



United States Department of Agriculture

ERS Use of Food Assistance Administrative Records

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USDA Economic Research Service

Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) Workshop
December 16, 2015



Census-ERS-FNS Joint Project

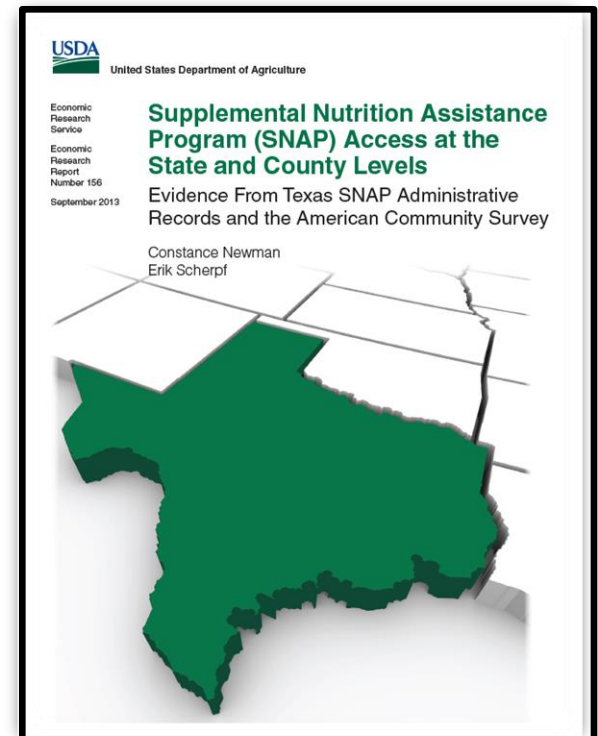
Broad goals include informing policymakers, managers, and the public on:

- Who participates in USDA food assistance programs?
- How does participation affect people's lives?
- Who does not participate and why?



1. SNAP Access Rate

(Newman and Scherpf, 2013)



SNAP Participation Rates

(2012)

- A key measure of program performance:
“effectiveness in reaching eligible people”
- National: 83% (working poor: 72%)
- State: From 56% (Wyoming) . . .
. . . to 100% (Maine, Michigan, Oregon)



ERS developed a SNAP Access Rate:

- Sub-state geography (county-level)
- Subgroups (at State-level, or by county)
- Census is using the ERS report (on Texas) as template for providing results to other States.



Methodology

Link State-level SNAP admin data to American Community Survey.

Benefit of admin data:

- ✓ the universe of SNAP participants in a State
- ✓ known for completeness and accuracy (any receipt in past year?)

Benefit of ACS data:

- ✓ Contains non-SNAP participants
- ✓ Annual income data—used to model SNAP income eligibility

Benefit of linked data:

- ✓ Access rate cannot be estimated using either set of data by itself



Statistical Issues

Related to ACS:

1. ACS income data are measured on annual basis
2. ACS Household is not identical to “SNAP unit”
3. ACS lack detailed data used to determine official eligibility at SNAP offices

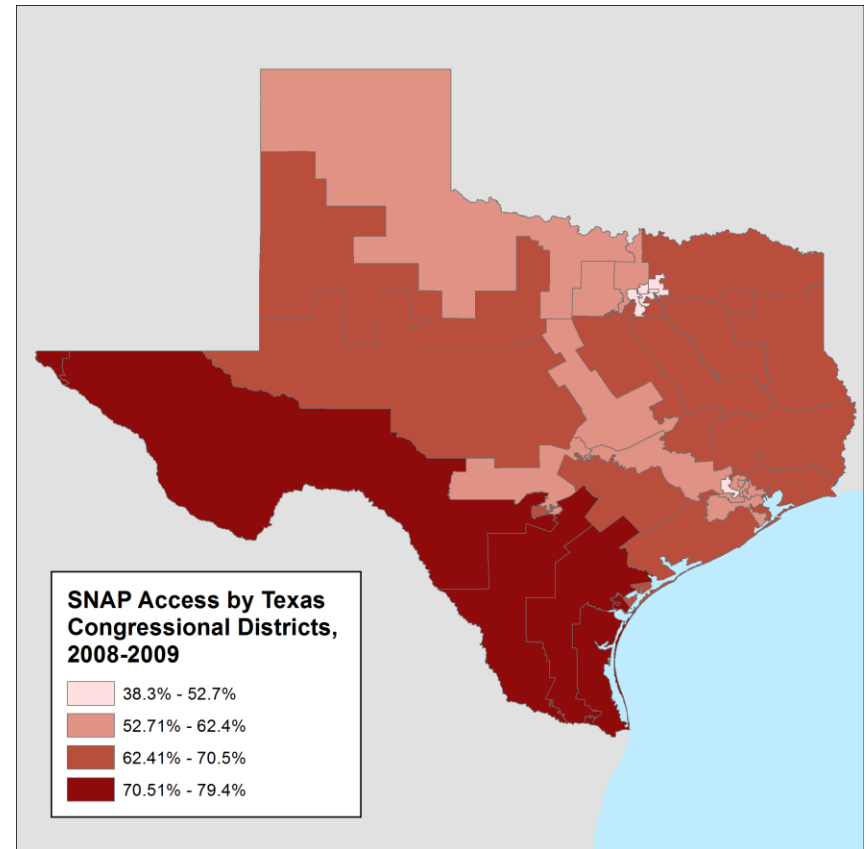
Related to linking:

4. Most but not all records PIKed
 - 2008-09 TX admin data: 88% units PIKed for ALL members
 - 2009 ACS: 94% sim. units lack PIKs for ALL members



SNAP Access Rates: Geographic (2009 ACS)

- Texas: 63%
- Among 25 “large” counties: 46% to 78%
- Among congressional districts: 37% to 77%



SNAP Access Rates: Demographic

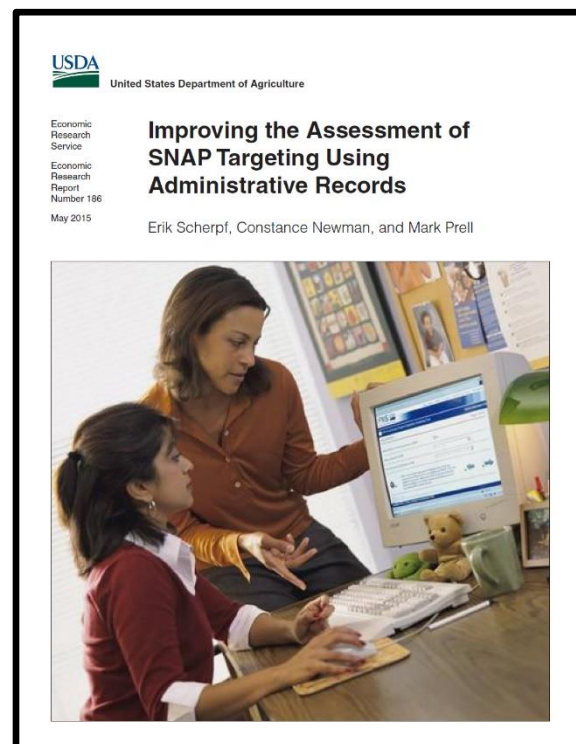
(2009 ACS)

	El Paso	Hidalgo
Spanish-Speaking Households, Overall	75%	80%
Not Linguistically Isolated	82%	82%
Linguistically Isolated	67%	80%



2. SNAP Targeting

(Scherpf et al., 2013)



