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# TANF 101

## Block Grants

**CLASP**  
The Center for Law and Social Policy

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### Introduction

Over 25 years ago, the 1996 federal “welfare reform” law replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and related programs with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. The passage of the law came after a campaign to “end welfare as we know it,” centered in racist dog-whistle language. This effort was intended to give states more flexibility to reduce cash assistance caseloads and to provide support only to so-called “deserving” recipients by enforcing work reporting requirements, time limits, and other program requirements.<sup>1</sup> AFDC was an uncapped federal matching program, under which states received more federal money when they spent more on cash assistance, and less when their caseloads declined. By contrast, under TANF, states are given a fixed block grant that they can spend on a wide variety of activities to further any of the four statutory purposes as written into the law:

- 1) *Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;*
- 2) *End the dependence of needy parents on*

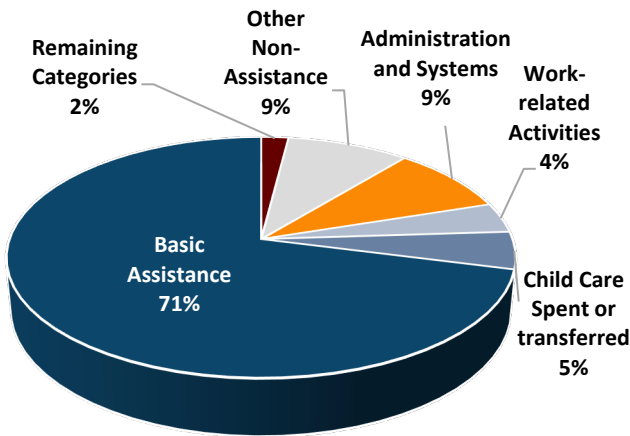
- government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;*
- 3) *Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and*
- 4) *Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.*

Reducing poverty among children and families is not a listed purpose of the program—rather, the existing purposes aim to control behaviors.

States can also use TANF funds for certain other activities, such as juvenile justice, that they supported under AFDC’s Emergency Assistance before 1996.

TANF also has a “maintenance of effort” (MOE) requirement under which states must continue to spend at least 75 percent of the amount that they did prior to the passage of the 1996 law on programs serving eligible families in need of assistance. The MOE requirement rises to 80 percent for states that fail another requirement called the work participation rate.<sup>2</sup> Neither the TANF block grant nor the MOE requirement are adjusted for inflation or population growth.

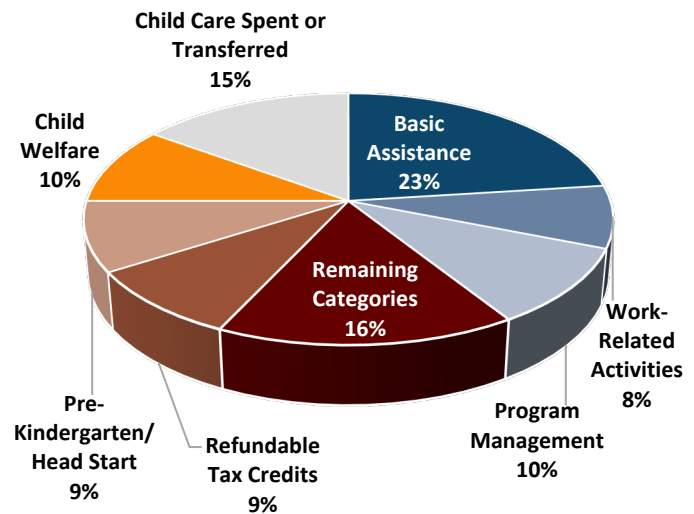
## FY 1997 TANF MOE



TANF and MOE spending is not limited to cash assistance. States may spend funds on a range of programs and services for needy families with children, regardless of whether the families are getting cash aid. States define what constitutes “needy,” and the income cut off for those programs is often much higher than the limit set for cash aid. When cash assistance caseloads fall—as they did dramatically during the late 1990s and more gradually in the years after<sup>3</sup>—this makes it easier for states to use the funds for other TANF purposes. However, because the TANF block grant does not increase when assistance caseloads rise, states face difficult budget choices during times of increased economic hardship. With no new money, they must either cut other services funded with TANF or provide additional state funds.

