

The Effect of Recipient Contribution Requirements on Support for Social Programs

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Abstract

A large literature examines the use of recipient contribution requirements in social programs to target people who most need and value aid. Yet little is known about public support (i.e., voter and donor preferences) for such requirements. Using both a laboratory experiment and a field experiment with a nationally representative sample, we find an inverted u-shape response to monetary contribution requirements for a food aid program: individual support increases when recipients make small monetary contributions and returns to baseline under large contribution requirements. Recipient time contribution requirements also increase program support. Results from additional treatments suggest that, in line with theoretical models, individuals use contribution requirements to increase both allocative efficiency, screening recipients who most value the good, and targeting efficiency, screening recipients most in need. Our work informs the design of social programs which must respond to the preferences of voters and donors who provide political and financial support.

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1 Introduction

An ongoing question regarding the optimal structure of social programs is whether they should include recipient contribution requirements. Some government and non-profit aid programs distribute benefits to needy recipients free of charge. Many others require recipients to contribute their own resources (time or money) to receive benefits. For instance, to qualify for a home from the non-profit Habitat for Humanity, low-income recipients must make small monthly payments and contribute hundreds of hours to the building process. Government workfare programs, which condition transfers on recipient labor, are prevalent across the world. And both government and non-profit programs that provide in-kind transfers, such as health products and education, often require recipients to pay a small part of the cost through subsidized pricing or fees.¹

Recipient contribution requirements provoke heated debate among policymakers. For example, Republican lawmakers in the U.S. have recently pushed to tie Medicaid and food stamp benefits to recipient work. Democratic lawmakers and consumer advocates have argued that such requirements strip benefits from those who need them most. In response, the 2017 GOP White House budget director defended the proposed policies saying, “what we’ve done is not to try and remove the safety net for folks who need it, but to try and figure out if there’s folks who don’t need it that need to be back in the workforce.”²

A long line of theoretical work provides justification for these policies, arguing that if there is imperfect information about recipients, contribution requirements can act as a screening device to target those who most need and value aid (Akerlof, 1978). However, contribution requirements involve tradeoffs. They impose costs on recipients whose welfare we are aiming to improve. And the requirements may screen out the neediest if they are less able to make contributions.³

The tradeoffs between allocative efficiency (screening those who most value the good) and targeting efficiency (screening those most in need) have received extensive attention on the demand (recipient) side. However, the academic and policy debate on recipient contribution requirements has largely ignored the supply side: the voters and

¹Habitat for Humanity International ranked 11 on the list of top charities in the U.S. in 2016 (<https://www.forbes.com/top-charities/list/>). See <https://www.habitat.org/housing-help/apply> for details. For health products, see Population Services International (health products) <http://www.psi.org/research/evidence/social-marketing-evidence-base/>. For education, see Unicef “Free or Fee: 2006 Global Report” https://www.unicef.org/education/bege_61665.html.

²See T. Luhby, Republicans want the poor to work for their government benefits, *CNN Money* (2107; <http://money.cnn.com/2017/05/30/news/economy/republicans-work-requirements-poor-benefits/index.html>).

³Time contribution requirements can also impose deadweight loss from wasted time.

charitable donors who provide political and financial support for social programs. This is a critical gap because optimal policy design requires that programs be structured in ways that are both economically efficient *and* politically attractive. In this vein, a large literature examines individual preferences for redistribution, charitable giving and support for social programs. But this work has given little attention to public support for recipient contribution requirements, or to the screening concerns these requirements address.

In this paper we explore the supply side: do people support programs with costly recipient contribution requirements? And if so, do they use contribution requirements to screen recipients as theoretical models predict? To answer these questions, we experimentally vary recipient contribution requirements for a food aid program and study the impact on individual-level support for the program, using donations to the food program as our measure of program support.

We first conduct a laboratory experiment in which over 1,000 undergraduate students choose between allocating a donation to a children’s charity or to a healthy food aid program. We then conduct a field experiment that includes nearly 5,000 nationally representative Americans from an internet survey panel, in which participants can donate a portion of their survey earnings to a healthy food aid program. In both experiments we vary the recipient monetary contribution requirements of the aid program described to participants: the recipient makes no contribution, the recipient pays 10% of the cost, or the recipient pays 50% of the cost. In the field experiment, we also include treatments in which the recipient has to expend time (5 minutes or 25 minutes) registering for the program to receive the food.

Across both the laboratory and field experiments, we find an ‘inverted u-shape’ of support in response to monetary contributions by recipients: support increases when recipients pay 10% of the cost and drops back to baseline when recipients pay 50% of the cost. Both low and high contributions of time by recipients increase program support. Our results suggest that people want to screen recipients, recognize recipient contributions as a targeting mechanism, respond to tradeoffs between allocative and targeting efficiency that monetary contribution requirements involve, and perceive time contributions as an effective screening device.

Specifically, the behavior in our study closely matches the predictions of our theoretical framework discussed in Section 4, in which individuals use recipient contribution requirements to increase allocative and targeting efficiency. There is uncertainty about the value of the good (healthy food) to recipients. Recipients who value the good self-target by being willing to contribute a nominal amount (10% of the cost). That is, low

monetary contributions screen out recipients who have little value for healthy food but will accept it if it is free. But larger monetary contribution requirements (50% of cost) may be viewed as too burdensome or more likely to screen out those who are most in need. In contrast, individuals may view higher contributions of time as more likely to target those in need if they believe that poorer recipients have lower costs of time (i.e., wealthier recipients will not be willing to expend time to receive the good).

We next examine the extent to which individual preferences align with the political debate in the U.S. – i.e., that conservatives are generally less in favor of social programs and more in favor of recipient contribution requirements than are liberals. In line with the political debate, we find suggestive evidence that the response to monetary contribution requirements is strongest among conservatives.

Finally, we use additional treatments to examine alternative mechanisms driving the response to monetary contribution requirements. First, we test whether our results are due to price effects: when recipients contribute part of the cost, the price of providing the good decreases. Second, we examine whether preferences for fairness or reciprocity can explain our results: recipients who contribute their own resources are considered more deserving of aid. Third, we examine investment motivations: individuals want recipients to invest their own resources in the good (e.g., because they think recipients will value a good more if they pay a higher price for it). The results of our additional treatments are inconsistent with these alternative mechanisms.

Our study contributes to several growing and largely distinct literatures. Using an incentivized decision in a nationally representative sample, we demonstrate that small changes in the description of a program’s recipient contribution requirements have a significant impact on support for the program. To our knowledge, this study is the first to examine individual preferences for recipient contribution requirements and the role of screening concerns in support for social programs.

Our first contribution is to the theoretical and empirical literature on social preferences and charitable giving that examines the impact of leadership contributions made by third-party donors. Our findings show that the mechanisms driving the impact of contributions by others depend on the source of the contribution. The inverted u-shape we find in response to recipient contributions stands in sharp contrast to prior work which finds either a flat or positive relationship between the size of third-party donor contributions and giving (List, 2011; Andreoni and Payne, 2013, provide reviews).⁴

Our second contribution is to the literature examining preferences for redistribution.

⁴Our additional treatments include tests of third-party donor contributions. The effects of these treatments are consistent with the prior evidence.

Much of this work focuses on sources of inequality – whether due to choices or luck – and related preferences for fairness and redistributive justice (Cappelen et al., 2007; Konow, 2010; Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Cappelen et al., 2013, provide recent discussions). We demonstrate that screening concerns related to allocative and targeting efficiency are an additional factor shaping support for redistribution and social programs.

Our third contribution is to the work in development and public economics on the optimal design of social programs. Our results demonstrate, perhaps surprisingly, that individual preferences align fairly well with theoretical economic models. However, our findings also highlight a potential gap between empirical findings regarding optimal policy on the demand (recipient) side and individual preferences on the supply side. Studies examining the impact of contribution requirements on take-up and usage of aid find mixed evidence of effectiveness (see Section 2 for discussion). At the same time, our work shows that recipient contribution requirements can increase public support for social programs. Hence, the design of policies in response to evidence on the demand side may also need to address political economy considerations on the supply side.

In the remainder of the paper, Section 2 discusses the related literature; Section 3 describes the design of our experiments; Section 4 discusses our theoretical framework; Section 5 summarizes our main results; Section 6 discusses alternative mechanisms including the results of our secondary treatments; and Section 7 concludes.

2 Background Literature

2.1 Optimal Design of Social Programs

Our study is broadly motivated by work on the optimal design of social programs when there is imperfect information about recipients. The first strand of literature focuses on screening through monetary contribution requirements. It is well established that price mechanisms improve allocative efficiency by screening out those who have little value for a good (see e.g. Glaeser and Luttmer, 2003, for discussion). But in the case of social programs for low-income recipients, monetary contribution requirements involve a tradeoff: while higher prices can decrease over-inclusion (giving a good to recipients who do not use it), they also increase under-inclusion (not giving a good to recipients who need it but cannot pay for it). Empirical studies of recipient contribution requirements generally argue that increases in under-inclusion outweigh decreases in over-inclusion (see Dupas, 2014; Dupas and Miguel, 2017, for reviews).⁵

⁵An exception is Cohen et al. (2015).

Taken together the prior literature suggests that the response to recipient contribution requirements may not be monotonic because prices that are too low may include individuals who do not value the good, while prices that are too high may exclude those who most need the good but are least able to pay for it. Our experimental design includes three levels of recipient monetary contributions – none, low (nominal) and high – to examine whether individuals understand and respond to tradeoffs between under- and over- inclusion.

The second strand of literature focuses on improving targeting efficiency by screening those most in need. Ordeal mechanisms (such as time intensive application processes) can screen out wealthier recipients if they are more costly for the rich than the poor – e.g., because the cost of time is increasing in income (Nichols et al., 1971; Nichols and Zeckhauser, 1982; Ravallion, 1991; Besley and Coate, 1992; Kleven and Kopczuk, 2011; Alatas et al., 2016). However, they can also impose deadweight loss through wasted time.

Empirical studies of ordeal mechanisms generally argue that they improve targeting with fewer concerns about under-inclusion compared to monetary contribution requirements (Ravallion, 1991; Alatas et al., 2016; Dupas et al., 2016; Rennane, 2016).⁶ However, related work demonstrates that even small barriers to program participation can work against the policy goal of improving outcomes for those most in need (see Bertrand et al., 2004; Currie, 2006; Banerjee and Duflo, 2012, for discussion). And programs that condition transfers on recipients’ behavior may increase administrative costs without significantly improving outcomes (Baird et al., 2014, provide a review). The time contribution treatments in our experiment are modeled after ordeal mechanisms to examine the response to these requirements alongside monetary contribution requirements.

In addition to screening, this literature has also examined whether monetary contribution requirements can increase recipients’ value for a good by having them invest their own resources in it. This could occur if recipients are sensitive to sunk costs (Thaler, 1980; Arkes and Blumer, 1985) or infer quality from price (Bagwell and Roridan, 1991; Riley, 2001).⁷ Empirical studies find little evidence that paying a (higher) price for a good induces recipients to increase usage (Ashraf et al., 2010; Cohen and Dupas, 2010; Berry et al., 2015). The additional treatments in our study allow us to examine whether individuals want recipients to invest in the good they are receiving.

⁶An exception is Deshpande and Li (2017).

⁷Another strand of this literature has argued that consumers perceive higher benefits from free (zero cost) goods compared to positive prices (e.g. Shampanier et al., 2007).

2.2 Preferences for Redistribution and Charitable Giving

The literature described above focuses only on the impact of contribution requirements on the demand (recipient) side. We add to this work by examining public preferences for screening and contribution requirements on the supply side – i.e., the donors and voters who support social programs. Here, we contribute to the literature on preferences for redistribution, social preferences and charitable giving.

Prior work has examined the impact of leadership gifts – third party contributions designated as seed money or matching grants – on charitable giving. Theoretical work demonstrates that when there is imperfect information, contributions by third-party donors can serve as a credible signal of a charity’s quality and increase giving (Vesterlund, 2003; Andreoni, 2006; Potters et al., 2007; Karlan and List, 2012). Andreoni (2006) additionally predicts that to be credible third-party donations must be large.

In line with the theory, empirical studies generally find that third-party contributions increase giving; and that giving is either flat or increasing in response to larger contributions (List and Lucking-Reiley, 2002; Karlan and List, 2007; Eckel and Grossman, 2003, 2008; Karlan et al., 2011; Huck and Rasul, 2011). There is suggestive evidence that low contributions by third-party donors (match rates below 1 to 1) have no impact or even decrease giving (Karlan et al., 2011). These findings contrast with the literature discussed above on the optimal design of social programs, which suggests that low recipient contribution requirements may be *more* effective than higher contributions. Our experiment includes both recipient contribution treatments and third-party contribution treatments to evaluate whether they operate through distinct mechanisms.

Another strand of literature examines preferences for fairness and reciprocity in the context of support for redistribution. These studies generally find that recipients who have worked hard or contributed more are considered more deserving of aid (Cappelen et al., 2007; Fong and Luttmer, 2009, 2011; Lefgren et al., 2016; Almås et al., 2016). This work argues that fairness preferences should be incorporated into models of optimal redistribution and program design (Alesina and Angeletos, 2005; Drenik and Perez-Truglia, 2017; Saez and Stantcheva, 2016).⁸ The additional treatments in our study aim to highlight preferences for allocative and targeting efficiency as distinct from preferences for fairness or reciprocity.

