

Private and Public Food Assistance Use Dynamics in Upstate New York

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Data and Basic Descriptives

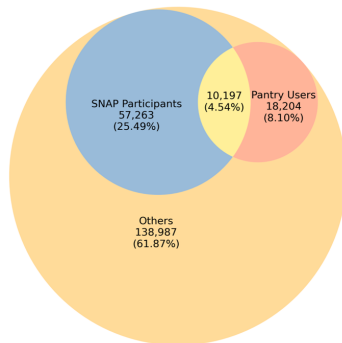
2018-21 admin data from 6-county Southern Tier region
All SNAP and 128 FBST-affiliated food pantries transactions

Key findings:

- At least 38% of population (of ~ 225K hhs) received FA at least once 2018-21

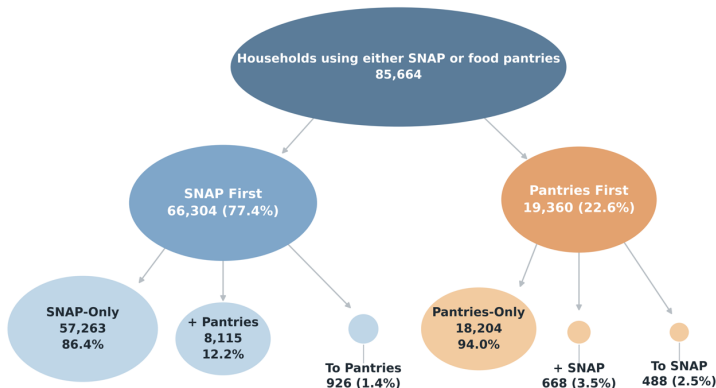
Of those receiving FA:

- ~80% use SNAP; <12% use both
- More female, rural, and single adult than overall pop
- Pantry-only are older, less likely single mom w/child than are SNAP users
- ~ 1/3 have a child



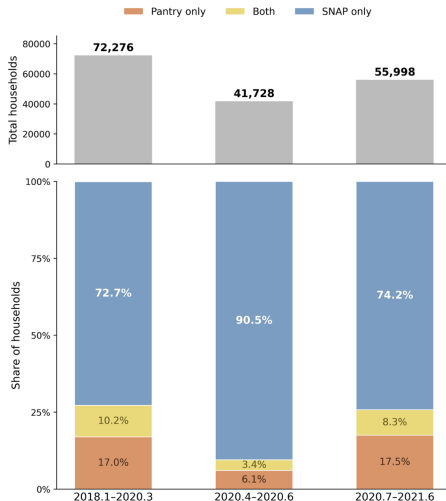
Little joint use of CFA and SNAP

- 77% 1st observed receiving SNAP
- 86% of SNAP participants never use a pantry
- 94% of pantry-1st never use SNAP.
- 8x more people SNAP → pantry than pantry → SNAP



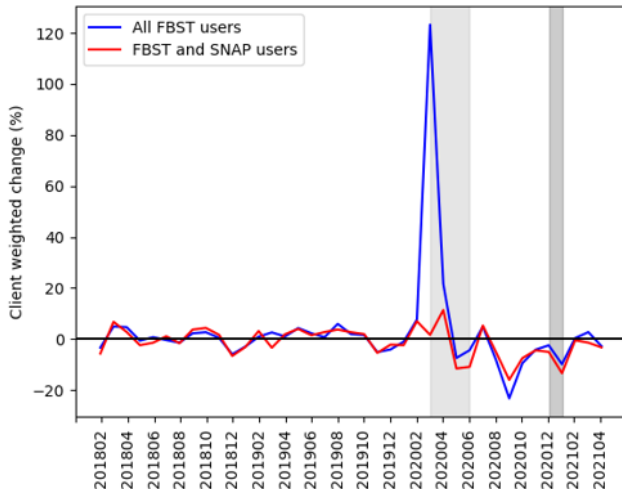
During COVID ...

Food assistance use temporarily shifted toward SNAP



During COVID ...

SNAP was a major shock absorber during COVID. Jump in pantry use overwhelmingly among those *NOT* on SNAP.



As SNAP benefits and food prices change ...

As SNAP benefits rose w/emergency allotments and COLA, pantry use by joint users fell. Hhs w/children make biggest adjustments.

As food prices rise, food pantry and SNAP use both increase very slightly. Food assistance use far more strongly associated with unemployment than with food prices. (From companion paper.)

Implications

- **Joint use is (surprisingly?) limited.** Could more be done to encourage dual use among the SNAP eligible?
- **CFA/SNAP buffer each other.** SNAP serves (2.4x) more people, more frequently for a longer period. But benefits exhausted quickly (most w/n 10 days). Pantries crucial for handling SNAP-ineligibles and absorbing shocks.
- **Can't manage what's unmeasured.** Might there be value to near-real time admin data integration, not just in ST but statewide, to improve monitoring and response?

Thanks to USDA/CUAES for Hatch grant support for this project and to FBST and OTDA for providing data and invaluable guidance. Thank you for your interest and your time.

Lots more detail in working papers (in journal review) available at <https://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/research/workingpapers.html>

Please reach out with questions/comments to:

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