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## Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program — Research Synthesis Brief Series

# How Has the TANF Caseload Changed over Time?

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- The national caseload declined by 50 percent between 1997 and 2011, but specific state caseload reductions ranged from 25 to 80 percent.
- The TANF take-up rate (the percentage of eligible families receiving assistance) has declined continuously since 1996, dropping to a low of 36 percent in 2007.
- “Nonassistance” expenditures such as emergency payments, child care, transportation and other support services accounted for 70 percent of TANF funds in 2009, but recipients of these supports are not counted in the TANF caseload.
- Over half of TANF cases are now “child only,” meaning adults in the household are not receiving assistance because they are ineligible or not the child’s parent.

**T**emporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseloads have plummeted since the program was enacted in 1996.<sup>1</sup> This brief summarizes changes to the caseload during this period of decline and explores factors that have contributed to caseload change.

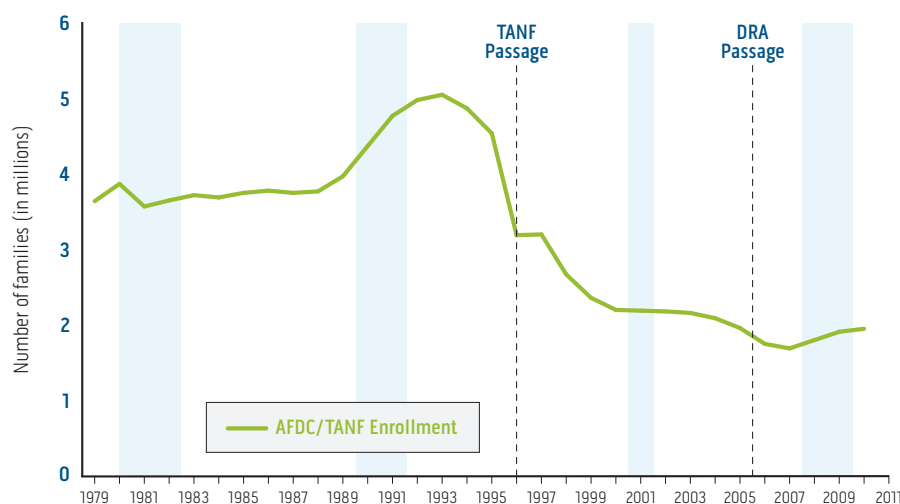
While the demographic characteristics of adults receiving benefits have been similar over time, the caseload has shifted, with the percentage of “child-only” cases rising to about 50 percent, while the

percentage of single-parent and two-parent cases has fallen.

Factors such as the economy and the earned income tax credit (EITC) played a key role in caseload decline, but TANF policy has had a substantial impact. Specific TANF policies such as financial incentives, sanctions, and time limits help explain changes in caseload exits and entries and overall caseload size. Variation in state TANF policies and other state characteristics contribute to wide differences in program outcomes across the country.

As TANF caseloads remain low, even in a recession, we need more research on why fewer eligible families are taking up TANF benefits than did so historically.

**Figure 1. Families Receiving TANF, 1979–2011**



Sources: Administration for Children and Families (TANF/SSP/AFDC enrollment), National Bureau of Economic Research (recessions).

## What Is the Size and Shape of the Caseload?

In an average month in 1997, 3.94 million families (10.4 million individuals) were receiving TANF. This number had fallen to 1.95 million by 2011, a decline of 50 percent (figure 1).<sup>2</sup> The steepest enrollment decline happened in the first five years of the program, with gradual declines continuing until the recent recession began in 2007. The number of families increased during the recent recession, from 1.91 million at the beginning of the recession in December 2007 to a peak of 1.94 million in December 2010, an increase of 17 percent. The national caseload remains lower than it was in 2005 before the recession.

## State Caseloads Vary

TANF caseloads have declined steeply in most states (table 1), but state experiences vary. Five states have seen caseload reduc-

tions of less than 25 percent,<sup>3</sup> while other states—including Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, and Wyoming—have had caseload declines of over 80 percent. The national caseload has become increasingly concentrated in several states. In 2010, California accounted for 30 percent of all TANF cases and New York and Ohio another 8 and 5 percent, respectively.

