

# **Disability Lifeline (formerly General Assistance) Cash Assistance Program**

**Staff Briefing  
Prepared by Senate Ways and Means Staff**

**January 31, 2011**





# Agenda

## ■ Overview

- Program descriptions
- Client demographics, length of stay, & incapacities

## ■ Caseloads and Spending

- Caseload trends
- Legislative policy changes
- Spending

## ■ Options

- Examine other state practices
- Explore other options

# Program descriptions and relative size

## Disability Lifeline – Unemployable (DL-U)

- State-funded program providing cash and medical benefits for adults who are physically or mentally incapacitated and expected to be unemployable for more than 90 days
- Primary incapacity cannot be chemical dependency
- **FY 2011 average monthly caseload 21,612 (55%)**

## Disability Lifeline– Expedited SSI (DL-X)

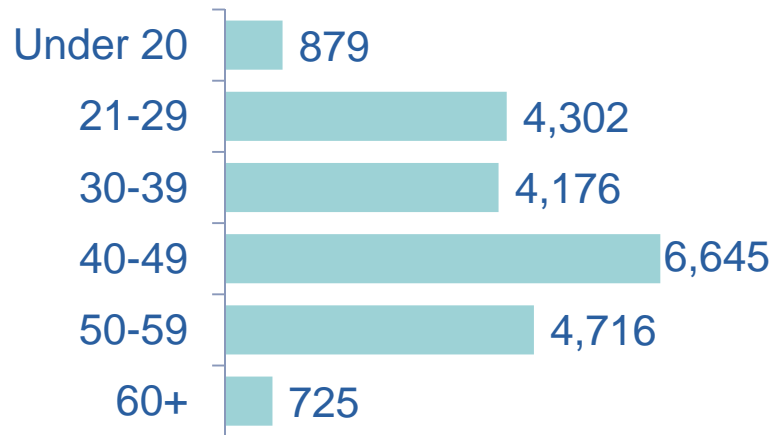
- Federally matched or reimbursed program for those presumptively eligible for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) cash and medical benefits
- **FY 2011 average monthly caseload 13,459 (34%)**

## Disability Lifeline– Other (DL-Other)

- Aged, blind, and disabled subgroups that are not eligible for SSI benefits due to citizenship requirements for SSI (legally in US)
- **FY 2011 average monthly caseload 4,466 (11%)**

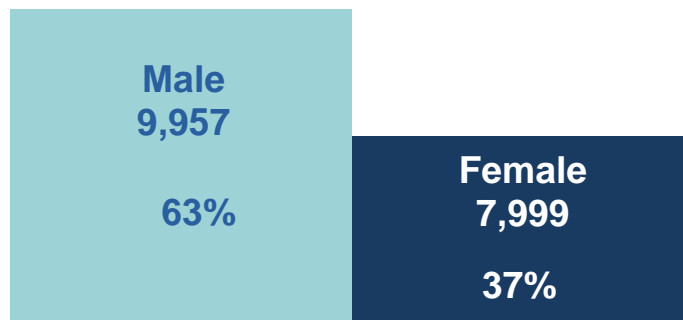
# The DL-U clients are primarily 40 year old white males with 29% identified as homeless