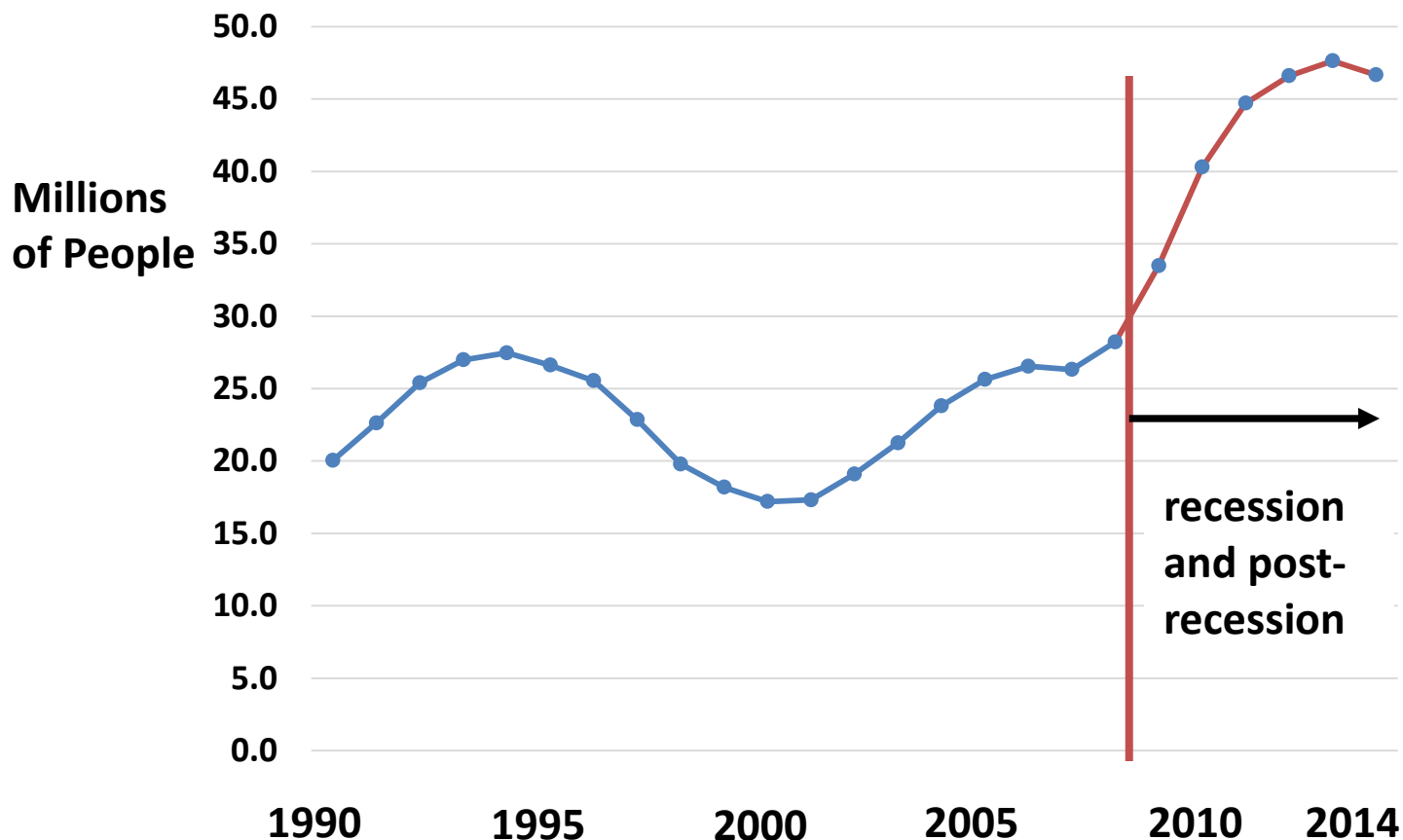
Measures of Targeting

- What percentage of all SNAP participants have the “very lowest” income?
- What percentage of all SNAP benefits are received by participants with the “very lowest” income?



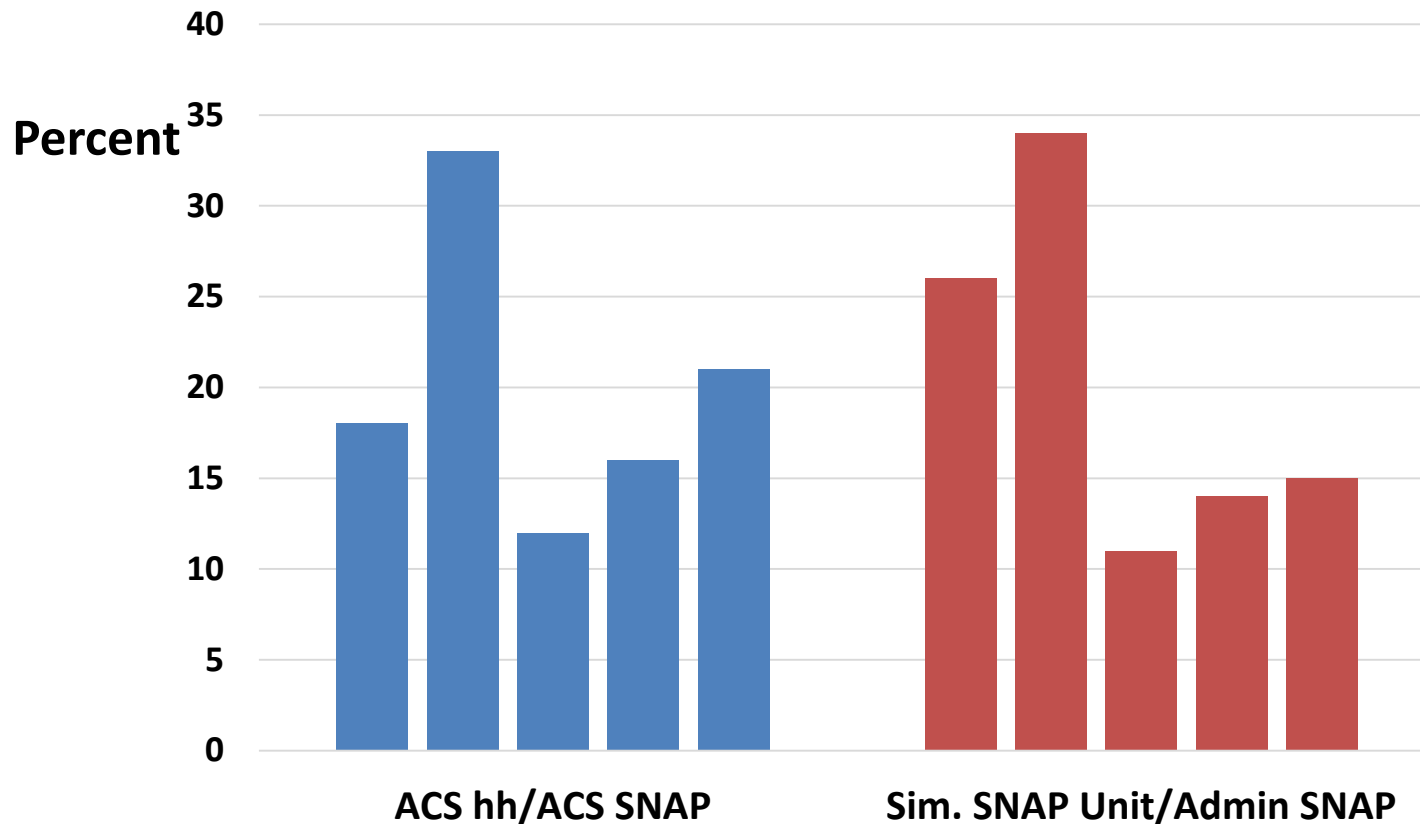
SNAP Participation

(avg month of the year)



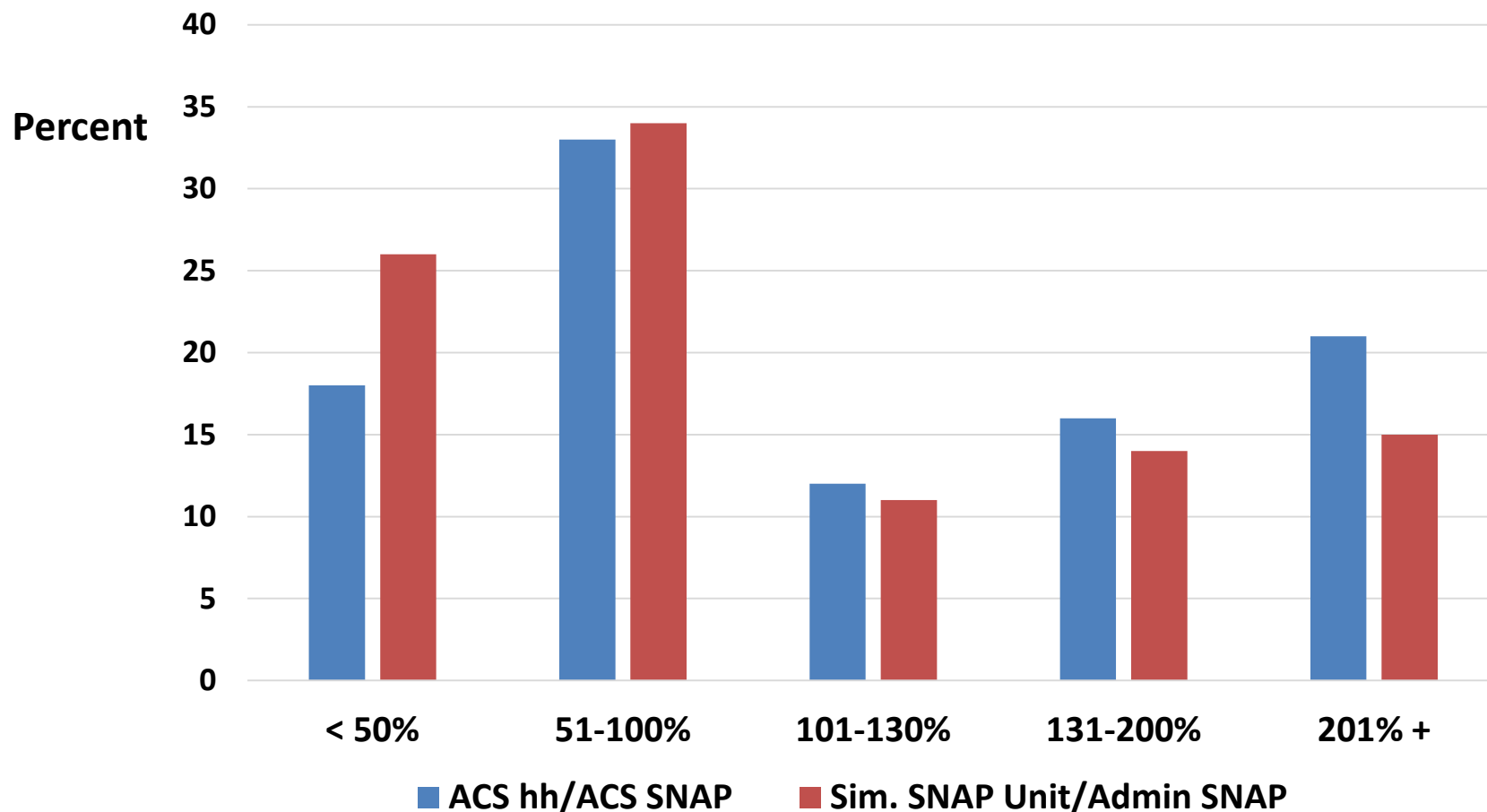
Dist'n of Income Relative to Poverty, SNAP “households”