Our study also contributes to an emerging literature that puts into question whether

⁸In a related study, Drenik and Perez-Truglia (2017) surveyed Amazon Mechanical Turk respondents and found that stated support for cash transfers increases when a beneficiary is described as hard-working compared to when a beneficiary is described as lazy, and that rating diligent beneficiaries as more deserving is positively correlated with support for work requirements in social programs.

donors value charities' effectiveness (Niehaus, 2014; Exley, 2015; Karlan and Wood, 2017). Our evidence that donors care about screening suggests a concern for effectiveness in this domain. Finally, our suggestive evidence that the response to recipient contribution requirements may vary by political preferences adds to a larger literature examining differential preferences among liberals and conservatives for resource distribution (Graham et al., 2009; Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Kuziemko et al., 2015; Almås et al., 2016).

3 Setting and Experimental Design

3.1 Experimental Settings

We conducted a laboratory experiment and a field experiment in which we varied the characteristics of a food aid program, and then examined the impact on individual-level support for the program through costly donations.

The laboratory experiment was conducted in October-November 2016 with 1,020 undergraduate students at the University of California San Diego (UCSD).⁹ Participants were shown information about the children's charity Kids Korps and a healthy food program side by side and asked to choose which one to direct a \$100 donation (we randomly chose one participant's decision to determine the actual donation).¹⁰ Kids Korps was described as '*a non-profit organization that engages young people in volunteerism and teaches them about leadership and civic responsibility.*' The food program was described as '*a non-profit organization that delivers baskets with \$10 of fresh produce to families who lack access to healthy food.*' The description of the healthy food program was followed by the treatment message; the description of Kid Korps stayed constant in all treatments (See Appendix B for screenshots of the study).

The field experiment was conducted with 4,908 respondents of the Understanding America Study (UAS) at the University of Southern California (USC). The UAS is a probability-based Internet panel of about 6,000 adults who are representative of the American population.¹¹ Panel members routinely receive incentives to participate in surveys. The experiment was conducted as part of the panel's end-of-year survey in December, 2016 - February, 2017. Participants received \$8 for the survey, which took

⁹Participants received course credit in another faculty member's class for participation. The experiment was conducted outside of class time.

¹⁰This design is similar to Gneezy et al. (2014).

¹¹Panel members are recruited through address based sampling, in which recruitment letters are sent to randomly selected households using address lists from the U.S. Postal Service. Panel members without prior access to the Internet receive a tablet and internet.

approximately 14 minutes to complete.

Prior to the beginning of the survey, we offered respondents the opportunity to donate any amount of their survey payment to our food program, which was described as, ‘*a healthy food basket program . . . to provide families in need with \$10 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables*’. This description was followed by the treatment message and a note that 100% of donations would go towards purchasing the food items in the basket (See Appendix C for screenshots of the study). Participants were told that the question about donating was separate from the survey and were not told that it was part of an experiment, with the following message from the survey administrators: ‘*We would like to share with you an optional opportunity we have been invited to participate in by another project run at USC [...] your participation in this other project is completely voluntary [...] after we give you information about this project and you make your selection, our end of the year survey will begin*’.

3.2 Main treatments

Our main experimental treatments vary the recipient contribution requirements, either money or time, and are summarized in Table 1. In the monetary contribution treatments (both in the laboratory and field experiment), we varied whether we told respondents that the recipients contribute nothing (\$0 of the \$10 cost), a low amount (\$1 of the \$10 cost), or a high amount (\$5 of the \$10 cost). Our time contribution treatments are modeled after social assistance programs such as Medicaid and food stamps in the U.S., which some have argued involve a time-consuming application process - i.e., an ordeal mechanism - in order to screen recipients (Nichols et al., 1971; Besley and Coate, 1992). In these treatments (field experiment only), we varied whether we told respondents that the recipients contribute nothing (no additional registration process), a low amount (a 5 minute additional registration process) or a high amount (a 25 minute additional registration process).

For the field experiment monetary contribution treatments, respondents were told in the No Recipient Contribution treatment: ‘*Families pay nothing for the basket. Donations provide the full \$10 cost.*’; in the Low (High) Recipient Contribution treatment: ‘*Families contribute \$1 (\$5) for the basket. Donations provide the other \$9 (\$5).*’¹² In all time contribution treatments, respondents were told ‘*Families pay nothing for the basket. Donations cover the full \$10 cost.*’ In addition, respondents were told in the No Time Contribution treatment: ‘*Families receive the basket with no additional reg-*

¹²The treatment messages were identical for the laboratory experiment except we replaced the word ‘families’ with ‘parents.’

Table 1: Main Experimental Treatments

| Contribution Level | Monetary Contribution | Time Contribution |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| None | \$0 | \$0, No additional time |
| Low | \$1 (10% of cost) | \$0, 5 minutes |
| High | \$5 (50% of cost) | \$0, 25 minutes |

istration process’; in the Low (High) Time Contribution treatment: ‘Families receive the basket following an additional 5 (25) minute registration process.’

In both the laboratory and field experiment, all experimental manipulations were truthful. After the survey was complete, the funds that we raised were used to purchase baskets of food for low-income households in and around Los Angeles, CA at the cost-sharing amounts for each treatment. UAS participants also received an update in their quarterly newsletter regarding the total amount raised for the programs and the number of baskets distributed to date. In Section 3.3, we discuss additional treatments that allow us to disentangle mechanisms for the main treatment effects.

3.3 Additional Treatments

We include several additional experimental design features that allow us to examine the mechanisms for our main experimental treatments. First, we include treatments (in both the laboratory and field experiment) in which monetary contributions (low and high) are provided by a third-party donor rather than by recipients. In the field experiment respondents were told in the Low (High) Donor Contribution treatment: ‘Funding from a private donor provides \$1 (\$5) for the basket. Donations provide the other \$9 (\$5).’ The treatment messages were identical for the laboratory experiment except we replaced ‘private donor’ with ‘private foundation.’

Second, we include treatments (field experiment only) in which recipients receive foods of their choice, rather than being restricted to healthy foods (under the none, low and high monetary contribution requirements). We described the food program as a ‘a food basket program . . . to provide families in need with \$10 worth of foods of their choice.’ All treatment messages were identical to the monetary contribution treatments described in Section 3.2.

Third, in the recipient monetary contribution treatments (field experiment only), we surprise those who choose to make a donation with the option to have their donation help cover the recipient’s contribution (i.e., give recipients a refund for their contribution). In the Low (High) Contribution treatments we tell donors, ‘You have

the option to use your donation to help cover the cost of the baskets to families. If you choose this option, families will receive a refund for their \$1 (\$5) contribution to the basket.' Finally, we survey respondents about their perception of recipients: their household income, how much of the food they eat, their race and deservingness.

3.4 Randomization and baseline characteristics

For the randomization, we pre-specified the sample sizes for each treatment group, but did not stratify (or otherwise balance) on any baseline characteristics. Based on a conservative estimate of 4,800 participants, we allocated sample sizes as follows: 600 participants in each of the monetary contribution treatments (none, low and high); 500 participants in each of the time contribution treatments (none, low and high); and 300 participants in each of the secondary treatments discussed in Section 3.3. In the lab experiment, we allocated participants equally to each treatment.

We merge our field experimental data with a rich set of demographic characteristics collected by the UAS panel, including: age, gender, race/ethnicity, marital status, educational attainment, household income, and household size. In the lab experiment, we conduct a short demographic survey after the donation decision asking participants their age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

We also merge our field experimental data with additional data that USC collected on respondents' voting intentions in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. Between July and November 2016, panel members were asked weekly: *'What is the percent chance that ... 1) you will vote in the Presidential election? 2) you will vote for Clinton, Trump, or someone else?'* We average responses to these questions across all weeks until the election. Reported intentions were a good predictor of actual voting behavior in similar continuous Presidential election polls conducted in 2008 and 2012 (Delavande and Manski, 2010; Gutsche et al., 2014). We report the following voting intentions for the 2016 Presidential Election: probability of voting, and the candidate most likely to vote for - this data is available for 85% of the sample since it was gathered in earlier surveys.¹³

Tables 3 and 4 present average baseline characteristics by treatment group in the laboratory and field experiments, respectively.¹⁴ We report statistically significant dif-

¹³Missing data is due either to respondents choosing not to complete these prior surveys, or not being asked to complete the prior surveys if they joined the panel after the surveys were fielded. In the main analysis, we include the full sample; in the analysis of liberal/conservative leanings, we drop the 15% for whom voting intentions data are not available.

¹⁴The baseline characteristics for our secondary treatments discussed in Section 3.3 are presented in Appendix Table A.1 and Appendix Table A.2 for the laboratory and field experiment, respectively.

ferences of binary comparisons of each contribution treatment group and the relevant no contribution (money or time) treatment group. In the final column, we report the p -value from a joint F-test that the group means across all monetary and time contribution treatments are equal. Our treatment groups are well balanced on observable characteristics. In the laboratory experiment, there are no significant differences at the 10% level. In the field experiment, of the 96 binary comparisons of means we test, three are significantly different at the 10% level and two are significantly different at the 5% level, slightly less than would be expected by chance. Comparing across all treatments, there are statistically significant differences in one household income category and whether a respondent has non-missing voting intentions.

4 Theoretical framework

4.1 Model set up

In this section, we develop a simple framework that motivates our experimental design. We model support for social programs as a donation decision. The intuition is as follows. Altruistic donors would like to target recipients who receive the largest utility from a charitable good. Recipients' utility depends both on their marginal utility from receiving a cash transfer, which we assume is decreasing in income, and on their willingness to pay for the good, which is heterogeneous (holding income fixed). If donors had perfect information, they would target low-income recipients who highly value the good. However, donors do not (perfectly) observe individual recipient income and valuation for the good, but rather form expectations based on the recipient population distribution. In such cases, recipient contribution requirements can serve as a screening device, shifting the distribution to include only recipients who are willing to incur the required costs in order to receive the good.

More formally, we consider a good with an individual potential donor and a population of potential recipients with income distribution ϕ . Recipients choose whether to receive a single unit of the good g . To receive the good, recipients must incur costs $c = c(r, h, y)$, where r is the recipient monetary contribution required to receive the good, h is the recipient time contribution required to receive the good, and y is recipient income. We assume costs are increasing in recipient contributions r and h (we discuss below cases in which costs do or do not depend on income).

Fixing income y , valuation for the good has distribution ψ with mean $\mu(y)$ and standard deviation σ , which for simplicity we assume is independent of income. Will-

ingness to pay for a single unit of the good is $v = v(q, y)$, where $q \in [0, 1]$ is the proportion of potential recipients with income y whose valuation for g is at least v .¹⁵

Recipient surplus denominated in cash is the recipient's willingness to pay minus the recipient's cost, $v - c$. Recipient utility from a single unit of the good is the recipient's marginal utility of receiving a cash transfer multiplied by the cash equivalent of the good to the recipient (i.e., recipient surplus). The marginal utility of receiving a cash transfer is $\lambda(y)$, where λ is the marginal utility of income and we assume λ is decreasing in y . Thus, recipient utility is $\lambda(y)[v(q, y) - c(r, h, y)]$.

The potential donor does not (perfectly) observe each potential recipients' income or valuation. Instead he/she forms expectations of recipient utility based on the population distributions of income and valuation, ϕ and ψ . Expected recipient utility is:

$$E[\lambda(v - c)]|_{v \geq c} = \frac{\int_{y=0}^{\infty} \int_{q=0}^{q^*(r, h, y)} \lambda(y)[v(q, y) - c(r, h, y)] \phi(y) dq dy}{\int_{y=0}^{\infty} \int_{q=0}^{q^*(r, h, y)} \phi(y) dq dy}$$

where $q^*(r, h, y)$ is the proportion of potential recipients with income y willing to incur costs $c(r, h, y)$ to receive g – i.e., those for whom $v \geq c$. The potential donor allocates his/her income m between personal consumption x and charitable giving b to maximize the following utility function subject to the budget constraint $x + b \leq m$:

$$V = V(x, b) = u(x) + \alpha \left(\frac{b}{p\kappa} \right) \frac{\int_{y=0}^{\infty} \int_{q=0}^{q^*(r, h, y)} \lambda(y)[v(q, y) - c(r, h, y)] \phi(y) dq dy}{\int_{y=0}^{\infty} \int_{q=0}^{q^*(r, h, y)} \phi(y) dq dy}$$

where we assume u is increasing and concave and $\alpha \in [0, 1]$. Utility from charitable giving is the total units of charitable good produced multiplied by expected recipient utility from a single unit of the good. The total units produced is $\frac{b}{p\kappa}$, where κ is the unit cost of the good and $p \in (0, 1]$ is the proportion of the good's cost covered by the donor.

¹⁵ v is the inverse of $1 - \Psi$, where Ψ is the cumulative density function of ψ . That is, the downward-sloping demand curve is formed by ranking the willingness to pay of recipients from highest to lowest, as in e.g., Glaeser and Luttmer (2003).

