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Pat Ruggles



Senior Fellow

[Economics, Justice, and Society](#)

B.A., Economics, Yale University
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 Ph.D., Economics, Harvard University

Contact

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Patricia Ruggles is a Senior Fellow with the Economics, Labor and Population Studies department. She has worked throughout her career to improve the quality of the economic and social statistics used for research and policy analysis. She has been involved in the development of methods for analyzing longitudinal data sets since the 1980s, when she was a researcher at the Urban Institute. She was an early user of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), using it to create integrated longitudinal files for the analysis of income and poverty spells over time. She served on the National Academy of Sciences Panel to evaluate the SIPP in 1989 and 1990.

Patricia has held two NSF/ASA fellowships at the Bureau of the Census, both focused on improving data quality and usability. The analyses of poverty-related issues that came out of her first NSF fellowship contributed to her book, *Drawing the Line*, which analyzed the impacts of alternative poverty measures. That book led to a major review of poverty measurement by the National Academy of Sciences, and Census is now issuing a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) that incorporates those recommendations. Patricia's second NSF fellowship at Census focused on improving welfare program data in the SIPP, and led to her well-known work with Rebecca Blank on the dynamics of welfare spells. Patricia has also published many other studies based on the SIPP, the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) and other longitudinal data bases.

Patricia joined the staff of the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress in 1990, where she was concerned with data and measurement issues that affect policy analysis. In addition to a series of hearings on poverty measurement, she organized hearings on price measurement, unemployment, productivity, and other major economic indicators. She also worked extensively on issues relating to health insurance, health needs, and welfare. After a break to serve in the Clinton

Published Research

- ["Drawing the Line: and Their Implications for Poverty Measurement"](#)
- ["Economic Status Evidence from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics"](#)
- ["The Impact of Government Programs on the Distribution of Income in the 1980s"](#)
- ["The Impact of Retirement Benefit Programs on the Distribution of Income in the 1980s"](#)
- ["Income Distribution in the 1980s Were Different Than in the 1970s"](#)
- ["Longitudinal Measures of Income and Assets for Income and Asset Dynamics"](#)
- ["Measuring Poverty in the United States: A Comparison of the Current and Proposed Measures"](#)
- ["The Needy or the Non-Needy: Support Needs of the Poor"](#)
- ["Poverty Measurement: Hard to Change the Definition"](#)
- ["Retrenchment and the Analysis of the Impact of the Reagan Administration on the Poor"](#)
- ["Short- and Long-Term Measures of Poverty: Measuring the American Poor"](#)
- ["Short-Term Recidivism among Welfare Recipients."](#)
- ["Using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics to Study Poverty and Income Dynamics"](#)

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for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In that role she was responsible for an annual budget of about \$20 million to oversee research on issues relating to income and poverty.

Dependent Children Dynamics of Eligibility

More recently, Patricia has worked at the National Academy of Sciences on projects relating to social and economic indicators and on a re-evaluation of the SIPP. She has also consulted with the city of New York on the creation of a city-specific poverty measure and with the United Nations on tracking environmental data in the context of the System of National Accounts.

Representative Projects

Family Self-Sufficiency Data Center. State and local agencies that provide services to low-income families to achieve self-sufficiency are increasingly looking to incorporate better data into decision-making around policies, programs, and practices in an effort to improve outcomes and make efficient use of scarce taxpayer dollars.

High-quality data will support research to build evidence around what works to improve self-sufficiency. [More](#)

Headlines

Sparks: The NORC Blog

Pat Ruggles: Why Does Economic Measurement Matter? [More](#)

Posted: 10.30.2015 8:51AM

Sparks: The NORC Blog

Pat Ruggles: Career of Nobel Prize Winner Angus Deaton Highlights Value of Microdata [More](#)

Posted: 10.23.2015 12:16PM

Press Release

Leading Poverty Economist Patricia Ruggles Joins NORC at the University of Chicago as a Senior Fellow in the Economics, Labor, and Population Studies Department [More](#)

Posted: 6.12.2013 5:02PM

News

The New York Times: NORC Senior Fellow Pat Ruggles helps answer the question, "Who Is Poor?"

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Posted: 3.15.2013 11:56AM

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