2008 through 2012 ACS 1-year data, New York State respondents



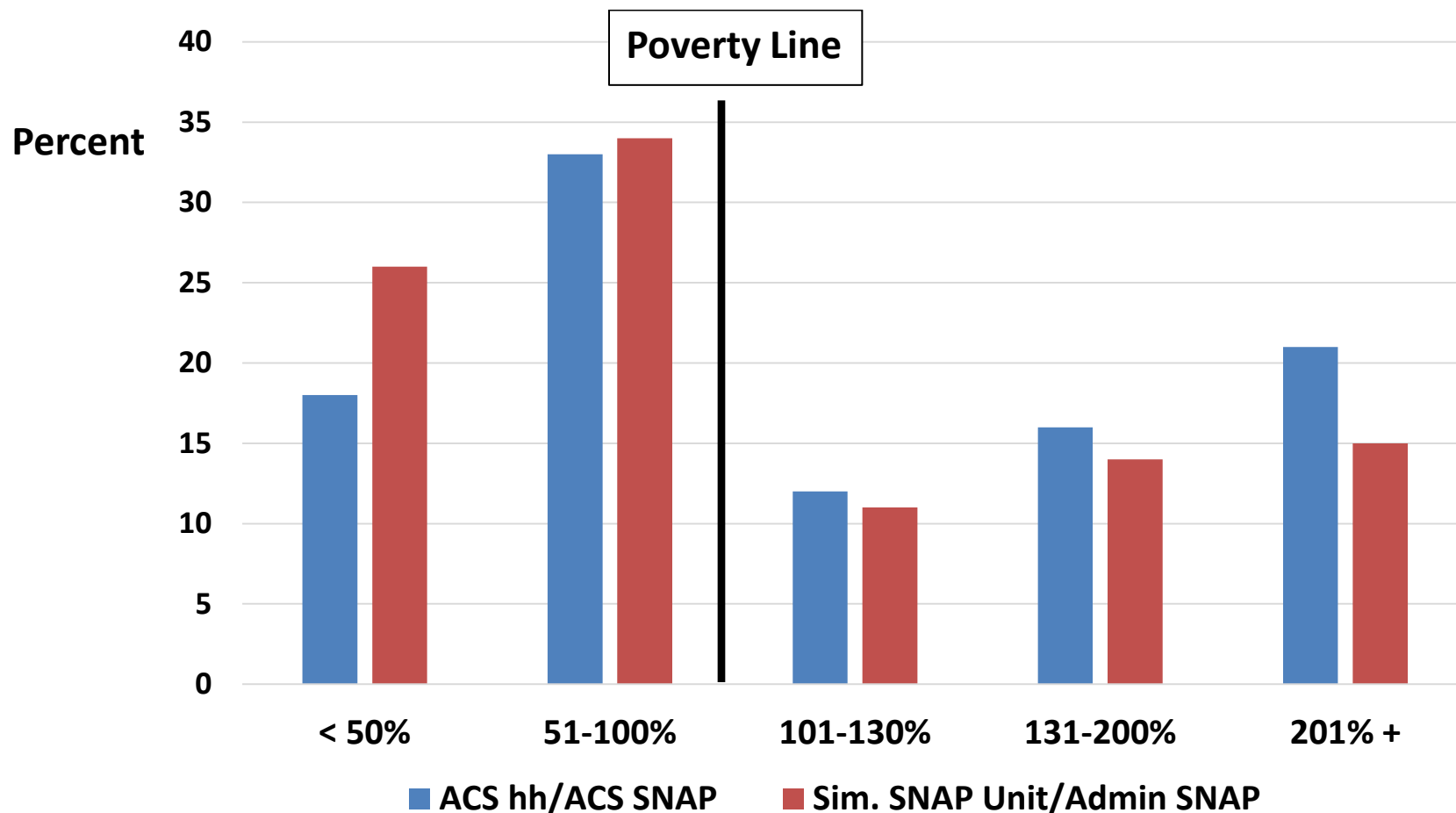
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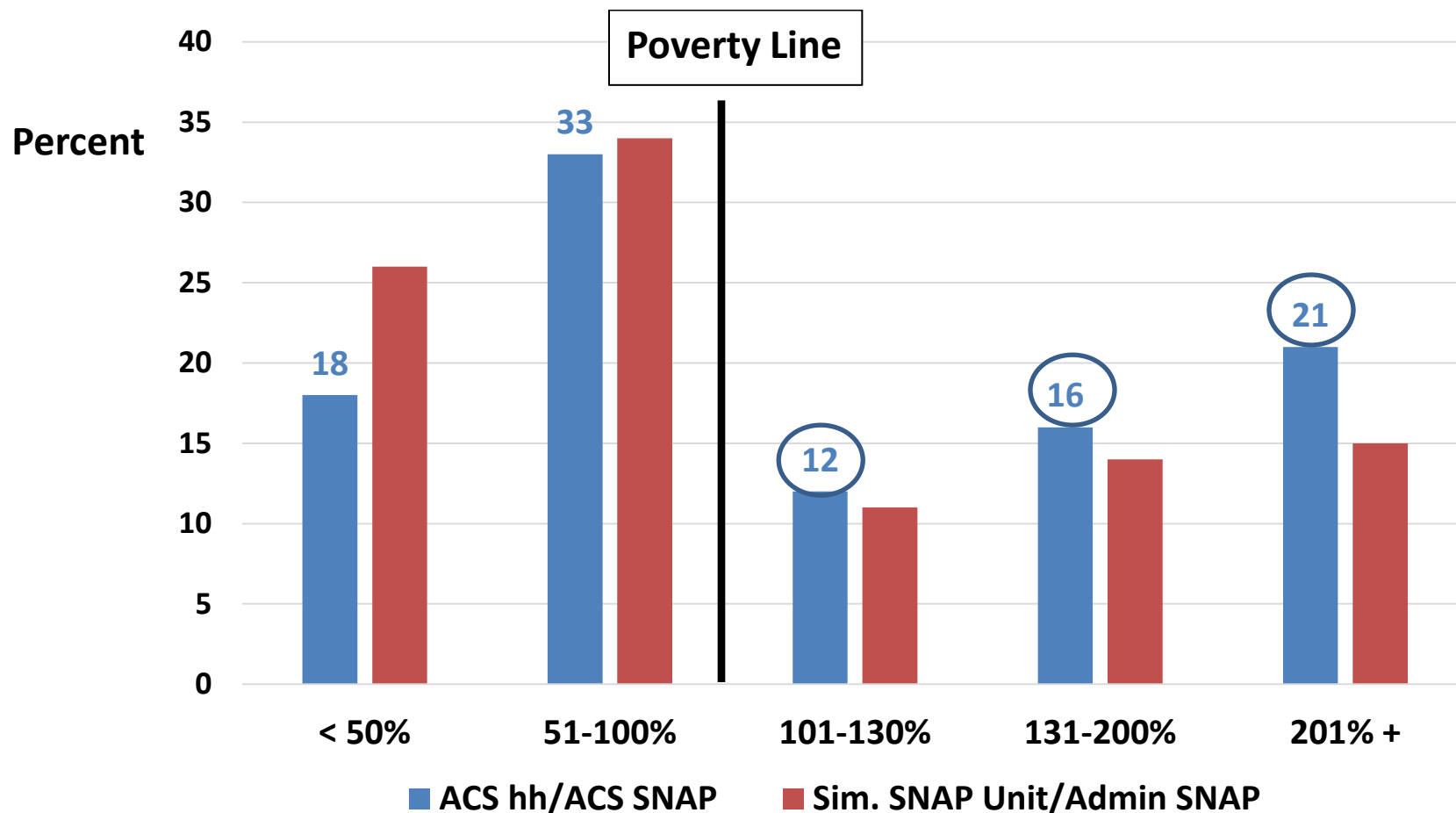
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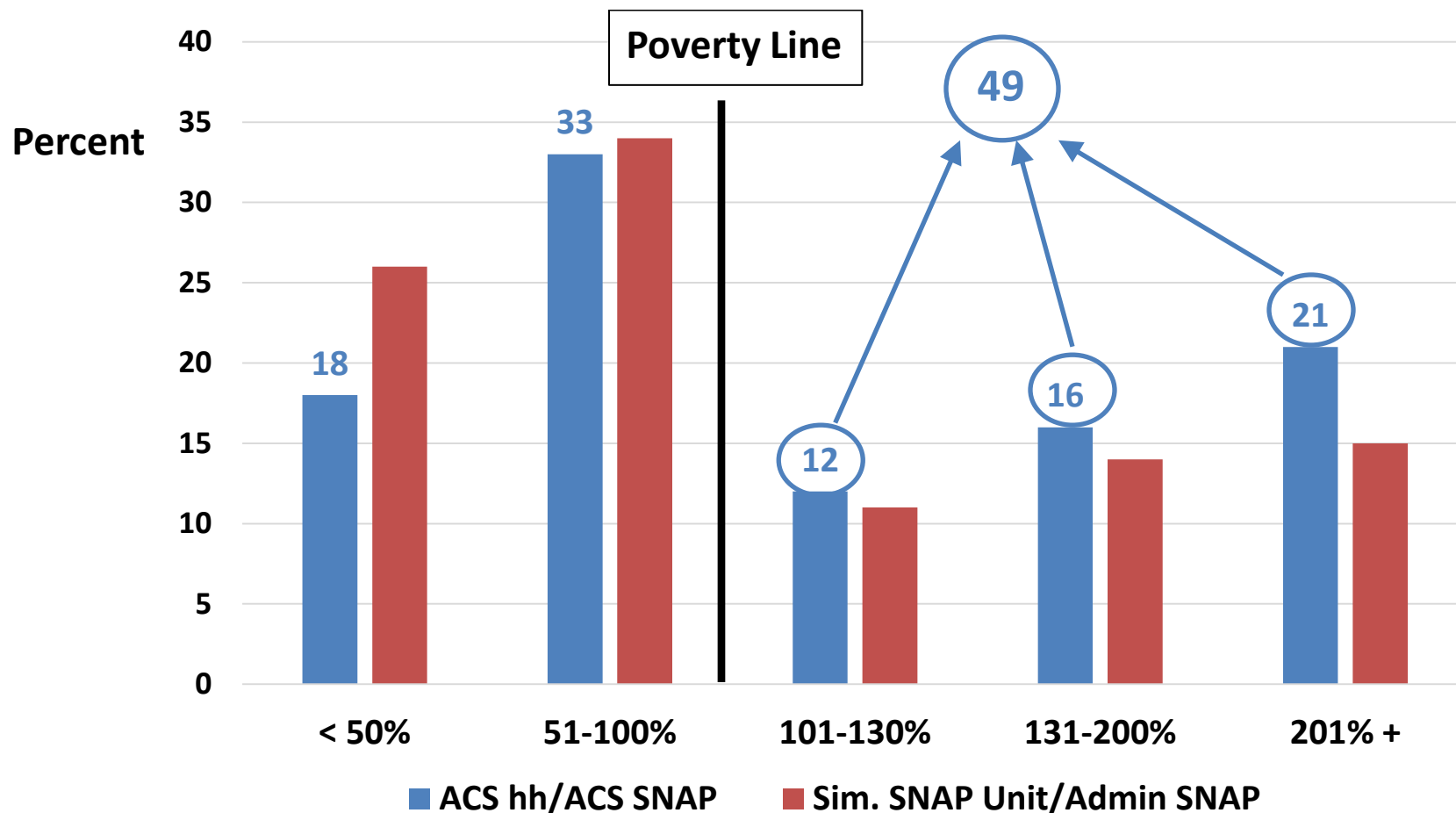
