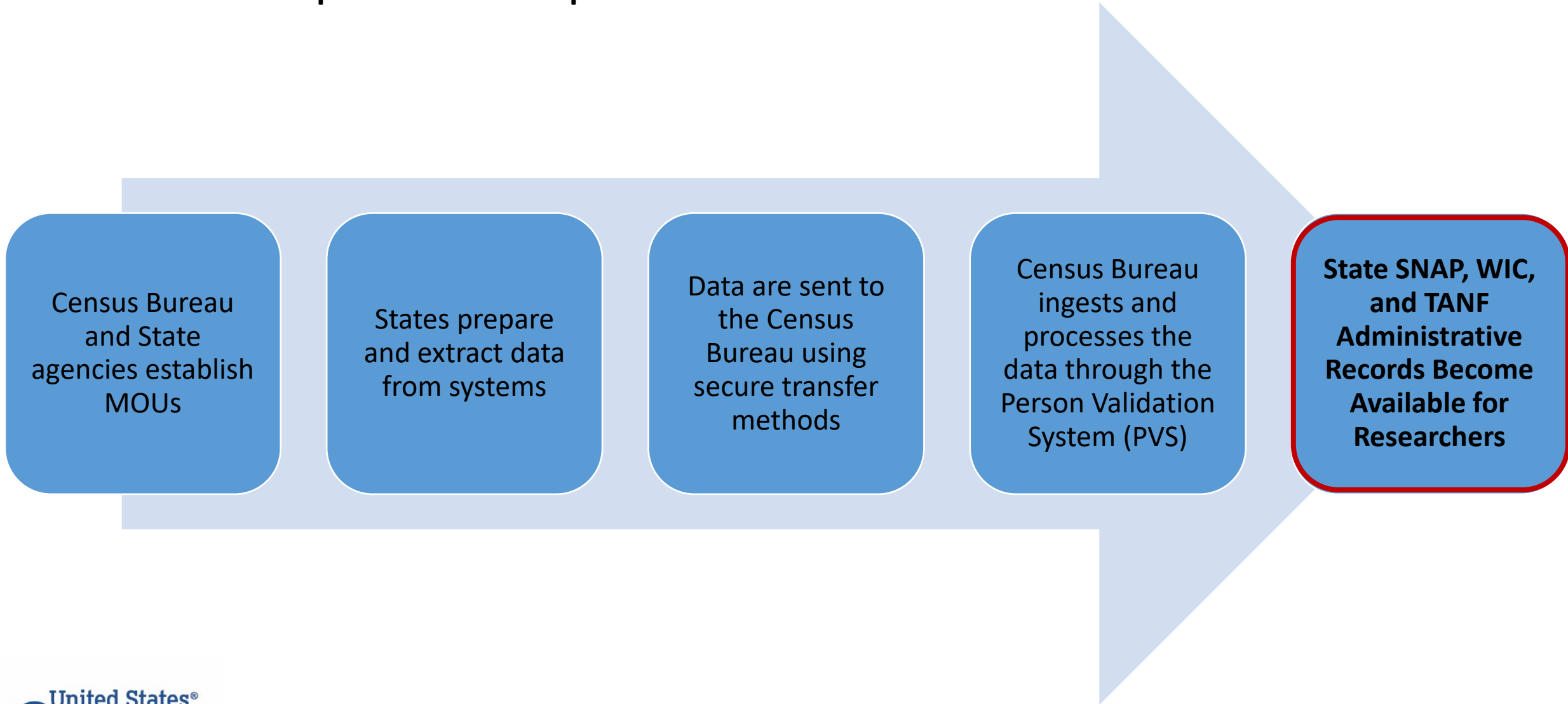


Data acquisition process



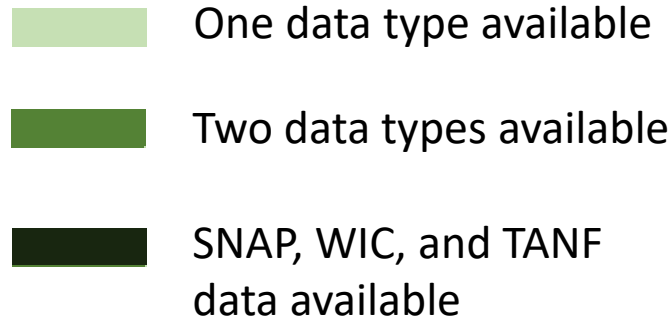
- During the PVS process, unique person and address identifiers are assigned to the data and sensitive personally identifiable information are removed before data is made available to researchers

