

## **Children Receiving OASDI and SSI by State and County, 1970-2019: Description and Fifty Years of Data**

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### **Key Findings and Policy Implications**

This database development project involved the compilation of digitization county-level data on OASDI and SSI benefits to children from 1970 to 2019. The data were compiled from historical SSA publications, including *Social Security Beneficiaries by State and County*, *OASDI Beneficiaries by State and County*, and *SSI Recipients by State and County*. Among the program participation rates and trends identified in the data:

- Child eligibility for SSI benefits is based on disability. The average rate of SSI child enrollment has increased over time from 0.2% of the minor population in 1975 to around two percent since 2010. Sorting counties by rates of SSI receipt among children, counties at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile had between 2.05- and 2.32-times higher receipt rates than counties at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile throughout the 1985 to 2019 period.
- OASDI benefits are provided to the minor children of active beneficiaries, the surviving minor children of deceased beneficiaries, and some adult children with disabilities. Survivor's insurance is the largest source of child Social Security benefits, making up nearly half of child beneficiaries, though with a gradually decreasing share through 2012. Social Security retirement insurance has the fewest child beneficiaries, accounting for between 11 and 17 percent of child beneficiaries throughout the 1980-2019 period. The portion of child beneficiaries receiving benefits through SSDI increased gradually through 2012, peaking at 43 percent of beneficiaries, and declined slightly thereafter.

While aggregate rates and trends are important in understanding the scope of Social Security's impact on families, the compilation of county-level data also enables more detailed distributional analyses, and scientific exploration of how program participation is affected by state and local policies, socioeconomic and demographic factors, labor market considerations and other factors. To facilitate the future analytical value of the new database, other county-level data have been merged with the program participation data, and relationships between geographically identified influences and county-level participation rates are being explored.

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