The donor gives according to the following first order condition:

$$u'(m - b) = \alpha \left(\frac{1}{p\kappa} \right) \frac{\int_{y=0}^{\infty} \int_{q=0}^{q^*(r,h,y)} \lambda(y)[v(q, y) - c(r, h, y)]\phi(y) dq dy}{\int_{y=0}^{\infty} \int_{q=0}^{q^*(r,h,y)} \phi(y) dq dy}$$

4.2 Predicted Effects of Recipient Contributions

Below, we consider the effect of recipient monetary contributions r and recipient time contributions h on giving b via the following four mechanisms:

1. *Price*: By concavity of u , giving b is decreasing in the proportion of costs covered by the donor p (i.e., the price to the donor of producing one unit of the good).
2. *Expected recipient cost*: By concavity of u , giving b is decreasing in expected recipient costs $E[c]|_{v \geq c}$.
3. *Expected recipient willingness to pay*: By concavity of u , giving b is increasing in expected recipient willingness to pay $E[v]|_{v \geq c}$.
4. *Expected recipient income*: By concavity of u , giving b is increasing in the expected marginal utility of income $E[\lambda(y)]|_{v \geq c}$. Thus, by λ decreasing in y , giving is decreasing in expected recipient income.

We now consider how recipient monetary contributions r affect the four mechanisms discussed above. We first discuss the effect on price and then discuss effects on expected recipient utility via expected recipients costs, willingness to pay, and income. We assume recipients' costs are equal to the monetary contribution $c(r, h, y) = r$.

First, recipient monetary contributions decrease the price of giving, where the proportion of the costs covered by the donor is $p = 1 - r$ (i.e., the donor can produce more of the good for the same level of giving). Second, recipient monetary contributions increase recipient costs. Third, recipient monetary contributions (weakly) increase expected recipient valuation by shifting the distribution from including all recipients with willingness to pay $v \geq 0$ to including only those recipients with willingness to pay $v \geq r$. Figure 1a illustrates an example of the effect of recipient costs $c = 0$ vs. $c = r$ on expected recipient valuation $E[v]$ and expected recipient surplus $E[v - c]$.¹⁶ Fourth,

¹⁶In Figure 1a, we fix an income level y , $E[v]_{c=0}$ is the mean valuation of all potential recipients with $v \geq 0$, q^* is the proportion of potential recipients with willingness to pay $v \geq r$, and $E[v]_{c=r}$ is the expected willingness to pay of those recipients. The effect of r on expected recipient surplus $E[v - c]$ depends on the valuation distribution ψ . The figure illustrates an example with a lognor-

if g is a normal good, then recipient monetary contributions (weakly) increase the expected income of recipients who select into receiving the good. Figure 1b illustrates an example of selection on income for recipient costs $c = r$, where the proportion of potential recipients with willingness to pay $v \geq r$ is larger for high-income than low-income recipients $q_H^* > q_L^*$.

Taken together, the four effects yield equivocal predictions. The decreased price of giving and selection of recipients who highly value the good increase giving. However, the monetary contribution requirements come with a tradeoff. They impose costs on recipients and differentially screen out low-income recipients who donors want to target, which decreases giving. Therefore, recipient monetary contributions can increase, decrease, or have no net effect on giving. Next, we discuss a special case of low monetary contributions where these tradeoffs are potentially minimized.

We now consider a special case of low recipient monetary contributions, $r = \varepsilon$, shown in Figure 2a. If recipient contributions are nominal (i.e., just above zero), the effects on price and recipient costs are negligible. The primary effect is to screen out potential recipients with $v(q, y) < \varepsilon$ – i.e. those recipients who have (almost) no value for the basket but will accept it if it is free. If a substantial proportion of recipients have low valuations, then low contribution requirements can non-negligibly increase expected recipient willingness to pay. Finally, low contribution requirements can also non-negligibly increase expected recipient income. However, the negative effect on giving of increased expected recipient income is dampened because recipients with (close to) zero cash value for the basket receive (close to) zero utility from the good regardless of their marginal utility of income. Low contributions screen out recipients who have little value for the good without imposing a costly burden on recipients and with less concern about screening out low-income recipients. Thus, we predict that for charitable goods in which potential recipients may not value the good, low recipient monetary contributions will increase giving.

The effectiveness of low monetary contributions depends on uncertainty in recipients' valuation for the good. As illustrated in Figure 2b, low contribution requirements are most effective for valuation distributions with high standard deviations, σ_H (i.e., there is large heterogeneity). For goods with a low standard deviation σ_L , low recipient contributions will have little impact because they will screen out a trivial proportion of the population. Thus, we predict that low monetary contributions will have little impact on giving for goods in which there is (close to) a common valuation among

mal distribution of ψ in which expected recipient surplus has a local minimum and is increasing in costs thereafter. If, for example, ψ has a standard normal distribution, expected recipient surplus is decreasing in costs $\forall c$.

recipients – i.e., it is not necessary to screen out low valuation recipients because there are very few of them.

Finally, we turn to recipient time contributions h . If time costs do not vary with income, then the effects on expected recipient utility via the mechanisms discussed above – expected recipient costs, willingness to pay and income – are the same for time contributions as for monetary contributions (time contributions do not affect price). Where predictions differ is if time costs are increasing in income, as is commonly modeled in the literature on ordeal mechanisms.¹⁷ Under this assumption, there will be less positive selection on income than under monetary contributions because the higher willingness to pay of higher-income recipients will be offset by the relatively higher costs to them of time contributions. If time costs increase faster in income than does willingness to pay, then expected income will be decreasing in time contributions, which will increase giving. Time contributions impose relatively lower cost burdens on poorer recipients, are less likely than monetary contributions to screen out poorer recipients and more likely to screen out higher-income recipients. Thus, we predict that both low and high recipient time contributions may increase giving while, as discussed above, high recipient monetary contributions may not.

5 Results

In this section, we discuss the effects of our main experimental treatments: recipient monetary and time contributions. We also examine the effects of recipient contribution requirement by political preference. In the next section, we discuss alternative interpretations of our results and the additional treatments we use to examine these.¹⁸

5.1 Effects of recipient contribution on program support

The main results of our experiment are presented in Figure 3. Our outcome measure is ‘Share of Support’ for the program. In the laboratory experiment, share of support is the proportion of subjects who choose to direct the \$100 donation to the food program (the outside option is to direct the donation to the alternate program). In the field experiment, share of support is the average share of a participant’s \$8 survey

¹⁷For example, time costs will be increasing in income if the cost of time is increasing in wages and wages are increasing in income. It could also be the case that time is more costly for low-income recipients, for example due to higher transportation costs. See e.g., Alatas et al. (2016) for discussion.

¹⁸We pre-registered our analysis plan for the field experiment, including testing associations with liberal/conservative leanings. See <https://www.socialscienceregistry.org/trials/1850>.

payment donated to the food program, including zeroes (the outside option is to keep the payment).

For both the laboratory and field experiment, we observe an inverted u-shape response to recipient monetary contributions: relative to no contribution, donations increase when recipients contribute 10% of the cost and drop back to baseline when recipients contribute 50% of the cost. For contributions of time, both low and high (5 and 25 minute) recipient contributions increase program support.

Table 5 reports OLS estimates of the effects of the recipient contribution treatments on program support. In Panel A, the dependent variable is ‘Share of Support’ (as in Figure 3). In Panel B, the dependent variable is ‘Any Support,’ which is an indicator variable that is equal to 0 if participants in the field experiment choose not to donate and is equal to 1 if participants choose to give a non-zero donation. We also report the p -value from a test of equality of the Low and High contribution treatments.

Columns 1-4 estimate the effects of recipient monetary contributions (the omitted group is No Monetary Contribution) in the laboratory experiment and field experiments. Columns 5-6 estimate the effects of recipient time contributions (the omitted group is No Time Contribution). Odd numbered columns include indicator variables for treatment only, while even numbered columns add additional controls. Column 2 adds controls for session fixed effects and the demographic characteristics in Table 3: age, gender, and race/ethnicity. Columns 4 and 6 add survey day fixed effects and controls for the demographics characteristics in Table 4: age, gender, race/ethnicity, marital status, educational attainment, household income, and household size. To increase efficiency when covariates are included, the regressions include the respondents in all ‘healthy basket’ treatments (the main treatments and the donor contribution treatments described in Section 3.3).¹⁹

Low monetary contributions by recipients increase program support significantly in both the laboratory and field experiments. In the laboratory experiment, low monetary contributions increase the share of support by an estimated 8 – 10 percentage points ($p = 0.042$ without covariates, $p = 0.097$ with covariates). In the field experiment, the share of support increases by an estimated 5 percentage points ($p = 0.043$ without covariates, $p = 0.051$ with covariates). The effects are stronger when we examine the effects on any support, which increases by an estimated 8 percentage points ($p <$

¹⁹In the analysis of the laboratory experiment, we exclude 62 participants for whom we are missing demographic information: 32 people are missing age, 31 people are missing gender, and 33 people are missing race/ethnicity. In the analysis of the field experiment, we exclude 5 people for whom we are missing demographic information: 4 people missing age and 1 person missing gender. We also exclude 12 participants who started but did not complete the survey. Including these participants does not affect the results (Appendix Table A.3).

0.01 with and without covariates). There is no impact of high recipient monetary contributions in either the laboratory or field experiment. Importantly, we find that the effects of low monetary contributions are significantly different from the effects of high monetary contributions (we reject that the effects of the Low and High monetary contribution treatments are equal at the 5% level in five of six estimates).

Turning to the time contribution treatments, both low and high recipient time contribution treatments increase program support. Low time contributions increase share of support for the program by an estimated 5 percentage points ($p = 0.062$ without covariates, $p = 0.046$ with covariates). High time contributions increase donations by an estimated 7 percentage points ($p = 0.013$ without covariates, $p = 0.017$ with covariates). The estimated effects are similar (though statistically weaker) when we examine the impact on any support. The estimated effects of the Low and High time contributions are never statistically distinguishable.²⁰

5.2 Effects by political preference

In order to better understand public support for recipient contribution requirements, we investigate the role of political leanings in preferences for these policies. We are in a good position to examine this issue due to the representative nature of our sample, and due to our ability to incorporate data on voting intentions in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election before the winning candidate was announced (self-reported voting after elections take place generally overstate support for the winning candidate). We consider individuals to lean conservative if their preferred candidate was the Republican nominee, Donald Trump, and to lean liberal if their preferred candidate was the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton.

Figure 4 shows the share of program support by treatment and political leanings – Trump or Clinton – for recipient monetary contributions (Panel A) and recipient time contributions (Panel B). The pattern of effects is similar across political preference: an inverted u-shape response to monetary contribution requirements and increasing support in response to time contribution requirements. However, the response to monetary contribution requirements is more pronounced among Lean Trump respondents. As shown in Figure 4 Panel A, Lean Trump respondents give less than Lean Clinton

²⁰We also estimate p -values adjusting for multiple hypothesis testing in regressions without covariates using both the procedures developed by List et al. (2016) and by Holm (1979). The only changes in the significance levels (1%, 5%, 10%) reported for Table 5 are the effect of the High Time treatment on Any Support which is no longer significant at the 10% level; and the test of equality of the effects of the Low and High Monetary treatments on Share of Support, which is significant at the 10% level rather than the 5% level.

respondents at baseline (No Contribution treatment). But they respond more strongly to low monetary contributions, almost closing the gap in program support.

Table 6 reports OLS estimates of treatment effects by political preference.²¹ Among Lean Trump respondents, the effects of low monetary contributions on program support are an estimated 7 percentage points for Share of Support ($p = 0.093$) and an estimated 10 percentage points for Any Support ($p = 0.045$). The size of these effects are similar to the baseline Trump-Clinton gap in program support of 7 – 9 percentage points. The estimated effects of the Low Monetary contribution treatment are smaller among Lean Clinton respondents (2 – 5 percentage points), which helps to close the gap in program support in this treatment. As in the full sample, high monetary contributions do not affect program support among either Lean Trump or Lean Clinton respondents. In response to time contributions by recipients, the estimated effects on share of support are larger among Trump voters, but the estimated effects on any support are larger among Clinton voters. Note that the results by political preference are only suggestive, as the estimated treatment effects for Trump and Clinton voters are not significantly different at conventional levels.

6 Mechanisms

The inverse u-shape we find in response to recipient monetary contributions is consistent with our framework in which individuals use low monetary contribution requirements to target recipients who value the healthy food basket but are concerned that high monetary contribution requirements may be too burdensome or screen out low-income recipients. That is, individuals use recipient contributions as a screening device and weigh tradeoffs between allocative and targeting efficiency. In this section, we examine alternative interpretations of our results for recipient monetary contributions. The alternative mechanisms we consider fall into two broad categories. The first is that individuals have preferences over the costs they provide for the aid program. The second is that individuals have preferences over the costs provided by recipients.

Preferences over own costs could be due to price, outcome or personal impact motivations. Framed in terms of price, when recipients contribute 50% of costs, then the price to the donor of providing a basket of food is cut in half. Framed in terms of outcomes, the same donation amount can generate twice as many baskets.²² If individ-

²¹The regressions have the same structure as those in Table 5 with the full set of covariates. Excluding covariates does not affect the results (available upon request).

²²We do not distinguish between providing more baskets to a single recipient or providing a single basket to more recipients – see e.g., Ottoni-Wilhelm et al. (2017) for a discussion of this issue. We

uals have non-monotonic preferences over price (or outcomes), this could generate the inverted u-shape we find in our main results. A related motivation is personal impact, in which individuals would like to be responsible for providing a certain proportion of the cost of the good (see e.g., Cryder et al., 2013, for discussion). The inverted u-shape we find could be generated if individuals feel better about providing 90% of the cost relative to 100% or 50% of the cost. Hereafter, we use “price effects” to include motivations due to price, outcome or personal impact.