**Age Distribution  
June 2010**

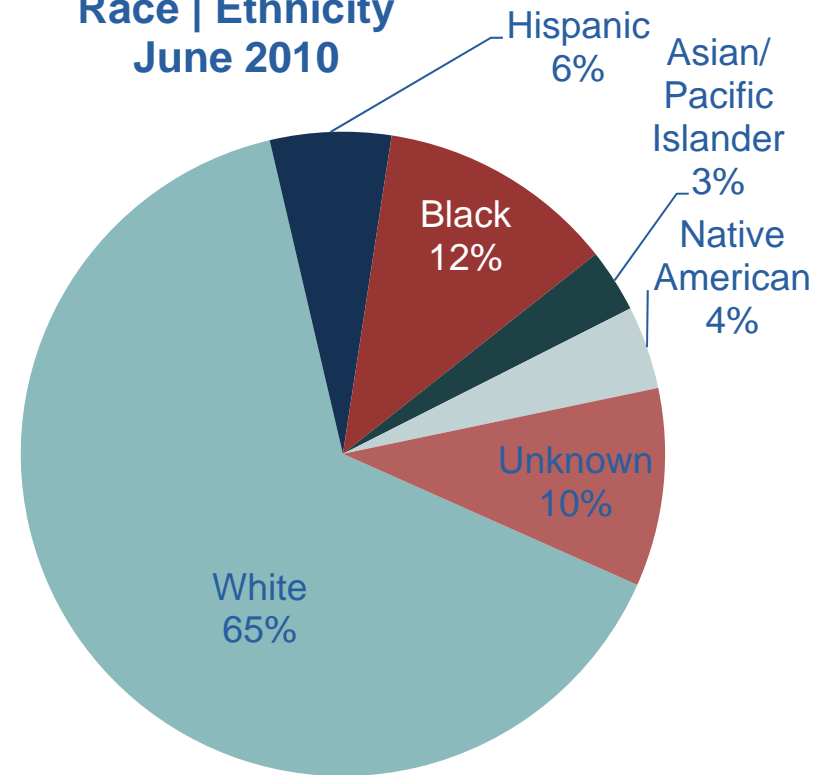


The average age is 40.3 years old

**Gender  
June 2010**



**Race | Ethnicity  
June 2010**



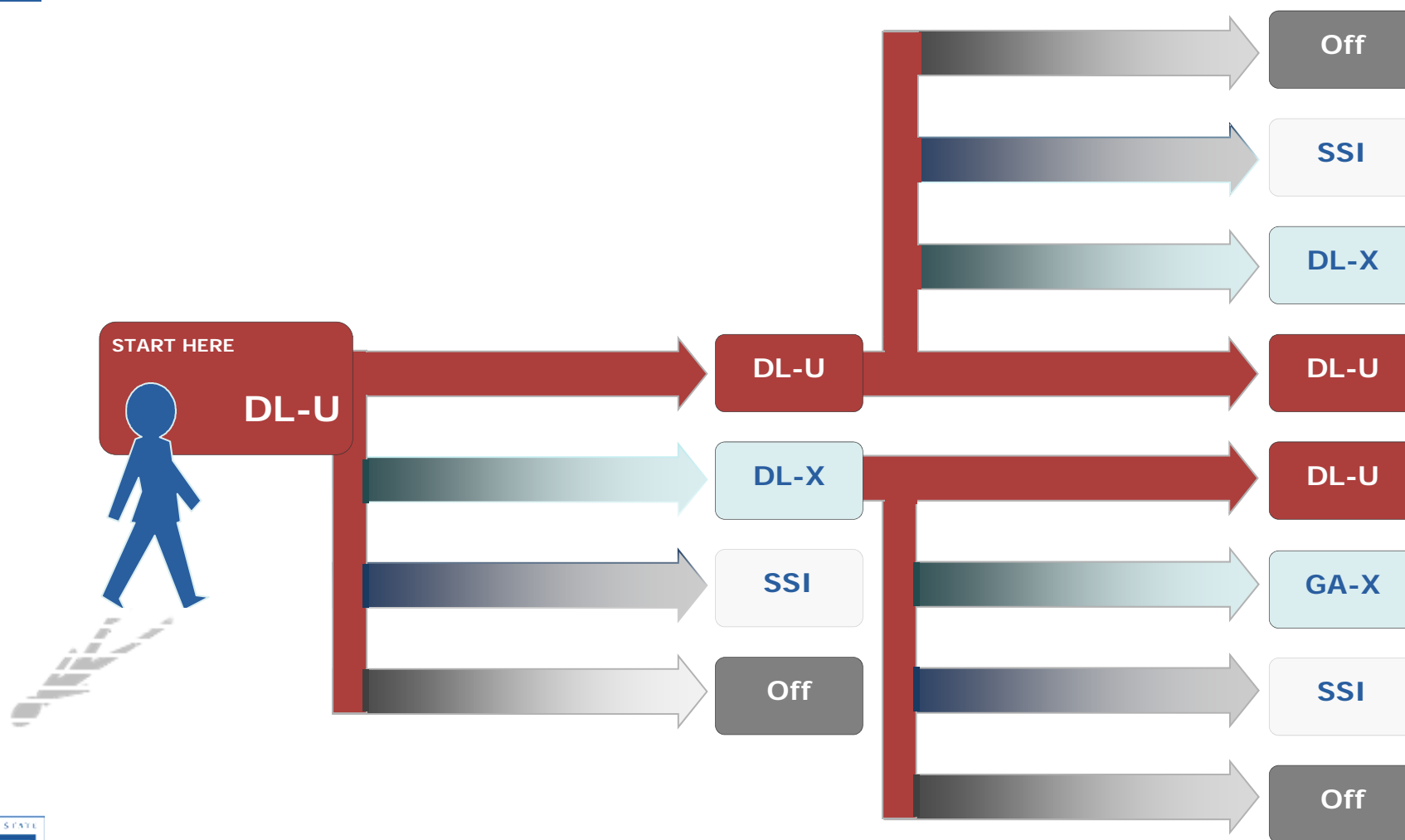
**June 2010 Homelessness**

71% Did not self identify as homeless

