

No Calm Before the Storm: Low-Income Latina Immigrant and Citizen Mothers Before and After COVID-19



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Government pandemic provisions occurred alongside a safety net that excludes or dissuades Latina mothers from participation. These families are also disproportionately exposed to punitive immigration policies and rhetoric that may shape their views on such provisions and, in turn, influence their post-pandemic well-being. To understand these complexities, we draw on interviews before and after COVID-19 with thirty-eight Latina immigrant and citizen mothers, most of whom are undocumented (N = 29). We find that pre-pandemic distrust of public institutions and the safety net was common, increased after COVID-19, and negatively affected undocumented respondents' post-pandemic circumstances relative to that of citizen mothers. Findings suggest that safety net expansion on its own will not offset pandemic effects for these families without addressing exclusion from public benefits and alienation from and distrust of government.

Keywords: COVID-19, safety net, undocumented, immigrant, government trust

The pandemic brought unprecedented interruptions in work (Holzer 2020) and family life along with ensuing hardships for many, especially women with children, who fared comparatively worse than men in reported mental health deterioration (Kantor and Kantor 2020; Anderson 2021) and under- or unemployment (Dias, Chance, and Buchanan 2020; Alon et al. 2021; Yavorsky, Qian, and Sargent 2021). Gen-

dered pandemic disparities are associated with women's disproportionate pandemic-era child-care responsibilities, even in dual-partner households (Bateman and Ross 2020; Calarco et al. 2021). The pandemic was particularly deleterious, however, for low-income women with children (Ranji et al. 2021), who endured some of the largest work and income reductions following COVID-19 (Ananat and Gassman-Pines

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2020), although the implementation of federal pandemic provisions reduced poverty and hardships for many (Raphael and Schneider 2023, this issue; Bitler, Hoynes, and Schanzenbach 2023, this issue) including low-income families (Cooney and Shaefer 2021; Wahdat 2022; Acs and Karpman 2020).

Emerging evidence, however, suggests that low-income Latine families endured comparatively higher job losses and rates of material and food hardships in the aftermath of COVID-19 (Gupta, Gonzalez, and Waxman 2020; Parolin, Curran, and Wimer 2020). These patterns of hardship among Latine families continued even after pandemic provisions were made available (Hernandez-Castro et al. 2022; Hibel et al. 2021), especially among Latina immigrant women (Sáenz and Sparks 2020) who were disproportionately less likely to enroll in safety net programs in the aftermath of the pandemic, potentially further exacerbating socioeconomic hardships (Touw et al. 2021; Elliott et al. 2021; for pandemic effects, including resource seeking, among Latine elder immigrants, see Calvo and Waters 2023, this issue).

Some evidence points to inequities in eligibility determination and program treatment as a barrier to safety net enrollment for Latina immigrant and citizen mothers following COVID-19 (Elliott et al. 2021). Although this line of scholarship confirms long-standing inequitable treatment of this group in means-tested programs (see, for example, Schram et al. 2009) remains common in the pandemic era, it does not consider pre-pandemic views on or experiences with the state, nor the common exclusion or dissuasion of Latina mothers from safety net participation. Indeed, from the Great Depression to the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act and its aftermath (PRWORA), an expansive literature demonstrates exclusion or dissuasion of Latina mothers, especially those who are undocumented, and citizen mothers from public provisions through formal policy rules (Quadagno 1994; Bitler and Hoynes 2011; Kullgren 2003; Fix and Passel 1999; Ellwood and Ku 1998; Fox 2016) or treatment by frontline staff (Schram et al. 2009; Fording, Schram, and Soss 2013; Einstein and Glick 2017; Monnat 2010; Gooden 2004). This context suggests that experiences

with and perceptions of government and public provisions prior to the pandemic may have influenced low-income Latina immigrant and citizen mothers' resource seeking in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Social and political factors also shape low-income Latina mothers use of public provisions. For instance, deportation threat, the constant threat of deportation shaped by immigration status and potential enforcement, significantly reduces Latina immigrant mothers' enrollment in safety net programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP), SNAP for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (Vargas and Pirog 2016), Supplemental Security Income (Alsan and Yang 2018), parental employment (East et al. 2018) and Latino children's school enrollment (Dee and Murphy 2020). These reductions occur even when undocumented mothers' citizen children are eligible for such supports including child-care (Yoshikawa and Kalil 2011; Ha and Ybarra 2014), and public health insurance (Ybarra, Ha, and Chang 2017). Anti-immigration political rhetoric has also been found to instill fear among immigrants and, in turn, reduce use of public provisions (Vernice et al. 2020; Hatzenbuehler et al. 2017; Blackburn and Sierra 2021), which was further exacerbated during the Donald Trump administration (Callaghan et al. 2019; Canizales and Vallejo 2021; Morey 2018). These factors might also contribute to distrust of government, which in turn affects trust in other public institutions (Cruz Nichols, LeBrón, and Pedraza 2018). Thus, in addition to safety net restrictions, a confluence of factors may influence public program participation and well-being among low-income Latine immigrant and citizen families.

This article expands the literature on the socioeconomic well-being of low-income Latina immigrant and citizen mothers with children in the early pandemic period by considering safety net restrictions and social and political contexts that might also affect program participation and well-being more generally. To this end, we consider the exclusionary or dissuasive nature of the safety net for low-income Latina undocumented immigrant and citizen women and trust in public institutions as these factors likely shape pandemic-era resource seeking. To

do so, we draw on semistructured interviews with thirty-eight Latina immigrant and citizen mothers in Chicago, most of whom are undocumented ($N = 29$) in the year before and six months after COVID-19.

EARLY PANDEMIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING AMONG IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

Work and income losses were significant in the early aftermath of the pandemic—by May 2020 a substantial minority of workers, 43.4 percent, reported someone in their family had experienced a job loss (for more on employment and the pandemic, see Raphael and Schneider 2023, this issue; Landivar et al. 2023, this issue; Ravenelle and Newton 2023, this issue). Rates of job and income losses were most pronounced among low-income Latine families (Acs and Karpman 2020), especially those with at least one noncitizen in the household (Gonzalez et al. 2020; Sáenz and Sparks 2020), suggesting that immigrant households were at a comparatively distinct socioeconomic disadvantage. Moreover, Latina women were significantly more likely than white women to experience job loss (Gezici and Ozay 2020; Gould, Perez, and Rawlston-Wilson 2020; Gould and Rawlston-Wilson 2020; Hegewisch 2021; BLS 2020; see also Raphael and Schneider 2023, this issue; Landivar et al. 2023, this issue). It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that low-income Latina immigrant and citizen women reported comparatively higher rates of material hardship (Karpman et al. 2020; Gonzalez et al. 2020) and food insecurity (Lauren et al. 2021; Schanzenbach 2021) in the early aftermath of COVID-19.