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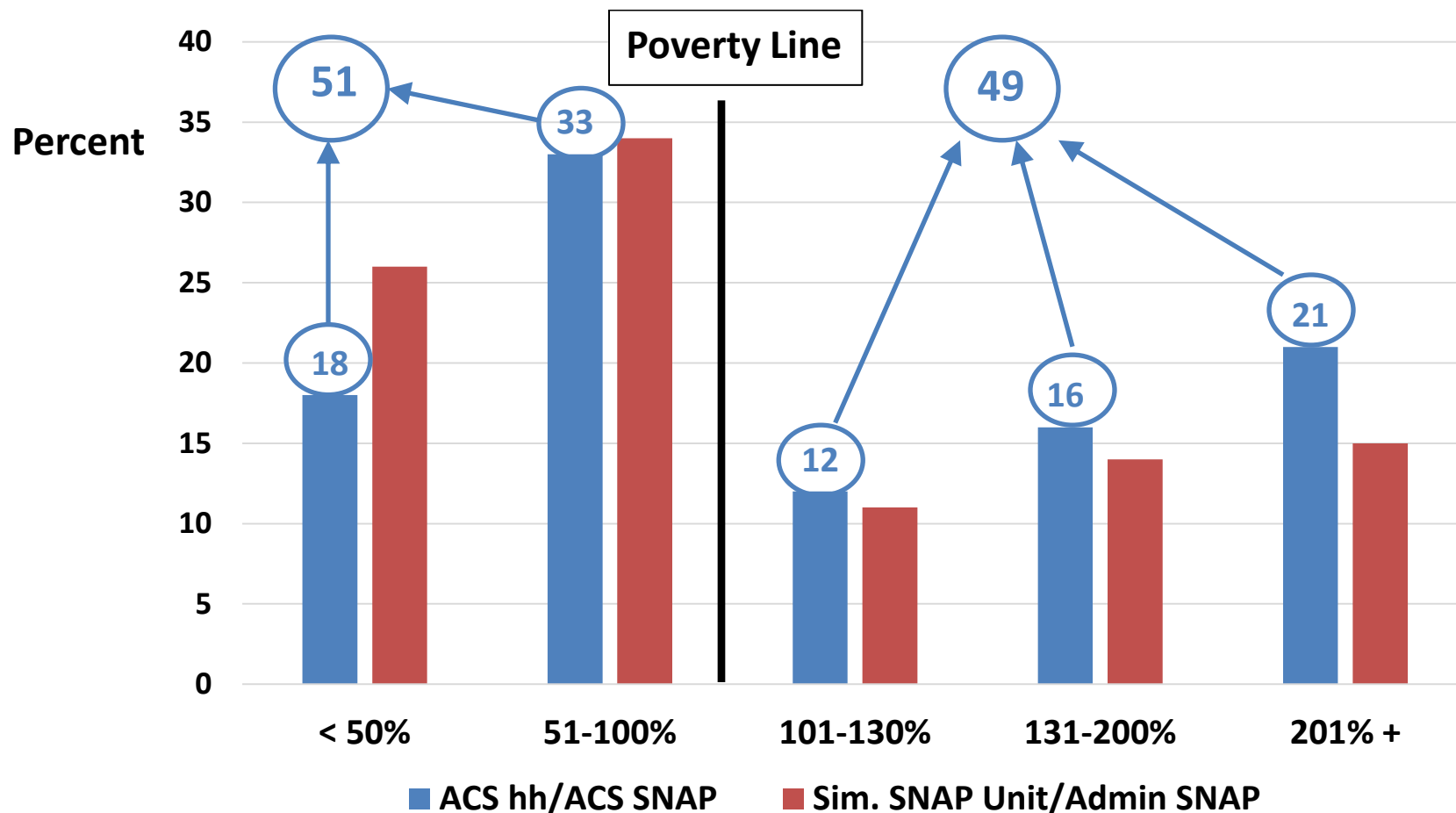
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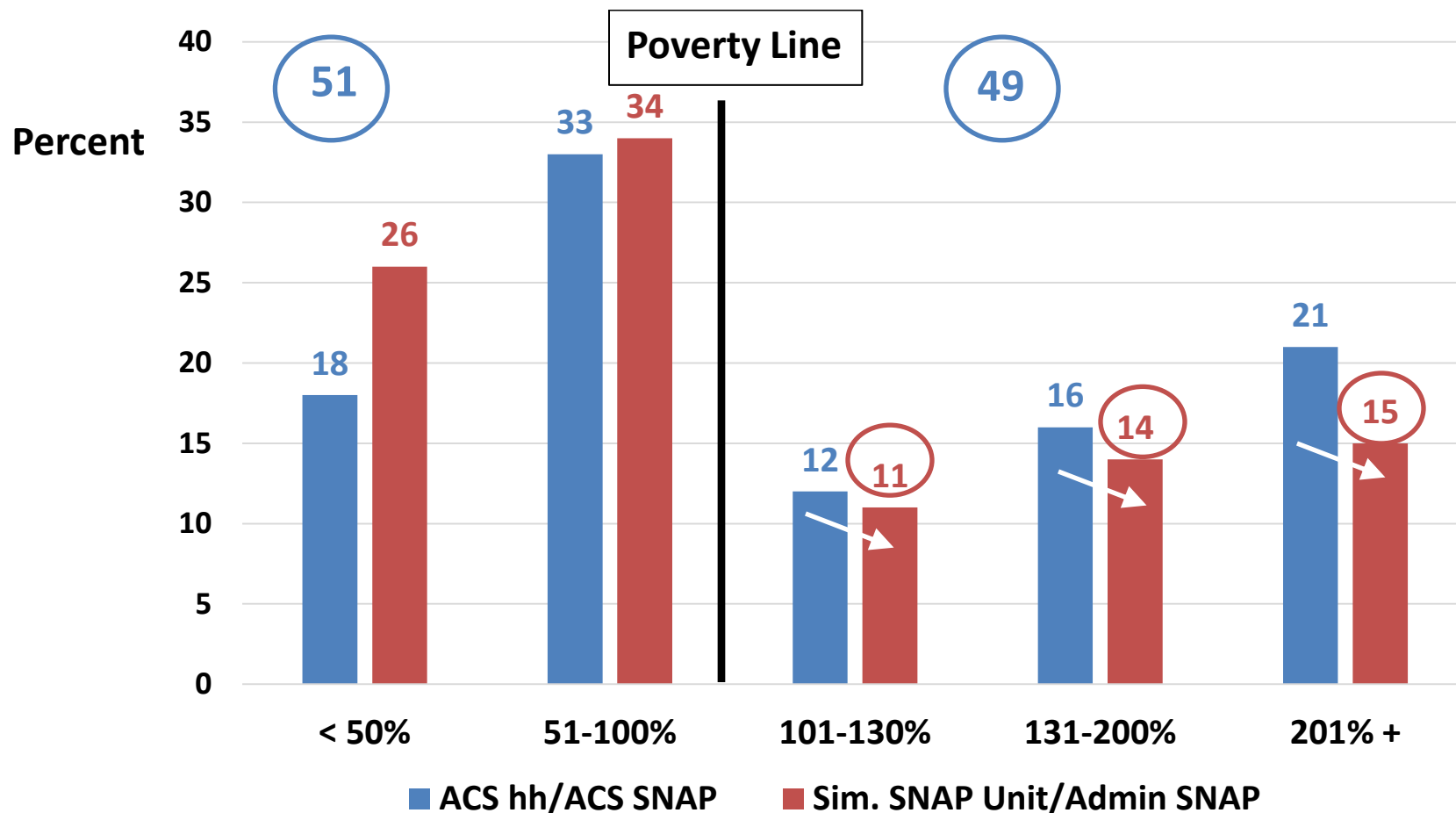
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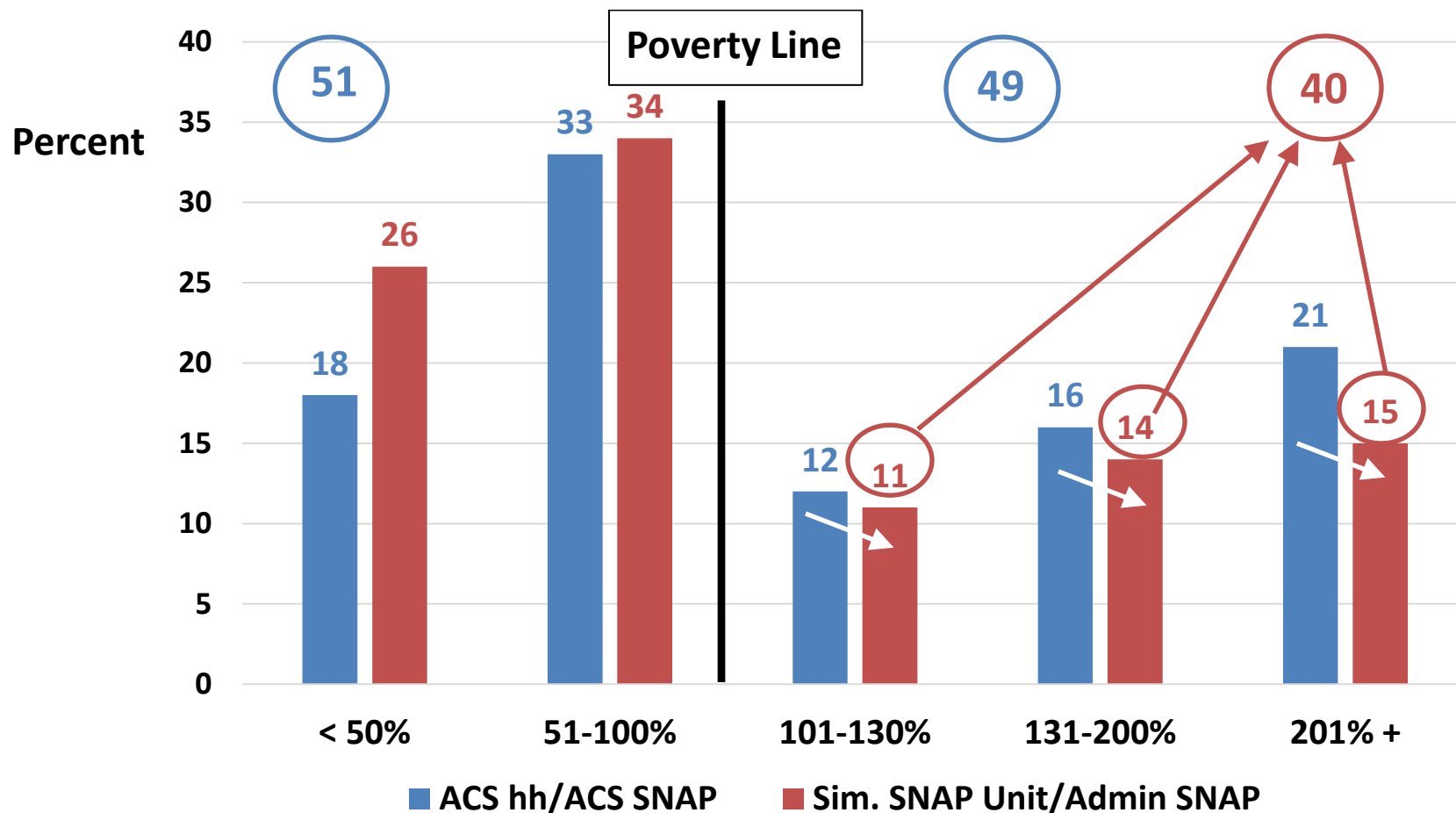
