

The Impact of Welfare Reform in a Nutshell

In 1996 the federal government enacted “welfare reform” legislation eliminating “welfare as we know it” by replacing Aid to Families with Dependent Children or “AFDC” with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or “TANF” as the national welfare program for families with children. Since its inception in 1996 to the present, TANF has continuously shrunk the share of poor families aided by the program. Benefit amounts, already quite meager even prior to welfare reform, have fallen further below the official poverty level.

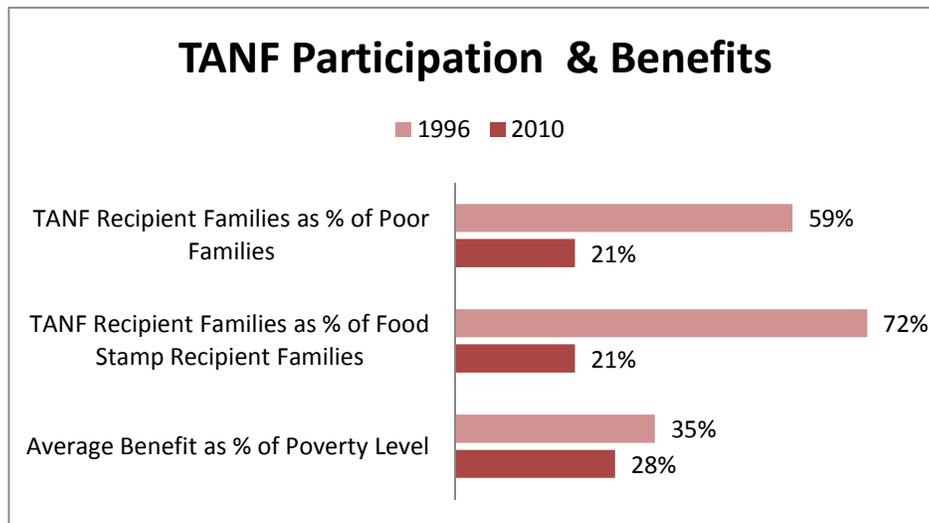


Table Source Note. *Participation:* Percentages calculated by Legal Momentum from Census Bureau Poverty data available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/historical/families.html>; HHS TANF participation data available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/index.htm>; USDA Food Stamp/SNAP participation annual reports “Characteristics of Food Stamp (SNAP) Households Fiscal Year (___)”. *Benefits:* The “average” benefit means here the benefit for a family of three with no income in the state with the median benefit amount for such a family; 1996 benefit data from *Greenbook 2008*, available at <http://democrats.waysandmeans.house.gov/media/pdf/110/tanf.pdf>, and 2010 benefit data from Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *TANF Benefits Are Low And Have Not Kept Pace With Inflation*, available at <http://www.cbpp.org/files/10-14-10tanf.pdf>.

(April 2012). (For further information, contact Timothy Casey, tcasey@legalmomentum.org)

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