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Measures of Child and Family Economic Security for Families Participating in Maine's Public Assistance Programs

February 2022

Submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Title 22 MRS, §3109

Prepared by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Family Independence and Research and Evaluation Team

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Introduction and Background

The 129th Maine Legislature enacted Public Law 2019, Ch. 485, introduced as LD 1774, *An Act to Reduce Child Poverty by Leveraging Investments so Families Can Thrive* (LIFT). This law took important steps toward policy changes that reduce child poverty, increase food security, and create stronger bridges to employment for families and children. It also requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to collect and provide data regarding the economic security of children and families. Specifically, the language requires that the Department shall obtain and compile data annually “regarding child and family economic security from those sources reasonably available to the Department, including, but not limited to, data collected and maintained by the Department, data available from the Department of Labor and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Revenue Services or other state or federal agencies and such other data as can reasonably be obtained from other public or private sources upon request.”

This is the second iteration of this report.

Terminological note: the 130th Legislature updated the title of the Food Supplement Program to align it with the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. Maine’s program is now known as SNAP and the report has been updated to reflect that.

Organization of Report

The report is organized into sections based on the order of requirements as included in 22 MRS §3109.¹

Each data section will include the specific statutory requirement, requested data that can reasonably be obtained by the Department, data sources, and other relevant descriptive information to help with interpretation of the data.

A list of acronyms and term definitions can be found at the end of the report.

¹ <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec3109.html>

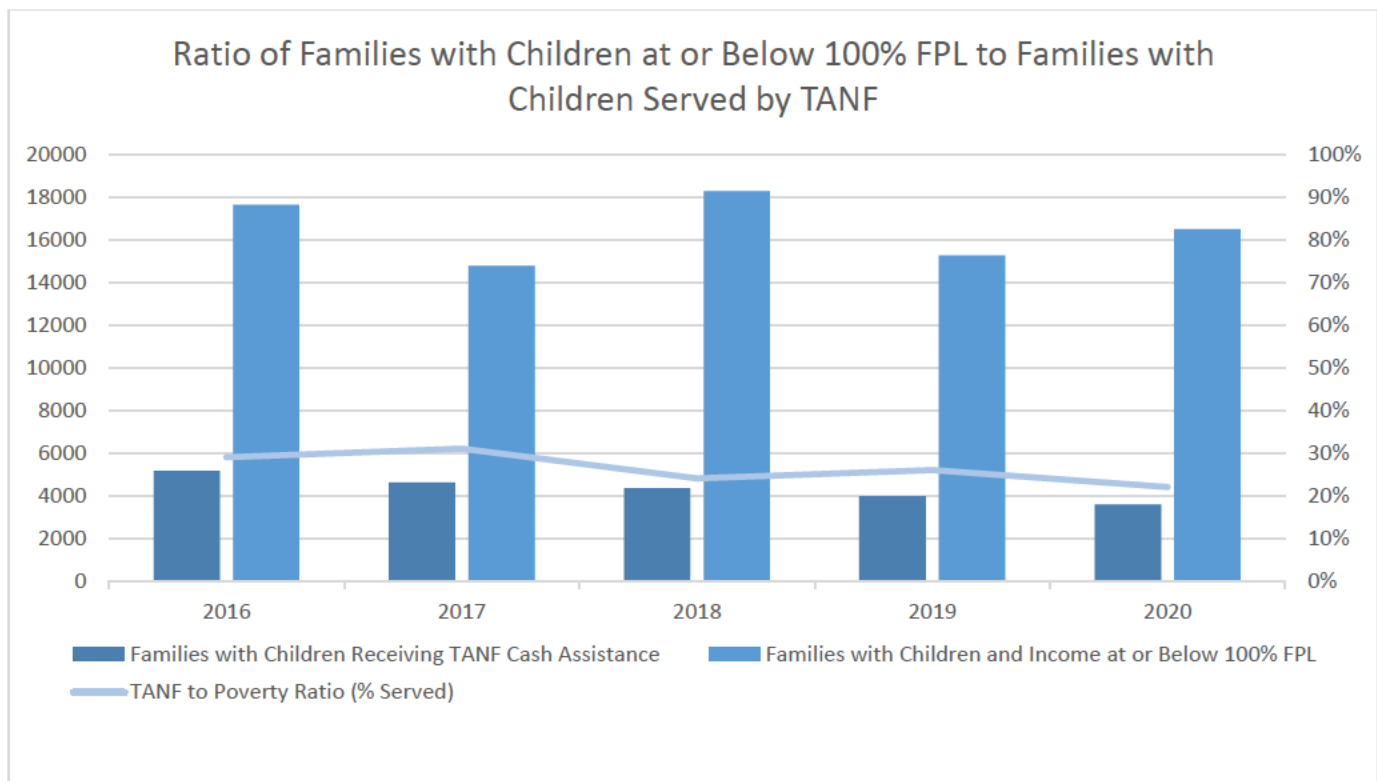
Report

A. Ratio of Families with Children Receiving TANF and Families with Children and Income at or below 100% at the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

These data reflect the ratio of families with children receiving TANF compared to the number of Maine families with children *and* income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level in the years 2016 to 2020. These data rely on an annual monthly average and reflect a periodic average, over the five years, of 26% of Maine families with children and income at or below 100% the Federal Poverty Level are receiving TANF cash assistance.

NOTE: The Census Bureau will not release its standard 2020 ACS 1-year estimates because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection. [Experimental estimates](#) developed from 2020 ACS 1-year data were released in November 2021 and are utilized in this report.

| Calendar Year | Families with Children Receiving TANF Cash Assistance | Families with Children and Income at or Below 100% FPL | Ratio of TANF Families to Families < 100% FPL |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| 2016 | 5,167 | 17,634 | 29% |
| 2017 | 4,604 | 14,772 | 31% |
| 2018 | 4,335 | 18,271 | 24% |
| 2019 | 3,980 | 15,264 | 26% |
| 2020 | 3,571 | 16,485 | 22% |



Data Details: Families with Children includes a household which includes a parent or specified relative with at least one minor child also residing in the household. Those families defined as receiving TANF must have at least one household member eligible for and

in receipt of the TANF monthly cash benefit. For example, one family may include a sole parent receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits (and therefore, are not eligible to receive TANF cash benefits) and one child who is eligible for the TANF monthly cash benefit. The included counts are a monthly average by calendar year to better relate to the US Census Bureau data.

Data Sources: TANF Counts: ACES

Families Below 100% FPL (2016 – 2019): [US Census Bureau](#), 1-Year American Community Survey

Families Below 100% FPL (2020): [American Community Survey Experimental Data \(census.gov\)](#)

Context for the TANF to Poverty Ratio

Due to the nature of the federal TANF block grant, eligibility standards for cash assistance and program participation are largely determined by the states administering the program. [Title 22 MRS §3769-C](#) requires the Department to utilize what is called the Standard of Need (SON) to determine both eligibility and benefit levels for TANF cash assistance, rather than 100% FPL. Pursuant to statute, the Department updates the SON annually, and the SON is different when housing costs exceed 50 percent of TANF countable income.