Despite scholarship demonstrating deep job and income losses and high rates of poverty and hardship among Latine families and immigrant women in particular, we have little information on how low-income Latina immigrant, especially those who are undocumented, and citizen women coped with pandemic-era socioeconomic duress. This oversight is critical given that scholars point to the multilayered systems of marginalization low-income Latina

women with children endure. These women were more likely to work in industries hardest hit by the pandemic and incur job losses or work in essential jobs that may have kept them employed but also raised the risk of COVID-19 infections (Touw et al. 2021; Clark et al. 2020; Olayo-Méndez et al. 2021; Hernandez-Castro et al. 2022). Latina immigrant women, and immigrants in general, are excluded from public provisions, with few exceptions, including pandemic-era provisions (Kolker 2022). Taken together, these factors suggest that low-income Latina women with children, especially immigrants and those who are undocumented immigrants, may have had few places to turn in the aftermath of COVID-19, portending hardships for them and their children that likely affect their ability to recover from the pandemic era in the near and long term.

Federal Assistance

In response to the pandemic, the federal government instituted a host of provisions to attenuate economic hardships in the United States, including three rounds of stimulus checks to qualifying individuals and families, emergency SNAP benefits, and a dramatic expansion to unemployment insurance (UI) and other safety net benefits via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. Stimulus payments provided immediate cash to qualifying individuals and families—\$1,200 to individuals, \$2,400 to married couples, and an additional \$500 for each qualifying child.¹ These provisions proved essential to moderate and low-income households (see Bitler, Hoynes, and Schanzenbach 2023, this issue), but most immigrants were excluded from participation (Kolker 2022; Parmet 2021). These exclusions mirror those established as part of welfare reform that excluded undocumented immigrants entirely, placing a five-year ban on means-tested program participation for most other immigrants with few exceptions (Fix 2009).

At the same time, the citizen children of ineligible or excluded immigrants were and are still eligible to receive safety net benefits. None-

1. Moderate and low-income individuals and families received the full stimulus payment; higher income groups' stimulus payments were reduced by 5 percent of income above the cutoff.

theless, a large body of evidence finds that welfare reform's immigrant restrictions resulted in a chilling effect in program take-up among eligible immigrant families and the citizen children of immigrants (Van Hook 2003; Fix and Passel 1999; Kaushal and Kaestner 2005; Fix, Capps, and Kaushal 2009; Ziolo-Guest and Kalil 2012). In the case of pandemic provisions that occurred during this study's time frame, immigrants were excluded from receipt of stimulus payments and UI benefits; traditional safety net restrictions remained in place unless states used their resources to provide support to immigrant families, except for emergency Medicaid provisions (Kolker 2022). Stimulus payments were restricted even from households in which one parent was a citizen but the other was not, and for those who filed taxes with an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN, a common filing procedure for workers who are undocumented), thereby excluding not only working immigrant adults but also their children, who are overwhelmingly U.S. citizens (Kolker 2022).

Further hampering immigrant families' access to resources were the Trump administration's changes to the public charge rule that went into effect in February 2020, just as the pandemic was unfolding. The rule rendered immigrants who received most any public benefit ineligible for future legal status. It further exacerbated the chilling effects of the welfare reform era on immigrants and their children's participation in public programs despite citizen children's continued eligibility (Artiga and Rae 2020; Touw et al. 2021; Capps, Fix, and Batalova 2020; Barofsky et al. 2020; Galletly et al. 2022; Bustamante et al. 2022).

The Study

Evidence on pandemic provisions and safety net use paints a mixed picture of how low-income Latina immigrant and citizen mother families fared in the aftermath of COVID-19. Traditionally, these are women who have been excluded from safety net participation or dissuaded by punitive actions such as the sanctioning of benefits or poor caseworker treatment (Schram et al. 2009; Monnat 2010; Ernst, Nguyen, and Taylor 2013; Lee and Yoon 2012; Jennings and Santiago 2004). Yet low-income

Latina mothers are also disproportionately subject to other marginalizing forces such as deportation threat (Asad 2020; García Hernández 2014; Menjívar, Gómez Cervantes, and Alvord 2018) and anti-immigrant rhetoric, both of which have been found to reduce program participation among immigrant and citizen Latine families (Asad 2020; Vargas and Pirog 2016; Alsan and Yang 2018; Blackburn and Sierra 2021).

Taken together, these complexities suggest the convergence of distinct social positions bounded by citizenship status, the path dependency of a punitive or restrictive safety net, and social and political dynamics as influential in the socioeconomic well-being of low-income Latina mothers due to their exposure to overlapping systems of marginalization (Crenshaw 1991; Fox 2016). In this study, we account for a diversity of factors that might shape these families' well-being before and immediately after the pandemic. To do so, we explore three questions while considering differences that may emerge based on maternal immigration status: How were low-income Latina immigrant and citizen mothers' faring in the lead up to the pandemic in work, family, and safety net participation? What were the socioeconomic consequences of the early pandemic for these families? Did experiences with other related institutions influence socioeconomic well-being before and after COVID-19?

DATA AND METHODS

This study draws on data originally collected from a larger project on Chicago's municipal identification program, CityKey. Launched in May 2018, it originated in the Chicago City Clerk's office after collaboration with community-based organizations to determine how to structure the program to be inclusive of marginalized Chicagoans who are often without formal identification (ID), such as residents who are returning citizens or immigrants (including those who are undocumented) or residents who are low-income, living with a disability, housing insecure, or LGBTQI. To foster broad inclusion among a diversity of marginalized Chicagoans, CityKey was free to the first hundred thousand enrollees, did not retain any data on enrollees of the program, provided gender-affirming identifiers as options, was

distributed citywide at numerous locations (such as libraries, council offices, city hall, nonprofits, homes for the aged, and schools), and allowed for a host of documents as proof of residency, such as “care of” letters from local homeless shelters or letters from a landlord when formal leases were not in place.

In addition to fielding a survey with CityKey enrollees (May 2018–May 2019, $N = 7,459$), we also conducted in-depth, semistructured interviews with a stratified random sample of survey respondents in the year after program enrollment. Because we expected the positive effects of a municipal ID to primarily benefit those marginalized from the state such as immigrants, returning citizens, and Black and Latine citizens, we stratified our original interview sample across these groups ($N = 196$). In response to the pandemic, we reinterviewed our original interview sample in the months following the onset of COVID-19 (April 2020–September 2020). Overall, we reinterviewed 78 percent of our original interview sample ($N = 153$). For this study, we selected all interview respondents who participated in pre- and post-pandemic interviews, identified as women, had a minor dependent child, and were Latina immigrant or citizen respondents ($N = 38$).² Among our selected respondents, twenty-nine reported being undocumented, six were U.S. citizens, and three had a visa to live in the United States at the time of interview (see table A.1).

