

A Stronger Safety Net for America's Children

Congressional Briefing

June 27, 2013

US Capitol Visitor Center
Washington, District of Columbia

John Quintero
South by North Strategies, Ltd.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Key Safety Nets & Work Supports

Basic Needs	Child Care	Health Insurance	Nutrition Assistance	Wage Supplement
<p>Low income home energy assistance program (LIHEAP)</p> <p>Temporary assistance to needy families (TANF)</p>	<p>Child care and development fund (CCDF)</p> <p>Child and dependent tax credit (CDTC)</p> <p>Child tax credit (CTC)</p>	<p>Medicaid</p> <p>Children's health insurance program (CHIP)</p>	<p>National school lunch program (NSLP)</p> <p>Supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP)</p> <p>Special supplemental nutrition assistance program for women, infants, & children (WIC)</p>	<p>Earned income tax credit (EITC)</p>

Selected Design Features

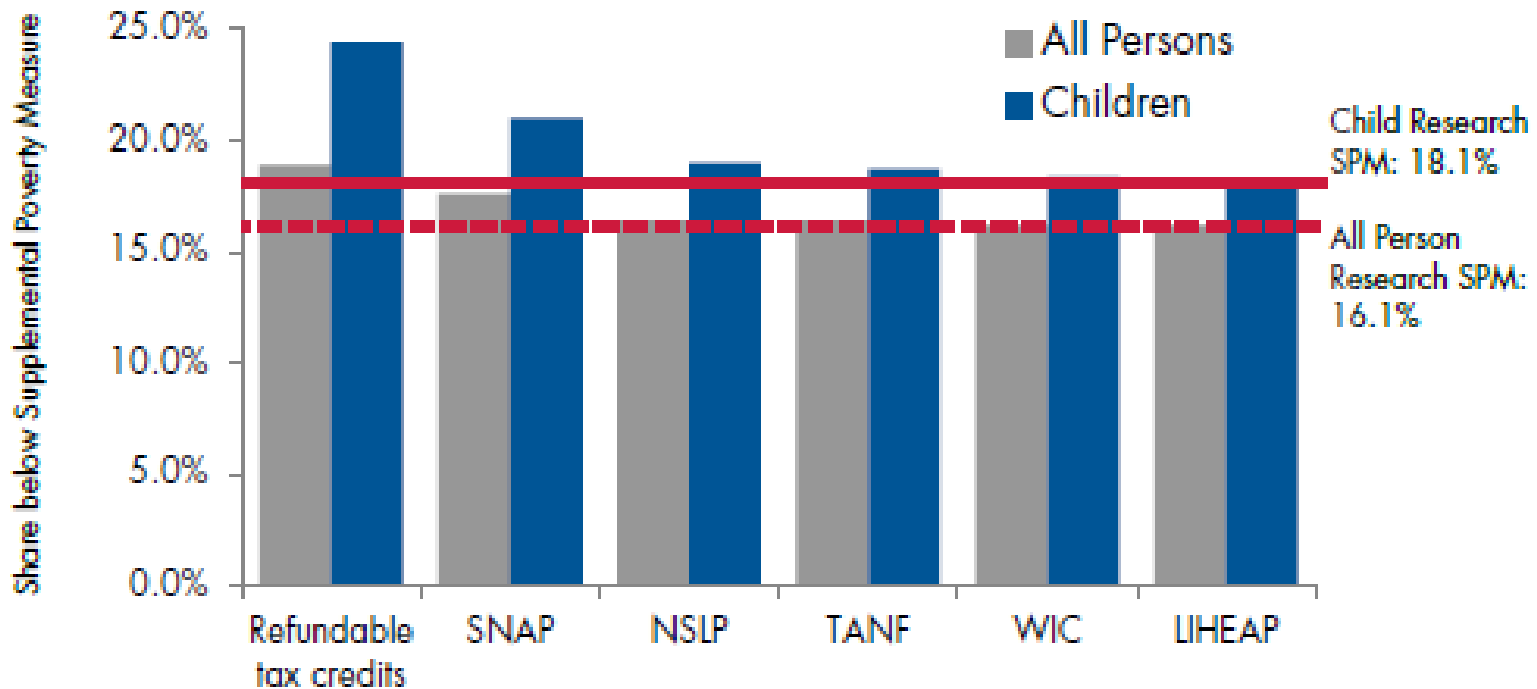
- Most are federal-state partnerships.
 - Shared responsibility has advantages and disadvantages.
- Funding structures are diverse.
 - Structures range from entitlements to tax expenditures.
- The initiatives have a broad reach.
 - 27 million taxpayers received the EITC in 2011; 19.9 children benefited from SNAP in FY 2010-11; and 28.6 million children had Medicaid insurance in FY 2010-11.

Importance for Families & Children

- Close (or at least narrow) the income gap.
 - Selected supports closed 43.9 percent of the income gap facing low-income families in 10 jurisdictions in 2007.
- Reduce poverty, especially child poverty.
 - Initiatives should be one strand in a policy agenda that promotes work, supports families, and invests in kids.
- Promote long-term, child development.
 - Programs like SNAP resemble “effective immunizations” that are particularly important during recessions.

