This report examines the Food Stamp caseload in Texas between 1995 and 2001. The primary objective is to identify the factors affecting the Food Stamp caseload patterns for citizens and non-citizens in the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties of the state. This objective is addressed through the use of descriptive data and analysis that focus on the demographic and program participation characteristics of Food Stamp case heads. The data used are extracted from a time series of monthly Food Stamp client files.

The report proposes that the additional burden of immigration status verification will cause non-citizens to be more sensitive to administrative processes that affect all cases such as the reduction in eligibility recertification intervals. To explore this proposition, an event history technique is applied to a longitudinal file comprised of the monthly client files from September 1995 through September 2001. Three event history models for all cases, for citizen cases, and for non-citizen cases are estimated to measure the hazard of caseload exit using demographic, economic, and program factors as independent variables.

The analysis shows that, on the whole, non-citizens have a greater hazard of exit. A comparison of the citizen and non-citizen models shows that exit probabilities decline with age and larger household sizes. These effects are relatively stronger for citizens. Female headship reduces the exit hazard as does membership in a non-Anglo minority. Lower education levels decrease the exit hazard with the exception of citizens with less than a 9th grade education. For non-citizens in the less than a 9th grade education educational attainment category, the exit hazard is reduced. Relatively higher incomes reduce the exit hazard for both citizens and non-citizens but the effect is much stronger for non-citizens. Employment reduces the exit hazard for citizens but raises it for non-citizens. Both groups have their exit hazards decreased by longer certification intervals and the effect is stronger for citizen heads. The receipt of TANF reduces the exit hazard more for citizen than non-citizen cases. All other things equal, citizen and non-citizen cases in nonmetropolitan counties have reduced hazards of exit compared to their metropolitan counterparts.

The results suggest that there is relatively little difference in the exit patterns of citizens and non-citizens and that the Food Stamp program represents a coping strategy for low-income
households regardless of their nativity. Future research should evaluate how regional variations in program administrative practices and local economic conditions affect the participation of citizen and non-citizen households.