Semistructured individual interviews were conducted and audio recorded in the participant’s selected location for pre-pandemic interviews, and by phone for post-pandemic interviews. On average, pre-pandemic interviews lasted seventy-two minutes and post-pandemic ninety minutes. Both asked respondents about their perceptions of and experiences with political and institutional trust at the local, state,

and national level; neighborhood quality; work; health and well-being, and the social safety net. Post-pandemic interviews also asked about knowledge of public health measures, sources of information on the pandemic, and sources of trust and concern. Trained bicultural and bilingual interviewers were matched to respondents based on language competency (Spanish or English). When possible, interviewers who conducted pre-pandemic interviews were paired with the same respondent for post-pandemic interviews. For pre-pandemic interviews, respondents received \$50 compensation for their time; post-pandemic interviews were compensated at a rate of \$60.

Selected interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded using Dedoose, a qualitative analysis software program. Our analytic approach draws from Nicole Deterding and Mary Waters (2018), and involves first indexing transcripts and anchoring content to interview protocol questions and then applying analytic codes to emergent themes. Thus we created a set of a priori codes based on our interview protocol and then generated new codes for emergent themes and patterns. The codebook was refined in an iterative process of coding transcripts independently, discussing coding decisions as a team, modifying codebook rules, and finalizing the codebook. We then identified topics and patterns while refining our interpretations to understand pre- and post-pandemic patterns in institutional distrust, perspectives on and experiences with public provisions and resource seeking, socioeconomic well-being, and variations in these outcomes relative to citizenship and race across these two periods.³

RESULTS

Our findings highlight experiences with work and family, the safety net including pandemic provisions, government trust, and nonprofits

2. Undocumented status was determined by asking respondents a series of questions about their immigration status. Respondents were asked whether they were a citizen of the United States or were willing to share their immigration status. Responses included explicit answers such as “I am undocumented” or more colloquial references in Spanish of being undocumented, such as *aquí mojado*, *sin papeles*, or *no tengo nada*. If the participant did not respond, we drew on additional questions including whether they had a temporary Illinois driver’s license, which undocumented drivers in the state of Illinois carry, or an indication of their primary form of identification, whether foreign identification card such as a consular identification card or passport.

3. Respondent names are pseudonyms.

before and immediately after the pandemic, paying attention to differences relative to respondents' immigration status. Overall, our respondents were struggling before the onset of COVID-19, though this varied relative to immigration and marital status, and that overall, respondents expressed deep distrust of government institutions and associated provisions due to experiences with or perceptions of discriminatory and/or xenophobic treatment. In the aftermath of COVID-19, we observed divergence in access and use of social provisions between citizen and undocumented mothers, exacerbating existing alienation and distrust of government among undocumented mothers.

Work and Family

Respondents work and family responsibilities were complicated at the onset of the pandemic given that mothers who lost their jobs found themselves responsible for trying to prevent COVID-19 in their home and for attending to their caregiving responsibilities. Mothers who were still working in the pandemic's aftermath often had to negotiate work while struggling to protect their children from the virus and locating resources to stem post-pandemic hardships, including government provisions.

Before the pandemic, respondents regardless of citizenship status often had multiple strategies to support work and caregiving that included arrangements with partners, spouses, and other family members. For instance, Reina, a forty-seven-year-old undocumented married Mexican immigrant mother of one, was a waitress at a local restaurant during her first interview who scheduled work around childcare with her husband, allowing them both to work and support their family "We take turns [with childcare], with my husband. . . . We have not needed childcare thank God." By the time of our second interview with Reina, during the pandemic, she had lost her waitressing job and her family was struggling: "I was a waitress, and I wanted to help my husband by working, we wanted to better our lives . . . but the close of all restaurants, all of that affected us. . . . We are seeing the consequences of everything right now."

Similarly, before the pandemic Regina, a

twenty-eight-year-old married Latina citizen mother of two, chose work that was flexible, such as babysitting and cleaning, that allowed her to arrange her schedule around her children's needs: "I love to work, but it's hard because I take responsibility for my kids. My kids are with me 24/7. . . . Their father works, which is good because that's our provider. But I won't take a 9:00 to 5:00 just because I want to make sure my kids get home from school safe."

At the onset of the pandemic, however, Regina was no longer working as an informal babysitter or house cleaner due to fears of the virus:

As far as the cleaning, I haven't wanted to, just because like I said, I haven't wanted to go to other people—I'm like, "I have no idea what's in places." A couple of people have called me [since the pandemic], to see if I wanted to clean and I told them, "I'm not going to do it right now." Just because I'm going to clean somebody else's house, I don't know if they have . . . It's just a worry if you don't know. . . . I have lost out on money, but I feel like my health and my safety is more important right now. We're managing.

Respondents who were essential workers often described their fear of COVID-19 exposure as shaping work and childcare decisions, again, regardless of immigration status. Raquel was a thirty-year-old married undocumented Mexican immigrant mother of two who worked full time in housekeeping before the pandemic but whose hours were reduced during the pandemic. She told us, "I'm still working there. I go maybe two, three days a week, because I have the kids in the house, I don't like to take them to the babysitter. I don't take them to the babysitter no more . . . because I'd rather for my kids to stay home and don't go in other people's house."

Similarly, Jasmine, a forty-five-year-old Latina citizen married mother of one shared that she changed jobs after COVID-19 because she felt unsafe commuting on the train because of possible COVID-19 exposure, which led to her taking a similar job but with less pay: "It [former job] was downtown. I was feeling like I was risking my life when I was going on the train. I

was like, “I’m not going to do this anymore because it’s risky.”

The Safety Net

Before the pandemic, respondents were able to piece together some stability from their work and the safety net, yet repeatedly expressed the poor treatment they received as a condition of engaging the state. Even though mothers’ immigrant and racialized social positions influenced their interpretation of motivations behind the disrespect they encountered while seeking safety net benefits, it was common across groups to cite poor treatment, discontent, and fear in application processes before and after the pandemic. These experiences were compounded by job losses or hourly work reductions and shaped how and the extent to which they sought safety net and other resources. For instance, during her first interview, Viviana, a twenty-one-year-old undocumented Honduran immigrant mother of two, described her experience with caseworkers when visiting a public aid office to apply for food stamps for her children before the pandemic, “Sometimes they think that because we go there, they [caseworkers] have to be mean about it. They think that those stuff are coming out of their pocket and treat people bad.”

After the pandemic, and despite enduring discriminatory treatment while successfully receiving food stamps, Viviana explained that it was not enough to feed her children adequately or offset pandemic hardships: “They help us with the LINK card and stuff like that, but there’s not much help for us . . . I eat different food, my daughters eat different food, my partner is not working.” Similarly, Regina, a twenty-eight-year-old Latina citizen married mother who received a \$9 increase in SNAP benefits following COVID-19, struggled to afford food in the pandemic environment: “There’s no sales or anything as before. Everything is full price. Before, I was always a good shopper. I would buy stuff on sale. . . . I would make sure that my benefits would last me the whole month. Now, nobody has no sales. . . . so you have to just get what you can get.”