Variation in state caseload declines may stem from a range of factors, including differences in state TANF policies and other state policies, and from differences in state economies. The flexibility of the TANF program allows states to set different policies that in turn can increase or decrease participation. Other state policies such as more generous housing assistance or state earned income credits can also influence TANF participation. Stronger economies make work a more feasible alternative to TANF.

## Participation Rates Have Declined

TANF caseload decline can be attributed both to more families leaving TANF and to fewer eligible families participating. The “take-up rate” gauges the number of families receiving TANF assistance relative to the number eligible for benefits. This rate has declined from a high of 86 percent in 1992 to 79 percent in 1996 to 36 percent in 2007, the most recent year available.<sup>4</sup> While boom economic times in the late 1990s may have reduced eligibility, take-up rates among eligibles declined even during this period and continued to decline. A similar decreasing trend has occurred in the percentage of poor families with children receiving TANF.<sup>5</sup> The steep decline in program participation suggests that many families are choosing not to receive TANF assistance, do not know they are eligible, find it difficult to enroll, or are being otherwise diverted.

## Nonassistance and State Actions Affect the Caseload Counts

TANF caseload data count only the number of individuals receiving TANF cash assistance. States also fund other services and supports through TANF, technically called “nonassistance,” and recipients of these are not counted as part of the TANF caseload.

Nonassistance includes support services to low-income employed families such as child care and transportation assistance, work subsidies paid to employers, and employment services for families not receiving cash assistance. Nonassistance funds can also be used for other programs that help low-income families, such as state EITC and state child welfare services.

TANF diversion payment programs are another form of “nonassistance.” These programs provide applicants eligible for TANF lump-sum payments, typically worth one to four months of regular benefits, in lieu of enrolling them in TANF cash assistance. Diversion programs aim to keep families

Table 1. Change in Families Receiving TANF, 1997–2010

	FY 2010 caseload	% change from FY 1997		FY 2010 caseload	% change from FY 1997
Alabama	21,221	-38.5	Montana	3,752	-57.8
Alaska	3,305	-72.5	Nebraska	8,661	-37.5
Arizona	32,473	-40.7	Nevada	10,271	-13.8
Arkansas	8,547	-59.1	New Hampshire	6,173	-24.0
California	576,150	-29.4	New Jersey	33,471	-64.9
Colorado	11,521	-61.5	New Mexico	19,797	-26.6
Connecticut	17,268	-69.1	New York	155,530	-59.5
Delaware	5,157	-47.2	North Carolina	24,471	-75.3
Dist. of Columbia	8,745	-63.7	North Dakota	2,035	-51.5
Florida	58,267	-65.8	Ohio	103,030	-44.7
Georgia	20,572	-80.6	Oklahoma	9,420	-68.9
Hawaii	9,725	-54.3	Oregon	30,207	25.5
Idaho	1,731	-73.2	Pennsylvania	51,883	-68.3
Illinois	22,188	-88.8	Rhode Island	7,445	-62.4
Indiana	36,214	-19.0	South Carolina	18,481	-46.0
Iowa	21,570	-25.2	South Dakota	3,231	-36.7
Kansas	14,588	-27.8	Tennessee	62,253	-11.6
Kentucky	30,209	-53.7	Texas	50,618	-75.8
Louisiana	10,593	-81.3	Utah	6,817	-44.3
Maine	14,778	-20.0	Vermont	3,163	-61.7
Maryland	24,543	-58.6	Virginia	37,163	-31.0
Massachusetts	53,914	-30.9	Washington	69,125	-25.7
Michigan	68,233	-55.0	West Virginia	9,737	-71.1
Minnesota	23,837	-55.3	Wisconsin	21,982	-43.5
Mississippi	12,092	-68.6	Wyoming	327	-88.3
Missouri	38,902	-45.8	<b>Total U.S.</b>	<b>1,910,680</b>	<b>-51.5</b>

Source: Families Receiving TANF from Administration for Children and Families.

with specific short-term cash needs (e.g., cash to repair a car or pay the rent to forestall eviction) from entering the TANF cash assistance program. In 2010, 34 states had formal diversion payment programs.<sup>6</sup> In most states, families that receive the diversion payment are ineligible to receive TANF cash assistance for a set number of months.

