

Intergenerational Poverty Study

Trajectories of Public Benefit Receipt and Shelter Stays among Children in the Cash Assistance Program

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Background

A substantial body of research demonstrates that low-income children in the U.S. face an uphill struggle to realize the American dream of upward mobility. Poverty in childhood is associated with poorer health and lower educational attainment, which in turn are associated with lower adult earnings. Individual, family, and neighborhood factors all play a role in the transmission of poverty. Recognizing that low-income parents face multiple challenges as economic providers and as caregivers, states and localities are showing renewed interest in “two-generation” approaches to poverty. These strategies target children and parents together with the goal of both addressing current needs and strengthening capacity for future success.¹

Generational or intergenerational poverty refers to families where two or more generations experience poverty. Those who are poor as children—especially those who are persistently poor for substantial portions of childhood—find it harder to achieve success as adults compared to those who are never poor. Among adults who spend more than half of their childhood in poverty, more than one-third are poor in early and middle adulthood.² Life-cycle models suggest that children born into low-income families are less likely to achieve markers of success (e.g., educational attainment, age-appropriate social and emotional skills, and higher income levels) at every life stage, with only 44 percent of low-income children reaching the middle class by age 40 compared to 63 percent of higher-income children.³ Retrospective analysis of New York City data found that 45 percent of those on cash assistance at age 24 received cash assistance as adolescents, and 31 percent of adults ages 20-29 in the city’s homeless shelters were in shelter as children.⁴

Under the auspices of the New York City Department of Social Services, the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and Department of Homeless Services (DHS) provide critical support to millions of New Yorkers, addressing the needs of families in situational (short-term) poverty as well as families with long-term barriers to self-sufficiency. HRA administers more than 15 major public assistance programs including cash assistance (CA), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), rental assistance, and child support, while DHS oversees New York City’s shelter system and street outreach programs.

¹ For an overview of the research on this topic, see Kealey E. (2018), *Intergenerational poverty: A review of the evidence base on economic mobility, mechanisms for the transmission of poverty, and promising practices for a two-generation approach*. New York City: Department of Social Services, Office of Evaluation and Research.

² Wagmiller R. & Adelman R. (2009). *Childhood and intergenerational poverty: The long-term consequences of growing up poor*. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

³ Acs G., Martin S., Schwabish J., Sawhill I. (2016). The social genome model: Estimating how policies affect outcomes, mobility and inequality across the life course. *Journal of Social Issues*, 72 (4), 656-675.

⁴ Shelter analysis conducted by New York City Department of Social Services Homeless Program Innovation, July 2017. Cash assistance analysis from Dinan K. & Rachidi A. (2014). *Young adults on the cash assistance caseload: A descriptive analysis of client characteristics, case status, and program experiences*. New York: New York City Human Resources Administration.

This first research report in OER's Intergenerational Poverty Study leverages longitudinal data available through the Welfare Management System (WMS) and the DSS-DHS system of record (CARES) to explore the following questions:

- Among NYC residents who received HRA-administered cash assistance benefits as children, what is their trajectory in terms of benefit receipt and shelter stays as young adults?
- Is the duration and timing of childhood benefit receipt and shelter history associated with different trajectories?
- Do patterns differ by child sex and other child and family characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, language of head of case, borough of residence, etc.)?

One caveat is that from 2000 to 2017, the time period covered by this study, the size and composition of the CA, SNAP, and Medicaid caseloads changed substantially. While the SNAP caseload has consistently been larger than the CA caseload, the difference between them in this 18-year span grew exponentially: the number of CA clients in NYC fell by more than 40 percent from 622,000 to 368,000, while the SNAP caseload nearly doubled from 904,000 recipients to more than 1.6 million. Finally, the Medicaid program is both the largest of the three and has seen the most growth over this period. The number of NYC residents with Medicaid coverage rose from 1.6 million in January 2000 to 3.1 million in late 2013, before program administration began shifting from NYC to NYS. Since then, overall NYC Medicaid numbers have continued to rise, although the HRA-administered caseload has fallen (to 1.8 million as of December 2017) while the state-administered portion has grown. We reflect this context in our analyses below.

Key Findings

To gain insight into patterns of intergenerational poverty in NYC, our study focuses on individuals who received cash assistance in NYC in 2000-2002 as children ages 6 to 12, with the study group analyzed in the following cohorts by birth year: 1988-90, 1991-1993, 1994-1996. Overall, our analyses find relatively low rates of public benefit in young adulthood among our cohort. While our sample was drawn from children who received cash assistance in childhood and adolescence and therefore were *a priori* at elevated risk for poverty and homelessness as adults compared to the general NYC population, findings suggest that there are certain groups who may face greater barriers or challenges to self-sufficiency including young women, those who identify as Black, and those in shelter as very young children or as teens. That being said, characteristics examined in the current study explain a very small amount of the variation in outcomes observed for our sample. It may be the case, for example, that findings related to race reflect both systematic racism embedded in the educational,

labor and housing markets and also race as a proxy for persistent poverty, which is associated with far higher rates of adult poverty than short-term experiences of poverty during childhood. Specifically, in this first report we find that:

- Across all benefit programs, the proportion of individuals receiving assistance declines over time, with younger children more likely to be on benefits compared to older children at any given point in time. By the time each cohort turned 18, the majority were *not* receiving cash assistance and about half were on SNAP. As each cohort entered their early twenties, the proportion on CA stabilized at about 10 percent while that on SNAP declined to less than 30 percent.
- Patterns of benefit receipt by developmental stage differed among the cohorts, with the older cohort (those born in 1988-90) more likely to receive cash assistance and SNAP in young adulthood compared to those born in later years. For example, 28.2 percent of those born in 1988-90 were on cash assistance when aged 19-21, compared to 21.6 percent of those born 1994-96. This may reflect economic challenges faced by the older group, who came of age during the Great Recession.
- Analysis of factors associated with receipt of cash assistance in young adulthood, specifically ages 22 through 27, found that children who went on to receive CA as young adults were substantially more likely to be female (66.6% vs. 46.9%), black (51.2% vs. 35.4%), and have a history of shelter in childhood (36.4% vs. 22.5%). They were also somewhat more likely to come from an English-speaking home (86.3% vs. 79.7%), compared to those who were on cash assistance early in life but did not receive it as adults.
- Regression analyses similarly indicate that among those who received cash assistance as children, young women and those who identified as Black were twice as likely to be on cash assistance during ages 22-27 compared to young men and those who identify as white, Asian, or other, respectively.
- Adolescence appears to be a critical time for future self-sufficiency. Those receiving CA when aged 12-14 were twice as likely to be on CA as young adults compared to those who were not on CA in early adolescence, and those in shelter when aged 12-17 were 72 percent more likely to be on CA age 22-27 compared to those not in shelter as teens. However, regression results should be interpreted with caution since the model explained less than 10 percent of the variation in CA receipt during early adulthood.
- Analysis of factors associated with use of DHS-operated shelters in young adulthood (age 22 to 29, depending on birth year) echo findings from the analysis of cash assistance receipt and reflect the intersection of poverty and homelessness. Children