The TANF Emergency Fund, created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that was passed in response to the Great Recession, was a temporary exception to that rule, providing an additional \$5 billion over two years.<sup>4</sup> States were

## FY 2023 TANF MOE



*Note: Refundable tax credits includes EITC and non-EITC spending; Child Welfare includes foster care spending from basic assistance, AUPL, and Non-AUPL.*

able to use these funds for cash assistance, short-term emergency benefits, and subsidized employment programs. The American Rescue Plan, enacted in March 2021 as part of the series of bills aimed at addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and associated recession, provided a \$1 billion TANF Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund for states to provide non-recurrent, short-term support to families during the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

## TANF/MOE support a broad range of services for families with low incomes

States have used their flexibility under TANF to support a wide range of activities. Over time, fewer TANF funds have gone toward cash assistance for families. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 the most recent year for which data are available, basic monthly cash assistance payments accounted for just 22.3 percent of combined TANF/MOE spending, down from 71 percent in FY 1997.<sup>6</sup> This primarily reflects the

decline in TANF caseloads, which remain well under half their peak prior to 1996's "welfare reform." TANF cash assistance has served fewer families with children living in poverty over time, in part due to policies like work reporting requirements and time limits, that make the program harder to access.<sup>7</sup> TANF monthly benefits for families in many states also have not kept up with inflation since the passage of the 1996 law, contributing to the lack of funds going toward basic assistance.<sup>8</sup>

In 2020, states also reported spending 9.7 percent of their TANF/MOE funds on supporting parents in getting the skills they need for employment, finding and keeping jobs, or other work-related activities (although not all of these funds were used to serve families receiving assistance).

These national figures conceal a great deal of state-to-state variation in spending priorities. For example, spending on basic assistance ranged from 4 percent of total TANF/MOE spending in Illinois to over two-thirds in Kentucky.<sup>9</sup>

The second largest use of TANF/MOE funds is to provide child care subsidies to families with low incomes, including those receiving TANF, those who are transitioning from TANF, and those who have never received cash assistance or participated in the TANF program. Each state may transfer up to 30 percent of its TANF grant to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) or to a combination of CCDBG and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG); states may also spend TANF and MOE funds directly on child care. TANF funds transferred to CCDBG become subject to the CCDBG rules, including minimum health and safety rules; TANF funds spent directly on child care are not subject to these rules, which means the child care may be of lower quality. In FY 2020, states spent or transferred a total of \$5.2 billion in TANF and MOE funds on child care, accounting for 16.6 percent of all TANF/MOE spending.<sup>10</sup>

TANF funds represent a substantial portion of the national investment in child care. Total spending on child care—comprised of federal and state CCDBG funds and TANF and MOE direct spending—was \$13.3 billion in FY 2019.<sup>11</sup> Robust, sustained federal investments in CCDBG would mean states could be less reliant on TANF transfers and direct spending to meet family child care needs and those funds could instead be used on cash assistance and the other range of supports states can provide to TANF recipients.

As with cash assistance, there is a variation among states, with 19 states using less than 10 percent of TANF and MOE funds on child care and only 4 states using more than 40 percent.

In the past, states reported a significant share of TANF and MOE spending in non-descriptive categories including "other" and "authorized under prior law" (AUPL); these two categories accounted for 19.3 percent of TANF funds used in 2014. This made it difficult to understand how TANF funds were being used, or to compare across states. Starting in FY 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) revised the reporting requirements to add new spending categories and to provide more detailed instructions on how to account for use of funds; states must also provide narrative descriptions of spending still reported as "other" or "AUPL."

