

Effects of SNAP Disbursement Schedules

Jillian Carr, PhD, Purdue University

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Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.
School of Business

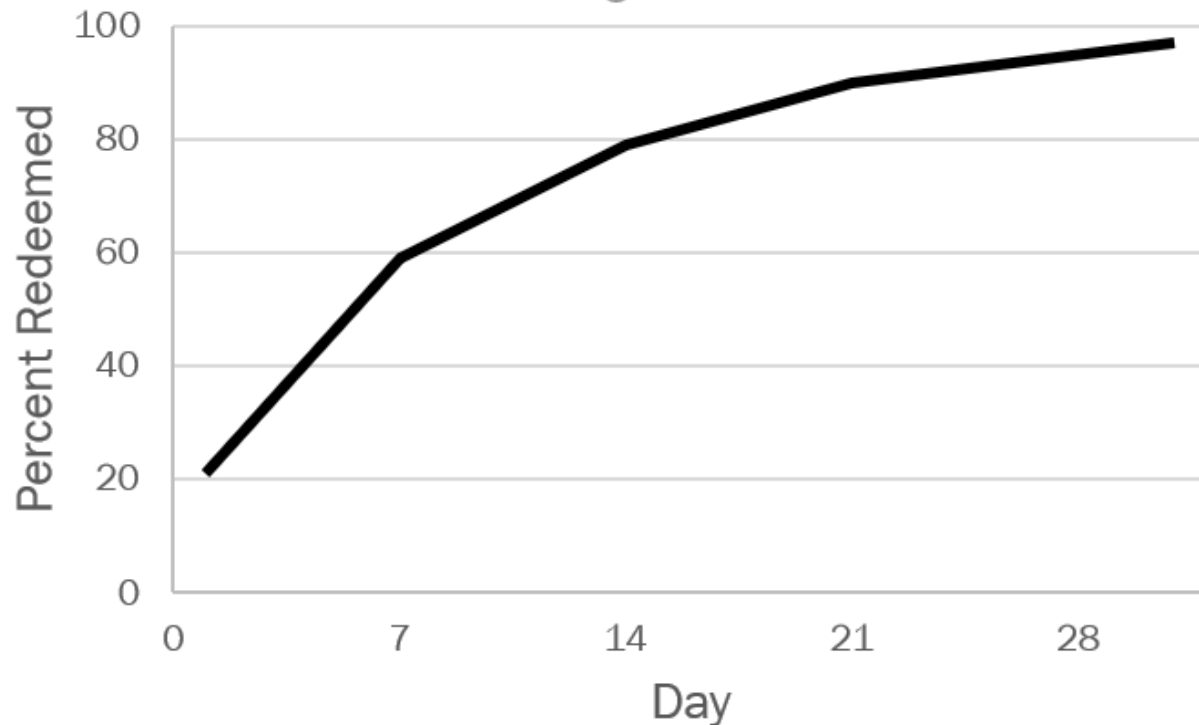
Indiana SNAP Disbursement Schedule

Each family receives payment once per month on the day corresponding to the head's first letter of last name.

Letters	Day
A/B	5
C/D	7
E/F/G	9
H/I	11
J/K/L	13
M/N	15
O/P/Q/R	17
S	19
T/U/V	21
W/X/Y/Z	23

SNAP recipients redeem benefits quickly

USDA data says ...



“More than a quarter of households (28 percent) redeemed nearly all or all of their monthly benefits in the first week after issuance, and more than half (53 percent) had done so by the second week.”

Castner, Laura, and Juliette Henke. "Benefit redemption patterns in the supplemental nutrition assistance program." *Mathematica Policy Research Reports* (2011)

SNAP recipients face resource scarcity

Families buy less food

“From week one to week four, benefit households reduce their quantities [of food] purchased by 32 percent”

Hastings, Justine, and Ebonya Washington. "The first of the month effect: consumer behavior and store responses." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 2.2 (2010): 142-162.

Families consume less food

“Caloric intake declines by 10 to 15 percent over the food stamp month”

Shapiro, Jesse M. "Is there a daily discount rate? Evidence from the food stamp nutrition cycle." *Journal of Public Economics* 89.2-3 (2005): 303-325.