Preferences over the costs borne by recipients could be driven by fairness or reciprocity motivations. As discussed in Section 2.2, individuals with preferences for fairness or reciprocity may consider recipients who make a contribution more deserving of receiving aid in return. Preferences over recipients’ costs could also be due to investment motivations. As discussed in Section 2.1, investment motivations can arise from a belief that recipients will value the good more if they pay a (higher) price for it (i.e., invest their own resources in the good). As with price effects, non-monotonicity in fairness preferences or investment motivations could generate the inverse u-shape response to recipient contributions in our main results.

6.1 Effects of additional treatments

We use the additional treatments described in Section 3.3 to test the alternative mechanisms – price effects, fairness and reciprocity, investment motivations – against the predictions of our screening framework discussed in Section 4. Table 2 summarizes the predicted impact of each of the additional treatments for each mechanism. The additional treatments also help us separately examine the primary mechanisms of our framework: (1) the price of providing the good, (2) recipient costs of receiving the good, (3) uncertainty about recipients’ value for the good – in our framework the distribution of recipient valuation ψ , and (4) uncertainty about recipient income – in our framework the distribution of recipient income ϕ . As shown below, the results of our additional treatments are inconsistent with the alternative mechanisms and provide support for the predictions of our framework.

First, in both the laboratory experiment and the field experiment we include treatments in which the monetary contribution comes from a third-party donor rather than the recipient. This allows us to examine the effects of changes in price while turning off mechanisms related to screening recipients. Our framework predicts that giving will be flat or increasing in response to lower prices. Similarly, as discussed in Section 2.2, prior

argue that our additional treatments address outcome motivations of either type.

Table 2: Predicted Impact of Additional Treatments by Mechanism

| | Donor Contribution | Foods of Choice | Provide Refund? |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Screening | Flat or increasing in contribution | Little or no impact of contribution | Yes |
| Price effects | Inverse u-shape | Inverse u-shape | No |
| Fairness & reciprocity | | Inverse u-shape | No |
| Investment motivations | | Inverse u-shape | No |

Notes: In Donor Contribution treatments, a third-party donor provides none, low or high contributions to the ‘healthy food’ program. In Foods of Choice treatments, recipients provide none, low or high contributions to the unrestricted ‘foods of choice’ program. The Provide Refund option asks donors whether they want to use their donation to provide a refund to recipients for their contribution. The alternative mechanisms to our screening framework (price effects, fairness & reciprocity, investment motivations) predict the same impact of contributions on program support in the additional treatments as in our main treatments: an inverse u-shape.

work on third-party contributions suggests that low contributions will not be effective and that program support will be flat or increasing in response to higher contributions. In contrast, if the inverted u-shape we observe in our main treatments is due to changes in price, then we should see the same response regardless of whether the contribution is provided by the recipient or a third-party donor.

Second, in the field experiment we include treatments in which families receive foods of their choice rather than being restricted to healthy foods. The aim of these treatments is to largely turn off screening motivations related to uncertainty about whether recipients value the good they are receiving. In our main treatments, individuals may be concerned that some recipients do not value healthy food but will accept it if it is free; low contribution requirements screen out those recipients. In contrast, we assume all recipients value unrestricted foods of their own choosing, so there is little need for screening and thus little role for recipient contribution requirements. As discussed in Section 4, our framework predicts that when there is little uncertainty – i.e., the recipient valuation distribution ψ has low standard deviation σ – recipient contributions will have little or no impact.

In contrast, if donors are motivated by fairness preferences and the perceived deservingness of recipients who make contributions, then we would expect to see a similar

response whether recipients are contributing to receive restricted (healthy) foods or contributing to receive unrestricted foods of their choice. Similarly, if price motivations are driving our main results, then we should see the same response to recipient contributions regardless of whether the baskets are restricted or unrestricted. Finally, if the response to recipient contributions is driven by individuals wanting recipients to invest in the good, then the effects of recipient contributions should also be similar across program types.²³

Figure 5 presents the results of the donor contribution treatments and foods of choice treatments. The pattern of effects in the third-party donor contribution treatments is consistent with the predictions of our framework and the findings of prior studies: low contributions have little impact and program support is either flat or increasing in response to higher contributions.²⁴ Also consistent with the predictions of our framework, recipient contributions have no impact on program support in the foods of choice treatments. Nowhere do we see evidence of the inverse u-shape from our main results.

Table 7 presents the estimated effects of the alternative monetary treatments alongside our main estimates from Table 5.²⁵ Our framework predicts an inverted u-shape for our main treatments but not our additional treatments. The alternative mechanisms discussed above predict similar responses across treatments. We therefore include p -values for the following one-sided hypothesis tests of whether the response to contributions in our main treatments is distinct from the pattern of results in our additional treatments. First, that the effects of low contributions in our main treatments (column 1) are larger than: (a) the effects of low donor contributions (column 2), and (b) the effects of low contributions in the foods of choice program (column 3). Second, that the difference between Low and High contributions is larger for the main treatments than for the additional treatments.

²³It is possible that price elasticity, fairness preferences and investment motivations vary across program types, for example due to paternalistic preferences. Comparing the restricted and unrestricted food programs allows us to examine the role of paternalism in program support. If donors are (not) paternalistic, they may prefer programs that (do not) limit recipients' food choices. As shown in Table 7, we do not find differences in share of support for the "healthy" vs. "foods of choice" programs at baseline (i.e., when there are no recipient contributions). This suggests little role for paternalism in explaining our results.

²⁴We do not find evidence of crowding out for third-party donor match rates below 1 to 1.

²⁵The dependent variable is 'Share of Support.' Columns (1) and (2) include all 'healthy basket treatments' with no recipient contribution as the omitted group. Column (3) includes only the 'foods of choice' treatments. The regressions only include indicators for treatment. Including controls for baseline characteristics does not affect the results (available upon request). We note that in the field experiment we did not have sample size to adequately power our additional treatments and so do not emphasize the tests of statistical significance for the additional treatments, but rather the pattern of effects.

Consistent with the predictions of our framework, low recipient contributions increase program support in our main treatments but not in the donor contribution treatment or in the foods of choice treatment. And high contributions *decrease* program support compared to low contributions in our main treatments but not in our alternative monetary contribution treatments. In fact, in all alternative treatments high contributions directionally *increase* program support compared to low contributions.²⁶ The differences in the pattern of effects are generally significant at conventional levels.²⁷ These results suggest that mechanisms related to price effects or fairness preferences are not driving our main results, and are also inconsistent with investment motivations.

Finally, to distinguish screening mechanisms from investment mechanisms, we gave donors the option to use their donation to provide recipients with a refund for their contribution. We only asked this of respondents who chose to make a non-zero donation and only revealed the option after they chose their donation level. This allows us to separately identify donors' desire to screen recipients who are *willing* to make a contribution from donors' desire to have recipients make the actual investment in the good.

As discussed in Section 4, our framework predicts that, conditional on screening recipients, donors would like to minimize recipient costs and will therefore choose to refund participants. If, however, individuals want recipients to make an investment in the good, then they should choose *not* to provide refunds. Similarly, preferences for reciprocity would suggest that donors do *not* provide refunds because they want to reciprocate contributions made by recipients. Finally, if recipients receive a refund, this is equivalent to a price increase: donors now cover the full cost of the good. Thus, if price motivations are driving the response to recipient contributions, donors also should choose *not* to provide refunds.

The large majority of donors (78%) chose to cover the recipients' contribution. A small percentage (10%) declined to cover the recipients' cost (the remainder indicated that they did not understand the option). This suggests that most donors are not motivated by wanting recipients to make a costly contribution of their own resources, either

²⁶Interestingly, in the foods of choice treatments both the Low and High contribution treatments increase donation rates (i.e., any support), but this is offset by lower donations conditional on donating. Results available upon request.

²⁷The effects of low contributions in our main treatment are significantly larger than the effects of low donor contributions at the $p = 0.024$ level in the laboratory experiment and the $p = 0.174$ level in the field experiment; and are larger than the effects of low contributions in the foods of choice program at the $p = 0.074$ level. The difference between the effects of low and high contributions in our main treatments is larger than that same difference for donor contributions at the $p = 0.041$ level and is larger than the low-high difference in the foods of choice program at the 0.047 level.

due to investment motivations or preferences for reciprocity. It is also inconsistent with mechanisms related to price, outcome or personal impact motivations.

6.2 Further evidence

To further inform our understanding of mechanisms, at the end of the field experiment we asked respondents about their perceptions of families receiving the baskets. To maintain the naturalism of our field setting, these questions were not incentivized and we expected largely qualitative insights from the results.

Our framework predicts that recipient contribution requirements will affect the expected income distribution of those who select into receiving the good: recipient monetary contribution requirements will increase the expected income of recipients; while expected income will be flatter or even decreasing in response to recipient time contribution requirements. To examine this prediction, we elicit respondents' beliefs about the household income of recipients who choose to participate in the program.²⁸

As shown in Appendix Figure A.1, we find suggestive evidence that individuals believe high monetary contribution requirements may screen out the poorest recipients while time contribution requirements are less likely to do so. As monetary contributions increase, individuals perceive recipients as having higher incomes: respondents believe recipients are less likely to have household incomes below \$26,000 and more likely to have household incomes above \$35,000. The effects of the Low Time contribution treatment follow the opposite pattern: respondents believe that recipients are more likely to have low household incomes and less likely to have high household incomes (we do not find a consistent pattern for the High Time contribution treatment).

We also find suggestive evidence on the recipient side to support the beliefs of our respondents. Among a sample of 133 people at a low-income-area grocery store, we elicited willingness to receive a healthy food basket under each of the recipient

²⁸After respondents have made their donation decisions, we ask them what portion of families who participate in the basket program they believe are in each of the following household income categories: \$0-\$5,000, \$6,000-\$15,000, \$16,000-\$25,000, \$26,000-\$35,000, \$36,000-\$45,000, \$46,000-\$60,000, \$61,000-\$75,000. Answers are on a 7-point scale corresponding to *'None, Almost None, Some, About Half, Most, Almost All, All.'* Appendix Figure A.1 reports coefficient estimates (with standard error bars) from regressions for each income category that include all 'healthy basket' treatments and the full set of covariates (the omitted group is the relevant No Contribution (time or money) treatment). Positive coefficients indicate a higher estimated proportion of households in a given income category compared to baseline; negative coefficients indicate a lower estimated proportion. We also ask respondents in the field experiment their beliefs about recipients' race/ethnicity, as well as how much of the food in the basket is eaten and how deserving the recipients are. We report the estimates for the other belief questions in Appendix Table A.4 using the same regressions specification as for the beliefs about household income. We find little impact of treatment on perceptions of how much of the food is eaten, deservingness or recipient race/ethnicity.

contribution requirement treatments. We find that as monetary contribution requirements increase, the proportion of participating recipients with household incomes under \$26,000 decreases while the proportion with household incomes over \$35,000 increases, with no impact on households making \$26,000-\$35,000. We observe the opposite pattern for time contributions. As time contribution requirements increase, the proportion of participating recipients making under \$26,000 increases and the proportion making over \$36,000 decreases with again no impact on households making \$26,000-\$35,000.²⁹

7 Conclusion

In this study, we demonstrate two novel findings. First, contributions of both money and time by recipients in a food aid program increase public support for the program. Second, the response to recipient monetary contributions takes an inverted-u-shape: small monetary contributions increase program support, while large contributions do not. Our experimental results are consistent with a theoretical framework in which donors use recipient contributions to target those who most need and value the good.

A large literature in public finance and development has examined how to optimally target aid when the social planner has imperfect information. Prior work on recipient contribution requirements has largely focused on the impact of these policies on the recipient side. We add to this literature by examining the effects of recipient contribution requirements on the voters and donors who influence the provision of aid programs.

Surprisingly, like a social planner, individuals seem to recognize both that contribution requirements can serve as a screening device, and that they involve tradeoffs between under-inclusion (not giving a good to someone who needs it) and over-inclusion (giving a good to someone who will not use it). Individuals also seem to perceive time contribution requirements as an effective self-targeting mechanism, despite the potential deadweight loss of wasted time.

Comparing the effects of the money and time contribution treatments, the estimated effects of recipients contributing \$1 are very similar to the effects of recipients contributing 5 minutes of their time (equivalent at a \$12/hour cost of time). However, the effects diverge for high contribution treatments: high monetary contributions (\$5) have no impact on program support while high time contributions (25 minutes)

²⁹The percentage of our sample of recipients with household incomes below \$26,000, \$26,000-\$35,000 and above \$35,000 is 53%, 17% and 30% respectively. The decision was incentivized: one of the choices was randomly chosen to be implemented, and recipients actually had to pay/put in time to receive a basket of healthy food.

increase program support substantially.

Our results suggest that screening concerns may be an important driver of support for social programs with two key implications. First, voters and donors may withhold support for programs due to uncertainty about the value of aid to recipients. And second, nominal contributions by recipients can be sufficient to address screening concerns. Importantly, our finding that screening concerns are a driver of program support are distinct from the literature on third-party contributions, as well as work on preferences for fairness and reciprocity.

To the literature on the optimal design of social programs, screening preferences may help explain why some programs continue to include recipient contribution requirements even if there is empirical evidence of their inefficiencies.³⁰ An open question is whether people would be responsive to information about the impact of recipient contribution requirements on the demand side. Previous studies generally find that information has limited impact on support for social programs (Kuziemko et al., 2015, provide a discussion). But recent evidence from other contexts – e.g., immigration – shows that information about impact can affect policy preferences (Haaland and Roth, 2017).