New pandemic provisions and loss of work and income motivated some respondents to seek social safety net resources. However, re-

spondents who shared challenges with qualifying for safety net benefits before the pandemic found themselves at a disadvantage in applying in its immediate aftermath due to learning costs, including among citizen mothers, (Herd and Moynihan 2019) in how to apply. For example, Lorena, a married Latina citizen mother, thirty-seven years old with two children, described being denied Medicaid benefits for her children before the pandemic, “I came out of that office angry because I was not asking for anything for myself, I was asking for medical insurance for my daughters, which I believe is a right of theirs as U.S. citizens.”

Despite this experience, she was interested in applying at the onset of the pandemic but was unsure where to apply, “Where does one even apply now that everything is closed? If there was an opportunity to apply, I would do it, but I have no idea how this works.”

Similarly, Denise, a twenty-nine-year-old undocumented married Mexican mother of one, wanted to apply for SNAP for her citizen son due to losing her job but had never applied before. As she explained, “Well, up to now I have not asked for help, but I am thinking of asking for food stamps, the LINK card, [for my child] and was thinking of going to the benefits office. However, what happens if I go and they do not give me food stamps . . . I saw on the news that the offices are closed, and I am unsure if they are closed now, so that is a reason why I have not gone.”

Jasmine, a forty-five-year-old Latina citizen mother of one related in her pre-pandemic interview that she had been deterred from SNAP after multiple denial letters. By the second interview, she had lost her job and feared an eviction, and therefore reapplied for SNAP. However, her experience applying during the pandemic led to growing concerns about surveillance and delays in benefit receipt: “I applied for assistance, and they told me no. They said that they have to investigate me. They got to come home and check the home to see who’s living here, who’s not living. How long I’ve been without a job. They have to do so many investigations, by the time they give me the money, they will throw me to the street.”

Respondents did not take a wholesale approach to assessing all safety net interactions

as suboptimal; instead, they often discerned between punitive and positive encounters with the state, levels of risk between different programs, and the administrative burdens required to participate (Herd and Moynihan 2019). As a result, respondents, especially undocumented mothers, mostly identified Medicaid and WIC programs as distinct from welfare programs, which they largely viewed as SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). For instance, Elodia, a thirty-four-year-old Mexican immigrant single mother of two, explained that treatment by frontline staff varied between programs. “I think the WIC people are nice, they are helpful. They help you with completing applications and anything else you might need. But I think the people that do the medical card they treat you racially. They think that you are going to ask for something for yourself, when no, I went to go ask for benefits for my children, not for me.”

Public Charge

Between her first and second interviews, Elodia’s work permit was approved, cementing her unwillingness to apply for SNAP during the pandemic due to Trump’s public charge rule: “I haven’t applied because if I become a resident in the future, I may not qualify because they [the government] may think I am a public charge to this country. I have thought about this recently a lot more since they have recently approved my work permit, and I now have a real driver’s license, not the temporary one, so that is why.”

Elodia was not alone in her concern about the effect of the public charge rule on her and her family’s hopes for legal status and how safety net participation, even during a pandemic, might thwart their future in the United States. Indeed, even though it was common for our respondents regardless of immigration status to report distrust, mistreatment, or administrative burdens as part of decision-making in safety net and pandemic provision use, undocumented mothers overwhelmingly indicated that the political context exacerbated their fears of resource seeking. For instance, as Cecilia, a thirty-three-year-old undocumented Guatemalan immigrant mother in a domestic partnership who lost her job during the pan-

demic, explained, “I don’t think I would apply [for UI] they ask for too much information and sometimes I get scared. I would say no.” Yet pandemic hardship left some undocumented mothers contemplating enrolling their children despite public charge. Benita, a married fifty-year-old undocumented Mexican immigrant and mother of one who was not receiving SNAP for her child in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic despite losing her full-time job, explained it this way in her pandemic interview:

Well, if we continue like this, I think we will need to apply since there will be no jobs like we had prior. I think that even though it may affect us as undocumented persons in the future to adjust our status—because with this president (Trump) you never know, he is looking for all kinds of possibilities—we will need to reach out to those resources too, because if they do not give us any support to adjust our status or fix our papers, and be stable in this country, that we pay taxes too, then I guess we also need a little help too.

For some undocumented mothers, negative experiences with the safety net before the pandemic coupled with fears of the public charge rule shaped their decision whether to apply for help afterward, as Isaura, a forty-year-old married Honduran immigrant mother of four, explained:

My children were telling me to apply to student LINK, because they were not going to school and they were giving student LINK, but in the past when I have applied for LINK the social worker had told me that my family does not need LINK because we need to have (legal) status, and she said that to me in a very mean way . . . she gave me the application but she said if you are an immigrant, you should not fill it out because it will affect you . . . I didn’t want to fill it out after, I got scared.

Antonia, forty-two-year-old undocumented Mexican mother of two, said much the same: “I honestly do not apply, because on TV they said that if you do not have papers, or social

security, you cannot receive any help. On Univision they say that undocumented people do not have rights to those resources because the president said, so why bother applying for these resources, if they will say no matter what. We just stay at home.”

Some mothers reported fears of program enrollment and eligibility related to their immigration status; others, though, understood despite their immigration status their children were eligible for benefits yet still would not apply. Gabriela, forty-five-year-old undocumented Mexican mother of two whose husband’s hours were reduced after COVID-19, explained:

Do you remember the last time [pre-pandemic interview] when my husband was working real well, and we did not qualify [SNAP] because his income was too high. Well now, I know we can apply, since he is making less. I have not done it . . . in the future it might affect the kids right? Through their social security? I am unsure if it’s true or not . . . Right now, even though I want to apply, I probably won’t because it may affect us in the future.

Institutional Distrust

Negative safety net experiences, even among those who received support, is but one point of distrust we found among our sample. Respondents expressed deep distrust of and alienation from local law enforcement, public education, and local and national political leaders during both interviews, revealing the convergence of myriad government institutions that they view as (sometimes) necessary but also coercive, punitive, uncaring, and exploitive primarily on the basis of their low-income, immigrant and racialized social positions. However, distrust varied across institutions, pre- and post-pandemic interviews, and often by citizenship status. For instance, across both interviews, undocumented mothers commonly expressed the need for law enforcement but also their fear of exploitation by this system. Magdalena, a forty-seven-year-old widowed undocumented Mexican immigrant with two children, highlighted this concern: “The community (undocumented immigrants) is afraid, mainly because the police is in contact with ICE [Immigration

and Customs Enforcement]. If they see something, people do not call the police because they are afraid. Everyone stays quiet, they put up with it, oftentimes related to domestic violence and other things that you see on the streets.”