The more detailed reporting for expenditures shows that states spent 8.3 percent of TANF and related funds on child welfare services in FY 2020. In a few states, child welfare accounted for very large shares of TANF spending: for example, Arizona, Georgia, and North Dakota spent 67 percent, 47.1 percent, and 61.8 percent, respectively, of TANF and MOE funds on child welfare services. This figure does not include cash assistance spending on "child-only" cases, which are often an alternative to foster care. (In 2020, more than half of TANF assistance cases were child-only cases without a parent present in the household.<sup>12</sup>) In some cases, child welfare agencies

may be using TANF funds to provide families with case management, treatment, and other services that support both family stability and economic security. However, in other cases, it appears that states are significantly supplanting state spending on core child welfare services, such as child protective services and foster care, with TANF funds.<sup>13</sup>

Due to these funding allocations, families with low incomes are often left ineligible to receive more than a paltry cash assistance monthly benefit to help them escape poverty, and the state may be instead investing those TANF dollars toward child welfare enforcement that may ultimately remove the child from the home. Ironically, instances of child welfare involvement due to child neglect often are largely a result of the family living in poverty.<sup>14</sup> Research finds that a state providing generous investments in TANF dollars toward families is correlated to whether a child will ultimately be removed from the home.<sup>15</sup>

States also reported spending 8.5 percent of TANF/MOE on pre-kindergarten/Head Start programs.<sup>16</sup> According to long-standing guidance from the Administration for Children and Families at HHS, states may use TANF and MOE funds to support such programs as long as they are not generally available to all children throughout the state. HHS has encouraged states to use such funds to serve “at-risk” children from families with low incomes.<sup>17</sup> States ultimately get to decide the income eligibility for children in these programs. Again, this use of funds varied greatly by state; Tennessee and New Jersey spent roughly 38 percent and 41 percent, respectively, on pre-K and Head Start programs.

States are allowed to carry TANF funds over from year to year. At the end of FY 2020, states reported unobligated balances totaling about

\$5.2 billion. While some “rainy day” funds may be prudent, excessive carryover funds suggest that states could reasonably invest more in the

immediate needs of families with low incomes in their state. Hawaii, Maine, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wyoming each reported unobligated balances greater than their annual TANF block grant.<sup>18</sup> In 2020, some states, like Tennessee and Virginia, chose to invest their TANF carryover funds to provide emergency assistance to families with low incomes during the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>19</sup> Even with these investments, Tennessee still has about \$790 million in unspent TANF funds, which represents 414 percent of its annual block grant.<sup>20, 21</sup>

## State spending on social services has declined since 2002

During the early years of TANF, caseloads fell faster than anticipated. Therefore, all states spent less than they had budgeted and accumulated funds they were allowed to carry over from previous years. The TANF and MOE funds freed up by declining caseloads were often reinvested in a range of innovative programs designed to support working families paid low incomes, to address the root causes of poverty, and to promote two-generation benefits for parents and their children. These included refundable state Earned Income Tax Credits to make work pay; child care and transportation subsidies; home visiting programs for new parents; early education for young children; and programs to encourage teens to stay in school and avoid early childbearing.

As states realized the breadth of programs that could be supported by TANF/MOE funds, they rapidly drew down their carryover funds. By 2001, states were spending more TANF funds each year than they received from the block grant.

However, as revenues declined during the 2001-2002 recession, **a number of states began to substitute TANF and MOE funds for state general revenues supporting social services for families**

**with low incomes.** It appears that this shift continued through the 2000s, and accelerated during the Great Recession (2007- 2009), which placed state budgets under severe pressure.

One complication making it difficult to monitor spending trends over time is that, starting in FY 2006, because of policy changes made by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, states had a strong incentive to report MOE spending *in excess* of the minimum required.<sup>22</sup> Many states made an effort to identify existing state spending on families with low incomes that was aimed at the purposes of TANF and thus could be claimed as MOE.

In addition, the availability of matching funds under the TANF Emergency Fund drew attention to a previously little-noticed provision allowing states to claim as MOE otherwise qualifying expenditures by third parties, such as businesses, foundations, nonprofits, and local governments, as long as the third party agrees.<sup>23</sup> For example, some states claim expenditures from private donations by nonprofit organizations on programs for youth in communities with low income as TANF MOE.