The following chart compares eligibility based on the current SON and the corresponding FPL of households:

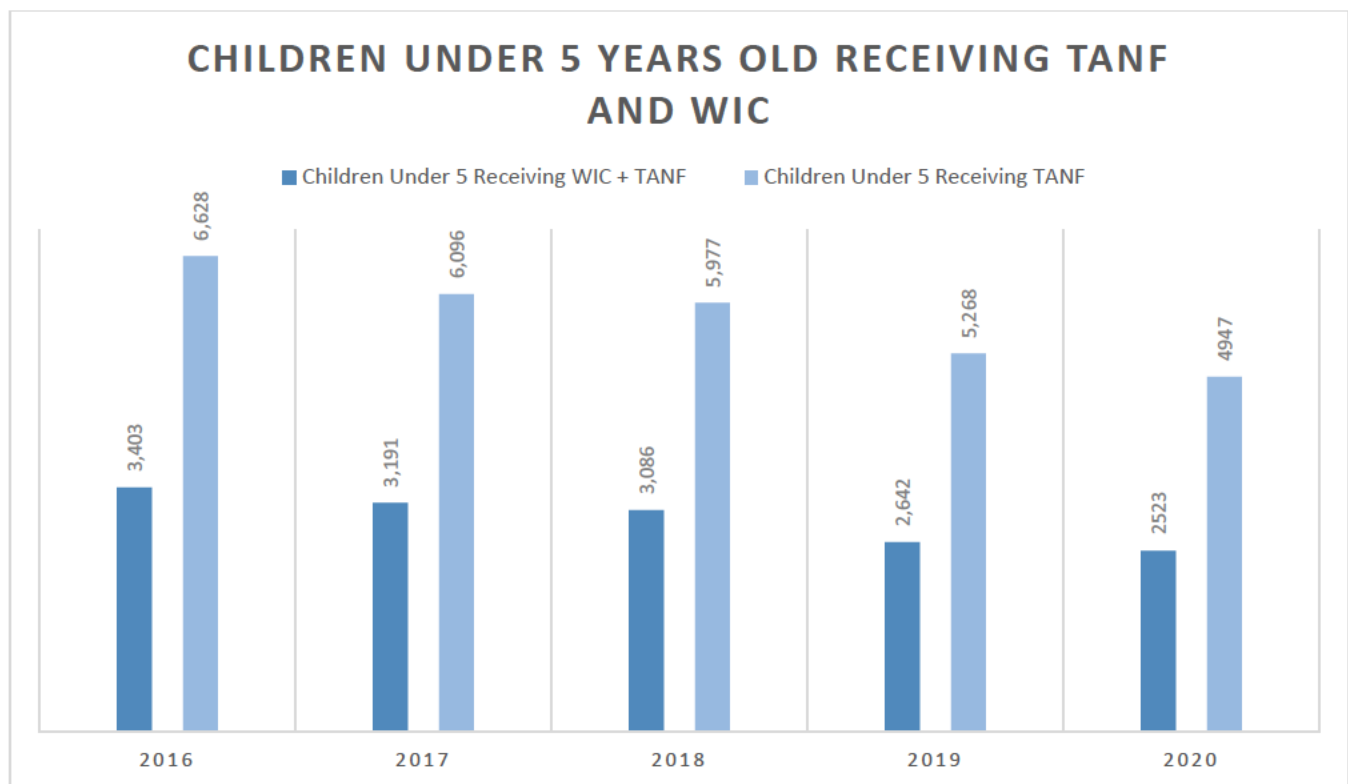
| TANF Income Eligibility Under Standard of Need | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Household Size | Income to be Eligible (housing expense <50% of income) | | Income to be Eligible (housing expenses >50% of income) | | 100% FPL (Monthly Income) |
| | Monthly Income Limit (SON) | Percentage of FPL | Monthly Income Limit (SON) | Percentage of FPL | |
| 1 | \$362 | 33.71% | \$662 | 61.64% | \$1,074 |
| 2 | \$569 | 39.19% | \$869 | 59.85% | \$1,452 |
| 3 | \$763 | 41.69% | \$1,063 | 58.09% | \$1,830 |
| 4 | \$960 | 43.46% | \$1,260 | 57.04% | \$2,209 |
| 5 | \$1,153 | 44.57% | \$1,453 | 56.17% | \$2,587 |
| 6 | \$1,348 | 45.46% | \$1,648 | 55.58% | \$2,965 |
| 7 | \$1,544 | 46.17% | \$1,844 | 55.14% | \$3,344 |
| 8 | \$1,740 | 46.75% | \$2,040 | 54.81% | \$3,722 |
| +1 | \$195 | 51.45% | \$195 | 51.45% | \$379 |

Based on the SON calculation, it is possible that someone below 100% of FPL would still be determined ineligible for benefits. It is possible that by changing eligibility in statute to 100% FPL rather than SON, more families would be deemed eligible and have access to the TANF program. There are other considerations related to the impact this change would have on other benefits and programs, such as child support “gap” payments. Before considering any proposal for change, the full impact on clients should be analyzed and considered.

B. Percentage of Children Under 5 Years of Age Receiving TANF and WIC

The percentage of children, under 5 years of age, receiving TANF that also received assistance through WIC in a single year between 2016 and 2020 or any combination of years during that period.

| Calendar Year | Children Under 5 Receiving WIC + TANF in Same Year | Children Under 5 Receiving TANF | % of Children Under 5 Receiving WIC also Receiving TANF |
|---------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 2016 | 3,403 | 6,628 | 51% |
| 2017 | 3,191 | 6,096 | 52% |
| 2018 | 3,086 | 5,977 | 51% |
| 2019 | 2,642 | 5,268 | 50% |
| 2020 | 2,523 | 4,947 | 51% |



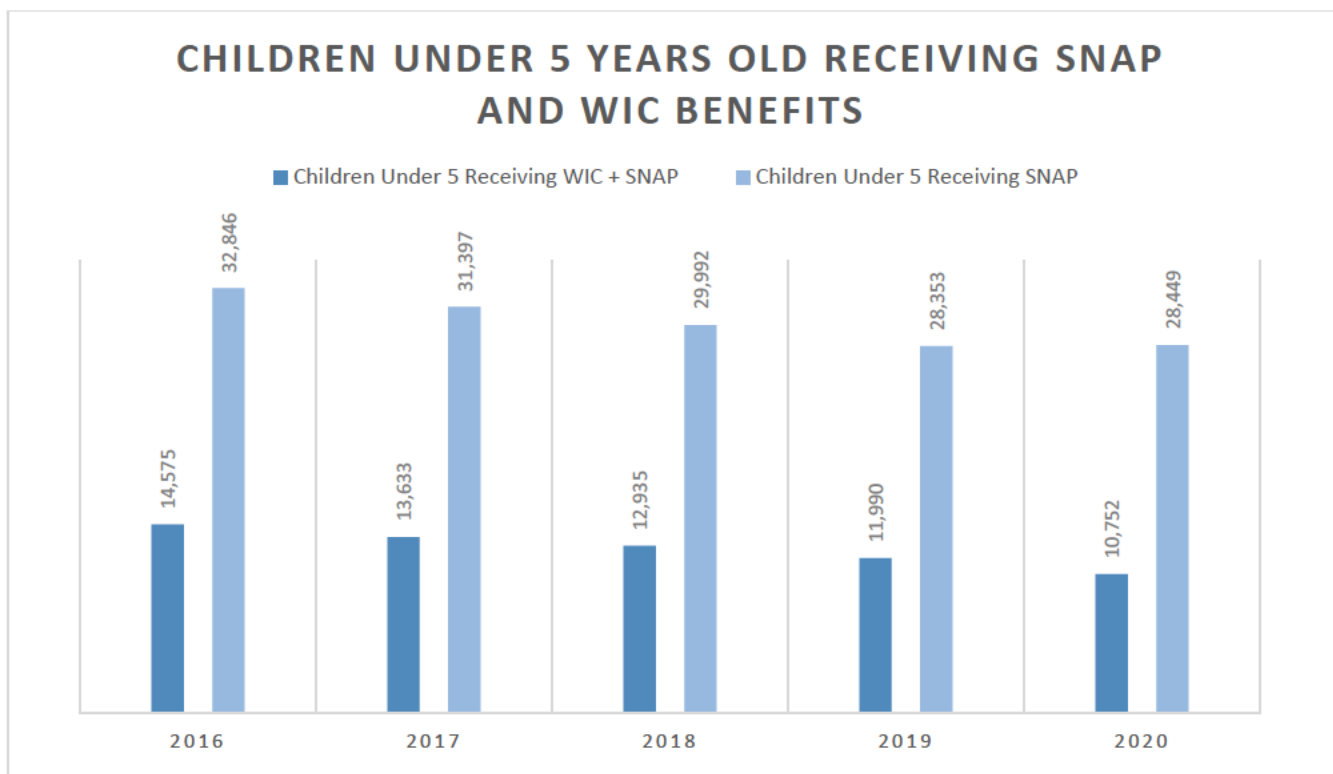
Data Details: Children under 5 includes birth through the month the child turns 5 years of age and only includes those with Social Security Numbers (SSN) as this is a requirement of WIC eligibility. Children included for both TANF and WIC counts must have been in the program for at least one month in the calendar year. These counts are distinct counts by year, meaning each child will only be counted once in a calendar year.