Despite this fear and threat of policing, Magdalena still believed policing was necessary to reduce crime in her community in the aftermath of COVID-19: “I know that there is a lot of money going to the police department, it’s a lot, but we really need them here, there is so much crime that we really need them.”

Distrust of policing was not unique to undocumented mothers, though the degree or reasons were different for citizen respondents. For instance, Regina, a twenty-eight-year-old married Latina citizen mother of two, indicated both her need to depend on police before the pandemic to address gang activity that threatened her children and her skepticism that police would be responsive. During her pandemic interview, Regina’s views of law enforcement did not change, highlighting harassment she experienced during the pandemic but also noting a particular incident:

In my neighborhood, I would say it’s pretty much the same. It’s still the same. I know they [the police] try to do the best they can, it’s just some officers are kinder than others, and that’s just what it is. Depending on what situation or what happens like the police arrive on scene, it depends on them. Like I said, I have gotten pulled over a couple of times. Yesterday, I don’t know, something happened in the neighborhood. We were driving to Walgreens. They pulled up on the side of us. They were just there staring and staring and I’m like, “Oh my God. I’m with my family. What are you staring at us for?” I just feel it depends. Some officers are rude and some are kind.

Institutional distrust was reflected in not only policing but also other public institutions, including differences in educational quality between marginalized and advantaged children. For instance, Felipa, a forty-one-year-old single Latina citizen mother of one who separated from her partner during the pandemic, de-

scribed her opinion of public schooling in Chicago: “In my opinion, public schools are completely corrupt, and it needs to change. Sadly, the level of education in the United States, and especially in the city of Chicago is bad, very bad and poorly administered. There are so many politics and corruption, and people give each other jobs without doing the actual job. This needs to change. . . . they need to offer equitable education to all children not only in certain areas of the city.”

Local and Federal Government

Some respondents said that their trust in public institutions was strengthened based on decisions and policies implemented during the pandemic. Yet for others, the pandemic decreased their trust in institutions, typically among local government officials. For example, Elodia, a thirty-four-year-old Mexican immigrant single mother of two who previously trusted both federal and local politicians, lost trust in local officials after the city of Chicago approved a demolition project that affected air quality in her community during the pandemic:

Here in [my neighborhood], we didn’t hear about there being a demolition of an energy plant. There was so much contamination here], and no one ever told us “there will be contamination, do not leave your house.” They did this at 8 am, the alderman came until day three to discuss the situation, for what? If the city of Chicago agreed to do this during a pandemic, why should I believe they care about me, it’s all just to benefit themselves. The alderman doesn’t care, they come to talk about the injustice, and they would do something about it and investigate, but they never did anything.

We observed a deepening of distrust in local government for mothers who previously felt represented and had some form of immigration status (U.S. citizenship or visa). Linda, a thirty-nine-year-old Latina citizen married mother with three children, was an active participant in local community politics before the pandemic. During the first interview, she felt her local alderperson respected her views but

observed that undocumented immigrants were ignored and made efforts to bring this problem to community meetings. However, by the second interview, she did not feel represented because of the limited contact she now had with her alderperson: “We have had—as residents we have not being able to talk with the public servants because we are all in our own house. We have not been able to get together to share what or how we have been affected, we have not had a direct conversation with them.”

Conversely, Edna, an undocumented thirty-seven-year-old mother, had pre-pandemic concerns with the Trump administration’s plans to remove the SNAP program for her children: I feel that the government doesn’t really care about the poor, or the needy. Right now, they want to end help provided by the LINK card, I have seen on the news that they want to take it away. There are people that really need these resources, we are the poorest people, and we earn less than most people, we do need this help.”

By the time of the second interview, Edna had applied for food stamps for her children and was immediately approved, improving her trust of government after COVID-19, “I think they [government] are concerned about us, because of this virus and everything that is happening.”

Edna was one of the few mothers whose feelings about institutions improved during the pandemic. In most instances, existing feelings of distrust grew stronger. Liliana, a thirty-nine-year-old undocumented Mexican immigrant single mother who worked full time before and after the pandemic, said this: “They do not care what I think, they do not care about my well-being because we are immigrants, we are a burden for them.” Meanwhile, Isaura, a forty-year-old married undocumented Honduran immigrant mother of four, related similar disillusionment and alienation from government during the first interview, in part because of the federal government’s inaction to pass an amnesty bill and city’s inaction to answer her requests via the 311-reporting system. These experiences shaped the extent to which she felt confident to seek resources during the pandemic:

I have not contacted anyone. I have not been able to fill out any applications for help because they always ask for a social security number, something that we do not have. For example, the city was giving out rent support and when we wanted to apply and go on the application, it was already full. It's a lottery system, they do not help the people that most need the resources. Everyone applies, especially people with computers. The most intelligent people are the people who use a computer, the people that study or went to school they are the ones that have the most benefits.

Stimulus Benefits

In addition to existing fears of public charge and anti-immigrant rhetoric prior to the pandemic, pandemic stimulus benefit restrictions for undocumented immigrants increased hardship and alienation for undocumented respondents and those in mixed-status families. Angelica, a forty-seven-year-old undocumented Mexican single mother of two who has lived in the United States for twenty-two years, had her work hours cut in half. She shared her thoughts on not being eligible for stimulus payments: "I fulfill all my obligations like any person from this country, but I am not from this country. That bothers me, because I do everything I need to do as a resident who lives here. . . . however I am not able to receive this assistance [stimulus payments]. You ask yourself 'why not me?' No one in my social circle is in my situation, everyone has received this help, except for me." Arlene, a forty-six-year-old undocumented Honduran immigrant who had lost her restaurant job after COVID-19, expressed similar feelings:

Imagine if they would have given citizen children a fraction of what they gave families—they are citizens they have rights, residents too, us [undocumented] no, but I pay taxes, I pay everything that is asked of me, I do not have any issues with the government, so why didn't they give my daughter \$500, she is a citizen, its fine if they didn't give me \$1,200 because I am not a citizen, but she is a citizen . . . because we are immigrants, we do not have rights. I am dragging my daughter down because my only sin is being an immigrant,

but to the government I pay everything I need to pay, because for me, the government does not provide charity, they deduct whatever they need to deduct.

