

A Look at Adults and Children Terminated from TANF Due to Time Limits in February 2011

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While federal law prohibits states from using TANF block grant funds to provide assistance to most families in which an adult is included in the TANF cash grant for longer than 60 months, it allows states flexibility in designing time limit policies. States can adopt a shorter time limit, exempt certain categories of recipients from the time limit, and grant extensions of benefits to certain families that reach the time limit. Due to fiscal constraints, the Department of Social and Health Services narrowed who qualifies for TANF time limit extensions in February 2011. With this change, fewer families in Washington State are now eligible for continued TANF cash benefits after 60 months (see WAC 388-484 and 388-310-0350). The analysis summarized here examines the possible impacts of this policy change on Basic Food receipt, enrollment in medical assistance, self-reported homelessness and subsidized housing receipt as recorded by ESA caseworkers in the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES), and receipt of emergency housing assistance as recorded in the Department of Commerce's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).¹ The analysis focuses on the 8,996 children and 4,742 adults who were terminated from TANF due to time limits in February 2011 and did not return to TANF through November 2011. Outcomes were observed between February and October 2011 (with the exception of housing assistance, for which HMIS data linked to DSHS client data was only available through June 2011).

Key Findings

While many time-limited clients continued to receive some form of public assistance after leaving TANF, the proportion receiving benefits declined as more time elapsed. Specifically, we found that:

- **The majority of both adults and children² continued to receive Basic Food assistance, but there was a decline in the proportion of clients receiving these benefits.** Among children, the Basic Food utilization rate declined by 7 percent, from 98.8 percent in February to 92.2 percent in October. Over that same time period, the utilization rate among adults also declined by 7 percent, from 98.4 percent to 91.2 percent.
- **The majority of both adults and children continued to receive medical assistance through the Health Care Authority,³ but there was a decline in the proportion of clients enrolled.** Among children, there was a 5 percent decline in medical coverage, from 99.2 percent in February to 94.5 percent in October. Among adults, medical coverage declined by 15 percent (from 95.7 percent in February to 81 percent in October).
- **Over a third of both adults and children reported living in subsidized housing over the eight-month follow-up period.** About 35 percent of adults consistently reported living in subsidized housing from February to October, while approximately 41 percent of children lived in subsidized housing.
- **A relatively small proportion of both adults and children reported being homeless to an ESA caseworker.** Although the rate of self-reported homelessness increased slightly over time for TANF leavers, the change was consistent with that found for TANF households overall. Among children who left TANF, the homeless rate increased by about 1 percent, from 5.0 percent in February to 6.2 percent in October. Among adult leavers, the homeless rate increased by 2 percent, from 6.8 percent in February to 9.1 percent in October, and among all TANF households, the rate increased by 2 percent, from 8.3 to 10.1 percent, in the same period.
- **A small proportion of both adults and children received emergency housing assistance through local housing providers, as recorded in HMIS, over a four-month follow-up period.** Emergency housing assistance included the receipt of Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRR), emergency shelter, or transitional housing assistance. Approximately 3 percent or less of time-limited adults and children accessed at least one of these three programs between February and June 2011, with no apparent trends over time.

¹ Data on receipt of housing assistance was obtained through a linkage to the Department of Commerce's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for clients who gave consent to have their HMIS records shared with DSHS and had sufficient identifying information for linkage.

² Whether or not an individual is defined as a "child" is determined by their relationship to the head of the household, as recorded in ACES, rather than by age.

³ These programs are Medicaid, SCHIP, and other state and federal medical assistance programs administered by the Health Care Authority, with the exception of Basic Health.

TANF Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of February 1, 2011

DATA SOURCE: ESA-EMAPS Assignment #2261 using the ACES Data Warehouse as of December 2011

TABLE 1A. CHILDREN (n = 8,996)

2011	Receiving Food Assistance		Receiving Medical Assistance		Subsidized Housing Assistance ¹		Self-Reported Homelessness ¹	
	Number of Children	% of All Children Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1 2011	Number of Children	% of All Children Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1 2011	Number of Children	% of All Children Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1 2011	Number of Children	% of All Children Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1 2011
February	8,884	98.8%	9,029	99.2%	3,702	41.2%	453	5.0%
March	8,850	98.4%	8,926	98.1%	3,715	41.3%	428	4.8%
April	8,777	97.6%	8,915	97.4%	3,721	41.4%	452	5.0%
May	8,735	97.1%	8,800	96.8%	3,712	41.3%	454	5.0%
June	8,692	96.6%	8,847	96.8%	3,712	41.3%	478	5.3%
July	8,307	92.3%	8,854	96.5%	3,747	41.7%	516	5.7%
August	8,368	93.0%	8,944	95.7%	3,753	41.7%	541	6.0%
September	8,344	92.8%	8,739	95.2%	3,767	41.9%	559	6.2%
October	8,298	92.2%	8,723	94.5%	3,731	41.5%	561	6.2%