Data acquisition process



Availability of SNAP, WIC, and TANF data

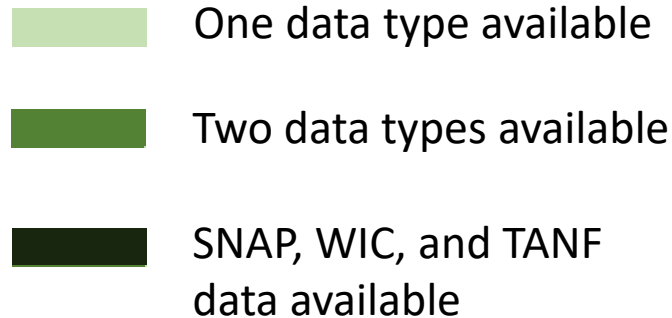
- For 37 states and one county, we have data for at least one of the three programs for at least one year



State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
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California - LA County only														
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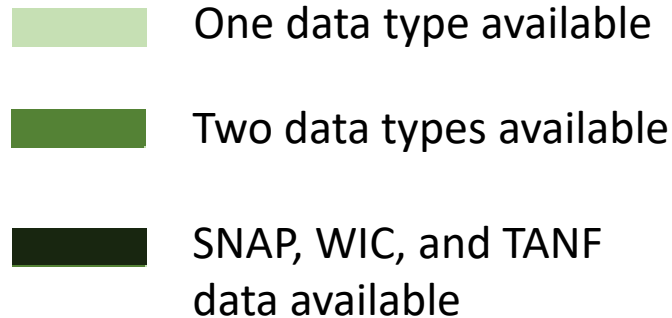
-  One data type available
-  Two data types available
-  SNAP, WIC, and TANF data available



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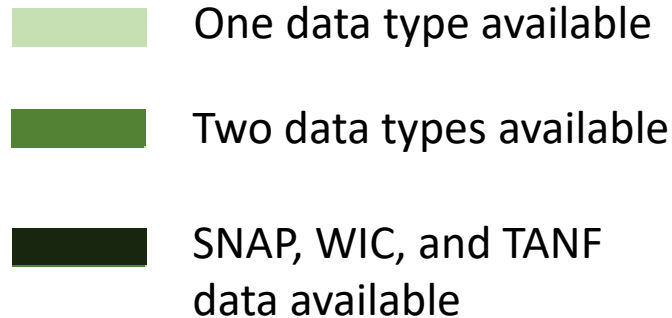
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How are these data being used?

- These data have been used to study survey responses of program receipt and poverty measurement as well as research efforts on producing population statistics using administrative records sources
 - Harris 2014, Colby et al. 2017, Fox et al. 2017, Rothbaum et al. 2021, Meyer et al. 2019, Brown and Murray-Close 2023.
- Additional ongoing research at Census Bureau and by research partners at USDA and external researchers with Special Sworn Status.
- Highlighting two projects
 - **Estimating program eligibility and access at granular levels**
 - **SNAP Longitudinal Database**

Estimating SNAP Eligibility and Access

- Methodology based on work by Newman and Scherpf (2013)

American Community
Survey
(ACS)

- ~ 3.5 million households sampled annually
- **Define SNAP units and estimate individual SNAP eligibility**



- Data are linked at the individual level using Census-Bureau assigned identifiers

