

Derek Wu

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EDUCATION

University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy Ph.D. Candidate Thesis: “ <i>Essays on Poverty and Government Safety-Net Programs</i> ”	2015-2021 Chicago, IL
Princeton University A.B., School of Public and International Affairs (<i>with honors</i>) Certificate in Finance	2009-2013 Princeton, NJ

RESEARCH FIELDS

Public Economics, Labor Economics, Economics of Education, Applied Microeconomics

JOB MARKET PAPER

“Certification and Recertification in Welfare Programs: What Happens When Automation Goes Wrong?”

Abstract: This paper examines how barriers to enrollment impact the number and type of people enrolling and reenrolling in three important U.S. safety net programs: SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid. The research design leverages a natural experiment in Indiana, where the IBM Corporation in 2007 unsuccessfully rolled out an effort to automate the administration of welfare services - reaching only two-thirds of all counties before unexpectedly halting in 2009. Using administrative records spanning nearly 3 million program recipients, the results show that SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid enrollment fall by 15%, 24%, and 4% in the treated counties one year after automation (relative to the untreated counties). These initial declines are driven by similar decreases in entry rates across all programs and increases in exit rates that are largest for TANF. For Medicaid, the decline in overall enrollment exhibits considerable permanence long after IBM's automated system was disbanded. Earlier-treated and higher-poverty counties experience larger declines in welfare receipt. Targeting efficiency also improves at initial application by screening out entrants who are less needy, but worsens at recertification by severing benefits to those who are more needy.

PUBLICATIONS

- Meyer, Bruce D., **Derek Wu**, Grace Finley, Patrick Langetieg, Carla Medalia, Mark Payne, and Alan Plumley. Forthcoming. “The Accuracy of Tax Imputations: Estimating Tax Liabilities and Credits Using Linked Survey and Administrative Data.” In Chetty, R., J. Friedman, J. Gornick, B. Johnson, and A. Kennickell (eds.), *Measuring and Understanding the Distribution and Intra/Inter-Generational Mobility of Income and Wealth*, NBER Book Series.
- Meyer, Bruce D., **Derek Wu**, Victoria Mooers, and Carla Medalia. 2021. “The Use and Misuse of Income Data and Extreme Poverty in the United States.” *Journal of Labor Economics*, 39(S1): S5-S58.
- Wu, Derek**. 2020. “Disentangling the Effects of the School Year from the School Day: Evidence from the TIMSS Assessments.” *Education Finance and Policy*, 15(1): 104-135.
- Medalia, Carla, Bruce D. Meyer, Amy O'Hara, and **Derek Wu**. 2019. “Linking Survey & Administrative Data to Measure Income, Inequality, and Mobility.” *International Journal of Population Data Science*, 4(1): 1-8. (Winner of the ADRF Network 2018 Annual Conference Best Paper Award)

Meyer, Bruce D. and **Derek Wu**. 2018. "The Poverty Reduction of Social Security and Means-Tested Transfers." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 71(5): 1106-1153.

WORKING PAPERS

"The Anti-Poverty, Targeting, and Labor Supply Effects of the Proposed Child Tax Credit Expansion" (with Kevin Corinth, Bruce Meyer, and Matthew Stadnicki), Sep 2021. NBER Working Paper No. 29366.

"The Costs of Automating Welfare Services: Effects on Program Enrollment", Aug 2021.

"A Dynamic View of Income, Employment Household Structure, and Health Around Safety Net Participation" (with Jonathan Zhang), Aug 2021. *Under Review*.

"Does Geographically Adjusting Poverty Thresholds Improve Poverty Measurement and Program Targeting?" (with Brian Curran and Bruce Meyer), Aug 2021.

"Learning about Homelessness Using Linked Administrative and Survey Data" (with Alexa Grunwaldt, Carla Medalia, Bruce Meyer, and Angela Wyse), May 2021. NBER Working Paper No. 28861.

"Do Surveys Miss the Poor? Evidence from Administrative SNAP Records" (with Bruce Meyer), Mar 2021.

"COVID-19 and the Urban Taxi Market: Lessons from Chicago", Jul 2020.

"Understanding Poverty by Linking Survey, Tax, and Program Data" (with Carla Medalia and Bruce Meyer), Mar 2020.

"Do Federal Grants Crowd Out Local Spending? Evidence from Title I", Jun 2019.