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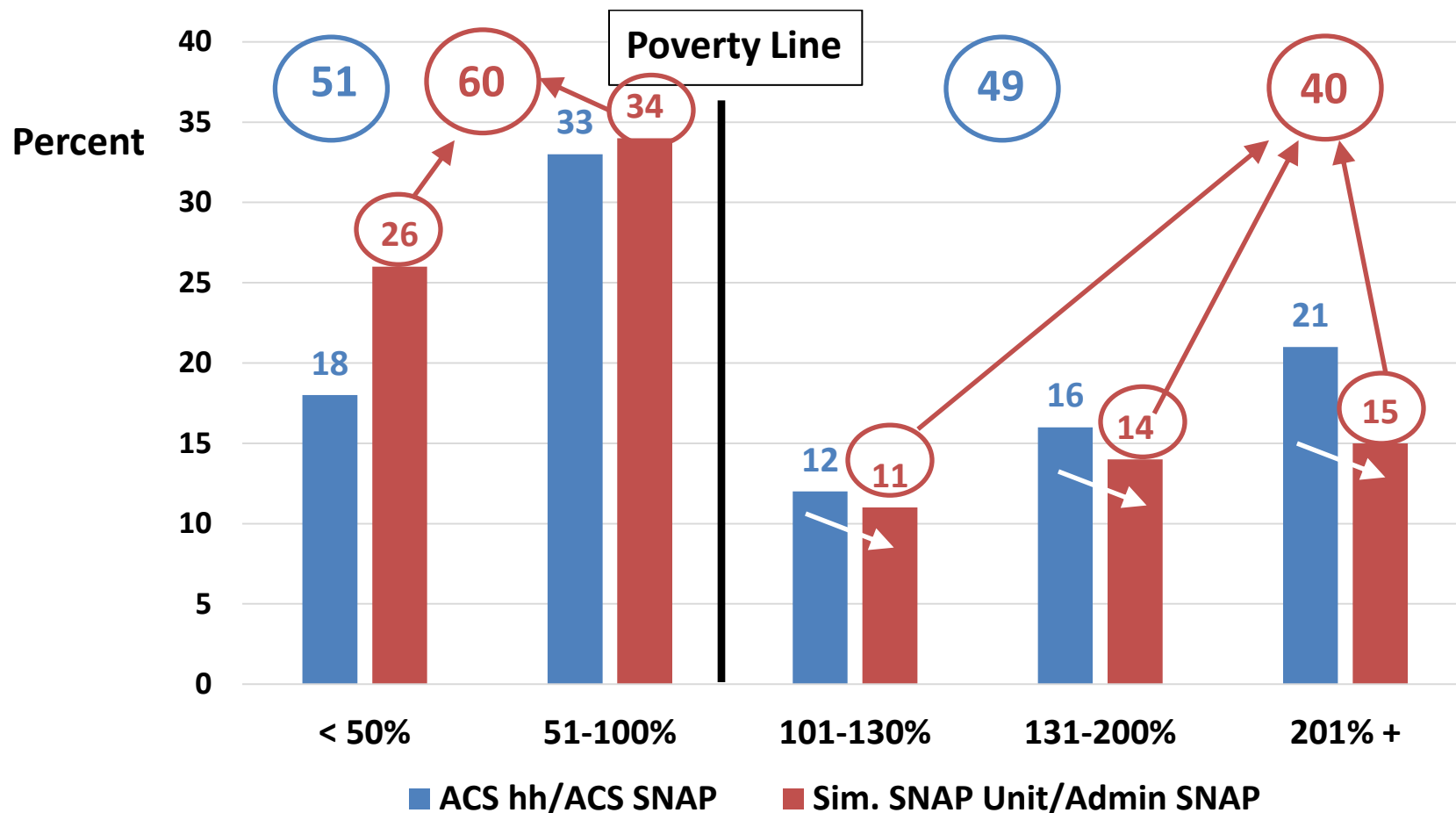
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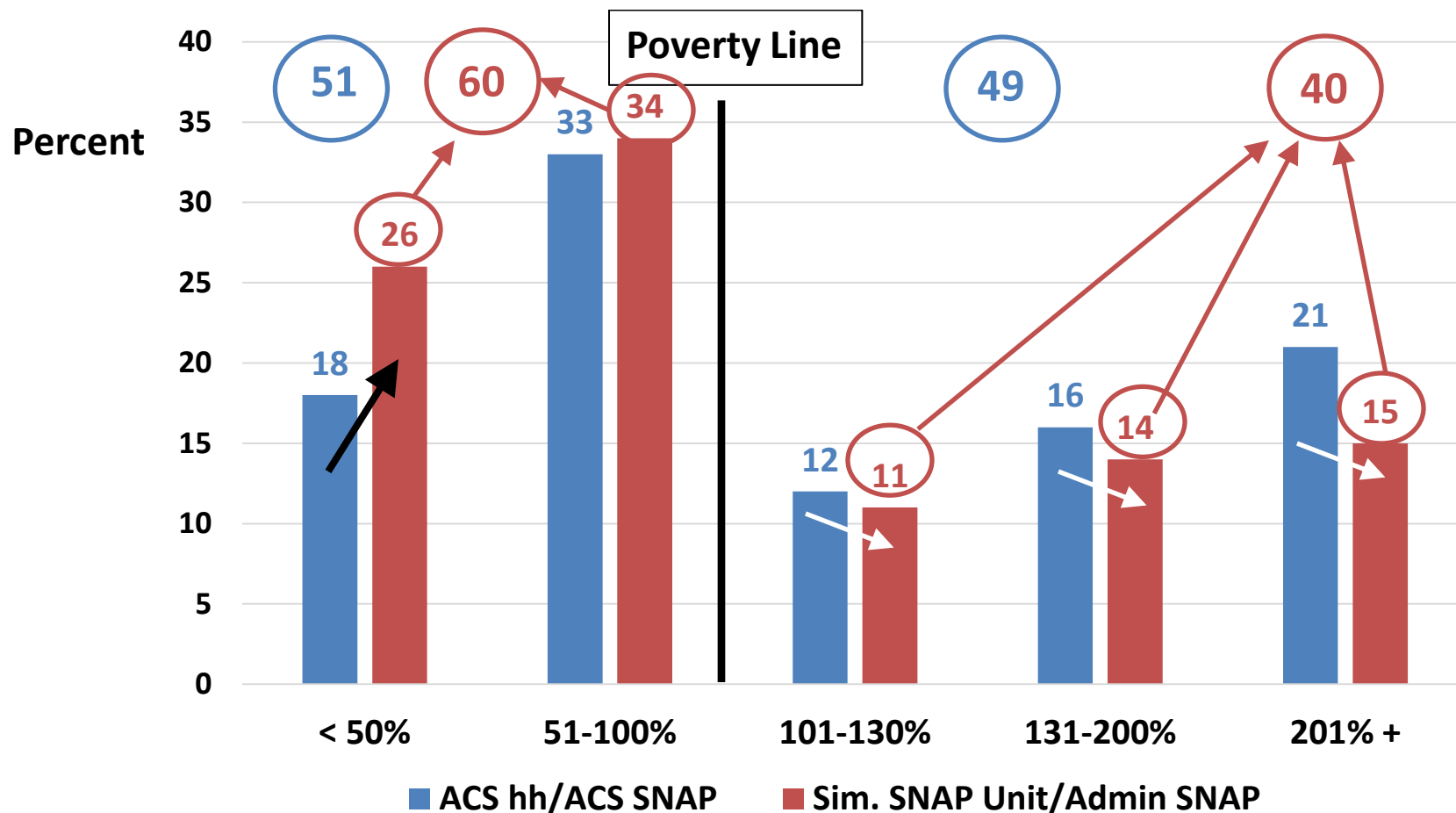
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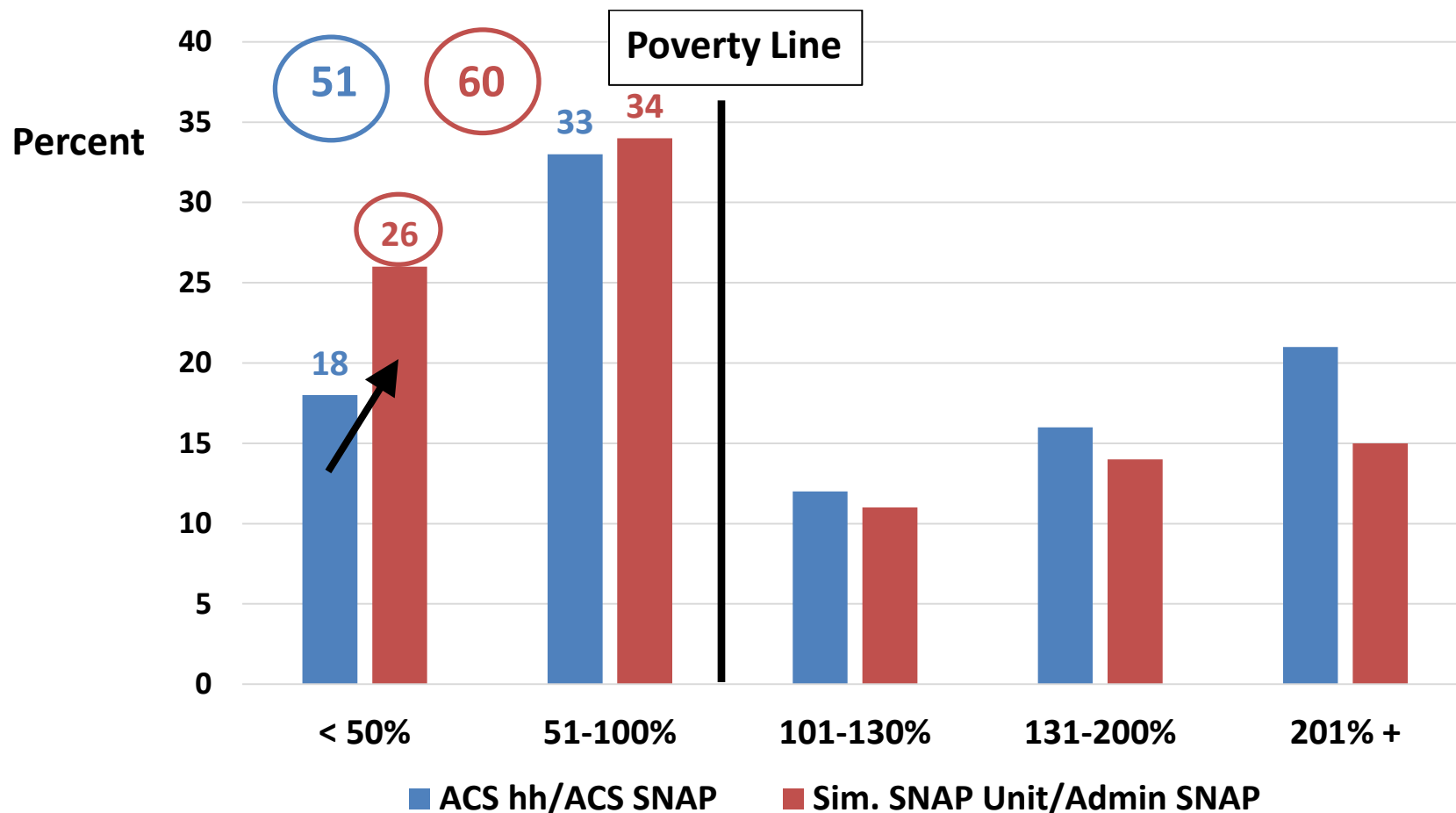