Many states used this provision during FYs 2009 and 2010 to qualify for funding from the TANF Emergency Fund. In a few states, third-party expenditures accounted for nearly half of spending reported as MOE.<sup>24</sup> While reported MOE spending increased by over \$4 billion between FY 2005 and FY 2011, this almost certainly was partially driven by changes in data reporting, rather than true increases in the resources available to families in need. Many of these third- party activities were already taking place even before they were claimed as MOE.<sup>25</sup>

Since the expiration of the Emergency Fund at the end of FY 2010, states have had weaker incentives to report additional spending. Reported MOE spending decreased by nearly \$450 million between FY 2011 and FY 2013. It is unclear how to apportion this decline among 1) reporting changes; 2) the end of temporary programs supported under the Emergency Fund; and 3) decreased need due to

improving economic conditions. Reported MOE spending has fluctuated around this level since then. There was a slight increase in MOE spending reported in FY 2020.<sup>26</sup>

Researchers at the Rockefeller Institute of Government have attempted to monitor state spending on all social services, regardless of whether it was funded out of TANF or claimed toward the MOE requirement.<sup>27</sup> They found that, consistent with the declines in caseloads, spending on cash assistance has declined steadily since the creation of the TANF program. By contrast, spending on other non-medical social service programs—such as child care, child welfare, energy assistance, homeless shelters, and services for individuals with disabilities—increased significantly during the late 1990s but declined between 2002 and 2008.

During the Great Recession, increased demands for assistance and expanded federal support were counterbalanced by strained state budgets. At least 46 states responded to their budget deficits by imposing cuts in cash assistance and other social services.<sup>28</sup> Since the expanded federal assistance has come to an end, only some states have restored the cuts they made—and even those states have only partially done so.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, TANF caseloads increased for the first few months of the pandemic and then decreased to below pre-pandemic levels by October 2020.<sup>29</sup> TANF caseloads varied widely across states due to the differences in how states administer their TANF programs as well as the differences in temporary policies that states enacted to ease access to TANF during the pandemic. For example, 41 states made changes to work reporting requirements and/or sanctions, and 30 states made changes to how they count Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits as income during the pandemic.<sup>30</sup> Twenty-one states made changes to their state TANF time limit policies in response to the pandemic.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, new applicants may

have struggled to access TANF cash assistance when benefit offices were closed. This also reflects the challenges of the TANF block grant responding to changing economic circumstances and increased financial need.

Some states have taken steps to support families receiving cash assistance. Since July 2020, 20 states, and the District of Columbia, have increased their monthly TANF benefits. Seven of those states increased their TANF benefits by at least 10 percent. Other states increased the benefit by a lower amount as a result of an automatic inflation adjustment.<sup>32</sup>

## Block grant has not kept up with inflation and locks in low grants in Southern states

Under the 1996 law, the basic TANF block grant was fixed at \$16.57 billion a year. This figure has not been increased to reflect inflation since lawmakers first created TANF. Thus, **the value of the block grant has been eroded by 40 percent.**

The TANF amount available for each state was set based on its spending under the AFDC program.<sup>33</sup> While states with lower median incomes received a higher federal match rate under AFDC, they also usually had much lower benefit levels. This meant that the value of the TANF block grant per child living in poverty also varied widely. Thus, in the first years of the block grant, Arkansas received less than \$400 per year for each child in the state living in poverty, while Alaska received more than eight times as much.

There are also racial disparities in the level of each state's TANF benefits and in how much states spend toward basic assistance. Black families are likelier to live in states that have the lowest benefits and that spend the least of their TANF dollars toward basic

assistance.<sup>34</sup> This is the result of both current policy choices in the states and the structure of the block grant, which locks in the low benefit levels that Southern states had adopted under AFDC. State lawmakers' decisions on TANF benefits and spending can stem from racist stereotypes about "welfare queens," flawed ideas of who are "deserving" versus "undeserving" of financial support; and a desire to force people to accept jobs paying low wages.

Some in Congress realized the inequity in the block grant amounts at the time and, in the 1996 law, provided an additional allocation of funds—the TANF supplemental grants. These grants provided additional dollars to states that had either particularly low grants per person living in poverty or had high rates of population growth during the early 1990s. However, Congress allowed these grants to expire in FY 2011, resulting in a reduction of funding in these states.

