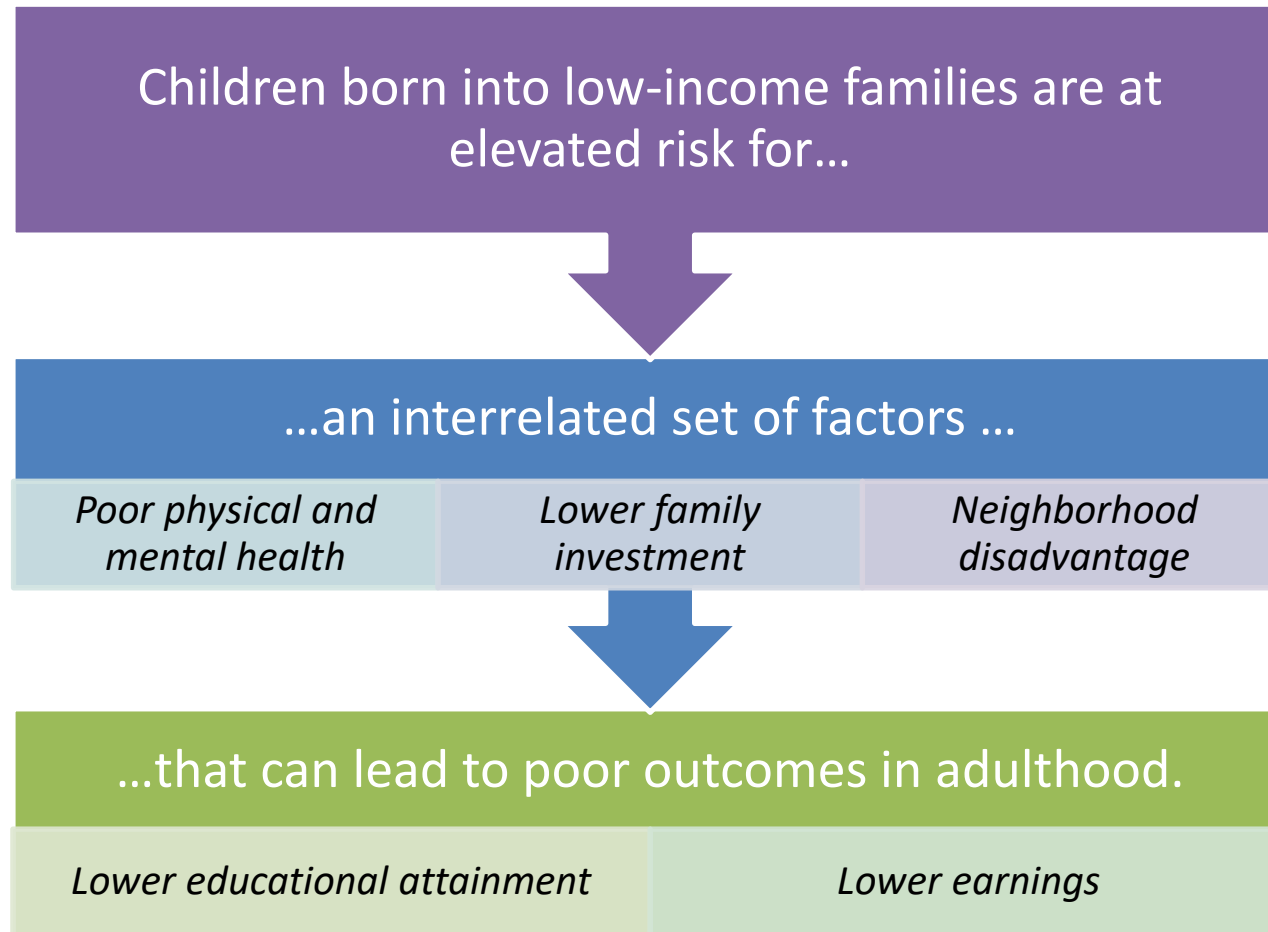# Intergenerational Poverty in New York City