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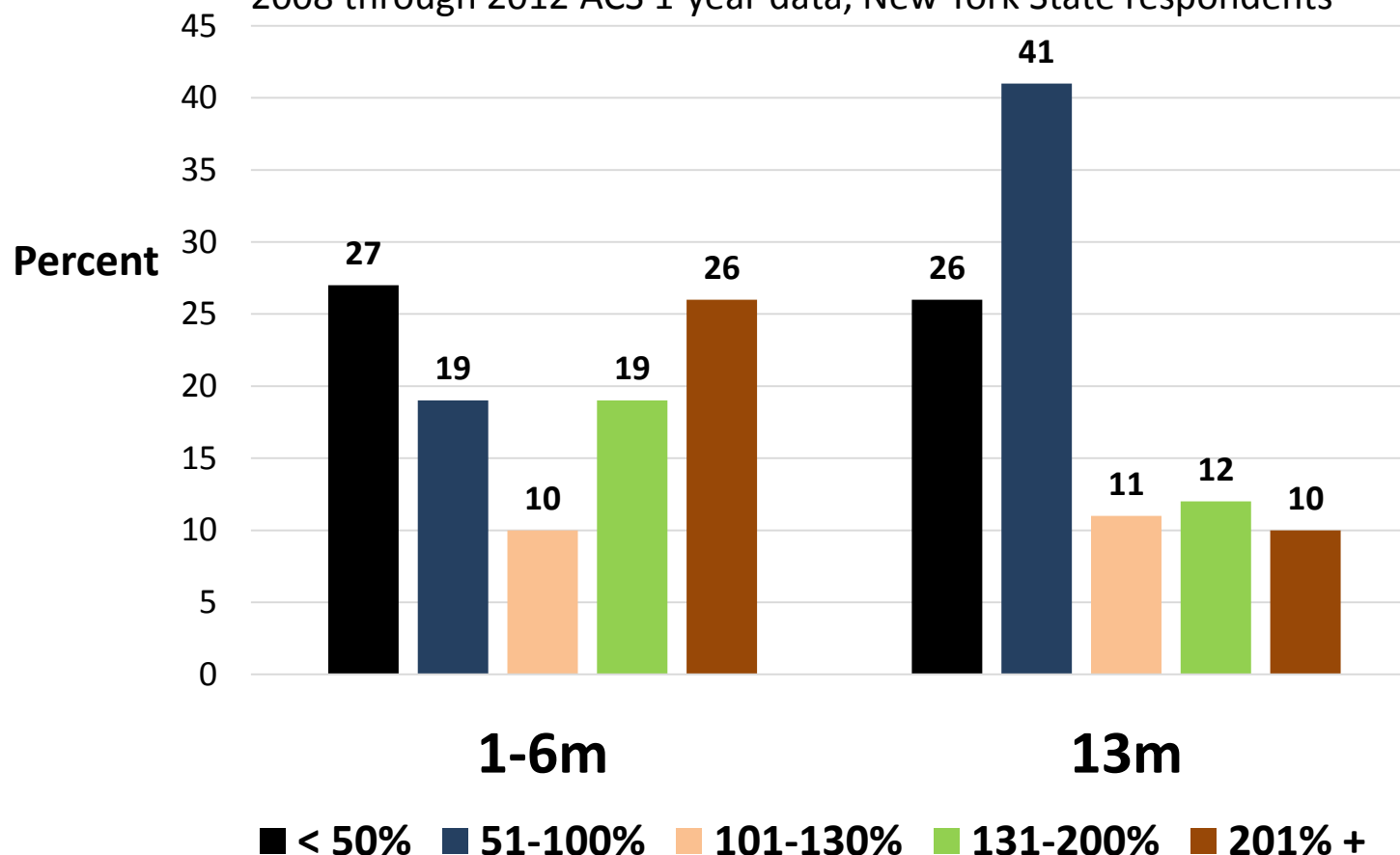
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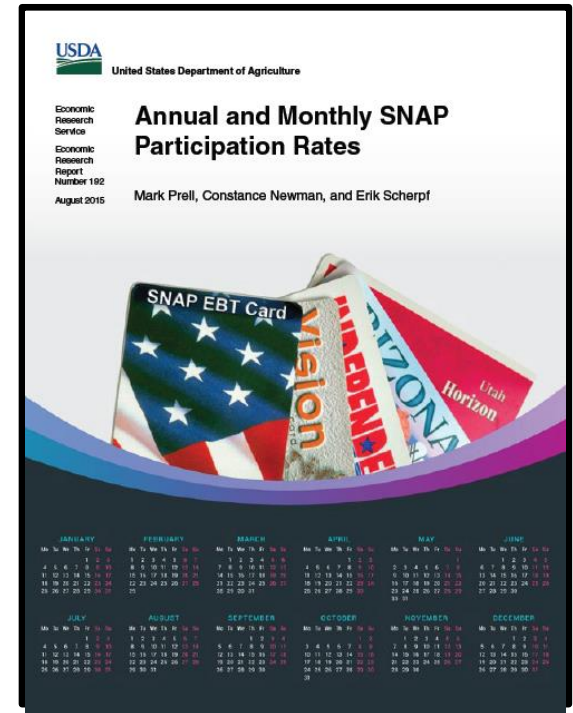
Dist'n of Income, Sim. SNAP units, by Months of SNAP Receipt

