

POVERTY & FAMILY SUPPORTS

FACT SHEET

Public Programs Lift Millions of Women and Children Out of Poverty

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Public social insurance and safety net programs are critical to the economic security of women and families.¹ Some of these programs are counted in the official poverty measure and lift millions of people out of poverty. Others, primarily non-cash benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) and tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), are not counted in the official poverty measure but boost the incomes of millions above the poverty line.²

Social Security, the EITC, SNAP, unemployment insurance, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are five key programs that lifted families' incomes above the official poverty line in 2013.³

- **Social Security** is a social insurance program that protects workers and their families when income is lost due to retirement, disability, or death. It covers nearly all workers and their families, not just those with low incomes, but is the nation's most successful anti-poverty program. Social Security lifted more than 22.1 million people out of poverty:

- o More than 14.7 million people 65 and older, including nearly 8.7 million older women;
- o More than 6.2 million adults 18-64, including nearly 3.3 million women; and
- o Almost 1.2 million children.

- The **EITC** supplements wages for low- and moderate-income working families. The EITC lifted the incomes of more than 5.3 million people above the poverty line:

- o Nearly 2.6 million adults 18 and older, including almost 1.5 million women; and
- o More than 2.7 million children.

- **SNAP** benefits help millions of families put food on the table. SNAP lifted the incomes of more than 3.6 million people above the poverty line, including:

- o More than 302,000 people 65 and older, including nearly 216,000 women;
- o Nearly 1.9 million adults 18-64, including over 1.1 million women; and
- o Almost 1.5 million children.

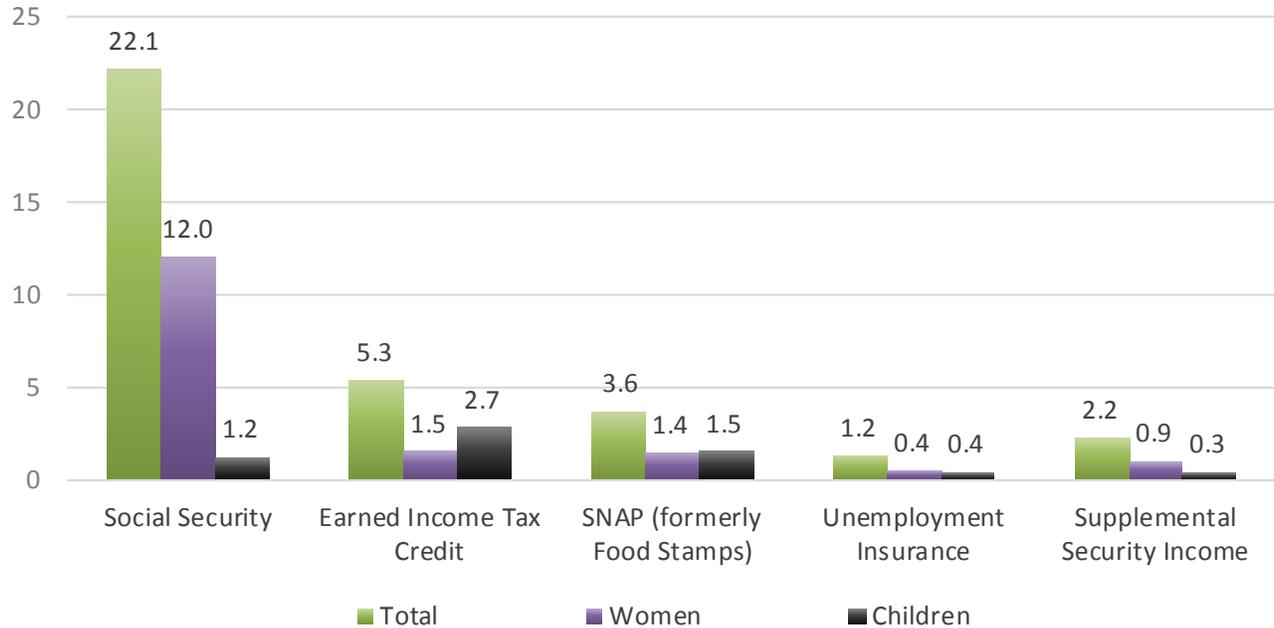
- **Unemployment insurance** benefits provide temporary income support to eligible jobless workers who have lost employment through no fault of their own. Unemployment insurance kept more than 1.2 million people from falling into poverty:

- o More than 868,000 adults, including nearly 427,000 women 18 and older and
- o More than 358,000 children.

- **SSI** provides income support for low-income individuals who are elderly or living with disabilities. SSI lifted nearly 2.2 million people out of poverty:

- o Almost 423,000 people 65 and older, including nearly 263,000 women;
- o More than 1.4 million adults 18-64, including almost 680,000 women; and
- o More than 347,000 children.

Number of People Whose Incomes were Lifted Above the Poverty Line in 2013, by Program (in millions)



Source: Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2014

www.nwlc.org 

Programs like Social Security, the EITC, SNAP, unemployment insurance, and SSI work—they move millions of women and children out of poverty and improve the economic security of millions more. They need to be protected and strengthened—not cut.

1 NWLC, Cutting Programs for Low-Income People Especially Hurts Women and Their Families (May 2014), available at <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/cutting-programs-low-income-people-especially-hurts-women-and-their-families>.

2 NWLC, FAQs about the Census Bureau's Official Poverty Measure (Sept. 2014), available at <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/faqs-about-census-bureau's-official-poverty-measure-1>.

3 All data on poverty are NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement 2014 (CPS ASEC) using CPS Table Creator, available at <http://www.census.gov/cps/data/cpstablecreator.html> (last visited Oct. 16, 2014).