State SNAP
Administrative
Records

- Monthly records on participating clients and cases

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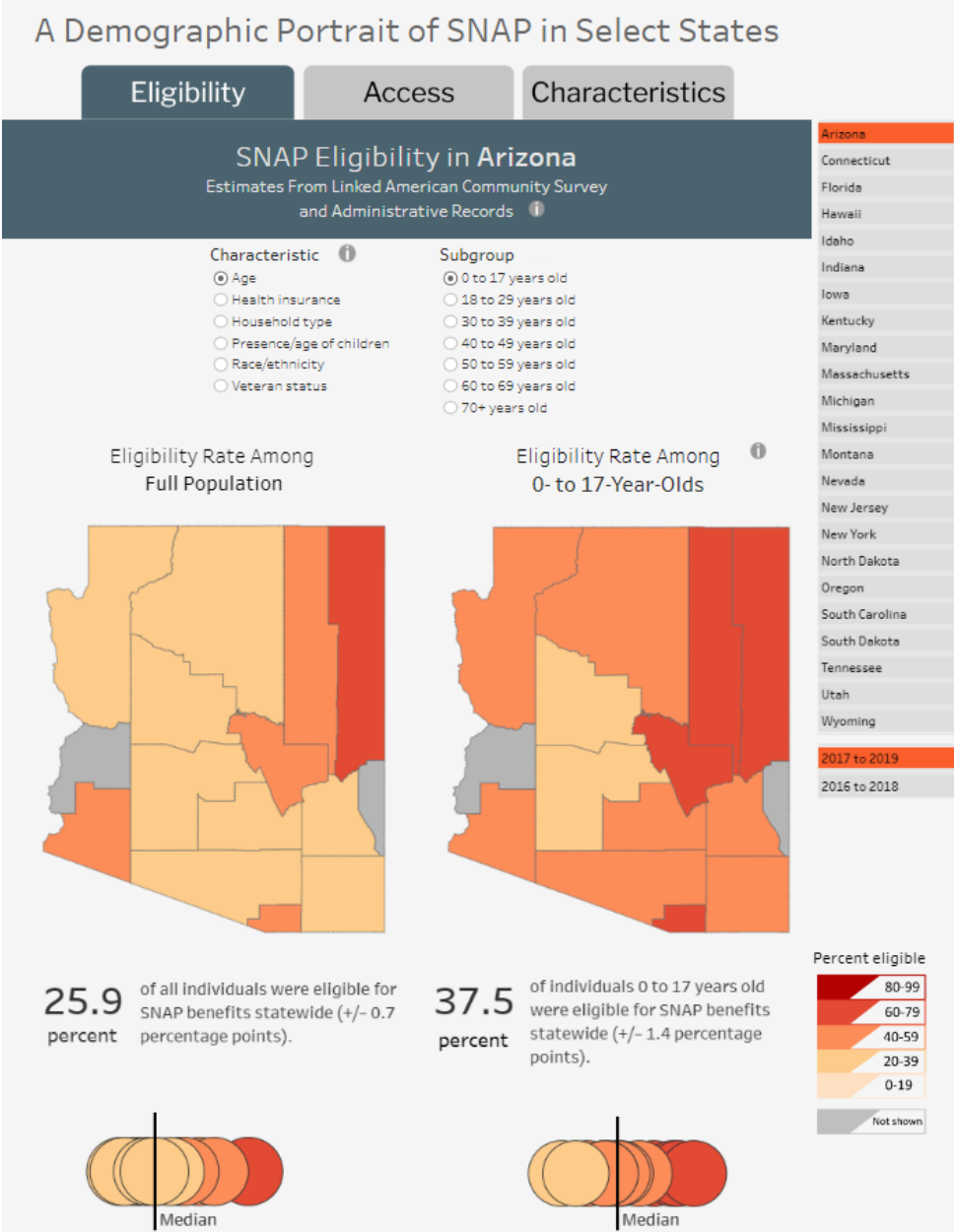
Estimates of SNAP
Eligibility and Access

Annual SNAP Table Packages & Data Visualization

Table 1a. <State> SNAP Modeled Eligibility and Access by Demographic Characteristics, <Year>

	Modeled Eligibility Rate		Access Rate (of Modeled Eligible)	
	Est	ME	Est	ME
Total	30.3	±1.2	79.5	±0.7
Race and Ethnicity				
Hispanic	63.1	±2.8	78.3	±4.3
Non-Hispanic White alone	28.6	±0.8	71.7	±1.0
Non-Hispanic Black alone	60.4	±2.1	82.5	±1.3
Non-Hispanic AIAN alone	38.3	±12.7	89.3	±9.0
Non-Hispanic Asian alone	24.8	±4.6	53.1	±10.1
Non-Hispanic NHPI alone	55.4	±33.0	46.2	±42.5
Non-Hispanic Some Other Race alone	44.3	±14.1	72.7	±28.5
Non-Hispanic Two or More Races	41.3	±5.4	83.0	±4.5