2008 through 2012 ACS 1-year data, New York State respondents



3. SNAP Dynamics

(Prell et al., 2015)



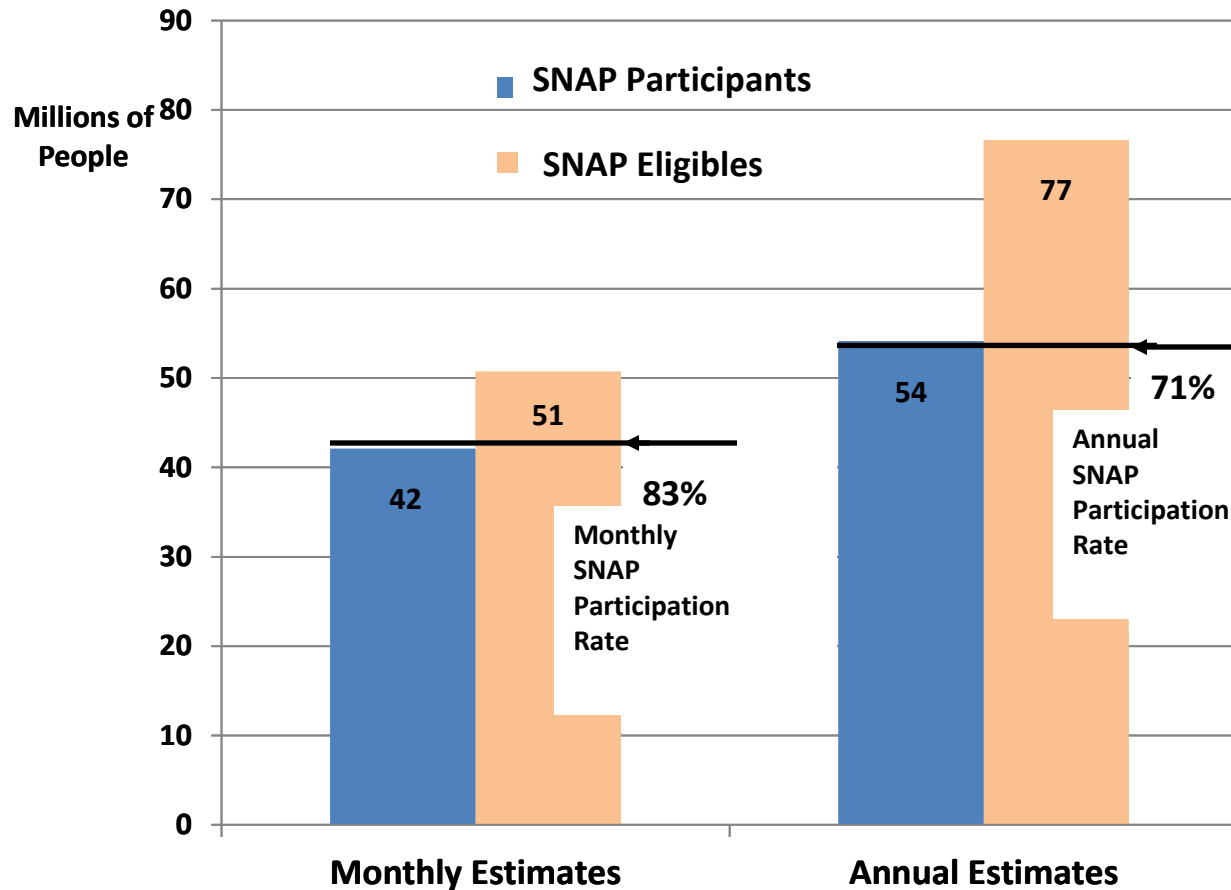
Annual SNAP part. rate complements Monthly SNAP part. rate

- Federal survey data on SNAP participation frequently use an *annual timeframe*
 - “Did you receive SNAP at some time during year?”
- If use annual timeframe for participation, important to use annual timeframe for estimating eligibles
- Annual participation rate differs from Monthly rate
 - reflects a different mix of subgroups (e.g. elderly, disabled, working poor)



Main result: Monthly Rate > Annual Rate

(2012 data)



New York Results Using Admin Data (2012)