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Office of Research and Policy Innovation
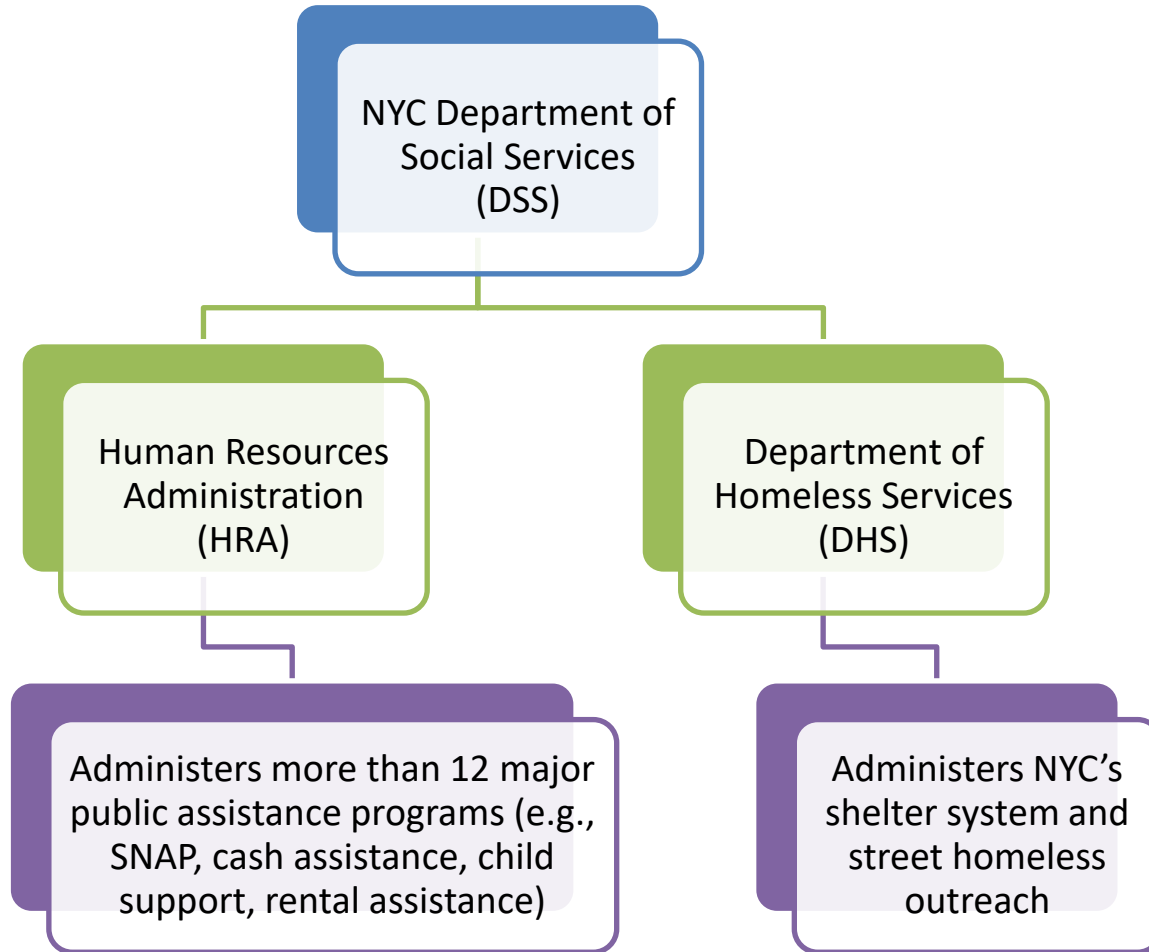New York City Department of Social Services

Association for Public Policy and Management Fall Research Conference
November 2022

Background

Children born into low-income families are at elevated risk for…

$\downarrow$

…an interrelated set of factors …

| Poor physical and mental health | Lower family investment | Neighborhood disadvantage |

$\downarrow$

…that can lead to poor outcomes in adulthood.

| Lower educational attainment | Lower earnings |

- Among adults who spend more than half of their childhood in poverty, more than one-third are poor in early and middle adulthood.

- The relationship between childhood and adult poverty is particularly strong for black Americans.

- **Study goal**: Gain insight re: children growing up in poverty in NYC through analysis of matched longitudinal administrative data

Acs G., Matin 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.

Chetty R. & Hendren N. (2018). Race and economic opportunity in the United States, Executive Summary.