To the literature on charitable giving, our work suggests an alternative mechanism for signaling quality through recipient contributions rather than through leadership gifts. In our context, small contributions by recipients had a larger impact than small contributions by third-party donors. For aid programs, this suggests a potential new way to allocate third-party donor contributions to maximize total giving: third-party donor dollars may be more cost-effective if they can be credibly funneled through recipients.

Finally, we believe our suggestive evidence that screening concerns may vary by individuals’ political preference deserves further study. Our work using a nationally representative sample is the first to suggest that this largely unexplored mechanism could drive differences in support for social programs.

³⁰This resonates with Fiszbein and Schady (2009) who conclude that, “even in situations where a narrow technical assessment might suggest that an unconditional transfer is more appropriate than a [Conditional Cash Transfer] (say, because there is no evidence of imperfect information . . .), conditions might be justified because they lead to a preferable political economy equilibrium. The political process may make significant cash transfers to the poor close to impossible unless those transfers are tied somehow to clear evidence of beneficiaries’ ‘positive behaviors.’”

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Figure 1a: Effect of recipient contribution on expected recipient surplus $E[v - c]$

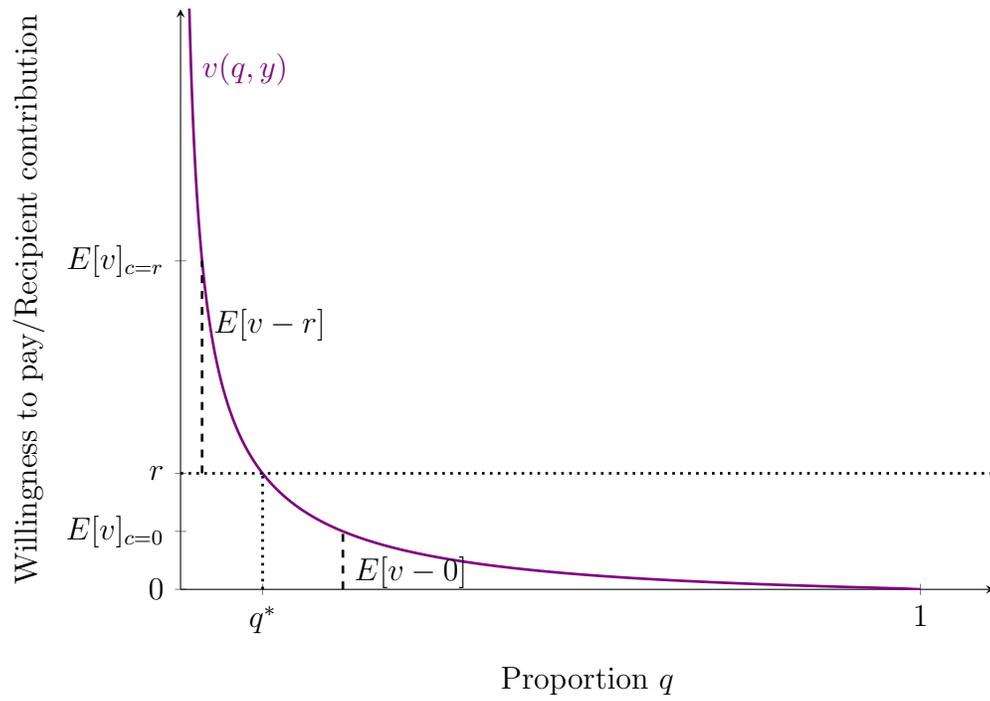


Figure 1b: Effect of recipient contribution for low income vs. high income recipients

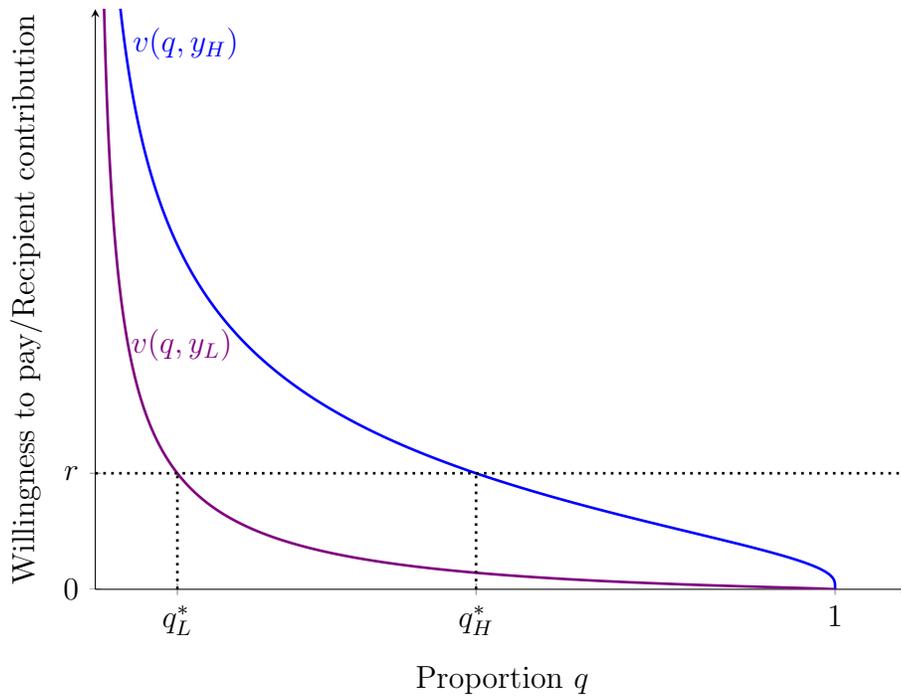


Figure 2a: Effect of low recipient contribution on expected recipient surplus $E[v - c]$

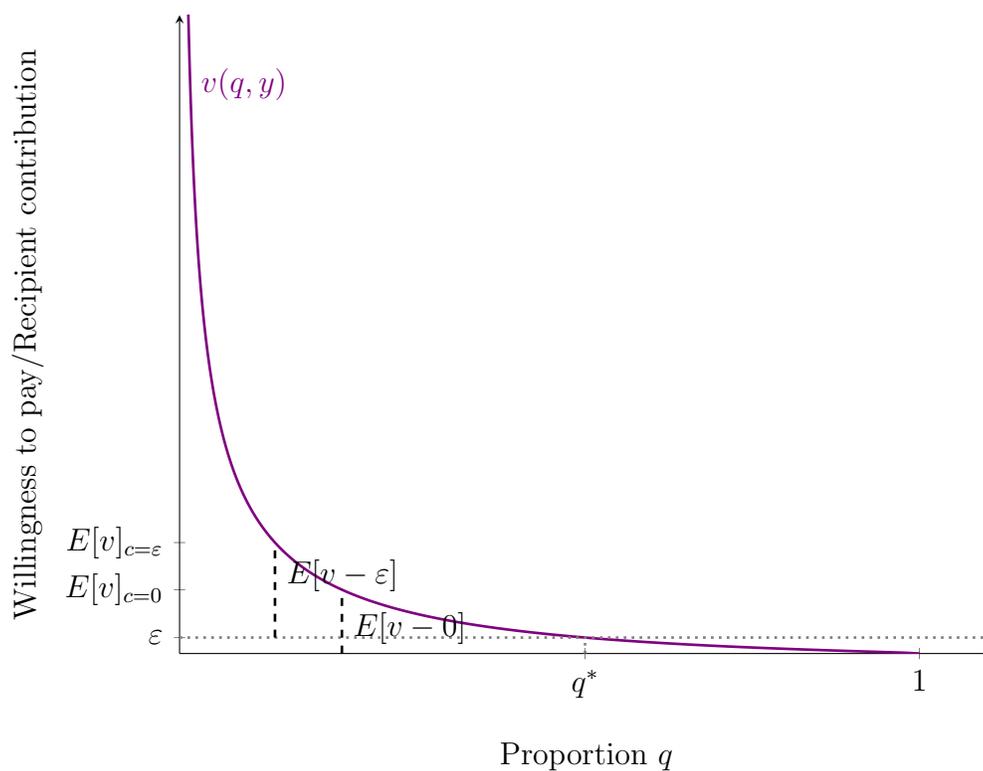


Figure 2b: Effect of low recipient contribution for low σ_L vs. high σ_H distributions

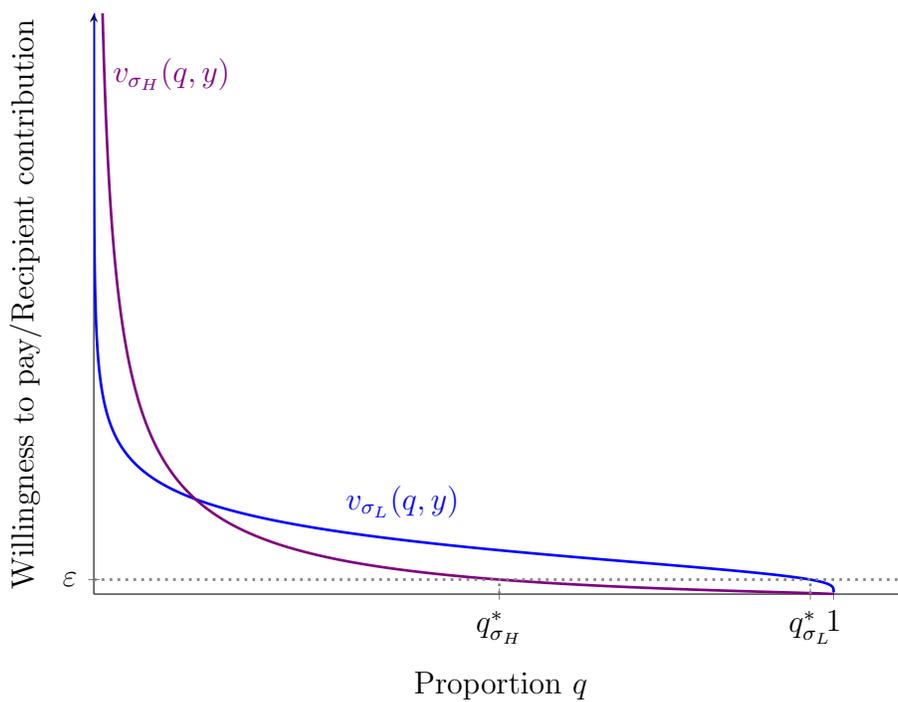
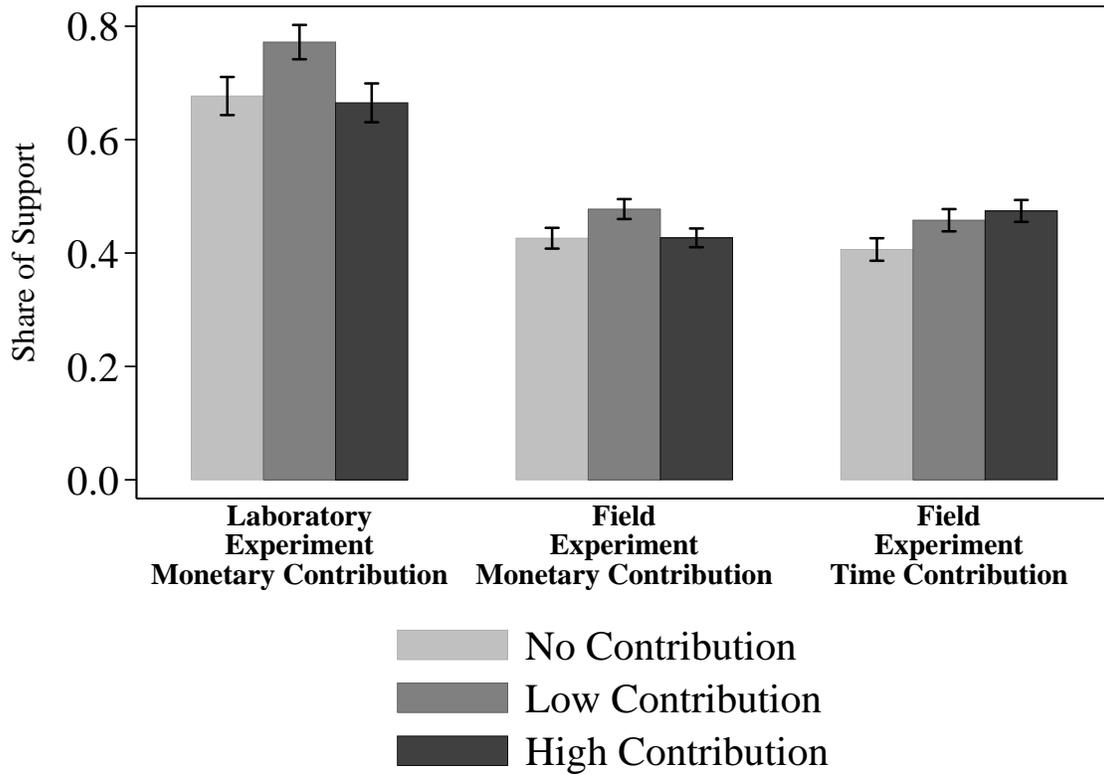
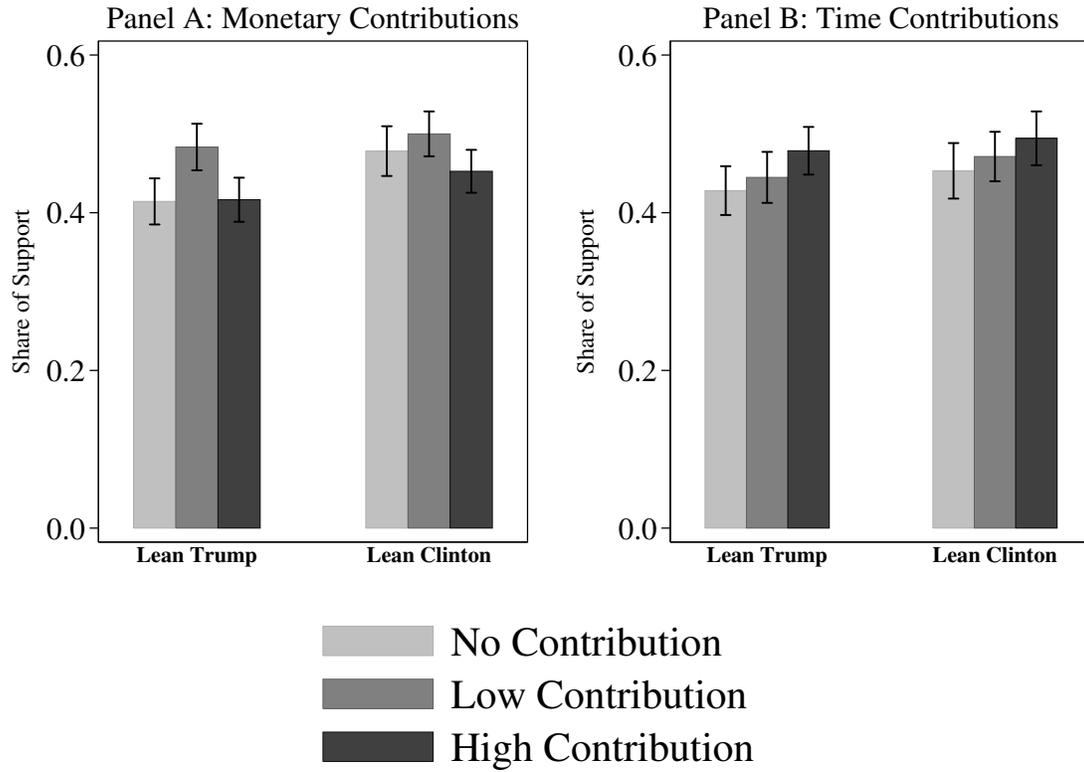