Data Sources: TANF Counts: ACES
WIC Counts: SPIRIT

C. Percentage of Children Under 5 years of Age Receiving SNAP Benefits and WIC

The percentage of children under 5 years of age receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that also receive assistance from WIC in the previous 4 calendar years is stated below.

| Calendar Year | Children Under 5 Receiving WIC + SNAP | Children Under 5 Receiving SNAP | % of Children Under 5 Receiving SNAP also Receiving WIC |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 2016 | 14,575 | 32,846 | 44% |
| 2017 | 13,633 | 31,397 | 43% |
| 2018 | 12,935 | 29,992 | 43% |
| 2019 | 11,990 | 28,353 | 42% |
| 2020 | 10,752 | 28,449 | 37% |



Data Details: SNAP includes state and federally funded SNAP. Children under 5 includes children from birth through the month the child turns 5 years of age and only includes those with SSNs as this is a requirement of WIC eligibility. Children included for both SNAP and WIC counts must have been in the program for at least one month in the calendar year. These counts are distinct counts by year, meaning each child will only be counted once in a calendar year.

Data Sources: SNAP Counts: ACES
WIC Counts: SPIRIT

D. For All Families for Whom TANF Cash Assistance has Terminated

The below section includes a combination of data from the Department of Labor (DOL) and ACES. ACES data are used to determine the proper FPL household limits using DOL data as the income source. Cases are included where TANF is closed for 30 days or more and meet the below criteria. We then follow-up at month 3 after closure (Q2) and then again at month 9 after closure (Q4) to identify if households tend to stay off TANF or reopen at a later date. This data does not demonstrate if a household has other income outside of earnings.

NOTE: 2020 Q2 and Q4 data is not available yet and will be included as part of the 2023 data set.

1. The number and percentage of families with no quarterly earnings

| | At Termination | | | Q2 | | | Q4 | | |
|------|----------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| | # | Total | % | # | Total | % | # | Total | % |
| 2016 | 2,516 | 4,739 | 53% | 2,495 | 4,739 | 53% | 2,511 | 4,739 | 53% |
| 2017 | 2,069 | 4,032 | 52% | 2,104 | 4,032 | 52% | 2,044 | 4,032 | 51% |
| 2018 | 1,878 | 3,928 | 48% | 1,998 | 3,928 | 51% | 2,005 | 3,928 | 51% |
| 2019 | 1,591 | 3,436 | 46% | 1,696 | 3,436 | 49% | 1,461 | 3,436 | 43% |
| 2020 | 1,452 | 2,752 | 53% | | | | | | |

Data Details: This section includes all applicable households where DOL reports \$0 in quarterly earnings.

2. The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from unsubsidized employment that are below 50% of the federal poverty level

| | At Termination | | | Q2 | | | Q4 | | |
|------|----------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| | # | Total | % | # | Total | % | # | Total | % |
| 2016 | 1,007 | 4,739 | 21% | 723 | 4,739 | 15% | 651 | 4,739 | 14% |
| 2017 | 708 | 4,032 | 18% | 587 | 4,032 | 15% | 523 | 4,032 | 13% |
| 2018 | 735 | 3,928 | 19% | 526 | 3,928 | 13% | 516 | 3,928 | 13% |
| 2019 | 587 | 3,436 | 17% | 525 | 3,436 | 15% | 422 | 3,436 | 12% |
| 2020 | 497 | 2,752 | 18% | | | | | | |

Data Details: This section includes TANF households where DOL reported household income less than 50% of the FPL.

3. The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from unsubsidized employment that are at least 50% but below 100% of the federal poverty level

| | At Termination | | | Q2 | | | Q4 | | |
|------|----------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| | # | Total | % | # | Total | % | # | Total | % |
| 2016 | 820 | 4,739 | 17% | 853 | 4,739 | 18% | 816 | 4,739 | 17% |
| 2017 | 807 | 4,032 | 20% | 703 | 4,032 | 17% | 670 | 4,032 | 17% |
| 2018 | 800 | 3,928 | 20% | 644 | 3,928 | 16% | 586 | 3,928 | 15% |
| 2019 | 710 | 3,436 | 21% | 520 | 3,436 | 15% | 348 | 3,436 | 10% |
| 2020 | 299 | 2,752 | 11% | | | | | | |

Data Details: This section includes TANF households where DOL reported household income greater than or equal to 50% of the FPL and less than 100% for the household size.

4. The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from unsubsidized employment that are at least 100% but below 150% of the federal poverty level

| | At Termination | | | Q2 | | | Q4 | | |
|------|----------------|-------|----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-------|----|
| | # | Total | % | # | Total | % | # | Total | % |
| 2016 | 275 | 4,739 | 6% | 366 | 4,739 | 8% | 398 | 4,739 | 8% |
| 2017 | 275 | 4,032 | 7% | 316 | 4,032 | 8% | 370 | 4,032 | 9% |
| 2018 | 307 | 3,928 | 8% | 382 | 3,928 | 10% | 365 | 3,928 | 9% |
| 2019 | 307 | 3,436 | 9% | 367 | 3,436 | 11% | 281 | 3,436 | 8% |
| 2020 | 201 | 2,752 | 7% | | | | | | |

Data Details: This section includes TANF households where DOL reported household income greater than or equal to 100% of the FPL and less than 150% for the household size.

5. The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from unsubsidized employment that are at least 150% but below 200% of the federal poverty level

| | At Termination | | | Q2 | | | Q4 | | |
|------|----------------|-------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|-------|----|
| | # | Total | % | # | Total | % | # | Total | % |
| 2016 | 78 | 4,739 | 2% | 209 | 4,739 | 4% | 232 | 4,739 | 5% |
| 2017 | 129 | 4,032 | 3% | 198 | 4,032 | 5% | 273 | 4,032 | 7% |
| 2018 | 155 | 3,928 | 4% | 247 | 3,928 | 6% | 270 | 3,928 | 7% |
| 2019 | 169 | 3,436 | 5% | 155 | 3,436 | 5% | 256 | 3,436 | 7% |
| 2020 | 197 | 2,752 | 7% | | | | | | |

Data Details: This section includes TANF households where DOL reported household income greater than or equal to 150% of the FPL and less than 200% for the household size.

6. The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from unsubsidized employment that are at least 200% of the federal poverty level

| | At Termination | | | Q2 | | | Q4 | | |
|------|----------------|-------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|-------|-----|
| | # | Total | % | # | Total | % | # | Total | % |
| 2016 | 43 | 4,739 | 1% | 96 | 4,739 | 2% | 132 | 4,739 | 3% |
| 2017 | 44 | 4,032 | 1% | 122 | 4,032 | 3% | 149 | 4,032 | 4% |
| 2018 | 53 | 3,928 | 1% | 131 | 3,928 | 3% | 185 | 3,928 | 5% |
| 2019 | 72 | 3,436 | 2% | 150 | 3,436 | 4% | 644 | 3,436 | 19% |
| 2020 | 106 | 2,745 | 4% | | | | | | |

Data Details: This section includes TANF households where DOL reported household income greater than or equal to 200% of the FPL for the household size.