Policy Context

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│ NYC Department of       │
│ Social Services         │
│ (DSS)                   │
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│ Human Resources  │  │ Department of    │
│ Administration   │  │ Homeless Services│
│ (HRA)            │  │ (DHS)            │
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   │                       │
┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ Administers more     │  │ Administers NYC's│
│ than 12 major        │  │ shelter system   │
│ public assistance    │  │ and street       │
│ programs (e.g.,      │  │ homeless         │
│ SNAP, cash assistance,│  │ outreach         │
│ child support,       │  │                  │
│ rental assistance)   │  │                  │
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- DSS provides critical support to over 3 million New Yorkers annually.

- NYC's public benefit caseload size and composition changed substantially over the core 2000-2017 study period:
  - Cash assistance caseload decreased by more than 40% to ~370,000.
  - SNAP caseload nearly doubled to more than 1.6 million.
  - The number of individuals in DHS Families with Children shelter more than doubled, reaching a monthly average of ~40,000 in 2017 (before declining rapidly to 27,000 in 2018-22).

Key Research Questions

Our first set of analyses focus on patterns of benefit receipt / shelter use and postsecondary enrollment.

Among individuals who receive cash assistance as children:

- What are their patterns of benefit receipt and shelter use as young adults?

- Do patterns vary by child and family characteristics?

- **What predicts benefit receipt and shelter use as young adults?***

- Who enrolls in college?

- What types of educational institutions do they enroll in?

- What are their educational outcomes?

- **Do patterns vary by individual and institutional characteristics?***

Focus of current presentation

Methods

- Sample: Individuals born 1988-1996 and on cash assistance in NYC in 2000-2002 (n=231,805)

- Data sources: state, local, and national administrative data

  - Welfare Management System (WMS): child / case characteristics and benefit receipt by year *from Jan 2000 – Dec 2017*

  - CARES: use of DHS-administered shelter by age category (0-5, 6-11, 12-17, 18-21, and 22+) *from Jan 1988 – Dec 2017*

  - National Student Clearinghouse: postsecondary enrollment and outcomes *from Jan 1988 – June 2021*

- Analytic approach:

  - Logistic regression to examine odds of CA receipt / DHS shelter use by select characteristics.

  - Bivariate analysis of differences in enrollment and graduation patterns assessed using z-test of proportions with Bonferroni correction.
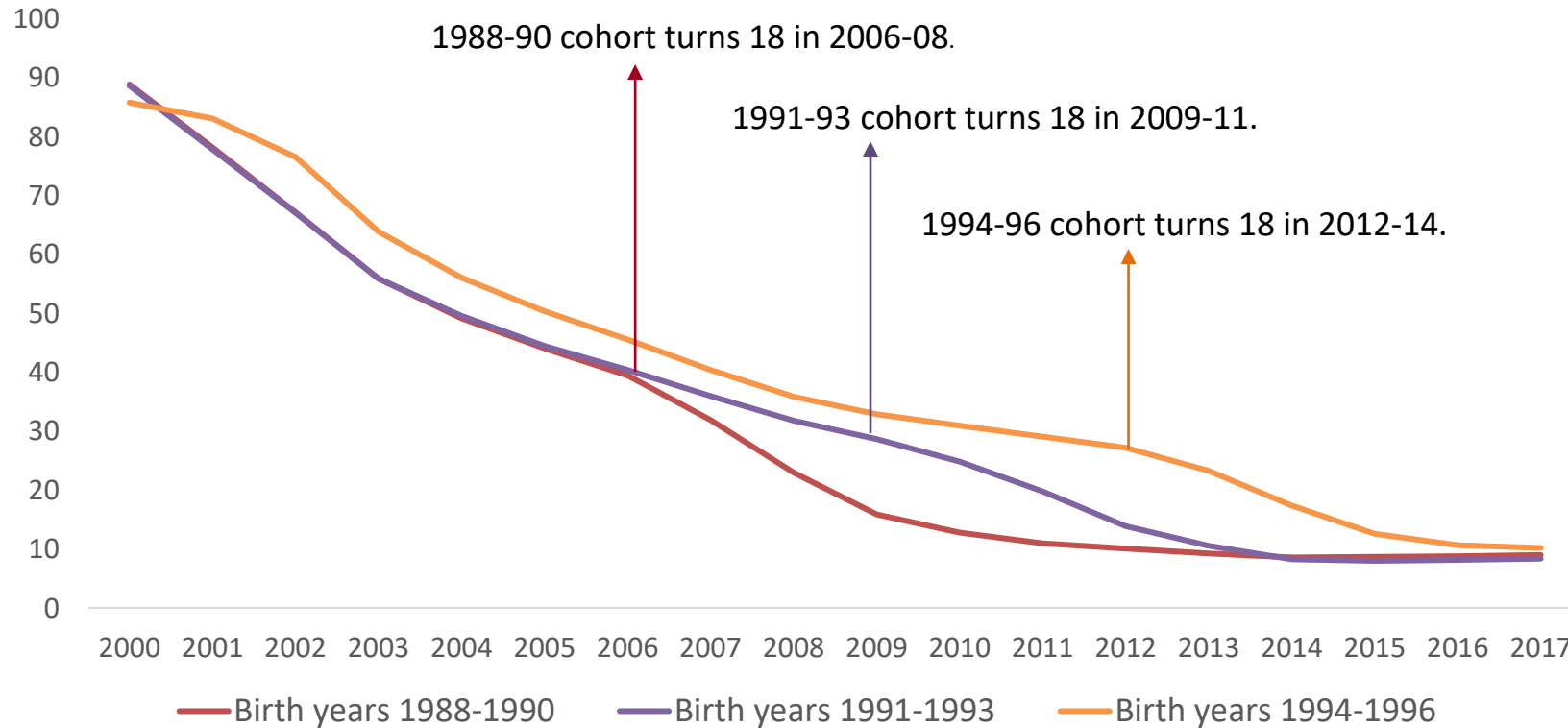
Sample Characteristics by Birth Cohort