in our study group who went on to enter shelter as young adults were substantially more likely to be female (60.5% vs. 48.6%), black (54.9% vs. 35.6%), and have a childhood history of shelter (45.9% vs. 22.6%); somewhat more likely to come from an English-speaking home (88.6% vs. 79.8%); and less likely to be Hispanic (33.8% vs. 44.1%), compared to those who were on cash assistance when young but did not go on to use DHS shelters as young adults.

- Regression analyses indicate that those who identified as Black were twice as likely to use DHS shelters ages 22 and older compared to those who identify as white, Asian, or other, and young women were 66 percent more likely to use shelter compared to young men. Receipt of SNAP (as a proxy for low-income households) during adolescence also elevated risk of future homelessness, with those on SNAP age 15-17 more than 60 percent as likely to use shelter as young adults compared to those not on SNAP in late adolescence. While time in shelter during all periods of childhood elevated risk of future shelter use, it was particularly pronounced for those who were in shelter in early childhood and as teens; those in shelter age 0-5 were 72 percent more likely to be in shelter as young adults, and those in shelter age 12-17 were more than twice as likely to be in shelter age 22 and older, compared to those who were not in shelter during those developmental stages. The model explained only about 6 percent of the variation in shelter use during young adulthood, and results should therefore be treated with caution.

We plan to extend our analyses in future work to examine patterns of benefit receipt at a more detailed level, including dosage and duration. We also plan to explore use of additional administrative datasets to address other critical factors such as those associated with human and economic capital, residential mobility, and cross-systems involvement.

Methods

This study focuses on the 18-year period of January 2000 through December 2017. The DSS Office of Planning and Performance Management (OPPM) pulled an initial cohort of individuals born in 1988-1996 and who were on CA in the years 2000-2002. This initial file included 254,039 unique recipient IDs, of which almost all (99.4%) included a Social Security Number (SSN); most of those (97.5%) represented unique SSNs. We therefore constructed the cohort for analysis by aggregating benefit receipt across recipient IDs by SSN and excluding 1) recipients without an SSN, 2) cases for which the aggregate total months on CA or SNAP was greater than 12 in any year (suggesting that an SSN had been assigned to more than one person), 3) cases in which multiple birth years were associated with the same SSN, and 4) cases in which the individual was not between the ages of 6-12 *at the time of their CA receipt* in the years 2000-2002. The final cohort for this study includes 231,805 individuals.

Data for this study were drawn from WMS for the years 2000-2017 and from CARES for the years 1988 to 2017. Client-level data included characteristics of the child and of the CA head of case (HOC), total months on CA and SNAP for each year in the period 2000-2017, whether or not the child was on HRA-administered Medicaid at any point in each year between 2000-2017, and whether or not the child was in a DHS shelter at any point during specified age ranges (0-5, 6-11, 12-17, 18-21, 22 and older).⁵ Note that we have data on shelter use through 2017, so those born in 1988 were followed through age 29, while those born in 1996 were followed through age 21. For cases with multiple recipient IDs in the original file, we used the most recent record from the 2000-2002 CA file. We further classified children into three cohorts according to birth year: 1988-1990, 1991-1993, and 1994-1996. Table 1 indicates the developmental stage for which children in each birth year cohort are observable, while Appendix 1 shows the specific ages for which children born in each year are observable over the study period.

Table 1. Study Cohorts by Available Age Ranges*

Developmental Stage ⁶	Birth years 1988 – 1990	Birth years 1991 – 1993	Birth years 1994 – 1996
<i>Childhood</i>			
Early middle childhood: 6 – 8 years			X
Late middle childhood: 9 – 11 years		X	X
Early adolescence: 12 – 14 years	X	X	X
Late adolescence: 15 – 17 years	X	X	X
<i>Young Adulthood</i>			
18 years	X	X	X
19 – 21 years	X	X	X
22 – 24 years	X	X	
25 – 27 years	X		

Note: Box indicates developmental stages observable for full sample.

We first explored patterns of benefit receipt over time by calculating the proportion of each birth year cohort receiving benefits each year in the period 2000-2017, separately for each program type. We then calculated the proportion of each birth cohort receiving benefits by

⁵ CARES does not include information about use of domestic violence shelters operated by the Department of Human Resources or youth shelters operated by the Department of Youth and Community Development.

⁶ Child age categories are based on those used by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to describe child development milestones; see <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening.html>

developmental stage, separately for each program type and for shelter history. We conclude our analysis with an exploration of factors associated with cash assistance receipt and DHS shelter use in young adulthood (ages 22-27), first by comparing individual and family characteristics for those receiving and those not receiving CA and similarly for those with and without a shelter stay, and finally by conducting logistic regression to examine changes in the odds of receiving CA and staying in shelter by select characteristics: gender, ethnicity, history of benefit receipt or shelter stays during childhood and adolescence, and birth year as a proxy for changing policy environments.

Results

Sample Characteristics

Characteristics of the study cohort as of 2000-2002 by birth year cohort are shown in Table 2. There is generally little difference among the birth cohorts in gender, ethnicity and language; approximately half are female, most are Hispanic (somewhat over 40%) or Black (approximately 38%), and most (approximately 80%) speak English. Younger children are more likely to be citizens (97.8% for those born in 1994-1996 compared to 93.4% among those born in 1988-1990), live in somewhat smaller CA households (3.3 among those born in 1994-96, compared to 3.5 for those born in 1988-90), and slightly more likely to live in the Bronx or Brooklyn. As discussed further below, there are also differences in shelter history by cohort: 28 percent of those born in 1994-96 experienced a stay in shelter before age 18, compared to 23 percent of those born in 1988-90.