7. The mean and median income of families with no quarterly earnings from unsubsidized employment

| | At Termination | | Q 2 | | Q4 | |
|------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Mean | Median | Mean | Median | Mean | Median |
| 2016 | \$1129.51 | \$754.82 | \$1126.09 | \$770.00 | \$1125.44 | \$765.31 |
| 2017 | \$1173.75 | \$811.54 | \$1175.25 | \$813.62 | \$1177.18 | \$818.78 |
| 2018 | \$1313.90 | \$898.40 | \$1319.69 | \$939.28 | \$1326.22 | \$934.58 |
| 2019 | \$1472.19 | \$1135.20 | \$1,490.68 | \$1167.53 | \$1499.40 | \$1169.30 |
| 2020 | \$1442.74 | \$1,331.20 | \$1,358.49 | \$1,232.88 | \$1,433.96 | \$1,311.70 |

Data Details: This chart includes only households that had their TANF terminated for whom DOL reported \$0 in earned income in the relevant quarter. Included income amounts consist of only Unemployment Insurance Benefits, Child Support, and/or other monies received from subsidized income sources as reported in ACES. These are mean and median income amounts by month at the start of each period – Termination, 2nd quarter following termination, and 4th quarter following termination. NOTE: A mean, or average, is the sum of the data points divided by the number of total data points. A median value is the middle number derived from an ordered list of data points.

8. The number and percentage of families receiving income from the Federal Supplemental Security Income or Federal Social Security Disability benefit programs

| | Section A: Individuals in Receipt of SSI or SSDI at Termination of TANF | | | Section B: Receipt of SSI or SSDI at 2nd Quarter Post TANF Termination | | | Section C: Receipt of SSI or SSDI at 4th Quarter Post TANF Termination | | |
|------|---|--------|----|--|--------|----|--|--------|----|
| | # | Total | % | # | Total | % | # | Total | % |
| 2016 | 226 | 11,330 | 2% | 192 | 11,330 | 2% | 184 | 11,330 | 2% |
| 2017 | 157 | 10,166 | 2% | 165 | 10,166 | 2% | 145 | 10,166 | 1% |
| 2018 | 161 | 10,026 | 2% | 148 | 10,026 | 1% | 127 | 10,026 | 1% |
| 2019 | 185 | 8,014 | 2% | 169 | 8,014 | 2% | 172 | 8,014 | 2% |
| 2020 | 163 | 8,189 | 2% | | | | | | |

Data Details: This data includes only those households and individuals who remain open on an OFI program and have active data fields within the ACES system for the dates queried.

- 2020 data will be updated for the next report as the 2021 figures will be included at that time.
- SSI recipients cannot receive TANF and SSI concurrently. Previous TANF payments are taken into consideration when SSI benefit amounts are determined to ensure no duplication of funding.
- While it is possible that a household may have their TANF terminated twice in one of the above periods, those occurrences are rare and are not statistically significant. A minor percentage of 2% of the population was found.
- Data include records where DOL reported no wages and ACES reported otherwise; In this instance, data in ACES include only unearned income.
- Data is provided at an individual level as the figures on a per case basis returned results < .5%
- These totals include households that were open on TANF and included an individual that received SSI or SSDI.

Further Explanation:

Section A: At the time participation in the TANF program was terminated

- i. # is the total number of clients, receiving SSI or SSDI, who had their TANF benefit closed for 30 days or more, by year. This is not a distinct count and may include multiple instances of a single individual over the period.
- ii. Total = all TANF cases where benefits were terminated over the course of the year. This is not a distinct count and may include one case multiple times if the case opened and closed within the same calendar year.
- iii. % = calculated based on: $\#/\text{Total} \times 100$

Section B: During the 2nd quarter after participation in the TANF program was terminated

- i. # is the number of individuals in receipt of SSI or SSDI anytime within the 2nd quarter after participation in the TANF program was terminated.
- ii. Total is the baseline total count of individuals whose participation in the TANF program was terminated in the calendar year.
- iii. % = calculated based on: $\#/\text{Total} \times 100$

Section C: During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated -

- i. # is the number of individuals in receipt of SSI or SSDI anytime within the 4th quarter after participation in the TANF program was terminated.
- ii. Total is the baseline total count of individuals whose participation in the TANF program was terminated in the calendar year.
- iii. % = calculated based on: $\#/\text{Total} \times 100$

Data Sources for this section.: ACES
MDOL

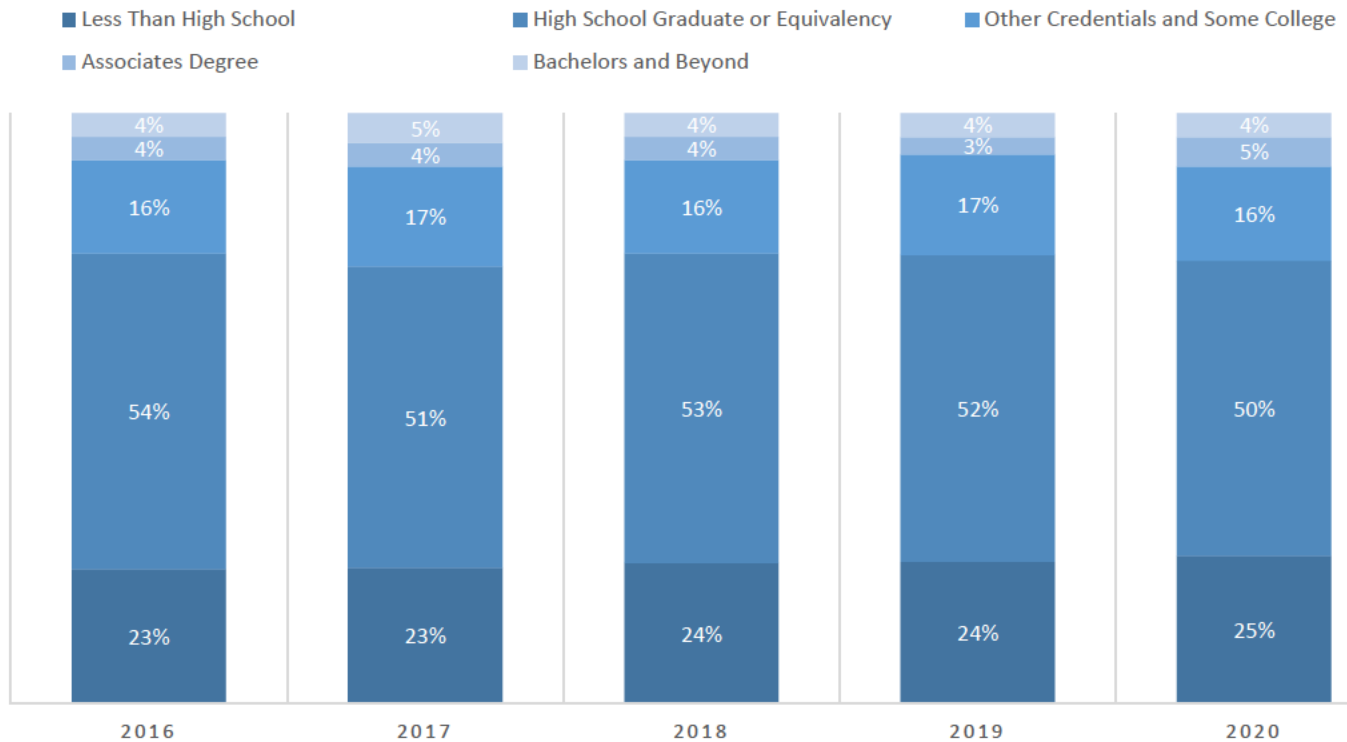
E. Highest Level of Educational Attainment of Adult Parents or Caretaker Relatives Receiving TANF Cash Assistance or Prior Year Participation Termination

1. The table below shows the highest level of education attained by an adult parent or caretaker relative that received TANF cash assistance, by year.