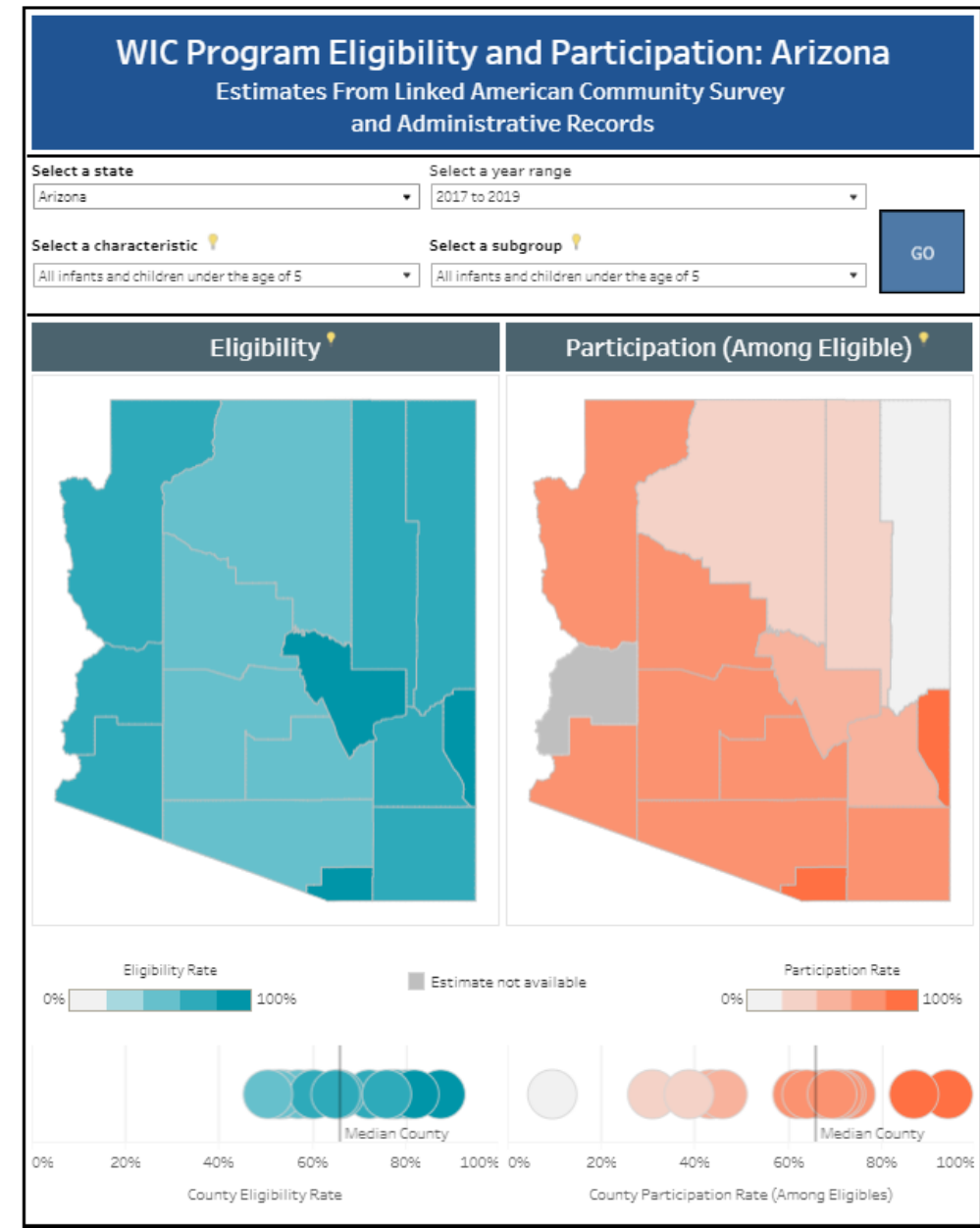
Note: Estimates shown above are mock data for a hypothetical state/year.