Figure 3: Program support by recipient contribution treatment group



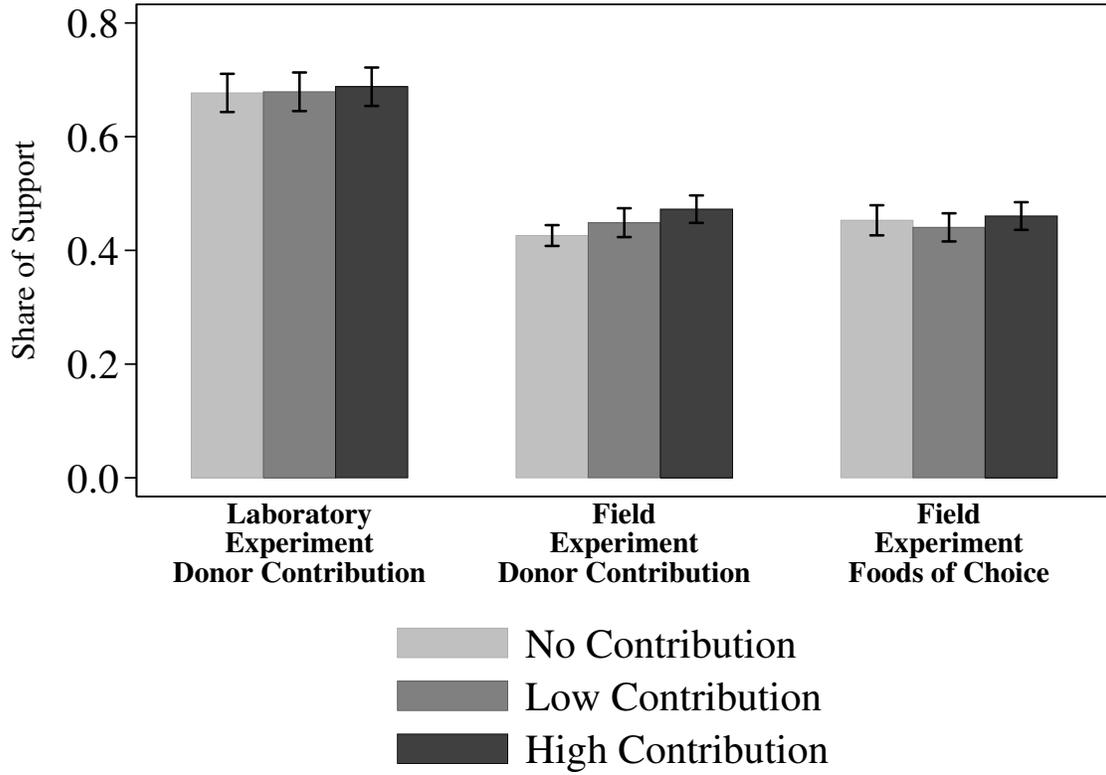
Notes: The figure presents mean share of support and standard errors bars for the laboratory experiment (proportion of participants who direct the donation to the food aid program) and the field experiment (share of total payment participants donate to the food aid program, including zeroes).

Figure 4: Program support by political preference



Notes: The figure presents mean share of support and standard errors bars for the field experiment (share of total payment participants donate to the food aid program, including zeroes).

Figure 5: Program support in additional contribution treatments



Notes: The figure presents mean share of support and standard errors bars for the laboratory experiment (proportion of participants who direct the donation to the food aid program) and the field experiment (share of total payment participants donate to the food aid program, including zeroes).

Table 3: Baseline characteristics by treatment group: Laboratory experiment

| | Monetary Contribution (\$) | | | F-test |
|----------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| | None | Low (\$1) | High (\$5) | p -value |
| N | 195 | 193 | 191 | |
| Age | 20.97 (2.85) | 20.93 (2.50) | 20.84 (2.27) | 1.00 |
| Female | 0.47 (0.50) | 0.53 (0.50) | 0.52 (0.50) | 0.57 |
| Asian | 0.60 (0.49) | 0.60 (0.49) | 0.61 (0.49) | 0.96 |
| Hispanic | 0.08 (0.28) | 0.06 (0.23) | 0.06 (0.23) | 0.53 |
| White | 0.23 (0.42) | 0.25 (0.43) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.88 |
| Other | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.95 |

Notes: The table reports group means. Standard deviations in parentheses. The reported p -value is the probability from a joint F -test that the group means are equal to each other. Asterisks indicate a difference of means compared to the No Contribution group significant at the * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01 level.

Table 4: Baseline characteristics by treatment group: Field experiment

| | Monetary Contribution (\$) | | | Time Contribution (mins) | | | F-test <i>p</i> -value |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| | None | Low (\$1) | High (\$5) | None | Low (5) | High (25) | |
| N | 580 | 605 | 657 | 484 | 516 | 533 | |
| Age | 49.08 (15.22) | 48.81 (15.30) | 49.90 (15.51) | 50.48 (14.63) | 49.92 (15.41) | 48.60** (15.77) | 0.91 |
| Female | 0.56 (0.50) | 0.55 (0.50) | 0.59 (0.49) | 0.58 (0.49) | 0.62 (0.49) | 0.59 (0.49) | 0.35 |
| White | 0.73 (0.44) | 0.77 (0.42) | 0.75 (0.43) | 0.73 (0.44) | 0.72 (0.45) | 0.76 (0.43) | 0.77 |
| Black | 0.08 (0.27) | 0.07 (0.26) | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.08 (0.28) | 0.88 |
| Hispanic | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.08 (0.28) | 0.07 (0.26) | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.11 (0.32) | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.21 |
| Other | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.07 (0.26) | 0.09 (0.28) | 0.08 (0.27) | 0.08 (0.27) | 0.06 (0.24) | 0.40 |
| Married | 0.61 (0.49) | 0.60 (0.49) | 0.56 (0.50) | 0.59 (0.49) | 0.61 (0.49) | 0.61 (0.49) | 0.74 |
| Dropout or High School | 0.28 (0.45) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.25 (0.43) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.28 (0.45) | 0.23 (0.42) | 0.29 |
| Some College or AA Degree | 0.38 (0.49) | 0.39 (0.49) | 0.39 (0.49) | 0.41 (0.49) | 0.35* (0.48) | 0.37 (0.48) | 0.66 |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 0.34 (0.48) | 0.37 (0.48) | 0.37 (0.48) | 0.35 (0.48) | 0.37 (0.48) | 0.40 (0.49) | 0.57 |
| Hh Income: Below 25,000 | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.25 (0.43) | 0.23 (0.42) | 0.22 (0.41) | 0.89 |
| Hh Income: 25,000-49,999 | 0.23 (0.42) | 0.20 (0.40) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.25 (0.43) | 0.25 (0.43) | 0.22 (0.41) | 0.40 |
| Hh Income: 50,000-74,999 | 0.18 (0.38) | 0.20 (0.40) | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.19 (0.39) | 0.21 (0.41) | 0.21 (0.41) | 0.44 |
| Hh Income: 75,000-99,999 | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.16 (0.37) | 0.14 (0.35) | 0.12 (0.32) | 0.11 (0.31) | 0.13 (0.34) | 0.01 |
| Hh Income: 100,000 and Above | 0.18 (0.39) | 0.20 (0.40) | 0.20 (0.40) | 0.20 (0.40) | 0.20 (0.40) | 0.23 (0.42) | 0.59 |
| Hh Size 1 | 0.16 (0.37) | 0.16 (0.36) | 0.17 (0.37) | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.14 (0.34) | 0.16 (0.37) | 0.76 |
| Hh Size 2 | 0.39 (0.49) | 0.40 (0.49) | 0.41 (0.49) | 0.43 (0.50) | 0.42 (0.49) | 0.37* (0.48) | 0.55 |
| Hh Size 3 | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.19 (0.40) | 0.16 (0.37) | 0.15 (0.36) | 0.17 (0.37) | 0.17 (0.37) | 0.66 |
| Hh Size 4+ | 0.27 (0.45) | 0.25 (0.44) | 0.26 (0.44) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.28 (0.45) | 0.30* (0.46) | 0.49 |
| Probability Vote | 0.86 (0.27) | 0.85 (0.29) | 0.85 (0.28) | 0.88 (0.25) | 0.86 (0.28) | 0.85 (0.29) | 0.97 |
| Lean Trump | 0.47 (0.50) | 0.41* (0.49) | 0.42* (0.49) | 0.47 (0.50) | 0.42 (0.49) | 0.47 (0.50) | 0.23 |
| Lean Clinton | 0.41 (0.49) | 0.42 (0.49) | 0.45 (0.50) | 0.40 (0.49) | 0.44 (0.50) | 0.39 (0.49) | 0.32 |
| Lean Other | 0.12 (0.32) | 0.17** (0.37) | 0.13 (0.34) | 0.14 (0.35) | 0.14 (0.35) | 0.14 (0.35) | 0.39 |
| Preference Missing | 0.16 (0.36) | 0.13 (0.34) | 0.18 (0.38) | 0.12 (0.33) | 0.13 (0.33) | 0.14 (0.35) | 0.10 |

Notes: The table reports group means. Standard deviations in parentheses. The reported *p*-value is the probability from a joint *F*-test that the group means are equal to each other. Asterisks indicate a difference of means compared to the relevant No Contribution (money or time) group significant at the * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01 level.

Table 5: Effects of recipient contribution on program support

| | Monetary Contribution | | | | Time Contribution | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Laboratory Experiment | | Field Experiment | | Field Experiment | |
| <i>Panel A: Share of support</i> | | | | | | |
| Low Contribution | 0.095** (0.047) | 0.079* (0.048) | 0.051** (0.025) | 0.049* (0.025) | 0.052* (0.028) | 0.054** (0.027) |
| High Contribution | -0.012 (0.047) | -0.009 (0.048) | 0.001 (0.025) | 0.000 (0.025) | 0.068** (0.027) | 0.065** (0.027) |
| Control mean | 0.68 (0.03) | | 0.43 (0.02) | | 0.41 (0.02) | |
| Pr(Low=High) | 0.023 | 0.064 | 0.039 | 0.045 | 0.545 | 0.695 |
| N | 958 | 958 | 4,000 | 4,000 | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| <i>Panel B: Any support</i> | | | | | | |
| Low Contribution | | | 0.083*** (0.028) | 0.081*** (0.028) | 0.050 (0.031) | 0.051* (0.031) |
| High Contribution | | | 0.026 (0.028) | 0.023 (0.028) | 0.056* (0.030) | 0.053* (0.030) |
| Control mean | | | 0.59 (0.02) | | 0.57 (0.02) | |
| Pr(Low=High) | | | 0.038 | 0.033 | 0.831 | 0.938 |
| N | | | 4,000 | 4,000 | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| Session/Survey day | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Demographics | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes |

Notes: OLS estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. Includes all “healthy basket” treatments. Omitted group is No Contribution for money (col 1-4) or time (col 5-6). Columns 1, 3 and 5 include indicator variables for treatment. Column 2 adds session fixed effects and demographic covariates (age, gender, race/ethnicity). Columns 4 and 6 add survey day fixed effects and demographic covariates (gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, Hh income and Hh size). * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01.