WORK IN PROGRESS

"Welfare Cuts and Well-Being: Evidence from Indiana in the Great Recession"

"The Effects of Application and Certification Screens on SNAP Enrollment and Targeting"

"Poverty Trends over Time Using Linked Survey and Administrative Data" (with Kevin Corinth and Bruce Meyer)

"Competition and Product Quality: Evidence from the NYC Transportation Market" (with Seunghoon Lee)

PRE-DOCTORAL RESEARCH

Kurzweil, Martin and **Derek Wu**. 2015. "Building a Pathway to Student Success at Georgia State University." Ithaka S+R Report.

Wu, Derek. 2015. "Online Learning in Postsecondary Education: A Review of the Empirical Literature (2013-2014)." Ithaka S+R Report.

Mulhern, Christine, Richard R. Spies, Matthew P. Staiger, and **Derek Wu**. 2015. "The Effects of Rising Student Costs in Higher Education: Evidence from Public Institutions in Virginia." Ithaka S+R Report.

Wu, Derek. 2015. "Appendix: University of California Online Education Initiative." In Bowen, W.G. and E.M. Tobin, *Locus of Authority: The Evolution of Faculty Roles in the Governance of Higher Education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

PRESENTATIONS

2021: AEA Annual Meetings; APPAM Fall Conference (scheduled); NTA Annual Conference (scheduled); SEA Annual Meeting (scheduled); SOLE Annual Meeting; University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy (scheduled); U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies; ZEW Public Finance Conference

2020: APPAM Fall Conference; Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families; Joint Statistical Meetings; University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy; U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies; Washington Center for Equitable Growth Grantee Conference

2019: AEA Annual Meetings; AEEP Annual Conference; National Academies of Sciences' Data Linkage Day; University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy; U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

2018 & earlier: APPAM Fall Conference; Joint Statistical Meetings; SEA Annual Meetings; Shandong University; University of Chicago, Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries in the Social Sciences; University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy; U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies; WEA International Conference

TEACHING

Advanced Statistics for Data Analysis II (MPP), Head TA for Bruce Meyer	2019, 2020
Advanced Statistics for Data Analysis I (MPP), Head TA for Dan Black	2018, 2019
Quantitative Methods in Public Policy (Undergraduate), TA for Anthony Fowler	2017
Advanced Microeconomics II (PhD), TA for Damon Jones	2017
Analytical Politics I (MPP), TA for Ethan Bueno de Mesquita	2016

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, & GRANTS

Washington Center for Equitable Growth Doctoral Grant (\$15,000)	2020
Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grant (\$25,000)	2020
University of Chicago Harris School PhD Fellowship	2015 – Pres.
University of Chicago NORC Fellowship (Declined)	2017
Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans (Finalist)	2016
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (Honorable Mention)	2016
Woodrow Wilson School Summer Grant (\$5,000)	2012
Pearson Prize for Higher Education, National Fellow (\$10,000)	2010
Coca-Cola National Scholar (\$20,000)	2009
United States Senate Youth Program, Maryland Delegate (\$5,000)	2008

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Research Fellow for Bruce Meyer (spent SY 2017-18 full-time at U.S. Census Bureau)	2017 – Pres.
Research Analyst for William G. Bowen, Ithaka Strategy and Research, New York, NY	2013 – 2015
Intern, White House Council of Economic Advisers, Washington, D.C.	2012
Intern & Research Fellow, National Council on Teacher Quality, Washington, D.C.	2010, 2011
Student Member, Maryland State Board of Education	2008 – 2009

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee

National Tax Journal

Affiliations

U.S. Census Bureau Special Sworn Status, AEA, APPAM, ASA

Selected Volunteer and Extracurricular Activities

Reader, PhD Admissions Committee, University of Chicago Harris School	2017
Co-Chair, PhD Social Committee, University of Chicago Harris School	2016 – 2017
Project Coordinator, SVC imPACT Volunteer Tutoring Program, Trenton (NJ)	2009 – 2013

MEDIA CITATIONS

Bloomberg, Brookings, Chronicle of Higher Education, Hechinger Report, Inside Higher Ed (x2), Los Angeles Times, The Economist, Slate, Vox, VoxEU, Washington Monthly, Yahoo! Finance

PERSONAL

Citizenship: United States of America

Foreign Languages: Oral Fluency in Mandarin Chinese, Proficiency in Spanish

REFERENCES

Professor Bruce D. Meyer
University of Chicago (Harris)
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Professor Dan A. Black
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