Overall, the block grant has not been adjusted to reflect population growth or the rise of poverty. States that have experienced growth in the number of children living in poverty have seen their funding per child living in poverty decline substantially. Since 1997, states such as Alaska and Nevada have seen the number of children living in poverty climb as much as two-thirds; combined with inflation, this growth has cut the funds available per child living in poverty by about 60 percent. Alaska's and Nevada's grants have fallen 67 percent and 57 percent, respectively, in purchasing power since 1997. (See Table 1.)

While Congress has provided some additional funding to states under the regular Contingency Fund, this funding is allotted to states in proportion to the basic block grant allocation and is limited to states that are able to increase their MOE above historical levels. Therefore, these additional funds have primarily gone to more affluent states that are able to spend more of their own funds.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

The ambitious goals of the TANF program are not matched by proportionate resources, especially in states with high rates of poverty and low fiscal capacity.<sup>36</sup> The net result is a program under pressure, and cash assistance serving fewer children living in poverty. States have the flexibility to allocate

the block grants among a range of programs and services, but flexibility is not a substitute for adequate funding.

**Table 1: Real and Nominal Analysis of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant Amounts**

State	State Family Assistance Grant, Nominal Amount, 1997 (in millions)	State Family Assistance Grant, Real Amount, 2020 (in millions)	Number of Children Living in Poverty, 1997-1998 (in thousands)	Number of Children Living in Poverty, 2019-2020 (in thousands)	Real Grant Amount per Child Living in Poverty, 1997-1998	Real Grant Amount per Child Living in Poverty, 2019-2020	Percent Change in Grant per Child Living in Poverty
Alabama	\$93.3	\$57.7	246	200	\$382.6	\$289.1	-24%
Alaska	\$63.6	\$27.5	21	27	\$3,119.7	\$1,019.7	-67%
Arizona	\$222.4	\$123.7	333	242	\$672.4	\$512.1	-24%
Arkansas	\$56.7	\$35.1	153	132	\$372.7	\$266.7	-28%
California	\$3,733.8	\$2,253.8	2,185	1,208	\$1,696.1	\$1,866.5	10%
Colorado	\$136.1	\$84.1	114	149	\$1,198.3	\$564.4	-53%
Connecticut	\$266.8	\$164.9	90	90	\$2,958.1	\$1,832.2	-38%
Delaware	\$32.3	\$20.0	33	26	\$971.1	\$767.7	-21%
District of Columbia	\$92.6	\$57.2	45	24	\$2,065.1	\$2,385.1	15%
Florida	\$562.3	\$347.6	646	678	\$875.6	\$513.0	-41%
Georgia	\$330.7	\$204.4	497	422	\$669.9	\$485.0	-28%
Hawaii	\$98.9	\$61.1	53	41	\$1,869.4	\$1,509.5	-19%
Idaho	\$31.9	\$18.8	76	42	\$422.6	\$447.5	6%
Illinois	\$585.1	\$361.6	492	311	\$1,181.3	\$1,162.8	-2%
Indiana	\$206.8	\$127.8	160	242	\$1,282.6	\$528.2	-59%
Iowa	\$131.5	\$81.0	93	82	\$1,410.9	\$993.4	-30%
Kansas	\$101.9	\$62.9	79	90	\$1,288.3	\$703.1	-45%
Kentucky	\$181.3	\$112.1	198	170	\$908.6	\$659.1	-27%
Louisiana	\$164	\$101.4	291	240	\$567.1	\$422.3	-26%
Maine	\$78.1	\$47.7	38	34	\$2,067	\$1,425.1	-31%
Maryland	\$229.1	\$141.6	122	148	\$1,863.5	\$956.8	-49%
Massachusetts	\$459.4	\$283.9	231	137	\$1,973.4	\$2,072.5	5%
Michigan	\$775.4	\$479.2	397	293	\$1,938.1	\$1,635.6	-16%
Minnesota	\$268	\$161.0	211	115	\$1,263.4	\$1,399.7	11%