Nonassistance has grown dramatically as a percentage of TANF spending. The share of program funds going to nonassistance has risen from 27 percent in 1997 to 70 percent in 2009.<sup>7</sup> Changes in the TANF caseload reflect only the number of households receiving cash assistance and do not take into account the number of people receiving nonassistance. States report the amount of funds spent on nonassistance activities but not the number of recipients receiving nonassistance benefits and services. Some nonassistance functions as a substitute for cash assistance (e.g., EITCs, lump-sum payments, and work subsidies), while other nonassistance, though potentially important, does not (e.g., child-welfare-related expenditures and employment services).

Two common state practices related to the TANF work participation rate also affect the formal caseload count. Some states move select cases from TANF into “solely state-funded” (SSF) programs, to provide more individualized services, to reduce the state’s risk of receiving a federal penalty for failing to meet work participation requirements, or both. SSF families receive TANF-like assistance but are not subject to TANF rules, are not counted toward the work participation rate, and are not reported as TANF cases. A survey found that 28 states had SSF programs in 2008, although it is not known how many cases are in these programs.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, some states use TANF funds to provide small earnings supplements in order to keep working recipients on the caseload and to increase their work participation rate.<sup>9</sup> The net effect of these two

Table 2. Characteristics of Adult TANF Recipients (percent)

	FY 1998	FY 2009		FY 1998	FY 2009
<b>Age of adult recipients</b>			<b>Employment status of adult recipients</b>		
Under 20	6.1	8.0	Employed	22.8	23.5
20–39	75.2	76.0	Unemployed	45.0	47.3
Over 39	18.6	16.0	Not in labor force	28.3	29.2
<b>Gender of adult recipients</b>			<b>Years of education of adult recipients</b>		
Female	--- <sup>b</sup>	85.9	No formal education	--- <sup>d</sup>	5.3
Male	--- <sup>b</sup>	14.1	1–11 years	42.6	36.4
<b>Ethnicity/race of adult recipients</b>			12 or more years	46.0	58.0
Hispanic <sup>a</sup>	20.0	24.2	Unknown	11.4 <sup>d</sup>	0.4
White	35.6	35.4	<b>Age of youngest child</b>		
African American	37.1	34.1	Unborn	--- <sup>e</sup>	0.8
Native American	1.6	5.3	Under 1	11.0	15.3
Unknown	0.5	1.0	1–5 years	45.1	41.0
<b>Marital status of adult recipients</b>			6–19 years	42.0	42.1
Single	52.5	69.5	Unknown	1.8 <sup>e</sup>	0.7
Married	16.4	14.4	<b>Number of recipient children<sup>f</sup></b>		
Separated/widowed/divorced	21.2	16.0	Average	2.0	1.8
<b>Citizenship of adult recipients</b>			One	42.4	50.8
U.S. citizen	88.1	91.2	Two	29.6	26.9
Qualified alien	11.0 <sup>c</sup>	7.1	Three or more	26.3	20.4
Unknown	0.9	1.7	Unknown	1.8	1.8

Source: Administration for Children and Families, Characteristics of Families on TANF.

a. Can be of any race. b. Data not available. c. FY 1998 data do not distinguish between qualified and nonqualified aliens.

d. FY 1998 data combine no formal education and unknown level of education. e. FY 1998 data combine unborn children with unknown age of child.

f. For all TANF families, including child only.

changes on the caseload numbers is not known. Using data collected directly from states, one study found that the national TANF caseload was roughly 3 percent higher in December 2009 when including SSF program participants and excluding worker supplement recipients, with considerable variation across states.<sup>10</sup>

### Have the Characteristics of the TANF Caseload Changed?

The TANF caseload can be separated into three parts: cases with one parent, cases with two parents, and cases where there is no parent or the parent is not part of the official case, referred to as “child-only” cases. Over time, there has been a notable change in what per-

centage of the caseload is comprised by each type of case. In 2009, child-only cases made up almost half of the caseload and two-parent families about 5 percent, with the remainder being single-parent families. In 1997, child-only cases made up about one-fifth of the caseload and two-parent families were about 7 percent of the caseload.<sup>11</sup> The share of cases

that are single-parent families has fallen from 72 percent in 1997 to 47 percent in 2009.

