

1. Descriptive Information

<p>Workshop A-1 (Meeting Room) <i>Variation in CCDF Family Friendly Administrative Practices: What Varies and Why and How it Matters for Families and Children.</i></p> <p>Description</p> <p>This workshop will discuss what varies in how CCDF program policies are implemented “on the ground” (both between and within States) and what is known about how different practices influence target outcomes, including subsidy receipt stability, child care continuity, and parental work outcomes.</p>	<p>Facilitator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Julia Henly, University of Chicago <p>Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gina Adams, Urban Institute• Liz Davis, University of Minnesota• Erin Hardy, Brandeis University <p>Discussant</p> <p>Scribe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claire Lowe, Child Trends
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2. Documents in **Session Folder** (Please list any electronic documents or web links used during the session.)

Documents in CCPRC jump drive

- Adams local implementation presentation CCPRC 2015 no notes (2)
- Brandeis_Local Variation_regions masked_final revised (3)
- CCPRC 2015 DAVIS Variation in local admin practices (Maryland) (2)
- localvariation

3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Gina Adams. Summary of Presentation #1: Background and Overview of Subsidy Implementation Decisions that Affect Families and Children**

CCDF Reauthorization basic information:

- There is a 12 month eligibility re-determination
- Allows states the option to terminate assistance prior to re-determination for non-temporary loss of eligibility, though must provide three months of job search
- Key elements in eligibility criteria and how they are operationalized
 - The eligibility criteria are often overlooked
 - There are only four areas required by the federal law (age of child, income of family, reason for needing care, citizenship of child) all other criteria are at the state discretion.
 - The issue is thinking about how to define and operationalize these criteria because they can be defined in a number of ways either broadly or more specifically.
 - It is also important to think about how the qualifying activities are defined
- Eligibility criteria are important because state eligibility authorization policies affect how easy or difficult it is to get assistance

How to simplify the process for determining and monitoring eligibility – each of these processes are affected by the complexity of the eligibility criteria described above:

- Simplify *documentation and verification* policies and practices
 - E.G.: Seek documentation and verification only for elements that affect eligibility; Only verify information that has changed; Use eligibility determinations from other programs as sufficient verification
- Simplify process for the *application and enrollment*
 - E.G.: Make the application shorter (how easy/difficult is it to complete); Make the application available in many forms (online, in person)

- Simplify *redetermination*
 - E.G.: What do parents have to do? How long are the redetermination periods? Are the periods, dates, and processes aligned across different benefit programs?
- Simplify *interim change reporting*
 - E.G.: Avoid having interim reporting effectively function as another redetermination; Minimize changes that must be reported; Simplify reporting process for households

Conclusion statements

- Reauthorization requirements for family friendly policies is an important first step
- When thinking about this, it is essential to know state level policy decisions beyond redetermination periods, as nitty gritty questions about eligibility criteria, verification requirements, and what is required of parents as part of application, redetermination, and interim change reporting is also critical.

Liz Davis. Summary of Presentation #2: Using administrative data to understand local variation in policy implementation

- This presentation was part of the MN-MD research partnership and looks at how long people are using subsidies for and how long the eligibility periods are for families in Maryland.
- Basic information on the CCDBG Act of 2014
 - Includes a provision that states set a minimum eligibility period for CCDF subsidies for 12 months
 - About half of states had 12 month eligibility period prior to reauthorization
 - Maryland was of these states with a 12 month eligibility policy prior to 2014
- What is currently known about subsidy stability and eligibility redetermination:
 - Families typically receive subsidies for short period of time (median spell about 6 months)
 - Many return for another spell
 - Families are more likely to exit the subsidy program when it is time for redetermination
- Subsidy spell length in Maryland (by county)
 - There is a lot of variation across counties
 - Spell length ranged from 19 to 37 weeks across several counties and these were not explained by differences in the caseloads
 - The researchers then looked at what's going on in the counties that might explain this variation
- Administrative process in Maryland
 - Eligible families receive a voucher to take to the provider of their choice
 - The voucher is issued for a specific period of time with a specific provider
 - The voucher has an end date
 - The policy is to review a family's eligibility at least every 12 months
 - The 12 month period is a maximum length of time rather than a standard length of time
- Data and Methods
 - The current study includes five years of subsidy administrative data in Maryland from 2007 to 2012
 - Unit of analysis: Voucher
 - Data includes characteristics of the child and family at time voucher begins
 - Dates on voucher do not change so they analyzed start and end dates of voucher and eligibility start and end dates
- Findings
 - Eligibility periods are getting longer over time but most are shorter than 12 months.
 - 1/3 of vouchers have eligibility periods of about 12 months, but majority were shorter than a year
 - Vouchers are shorter than eligibility periods
 - Vouchers range from 1 to a full 52 weeks

- Half of vouchers are shorter than eligibility period they are associated with
- Half of vouchers were for 13 weeks
- Variables related to differences in the length of *vouchers*
 - Families on Temporary Cash Assistance had shorter vouchers
 - Families receiving subsidy for training or education had shorter vouchers than families receiving subsidy for employment
- Variables related to differences in the length of *eligibility*
 - Few statistically significant relationships.
 - Eligibility periods mostly not related to family characteristics
 - Eligibility periods vary across counties
 - Differences in county practices in setting redetermination dates and voucher authorization end dates
- Summary
 - Many families were given eligibility periods shorter than 12 months
 - Vouchers were shorter than eligibility periods for half of all vouchers and seemed to be getting shorter over time
 - Results suggest that local offices have different practices when it comes to eligibility redetermination dates and voucher authorization end dates
- Questions for implementation of new 12-month eligibility policy under CCDBG reauthorization
 - How will the policy be implemented “on the ground”?
 - Will caseworkers or local managers have discretion about who is required to recertify in the than 12 months?
 - What other polices trigger need for parents to take action in order to keep receiving subsidy?