Table 2. Characteristics of Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 by Birth Cohort (n=231,805)

Characteristic	Birth years 1988 – 1990 (n=74,598)		Birth years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)		Birth years 1994 – 1996 (n=73,300)	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Child age as of 12/31/2002, mean	13.4 years		10.5 years		7.6 years	
U.S. Citizen, Child	69,678	93.4%	80,368	95.8%	71,717	97.8%
Female	37,297	50.0%	42,084	50.2%	36,475	49.8%
Ethnicity, Child						
Hispanic, any race	31,627	42.4%	36,008	42.9%	32,294	44.1%
Black	28,151	37.7%	31,580	37.6%	28,489	38.9%
White	6,305	8.5%	6,652	7.9%	5,466	7.5%
Multiracial	4,811	6.4%	5,369	6.4%	4,550	6.2%

Characteristic	Birth years 1988 – 1990 (n=74,598)		Birth years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)		Birth years 1994 – 1996 (n=73,300)	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1,185	1.6%	1,264	1.5%	1,056	1.4%
Other	2,519	3.4%	3,034	3.6%	1,445	2.0%
Ethnicity, Head of Case						
Hispanic, any race	30,450	40.8%	34,088	40.6%	29,898	40.8%
Black	27,540	36.9%	30,695	36.6%	27,755	37.9%
White	6,185	8.3%	6,496	7.7%	5,360	7.3%
Multiracial	4,749	6.4%	5,413	6.5%	4,627	6.3%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1,236	1.7%	1,259	1.5%	1,084	1.5%
Other	4,438	5.9%	5,956	7.1%	4,576	6.2%
Language, Head of Case						
English	59,893	80.5%	67,470	80.9%	59,043	80.8%
Spanish	12,343	16.6%	13,704	16.4%	12,212	16.7%
Other	2,165	2.9%	2,254	2.7%	1,785	2.4%
Borough of residence						
Bronx	25,266	33.9%	29,092	34.7%	25,915	35.4%
Brooklyn	25,970	34.8%	29,194	34.8%	25,675	35.0%
Manhattan	11,388	15.3%	12,262	14.6%	10,343	14.1%
Queens	9,842	13.2%	10,892	13.0%	9,143	12.5%
Staten Island	1,924	2.6%	2,177	2.6%	1,981	2.7%
Ever in shelter under age 18	17,315	23.2%	20,781	24.8%	20,301	27.7%
Number of persons in CA household, mean	3.5		3.4		3.3	

Source: WMS and CARES data pulled by OPPM.

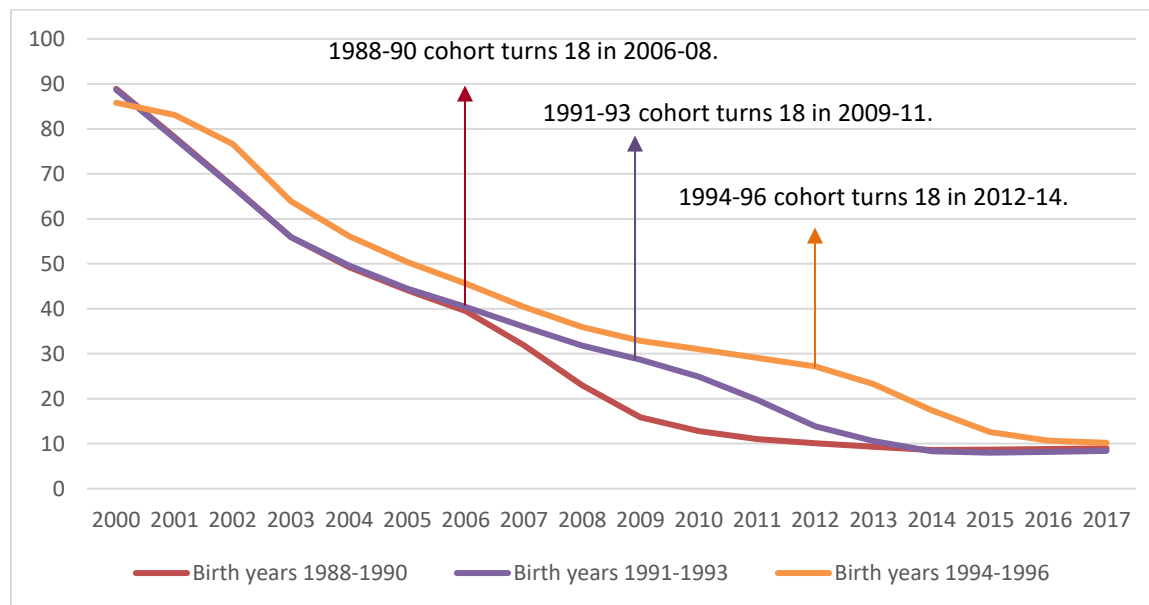
Benefit Receipt Over Time

To provide context for our analysis, we first graphed the proportion of each birth cohort receiving benefits in each calendar year of the study period. Across all benefit programs, the proportion of individuals receiving assistance declines over time; by the time each cohort

enters young adulthood, the majority are *not* receiving cash assistance and about half are on SNAP. By the end of our study period in 2017, among all birth cohorts the proportion on CA plateaued to about 10 percent while that on SNAP fell to approximately 25 percent.

As shown below in Figure 1, cash assistance receipt fell sharply among all birth cohorts between 2000-2006, from almost 90 percent to under 50 percent. After 2006, CA receipt continued to decline but at a somewhat slower rate among those born between 1991-93 and 1994-96 compared to those born in 1988-90. That is, younger children were somewhat more likely to receive CA as compared to older children. As each cohort entered young adulthood, CA receipt stabilized at close to 10 percent. Specifically, in 2011, approximately 10 percent of the 1988-90 cohort—by then ages 21 to 23 years—was on CA. Similarly, the 1991-93 cohort fell below 10 percent by 2014, and the 1994-96 cohort reached that level in 2017. CA receipt did not increase among any of the cohorts during and immediately after the 2008 recession, although the *rate* of decline appears to have lessened.