Child-only cases arise if eligible children live with adults who are not their parents or if children live with parents who are ineligible for TANF for reasons other than income—typically because they receive cash disability benefits, are ineligible under a state’s rules for immigrant status, or have been removed from the case due to a sanction or other program rule. While the child-only share of the TANF caseload increased between 1997 and 2009, the absolute number declined as the overall caseload declined. However, child-only caseload trends vary greatly across the states. For example, almost half of states saw an absolute increase in child-only cases since 2002. In several states (Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Dakota, and Texas) child-only cases made up two-thirds or more of the caseload in 2009.<sup>12</sup>

A small portion of the TANF caseload is two-parent families and the share has not changed appreciably over time, falling from about 7 to 5 percent between 1997 and 2009. However, the number of two-parent families receiving assistance has fallen 42 percent from 1997.<sup>13</sup> Research has found that two-parent families are less likely to be eligible for TANF due mainly to higher incomes. They are also less likely to participate if eligible, although the reason is not clear.<sup>14</sup> Two-parent cases are tracked separately in part because they are subject to higher work participation requirements. These higher requirements have led some states to move these cases into SSF programs, which means that declines in the caseload since 2005 may overstate declines in the number of two-parent families receiving cash assistance.

### Demographic Characteristics of Caseload Largely Unchanged

As the large decline in the caseload unfolded, questions arose as to whether the composition of the remaining caseload would change. Many argued that if those most work ready

exited, the remaining caseload would be more work challenged. But available evidence suggests that there has been little change in caseload characteristics. This may be because not all of those exiting the caseload left with employment. One study examining changes in recipients’ characteristics through the mid-2000s concluded that demographic characteristics had changed little since TANF passed, although average education levels were sensitive to economic cycles. This study also reported little evidence of increased barriers to work among the caseload, with the exception of some increase in health problems or disability.<sup>15</sup> Another study focusing on TANF recipients in two states through 2005 also found limited change in demographic characteristics.<sup>16</sup>

Administrative data also indicate few changes in caseload characteristics comparing 1998, 2005, and 2009 (table 2). The share of recipients who are over 39 and those who are not U.S. citizens has decreased. The share who are Hispanic has increased. With respect to factors that might make work more difficult, there has been a slight increase in the number of recipients with infants but an increase in those with high school or more education. Many of the barriers we would like to measure are not present in available national data sources, such as criminal record, substance abuse, domestic violence, low functional literacy or learning disability, and child with health problems (beyond receipt of Supplemental Security Income).

### What Factors Explain Caseload Changes?

The size and composition of the caseload could be changing for many reasons. Families’ need for TANF cash assistance can vary with the economy and the availability of alternative support programs. Program rules can create incentives or disincentives to enroll in TANF. Program practice “on the ground” can also affect the size of the caseload by making

it more or less difficult to enroll and affecting families’ attitudes about enrollment.

### TANF Program and the Economy Affect Caseloads

Numerous studies address the relative importance of different factors in explaining caseload changes. Many focus on explaining the dramatic decline in caseloads around the time of TANF enactment.<sup>17</sup> These studies typically use statistical techniques to try to separate the effect of the economy from the effect of TANF policy on caseload decline. These studies generally agree that declining unemployment and the improving economy in the late 1990s were important determinants of caseload decline but could not account for a large part of the post-TANF caseload decline. These studies conclude that TANF policy in aggregate explains a sizeable part (roughly 20 percent) of the decline in caseloads. Changes in other policies, primarily the EITC, also have important impacts on welfare caseloads.<sup>18</sup>

There has been limited study of caseload change in more recent years.<sup>19</sup> One exception addresses the responsiveness of TANF caseloads to economic cycles and includes data from the recent recession.<sup>20</sup> The authors conclude the TANF caseload is less responsive (or at least no more responsive) to economic changes than the cash welfare caseload was prior to welfare reform.