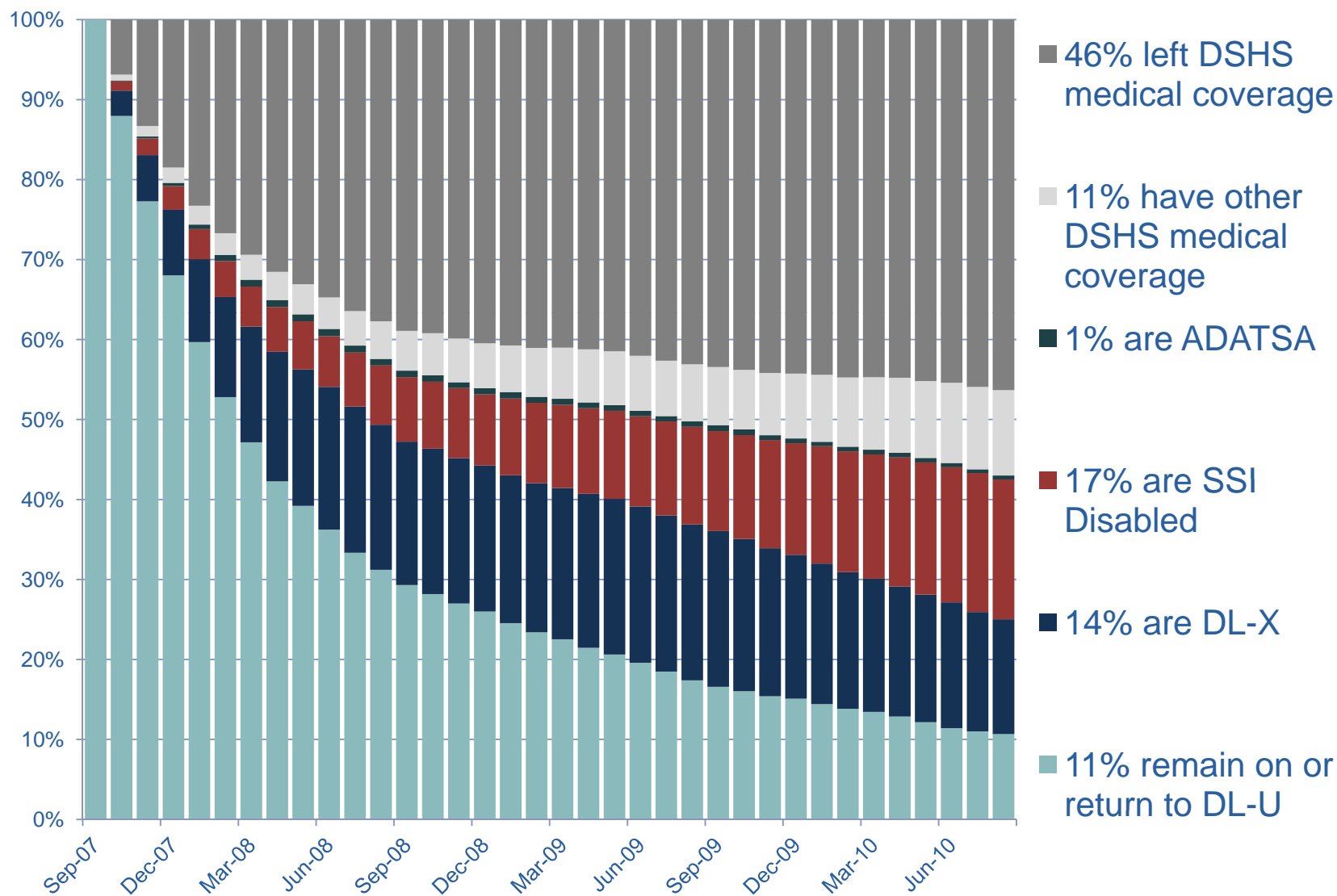
29% Self identified as homeless

Source: 2010 ESA-ACES Data

# The DL-U program usually is the first step toward many different outcomes

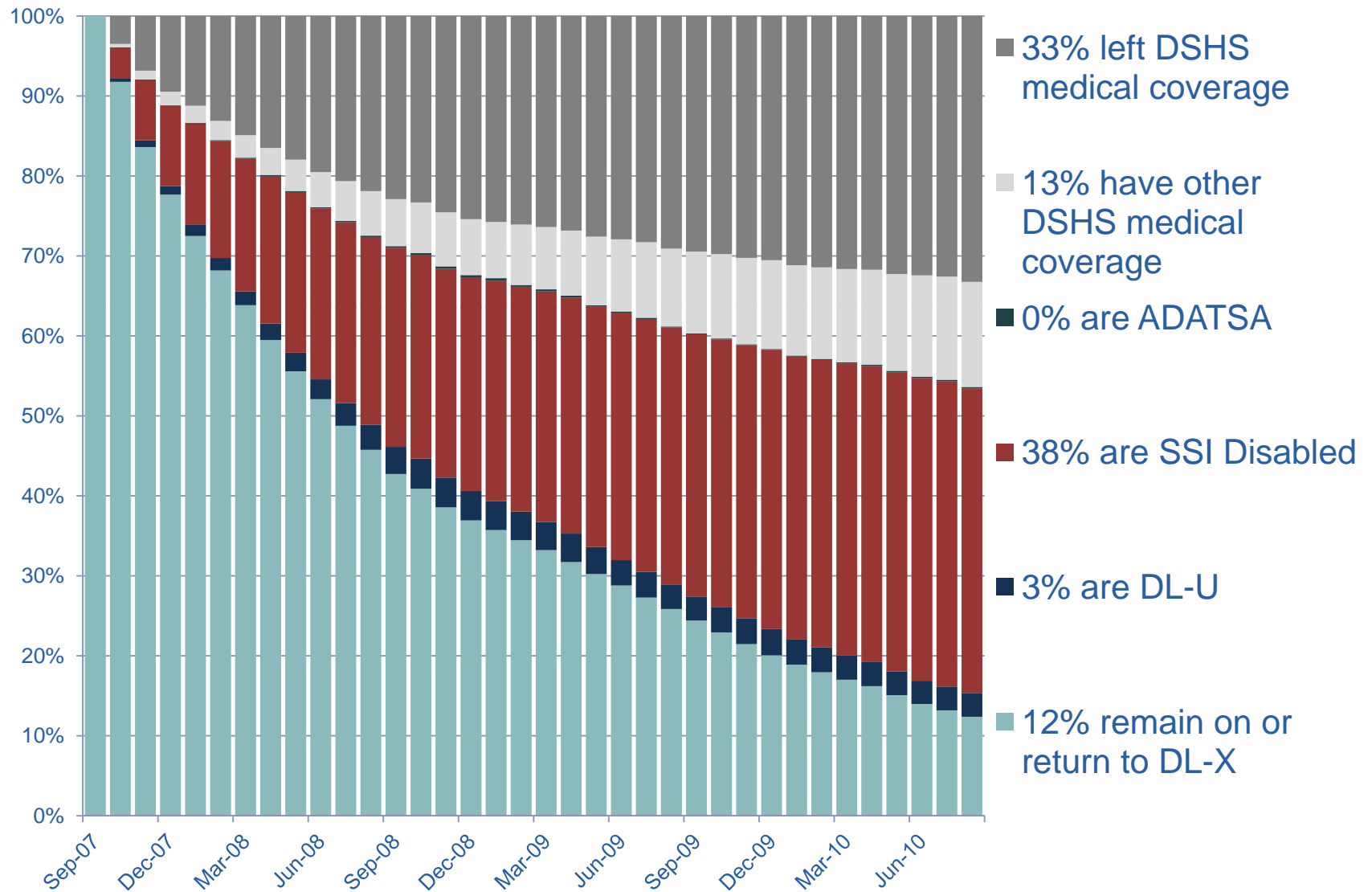


# What happens to DL-U clients three years later after entering the program?



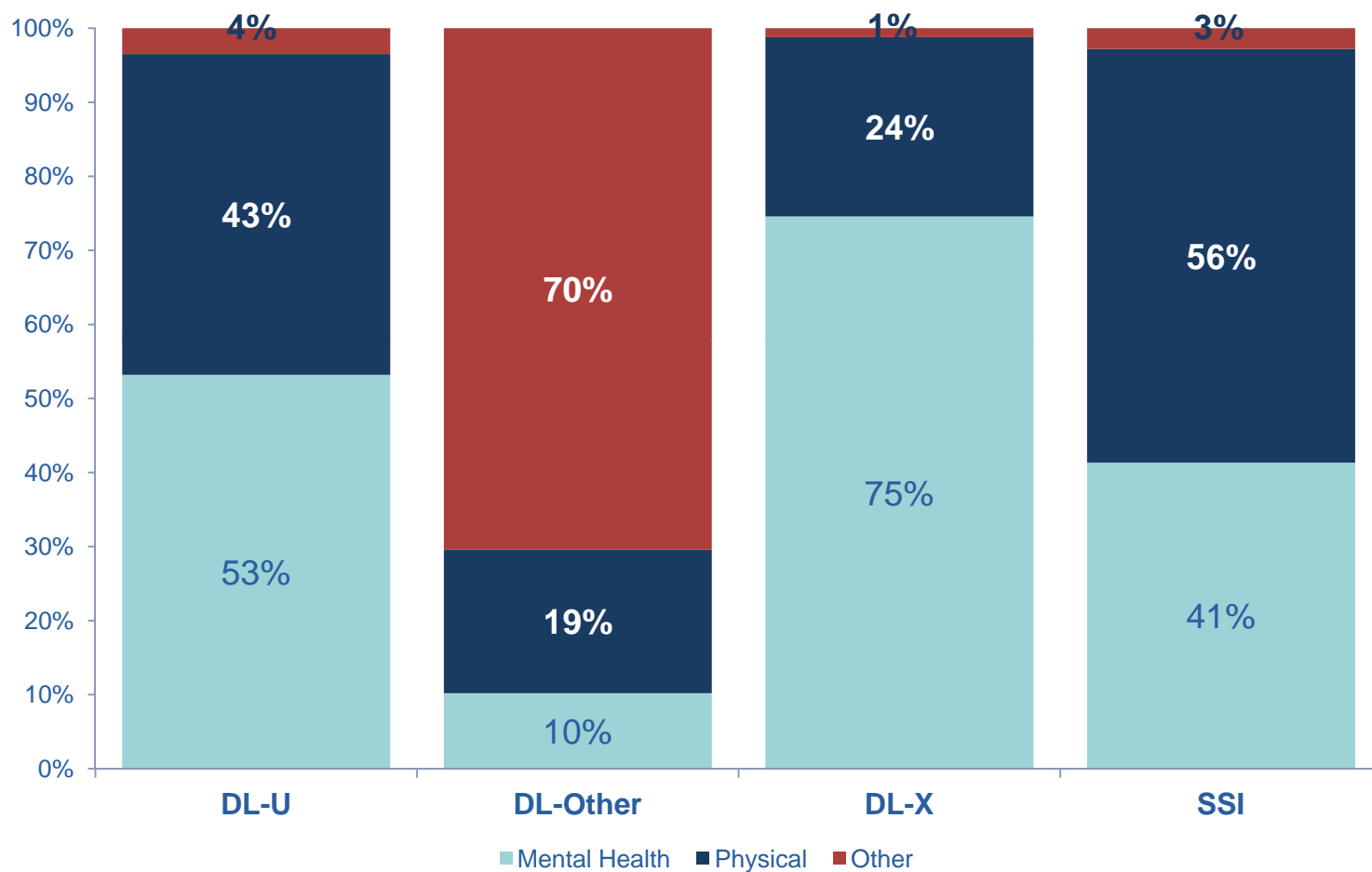
