

News from the CFS RDRC

Re-Doubling Our Focus

The Center for Financial Security Retirement and Disability Research Center (CFS RDRC) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison recognizes the difficulties that we have all faced over the last several months and we wish to acknowledge the communities that bear even greater burdens and challenges resulting from the COVID19 crisis. As a center that has focused much of our research on developing evidence that can assist in understanding issues specifically related to economically vulnerable populations, the CFS RDRC takes seriously our responsibility to persist in our research, to broaden the scope of our outreach, and to grow our efforts in response to the current crisis. The CFS RDRC is dedicated to incorporating a diversity of viewpoints and disciplines into our research, the training and preparation of emerging scholars, and generating research findings that are useful and applicable to policy and practice.



Second Year of the Junior Scholar Intensive Training (JSIT)

The CFS RDRC, in collaboration with Howard University's Center on Race and Wealth (CRW), held the second Junior Scholar Intensive Training (JSIT) Summer Workshop June 15th - 19th, 2020. Twelve scholars, representing a variety of disciplines, completed the week-

long, virtual training at UW-Madison with support from the Social Security Administration. Yvonne Hampton, Economist and doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri - Columbia, attended the workshop and said, "This workshop was life changing for me. I've been stuck and in one week this workshop reignited my excitement for research, and was exactly what I needed."

Over 20 faculty from UW and beyond participated as instructors and mentors in the JSIT workshop, including [Marah Curtis](#), [Manasi Deshpande](#), [Bradley Hardy](#), [Fenaba Addo](#), [Haydar Kurban](#), [Jason Fichtner](#), [Jen Dykema](#), [Marcy Carlson](#), [Victoria Perez](#), [Sarah Halpern-Meekin](#), [Damon Jones](#), and [Andria Smythe](#). Core faculty were [Mary Hamman](#), [J. Michael Collins](#) and [Justin Sydnor](#). Topics covered in the workshop agenda included identifying social insurance research questions, identifying data sources, grant writing, working with data sets, communicating and translating research, and building a mentor relationship. Scholars came away from the training with well-developed ideas for research proposals that they will

continue to work on throughout the summer with their mentors culminating in an opportunity to submit research proposals for a JSIT Research Award competition at the end of the summer. Last year's JSIT research awards and abstracts are [here](#).

The goal of JSIT is to provide a mentored training that builds and diversifies the research pipeline within RDRC topic areas. JSIT scholars will hopefully be well-positioned to submit a full proposal in the next round of funding for the CFS RDRC next year.



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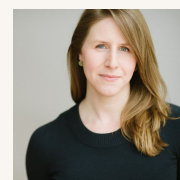
Spotlight on Research:

Lost and Found: Claiming Behavior in Abandoned Retirement Accounts

Many tax-advantaged retirement accounts require individuals to start taking distributions by a certain age (typically 70.5), yet some individuals fail to do so. When this occurs, the unclaimed accounts are often handed over to the state as unclaimed property. Given policy interest in assessing the savings adequacy of older households in the United States, increasing the claim rate of these accounts is a policy priority so that individuals can fully access their own resources. Little is known about the claiming behavior related to these accounts, however. This project will use new data from several years' worth of state unclaimed and claimed property databases to produce a set of stylized facts and formal regression estimates documenting the patterns and predictors of claiming related to these retirement accounts. We aim to quantify how frequently a retirement savings "mistake" of abandoning an account is mitigated by re-claiming the account; we will also investigate the factors that lead to this behavior. The goal is to inform policymakers as to the extent of this phenomenon (how many retirement accounts become unclaimed and remain unclaimed?) and to describe interventions that can help increase the claiming of abandoned accounts.

This project builds on the authors' prior year research, [Frictions in Saving and Claiming: An Analysis of Unclaimed Retirement Accounts](#). A [brief](#) and [working paper](#) are available.

Introducing the Recipient of the 2020 IRP Extramural Small Grant on Poverty, Retirement, and Disability Research



Jennifer
Doleac
Texas A&M
University

As a collaborative program of the CFS RDRC funded by the SSA RDRC, the [Institute for Research on Poverty \(IRP\)](#) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison offers a small grant to support the study of economically vulnerable populations related to poverty, retirement, and disability policy. This small grants program is designed to expand the reach of poverty

research into issues related to retirement and disability policies and programs. The recipient of the the 2020 award is Jennifer Doleac, Associate Professor of Economics at Texas A&M University, and Director of the Justice Tech Lab. An abstract of her project, titled "*What Does Retirement Look Like for the Criminal-Justice-Involved Population? Sources of Income in Old Age for People with Criminal Records*" is available [here](#). This project will link a new database of administrative data on criminal records (CJARS) with Census data on employment during the life course and income and program participation in old age, to provide the first descriptive study of the economic well-being of people with criminal records who have reached retirement age.

New Publications, Events & Opportunities

Publications

Security Matters

[Security Matters](#) publications provide topical summaries of research findings and their applicability in practitioner and service-delivery settings.

- [Housing Assistance Preferences for People with Disabilities and SSI Participation](#)
- [Debt Stress and Mortgage Borrowing in Old Age](#)

Visualizing Vulnerability

[Visualizing Vulnerability](#) is an interactive, dynamic data visualization resource that provides insights into vulnerable populations across the U.S.

- [Mapping a Vulnerable Population: Nursing Home Residency](#)

Archived Webinars

- [WI19-06: Debt Stress and Mortgage Borrowing in Older Age: Implications for Economic Security in Retirement](#)
- [WI19-08: Nursing Home Care and the Impact of an ACA Program: An Overview of Study Findings and Implications](#)

Upcoming Events

- The **2020 Retirement and Disability Research Consortium Annual Meeting** will be a virtual event held on August 6, 2020. Visit the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College [webpage](#) to view the agenda and to register.

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website

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