

EFFECTS OF SNAP-ASSOCIATED WORK REQUIREMENTS ON DISABILITY CLAIMING

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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a food assistance program administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) programs. This paper explores a potential interaction between SNAP and SSI/SSDI.

Depending on the economic conditions in a state, in order to receive SNAP benefits, an able-bodied adult must work for more than three months within three years. However, SSI and SSDI provide qualifying individuals SNAP along with other benefits, but do not require employment. This paper tests whether SNAP-related work requirements increase SSI and SSDI claiming, using administrative claims and household survey data.

SNAP Work Requirements Are Associated with Limited Increases in Disability Claiming

Between 2010 and 2017, 42 states added work requirements as a food assistance eligibility criterion for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). As these work requirements apply only to ABAWDs, who are aged 18-49 and not administratively determined to have a disability, qualifying for SSI or SSDI would enable an individual to receive food assistance without meeting the work requirements. This study is the first to examine whether work requirements associated with SNAP lead to an increase in disability claiming.

This study's analysis (including difference-in-differences and event study analyses of administrative claims data from SSA) found no overall change in disability applications or receipt for SSI and SSDI is evident between 2010 and 2017. However, this study finds evidence of a four percent increase in SSI applications in the first half of the sample period (2010-2013); and delayed increases in SSI applications and receipt documented among states that had work requirements reinstated earlier in the sample period. Further, analyses using the Current Population Survey (CPS) data to explore the demographics driving these effects show an increase in SSI receipt among individuals with self-reported disabilities and incomes below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Line. These results are strongest among women, Whites, and those with less than a high school education or disabilities other than blindness. These results indicate that overall effects from work requirements are not large, but that the affected population is particularly vulnerable.

Work Requirements Affect SSI but Not SSDI

SSA administrative claims data show work requirements weakly affect SSI applications and receipt, but have no effect on SSDI. The effects on SSI may not appear until three years after work requirement implementation, but a delayed effect only could be tested for states that implemented work requirements early enough in the sample period from 2010 to 2017.

Work Requirements Increase SSI Receipt among Low Income Individuals with Self-Reported Disabilities

CPS data indicate that individuals with self-reported disabilities earning less than 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Line increased their likelihood of SSI receipt following the implementation of work requirements. These results are strongest among Women, Whites, and those with less than a high school education or a disability other than blindness.

Implications

- *The overall effects of work requirements on disability claiming are not large, but they affect a particularly vulnerable population.*
- *A vulnerable population exists on the margin between remaining in the work force as an able-bodied adult and claiming disability.*
- *Improved targeting of work requirements or exemptions from work requirements could help protect low-income individuals with self-reported disabilities from entering disability rolls.*
- *Improved targeting of work requirements or exemptions from work requirements could reduce expenditures because SNAP benefits are less costly than disability benefits.*

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