Highest Level of Educational Attainment for Adult Parents and Caretaker Relatives on TANF

| | 2016 | | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | | 2020 | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of |
| | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total |
| < High School | 1,316 | 23% | 1,267 | 23% | 1,193 | 24% | 1,049 | 24% | 942 | 25% |
| High School Graduate or Equivalency | 3,148 | 54% | 2,622 | 51% | 2,611 | 53% | 2,212 | 52% | 1844 | 50% |
| Other Credentials and Some College | 949 | 16% | 837 | 17% | 782 | 16% | 720 | 17% | 611 | 16% |
| Associates Degree | 207 | 4% | 196 | 4% | 187 | 4% | 150 | 3% | 169 | 5% |
| Bachelors and Beyond | 217 | 4% | 204 | 5% | 175 | 4% | 159 | 4% | 139 | 4% |
| Total | 5,837 | | 5,126 | | 4,948 | | 4,290 | | 3,705 | |

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINMENT FOR ADULT PARENTS AND CARETAKER RELATIVES ON TANF



Data Details: Data show the Parent/Caretaker's highest level of education at the time of TANF program termination. OFI does not consistently track the highest level of education after TANF program termination. Highest level of educational attainment is self-reported at the time of DHHS contact and is not required information or a required data field for eligibility determination. Less Than High School includes cases where the client had no formal education, the education level was unknown, or did not complete High School. High School Graduate or Equivalency includes cases where the Parent/Caretaker either has a High School Diploma, GED or equivalent. Other credentials include Parent/Caretakers that have some post-secondary education or other certification. Associates Degree includes those records where the Parent/Caretaker has an Associates Degree while the Bachelors and Beyond column includes all other Parent/Caretakers that have at least a Bachelors Degree.

NOTE: If comparing the 2016-2019 data provided on the prior year's report please note a slight difference in the client counts. This is due to a data filtering error that was identified while compiling this report and led to a slight increase in the count.

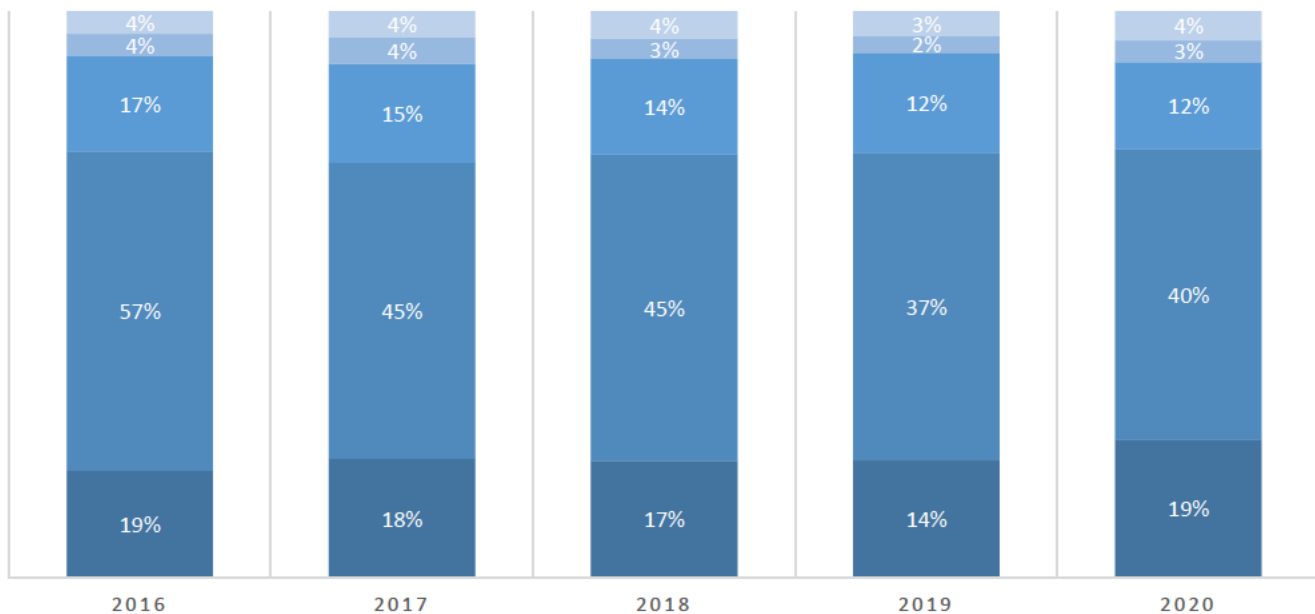
2. This table also lists data regarding the highest level of education attained but differs in that it pertains solely to adult parents or caretaker relatives whose participation in the TANF program was terminated in the year prior.

Highest Level of Educational Attainment for Adult Parents and Caretaker Relatives Terminated in the Prior Year

| | 2016 | | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | | 2020 | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of |
| | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total |
| < High School | 618 | 19% | 611 | 18% | 547 | 17% | 473 | 14% | 628 | 19% |
| High School Graduate or Equivalency | 1,874 | 57% | 1,502 | 45% | 1,475 | 45% | 1,234 | 37% | 1,308 | 40% |
| Other Credentials and Some College | 570 | 17% | 498 | 15% | 453 | 14% | 381 | 12% | 413 | 12% |
| Associates Degree | 127 | 4% | 118 | 4% | 99 | 3% | 75 | 2% | 95 | 3% |
| Bachelors and Beyond | 117 | 4% | 117 | 4% | 125 | 4% | 83 | 3% | 133 | 4% |
| Total | 3,306 | | 2,846 | | 2,699 | | 2,246 | | 2,577 | |

**HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINMENT FOR
ADULT PARENT AND CARETAKER RELATIVES ON TANF
WHERE TANF CLOSED AT LEAST ONE YEAR PRIOR**

■ Less Than High School
 ■ High School Graduate or Equivalency
 ■ Other Credentials and Some College
 ■ Associates Degree
 ■ Bachelors and Beyond



Data Details: Data in 2. show highest level of education at the time of TANF program termination. OFI does not consistently track the highest level of education after TANF program termination. Highest level of educational attainment is self-reported at the time of DHHS contact and is not required information or a required data field for eligibility determination.

Data Source: ACES

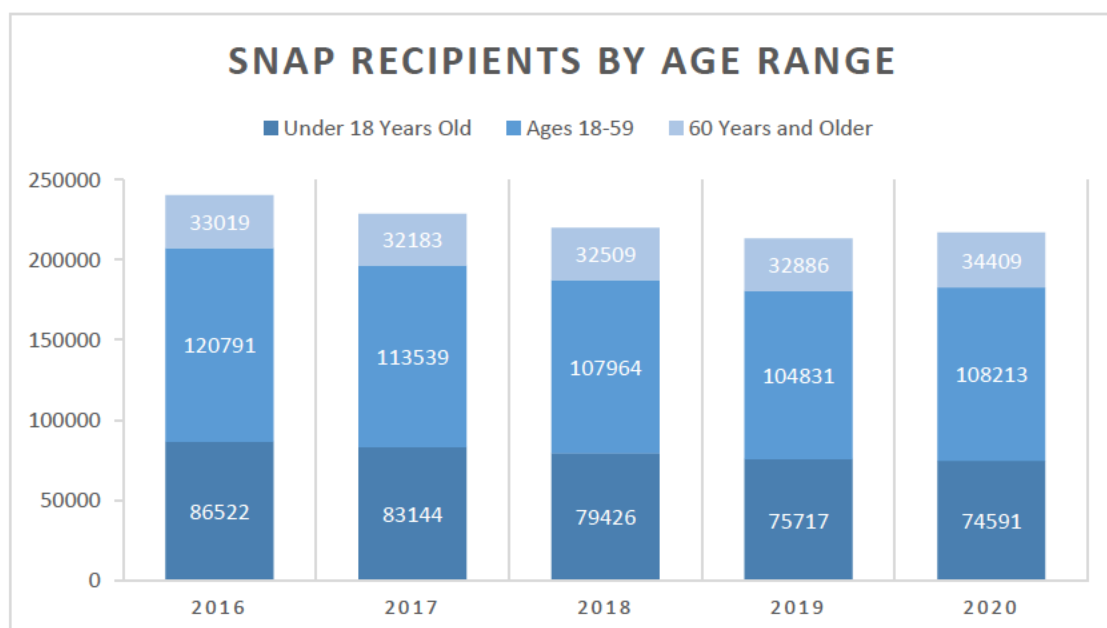
F. Age and Disabled Breakdown of Persons Receiving SNAP to Those Potentially Eligible for SNAP

The Department is unable to ascertain Maine-specific data that demonstrate what is being asked for in this specific piece of the report requirements. The table below does reflect the data on individuals meeting the characteristics prescribed in the statute, (e.g. age and disability) but determining the Maine population who is “potentially” eligible for SNAP is not a request the Department can reasonably fulfill. Any estimate of people who have not applied for the program but are potentially eligible to enroll would need to rely on detailed estimates from federal survey data on income, assets, expenses, citizenship or non-citizenship status, age, family structure including number of children in the household, living arrangements (e.g. home, homeless, group living arrangement), and disability status.