Similar feelings occurred in mixed-status families in which U.S. citizen mothers were married to individuals with liminal immigration status (temporary work permit, undocumented). For example, Lorena, a thirty-seven-year-old Latina citizen mother of two with an undocumented immigrant husband who had lost his job with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, felt a strong sense of support and representation in government prior to the pandemic. This changed when she learned she and her daughters would not receive a stimulus check because she and her undocumented husband had filed taxes jointly the previous year in preparation for his petition for an immigration status adjustment: "They don't care; if they cared, they would take more consideration of us. For example, returning to the stimulus check, I understand that my husband does not qualify, buy why did they exclude my daughters and me. We are American citizens, that's where I feel the discrimination. . . . They excluded my daughters and I, and we are American citizens, we should have the same rights as everyone else."

Stimulus benefits were overwhelmingly helpful to citizen mother respondents, exemplified by Regina, a twenty-eight-year-old Latina citizen married mother who was working full time before the pandemic but lost her job after the onset of COVID-19: "I did have money issues at first as far as paying the bills because it there was less work, because the money that I was receiving from the babysitting or the cleaning, I was contributing to the bills. We were struggling at first, and then we did receive those stimulus checks, so we paid all our bills. The light, the gas, the cable bill, the car insurance, the rent, everything we just took care of."

Role of Nonprofits

It may be that nonprofit resources helped fill the resource gap left for many of our respondents in the wake of the pandemic, especially undocumented mothers. We find suggestive

evidence that a nontrivial minority did turn to nonprofits before and in the immediate aftermath. Among our sample, fifteen mothers reported receiving nonprofit assistance before and following COVID-19, thirteen did not receive any in either period, and the remainder received assistance in only one period. Reasons for seeking nonprofit resources (or not) were mixed. Respondents who reported accessing nonprofit resources before COVID-19 often sought out or were contacted directly by these agencies. For some respondents, connections to schools, childcare, or community centers facilitated information on nonprofits and, in turn, led to nonprofit support seeking, which aligns with other research on the importance of adjacent organizations' facilitating social network information sharing (Small 2009; Lubbers, Small, and Garcia 2020). For others unfamiliar with nonprofits before the pandemic, kith and kin networks or social media provided information that enabled them to seek nonprofit support after its onset. Respondents disconnected from nonprofits before and after COVID-19 reported lacking knowledge in this domain at both times.

Among those having a pre-pandemic relationship with a local nonprofit, it was more common to seek such resources after, worker outreach often playing a key role. Cecilia, a thirty-three-year-old undocumented Latina, is representative. She explained when asked whether she received help from any community organizations following COVID-19:

Yes. From [the nonprofit] they provided us with a \$50 food card, they were calling families there and giving it to them . . . the manager, the one in charge is the one who is dedicated, she was the one who was calling us to ask how we were, if everything was fine and she called . . . and I didn't have to provide ID, since they already know me, my family, they visit my house. They also would leave the food outside my house . . . they leave me three boxes of lunch for the children.

Others relied on their children's schools, such as Martha, a fifty-year-old undocumented immigrant from Mexico. She had received help from the school before the pandemic but her

restaurant job work hours were reduced after its onset. The school reached out to the family to offer support and information on locating resources: "I tell you that they [the school] even told us that if we needed food, to call a number. All of that, the money thing [stimulus payments], it just seems to me that they applied purely by people who were . . . who have a social security [number]. But, thank God that they were here for us. . . . Food was sent to my son, from the school too."

At the same time, some who were disconnected from nonprofits prior to the pandemic, such as Felipa, learned about such resources through social media:

Through Facebook I am [connected to local nonprofits], I have got in touch with [immigrant serving nonprofit]. They have been a source, they put out a lot of information . . . So, there are resources to offer food to people who need it and resources about mental health . . . because of all this that is happening . . . That's what I rely on. So . . . I have been able to have a little more information about what resources . . . currently exist due to the pandemic, has been through [local nonprofit] because they are constantly stating if they are going to have a workshop through Zoom or through Facebook.

Respondents disconnected from nonprofits before the pandemic often explained that balancing work, family, and children's schooling did not allow them time to engage nonprofits. In turn, some of these mothers, regardless of immigration status, did not have the requisite information needed to seek out nonprofit support after the onset of the pandemic. Jasmine, a forty-five-year-old Latina citizen, explained in her pre-pandemic interview: "No [I am not connected to these organizations] because my job doesn't allow me. I would like to . . . maybe later on when I have another job that allows me to do that. When I have to work, I work from three to eleven." After the onset of the pandemic, Jasmine reported still being unaware of local nonprofits: "I don't hear nothing around here [from local nonprofits]. Nobody going around finding out anything about anybody here. The only thing that I've seen along here

is somebody that came around about daycare for the kids.”

Other respondents who were unaware of nonprofits prior to the pandemic were connected following COVID-19 through their social networks. Linda, a thirty-nine-year-old Latina citizen who lost her job after COVID-19, was introduced to a local nonprofit by a coworker: “I have a colleague who works for an organization, and she continues to work, not directly with people but by phone, she alerts us to some resources [from nonprofits] that are available.”

Seeking nonprofit assistance was important for our respondents but varied mostly because those unfamiliar with them before the pandemic found their access thwarted afterward. Not knowing about nonprofit services is common (Smith 2010). Further, the ability of nonprofits to connect with those unfamiliar with their services was likely hampered by lockdowns that tempered effective outreach. Although other institutions, such as schools, mitigated some of these hurdles, important questions arise about fostering visibility and direct access and knowledge of such resources. We did not hear any reports of distrust of nonprofit services or reports of fear of poor treatment by frontline staff as reasons for not seeking nonprofit resources unlike state-sponsored provisions.

DISCUSSION

This study contributes to the growing literature on the pandemic’s socioeconomic consequences for Latina immigrant citizen mothers with children and the role of public provisions in buffering (or not) economic hardships for this group. We depart from earlier research by examining pre-pandemic socioeconomic circumstances among this group to assess its relationship to post-pandemic experiences in work and family, safety net and nonprofit resource seeking, and institutional trust. We also consider the roles of other public institutions and social and political factors relative to feelings of alienation from and distrust in government and associated provisions. Drawing on qualitative interviews with thirty-eight low-income Latina citizen, undocumented, and immigrant women in Chicago, this study finds that these mothers’ pandemic-era well-being is

in many instances related to pre-pandemic experiences with the state but also concurrent social and political factors that shaped resource seeking and trust in public institutions. Considering these domains relative to socioeconomic well-being before and after COVID-19 is crucial to understanding how these contexts may shape future decisions to seek assistance and recover from the pandemic.