Mississippi	\$86.8	\$53.6	163	165	\$534.7	\$326.0	-39%
Missouri	\$217.1	\$134.2	229	179	\$942.7	\$749.5	-20%
Montana	\$45.5	\$23.5	51	25	\$906.1	\$939.9	4%
Nebraska	\$58	\$35.1	68	60	\$852.9	\$585.3	-31%
Nevada	\$44	\$27.1	73	104	\$608.2	\$262.2	-57%
New Hampshire	\$38.5	\$23.8	43	15	\$888.7	\$1,587.3	79%
New Jersey	\$404	\$249.7	256	164	\$1,569.2	\$1,527.4	-3%
New Mexico	\$126.1	\$68.2	158	100	\$802	\$685.1	-15%
New York	\$2,442.9	\$1,510.0	1,134	672	\$2,138.7	\$2,247.0	5%
North Carolina	\$302.2	\$186.3	330	468	\$923.2	\$398.5	-57%
North Dakota	\$26.4	\$16.3	34	19	\$770.5	\$882.0	14%
Ohio	\$728	\$450.0	467	480	\$1,548.6	\$938.4	-39%
Oklahoma	\$148	\$85.6	156	156	\$944.5	\$548.6	-42%
Oregon	\$167.9	\$102.8	154	91	\$1,085.5	\$1,130.1	4%
Pennsylvania	\$719.5	\$444.7	491	353	\$1,454.1	\$1,261.6	-13%
Rhode Island	\$95	\$58.7	43	26	\$2,218.4	\$2,303.2	4%
South Carolina	\$100	\$61.8	185	231	\$536.3	\$267.5	-50%
South Dakota	\$21.9	\$13.2	26	39	\$852.1	\$341.6	-60%
Tennessee	\$191.5	\$118.4	269	282	\$717.3	\$420.5	-41%
Texas	\$486.3	\$300.6	1,264	1,258	\$386.8	\$238.9	-38%
Utah	\$76.8	\$46.7	84	77	\$919.8	\$610.9	-34%
Vermont	\$47.4	\$29.3	17	11	\$2,765.5	\$2,660.8	-4%
Virginia	\$158.3	\$97.8	215	213	\$730.6	\$460.4	-37%
Washington	\$404.3	\$235.0	189	162	\$2,122.8	\$1,455.3	-31%
West Virginia	\$110.2	\$68.1	82	64	\$1,341.6	\$1,072.4	-20%
Wisconsin	\$318.2	\$194.0	146	156	\$2,170.1	\$1,243.7	-43%
Wyoming	\$21.8	\$11.4	19	15	\$1,138.1	\$788.2	-31%
United States	\$16,488.7	\$10,062.1	13,134	10,715	\$1,248.8	\$939.1	-25%

**Source:** Office of Family Assistance, TANF Financial Data for years 1997 through 2020; Current Population Survey March Supplement, "Related Children Under Age 18" for years 1997-2020. Although the American Community Survey is generally preferable to the CPS for state-level analysis, it is not available for the 1996 time period. Therefore, we have chosen to average 2 years of CPS data for states.

**Note:** Real amounts of the TANF block grant are a summation of the State Family Assistance Grant and Supplemental Grants awarded to states, adjusted to 1997 dollars using the CPI. (E.2.: Expenditures using State Family Assistance Grant (SFAG) Funds, FY 2020, Office of Family Assistance, October 2021,

[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/fy2020\\_tanf\\_financial\\_data\\_table\\_092221.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/fy2020_tanf_financial_data_table_092221.pdf)). This amount is divided by the number of children in poverty in each state to derive the real grant awarded per child living in poverty in each state.

Puerto Rico is not included in this table due to a lack of federal data on TANF spending in the territory.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Ife Floyd, LaDonna Pavetti, Laura Meyer, *et al.*, “TANF Policies Reflect Racist Legacy of Cash Assistance,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, August 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/tanf-policies-reflect-racist-legacy-of-cash-assistance>.

<sup>2</sup> For more detail on the TANF work participation rate, see Elizabeth Lower-Basch and Ashley Burnside, *TANF 101: Work Participation Rate*, Center for Law and Social Policy, August 2021, <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/tanf-101-work-participation-rate/>.