Families skip meals

“We found that SNAP participants were increasingly more likely than nonparticipants to report a day with no eating occurrences over the benefit issuance cycle.”

Hamrick, Karen S., and Margaret Andrews. "SNAP participants' eating patterns over the benefit month: a time use perspective." *PLoS one* 11.7 (2016).

Impacts on crime and health:

Scarcity vs. Plenty

Scarcity

- Women (in Indiana) are convicted of theft *MORE* for crimes occurring at the end of their SNAP benefit cycle.¹
- Older recipients (55+, in South Carolina) are more likely to visit the ER at the end of the benefit cycle.²

1. Carr, Jillian B., and Analisa Packham. "SNAP benefits and crime: Evidence from changing disbursement schedules." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 101.2 (2019): 310-325.

2. Cotti, Chad D., John M. Gordanier, and Orgul D. Ozturk. "Hunger pains? SNAP timing and emergency room visits." *Journal of Health Economics* 71 (2020): 102313.

Impacts on crime and health:

Scarcity vs. Plenty

Plenty

- 5% increase in alcohol purchases when SNAP is distributed on a weekend.¹
- Decrease in drunk driving fatalities on distribution days.²
- Increase in domestic violence with addition of distribution days.³

1. Castellari, Elena, et al. "Another Saturday Night: Food Stamp Timing and Monthly Consumption Patterns." *Working paper available at SSRN* 2729479 (2016).

2. Cotti, Chad, John Gordanier, and Orgul Ozturk. "Eat (and drink) better tonight: Food stamp benefit timing and drunk driving fatalities." *American Journal of Health Economics* 2.4 (2016): 511-534.

3. Carr, Jillian B., and Analisa Packham. "SNAP schedules and domestic violence." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 40.2 (2021): 412-452.

Impacts on education:

Cotti, Chad, John Gordanier, and Orgul Ozturk. "When does it count? The timing of food stamp receipt and educational performance." *Economics of Education Review* 66 (2018): 40-50.

- Students score lowest on math standardized test just before benefit receipt.
- Results driven by African American students (South Carolina).

