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## Oh, SNAP!: A Comparison of Food Insecurity Across Four Counties

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RESEARCH / CREATIVE PROJECT ABSTRACT / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
FINAL REPORT FORM

Title of Project

Oh, SNAP!: A Comparison of Food Insecurity Across Four Counties

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 Student Name Aleyna Hunt & Sociology Club

 Faculty Sponsor Aurea Osgood

 Department Sociology

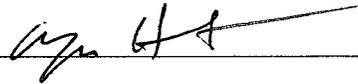
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## Abstract

Food insecurity is an important and growing issue in the United States. As of 2012, 15.9% of individuals in the United States were food insecure. The USDA defines food insecurity as, "Consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year." Our research will compare food insecurity across four counties in Nebraska (Hall and Douglas) and Minnesota (Winona and Ramsey). This poster will include information about two programs aimed at the food insecure: Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We will explore the usage of these two programs across the counties. Policy recommendations will also be included to address food insecurity within these counties.

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The end product of this project in electronic format has been submitted to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs via the Office of Grants & Sponsored Projects Officer (Maxwell 161, npeterson@winona.edu).

 Student Signature  Date 4/8/14

 Faculty Sponsor Signature  Date 4/8/14

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# Oh, SNAP!

## A Comparison of Food Insecurity Across Four Counties

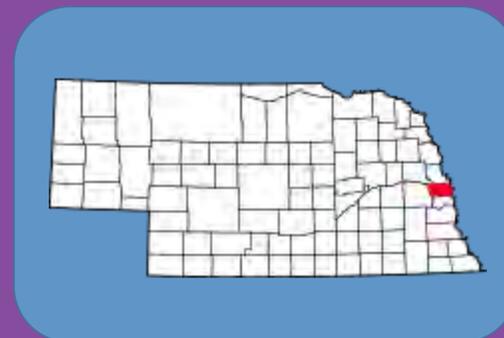
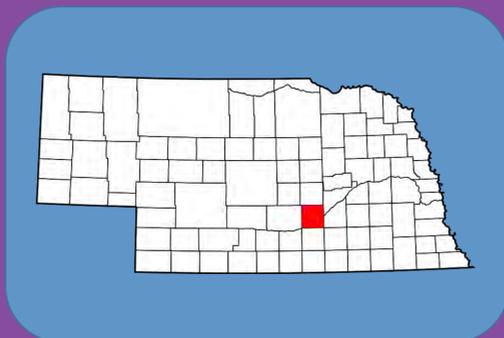
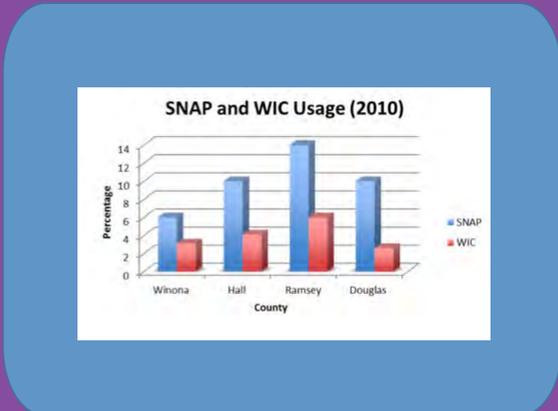


**Introduction to SNAP**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a program for low-income individuals and families that provides food-purchasing assistance. This program provides eligible individuals and families with proper nutritional guidelines and monthly allocations for food. SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program in the U.S. In 2012, nearly 47 million persons (in 23 million households) were receiving SNAP benefits. This program works with state agencies and nutrition educators to be sure those eligible are educated enough to make proper food choices.

**Introduction to WIC**

Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a program designated to help pregnant women, postpartum women, and children under the age of five with nutrition assistance. Currently, WIC serves more than half of all infants born in the U.S. and more than 8 million total participants. This program supplies women and children with healthy food and beverage options to be sure the child is nourished in the best way possible. WIC is a federal program that was established in 1972 that has done a lot for families since then.



### Winona County, MN

Winona County is located in southeast Minnesota and has a population of approximately 52,000. Education and health care are the most common industries. Winona County also has a large population of college students, with three major colleges in the area. Over the past few years, the majority of people in Winona County voted for the Democratic Party.

Of the four counties, Winona has the second highest percent of persons below the poverty level (16%), while also having the lowest percent of people using SNAP (6%). It has nearly half the percent of persons under 5 years of age (4.8%) compared to Hall County (8.2%), and a slightly lower rate of persons using WIC (3.1%) than Hall County (4.1%). Additionally, Winona County has only a slightly higher unemployment rate (4.9%) than Hall County (4.5%).

### Hall County, NE

Hall County is located in the mid-southern region of Nebraska and is home to more than 60,000 people. Twenty-seven percent of the population is under 18 years of age. Although three colleges are located within the region, only 16.8% of the population has a Bachelor's Degree. The major industries of the area are health care and food. These two industries make up 30% of the job market and also contribute to the lowest unemployment rate (4.5%) of the four counties as well as the lowest poverty rate (11.9%).

Although Hall County has the lowest unemployment and poverty rates, that does not stand true in terms of WIC and SANP participation. Ten percent of the population depends on SNAP and 4% rely on WIC for food assistance.

### Ramsey County, MN

Ramsey County is located in eastern central Minnesota and includes 18 cities (the largest of which is St. Paul), one township, and two unincorporated communities. The population of Ramsey County is 520,152. The two most common industries in Ramsey County are education and health care. Ramsey County is home to over 20 colleges and universities. Sixty-six percent of this county voted Democrat in 2012.

Ramsey County has a higher unemployment rate (5.3%) than Douglas County, and it also has a higher percent of people using SNAP (14%) and WIC (6%) than does Douglas County. In fact, of the four counties, Ramsey County has the highest rate of SNAP and WIC participation, while also having the highest rate of unemployment and percent of persons living below the poverty line.

### Douglas County, NE

Douglas County is located on the eastern border of Nebraska and is home to a quarter of Nebraska's residents at 531,265 people. Douglas County has a broad economy with the most common industries being health care and education. The majority political party in Douglas is the Republican Party. Douglas County is also home to 13 different colleges. The unemployment rate (4.9%) is lower than the national average and Ramsey County.

The poverty rate is also lower for Douglas County at 13.3% compared to Ramsey County at 16.4%. In 2010, Douglas County had fewer people using SNAP (10%) than Ramsey (14%). However, Ramsey County's SNAP program has a higher annual benefit, allotting \$1,452 to each person, as compared to only \$1,340 in Douglas County.

Indicator (2010)	Winona County	Hall County	Ramsey County	Douglas County
Population Size	51,629	60,345	520,152	531,265
Persons 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree	26.2%	39.2%	36.2%	16.8%
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	4.5%	5.3%	4.9%
Persons Below the Poverty Level	16%	11.9%	16.4%	13.3%
SNAP Enrollment	6%	10%	14%	10%
WIC Enrollment	3.1%	4.1%	6%	2.6%

References: [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org); [www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/map\\_of\\_the\\_week/2013/04/food\\_stamp\\_resipients\\_by\\_county\\_an\\_interactive\\_tool\\_showing\\_local\\_snap\\_data.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/map_of_the_week/2013/04/food_stamp_resipients_by_county_an_interactive_tool_showing_local_snap_data.html); [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com); <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic>; <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>