<sup>3</sup> For more detail on the changes in the cash assistance program, see Elizabeth Lower-Basch, *TANF 101: Cash Assistance*, Center for Law and Social Policy, April 2019, <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/tanf-101-cash-assistance>.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Lower-Basch and Elizabeth Kenefick, *TANF Emergency Fund*, Center for Law and Social Policy, October 2010,

<https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/TANF-ECF-Use-Sept-30.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Office of Family Assistance, “Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund,” March 25, 2021, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/pandemic-emergency-assistance-fund>.

<sup>6</sup> *TANF Financial Data - FY 2020*, Office of Family Assistance, August 2021, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/tanf-financial-data-fy-2020>.

<sup>7</sup> Aditi Shrivastava and Gina Azito Thompson, *TANF Cash Assistance Should Reach Millions More Families to Lessen Hardship*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, updated February 18, 2022,

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/tanf-cash-assistance-should-reach-millions-more-families-to-lessen>.

<sup>8</sup> Ali Safawi and Cindy Reyes, “States Must Continue Recent Momentum to Further Improve TANF Benefit Levels,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, December 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/states-must-continue-recent-momentum-to-further-improve-tanf-benefit>.

<sup>9</sup> *TANF and MOE Spending and Transfers by Activity, FY 2020* (State Pie Charts), Office of Family Assistance, August 2021,

[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/fy2020\\_tanf\\_and\\_moe\\_state\\_pie\\_charts\\_092221.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/fy2020_tanf_and_moe_state_pie_charts_092221.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *TANF and MOE Spending and Transfers by Activity, FY 2020*, [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/fy2020\\_tanf\\_and\\_moe\\_state\\_pie\\_charts\\_092221.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/fy2020_tanf_and_moe_state_pie_charts_092221.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> CLASP calculation of FY 2019 total combined spending on child care assistance—comprised of CCDBG and TANF-related funds. (Note that a portion of state TANF MOE spent on child care may also be counted as MOE under CCDBG.)

<sup>12</sup> *Table 3. TANF Families by Number of Adult Recipients: FY 2020*, Office of Family Assistance, November 2021, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/characteristics-and-financial-circumstances-tanf-recipients-fiscal-year-2020>.

<sup>13</sup> Michelle K. Derr, Tara Anderson, LaDonna Pavetti, *et al.*, *Understanding Two Categories of TANF Spending: “Other” and “Authorized Under Prior Law”*, Mathematica Policy Research, September 2009,

<https://www.mathematica.org/our-publications-and-findings/publications/understanding-two-categories-of-tanf-spending-other-and-authorized-under-prior-law>.

<sup>14</sup> Eli Hager, “A Mother Needed Welfare. Instead, the State Used Welfare Funds to Take Her Son.” *ProPublica*,

December 23, 2021, <https://www.propublica.org/article/a-mother-needed-welfare-instead-the-state-used-welfare-funds-to-take-her-son>.

<sup>15</sup> Frank Edwards, "Saving Children, Controlling Families: Punishment, Redistribution and Child Protection," SocArXiv, July 14, 2016, <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/47u29/>.

<sup>16</sup> *TANF and MOE Spending and Transfers by Activity, FY 2020* (National Pie Chart), Office of Family Assistance, August 2021,

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/tanf-and-moe-spending-and-transfers-activity-fy-2020>.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "TANF-ACF-PI-2005-01 (Funding Childhood Education, School Readiness, Kindergarten and Other Public Education Programs," *Office of the Administration for Children and Families*, April 2005, <https://www.hhs.gov/guidance/document/tanf-acf-pi-2005-01-funding-childhood-education-school-readiness-kindergarten-and-other>.

<sup>18</sup> *Table A.6. Summary of Federal TANF Funds, FY 2020*, Office of Family Assistance, October 2021,

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/tanf-financial-data-fy-2020>.

<sup>19</sup> Ashley Burnside, "The Rainy Day is Here: During COVID-19, States Should Increase Emergency Assistance," CLASP, May 8, 2020,

<https://www.clasp.org/blog/rainy-day-here-during-covid-19-states-should-increase-emergency-assistance>.

