

TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE (TFA)

What does this indicator measure?

*Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)*¹ measures the annual unduplicated number of children receiving cash assistance through the family welfare program in Connecticut towns for State Fiscal Years 1996, 2001, and 2003.

Why is this indicator important?

The TFA participation rate provides us with information on one specific population of children who may suffer from the negative effects of poverty and may need an array of services to improve their development and learning. Since the implementation of Connecticut's welfare reform program in 1996, mothers with little or no education or work experience are often only able to find jobs that pay fairly low salaries.² Work requirements alone will not move families out of poverty.

Research suggests that the children of TFA parents can experience academic and emotional problems, including increases in high-risk behaviors and decreased school achievements, due to the challenges their parents face related to work conditions.³

TFA and Family Economic Security

Looking at the significant drop in TFA participation since 1996, one might think that all previous recipients are now gainfully employed. However, this is not the case. Many people who have left TFA due to time limits or sanctions are still unable to find employment or financial stability. Those who have found work are often employed in low-skilled jobs that provide below self-sufficiency wages and no health benefits. Irregular work schedules are not uncommon. Overall Connecticut household TFA enrollment from 1992-2004 is presented in the accompanying figure.

Some former TFA recipients face significant barriers to finding and retaining steady employment that may include lack of transportation, child care, and

education; and mental and physical health problems, including substance abuse, depression, and domestic violence.⁴

While many analysts are feeling optimistic about economic recovery over the next year, they are uncertain about the rate of job growth here in Connecticut. A continued tight labor market would mean that TFA and non-TFA workers, particularly those who must contend with employment barriers, will continue to need (1) support in overcoming these hurdles and (2) job training and preparation to obtain higher-paying jobs to support their families.

How are Connecticut children and families faring?

Over 10% of the residents in our largest and mid-size cities were receiving TFA in 2003. Between 5% and 10% of residents in second-tier cities, towns in the Naugatuck Valley, and towns in the northeast corner received welfare support in the same year. These data reflect the mixed economy in the state that continues as many economists talk about a turnaround. In these areas of Connecticut, many residents continue to struggle financially.

Overall, between spring 2001 and fall 2003, Connecticut's TFA caseload declined by 9%. Despite a small increase of 2% in child participation between September 2002 and September 2003, the fact that more families did not apply during that two-year period is surprising, given the changes in the economy and an increase in Food Stamp use during this time.⁵ Several factors may have caused the program's stagnation, including Connecticut's strict time limit, the increased stigma associated with welfare receipt, and the ability of temporarily-unemployed parents with job experience and higher education to do without public assistance.⁶

What can be done: Support for families moving from TFA

Federal welfare reform reauthorization, now being considered in Congress, should:

- ▶ Expand the definition of work to include more post-secondary, technical, and vocational training;
- ▶ Eliminate additional work requirements that fail to move parents into self-supporting employment;
- ▶ Allow mental health and substance abuse treatment to count toward work requirements;

- ▶ Include an initial comprehensive family assessment to identify barriers for work;
- ▶ Allow states to use TANF funds for legal immigrants;⁷
- ▶ Increase federal child care funding by \$6 billion as contained in the Snowe/Dodd Senate Amendment (former welfare recipients who receive child care assistance are 82% more likely to be employed after two years);⁸ and
- ▶ Eliminate the superwaiver provision that would allow the executive branch of the federal government to give states the authority to rewrite program regulations for Food Stamps, the Child Care Block Grant, adult education, public housing, and homelessness programs.