Source: OFM Data Eligibility File

# What happens to DL-X clients three years later after entering the program?



Source: OFM Data Eligibility File

# DL programs and SSI reflect different primary incapacity conditions



\* SSI are individuals currently receiving benefits in Washington

Source: June 2010 ESA-ACES Data  
Federal Social Security Administration Dec 2009





# DL-U clients often have more than one incapacity including substance abuse

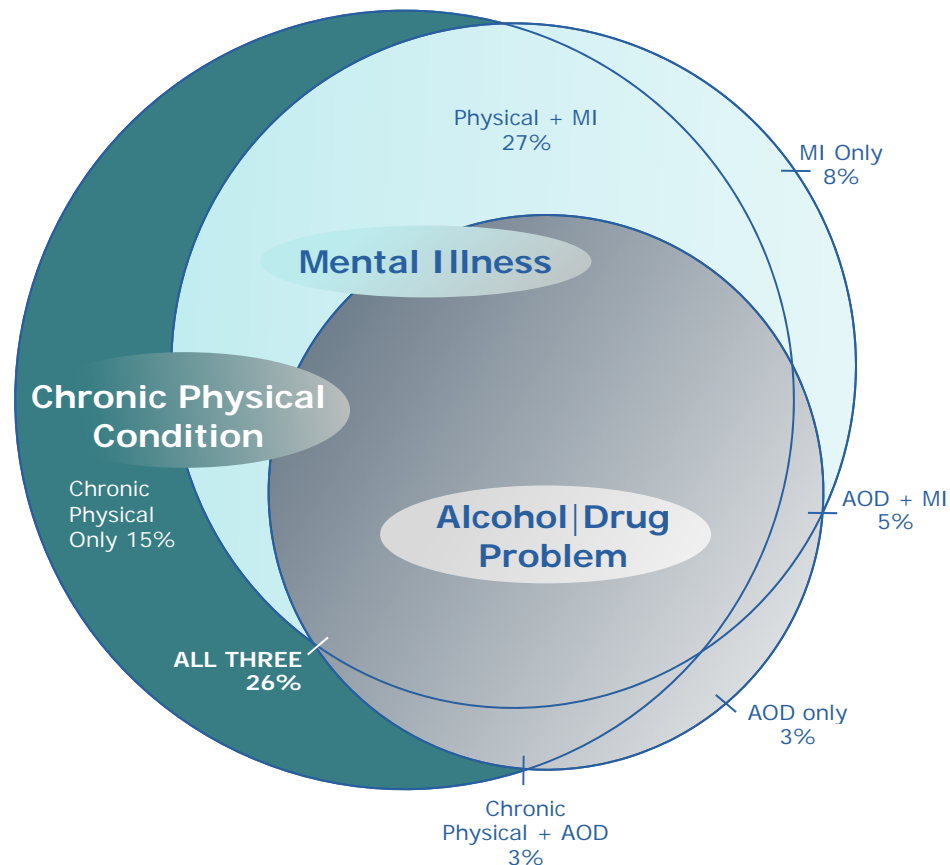
Co-occurring diagnosis among DL-U clients