### Specific TANF Policies Affect Caseloads

Specific TANF policies can have different impacts on caseloads. Some TANF policies serve to increase the caseload, such as financial incentives that allow workers to keep more of their earnings while retaining benefits, keeping families on the caseload longer. Others can have the opposite effect. Low benefit levels and mandated work activities make receipt of TANF less attractive. Stringent benefit reduction sanctions for failing to comply with requirements—including full family sanctions that eliminate

the entire benefit—are designed to incentivize behavior, but can also lead to the creation of child-only units or the elimination of cases altogether.<sup>21</sup> Time limit policies also affect the caseload. Federal law prohibits the use of federal TANF funds to provide assistance after a family receives 60 months of benefits, with some allowable exemptions. Individual states can impose even shorter time limits on benefit receipt. Time limits reduce caseloads directly when families hit the time limit, but can also reduce caseloads indirectly if families exit the program more quickly to save months for future use.

Evidence has been reviewed elsewhere on the impact of specific provisions from studies of the period immediately following TANF enactment and from states with federal program waivers prior to that.<sup>22</sup> The studies generally find that financial incentive policies increase caseloads, with more generous incentives leading to greater increases. As expected, mandatory work requirements, stronger sanctions, and time limits generally reduce welfare use and caseloads.

A few more recent studies support these earlier findings. One study using caseload data up to 2005 found sanctions, time limits, and diversion policies were associated with decreases in caseloads and more generous financial incentives with increases in caseloads, although these impacts were modest. Taken together they explain only 10 percentage points of the 56 percentage point decline.<sup>23</sup> Another study finds that time limits reduce welfare use, especially among families with young children. This impact result arises from a behavioral response to the existence of the limit rather than families reaching the time limit.<sup>24</sup> The actual number of cases closed due to state or federal time limits has been small. One study found that about 250,000 cases had been closed due to time limits from 1996 to 2008, although about one-third of those were in New York State, where most families reaching the time

limit are transferred to a state- and locally funded benefit program. Across the country, in an average month in FY 2009 only about 2 percent of cases were closed due to state or federal time limits.<sup>25</sup> This number may be increasing as several states have implemented shorter time limits in recent years.

Work diversion programs requiring applicants to participate in certain activities (usually job search during a 30- to 45-day application period) before enrollment can also reduce caseloads. In 2010, 21 states had these “up-front” job search requirements.<sup>26</sup> The extent to which these programs impact the caseload is unclear.

An additional factor influencing caseloads and take-up rates, beyond the specific policies, is the implementation of policy, or as one author puts it, “the policy as delivered by frontline workers.”<sup>27</sup> A study of four states’ implementation of welfare reform finds that the passage of TANF led frontline workers to consistently relate to clients the requirement to work even across very different state programs. In some states, such as Texas and Georgia, work requirements for applicants were used explicitly to divert recipients from the caseload. Whether the goal was diversion or application, this study finds that from the perspective of frontline workers, the most important factor in caseload decline was restricted access to TANF through the work mandate.<sup>28</sup>

### How Long Do Families Stay on Welfare?

Changes in the level and characteristics of the TANF caseload reflect a combination of changes in entries and exits and the length of time families remain on the caseload. Specific TANF policies affecting decisions to enter or leave the caseload (the dynamics of the caseload) can operate in complex ways. For example, policies that encourage work and increase exits may also discourage entry.

A number of studies analyzing the relative roles of entries and exits in explaining caseload

declines after the passage of TANF generally show that decreasing TANF entries played an important role in caseload decline, although increasing exits explain the majority of the decline. Other studies examining the impact of changes in welfare policies, other support programs, and the economy on entries and exits find that welfare reform significantly increased exits. The results on entry are more mixed. The economy and the expansion of the EITC both seem to reduce entry more than welfare policy.<sup>29</sup> However, all these results are from the early years after TANF passed. There is little evidence using more recent data.

Available data suggest that a large share of those who enroll in TANF remain on for short periods and a small share remain on for long periods. Federal data on the number of months current cases have accrued toward the federal 60-month time limit provide a snapshot of recent spell lengths in progress. Excluding child-only cases, 41 percent of FY 2009 cases had accrued less than a year and another 23 percent less than two years toward the 60 month limit. Only 12 percent had accumulated more than four years.<sup>30</sup> The same data show that only 2 percent of cases were closed due to time limits. There is some evidence that individuals with characteristics that may make work more difficult (such as health problems, low education, and young children) are more likely to remain on TANF longer.<sup>31</sup>

Another facet of caseload dynamics is families who leave the rolls and subsequently return to welfare. High rates of rapid returns suggest those exiting have not been able to reach self-sufficiency. Lower rates of return could reflect less need for assistance or difficulty accessing the program. One study finds that returns within two years of exiting fell from 26 percent in 1997 to 21 percent in 2002.<sup>32</sup> Another study in two states finds that returns fell initially after TANF passed and then began to increase through 2005. They find the impact of economic conditions and individual characteristics remained largely unchanged over this time.<sup>33</sup>



This suggests the initial decline and subsequent increases in returns may be due to welfare policies, although other unmeasured factors could also play a role.