Source: <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/snap-eligibility-access.html>

Annual WIC table package & data visualization

- WIC eligibility and participation among infants/children (McBride et al. 2023)
- WIC participation among women (not shown in visualization)

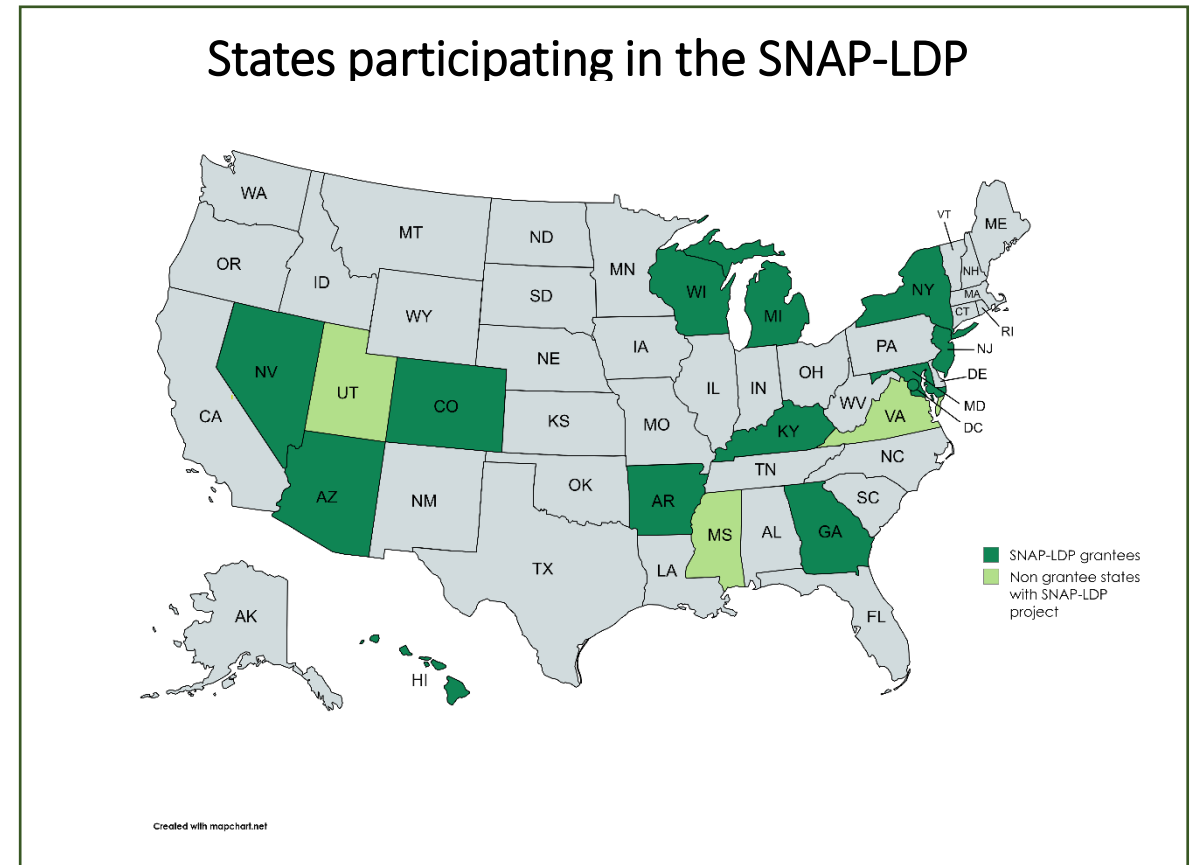


Annual TANF table package

- Because TANF rules vary so much by state, we do not estimate program eligibility. Instead, we estimate TANF participation among children and adults living with children who are below the poverty line.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Longitudinal Data Project (SNAP-LDP)

- The 2018 Farm Bill required FNS to develop a SNAP longitudinal research database and prior to approval, consult with Federal research agencies including the Census Bureau
- Goal is for the database to be used “solely to conduct research on participation in and the operation of the supplemental nutrition assistance program, including duration of participation in the program”



Conclusion

- SNAP, WIC, and TANF data highlights the complexities of interagency data acquisition as well as the opportunities to create blended data products.
- The Census Bureau is continuing to reach out to states to develop data sharing agreements and acquire data on SNAP, WIC, and TANF participants. For states that share data, we continue to develop annual estimates of program participation, communicate results to states, and explore future innovations to our products.
- SNAP-LDP work will facilitate further research by creating a more standardized, documented database.

Thank you!

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