Characteristic	Birth years 1988-1990 (n=74,598)	Birth years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)	Birth years 1994-1996 (n=73,300)
Female	50.0%	50.2%	49.8%
Race / Ethnicity			
Hispanic, any race	42.4%	42.9%	44.1%
Black	37.7%	37.6%	38.9%
White	8.5%	7.9%	7.5%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%
Language, Head of Case			
English	80.5%	80.9%	80.8%
Spanish	16.6%	16.4%	16.7%
Ever in shelter < 18 years	23.2%	24.8%	27.7%
# persons in CA household (avg)	3.5	3.4	3.3

- Approximately half of the sample was female, most were Hispanic or Black, and most lived in households where the head of case spoke English.

- Generally small differences by birth cohort in gender, race / ethnicity, and household size.

- Those with a shelter stay as a child increased from 23% of those born in 1988-1990 to 28% of those born 1994-1996.

Findings

CASH ASSISTANCE RECEIPT AND SHELTER USE

Cash Assistance Receipt by Birth Cohort and Year, 2000-2017

1988-90 cohort turns 18 in 2006-08.

1991-93 cohort turns 18 in 2009-11.

1994-96 cohort turns 18 in 2012-14.

Birth years 1988-1990 — Birth years 1991-1993 — Birth years 1994-1996

- As each cohort entered young adulthood (22+), CA receipt declined and stabilized at close to 10%.

- CA receipt did not increase among any of the cohorts during and immediately after the 2008 recession, although the rate of decline lessened.

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Source: WMS data pulled by DSS Office of Performance Management.

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Shelter Use by Birth Cohort and Development Stage, 1988-2017

Developmental Stage	Birth years 1988-1990 (n=74,598)	Birth years 1991-1993 (n=83,907)	Birth years 1994-1996 (n=73,300)
Childhood			
Ever in shelter, < age 18	23.2%	24.8%	27.7%
In shelter age 0-5	13.3%	14.0%	15.5%
In shelter age 6-11	9.9%	11.7%	14.3%
In shelter age 12-17	9.4%	9.0%	9.4%
Young Adulthood			
In shelter 18-21	9.6%	7.7%	7.7%
In shelter age 22+	14.4%	11.0%	7.3%*

- Shelter use was observed from birth through age 29 for the oldest in our sample (born in 1998) and through age 21 for the youngest (born 1996).

- About one-quarter of each cohort was in shelter as a child (< 18 years), with the highest rate among the youngest cohort.

- Shelter use was highest (13-15%) for very young children (0-5) and decreased to less than 10% by age 18-21.

