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**New research reimagines anti-poverty policies and the social safety net**

MADISON—A selection of substantially new, innovative anti-poverty policy proposals by leading social scientists that explores alternatives to shrinking federal programs was just released and is available online.

The proposals, based on decades of study of what works to reduce economic disadvantage and increase opportunity, are presented in a volume edited by Lawrence Berger, Maria Cancian, and Katherine Magnuson of the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Published by the Russell Sage Foundation in its open-access journal, the double-issue, “Anti-Poverty Policy Initiatives for the United States,” examines the social safety net in America and proposes policies that could be implemented to strengthen or reimagine programs to lift millions of Americans out of poverty.

At a time when existing programs have been eroded by disinvestment and the addition of work-based requirements, these proposals provide detailed analyses about both incremental and major policy changes that could reconfigure the social safety net and alleviate poverty and inequities resulting from poverty in significant ways.

Considering the context of an increasingly unstable labor market, changing family structures, and steepening inequality, the issue offers pathways and proposals for tenable solutions to restore these programs.

A number of the proposals were developed by UW–Madison faculty, including:

- Converting the Child Tax Credit into a universal, monthly child allowance. Drawing on research that further investment could reduce deep poverty by 50% and effectively eliminate child poverty. Developed by Timothy Smeeding, Economics and Public Affairs and former IRP Director, and colleagues.

- A federal policy that would help low-wage workers build up savings by creating a “Rainy Day Earned Income Tax Credit.” Developed by Sarah Halpern-Meekin, School of Human Ecology, and colleagues.
- A targeted and inexpensive program to provide a minimally adequate income, administered through the Social Security system. Developed by Pamela Herd, Public Affairs, Timothy Smeeding, and colleagues.
- Increasing financial resources to children living with a single parent by broadening child support services and publicly guaranteeing a minimum amount of support per child. Developed by Maria Cancian and Daniel R. Meyer, Social Work.

### **Access the Proposals**

Access “Anti-Poverty Policy Initiatives for the United States,” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, here: <https://www.rsfdjournal.org/toc/rsf/4/2> and <https://www.rsfdjournal.org/toc/rsf/4/3>.

### **About the Editors**

Lawrence Berger is a Professor of Social Work and Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at University of Wisconsin–Madison, whose research focuses on child and family policy, child development and well-being, child protective services and foster care, family resources, and household debt.

Maria Cancian is a Professor of Public Affairs and Social Work and an Affiliate and former Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her research considers the relationship between public policies and changes in marriage, fertility, employment and family well-being.

Katherine Magnuson is a Professor, Doctoral Program Chair in the School of Social Work, and Institute for Research on Poverty Associate Director of Research and Training at University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her work focuses on socioeconomic status and child development, early education and intervention, welfare reform, and family well-being.

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