Table 6: Effects of recipient contribution by political preference

| | Monetary Contribution | | Time Contribution | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | Lean Trump | Lean Clinton | Lean Trump | Lean Clinton |
| <i>Panel A: Share of support</i> | | | | |
| Low Contribution | 0.070* (0.042) | 0.023 (0.042) | 0.030 (0.045) | 0.012 (0.045) |
| High Contribution | 0.002 (0.041) | 0.002 (0.042) | 0.063 (0.044) | 0.037 (0.047) |
| Control mean | 0.41 (0.03) | 0.48 (0.03) | 0.43 (0.03) | 0.45 (0.04) |
| Pr(Low=High) | 0.102 | 0.587 | 0.451 | 0.578 |
| N | 1,524 | 1,421 | 1,524 | 1,421 |
| <i>Panel B: Any support</i> | | | | |
| Low Contribution | 0.095** (0.047) | 0.051 (0.047) | -0.002 (0.051) | 0.071 (0.050) |
| High Contribution | 0.029 (0.047) | 0.024 (0.046) | 0.022 (0.049) | 0.076 (0.051) |
| Control mean | 0.57 (0.03) | 0.66 (0.03) | 0.61 (0.03) | 0.58 (0.04) |
| Pr(Low=High) | 0.164 | 0.531 | 0.639 | 0.910 |
| N | 1,524 | 1,421 | 1,524 | 1,421 |

Notes: OLS estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. Includes all “healthy basket” treatments. Omitted group is No Contribution for money (col 1-2) or time (col 3-4). All columns include indicator variables for treatment, survey day fixed effects and demographic covariates (gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, Hh income and Hh size). * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01.

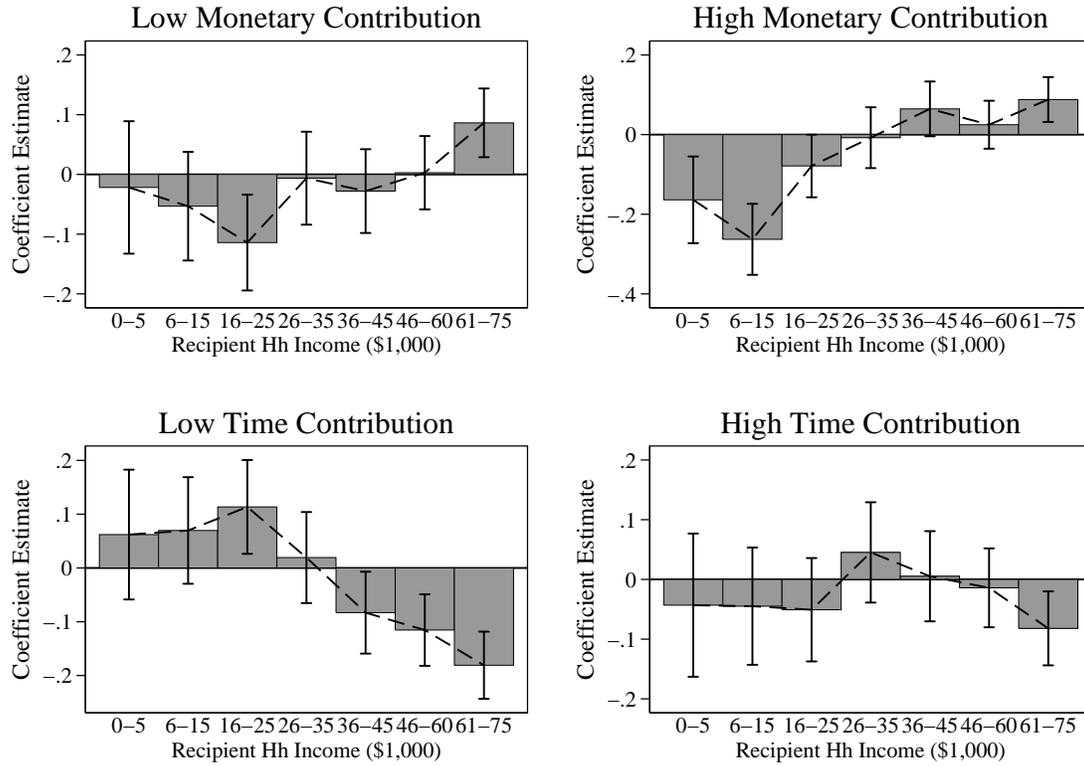
Table 7: Effects of alternative monetary contributions

| | Healthy Food Basket | | | Foods of Choice | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Recipient Contribution (1) | Donor Contribution (2) | <i>p</i> -value (1) > (2) | Recipient Contribution (3) | <i>p</i> -value (1) > (3) |
| <i>Panel A: Laboratory Experiment</i> | | | | | |
| Low Contribution | 0.095** (0.047) | 0.002 (0.047) | 0.024 | | |
| High Contribution | -0.012 (0.047) | 0.011 (0.047) | | | |
| Control mean | | 0.67 (0.03) | | | |
| Pr(Low=High) | 0.023 | 0.851 | 0.041 | | |
| N | 958 | 958 | | | |
| <i>Panel B: Field Experiment</i> | | | | | |
| Low Contribution | 0.051** (0.025) | 0.023 (0.031) | 0.174 | -0.012 (0.036) | 0.074 |
| High Contribution | 0.001 (0.025) | 0.046 (0.030) | | 0.007 (0.036) | |
| Control mean | | 0.43 (0.02) | | 0.45 (0.03) | |
| Pr(Low=High) | 0.039 | 0.496 | 0.041 | 0.574 | 0.047 |
| N | 4,000 | 4,000 | | 891 | |

Notes: OLS estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. Col 1-2 includes all “healthy basket” treatments. Column 3 includes all “foods of choice” treatments. Omitted group in all columns is No Monetary Contribution. All columns include indicator variables for treatment only. *p*-values report one-sided tests that the effects in column (1) are larger than the effects in columns (2) and (3). * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01.

A Appendix Figures and Tables

Figure A.1: Treatment effects on beliefs about recipient income



Notes: The figure presents coefficients and standard error bars from OLS estimates for each income range of effects of recipient contribution treatment reported for each panel. Dependent variable is belief on 1-7 scale about proportion of households that are in a given income range. Regressions include all “healthy basket” treatments. Omitted group is No Contribution for money (top panels) or time (bottom panels). All regressions include indicator variables for treatment, survey day fixed effects and demographic covariates (gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, Hh income and Hh size).

Table A.1: Baseline characteristics: Laboratory experiment additional treatments

| | Donor Monetary Contribution (\$) | | | F-test p -value |
|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| | None | Low (\$1) | High (\$5) | |
| N | 195 | 190 | 189 | |
| Age | 20.97 (2.85) | 21.43 (6.05) | 21.43 (6.00) | 0.93 |
| Female | 0.47 (0.50) | 0.50 (0.50) | 0.46 (0.50) | 0.76 |
| Asian | 0.60 (0.49) | 0.58 (0.50) | 0.59 (0.49) | 0.95 |
| Hispanic | 0.08 (0.28) | 0.06 (0.24) | 0.07 (0.25) | 0.75 |
| White | 0.23 (0.42) | 0.25 (0.44) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.84 |
| Other | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.11 (0.31) | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.91 |

Notes: The table reports group means. Standard deviations in parentheses. The reported p -value is the probability from a joint F -test that the group means are equal to each other. Asterisks indicate a difference of means compared to the No Contribution group significant at the * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01 level.

Table A.2: Baseline characteristics: Field experiment additional treatments

| | Donor Monetary Contribution (\$) | | | Recipient Monetary Contribution (\$) | | | F-test <i>p</i> -value |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| | None | Healthy Food Low (\$1) | High (\$5) | None | Choice of Food Low (\$1) | High (\$5) | |
| N | 580 | 307 | 318 | 292 | 296 | 303 | |
| Female | 0.56 (0.50) | 0.55 (0.50) | 0.58 (0.49) | 0.50 (0.50) | 0.56 (0.50) | 0.54 (0.50) | 0.81 |
| Age in Years | 49.08 (15.22) | 48.36 (16.23) | 49.69 (14.72) | 49.87 (16.07) | 49.17 (16.13) | 47.52* (15.66) | 0.98 |
| White | 0.73 (0.44) | 0.76 (0.43) | 0.76 (0.43) | 0.72 (0.45) | 0.72 (0.45) | 0.74 (0.44) | 0.95 |
| Black | 0.08 (0.27) | 0.06 (0.24) | 0.07 (0.25) | 0.11 (0.31) | 0.09 (0.28) | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.32 |
| Hispanic | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.08 (0.27) | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.08 (0.28) | 0.95 |
| Other | 0.10 (0.30) | 0.08 (0.27) | 0.09 (0.28) | 0.08 (0.27) | 0.09 (0.29) | 0.08 (0.27) | 0.86 |
| Married | 0.61 (0.49) | 0.60 (0.49) | 0.58 (0.49) | 0.64 (0.48) | 0.60 (0.49) | 0.59 (0.49) | 0.92 |
| Dropout or High School | 0.28 (0.45) | 0.26 (0.44) | 0.21** (0.41) | 0.22 (0.41) | 0.25 (0.43) | 0.26 (0.44) | 0.39 |
| Some College or AA Degree | 0.38 (0.49) | 0.38 (0.49) | 0.45* (0.50) | 0.38 (0.49) | 0.39 (0.49) | 0.36 (0.48) | 0.52 |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 0.34 (0.48) | 0.36 (0.48) | 0.34 (0.47) | 0.40 (0.49) | 0.36 (0.48) | 0.38 (0.49) | 0.77 |
| Hh Income: Below 25,000 | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.18** (0.38) | 0.22 (0.42) | 0.21 (0.41) | 0.24 (0.43) | 0.20 (0.40) | 0.50 |
| Hh Income: 25,000-49,999 | 0.23 (0.42) | 0.26 (0.44) | 0.25 (0.43) | 0.21 (0.41) | 0.28* (0.45) | 0.26 (0.44) | 0.51 |
| Hh Income: 50,000-74,999 | 0.18 (0.38) | 0.21 (0.41) | 0.17 (0.37) | 0.22 (0.42) | 0.18 (0.38) | 0.19 (0.40) | 0.50 |
| Hh Income: 75,000-99,999 | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.13 (0.34) | 0.15 (0.36) | 0.14 (0.35) | 0.11 (0.31) | 0.12 (0.33) | 0.17 |
| Hh Income: 100,000 and Above | 0.18 (0.39) | 0.22 (0.42) | 0.21 (0.41) | 0.22 (0.41) | 0.20 (0.40) | 0.22 (0.42) | 0.70 |
| Hh Size 1 | 0.16 (0.37) | 0.14 (0.35) | 0.17 (0.37) | 0.15 (0.36) | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.17 (0.37) | 0.94 |
| Hh Size 2 | 0.39 (0.49) | 0.37 (0.48) | 0.38 (0.49) | 0.38 (0.49) | 0.33 (0.47) | 0.33 (0.47) | 0.58 |
| Hh Size 3 | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.16 (0.36) | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.17 (0.38) | 0.16 (0.37) | 0.22 (0.42) | 0.31 |
| Hh Size 4+ | 0.27 (0.45) | 0.33* (0.47) | 0.28 (0.45) | 0.30 (0.46) | 0.34 (0.47) | 0.27 (0.45) | 0.35 |
| Probability Vote | 0.86 (0.27) | 0.86 (0.29) | 0.85 (0.28) | 0.86 (0.28) | 0.89 (0.23) | 0.87 (0.27) | 1.00 |
| Lean Trump | 0.47 (0.50) | 0.50 (0.50) | 0.45 (0.50) | 0.48 (0.50) | 0.42 (0.50) | 0.45 (0.50) | 0.76 |
| Lean Clinton | 0.41 (0.49) | 0.39 (0.49) | 0.42 (0.49) | 0.40 (0.49) | 0.46 (0.50) | 0.42 (0.49) | 0.85 |
| Lean Other | 0.12 (0.32) | 0.11 (0.31) | 0.13 (0.33) | 0.13 (0.33) | 0.12 (0.32) | 0.14 (0.34) | 0.97 |
| Preference Missing | 0.16 (0.36) | 0.19 (0.39) | 0.15 (0.36) | 0.16 (0.37) | 0.15 (0.36) | 0.15 (0.36) | 0.68 |

Notes: The table reports group means. Standard deviations in parentheses. The reported *p*-value is the probability from a joint *F*-test that the group means are equal to each other. Asterisks indicate a difference of means compared to the relevant No Contribution (healthy or foods of choice) group significant at the * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01 level.

Table A.3: Effects of recipient contribution: All participants

| | Monetary Contribution Laboratory Experiment | Contribution Field Experiment | Time Contribution Field Experiment |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Panel A: Share of support</i> | | | |
| Low Contribution | 0.097** (0.046) | 0.052** (0.025) | 0.053* (0.028) |
| High Contribution | -0.023 (0.045) | 0.000 (0.025) | 0.069** (0.027) |
| Control mean | 0.67 (0.03) | 0.43 (0.02) | 0.41 (0.02) |
| Pr(Low=High) | 0.008 | 0.035 | 0.546 |
| N | 1,020 | 4,014 | 4,014 |
| <i>Panel B: Any support</i> | | | |
| Low Contribution | | 0.084*** (0.028) | 0.052* (0.031) |
| High Contribution | | 0.026 (0.028) | 0.057* (0.030) |
| Control mean | | 0.59 (0.02) | 0.57 (0.02) |
| Pr(Low=High) | | 0.033 | 0.850 |
| N | | 4,014 | 4,014 |
| Session/Survey day | No | No | No |
| Demographics | No | No | No |

Notes: OLS estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. Includes all “healthy basket” treatments. Omitted group is No Contribution for money (col 1-2) or time (col 3). All columns include indicator variables for treatment. * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01.