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Predictors of CA Receipt in Young Adulthood

Characteristic	Receiving CA Age 22-27 (n=33,029)	Not Receiving CA Age 22-27 (n=178,547)	Odds Ratio (95% C.I.)
Female***	66.6%	46.9%	2.31 (2.25, 2.38)
Race / Ethnicity			
Hispanic, any race***	36.3%	44.1%	1.16 (1.11, 1.21)
Black***	51.2%	35.4%	1.94 (1.86, 2.02)
White	4.8%	8.6%	
CA receipt age 9-11***	90.2%	78.3%	1.47 (1.40, 1.54)
CA receipt age 12-14***	81.1%	58.8%	2.22 (2.15, 2.29)
Ever in shelter age 0-5***	20.9%	12.7%	1.43 (1.38, 1.49)
Ever in shelter age 12-17***	16.6%	7.8%	1.72 (1.65, 1.79)

- 15.6% of sample received CA as young adults.*
  - Expected to increase as cohorts age.
- Gender, race / ethnicity, and history of CA / shelter use significantly associated with CA receipt age 22-27.
  - Those who identify as women, Black, and who received CA in early adolescence ~ *twice as likely* to be on CA, holding other factors constant.
  - Shelter history as very young child or in adolescence also elevated risk.
- Model explained only small amount of variation (~10%) in CA receipt.

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Predictors of Shelter Use in Young Adulthood

Characteristic	In Shelter Age 22+ (n=24,193)	Not In Shelter Age 22+ (n=187,383)	Odds Ratio (95% C.I.)
Female***	60.5%	48.6%	1.67 (1.62, 1.71)
Race / Ethnicity			
Hispanic, any race***	33.8%	44.1%	1.23 (1.18, 1.29)
Black***	54.9%	35.6%	2.19 (2.10, 2.29)
White	3.5%	8.6%	
SNAP receipt age 15-17***	77.4%	62.3%	1.63 (1.57, 1.69)
Ever in shelter age 0-5***	25.9%	12.4%	1.72 (1.66, 1.78)
Ever in shelter age 12-17***	22.8%	7.4%	2.38 (2.29, 2.47)

- 11.4% of sample used DHS shelter as young adults.*
  - Expected to increase as cohorts age.
- Gender, race / ethnicity, and history of SNAP / shelter use significantly associated with shelter use age 22+.
  - Those who identify as Black and who were in shelter as adolescents *twice as likely* to use shelter as young adults, holding other factors constant.
  - Young women, those on SNAP as adolescents (proxy for low-income household), and those in shelter as very young children also at elevated risk.
- Model explained only small amount of variation (~6%) in shelter use.

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Findings

POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT AND ATTAINMENT

Post-Secondary Enrollment: Demographic Patterns

Characteristic (n=original cohort)	% Enrolling
Gender	
Female (n=115,856)*	49.8%
Male (n=115,949)	36.6%
Race / Ethnicity	
Hispanic, any race (n=99,929)	44.1%
Black* (n=88,220)	40.7%
White (n=18,423)	43.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander (n=3,505)*	57.4%
Shelter use as child	
Ever in shelter < age 18 (n=58,397)	35.9%
Not in shelter < age 18 (n=173,408)*	45.7%

- Of the 231,805 individuals in the original cohort, 43% (n=100,343) enrolled in post-secondary education by June 2021 – the year the oldest turned 33 and the youngest turned 25.

- Average age at first enrollment was 19.1 years.

- Statistically significant differences in enrollment by gender, race / ethnicity, and shelter history.

  – Women, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and those not in shelter as a child had comparatively higher rates of enrollment.

  – Blacks had lower enrollment rates compared to other race / ethnicities.

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Post-Secondary Attainment: Demographic Patterns

Characteristics (n=enrolled)	% Awarded any Degree
Gender	
Female* (n=57,829)	40.4%
Male (n=42,514)	28.8%
Race / Ethnicity	
Hispanic, any race (n=44,188)	35.9%
Black* (n=36,010)	30.2%
White (n=8,063)	48.9%
Asian / Pacific Islander* (n=2,018)	57.7%
Shelter use as child	
Ever in shelter < age 18 (n=21,022)	26.8%
Not in shelter < age 18 (n=79,321)*	37.8%

- Just over one-third of those enrolled (15% of the original cohort) achieved a degree.
  - For context, 38% of Pell Grant recipients entering college in 2009 earned a degree within 8 years.**

- Statistically significant differences in college achievement by gender, race / ethnicity, and childhood shelter history mirror those seen in enrollment patterns.
  - Women, Asian / Pacific Islanders, and those not in shelter as a child had comparatively higher graduation rates.
  - Blacks had lower graduation rates compared to other race / ethnicities.