Our respondents were “just making it” in the run-up to the pandemic, most working in low-wage jobs and struggling to juggle childcare and other family obligations while making ends meet, which aligns with an extensive line of research on low-income mothers’ in the post-welfare reform era. Pandemic-era job losses among our respondents were substantial—about half of those who were working full time or part time pre-pandemic were now unemployed (fourteen of thirty-one) in the early aftermath of COVID-19. In married or partnered households, it was common for at least one partner to lose a job, especially among undocumented mothers. Widespread job losses led some undocumented mothers to reconsider applying for safety net provisions for their children despite its potential to place these families at risk given their immigration status and common fear of the public charge rule during our study’s time frame. At the same time, undocumented mothers were ineligible for stimulus payments, which led many to assert that such exclusion was contradictory to their status as taxpayers and their children’s status as U.S. citizens. Most Latina citizen mothers received pandemic provisions, particularly stimulus payments, which provided their families with a “lifeline” that helped pay for housing, food, and essential goods and utilities. Nonetheless, it was common for respondents to report poor treatment by frontline workers when seeking public benefits; in some instances, these experiences shaped resource seeking decision-making following COVID-19. In the aftermath of the pandemic, many reported economic duress, especially those who lost a job or did not receive pandemic stimulus payments, especially undocumented mothers. Among mothers who did receive pandemic benefits, especially UI and stimulus payments, some of these provisions allowed them to re-

duce work hours or forgo work altogether. Of note, respondents who chose to reduce work hours or to not work during the pandemic did so to eliminate the need for childcare, which they viewed as protecting their children from COVID-19.

Another contribution of this study is revealing that even though negative experiences with safety net programs were common before and after the onset of the pandemic, undocumented mothers in particular face overlapping systems of marginalization that contribute to their assessments of socioeconomic well-being and trust in public institutions. This speaks to their well-being as a reflection of not only exclusionary or dissuasive safety net encounters but also marginalizing social and political forces. The culmination of overlapping marginalization from multiple systems influenced a deep sense of distrust in government, including political actors at the national and local level and rhetoric aimed at immigrant communities. The influence of these factors varied relative to respondents' social status—Latina citizen mothers often pointed to their racialized status as driving negative safety net interactions, the quality of public schools their children attend, and alienation from law enforcement due to punitive policing. Undocumented mothers systematically expressed that their liminal immigration status rendered them and their children unworthy of public supports even during a catastrophic pandemic. These different forms of marginalization worked together to sow distrust in public institutions among our respondents. Even though institutional distrust, especially in government, is not a new issue in the United States, evidence suggests that it is a growing phenomenon, especially since the 2016 election. Distrust in government has important implications for a range of issues including democratic processes and trust in other public institutions. Thus, we contribute to a broader understanding of how a convergence of factors contributes to immigrant mothers' assessment of their socioeconomic well-being and engagement with the state.

Our study offers suggestive evidence on the utility of means-tested support versus cash supports, particularly pandemic stimulus pay-

ments. It was common for respondents to cite poor treatment in safety net programs before and after the pandemic. However, respondents mostly noted SNAP and TANF when identifying program mistreatment while highlighting different experiences or perceptions with Medicaid and WIC, which transcended citizenship status. It may be that Latina mothers have internalized broader perspectives on the stigmatization of means-tested cash or near-cash provisions that may not be as salient as programs that offer in-kind assistance, such as Medicaid and WIC. It was also clear that among citizen respondents who received stimulus payments, these benefits were preferable to means-tested provisions in enabling them to receive support quickly, without bureaucratic hassles or poor treatment, and pay for essential goods. These findings are instructive for future debates about unrestricted cash benefits such as the monthly Child Tax Credit, which unfortunately was dispersed after our study time frame.

Nonprofit resources may have attenuated some of these challenges with government-sponsored provisions for undocumented mothers. Indeed, this panned out to be true for many: fifteen of thirty-eight respondents reported receiving nonprofit assistance before and after the pandemic. Although these respondents are a substantial minority of the sample, our study was based in Chicago, which has a large nonprofit industry. Respondents disconnected from nonprofits before COVID-19 who received nonprofit assistance after the pandemic were able to do so through social network information, a valuable but often unstable information source. These findings suggest that even though nonprofits reached many of our respondents, room for more effective engagement strategies remains, particularly with the hard-to-reach and those particularly fearful of state engagement, such as undocumented immigrants.

Our findings hold implications for potential paths forward in attenuating deleterious pandemic effects for low-income Latino families. Our respondents were struggling with work and childcare before the pandemic. In its aftermath, the childcare industry lost a nontrivial share of its workforce, which may exacer-

bate recovery for these families if childcare is even more constrained in the post-pandemic era. Like other research, we find that undocumented immigration status influences decisions to use safety net provisions. However, many undocumented mothers in our sample received some noncash safety net provisions for their children, such as Medicaid, which suggests that despite their liminal status and associated risk in engaging the state, undocumented mothers often prioritize their children's well-being in decisions to seek public supports. Moreover, undocumented mothers keenly discerned the contradiction of their status as "undeserving," and its transcription onto their children, while contributing to the polity through work and taxes. These feelings of alienation from government while contributing to society were exacerbated after the onset of the pandemic due to exclusion from pandemic provisions, particularly stimulus payments for undocumented mother's citizen children. Undocumented mothers who expressed these views also indicated reconsidering engaging the state to seek support. Restricting benefits by parent's immigration status may have consequences for the children of immigrants in the near and long-term of pandemic recovery. To enhance recovery prospects for immigrant families, consideration of children's program eligibility regardless of parental immigration status is therefore critical.

The context of this study was Chicago, the year before and the six months after the onset of COVID-19. We would be remiss if we overlooked the implications of our findings relative to place and time. As mentioned, it was common for respondents to identify multiple political and social factors that further marginalized them such as policing, inequitable public education for their children, and perceptions that government did not care about nor adequately respond to their needs. Given Chicago's history of policing,⁴ it is not surprising that our respondents not only identified this domain as

a source of institutional distrust but also reported complex feelings about their need for a police presence in their communities to feel safe even while recognizing disparate punitive policing of Latinos, immigrants, and other marginalized groups.

Respondents' views that political actors do not care about them occurred during the Trump administration, which passed a number of punitive immigration laws and participated in or spurred xenophobic rhetoric that further marginalized immigrants.⁵ President Trump was also vocal about his unwavering support for law enforcement regardless of racialized lethal force cases throughout his tenure.⁶ Indeed, the Trump administration policy and rhetoric disproportionately targeting immigrants and racialized citizens likely shaped the institutional distrust observed among many of our respondents.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited in several ways. First, the sample was derived from an original survey of enrollees in Chicago's municipal ID program, CityKey. It could be that obtaining a municipal ID reflects broader marginalization because those without any other form of government-issued ID are disproportionately immigrant, Black, and formerly incarcerated as well as low income (Brennan Center for Justice 2006). The sample is relatively small and diverse along citizenship lines but includes only six low-income Latina citizen mothers, limiting the utility of these findings for revealing patterns of inequitable treatment and socioeconomic well-being for this group. Nonetheless, this study offers a nuanced understanding of the myriad influences that shape not only Latina immigrant and citizen mothers' socioeconomic well-being and access to public supports in the pandemic era but also the importance of attenuating growing institutional distrust. The findings suggest areas for future research. First, as scholars continue theorizing and conducting

4. Cox and Freivogel 2021.

5. During the Trump administration, there were over 400 executive actions restricting and excluding immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (Pierce and Bolter 2020)

6. Cowan 2020.

research on low-income families, policy histories and sociopolitical contexts warrant more consideration such as foregrounding immigrant and racialized citizen mothers' longstanding exclusion and dissuasion from social provisions and experiences with the punitive arm of the state. It is also important to consider how the unique social positions between low-income mothers may lead to within group differences and experiences with the state and

well-being (Crenshaw 1991). Finally, although many of our respondents lost their jobs with the onset pandemic, several respondents chose to reduce work or quit altogether. Those who did so reported they did because of their fears for their own and their children's safety. This suggests that scholars who consider the effects of pandemic-era cash provisions on work disincentives should account for a diversity of factors aside from government provisions.