Table A.4: Treatment effects on beliefs

| | Food Eaten | How Deserving | White | Black | Recipient Race | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | | | | Hispanic | Asian | Other |
| <i>Panel A: Monetary Contribution</i> | | | | | | | |
| Low Contribution | 0.008 (0.076) | 0.008 (0.047) | -0.087 (0.057) | -0.083 (0.069) | -0.063 (0.068) | -0.009 (0.061) | -0.018 (0.067) |
| High Contribution | -0.025 (0.075) | -0.041 (0.046) | -0.002 (0.056) | 0.022 (0.068) | 0.029 (0.066) | 0.130** (0.060) | -0.002 (0.066) |
| Control mean | 5.50 (0.056) | 3.96 (0.034) | 3.35 (0.043) | 3.84 (0.050) | 3.72 (0.050) | 2.86 (0.046) | 2.97 (0.049) |
| Pr(Low=High) | 0.655 | 0.280 | 0.125 | 0.116 | 0.156 | 0.017 | 0.803 |
| <i>Panel B: Time Contribution</i> | | | | | | | |
| Low Contribution | 0.158* (0.083) | 0.036 (0.051) | -0.021 (0.062) | -0.012 (0.075) | -0.050 (0.073) | 0.024 (0.066) | 0.024 (0.073) |
| High Contribution | 0.068 (0.082) | 0.050 (0.051) | -0.080 (0.062) | 0.053 (0.074) | 0.008 (0.073) | -0.040 (0.065) | 0.017 (0.072) |
| Control mean | 5.51 (0.059) | 3.90 (0.035) | 3.36 (0.048) | 3.85 (0.056) | 3.75 (0.055) | 2.93 (0.050) | 2.93 (0.053) |
| Pr(Low=High) | 0.264 | 0.776 | 0.329 | 0.380 | 0.418 | 0.327 | 0.919 |
| N | 3,994 | 3,991 | 3,969 | 3,972 | 3,966 | 3,960 | 3,950 |

Notes: Dependent variable on 1-7 scale reported for each column. OLS estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. Includes all “healthy basket” treatments. Omitted group is No Contribution for money (panel A) or time (panel B). All columns include indicator variables for treatment, survey day fixed effects and demographic covariates (gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, Hh income and Hh size). * 0.1, ** 0.05, *** 0.01.

B Appendix: Laboratory Experiment Screenshots (For Online Publication)

Figure B.1: Control



In today's study we will ask you to give \$100 to one of two non-profits. At the end of the study, we will randomly choose the decision of one participant and implement it (i.e., make his/her specific payment). Your choice is whether to give the \$100 to "Kids Korps" or to "Louis' Groceries."

Kids Korps. Kids Korps is a non-profit organization that engages young people in volunteerism and teaches them about leadership and civic responsibility.

Louis' Groceries. Louis Groceries is a non-profit organization that delivers baskets with \$10 of fresh produce to families who lack access to healthy food. Parents pay nothing for the basket. Donations provide the full \$10 cost.

Please tell us which organization you would like to give \$100 to:

- Kids Korps
- Louis' Groceries

>>

Figure B.2: Low Recipient Contribution



In today's study we will ask you to give \$100 to one of two non-profits. At the end of the study, we will randomly choose the decision of one participant and implement it (i.e., make his/her specific payment). Your choice is whether to give the \$100 to "Kids Korps" or to "Louis' Groceries."

Kids Korps. Kids Korps is a non-profit organization that engages young people in volunteerism and teaches them about leadership and civic responsibility.

Louis' Groceries. Louis' Groceries is a non-profit organization that delivers baskets with \$10 of fresh produce to families who lack access to healthy food. Parents contribute \$1 for the basket. Donations provide the other \$9.

Please tell us which organization you would like to give \$100 to:

- Kids Korps
- Louis' Groceries

>>

Figure B.3: High Recipient Contribution



In today's study we will ask you to give \$100 to one of two non-profits. At the end of the study, we will randomly choose the decision of one participant and implement it (i.e., make his/her specific payment). Your choice is whether to give the \$100 to "Kids Korps" or to "Louis' Groceries."

Kids Korps. Kids Korps is a non-profit organization that engages young people in volunteerism and teaches them about leadership and civic responsibility.

Louis' Groceries. Louis' Groceries is a non-profit organization that delivers baskets with \$10 of fresh produce to families who lack access to healthy food. Parents contribute \$5 for the basket. Donations provide the other \$5.

Please tell us which organization you would like to give \$100 to:

- Kids Korps
- Louis' Groceries



Figure B.4: Low Donor Contribution



In today's study we will ask you to give \$100 to one of two non-profits. At the end of the study, we will randomly choose the decision of one participant and implement it (i.e., make his/her specific payment). Your choice is whether to give the \$100 to "Kids Korps" or to "Louis' Groceries."

Kids Korps. Kids Korps is a non-profit organization that engages young people in volunteerism and teaches them about leadership and civic responsibility.

Louis' Groceries. Louis' Groceries is a non-profit organization that delivers baskets with \$10 of fresh produce to families who lack access to healthy food. Funding from a private foundation provides \$1 for the basket. Donations provide the other \$9.

Please tell us which organization you would like to give \$100 to:

- Kids Korps
- Louis' Groceries



Figure B.5: High Donor Contribution



In today's study we will ask you to give \$100 to one of two non-profits. At the end of the study, we will randomly choose the decision of one participant and implement it (i.e., make his/her specific payment). Your choice is whether to give the \$100 to "Kids Korps" or to "Louis' Groceries."

Kids Korps. Kids Korps is a non-profit organization that engages young people in volunteerism and teaches them about leadership and civic responsibility.

Louis' Groceries. Louis' Groceries is a non-profit organization that delivers baskets with \$10 of fresh produce to families who lack access to healthy food. Funding from a private foundation provides \$5 for the basket. Donations provide the other \$5.

Please tell us which organization you would like to give \$100 to:

- Kids Korps
- Louis' Groceries



C Appendix: Field Experiment Screenshots (For Online Publication)

Figure C.1: Introduction Screen

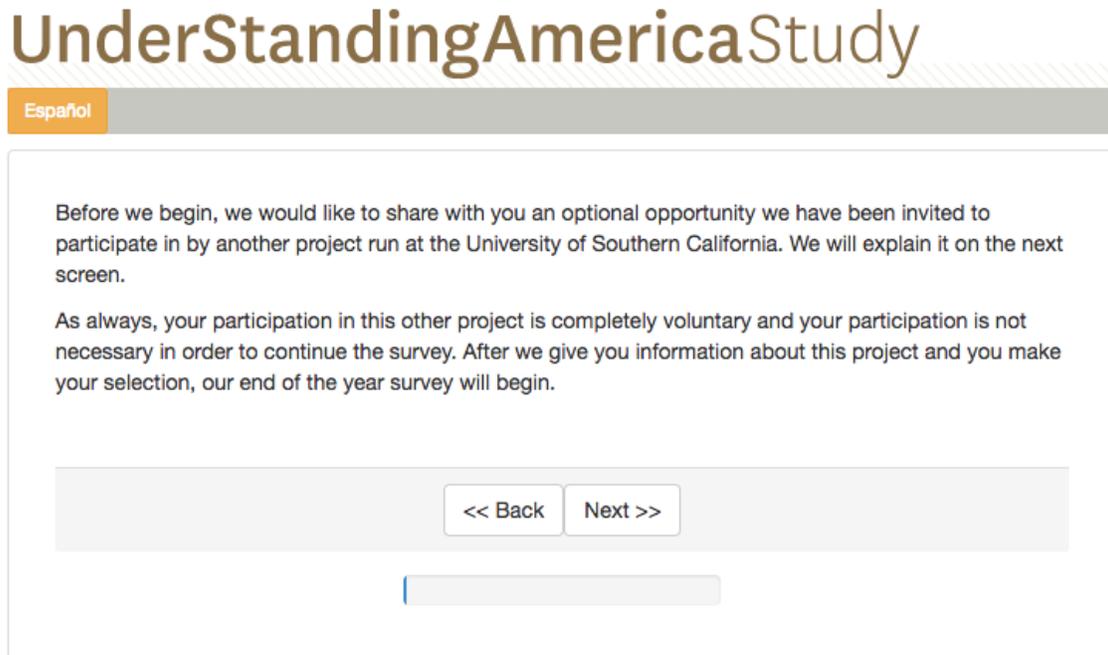


Figure C.2: Donation Decision Screen (50% of cost treatment)

UnderStandingAmericaStudy

Español

You are receiving \$8 for completing this survey. You have the opportunity to donate up to \$8 of your earnings today to the University of Southern California healthy food basket program.

About the healthy food basket program: USC is partnering with grocery stores in low-income areas to provide families in need with \$10 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables. Funding from a private donor provides \$5 for the basket. Donations provide the other \$5.

How you can donate to the food basket program: You can designate some portion of your participation earnings for this survey as a one-time donation. 100% of your donation today will go towards purchasing the food items in the baskets.

How much would you like to donate?

- \$1
- \$2
- \$3
- \$4
- \$5
- \$6
- \$7
- \$8
- Or type in:
- I do not wish to donate

Figure C.3: Refund Screen (Only asked if positive donation amount)

UnderStandingAmericaStudy

Español

You have the option to use your donation to help cover the cost of the baskets to families. If you choose this option, families will receive a refund for their \$1 contribution to the basket.

- Yes, I would like my donation to help cover the cost of the baskets to families.
- No, I would not like my donation to help cover the cost of the baskets to families.
- I don't understand this option.

Figure C.4: Thank-You Screen



Figure C.5: Reminder Screen (follows other survey questions)

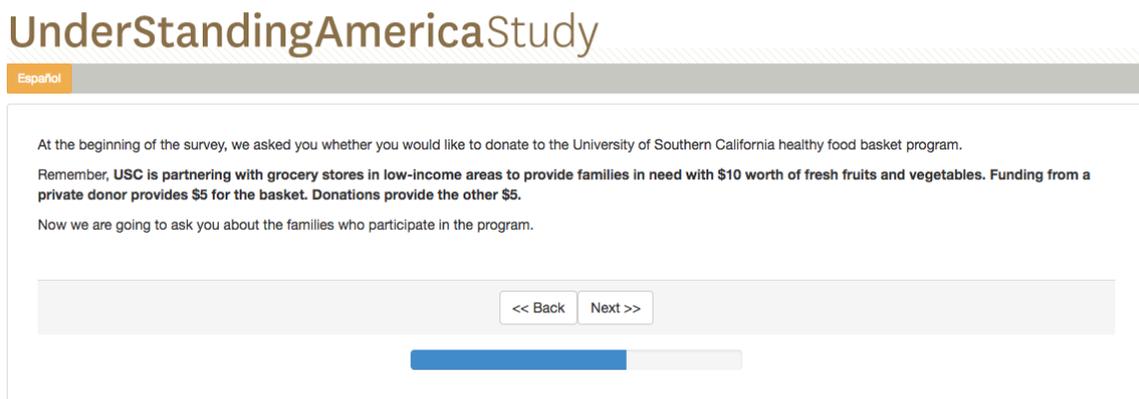


Figure C.6: Beliefs: Food Waste Question Screen

UnderStandingAmericaStudy

Español

How much of the food do you think is eaten by the families?

- None of the food
- Almost none of the food
- Some of the food
- About half of the food
- Most of the food
- Almost all of the food
- All of the food

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Figure C.7: Beliefs: Deservingness Question Screen

UnderStandingAmericaStudy

Español

How deserving of the basket do you think the families are?

- Not deserving at all
- Slightly deserving
- Moderately deserving
- Very deserving
- Extremely deserving

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Figure C.8: Beliefs: Race/Ethnicity Question Screen

UnderStandingAmericaStudy

Español

What do you think is the race/ethnicity of families who participate in the basket program?

| | None of the families | Almost none of the families | Some of the families | About half of the families | Most of the families | Almost all of the families | All of the families |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Asian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Black | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Hispanic | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| White | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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Figure C.9: Beliefs: Income Question Screen

Understanding America Study

Español

What do you think is the yearly household income of families who participate in the basket program?
Indicate approximately what portion of the families are in each income category below.

| | None of the families | Almost none of the families | Some of the families | About half of the families | Most of the families | Almost all of the families | All of the families |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| \$0-\$5,000 per year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| \$6,000-\$15,000 per year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| \$16,000-\$25,000 per year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| \$26,000-\$35,000 per year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| \$36,000-\$45,000 per year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| \$46,000-\$60,000 per year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| \$61,000-\$75,000 per year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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Figure C.10: Final Earnings Screen

UnderStandingAmericaStudy

Español

You chose to donate \$8 to the University of Southern California food basket program. Your earnings for this survey will be \$0.00 (\$8 minus your donation of \$8).

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Figure C.11: Newsletter Documenting Food Delivery Progress



Thank you to all of you who made a donation during the end of year survey.

We raised a total of **\$17,590** thanks to your generous contributions.

So far, the program has given out **540** food baskets valued at \$10 each.



We will continue to give out food baskets throughout the year thanks to your support!