TABLE 1B. ADULTS (n = 4,742)

2011	Receiving Food Assistance		Receiving Medical Assistance		Subsidized Housing Assistance ¹		Self-Reported Homelessness ¹	
	Number of Adults	% of Adult Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1, 2011	Number of Adults	% of Adult Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1, 2011	# of Clients	% of Adult Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1, 2011	# of Clients	% of Adult Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1, 2011
February	4,665	98.4%	4,600	95.7%	1,635	34.5%	323	6.8%
March	4,637	97.8%	4,477	93.3%	1,636	34.5%	314	6.6%
April	4,598	97.0%	4,383	91.1%	1,636	34.5%	328	6.9%
May	4,587	96.7%	4,302	89.7%	1,631	34.4%	337	7.1%
June	4,566	96.3%	4,290	89.2%	1,631	34.4%	367	7.7%
July	4,281	90.3%	4,187	87.0%	1,639	34.6%	409	8.6%
August	4,341	91.5%	3,946	82.1%	1,642	34.6%	426	9.0%
September	4,335	91.4%	3,932	82.0%	1,644	34.7%	429	9.0%
October	4,327	91.2%	3,885	81.0%	1,649	34.8%	430	9.1%

TABLE 1C. ALL CLIENTS (n = 13,738)

2011	Receiving Food Assistance		Receiving Medical Assistance		Subsidized Housing Assistance ¹		Self-Reported Homelessness ¹	
	# of All Clients	% of All Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1, 2011	# of All Clients	% of All Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1, 2011	# of All Clients	% of All Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1, 2011	# of All Clients	% of All Clients Terminated Due to Time Limits as of Feb 1, 2011
February	13,549	98.6%	13,629	98.0%	1,635	38.8%	776	5.6%
March	13,487	98.2%	13,403	96.5%	1,637	38.9%	742	5.4%
April	13,375	97.4%	13,298	95.3%	1,637	39.0%	780	5.7%
May	13,322	97.0%	13,102	94.4%	1,632	38.9%	791	5.8%
June	13,258	96.5%	13,137	94.2%	1,632	38.9%	845	6.2%
July	12,588	91.6%	13,041	93.2%	1,641	39.2%	925	6.7%
August	12,709	92.5%	12,890	91.1%	1,644	39.2%	967	7.0%
September	12,679	92.3%	12,671	90.6%	1,646	39.3%	988	7.2%
October	12,625	91.9%	12,608	89.9%	1,651	39.1%	991	7.2%

¹ Self-reported information on homelessness and subsidized housing receipt are only recorded in ACES when clients are receiving public assistance from ESA. This information is thus unavailable for time-limited individuals who did not continue to receive any assistance from ESA following the termination of their TANF grant. With few exceptions, subsidized housing is coded on adult clients only and extrapolated here for children based on data available for adults in the household.

Housing Assistance of TANF Clients Terminated As of February 1, 2011

DATA SOURCE: Washington State Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

TABLE 2A. **CHILDREN** (n = 8,996)

	Transitional Housing		Emergency Shelter		Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRR)		Any Emergency Housing Assistance ²	
	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent
2011								
February	171	1.9%	30	0.3%	20	0.2%	215	2.4%
March	167	1.9%	41	0.5%	26	0.3%	225	2.5%
April	171	1.9%	35	0.4%	39	0.4%	240	2.7%
May	173	1.9%	21	0.2%	23	0.3%	214	2.4%
June	176	2.0%	26	0.3%	30	0.3%	229	2.5%

TABLE 2B. **ADULTS** (n = 4,742)

	Transitional Housing		Emergency Shelter		Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRR)		Any Emergency Housing Assistance ²	
	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent
2011								
February	101	2.1%	13	0.3%	23	0.5%	134	2.8%
March	98	2.1%	18	0.4%	26	0.5%	139	2.9%
April	97	2.0%	22	0.5%	28	0.6%	145	3.1%
May	97	2.0%	20	0.4%	23	0.5%	138	2.9%
June	96	2.0%	16	0.3%	27	0.6%	137	2.9%

TABLE 2C. **ALL CLIENTS** (n = 13,738)

	Transitional Housing		Emergency Shelter		Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRR)		Any Emergency Housing Assistance ²	
	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent
2011								
February	272	2.0%	43	0.3%	43	0.3%	349	2.5%
March	265	1.9%	59	0.4%	52	0.4%	364	2.6%
April	268	2.0%	57	0.4%	67	0.5%	385	2.8%
May	270	2.0%	41	0.3%	46	0.3%	352	2.6%
June	272	2.0%	42	0.3%	57	0.4%	366	2.7%