Powerful Anti-Poverty Tools

Figure 2. Effect of Excluding Individual Public Benefits and Work Supports on Research Supplemental Poverty Measure, Selected Populations, United States, 2011



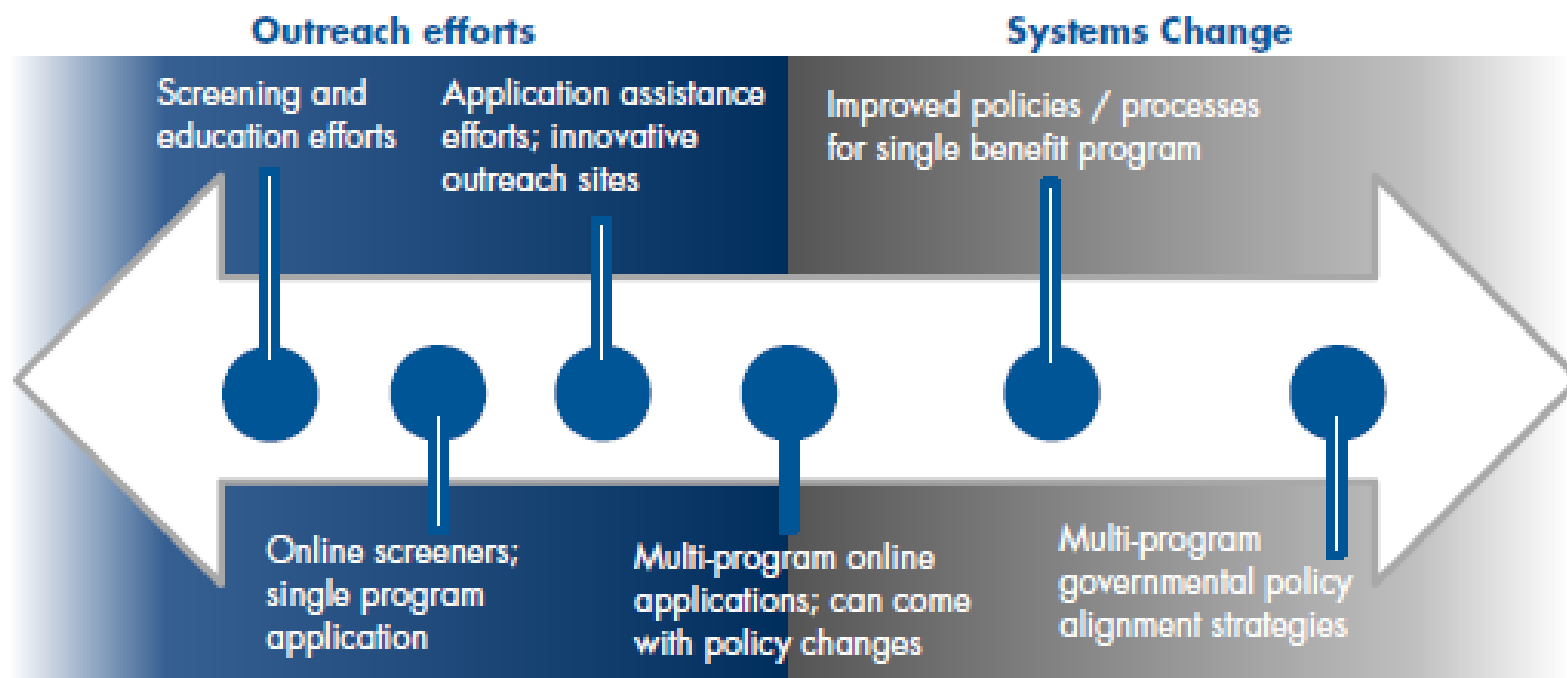
Source: Kathleen Short, *The Research Supplemental Poverty Measure, 2011* (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2012), 15, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p60-244.pdf>

Three Gaps in the Safety Net

- ***Eligibility gap*** is when a low-income family is ineligible for a particular benefit.
 - One multi-state study found that 21.2% of low-income households were ineligible for any of six initiatives.
- ***Coverage gap*** is when a family eligible for a particular support fails to receive it.
 - Just 7.1% of poor families received three supports in 2001.
- ***Hardships gap*** is difference between family resources and an income threshold.
 - In no state will the maximum TANF benefit raise the income of a three-person family above 50% of the FPL.

A Continuum of Reforms

Figure 3: Continuum of Reforms to Public Safety Net Programs and Work Supports



Source: Shelley Waters Boots, *Improving Access to Public Benefits: Helping Eligible Individuals and Families Get the Income Supports They Need* (New York: Ford Foundation, 2010), 7.

Systems Reforms in the States

- Adopt promising program policies.
 - Streamline eligibility determinations (e.g., deemed eligibility), rely on verifiable records (e.g., asset tests), and simplify compliance (e.g., continuous eligibility).
- Streamline administrative procedures.
 - Consolidate and coordinate applications (e.g., Colorado) and/or align recertification periods (e.g., Idaho).
- Improve program management
 - Make better use of information technology and/or improve work processes (e.g., Illinois).

Future Considerations

- Maintain support for key initiatives.
 - In the near future, a number of temporary provisions are set to expire or sunset (e.g., SNAP in late 2013).

- Reduce the need for safety nets & work supports.
 - Minimize the extent of low-wage work and “bad” jobs.

- Improve program effectiveness.
 - Strive to close eligibility, coverage, and hardships gaps.

- Encourage and support state-level reforms.
 - At a minimum, do no harm (e.g., re-impose asset tests).

Contact Information

Presenter

John Quinterno
South by North Strategies, Ltd.
179 East Franklin Street, #294
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

(919) 622-2392

johnq@sbnstrategies.com

www.sbnstrategies.com

Project Sponsor

Megan Curran
First Focus
1110 Vermont Avenue, NW, #900
Washington, DC 20005

(202) 657-0684

meganc@firstfocus.net

www.firstfocus.net