### What Are the Implications for State and Federal Policy?

The major implication for state and federal TANF policy of the research is that the large changes embodied in TANF had major impacts on the caseload independent of the economy. Some evidence suggests differential effects of specific policies. Financial incentives in the form of earnings supplements lengthen stays on the rolls, while other policies such as sanctions, diversion, time limits, and work mandates reduce caseloads.

That TANF take-up rates have declined continuously along with caseloads shows it is not just declining eligibility that is reducing caseloads, but fewer eligible families taking up these benefits. Understanding why and what this indicates about the TANF program is important. That caseloads remain relatively low even in a severe recession also requires scrutiny as to whether the program's transformed work focus is meeting families' needs.

The large share of child-only cases raises questions about appropriate services, benefits, and program rules. Most of these families do not fit into a work-focused program, and nonparent caretakers may benefit from specialized supports.<sup>34</sup>

The stability in caseload characteristics suggests that even as caseload numbers declined, the mix of low-income families receiving assistance has not been greatly impacted. However, many barriers of interest are not measured in available data, and some evidence shows increases in the share of the caseload with health problems. Research still cannot fully answer whether those with serious employment barriers more often leave the caseload due to failures to comply with complex rules or whether they find ample supports outside of TANF.<sup>35</sup> The increasing share

of disconnected parents among low-income families suggests some failures in the TANF program's ability to serve those in need.<sup>36</sup>

### Areas for Future Research

Much of the research on caseloads hails from the very early years after TANF passed and the waiver years prior to passage. The lack of more recent research that takes advantage of the more than 15 years that have now passed means several key issues for the TANF program are not fully understood. These include the impact of eliminating the entitlement to TANF (cash assistance) during a recession and the continued decline in participation among TANF eligibles. As TANF caseloads remain low, even in a recession, we need more research on why fewer eligible families are taking up TANF benefits than did so historically. The availability of TANF data for an entire business cycle now allows study of TANF's responsiveness over the business cycle. This issue and many others discussed above deserve additional research with this longer time frame.<sup>37</sup>

More analysis on the differential impact of policies on entry and exit is also warranted, particularly to understand the dramatic declines in take-up rates. Research that separates the role of changes in eligibility (monetary and nonmonetary) from changes in application rates and their effects on specific policies is important for understanding take-up. In particular, it is important to understand the impact of full family sanctions, time limits, and diversion programs on declining take-up rates separate from families not connecting with the program at all. Joint analysis of eligibility and participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and TANF may be informative as well. Direct survey of eligible nonrecipients' knowledge of the program and reasons for not applying would also be informative, although it is difficult to identify these families.

In general, as TANF provides employment and other services and supports, we

need to understand their impact in helping families remain off welfare. "Welfare-to-work" experiments have given us some evidence of short-term changes in welfare use, but most of these are dated. We need research that examines whether families that exit TANF are reducing their dependency and increasing self-sufficiency. While this research involves measurement of outcomes beyond the caseload, it includes better understanding of families cycling on and off TANF. We know little about the likelihood of families returning to welfare since the mid-2000s and how this varies by family characteristics and experiences.

A basic research question is how to interpret federally reported caseload numbers that exclude those receiving nonassistance TANF payments or solely state-funded benefits. Research is needed on the effects of these payment policies on low-income families. For example, should systematic information be collected on diversion program payment receipt or receipt of solely state-funded benefits? One dimension of reporting being examined by the federal government is more detailed reporting of nonassistance. Congress required states to provide the federal government more detailed information in spring 2011, although reporting of numbers served was not required.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, one of the most important aspects of TANF policy was the flexibility afforded states. The differences that have arisen in policy choices have played a role in researchers' ability to examine the impact of different policies on caseloads and other outcomes. However, more recent changes (since the Deficit Reduction Act) have not been exploited by researchers to as great a degree, and our understanding of why caseload patterns diverge so tremendously across states in more recent years is limited. The large concentration of the national caseload in a few states also calls for more research focused on these states in particular. ■