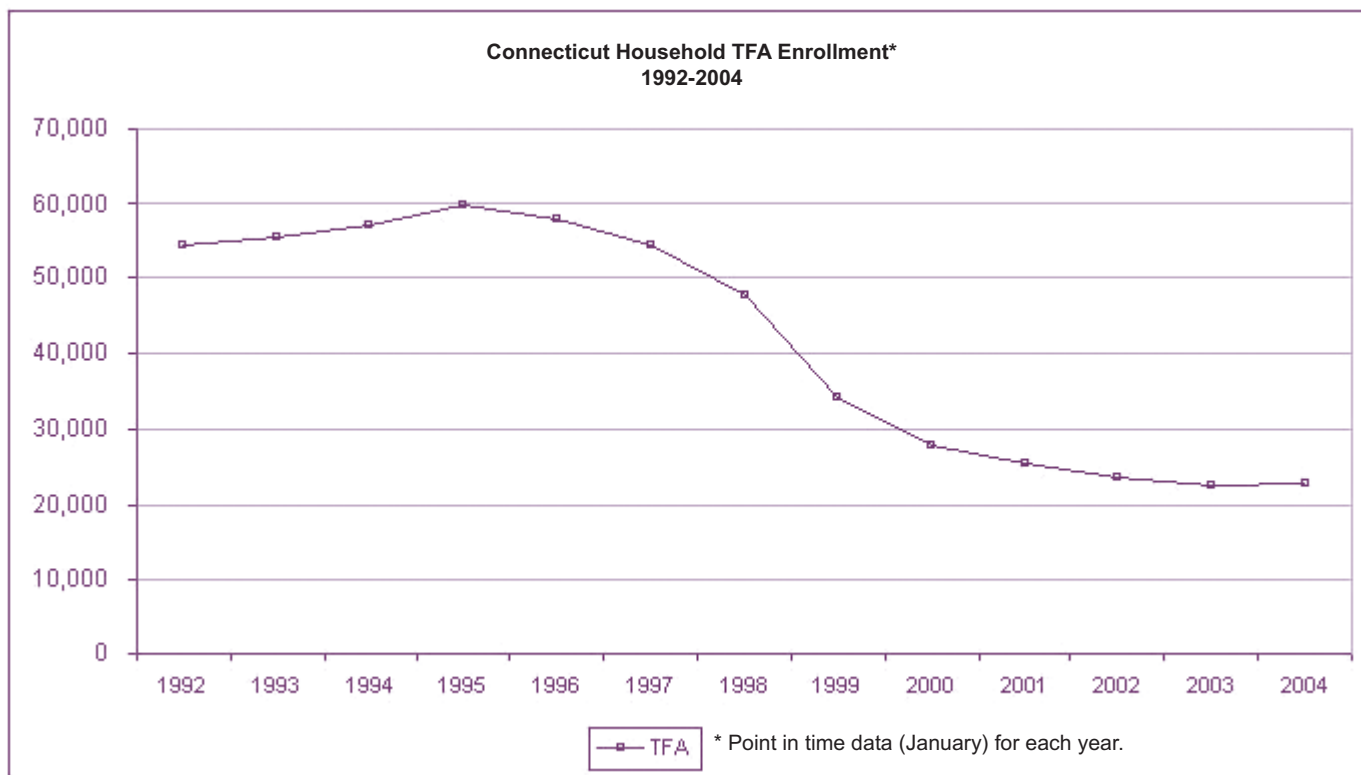
At the state level, TFA policies should promote higher education, including Graduate Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs), vocational training, college

education, and employment training, so that parents transitioning from welfare to work are able to obtain incomes above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Where can I get more information?

More information can be found using the following sources:

- ▶ Center for Law and Social Policy at: www.clasp.org
- ▶ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities at: www.cbpp.org
- ▶ Child Welfare League of America at: www.cwla.org
- ▶ Connecticut Department of Labor at: www.ctdol.state.ct.us
- ▶ Connecticut Department of Social Services at: www.ctdss.state.ct.us
- ▶ Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut at: www.larcc.org



SOURCE: Connecticut Department of Social Services.

Endnotes

¹ In 1996, Congress restructured our nation's family welfare system, creating the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant (TANF) that provided states more flexibility in designing their individual welfare programs. Connecticut already had begun this process with its Jobs First Program, which included (1) TFA, (2) the Jobs First Employment Services Program (JFES) and (3) the Safety Net Program. Current TANF law requires participants to be engaged in work, community service, job training, and treatment activities and limits lifetime benefits to five years. Legal immigrants must be in the U.S. at least five years to be eligible to receive TANF. Connecticut TFA recipients are limited to 21 months of life-time benefits.