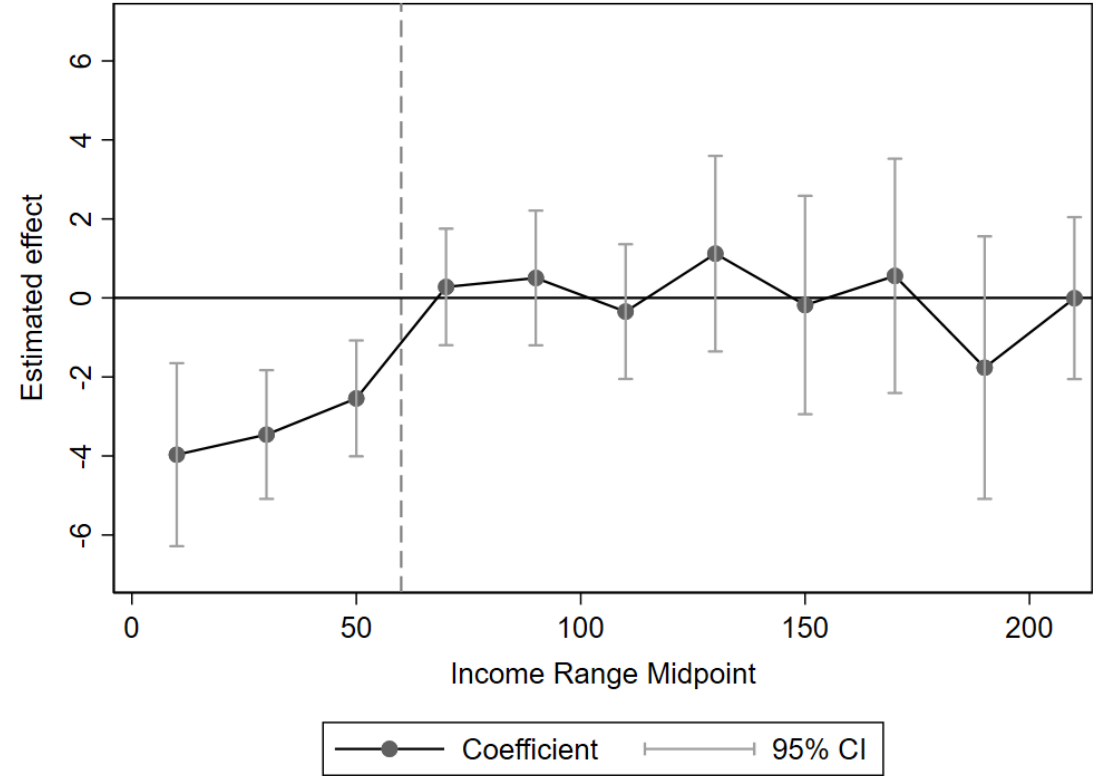
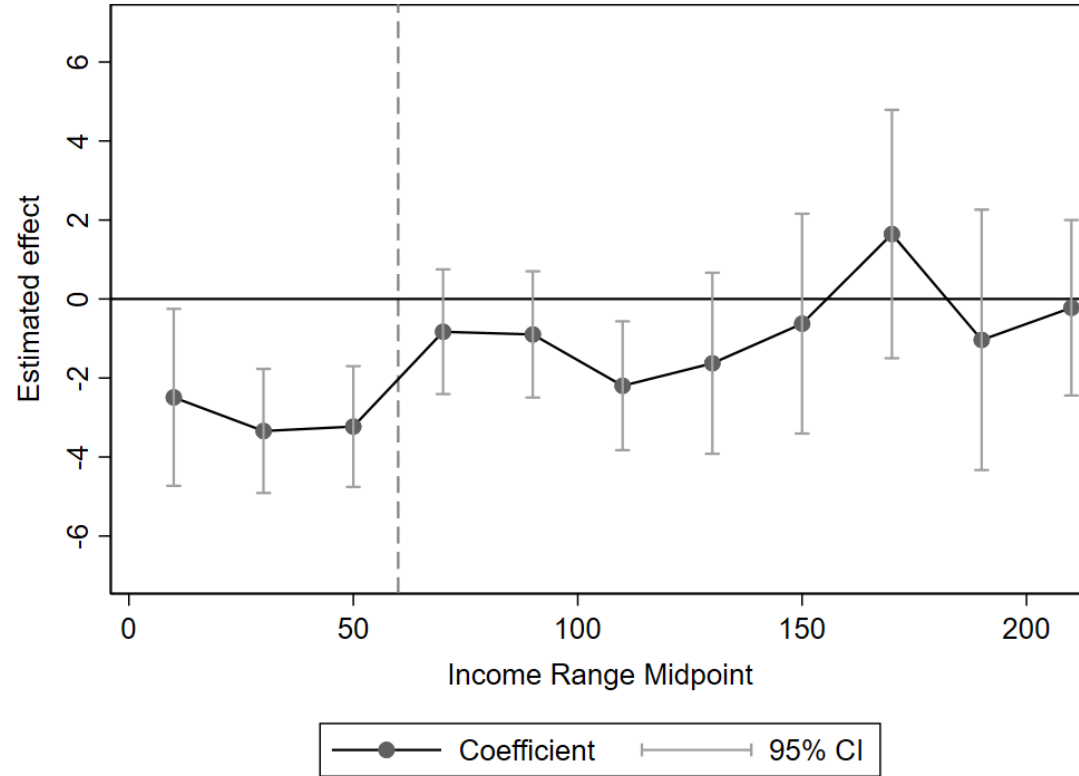
Gennetian, Lisa A., et al. "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit cycles and student disciplinary infractions." *Social Service Review* 90.3 (2016): 403-433.

- All students have more disciplinary infractions at end of month (Chicago Public School).
- The end of month increase is larger for SNAP students.
- More pronounced for males.

Bond, Timothy N., et al. "Hungry for success? SNAP timing, high-stakes exam performance, and college attendance." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 14.4 (2022): 51-79.

- Students score 6 points lower on the SAT if they take it more than 2 weeks post-disbursement.
- Students less likely to attend a 4-year college.
- Potentially costly in wages.

Effects on SAT scores



Takeaways and kudos ...

Indiana has done a number of best practices:

- Staggered SNAP distribution.
- SAT offered in school.

Fluctuations are problematic for recipients. Can we further smooth resources?

- Multiple distribution dates?
- Additional school food resources?

Thank You

Jillian Carr, PhD

carr56@purdue.edu



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