

# Building Social Sciences Research Capacity: Addressing Food Assistance and Nutrition Issues in the South

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Bo Beaulieu

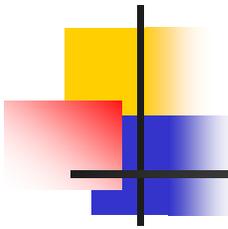
Southern Rural Development Center

Mississippi State University

Meeting of the Society for Nutrition Education

Philadelphia, PA

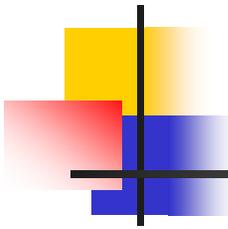
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# The SRDC's Efforts

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- One of five centers in the nation selected by ERS to be part of the FANRP small grants program
- Our small grants effort has been in place since 1998
- Why a focus on the South?

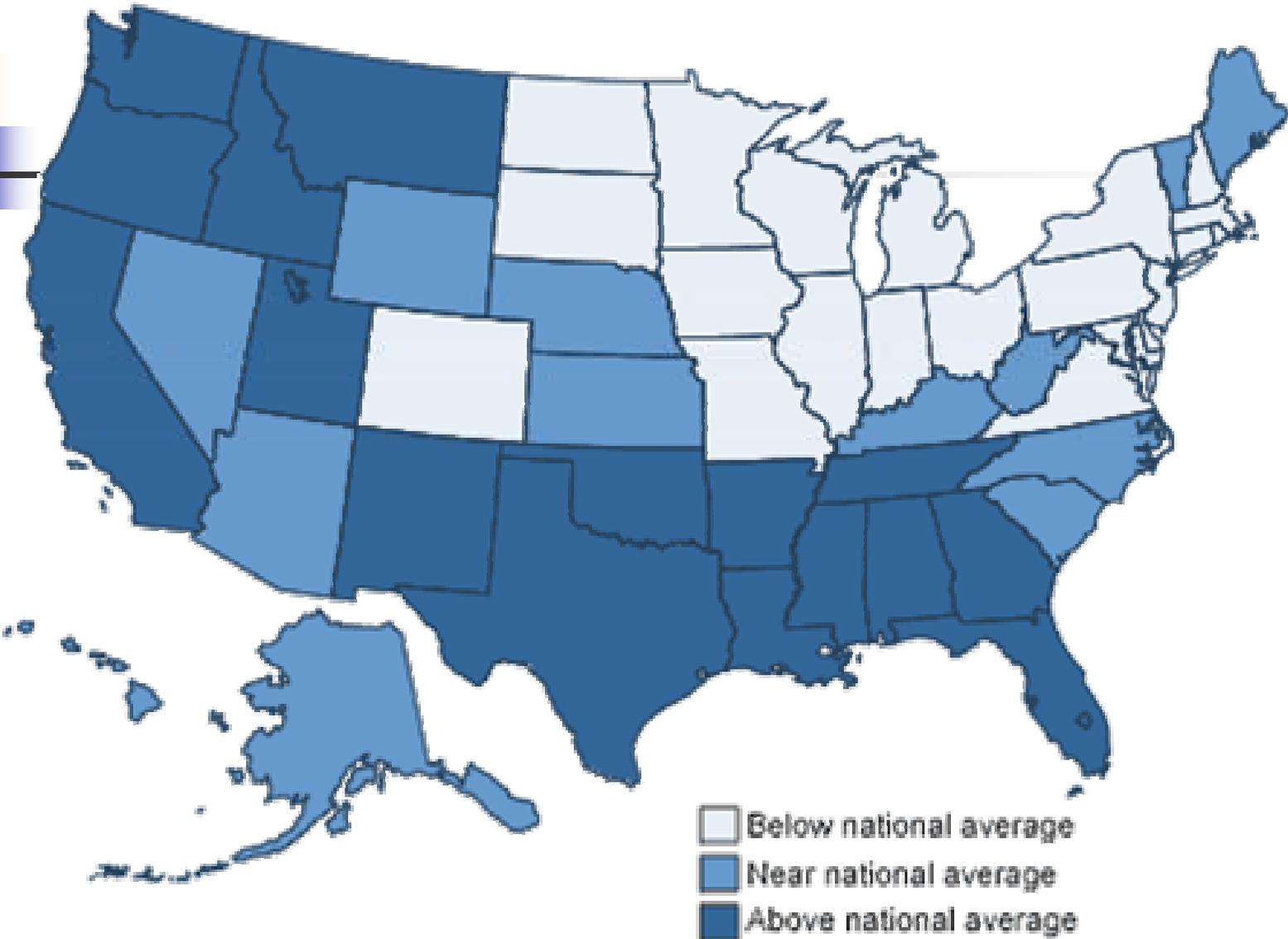
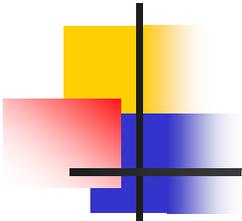


# Facts about the South

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- Of the 10 states in the nation with the highest rates of food insecurity, five are located in the South.
- 10 states in the South have incidences of hunger that exceed the national average of 3.1%.
- Poverty is high and persistent in many parts of the South. In fact, 12 states in the region have individual poverty rates that exceed the 1999-2001 national average of 11.6%
- Poverty is strongly tied to the prevalence of food insecurity and hunger.