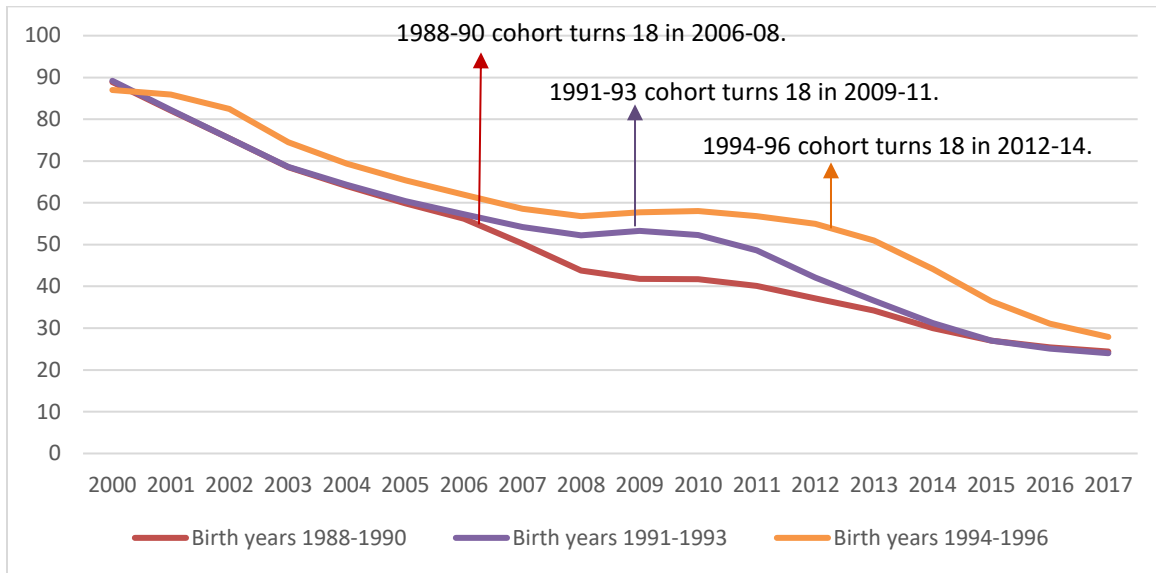
Figure 1. Cash Assistance Receipt by Birth Cohort and Year among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=231,805)



Source: WMS data pulled by OPPM.

The proportion of individuals receiving SNAP in each cohort (Figure 2) also declined over time as the cohorts aged, from almost 90 percent in 2000 to under 30 percent in 2017. However, the proportion receiving SNAP held largely steady for those born in 1991-93 and 1994-96 during 2008-2010, which may reflect economic conditions along with policy decisions that expanded SNAP during and after the recession.

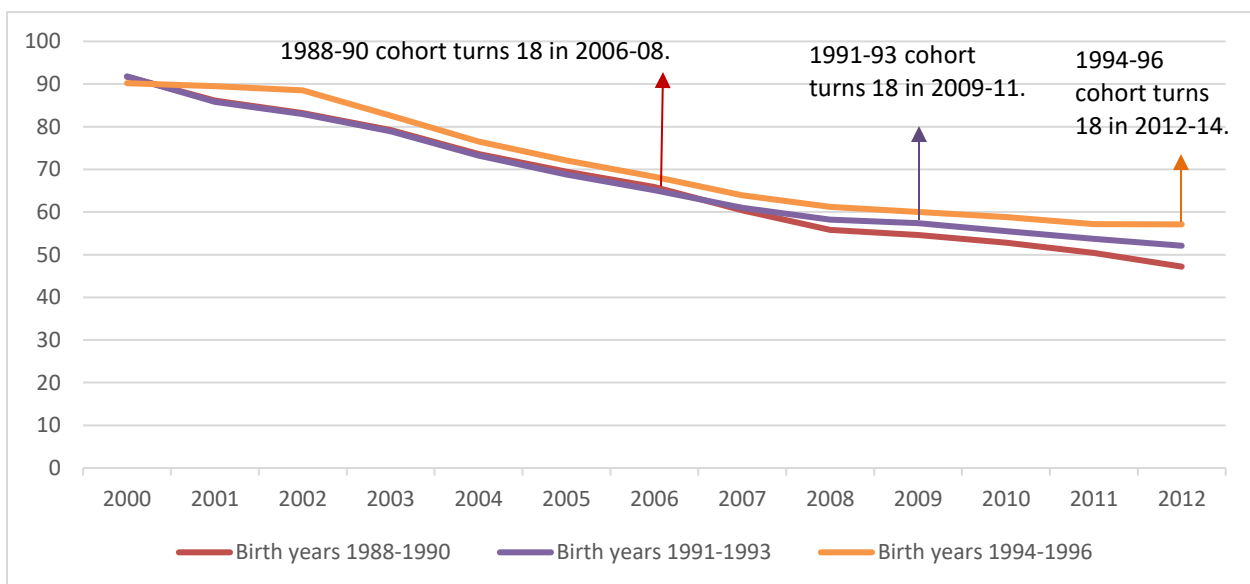
Figure 2. SNAP Receipt by Birth Cohort and Year among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=231,805)



Source: WMS data pulled by OPPM.

Finally, the proportion of individuals on Medicaid in each cohort (Figure 3) decreased somewhat less steeply over time (compared to CA and SNAP). Note that we display program participation for HRA-administered Medicaid in the period 2000-2012 only, due to changes in program rules starting in 2013 that shifted administration to New York State for a substantial proportion of the caseload.

Figure 3. HRA-Administered Medicaid Receipt by Birth Cohort and Year among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=231,805)



Source: WMS data pulled by OPPM.

Benefit Receipt During Stages of Childhood and Young Adulthood

While the above graphs illustrate general trends in safety net participation over time, we were particularly interested in benefit receipt during specific stages of childhood and early adulthood. (Note that benefit receipt is observable for all birth year cohorts between the ages of 12 and 21; receipt in early middle childhood and ages 22-27 is observable only for partial cohorts.) Tables 3 through 5 below show benefit receipt by developmental stage and birth year cohort for cash assistance, SNAP, and Medicaid respectively, and Table 6 shows patterns of benefit receipt across all three programs. Shelter history by age range and birth year cohort is shown in Table 7; here, data are available for a longer time period so we are able track shelter stay since birth for all cohorts. Throughout, although we provide the proportion of each birth year cohort receiving benefits in each available developmental stage, our discussion below focuses on adolescence and young adulthood—the stages for which data on all cohorts are available.

As shown in Table 3, the proportion of youth born in 1988-90 and receiving cash assistance is consistently higher than the proportion of youth receiving CA born in 1991-93 and 1994-96 across all developmental stages. The difference in early adolescence (ages 12-14) likely reflects the timing of our sample, as the oldest cohort would have been between the ages of 10 and 14 during the period 2000-2002 when the sample was determined and therefore *a priori* on CA during this developmental stage (i.e., to be picked up in our sample). (We do not know whether these individuals were also on CA during their early and middle childhood years.) However, the gap narrows but does not completely disappear over time, with 28.2 percent of the 1988-90 cohort on CA age 19-21 compared to 21.6 percent of those born in 1994-96. Macroeconomic factors may play a role in the persistence of poverty for the oldest cohort; those born in 1988-90 would have reached early adulthood between 2007-2009, around the time of the recession, whereas those born in 1994-96 would have reached early adulthood starting in 2012, under better economic conditions. There is substantial evidence documenting the ongoing disadvantage faced by individuals who come of age during economic downturns, especially for young men.⁷

⁷ See e.g. Oreopoulos P., Von Wachter T., and Heisz A. (2012). The short- and long-term career effects of graduating in a recession. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 4(1), pp. 1-29, and Sironi M. (2018). Economic conditions of young adults before and after the Great Recession. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 39(1), 103-116.

