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12-1-2011

Data Note: SSI Recipients Who Work

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Recommended Citation
Domin, Daria and Smith, Frank A., "Data Note: SSI Recipients Who Work" (2011). *Data Note Series, Institute for Community Inclusion.* Paper 3.
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Data Note No. 36, 2011

Source: Social Security Administration

SSI Recipients Who Work

By Daria Domin and Frank A. Smith

Social Security Administration,Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics: SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2010

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a means-tested income-support program administered by the Social Security Administration. Eligibility is contingent upon proving that one has a limited ability to work due to disability. However, the program offers several work incentives aimed at encouraging SSI recipients to enter the workforce while maintaining their benefits. Despite the promotion of employment through Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) and other programs, a very small percentage of SSI recipients actually work. This may be due to low awareness of these incentive programs among recipients (Livermore et al., 2010). In 2010, only 4.6% of SSI recipients worked nationally--a 30% decrease from 6.7% in 2000.

An interesting picture emerges when the data is examined at the regional level. The map below shows that when states are categorized into four groups across the range of percentage employed by state, the majority of states (80%) are in the lower half of that range (0–7.9% of people on SSI are employed). It also appears that subsets of neighboring states have similar outcomes. For example, the southern and southwestern United States from Arizona to Florida had the lowest percentage of SSI recipients working in 2010, with only 0 to 3.99% (the min. is 2.28%) of individuals employed. The north central state cluster--ND, SD, MN, and IA--had the highest percentage of individuals employed, between 13 and 17.99% (the max. is 16.66%).

Clusters of states experiencing better employment outcomes are notable. One possible explanation for why the northern cluster states have better outcomes while the southern and southwestern clusters have lower outcomes for people on SSI is the state unemployment rate. Three of the top four states with the lowest unemployment rate in 2010, as ranked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), are from the north central cluster (ND, SD, IA). The variation across states, and the fact that the lowest-performing and highest-performing states are geographically contiguous, may merit further exploration.

References

Livermore, G., Stapleton, D., et al. (2009). *Work activity and use of employment supports under the original Ticket to Work regulations: Characteristics, employment, and sources of support among working-age SSI and DI beneficiaries.* Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

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StateData.info
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Suggested Citation

Domin, D. and Smith, F.A. (2011). *SSI Recipients Who Work.* Data Note Series, Data Note 36. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.

This is a publication of StateData.info, funded in part by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (#90DN0216).

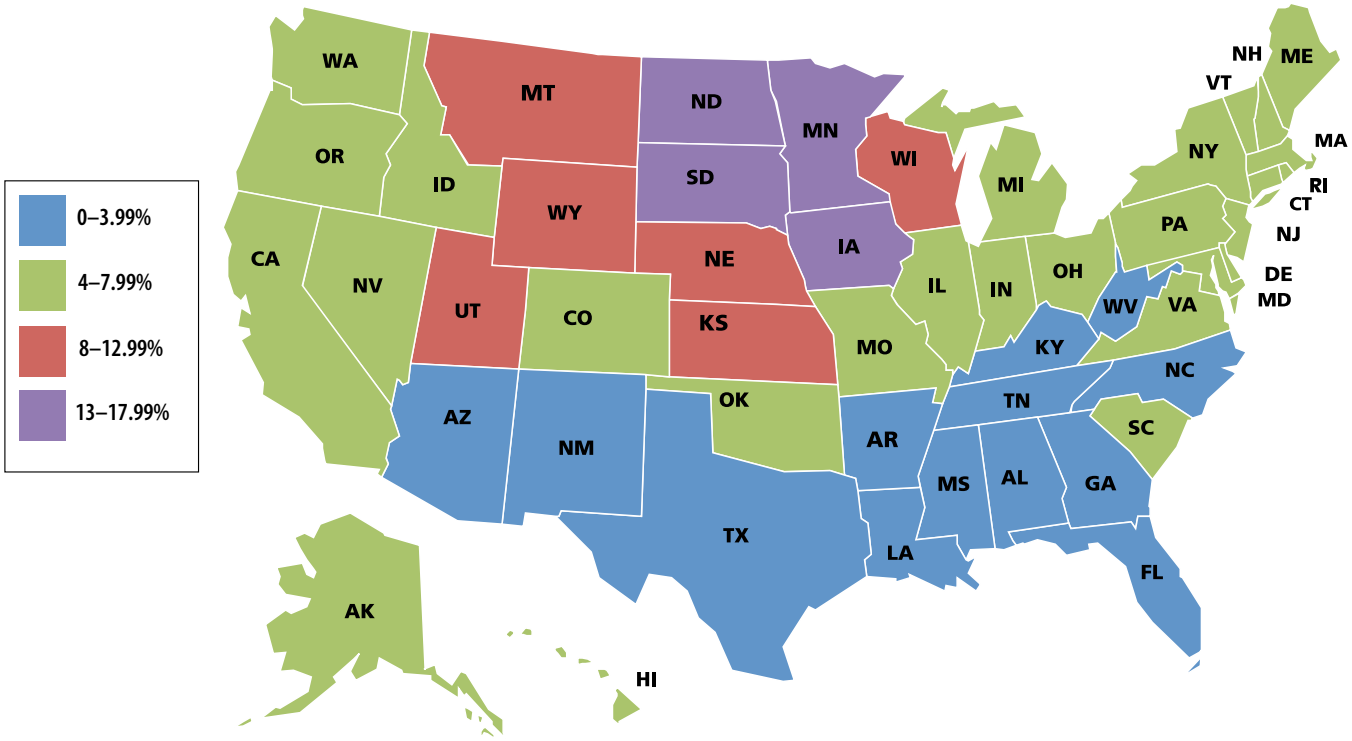

Table 1. Number of SSI recipients working by state in 2010

State	Number of SSI recipients	% working	State	Number of SSI recipients	% working
AL	160,678	2.28	NV	31,281	5.14
KY	182,212	2.34	NJ	135,936	5.29
MS	115,285	2.39	MO	127,361	5.39
WV	77,766	2.74	ME	34,007	5.51
FL	378,365	2.79	OH	273,627	6.06
TN	161,876	2.94	DE	14,750	6.11
GA	205,140	3.04	MA	148,652	6.15
DC	22,749	3.14	ID	25,754	6.15
TX	514,006	3.15	CO	57,202	6.36
LA	162,293	3.56	MD	93,996	6.38
AZ	96,375	3.67	AK	10,561	6.4
NC	200,196	3.71	OR	66,999	6.53
NM	52,798	3.78	NH	17,272	6.91
AR	100,589	3.85	CT	52,491	7.43
HI	19,112	4.21	VT	14,606	7.9
SC	103,104	4.31	UT	26,034	8.58
CA	918,517	4.44	KS	43,436	9.14
PA	335,912	4.52	WI	102,001	10.19
WA	122,803	4.54	MT	16,605	11.09
OK	88,080	4.59	WY	6,234	11.69
IN	113,690	4.72	NE	24,216	12.05
VA	130,757	4.82	MN	78,065	13.22
NY	556,085	4.93	IA	45,666	13.96
MI	239,361	4.96	SD	12,780	15.81
RI	29,567	5.08	ND	7,839	16.66
IL	245,661	5.12	**US**	**318,523**	**4.68**