Erin Hardy. Summary of Presentation #3: Studying local variation: why it matters for CCDF policy, practice, and research Lessons form a mixed methods study in Massachusetts

- This study looks at an administrative change that took place in MA in 2012
 - The change focused on making eligibility reassessment more “family friendly” which means that families no longer have to visit the CCR&R office. The change only applied to a subset of income-eligible voucher children.
- They are finding local variation in
 - Admin. practices
 - Other administrative factors, like family travel distances (burden)
 - The relationship between administrative factors and subsidy stability
- Today’s presentation will:
 - Provide examples of local variation in CCDF administrative factors from the MA study
 - Summarize what the study is saying about the relationship between local variation in admin factors and subsidy stability
- Background
 - Research question: does changing reassessment from CCR&Rs to providers impact stability
 - Sample: 2834 income-eligible voucher children with new subsidy receipt spell in 2012
 - Treatment children reassess with provider
 - Comparison children reassess with CCR&R
 - The geography of assessment is very different across treatment and comparison groups
- Methods
 - Used spell analysis

- Used discrete-time event history analysis
- Incorporated measures of administrative factors that may vary locally
- Integrated impact/implementation findings to explain observed local variation
- Family friendliness of reassessment practice, by CCRR region (table on slide 11)
 - Developed a discrete list of practices CCR&R are engaging in
 - Looked at whether or not CCR&R across regions are engaging in these activities
- Distance to reassessment by CCR&R region (figures on slide 12)
 - There is a wide range in median distance that families will travel
 - These distances are not explained by size of the region
- Subsidy spell analysis (figure on slide 14)
 - Range between 14 to 20 months across age groups and regions
- Selected impact model results (figure on slide 15)
 - Included distance and regional control variables
 - The odds ratios greater than one represent likelihood to exit, which indicates less stability
 - Lagged reassessment variable
 - Regional control variables: three regions with odds ratio greater than one
- CCR&R family friendliness and regional stability patterns (figure on slide 16)
 - Region one has children that do the best on the index
- Odds of exit in lagged reassessment month, by CCR&R region (figure on slide 17)
 - All statistically significant in the region specific model
- Summary
 - Admin factors are the strongest predictors of subsidy exits across all regions
 - However, some regions may be better than others
 - Results suggest that even in a state with key CCDF provisions in place, local admin factors may play a role in “moving the needle” on stability
- Implications
 - It’s important to include several regions/counties
 - Local variation in practices and lack of consistent local performance metrics are challenges in local implementation research
 - Local implementation studies are key to understanding local variation in impacts

4. Brief Summary of Discussion

- Ideas and concepts discussed:
 - Simplification of rules is good for everyone (families, providers, and caseworkers)
 - When we think of these as statewide policies, it’s not that we don’t care about variation, we just don’t initially think, “let’s look at variation”- it’s a statewide policy!
 - It says in policy what families get for eligibility but just because the policy says something, this does not mean that this is what the families are experiencing. Due to this, we need mixed methods studies. Need administrative data and other data to get at what families are experiencing.
 - States do not necessarily have the resources to train their caseworkers or develop effective communication systems.
 - States are going to have to do more with less

- There are different kinds of variation: caseworker variation, agency variation, etc.
- Leadership matters a lot to variation and determination periods. It's important to find out what the staff need
- Stable redetermination
- Families need to understand the policies and eligibility.
- Things to think about
 - How do we think about minimizing local variation when it's detrimental and how do we maximize it when it's positive?
 - Think about intentional versus unintentional variation in states. Due to this, we should also think about administrative business practices and supports.
 - Implementation science: how do you implement a change? State administrators need research on this because they and their front line staff need to implement change- This idea need to be part of the conversation.
 - Gathering and using information-what are we doing to give TAs information and help them use it? Evidence based practice for CQI.

5. Summary of Key issues raised (facilitators are encouraged to spend the last 3-5 minutes of workshops summarizing the key issues raised during the session; bullets below are prompts for capturing the kinds of issues we're looking for)

- There are many different kinds of variation and this variation is not always intentional
- Simplification of eligibility may help decrease variation and make eligibility easier for all parties.
- In terms of methodology, it will be important to use mixed method studies in future variation research. Policies say what families get for eligibility but that does not necessarily align with families' experiences. Mixed method studies will help get at what the families are experiencing and what practices offices are implementing in addition to what the admin data says.