Table 3. Cash Assistance Receipt by Birth Cohort and Developmental Stage among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=231,805)

Cash Assistance Receipt by Developmental Stage	Birth years 1988 – 1990 (n=74,598)		Birth years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)		Birth years 1994 – 1996 (n=73,300)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Childhood</i>						
Early middle childhood (6 – 8 years)	<i>n.a.</i> ^a	<i>n.a.</i>	51,835^a	91.7%	71,735	97.9%
Late middle childhood (9-11 years)	47,384^b	91.9%	71,297	85.0%	45,062	61.5%
Early adolescence (12-14 years)	63,021	84.5%	45,122	53.8%	33,160	45.2%
Late adolescence (15-17 years)	39,859	53.4%	33,403	39.8%	25,792	35.2%
<i>Young Adulthood</i>						
18 years	25,744	34.5%	22,517	26.8%	18,391	25.1%
19 – 21 years	21,023	28.2%	19,974	23.8%	15,867	21.6%
22 – 24 years	11,851	15.9%	10,875	13.0%	5,488^c	10.3%
25 – 27 years	9,825	13.2%	5,319^d	9.6%	<i>n.a.</i> ^d	<i>n.a.</i>

Source: WMS data pulled by OPPM.

Bold indicates periods in which benefit receipt rate is elevated due to cohort selection methodology—that is, we include all children ages 6-12 who received CA during 2000-2002.

^aObservable only for children born 1992-1996. 1991-1993 cohort n = 56,530.

^bObservable only for children born 1989-1996. 1988-1990 cohort n = 51,539.

^cObservable only for children born 1988-1995. 1994-1996 cohort n = 53,071.

^dObservable only for children born 1988-1992. 1991-1993 cohort n = 55,507.

Receipt of SNAP (Table 4) shows a somewhat different pattern. Those born in 1998-90 were by definition on CA (and therefore most likely on SNAP as well) during late childhood / adolescence because of our sampling methodology, and we see that represented in the higher levels of SNAP receipt among this cohort compared to those born later. However, comparing those born in 1988-90 to those born in 1994-96, the gap narrows to seven percentage points (69.2% compared to 62.2%) in late adolescence and just over five percentage points for ages 19-21 (55.9% compared to 50.5%). The higher absolute

prevalence of SNAP receipt compared to CA also may reflect the program dynamics described earlier in this report (rising SNAP caseload vs. falling CA caseload), and the smaller relative gap between younger and older cohorts potentially reflects efforts to expand SNAP eligibility during and after the recession.

Table 4. SNAP Receipt by Birth Cohort and Developmental Stage among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=231,805)

SNAP Receipt by Developmental Stage	Birth years 1988 – 1990 (n=74,598)		Birth years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)		Birth years 1994 – 1996 (n=73,300)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Childhood</i>						
Early middle childhood (6 – 8 years)	<i>n.a.</i> ^a	<i>n.a.</i>	51,886^a	91.8%	71,622	97.7%
Late middle childhood (9-11 years)	47,233^b	91.6%	74,843	89.2%	55,166	75.3%
Early adolescence (12-14 years)	66,108	88.6%	58,397	69.6%	48,374	66.0%
Late adolescence (15-17 years)	51,620	69.2%	51,661	61.6%	45,563	62.2%
<i>Young Adulthood</i>						
18 years	39,472	52.9%	44,721	53.3%	38,360	52.3%
19 – 21 years	41,679	55.9%	45,898	54.7%	36,997	50.5%
22 – 24 years	35,448	47.5%	31,619	37.7%	<i>15,351^c</i>	<i>28.9%</i>
25 – 27 years	26,844	36.0%	<i>14,504^d</i>	<i>26.1%</i>	<i>n.a.^d</i>	<i>n.a.</i>

Source: WMS data pulled by OPPM.

Bold indicates periods in which benefit receipt rate is elevated due to cohort selection methodology—that is, we include all children ages 6-12 who received CA during 2000-2002.

^aObservable only for children born 1992-1996. 1991-1993 cohort n = 56,530.

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^cObservable only for children born 1988-1995. 1994-1996 cohort n = 53,071.

^dObservable only for children born 1988-1992. 1991-1993 cohort n = 55,507.

Analysis of trends in Medicaid receipt (Table 5) are complicated by data issues associated with the shift to the New York Health Exchange starting in late 2013. We therefore show data

on Medicaid receipt only through 2012, when the youngest children in our cohort (born in 1996) would have turned 16 and the oldest (born in 1988) would have turned 24. Patterns mirror those seen in analyses of CA and SNAP above, with relatively higher levels of persistent MA receipt among the oldest cohort. Although Medicaid receipt among both the 1988-90 and 1991-93 cohorts dips from ages 15-17 to age 18 and then rebounds slightly in the period age 19-21, the youngest cohort shows a steady decline. Since those born in 1994-96 turned 19 starting in 2013, this may be an artifact of the shift to the NYS Health Exchange described above.

Table 5. Medicaid Receipt by Birth Cohort and Developmental Stage among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=231,805)

Medicaid Receipt by Developmental Stage	Birth years 1988 – 1990 (n=74,598)		Birth years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)		Birth years 1994 – 1996 (n=73,300)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	<i>Childhood</i>					
Early middle childhood (6 – 8 years)	<i>n.a.</i> ^a	<i>n.a.</i>	53,209^a	94.1%	72,765	99.3%
Late middle childhood (9-11 years)	48,566^b	94.2%	78,511	93.6%	60,101	82.0%
Early adolescence (12-14 years)	69,903	93.7%	65,119	77.6%	51,251	69.9%
Late adolescence (15-17 years)	58,495	78.4%	56,024	66.8%	46,548	63.5%
<i>Young Adulthood</i>						
18 years	46,345	62.1%	47,240	56.3%	15,650	54.1%
19 – 21 years	50,148	67.2%	49,103	58.5%	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>
22 – 24 years	40,368	54.1%	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>

Source: WMS data pulled by OPPM.

Bold indicates periods in which benefit receipt rate is elevated due to cohort selection methodology—that is, we include all children ages 6-12 who received CA during 2000-2002.