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Post-Secondary Outcomes: Institutional Patterns

Characteristic	% of Graduates (n=35,592)
By institution type: any degree from…	
Public institution	74.0%
Private institution	33.9%
CUNY	46.7%
SUNY	11.4%
Degree type: awarded any…	
Associate degree	52.0%
Bachelor's degree	68.0%
Graduate degree	14.2%
Number of institutions attended (avg)	2.2

- Almost three-quarters of graduates earned a degree from a public institution, and nearly half earned a degree from CUNY.

- Associate degrees are an important pathway for post-secondary education: 40% of students who earned an AA went on to earn a higher degree.

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Implications and Next Steps

- Our cohort of individuals receiving cash assistance as children was at elevated risk for poverty and homelessness as adults compared to the general NYC population, but still only a minority received public benefits or stayed in shelter in young adulthood.

- Certain groups face greater barriers or challenges to self-sufficiency.

  – Young women, those who identify as Black, and those in shelter as very young children or teens more likely to be receive CA / use DHS shelter as young adults.

  – Young men, those who identify as Black, and those in shelter as children less likely to enroll in / graduate from college.

- Future work will extend these analyses in several ways:

  – More detailed exploration of the relationship between depth and persistence of poverty across developmental stages and young adult outcomes.

  – Use of additional administrative datasets to explore other critical factors such as health, labor market participation, residential mobility, and cross-systems involvement.

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Appendix

ANALYTIC APPROACH

Analysis of Benefit Trajectories and Shelter Use

- OPPM pulled initial cohort of individuals born in 1988-1996 and who were on CA in 2000-2002 by WMS recipient ID.
  - OER aggregated across IDs using SSN and excluded those not age 6-12 at time of CA receipt.
- Descriptive analysis of benefit receipt over time: calculated using % of each birth cohort receiving benefits each year in the study period.
- Descriptive analysis of benefit receipt by developmental stage: calculated using % of each birth cohort receiving benefits by developmental stage in the study period, separately for each program type and for shelter history.
- Exploration of factors associated with CA receipt and DHS shelter use in young adulthood (age 22+):
  - Bivariate analysis of individual and family characteristics for those receiving / not receiving CA and for those with and without a shelter stay.
  - Logistic regression to examine odds of CA receipt / DHS shelter use by select characteristics.

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Characteristics Associated with Receipt of Cash Assistance Ages 22-27

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)

- Model explains ~7% of variation in outcomes (Cox and Snell R^2 = .074).
- Model correctly classifies 99.7% of those not on CA age 22-27 and 1.8% of those on CA age 22-27.

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Source: WMS and CARES data pulled by OPPM.
***$p < .001$

Characteristics Associated with Use of DHS Shelter Age 22+

Characteristic	B	SE B	Wald X^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 CA 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)

- Model explains ~6% of variation in outcomes (Cox and Snell R^2 = .059).
- Model correctly classifies 99.6% of those not in shelter age 22+ and 2.4% of those in shelter age 22+.

Post-Secondary Enrollment and Outcomes

- National Student Clearinghouse matched data based on first name, last name, and date of birth.
  - Provided file with separate rows by enrollment period, institution, and (if applicable) degree granted for individuals with at least one match -> restructured using Study ID assigned by OER and included in original file.
- Decision rules:
  - Analysis restricted to degrees coded as associate, bachelor, or graduate (i.e., certificates excluded).
  - For students with multiple degrees of the same type, used data related to the first degree.
  - Students with joint degrees (e.g., BA/MA) were coded as obtaining each degree.
  - Time of enrollment based on first and last dates of enrollment; does not reflect time spent out of school.
- Descriptive analysis of enrollment and graduation patterns calculated based on individual and institutional characteristics.
- Bivariate analysis of differences in enrollment and graduation patterns assessed using z-test of proportions with Bonferroni correction.