² Bloom, D., Melton, L., Michalopoulos, C., Scrivener, S., & Walter, J. (2000). *Jobs First: Implementation and Early Impacts of Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative*. New York, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Retrieved on April 12, 2004, from <http://www.mdrc.org/Reports2000/Connecticut/CT-Interim-Exec%29Sum.htm>

³ Child Welfare League of America. (2004). *2004 Children's Legislative Agenda*, Retrieved on April 23, 2004, from <http://www.cwla.org/advocacy/2004legagenda15.htm>

⁴ Heymann, J. (2000). *The Widening Gap: Why America's Working Families Are in Jeopardy—and What Can Be Done About It*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

⁵ Rahmanou, H. & Greenberg, M. (2004). *Welfare Caseloads Increase in 27 States Between June and September 2003*. Policy Briefs. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Retrieved on March 31, 2004, from http://www.clasp.org/DMFF/Documents/1077051715.36/03_203_TANF_caseload.pdf

⁶ Pear, R. (2004, March 31). "Defying Bush, Senate Increases Child Care Funds for the Poor." *The New York Times*. Retrieved on March 31, 2004, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/31/politics/31WELF.html?ex=1081740667&ei=1&en=a1f5a31aa4e1cdd0>

⁷ Child Welfare League of America. (2004).

⁸ Mezey, J. (2004). *Five Reasons Why the Senate Should Adopt the Snowe-Dodd Amendment to Increase Child Care Funding*. Center for Law and Social Policy. Retrieved on April 23, 2004, from <http://www.clasp.org/DMS/Documents/1080576573.24/Snowe.pdf>

TFA - Child Participation

Location	SFY 96 # Receiving	SFY 01 # Receiving	SFY 03 # Receiving	Location	SFY 96 # Receiving	SFY 01 # Receiving	SFY 03 # Receiving
Fairfield County	29,020	10,799	9,362				
Bethel	194	33	35	Norwalk	2,926	1,250	1,034
Bridgeport	16,830	6,748	5,849	Redding	15	5	3
Brookfield	86	21	27	Ridgefield	42	15	12
Danbury	2,485	666	564	Shelton	387	132	153
Darien	17	4	7	Sherman	10	9	5
Easton	6	1	1	Stamford	3,931	1,127	884
Fairfield	259	96	91	Stratford	954	406	421
Greenwich	355	100	81	Trumbull	137	43	48
Monroe	64	21	19	Weston	9	9	9
New Canaan	34	16	8	Westport	58	26	47
New Fairfield	74	31	34	Wilton	19	10	7
Newtown	128	30	23				
Hartford County	46,455	22,165	19,541				
Avon	28	7	10	Manchester	1,917	804	896
Berlin	115	32	33	Marlborough	33	4	12
Bloomfield	576	289	249	New Britain	7,516	3,981	3,586
Bristol	2,166	1,124	1,014	Newington	249	95	112
Burlington	30	7	23	Plainville	295	108	132
Canton	50	14	19	Rocky Hill	110	43	23
East Granby	41	16	23	Simsbury	57	17	26
East Hartford	3,061	1,478	1,257	Southington	480	182	193
East Windsor	174	60	95	South Windsor	129	65	43
Enfield	864	389	370	Suffield	97	23	26
Farmington	124	63	57	West Hartford	1,054	361	370
Glastonbury	215	47	63	Wethersfield	235	100	122
Granby	39	13	14	Windsor	604	260	256
Hartford	25,974	12,471	10,450	Windsor Locks	217	106	67
Hartland	5	6	0				
Litchfield County	2,837	1,200	1,226				
Barkhamsted	20	13	16	Norfolk	21	7	10
Bethlehem	22	7	2	North Canaan	10	20	19
Bridgewater	5	0	1	Plymouth	239	75	105
Canaan	76	9	9	Roxbury	10	0	1
Colebrook	5	1	4	Salisbury	33	13	8
Cornwall	6	1	3	Sharon	12	4	4
Goshen	10	6	5	Thomaston	107	45	43
Harwinton	20	9	9	Torrington	982	570	534
Kent	27	1	5	Warren	3	0	4
Litchfield	48	18	13	Washington	34	15	2
Morris	24	6	10	Watertown	263	81	94
New Hartford	24	17	23	Winchester	398	163	199
New Milford	401	107	94	Woodbury	37	12	9
Middlesex Co.	2,783	1,142	1,143				
Chester	51	9	18	East Hampton	119	44	48
Clinton	165	55	74	Essex	34	14	7
Cromwell	146	45	25	Haddam	44	20	11
Deep River	57	16	29	Killingworth	15	11	9
Durham	54	17	20	Middlefield	25	15	7
East Haddam	91	33	29	Middletown	1,698	763	762

Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)

Source:

Connecticut Department of Social Services. (SFY '96, '01, and '03). Unpublished data.

Methodology:

The total unduplicated number of children in a town or county receiving TFA benefits at any point in the year for state fiscal years 1996, 2001, and 2003.

Key:

SFY = State Fiscal Year

TFA - Child Participation							
Location	SFY 96 # Receiving	SFY 01 # Receiving	SFY 03 # Receiving	Location	SFY 96 # Receiving	SFY 01 # Receiving	SFY 03 # Receiving
Middlesex Co. contd.							
Old Saybrook	81	28	33	Westbrook	56	20	22
Portland	147	52	49				
New Haven Co.							
	42,083	22,014	19,149				
Ansonia	938	486	470	New Haven	16,733	9,916	7,645
Beacon Falls	64	15	20	North Branford	112	49	48
Bethany	16	9	8	North Haven	152	80	73
Branford	369	138	146	Orange	25	13	16
Cheshire	91	25	23	Oxford	48	24	16
Derby	489	218	188	Prospect	46	13	18
East Haven	652	325	268	Seymour	250	105	89
Guilford	103	54	48	Southbury	68	24	19
Hamden	1,146	633	549	Wallingford	667	233	224
Madison	30	15	26	Waterbury	10,829	5,284	5,458
Meriden	4,506	2,229	1,999	West Haven	2,884	1,333	1,108
Middlebury	22	15	12	Wolcott	127	67	55
Milford	779	287	235	Woodbridge	22	11	17
Naugatuck	915	413	371				
New London Co.							
	7,802	3,653	3,351				
Bozrah	15	18	20	New London	2,514	1,166	1,125
Colchester	200	85	82	North Stonington	43	32	28
East Lyme	134	65	55	Norwich	2,277	1,073	988
Franklin	12	10	8	Old Lyme	51	16	11
Griswold	279	91	106	Preston	29	22	20
Groton	1,019	539	433	Salem	27	12	12
Lebanon	77	31	20	Sprague	115	52	46
Ledyard	132	60	58	Stonington	299	134	135
Lisbon	55	18	18	Voluntown	63	20	19
Lyme	5	1	0	Waterford	191	70	58
Montville	265	138	109				
Tolland County							
	2,072	833	761				
Andover	33	6	14	Somers	91	23	22
Bolton	33	16	16	Stafford	306	89	92
Columbia	36	8	9	Tolland	40	17	19
Coventry	119	44	46	Union	12	5	1
Ellington	82	40	34	Vernon	959	483	408
Hebron	60	13	12	Willington	54	23	21
Mansfield	247	66	67				
Windham County							
	4,727	2,294	1,824				
Ashford	79	31	27	Pomfret	37	8	13
Brooklyn	97	53	27	Putnam	470	239	148
Canterbury	61	12	30	Scotland	9	3	8
Chaplin	23	10	31	Sterling	62	31	30
Eastford	13	3	0	Thompson	199	67	66
Hampton	18	23	8	Windham	2,162	1,029	850
Killingly	883	473	360	Woodstock	53	26	13
Plainfield	561	286	213				
CONNECTICUT							
	137,779	64,100	56,357				

What we need to know

Why TFA rolls have not grown more during the present economic downturn