- Monthly SNAP participation rate of 80%
- Annual SNAP participation rate of 75%



Why Monthly part. rate > Annual part. rate

Monthly eligibles tend to be people
with *more* months of eligibility



People with more months of eligibility
access SNAP at *higher* rates

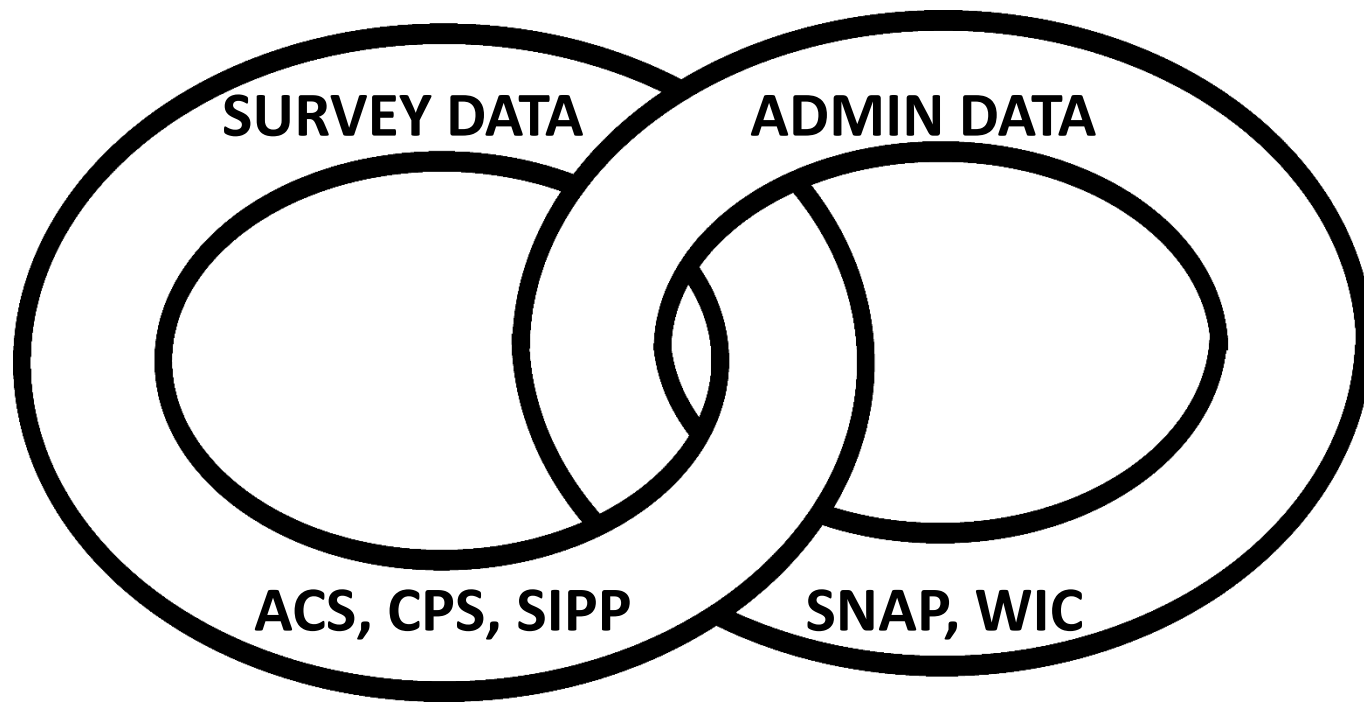


Monthly SNAP participation rate
exceeds the Annual SNAP participation rate



SUMMARY:

Benefits of multiple data sources



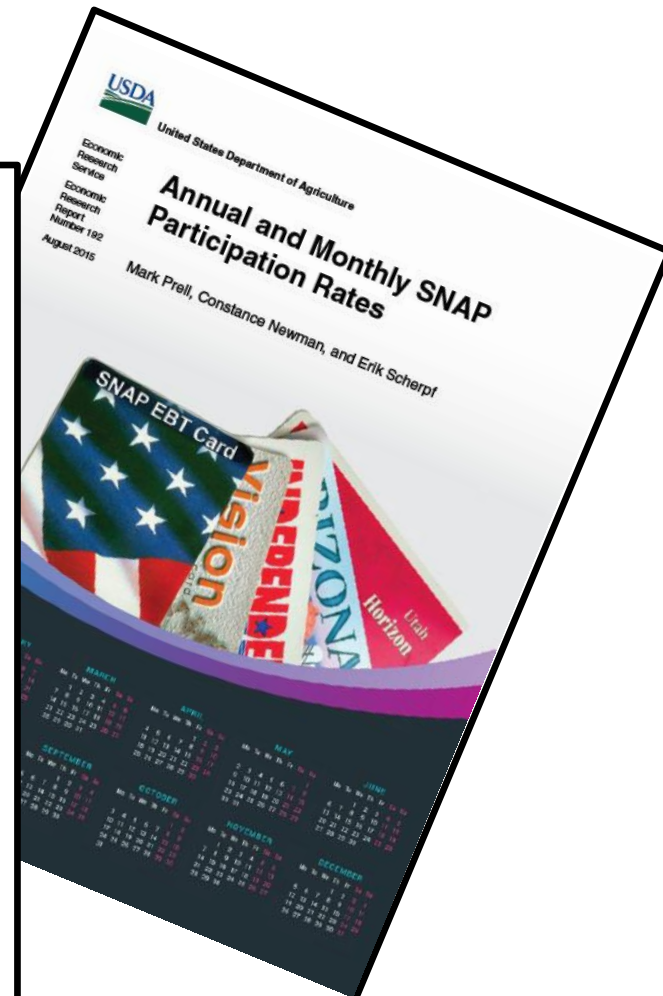
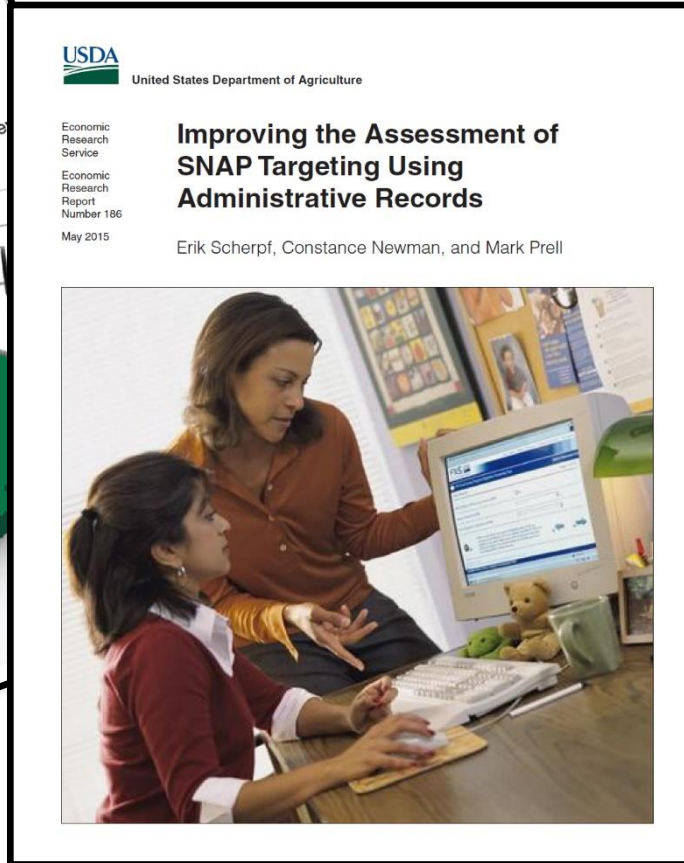
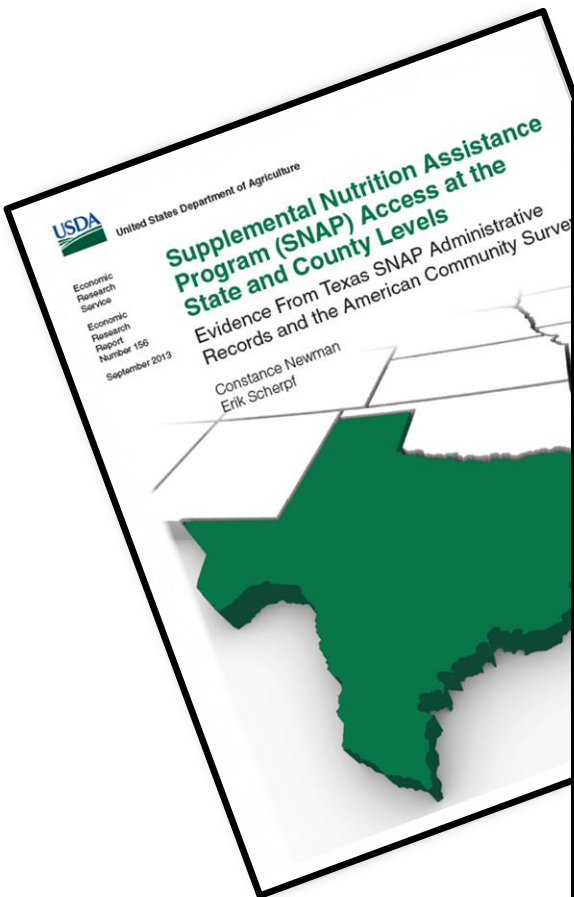
*Catch these full-length blockbusters
on the web!*



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Catch these full-length blockbusters on the web!





United States Department of Agriculture

Thanks!

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and a cast of thousands