Table A.1. Respondent Demographics, Work, and Safety Net Use Before and After COVID-19

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Immigration status	Wave 2		# of Dependent Children	Employment Status at		Occupation at Wave 1	Employment Status at Wave 2	Occupation at Wave 2	Safety Net Use	
				Marital Status	Wife		Wave 1	Wave 2				Wave 1	Wave 2
Linda	39	Latina	citizen	married	2	part time	works at children's school	unemployed	N/A	N/A	None	None	
Carina	29	Latina	citizen	married	3	homemaker		homemaker	N/A	N/A	WIC, Medicaid	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid	
Felipa	41	Latina	citizen	separated	1	full time	for-profit community org	full time	works from home	at for profit community org	None	None	
Lorena	37	Latina	citizen	married	2	full time	employment center	full time	works from home	at employment center	None	None	
Denise	29	Latina	undocumented	married	1	full time	housekeeping, janitorial services	unemployed	N/A	N/A	Medicaid	Medicaid	
Jasmine	45	Latina	citizen	married	1	full time	security guard	full time	security at new location		Medicaid	Medicaid	
Teresa	46	Latina	LPR ^b	married	5	homemaker	N/A	homemaker	N/A	N/A	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid	
Gabriela	45	Latina	undocumented	married	2	homemaker	N/A	homemaker	N/A	N/A	WIC, Medicaid	WIC, Medicaid	
Hilda ^d	38	Latina	undocumented	single	2	full time	pizza restaurant	full time	pizza restaurant		WIC, Medicaid	Medicaid	
Mariana	36	Latina	U-visa ^e	partnered	4	full time	housekeeping, janitorial services	unemployed	N/A	N/A	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid	
Elodia	34	Latina	visa	separated ^c	2	full time	bus aid cps	unemployed	N/A	N/A	Medicaid	Medicaid	
Edna	37	Latina	undocumented	partnered	3	full time	restaurant delivery	unemployed	N/A	N/A	Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid	

(continued)

Table A.1. (continued)

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Immigration status	Wave 2 Marital Status	# of Dependent Children	Employment Status at Wave 1	Occupation at Wave 1	Employment Status at Wave 2	Occupation at Wave 2	Safety Net Use Wave 1	Safety Net Use Wave 2
Magdalena	47	Latina	undocumented	widowed	2	part time	census worker	part time	census worker	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Norma	54	Latina	undocumented	single	1	full time	factory work	full time	factory worker	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Antonia	42	Latina	undocumented	married	2	self-employed	Mary Kay	unemployed	N/A	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Benita	50	Latina	undocumented	married	1	full-time	babysitter	unemployed	N/A	Medicaid	Medicaid
Reina	47	Latina	undocumented	partnered	1	full-time	restaurant	unemployed	N/A	Medicaid	Medicaid
Cecilia	33	Latina	undocumented	partnered	3	homemaker	N/A	homemaker	N/A	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid
Viviana	21	Latina	undocumented	partnered	2	homemaker	N/A	homemaker	N/A	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid
Arlene	46	Latina	undocumented	single	1	part time	restaurant	full time	new job: poultry factory	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Leonor	42	Latina	undocumented	partnered	1	full time	produce factory	full time	produce factory	Medicaid	Medicaid
Isaura	40	Latina	undocumented	married	4	full time	housekeeping, janitorial services	full time	new job: canning factory	Medicaid	Medicaid
Celeste	41	Latina	undocumented	married	1	part time	newspaper delivery	part time	newspaper delivery	None	None
Regina	28	Latina	citizen	married	2	full time	babysitter	unemployed	N/A	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Rocio	38	Latina	undocumented	married	1	full time	housekeeping, janitorial services	unemployed	N/A	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid	SNAP, WIC, Medicaid

Ana	48	Latina	undocumented	partnered	1	full time	babysitter and home-care	unemployed	N/A	Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Raquel	42	Latina	undocumented	married	2	full time	housekeeping, janitorial services	part time	housekeeping	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Mayra	41	Latina	undocumented	married	2	full time	fast food restaurant	full time	fast food restaurant	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Liliana	39	Latina	undocumented	single	2	full time	Tortilla Factory	full time	Tortilla Factory	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Cristina	46	Latina	undocumented	married	1	homemaker	N/A	homemaker	N/A	Medicaid	Medicaid
Maria	42	Latina	undocumented	married	2	homemaker	N/A	homemaker	N/A	WIC, Medicaid	WIC, Medicaid
Fabiola	30	Latina	undocumented	single	1	part time	restaurant	unemployed	N/A	SNAP, Medicaid	SNAP, Medicaid
Diana	44	Latina	undocumented	married	3	self-employed	Avon	unemployed	N/A	Medicaid	Medicaid
Elvira	43	Latina	undocumented	single	2	part time	retail store	part time	retail store	Medicaid	Medicaid
Martha	50	Latina	undocumented	married	1	part time	restaurant/singer	part time	restaurant	Medicaid	Medicaid
Angelica	47	Latina	undocumented	single	1	full time	domestic work for a family	part time	domestic work	Medicaid	Medicaid
Laura	38	Latina	undocumented	married	2	self-employed	clothing sales	unemployed	N/A	Medicaid	Medicaid
Sofia	47	White/Latina ^a	undocumented	single	1	full time	janitorial services	full time	janitorial services	None	None

Source: Authors' tabulation.

Note: SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, WIC = Special supplemental Nutrition Program for woman, Infants, and Children, TANF = Temporary Assistance for Need Families.

N/A: Not applicable. Respondents do not have an occupation indicated because of their employment status of being unemployed or homemaker.

^a Participant indicated White under race, but also identified country of origin from El Salvador (CITE).

^b LPR = legal permanent residency

^c Separated yet legally married

^d Partnered at wave 1 and single at wave 2

^e U-visa-nonimmigrant visa that allows noncitizen crime victims and certain qualifying family members to live and work in the United States for up to four years.

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