## DISEASE CONDITIONS

Chronic Physical	<b>71%</b>
Mental Illness	<b>66%</b>
Substance Abuse	<b>38%</b>

**72 percent** had  
**substance abuse or**  
**mental illness**  
*identified*

**15 percent** had a  
**chronic physical**  
**condition only**



*SOURCES: MMIS claims, TARGET service encounters, and WSP arrest records, FY 2006-07. Chronic physical and mental illness diagnosis groups derived from CDPS grouper. Mental illness also indicated by receipt of mental health medications.*



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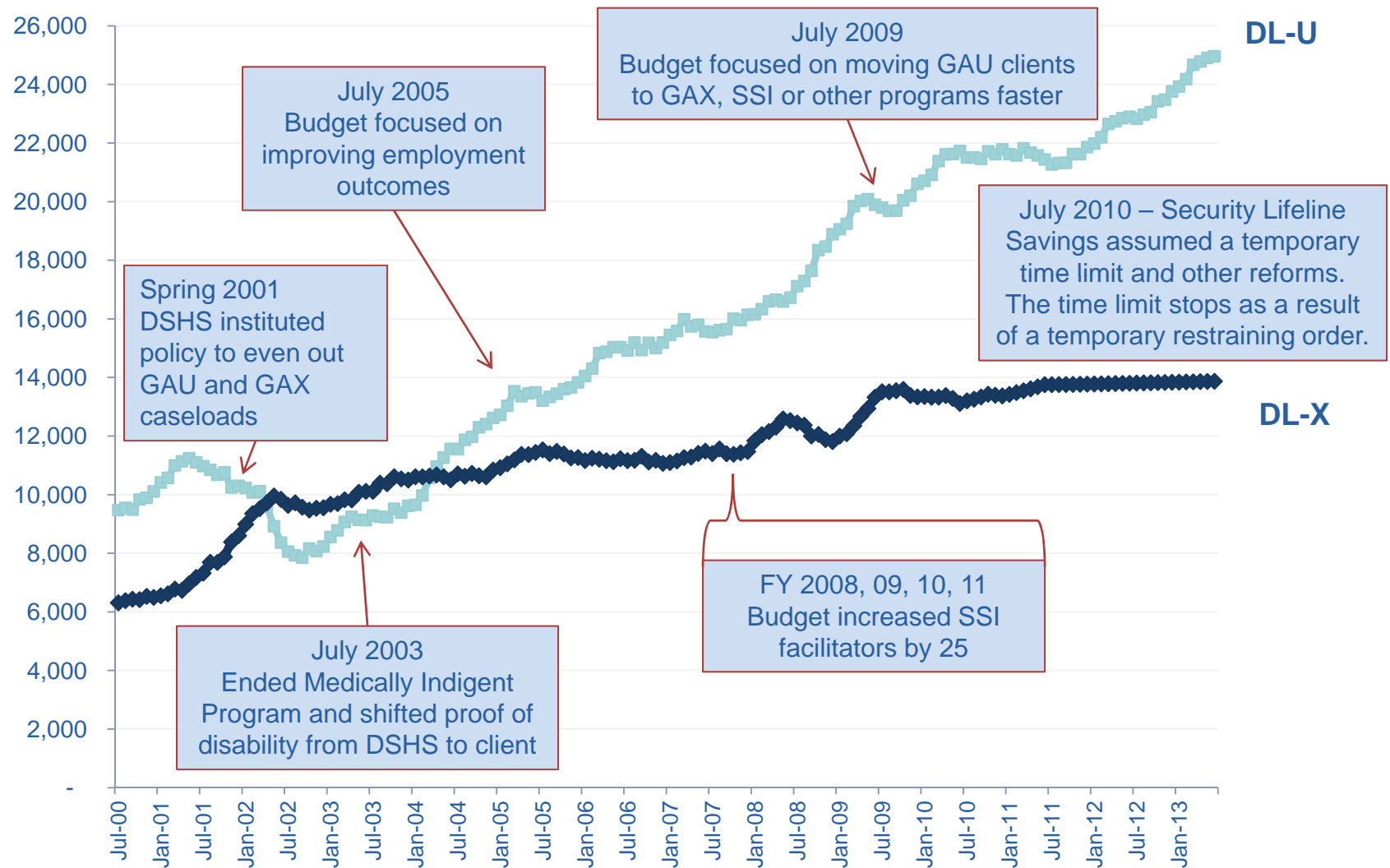
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- Caseload trends
- Legislative policy changes
- Spending