## Notes

1. TANF was passed as part of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, Public Law 104-193.
2. Because states were implementing TANF at different times throughout 1997, averages include Aid to Families with Dependent Children as well as TANF caseloads. Also, these numbers do not include Tribal TANF, which was also authorized under PRWORA. As of 2010, 63 approved Tribal TANF grantees were serving 298 American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages and the nonreservation American Indian and Alaska Native populations of over 121 counties. For more information on Tribal TANF see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/dts/>. Data on Administration for Children and Families (ACF) caseloads were accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/index.htm>. The 2011 caseload includes both TANF and Separate State Program (SSP-MOE) recipients.
3. Only Oregon shows a caseload increase from FY1997 to FY2010. This reflects that much of the decline in Oregon's caseload of the late 1990s had taken place by the end of 1997, with the caseload remaining flat until increasing in the current recession.
4. These estimates reflect declining eligibility due to time limits. These participation rates do not exclude eligible families sanctioned off the TANF rolls. Taking this into account would likely lead to a small increase in estimated participation rates.
5. Zedlewski and Golden (2010) report a decline in the percentage of poor families with children receiving cash assistance, from 44 percent in 1996 to 30 percent in 2008.
6. Kassabian et al. (2011).
7. U.S. Government Accountability Office (2011). TANF spending here refers to both federal TANF funds and the funds that states are required to spend to receive their federal TANF block grants.
8. Pavetti, Rosenberg, and Derr (2009).
9. See Hahn, Kassabian, and Zedlewski (2012) in this series for more detailed discussion of SSF programs and worker supplements.
10. Pavetti, Trisi, and Schott (2011). Because data are gathered from states directly, they may include differences in reporting other than just SSF and worker supplements.
11. Author's calculations based on ACF caseload data accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/index.htm>.
12. For more discussion of child only cases and a review of relevant literature, see Golden and Hawkins (2012) in this series of briefs.
13. Author's calculations based on ACF caseload data accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/index.htm>.
14. Rangarajan, Castner, and Clark (2005).
15. Acs and Loprest (2007).
16. Mueser, Stevens, and Troske (2009).
17. A review of these early studies can be found in Blank (2002) and Grogger and Karoly (2005). Earlier studies tried to explain increases in caseloads predating TANF, for example Blank (2001).
18. Blank (2002) and Grogger and Karoly (2005).
19. Blank (2009) reviews more recent studies than the previous reviews, although few focus on caseload changes.
20. Bitler and Hoynes (2010).
21. Kauff et al. (2007) discuss how states use sanctions and their potential impacts.
22. Grogger and Karoly (2005) review these studies.
23. Danielson and Klerman (2008).
24. Grogger (2004a).
25. Farrell et al. (2002). Data from "Characteristics and Financial Circumstances of TANF Recipients" accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/character/index.html>. Farrell et al. (2002) find a similar result for 2001 to 2005, that 2 to 3 percent of cases closed per month due to time limits.
26. Kassabian et al. (2011). See Rosenberg et al. (2008) for further discussion of diversion policies.
27. Lurie (2006).
28. Ibid.
29. Grogger (2004b); Moffitt and Winder (2003).
30. These numbers exclude those exempt from time limits and include 6 percent who have over 60 months and are presumably being financed out of state funds. Data from "Characteristics of TANF Families" accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/index.htm>. It should be noted that a higher percentage of shorter duration spells in progress is consistent with a rising caseload.
31. Seefeldt and Orzol (2005).
32. Loprest and Zedlewski (2006).
33. Mueser et al. (2009).
34. See Golden and Hawkins (2012) in this series of briefs.
35. Bloom, Loprest, and Zedlewski (2011) in this series of briefs.
36. Loprest (2011) in this series of briefs.
37. Additional research on the child-only caseload is also warranted and is discussed in Golden and Hawkins (2012) in this series of briefs.
38. Current reporting on this effort can be found at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2011). Derr et al. (2009) analyzed TANF-reported spending of nonassistance from 2007 to 2009.



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