^aObservable only for children born 1992-1996. 1991-1993 cohort n = 56,530.

^bObservable only for children born 1989-1996. 1988-1990 cohort n = 51,539.

Table 6 summarizes patterns of benefit receipt across the cash assistance and SNAP programs for the developmental stages observable across all three cohorts (ages 12-21). As

noted above, the older cohort was by definition on CA during early adolescence due to our sampling approach, and thus it is not surprising that those born in 1988-90 are far more likely to be on CA and SNAP during this stage compared to the younger cohorts. However, we also see that the oldest cohort is consistently more likely to be on CA and/or SNAP than those born in 1991 or later. For example, 56 percent of those born in 1988-90 were on CA and/or SNAP as young adults (age 19-21), compared to 50 percent of those born in 1994-96. We plan further exploration of these patterns, including factors associated with persistent poverty among those on CA in late childhood and early adolescence, in the next stage of our work.

Table 6. Patterns of Cash Assistance and SNAP Receipt in Adolescence and Young Adulthood among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002, by Developmental Stage and Birth Cohort (n=231,805)

Benefit Receipt by Developmental Stage	Birth Years 1988-1990 (n = 74,598)		Birth Years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)		Birth Years 1994-1996 (n = 73,300)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Early adolescence (12-14 years)						
CA and SNAP	61,801	84.2%	44,530	53.4%	32,862	45.0%
SNAP only	4,307	5.9%	13,867	16.6%	15,512	21.2%
No CA or SNAP	7,720	9.9%	24,918	29.9%	24,628	33.7%
Late adolescence (15-17 years)						
CA and SNAP	39,166	53.0%	33,034	39.5%	25,598	35.0%
SNAP only	12,454	16.9%	18,627	22.3%	19,965	27.3%
No CA or SNAP	22,285	30.2%	31,877	38.2%	27,543	37.7%
Young adult (18 years)						
CA and SNAP	25,121	34.0%	22,218	26.6%	18,205	24.9%
SNAP only	14,351	19.4%	22,503	26.9%	20,155	27.6%
No CA or SNAP	34,503	46.6%	38,887	46.5%	34,754	47.5%
Young adult (19 – 21 years)						
CA and SNAP	20,845	28.0%	19,849	23.7%	15,787	21.6%
SNAP only	20,834	28.0%	26,049	31.1%	21,210	29.0%
No CA or SNAP	32,741	44.0%	37,884	45.2%	36,223	49.5%

Source: WMS data pulled by OPPM. CA = cash assistance, SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Proportions exclude missing data.

Bold indicates periods in which benefit receipt rate is elevated due to cohort selection methodology—that is, we include all children ages 6-12 who received CA during 2000-2002.

Finally, we examine patterns of shelter use by developmental stage for each birth year cohort (see Table 7).⁸ As noted previously, those born in 1988 were followed through age 29, while those born in 1996 were followed through age 21. All three cohorts had roughly similar patterns of shelter use in very early childhood (age 0-5), ranging from 13.3 percent among the oldest birth year cohort (1988-90) to 15.5 percent among the youngest (born 1994-96). Shelter rates were also high in middle childhood (age 6-11) for the youngest cohort at 14.3 percent, compared to approximately 9 percent for the other two cohorts. Of interest, shelter use age 22 and up increases compared to ages 18-21 for those born in 1988-90 and 1991-93, the two birth year cohorts in which all members are observable for at least one year in each of these age groups. Across all birth cohorts, approximately 60 percent of those with shelter history age 22 and older are female. The extent to which exposure to shelter at various ages is a risk for future homelessness is an area of interest for further study, but will require more detailed information from CARES.

Table 7. Shelter History by Birth Cohort and Developmental Stage among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=231,805)

Shelter History by Developmental Stage	Birth years 1988 – 1990 (n=74,598)		Birth years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)		Birth years 1994 – 1996 (n=73,300)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	<i>Childhood and Adolescence</i>					
<i>Ever in shelter, under age 18</i>	17,315	23.2%	20,781	24.8%	20,301	27.7%
In shelter age 0-5 years	9,899	13.3%	11,746	14.0%	11,360	15.5%
In shelter age 6-11 years	7,361	9.9%	9,781	11.7%	10,504	14.3%
In shelter age 12-17 years	7,013	9.4%	7,539	9.0%	6,912	9.4%
<i>Adulthood</i>						
In shelter age 18-21 years	7,162	9.6%	6,498	7.7%	5,628	7.7%
In shelter age 22 and older	10,754	14.4%	9,194	11.0%	5,358 ^a	7.3%
Among those in shelter age 22+, female	6,471	60.2%	5,580	60.7%	3,279 ^a	61.2%

Source: CARES data pulled by OPPM.

^aShelter use age 22 and older is only observable for those born in 1994-95. Note that we expect the proportions of 1991-93 and 1994-96 birth cohorts with shelter use age 22 and older would increase over time as individuals' ages increased.

⁸ Shelter history was provided by OPPM by developmental stage, so we are not able to examine year-over-year trends.

Factors Associated with Cash Assistance in Young Adulthood

The previous analyses focused on benefit receipt and shelter use by birth year cohort and developmental stage. We next examined characteristics associated with cash assistance receipt in young adulthood, specifically ages 22 through 27. As of the end of our study period in 2017, 15.6 percent of our sample were on CA during this age range. It is important to keep in mind that most of the individuals in our study cohort had not reached 27 within the study period (also note that for the purpose of this analysis, we excluded individuals born in 1996 since they did not reach age 22 during the study period). Thus, we might expect that the proportion of those on CA during ages 22-27 would increase over time as more individuals moved into the relevant age range. Looking only at those who *had reached 27 by 2017* (which corresponds to the 1988-90 birth year cohort), 20.5 percent received CA between ages 22 and 27.

Also note that by definition, our sample is at higher risk for future CA receipt compared to the general NYC population since all were on CA (and therefore in poor households) at some point in 2000-2002. However, these analyses are limited by our inability to know whether *lack of benefit receipt* is due to factors associated with an individual's economic and human capital, or whether we are simply unable to observe them because they have left the city. Results should therefore be treated with caution. We will seek to address this limitation in future work through the use of other sources of administrative data that can shed light on these factors.