For further analysis on food insecurity and underserved populations, we recommend the following resources be explored: the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities’ [Chart Book: SNAP Helps Struggling Families Put Food on the Table](#) and the report titled [Ending Hunger in Maine by 2030](#), commissioned by the 129th Legislature.

SNAP Recipients by Age Range

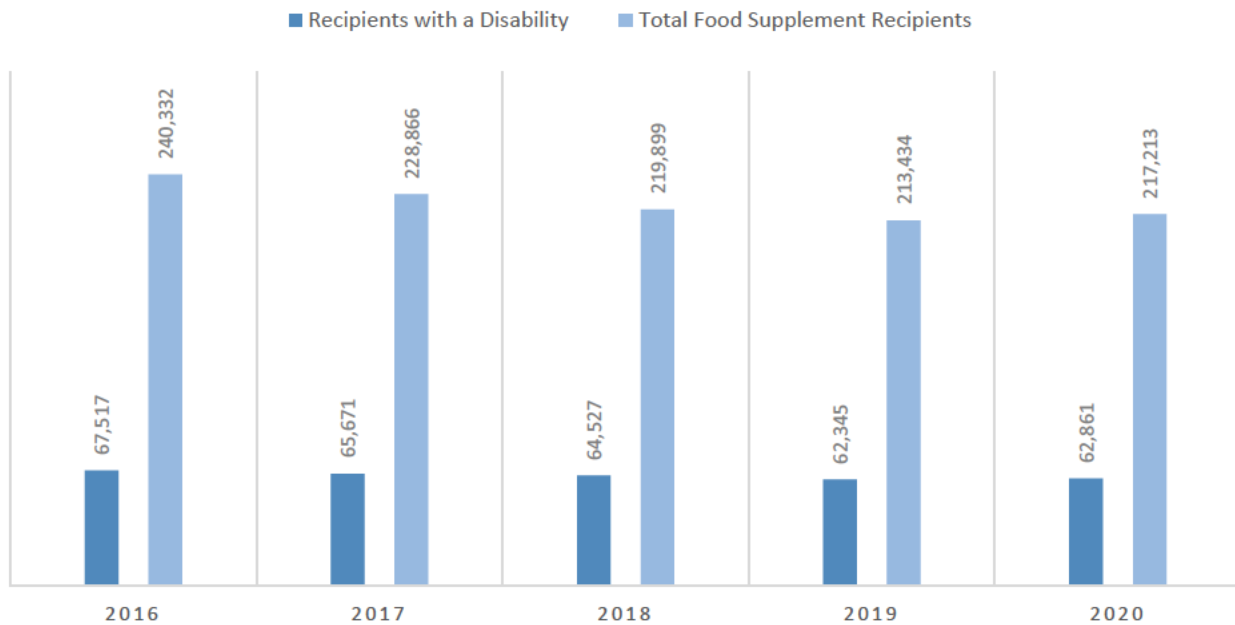
| Calendar Year | Under 18 Years Old | | Ages 18-59 | | 60 Years and Older | | Total Individuals Receiving SNAP |
|---------------|--------------------|---------|------------|---------|--------------------|---------|----------------------------------|
| | # | % Total | # | % Total | # | % Total | |
| 2016 | 86,522 | 36% | 120,791 | 50% | 33,019 | 14% | 240,332 |
| 2017 | 83,144 | 36% | 113,539 | 50% | 32,183 | 14% | 228,866 |
| 2018 | 79,426 | 36% | 107,964 | 49% | 32,509 | 15% | 219,899 |
| 2019 | 75,717 | 35% | 104,831 | 49% | 32,886 | 15% | 213,434 |
| 2020 | 74,591 | 34% | 108,213 | 49% | 34,409 | 16% | 217,713 |



SNAP Recipients with a Disability

| Calendar Year | Recipients with a Disability | Total SNAP Recipients | % Total |
|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| 2016 | 67,517 | 240,332 | 28% |
| 2017 | 65,671 | 228,866 | 29% |
| 2018 | 64,527 | 219,899 | 29% |
| 2019 | 62,345 | 213,434 | 29% |
| 2020 | 62,861 | 217,213 | 29% |

NUMBER OF SNAP RECIPIENTS WITH A DISABILITY



Data Details: Total individuals is a distinct count of clients with federally and state funded SNAP for any duration throughout the calendar year.

Data Source: ACES

G. Highest Level of Educational Attainment of Adult Parents or Caretaker Relatives Receiving SNAP

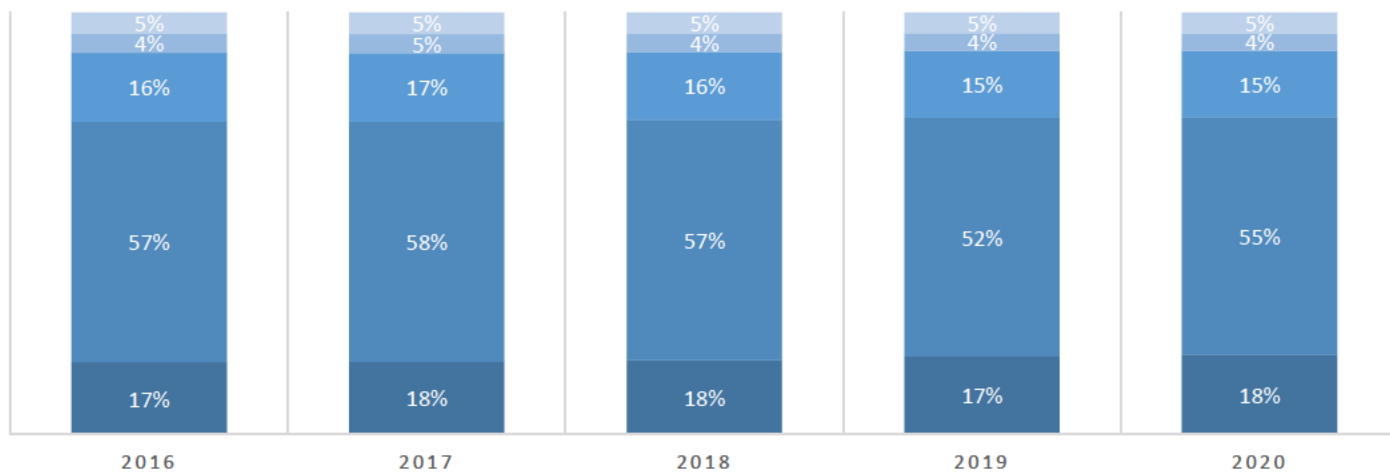
Below shows the number and percentage of adult parents or caretaker relatives who have children in the household and are receiving SNAP. Data are grouped by highest level of education attained by adult parent or caretaker relative.

