

Young parents comprise a vulnerable group of the population, especially from the perspective of the children whose livelihoods depend on them. As the labor market grows increasingly precarious and less secure, while at the same time the processes of educational attainment, marriage, and the formation of households become increasingly complex and less linear over time, young parents and young parent households may face heightened risks. In particular, these parents may be more disconnected from the social safety net, potentially leaving themselves and their children vulnerable to experiencing poverty and material deprivation.

In this study, we will examine this group historically to identify key trends, document the role of government policies in improving young parents' poverty outcomes over time, and examine changes in young parents' family budgets and living arrangements both over time and over the early stage of the life course.

To answer our research questions, we will use data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) dating to 1973 that includes a historical version of the Census' and Bureau of Labor Statistics' Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM). These data provide all of the sources of income accounted for in the SPM. We will construct five-year CPS data sets for each decade, the first covering 1973 to 1977, and the following from 1983 to 1987, and so on such that our last dataset will cover 2013 to 2017. With these data sets, we will first identify young mothers (i.e., all women under the age of 25 who have resident children) and identify the demographic characteristics of this group during years represented in the data. We will then determine the amount of income (in 2017 US dollars) to which young mothers had access according to the following definitions.

- *Individual Earnings*: Mother's income from wages, business, or farm income
- *Partner's Earnings*: Spouse or domestic partner's income from wages, business, or farm income
- *Cash Transfers*: Total income from Social Security, TANF, SSI, UI, Worker's Compensation, and Veterans Benefits received by the mother, their partner, and her child(ren)
- *In-Kind Transfers*: Total income from WIC, SNAP, LIHEAP, School Lunch and housing subsidies received by the mother, their partner, and her children

We will then determine the average incomes within each income category across all young mothers for selected years. Figure one below presents the corresponding outcomes for

young mothers whose eldest resident child was born when the mother was between 22 to 24 from the most recent 5-year file, which is pooled across the 2013 to 2017 waves of the CPS.

Additionally, we will examine the composition of young mothers' budgets and each income source as a percentage of total incomes, as shown in Figure 2 below for the years 2013 to 2017.

As suggested by Figures 1 and 2, cash and in-kind transfers comprise a fairly small share of the household income of young mothers, both in absolute dollar terms and as a percentage of total income. While these figures represent only the past decade, we will investigate these trends over the economic, political, and demographic shifts that have shaped the lives of young mothers in the United States over the past half century.