As shown in Table 8 below, those who were on cash assistance in 2000-2002 as children and adolescents and went on to receive cash assistance as young adults were substantially more likely to be female (66.6% vs. 46.9%), black (51.2% vs. 35.4%), and have a history of shelter at each stage of childhood, compared to those who were on cash assistance early in life but did not receive it as young adults. Those who received cash assistance as young adults were also more likely to have come from an English-speaking home: Among those receiving cash assistance as a young adult, 13.7 percent were on a case with a limited English proficient case head (mostly Spanish-speaking) in 2000-2002, as compared to 20.3 percent of those who did *not* go on to receive cash assistance. Only small differences are seen by the individual's citizenship status, borough of residence, and household size as a child.

Table 8. Characteristics of Individuals Receiving and Not Receiving Cash Assistance Ages 22-27 among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=211,576)

Characteristic	Receiving Cash Assistance Ages 22-27 (n=33,029)		Not Receiving Cash Assistance Ages 22-27 (n=178,547)	
	n	%	N	%
Age as of 12/31/2002, mean***	11.5		10.8	
U.S. Citizen***	32,115	97.2%	169,759	95.1%
Female***	22,003	66.6%	83,766	46.9%
Ethnicity, Child***				
Hispanic, any race	11,987	36.3%	78,827	44.1%
Black	16,924	51.2%	63,145	35.4%
White	1,599	4.8%	15,373	8.6%
Multiracial	1,735	5.3%	11,941	6.7%
Asian / Pacific Islander	220	0.7%	3,004	1.7%
Other	564	1.7%	6,257	3.5%
Language, Head of Case***				
English	28,344	86.3%	141,818	79.7%
Spanish	3,922	11.9%	30,848	17.3%
Other	570	1.7%	5,175	2.9%
Borough of residence***				
Bronx	11,919	36.1%	61,152	34.2%
Brooklyn	11,859	35.9%	61,831	34.6%
Manhattan	4,898	14.8%	26,200	14.7%
Queens	3,377	10.2%	24,086	13.5%
Staten Island	914	2.8%	4,654	2.6%
Shelter history				
Ever in shelter under age 18	12,008	36.4%	40,259	22.5%
In shelter age 0-5***	6,918	20.9%	22,603	12.7%
In shelter age 6-11***	5,440	16.5%	18,875	10.6%
In shelter age 12-17***	5,491	16.6%	13,911	7.8%
Number of persons in household, mean***	3.5		3.4	

Source: WMS and CARES data pulled by OPPM.

*** $p < .001$

The above analysis looks at the relationship between CA receipt and each characteristic separately. In order to address potential overlap among individual/family characteristics associated with young adult cash assistance receipt, we conducted multivariate analyses (specifically, logistic regression) to determine the extent to which certain characteristics increased or reduced the odds of CA receipt while holding others constant. While results (see Table 9 below) are suggestive, they should be treated with caution: the model explained less than 10 percent of the variation in CA receipt age 22-27 and was better able to predict who did *not* receive CA than to predict those who did.

Demographic factors associated with increased odds of CA receipt in young adulthood are generally consistent with characteristics of the caseload overall: young women were more than twice as likely to be on cash assistance age 22-27 compared to young men, and those who identify as Black were almost twice as likely to be on cash assistance age 22-27 compared to those who identified as White, Asian, or Other. Receipt of CA during adolescence, particularly late adolescence, elevated risk of future CA receipt: those who received cash assistance age 12-14 were more than twice as likely to be on cash assistance as young adults compared to those who were not on CA during the younger age. Similarly, while time in shelter during childhood elevated risk of future CA receipt, it was particularly pronounced for those who were in shelter as teens; those in shelter during age 12-17 were 72 percent more likely to be on CA when age 22-27, compared to those who were not in shelter during that time. Finally, the impact of the changing policy environment is seen in the relationship between birth year and receipt of CA in young adulthood: compared to those born in 1988, every additional year decreased the likelihood of receiving CA age 22-27 by 10 percent.

Table 9. Characteristics Associated with Receipt of Cash Assistance Ages 22-27 among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=188,517)

Characteristic	B	SE B	Wald X ²	Odds Ratio (95% C.I.)
Gender, female (compared to male)***	.838	.014	3563.070	2.311 (2.249, 2.376)
Ethnicity (compared to White/Asian/Other)				
Hispanic***	.144	.021	44.974	1.155 (1.107, 1.205)
Black***	.663	.021	991.756	1.941 (1.863, 2.023)
CA receipt (compared to no CA receipt)				
Age 9 to 11	.385	.023	280.002	1.469 (1.404, 1.537)
Age 12 to 14	.796	.017	2286.907	2.216 (2.145, 2.290)
Any time in shelter (compared to no time in shelter)				
Age 0 to 5	.360	.018	390.412	1.434 (1.383, 1.486)
Age 6 to 11	.114	.021	30.595	1.121 (1.076, 1.167)
Age 12 to 17	.540	.021	677.574	1.717 (1.648, 1.788)
Birth year (proxy for policy environment)	-.106	.004	856.863	.900 (.893, .906)

Source: WMS and CARES data pulled by OPPM.

*** $p < .001$

Factors Associated with Shelter Use in Young Adulthood

Finally, we examined characteristics associated with use of shelters operated by DHS in young adulthood, specifically age 22 to 29 (with the upper bound depending on birth year). This group represents 11.4 percent of our sample, excluding individuals born in 1996 since they did not reach age 22 during the study period. This is somewhat lower than the proportion found to receive cash assistance, but still elevated, and as in the CA results, the proportion will grow somewhat as the full study group reaches 29. By definition, our sample is at higher risk for future homelessness compared to the general NYC population since all were on CA (and therefore in poor households) at some point in 2000-2002. As noted above, these analyses are limited by our inability to know whether *lack of shelter use* is due to factors associated with an individual's economic and human capital, or whether we are simply unable to observe them because they have left the city. Results should therefore be treated with caution.

Results echo findings from the cash assistance analysis above and reflect the intersection of poverty and homelessness. As shown in Table 10 below, those who were on cash assistance in 2000-2002 as children and adolescents and went on to enter shelter as young adults were substantially more likely to be female (60.5% vs. 48.6%), black (54.9% vs. 35.6%), and have a history of shelter at each stage of childhood, compared to those who were on cash assistance early in life but did not use DHS shelters as young adults. Of particular note, almost half (45.9%) of those in shelter age 22 and older were in shelter as a child. Those who used shelter as young adults were less likely to be Hispanic (33.8% vs. 44.1%) and to have come from an English-speaking home: 11.5 percent of those who used shelter age 22 and older were on a case with a case head whose preferred language was other than English in 2000-2002, as compared to 20.2 percent of those who did *not* go on to use shelter as young adults. Small differences are seen in the individual's citizenship status, number of persons in the household as a child, and borough of residence; patterns by borough mirror trends seen in the shelter system overall.