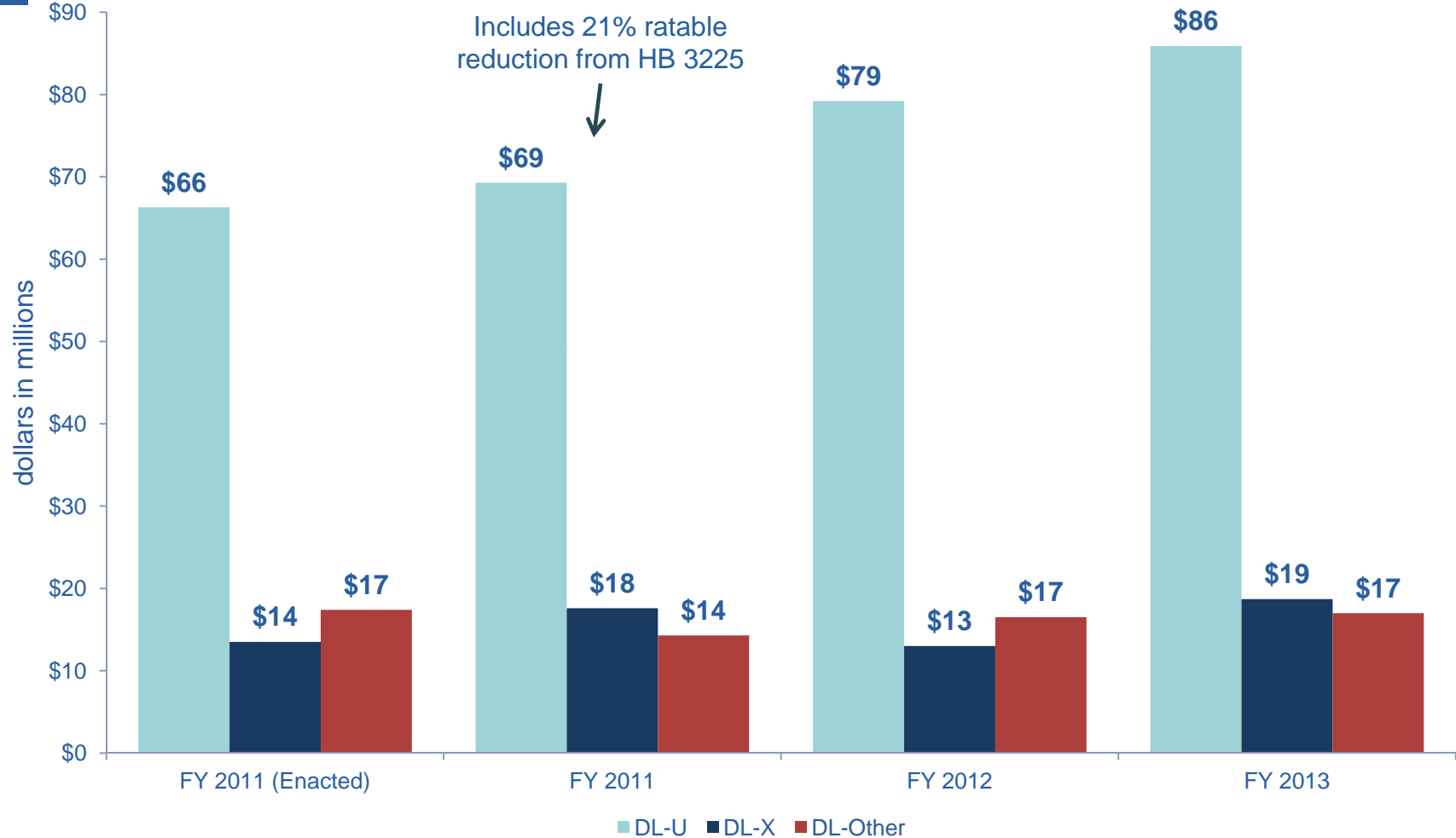
## ■ Options

- Examine other state practices
- Explore other options

# The legislature has made several attempts to reform the program and cut spending over the past decade



# DL-U costs continue to increase



\* FY 2011 estimated spending in the 2010 Enacted Supplemental Budget

\*\* The FY 2011 recovery rate is \$13.8M lower due to ratable reduction (\$5.1M) and missing the estimated recovery rate and DL-X caseload changes (\$8.7M)