<sup>20</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "State Fact Sheets: How States Spend Funds Under the TANF Block Grant," January 12, 2022, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/state-fact-sheets-how-states-spend-funds-under-the-tanf-block-grant>.

<sup>21</sup> *TANF Financial Data - FY 2020*, Office of Family Assistance, August 2021,

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/tanf-financial-data-fy-2020>.

<sup>22</sup> The DRA changes had the effect of making it much more difficult for states to meet the work participation rate requirement. Under the "Excess MOE" provision, states that claimed more MOE than the minimum required could adjust their caseload levels and claim additional caseload reduction credit. In addition, states with high levels of MOE could draw down additional funding from the TANF Contingency Fund. For more details, see Kay E. Brown, *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: State Maintenance of Effort Requirements and Trends: Testimony before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives*, U.S. Government Accountability Office, May 17, 2012,

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/590958.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Third party expenditures may be claimed as MOE under 45 CFR § 263.2(e).

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: Update on States Counting Third-Party Expenditures toward Maintenance of Effort Requirements," February 2016,

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/592861.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> States claiming third party expenditures as MOE that were not claimed as MOE during the base years of FYs 2007 or 2008 were required to provide HHS with information to document that they represented true increases in spending over the base year but were not required to make retroactive changes to their MOE reports for the base years.

<sup>26</sup> The increase in MOE spending between FY 2019 and FY 2020 was largely driven by the MOE spending in New Jersey, which accounted for a little less than half of the total MOE spending increase nationally during the year.

<sup>27</sup> Tom Gais and Lucy Dadayan, "The New Retrenchment: Social Welfare Spending," 1977-2006. Rockefeller Institute, September 2008, [http://www.rockinst.org/pdf/workforce\\_welfare\\_and\\_social\\_services/2008-09-15-the\\_new\\_retrenchment\\_social\\_welfare\\_spending\\_1977-2006.pdf](http://www.rockinst.org/pdf/workforce_welfare_and_social_services/2008-09-15-the_new_retrenchment_social_welfare_spending_1977-2006.pdf); Thomas Gais, Donald Boyd, and Lucy Dadayan, "The Social Safety Net, Health Care, and the Great Recession;" Robert Ebel and John Peterson, *The Oxford Handbook of State and Local Government Finance*, Oxford Press, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> 27 Nicholas Johnson, Phil Oliff, and Erica Williams, *An Update on State Budget Cuts*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, updated February 2011, <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1214>.

<sup>29</sup> Eleanor Pratt, Heather Hahn, "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Caseloads Early in the Pandemic," Urban Institute, April 2022, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/temporary-assistance-needy-families-caseloads-early-pandemic>.

<sup>30</sup> Katie Shantz, Linda Giannarelli, Ilham Dehry, Sarah Knowles *et al.*, "State TANF Policies During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Work Requirements, Time Limits, and the Treatment of UI Income," Urban Institute, January 2022, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/wrd2020-covid-special-topics-feb2022.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> Ilham Dehry, Sarah Knowles, "States Can Use TANF's Flexibility to Extend Cash Assistance for Families in Need," Urban Institute, March 24, 2022, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/states-can-use-tanf-flexibility-extend-cash-assistance-families-need>.

<sup>32</sup> Ali Safawi and Cindy Reyes, "States Must Continue Momentum to Further Improve TANF Benefit Levels," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, December 2, 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/states-must-continue-recent-momentum-to-further-improve-tanf-benefit>.

<sup>33</sup> The amount for TANF was equal to the maximum amount that the state received under AFDC and related to job training and emergency assistance programs during the 1992-1995 period, when caseloads were at their highest.

<sup>34</sup> Ali Safawi and Liz Schott, *To Lessen Hardship, States Should Invest More TANF Dollars in Basic Assistance for Families*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, January 12, 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/to-lessen-hardship-states-should-invest-more-tanf-dollars-in-basic>.

<sup>35</sup> Office of Family Assistance, "TANF Contingency Fund Awards, 2006-2013," Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, January 30, 2014, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/resource/tanf-contingency-awards>.

<sup>36</sup> Tom Gais and Lucy Dadayan, *The New Retrenchment: Social Welfare Spending*.