Highest Level of Educational Attainment for Adult Parents and Caretaker Relatives on SNAP

| | 2016 | | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | | 2020 | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of | Client | % of |
| | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total | Count | Total |
| < High School | 7,656 | 17% | 7,888 | 18% | 7,813 | 18% | 7,610 | 17% | 8,205 | 18% |
| High School Graduate or Equivalency | 25,420 | 57% | 25,975 | 58% | 25,237 | 57% | 23,260 | 52% | 24,543 | 55% |
| Other Credentials and Some College | 7,270 | 16% | 7,374 | 17% | 7,103 | 16% | 6,515 | 15% | 6,855 | 15% |
| Associates Degree | 1,988 | 4% | 2,061 | 5% | 1,938 | 4% | 1,757 | 4% | 1,820 | 4% |
| Bachelors and Beyond | 2,300 | 5% | 2,370 | 5% | 2,249 | 5% | 2,015 | 5% | 2,156 | 5% |
| Total | 44,634 | | 45,668 | | 44,340 | | 41,157 | | 43,579 | |

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINMENT FOR ADULT PARENT AND CARETAKER RELATIVES RECEIVING SNAP

■ Less Than High School
 ■ High School Graduate or Equivalency
 ■ Other Credentials and Some College
 ■ Associates Degree
 ■ Bachelors and Beyond



Data Details: Highest level of educational attainment is self-reported at the time of DHHS contact and is not required information or a required data field for eligibility determination.

NOTE: If comparing the 2016-2019 data provided on the prior year's report please note a slight difference in the client counts. This is due to a data filtering error that was identified while compiling this report and led to a slight increase in the count.

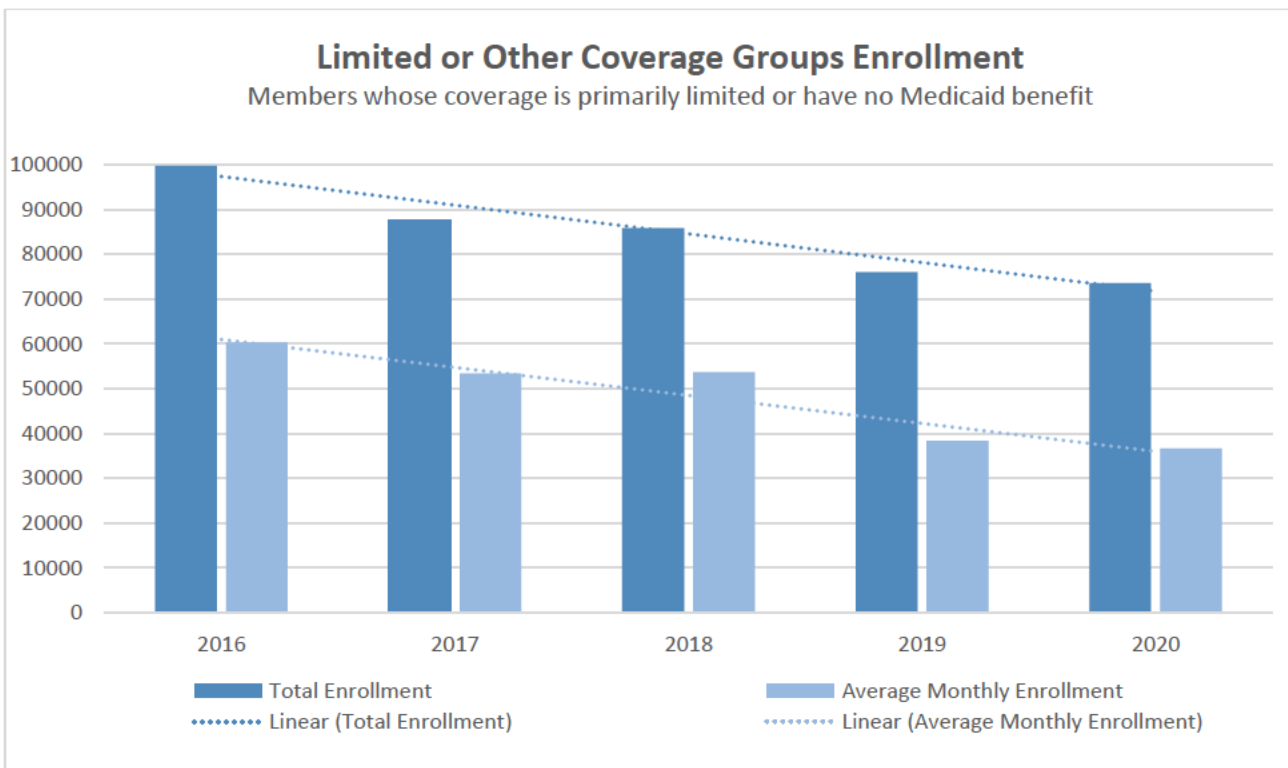
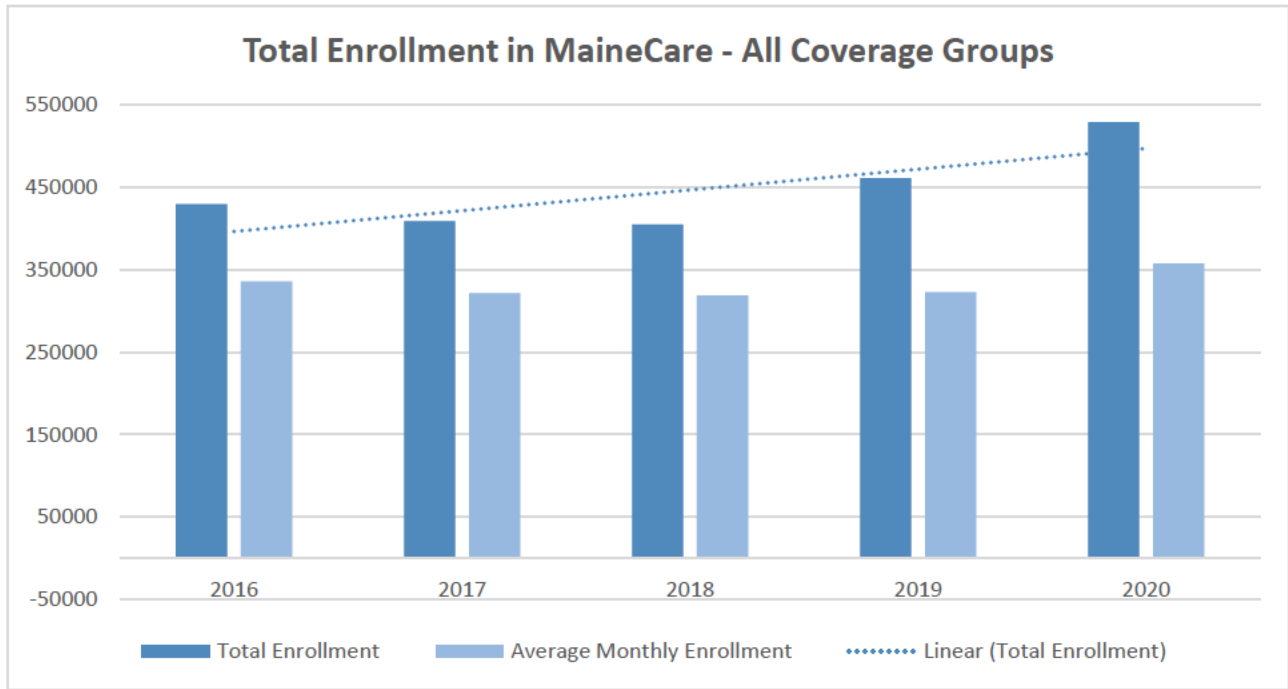
Data Source: ACES