Table 10. Characteristics of Individuals Using and Not Using NYC Department of Homeless Services Shelters Age 22 and Older among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=211,576)

Characteristic	In Shelter Age 22 and Older (n=24,193)		Not in Shelter Age 22 and Older (n=187,383)	
	N	%	n	%
Age as of 12/31/2002, mean***		11.4		10.9
U.S. Citizen***	23,674	97.9%	178,200	95.1%
Female***	14,642	60.5%	91,127	48.6%
Ethnicity, Child***				
Hispanic, any race	8,175	33.8%	82,639	44.1%
Black	13,289	54.9%	66,780	35.6%
White	851	3.5%	16,121	8.6%
Multiracial	1,350	5.6%	12,326	6.6%
Asian / Pacific Islander	102	0.4%	3,122	1.7%
Other	426	1.8%	6,395	3.4%
Language, Head of Case***				
English	21,374	88.6%	148,788	79.8%
Spanish	2,460	10.2%	32,310	17.3%
Other	302	1.3%	5,433	2.9%
Borough of residence***				
Bronx	8,984	37.1%	64,087	34.2%
Brooklyn	8,706	36.0%	64,984	34.7%
Manhattan	3,640	15.0%	27,458	14.7%
Queens	2,333	9.6%	25,130	13.4%
Staten Island	487	2.0%	5,081	2.7%
Shelter history				
Ever in shelter under 18	11,627	45.9%	46,770	22.6%
In shelter age 0-5***	6,278	25.9%	23,243	12.4%
In shelter age 6-11***	5,228	21.6%	19,087	10.2%
In shelter age 12-17***	5,505	22.8%	13,897	7.4%
Number of persons in household, mean***		3.6		3.4

Source: WMS and CARES data pulled by OPPM.

*** $p < .001$

Similar to the analysis of CA receipt described above, we conducted multivariate analyses (specifically, logistic regression) to determine the extent to which certain characteristics increased or reduced the odds of shelter use while holding others constant. We used SNAP receipt (including SNAP with and without CA) as a proxy for family poverty rather than cash assistance in order to test the assumption that low-income families more broadly are at risk for homelessness. While results (see Table 11 below) are suggestive, they should be treated with caution: the model explained only about 6 percent of the variation in shelter use age 22 and older and was better able to predict who did *not* use shelter than to predict those who did.

Table 11. Characteristics Associated with Use of DHS Shelters Age 22 and Older among Cash Assistance Recipients Age 6-12 in 2000-2002 (n=188,517)

Characteristic	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	Wald χ^2	Odds Ratio (95% C.I.)
Gender, female (compared to male)***	.510	.014	1246.901	1.665 (1.619, 1.713)
Ethnicity (compared to White/Asian/Other)				
Hispanic***	.210	.023	79.843	1.233 (1.178, 1.291)
Black***	.785	.023	1197.528	2.192 (2.097, 2.292)
SNAP receipt (compared to no SNAP receipt)				
Age 12 to 14	.183	.024	60.186	1.200 (1.146, 1.257)
Age 15 to 17	.489	.019	629.668	1.630 (1.569, 1.693)
Any time in shelter (compared to no time in shelter)				
Age 0 to 5	.543	.018	912.016	1.722 (1.662, 1.783)
Age 6 to 11	.386	.020	371.086	1.471 (1.414, 1.530)
Age 12 to 17	.866	.020	1928.952	2.377 (2.287, 2.471)
Birth year (proxy for policy environment)	-.116	.003	1242.702	.890 (.885, .896)

Source: WMS and CARES data pulled by OPPM.

*** $p < .001$

Predictors of shelter use in young adulthood mirror those identified in the analysis of CA receipt in early adulthood above: young women were 60 percent more likely to use DHS shelters age 22 and older compared to young men, and those who identify as Black were more than twice as likely to be in shelter age 22 and older compared to those who identified as White, Asian, or Other. (Note that we did not compare use by shelter type, e.g. single adults

vs. families with children, in this analysis; gender patterns are likely to differ by shelter system.) Receipt of SNAP during adolescence, particularly late adolescence, elevated risk of future shelter use: those who received SNAP age 15-17 were more than 60 percent as likely to be in shelter as young adults compared to those who were not on SNAP as adolescents. Similarly, while time in shelter during any period of childhood elevated risk of future shelter use, it was particularly pronounced for those who were in shelter in early childhood and as teens; those in shelter during age 0-5 were 72 percent more likely to be in shelter as young adults, while those in shelter age 12-17 were *more than twice as likely* to be in shelter age 22 and older, compared to those who were not in shelter during those developmental stages. Finally, the impact of the changing policy environment is seen in the relationship between birth year and shelter use in young adulthood: compared to those born in 1988, every additional year decreased the likelihood of using shelter age 22 and older by 11 percent.

Implications and Next Steps

This report provides a first look at the young adult outcomes of New Yorkers who received cash assistance as children. Our analyses find relatively low rates of public benefit in young adulthood: As the study group reached their early twenties, the proportion receiving cash assistance stabilized at about 10 percent and the proportion receiving SNAP declined to less than 30 percent. Further analyses suggest that certain subgroups of children are more likely to continue facing challenges to self-sufficiency as young adults. Specifically, both descriptive and regression analyses find that women, those who identify as Black, and those in shelter as very young children or as teens were more likely receive cash assistance and stay in shelter in their early 20s. That being said, results also indicate that the characteristics examined in the current study explain only a small amount of the variation we observe in outcomes, suggesting the importance of further analyses to better understand the associations documented here. Next steps in this study will include a more detailed examination of patterns in young adult outcomes based on the depth and persistence of childhood poverty, as proxied by the amount and duration of public benefits received and time spent in shelter. We also plan to explore the use of additional administrative datasets to address other critical factors such as those associated with human and economic capital, residential mobility, and cross-systems involvement.

Appendix 1. Age by Birth Year and Observation Year

	Birth year									
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1996
2000	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	4
2001	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	5
2002	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	6
2003	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	7
2004	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	8
2005	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	9
2006	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	10
2007	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	11
2008	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	12
2009	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	13
2010	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	14
2011	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	15
2012	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	16
2013	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	17
2014	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	18
2015	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	19
2016	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	20
2017	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21

Ages 6-8	Early middle childhood
Ages 9-11	Late middle childhood
Ages 12-14	Early adolescence
Ages 15-17	Late adolescence
Age 18	Young adulthood
Age 19-21	Young adulthood
Age 22-24	Young adulthood
Age 25-27	Young adulthood