\*\*\* Projected spending estimates are based on the November 2010 forecast



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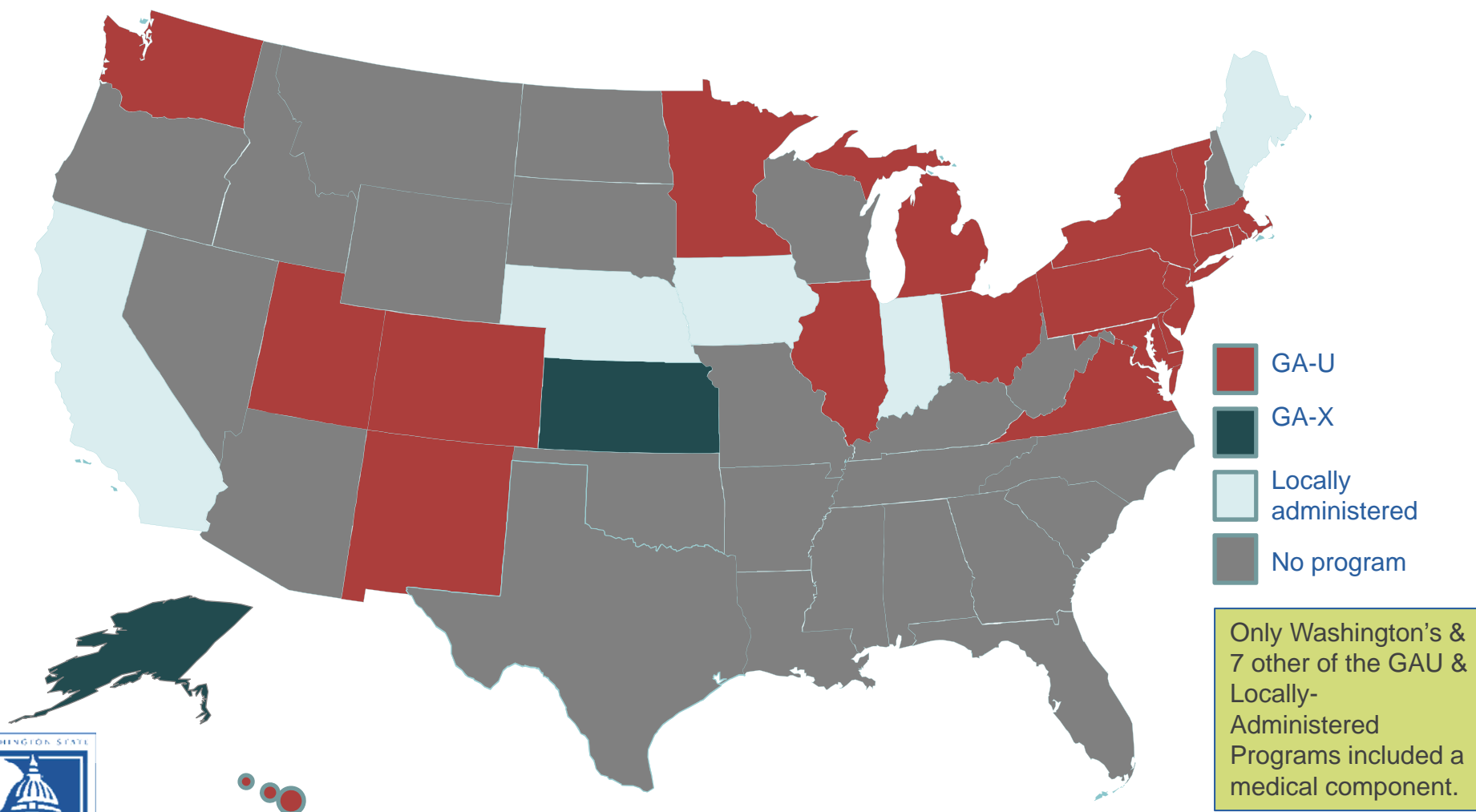
## ■ Caseloads and Spending

- Caseload trends and policy changes
- Length of stay
- Spending

## ■ Options

- Examine other state practices
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## 19 states (including Washington) provide disability lifeline assistance to temporarily unemployable adults





# Overview of policy options

- **Eliminate GA-U cash and/or medical**
- **Devolve the programs to local governments or networks**
- **Modify eligibility standards**
- **Control total program size**
- **Time limit participation in the program**
- **Reduce cash assistance and/ or medical benefits**