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 1999-2001

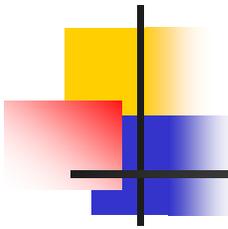


Source: Calculated by ERS based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

# What the SRDC has done in five years (1998-2002)



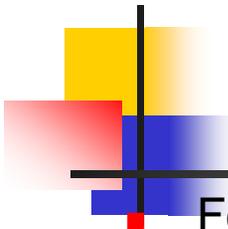
- Invested in innovative programs targeted to vulnerable populations
- Funded work involving 59 researchers/graduate students
- 14 land grant universities and 5 non-LGUs in the region have been awarded funds



# Some of the topics funded

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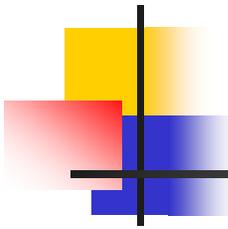
- Assessing the Prevalence of Childhood Obesity Among Limited Resource Latino and Non-Latino Families
- The Incidence of Overweight and Obesity in Southern Adolescents
- Retail Globalization and Food Access in the South
- Prevalence and Consequences of Child Obesity
- Nutrient Intakes of Food Insufficient and Food Sufficient Adults
- Relationships of Food Insufficiency to Disease Risk and Outcomes among Adults
- Contextual Determinants of Food Security in Southern Hispanic and African-American Neighborhoods
- Food Insecurity and Hunger among Home Bound Older Adults in the Rural South
- Food Stamp Receipt by Families with Noncitizen Householders
- Agency Profiles and Directors' Perceptions of Needs and Opportunities under Charitable Choices



# Some of the topics funded

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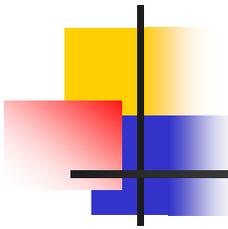
- Food Security, Health, and Well-Being Among Welfare Populations
  - Benefits and Problems Associated with the use of Electronic Benefits Transfer for Food Stamps
  - Private Food Assistance: Issues of Access and Need
  - The Impact of Food Stamp Reforms on the Elderly
  - A Comparison of Food and Nutrient Intakes, Food Purchase Patterns, Level of Food Security and Selected Demographic Variables Among Food Stamp Program Recipients and Non-Recipients
  - An Assessment of Faith-Based Food Assistance Programs
  - Food Stamp Utilization Patterns in Rural Counties: A Multilevel Analysis of the Micro- and Macro-Level Determinants of Caseload Dynamics



# Returns on our investment

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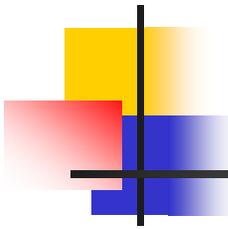
- Generated a number of scientific studies published in academic journals
- Involved a number of graduate students in food assistance and nutrition research
- Positioned researchers to more effectively compete for, and capture, extramural grants
- Allowed resources to be dedicated to enhancing the research capacity of the region's 1890 institutions
- Provided an important forum for keeping policymakers aware of food assistance issues



# The numbers . . .

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- Journal articles: 11
- Articles submitted: 8
- Articles in progress: 3
- Technical reports: 4
- Theses completed: 4
- Contributed papers: 25
- Grant applications submitted: 10

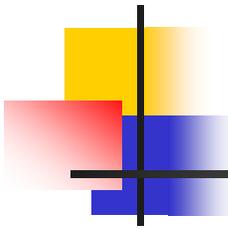


# The Food Assistance Policy Series

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- Distributed to U.S. Representatives, Senators, and key staffers from the South
- Sent to land grant administrators and select faculty in the region
- Available electronically on the SRDC website

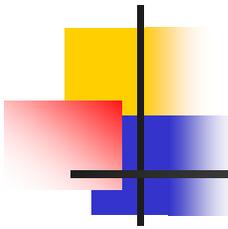




# What SRDC takes seriously. . .

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- The importance of expanding the number of social sciences faculty engaged in food assistance and nutrition research
- The urgency of building a stronger research capacity among 1890 institutions
- The necessity of communicating key findings to policymakers and other decision makers in a manner that is relevant and useful
- Improving the lives of vulnerable groups in the rural South



# Thank You

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