CCDF Policies Database: Providing Basic Information for Subsidy Research

CCPRC, October 29, 2009

Data and Measurement Challenges in Conducting
Subsidy Research

Some Researchers Who May Need Data on CCDF Policies

- Quantitative researcher doing a cross-state, cross-time analysis with secondary data

- Qualitative researcher who needs the history of policies in one place

- Modeler who is estimating how many families are eligible for subsidies

Existing Data on CCDF Policies

- Annual data from the "Report of State Plans" on key elements of plans
- Periodic information from NWLC on various aspects of policies
- But no data source that is:
  - Cross-state, AND
  - Cross-time, AND
  - Has detailed policies

The CCDF Policies Database

- Funded by HHS/ACF

- A five year project through September 2013

- Policies from Oct. 2005 forward

- Policies for 50 states, DC, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

- First data available in mid-2010

Today's Talk

- Overview of the CCDF Policies Database
- What information will be in the CCDF Policies Database
- How we'll obtain and check the information
- Examples of research uses

Key Design Features
of the Database

- Code policies that have been implemented

- Capture changes across time

- Capture key county-level variation

- Capture different treatment of different kinds of families (special-needs, TANF, etc.)

"Boundary" of the Database

Policies for the key programs that are funded partly or fully with CCDF money, and that subsidize the cost of care for individual children/families.

Policies/Programs that are Outside the Scope of the Database

- Head Start and state-funded pre-k
- Programs funded entirely with non-CCDF funds
- Programs funded with CCDF but serving small sub-populations
- Details on CCDF-funded quality activities

Guidelines for the Database Content

- Useful for most policymakers, researchers, and/or administrators

- Available from the State Plans, attachments, and/or written policy manuals/documents

- Able to be coded with acceptable consistency across states/areas

- Does not duplicate information available elsewhere at same level of detail

Categories of Policies: Policies Related to Families

- Eligibility
- Application and verification
- Redetermination and changes in family circumstances
- Terms of authorization
- Priorities and waiting lists
- Copayments & other payment policies

Categories, cont.:
Policies Related to Providers

- Reimbursement rates
- Requirements for receiving subsidies
- Documentation and on-site visits
- Overpayments and fraud
- Requirements for unregulated providers
  - Basic eligibility, background checks
  - Training requirements
  - Health and safety requirements

Categories, cont.:
Policies coded from the State Plans

- Key non-text data on:
  - Administration
  - Program development
  - Quality
  - Early learning guidelines
  - Professional development
  - Consultation / coordination

Not in the Database

- Legislative proposals
- Policies that have been agreed-upon but not implemented
- Tribal policies

- Policies that would require different documents

Example of Level of Detail: Eligibility sub-topics

- Children's age limits
- Parent/guardian activities that confer eligibility
- Definition of work – minimum hours
- Groups with automatic eligibility
- Definition of family (step-parents, older siblings)
- Income definition (disregards, deductions)
- Eligibility thresholds—initial, continuing, and variations across areas of a state
- Assets tests

Process

- Collect materials (ongoing)

- Project staff review and code materials

- Internal review

- Create draft tables

- Verification with state staff

- Finalize data and tables

How We'll Disseminate the Information

- A printed "Databook"

- On-line access to tables

- Access to full Database detail

A Few Ways the Database Could be Used in Research

- "Right hand side" variables for statistical analysis of survey data (SIPP, etc.)
  - Example: What policies are related to cross-state, cross-time changes in female labor force partic.?
- Analysis of CCDF characteristics data (801)
  - Example: What policies are related to cross-state differences in percent of caseload that receives subsidies due to education/training?
- Participation-rate analysis (survey & admin.):
  - How many families pass their state's criteria for eligibility for CCDF?

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