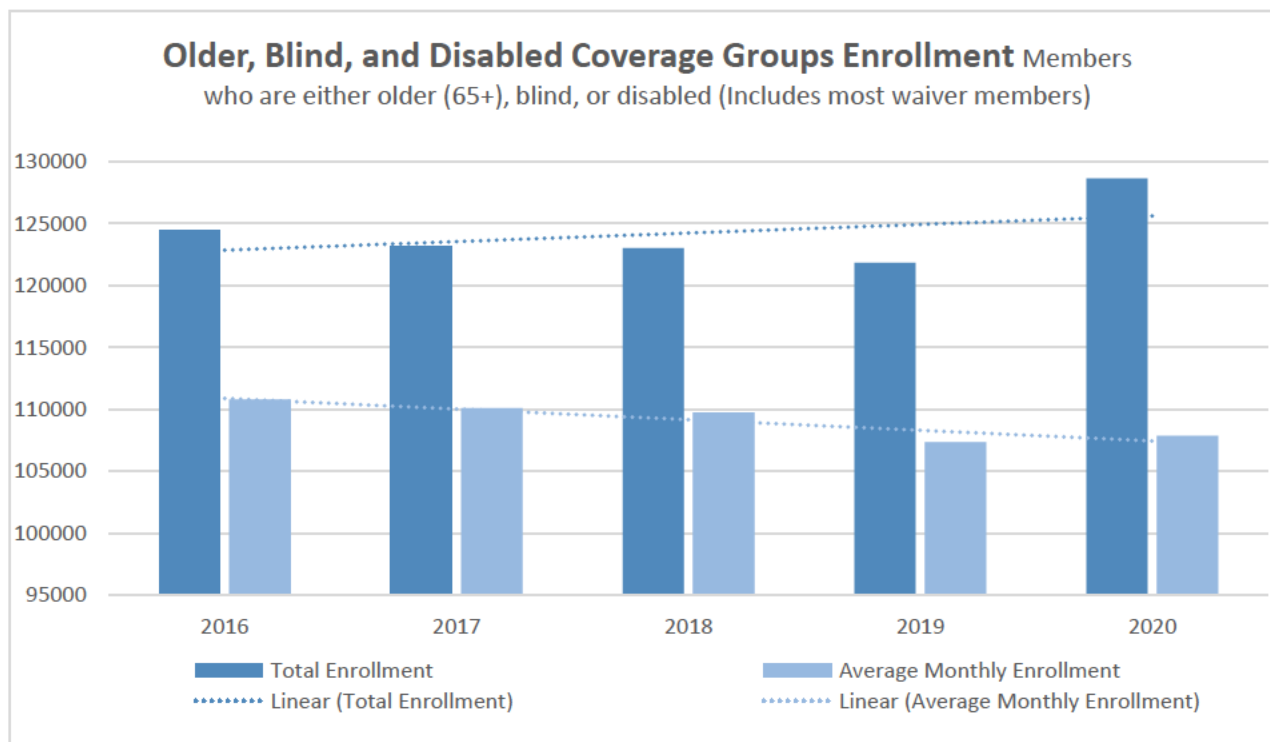
H. The Ratio of People Participating in the MaineCare Program, by Eligibility Group, to the Total Number of Potentially Eligible Persons Within Each Group

The Department is unable to ascertain Maine specific data that demonstrate what is being asked for in this specific piece of the reporting requirements. The data below reflect the number of individuals participating in the MaineCare program by eligibility group.

In the data below, it is important to note that the Federal government has prohibited states from closing MaineCare accounts through the duration of the Federal Public Health Emergency, with limited exceptions. This contributed to the jump in total and monthly average enrollment in 2020 and will likely be reflected in 2021 enrollment in the subsequent report.

| | Time Period | Blind, 65+ and/or Disabled | Non-MaineCare | Expansion Adults | State Only | Traditional | Total Enrollment |
|------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|
| 2016 | Total Members | 124,518 | 99,705 | | 2,165 | 202,746 | 429,134 |
| | Monthly Average | 110,793 | 60,328 | | 558 | 163,934 | 335,613 |
| 2017 | Total Members | 123,192 | 87,642 | | 2,146 | 195,898 | 408,878 |
| | Monthly Average | 110,083 | 53,397 | | 553 | 157,296 | 321,329 |
| 2018 | Total Members | 123,005 | 85,821 | | 3,938 | 192,243 | 405,007 |
| | Monthly Average | 109,773 | 53,632 | | 816 | 154,469 | 318,690 |
| 2019 | Total Members | 121,863 | 75,973 | 58,189 | 13,479 | 191,529 | 461,033 |
| | Monthly Average | 107,357 | 38,341 | 28,228 | 2,239 | 146,435 | 322,600 |
| 2020 | Total Members | 128,638 | 73,524 | 115,126 | 3,686 | 207,963 | 528,937 |
| | Monthly Average | 107,865 | 36,642 | 59,287 | 890 | 152,828 | 357,512 |





Data Details: Brief description of eligibility groupings is as follows: Older/Blind/Disabled – Members who are either Older (65+), Blind or disabled (this includes most waiver members); Expansion Adult – Members who were recently given eligibility via MaineCare Expansion; Non-MaineCare – Members whose coverage is primarily limited or no Medicaid benefit. Funding can often be a part of coverage provided by other offices in DHHS. (This includes members in spenddown status, who will be covered once spenddown is met. This also includes MaineRx RAC 3X – and it should be noted that RAC 3X was also used for instances of providing coverage for COVID testing for the uninsured); State-Only - Members whose coverage is only state funded, with no federal funding; Traditional – All other members in the MaineCare population, who would historically meet Medicaid enrollment requirements. DHHS is not currently able to estimate the number of “potentially eligible” people who could apply for MaineCare benefits in these categories but have not applied. MaineCare does not have data on people who might meet eligibility criteria for the programs but who do not apply to enroll. Eligibility for MaineCare programs is determined by several factors including age, household composition, tax filing status, disability status, pregnancy, living arrangement, citizenship status, family income and resources. Any estimate of people who have not applied for the program but are potentially eligible to enroll would need to rely on detailed estimates from federal survey data, which may not include all eligibility factors or be measured in a way that is consistent with eligibility determinations. Due to the many MaineCare program rules and financial limits, assumptions would be required if using federal survey data that would result in estimates with very large margins of error. For more detail on the complexities involved with estimating the number of potentially eligible but not enrolled people, see: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/76411/ib.pdf>. **Data Source:** DSS

Note: Please note the prior report had 2016 data indicated as 2019 and 2019 data labeled as 2016 in error.

I. MaineCare and CHIP Application Processing by CY 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019

Data below reflect the number and percentage of applications received by the Department for the MaineCare program and the children's health insurance program (CHIP) as defined in section 3174-X, subsection 1, paragraph A², by eligibility group, that are processed in less than 24 hours; that are processed within one to 7 days; that are processed within 8 to 30 days; that are processed within 31 to 45 days; and that are processed more than 45 days after receipt.

MaineCare Application Processing Times

| Timeliness | | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|------------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <24 Hours | # Applications | 6,976 | 6,869 | 6,791 | 7,893 | 8,072 |
| | % Applications | 29% | 27% | 28% | 24% | 23% |
| 1-7 Days | # Applications | 2,547 | 2,466 | 2,893 | 4,230 | 5,043 |
| | % Applications | 11% | 10% | 12% | 13% | 15% |
| 8-30 Days | # Applications | 7,301 | 7,139 | 6,270 | 11,163 | 12,049 |
| | % Applications | 30% | 28% | 26% | 34% | 35% |
| 31-45 Days | # Applications | 2,276 | 2,342 | 2,190 | 4,304 | 4,101 |
| | % Applications | 9% | 9% | 9% | 13% | 12% |
| >45 Days | # Applications | 5,079 | 6,893 | 5,989 | 5,715 | 5,269 |
| | % Applications | 21% | 27% | 25% | 17% | 15% |
| Total | # Applications | 24,179 | 25,709 | 24,133 | 33,305 | 34,534 |

² <http://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec3174-X.html>

Cub Care (CHIP) Application Processing Times

| Timeliness | | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| <24 Hours | # Applications | 199 | 226 | 197 | 210 | 464 |
| | % Applications | 25% | 23% | 22% | 19% | 20% |
| 1-7 Days | # Applications | 55 | 44 | 51 | 70 | 316 |
| | % Applications | 7% | 5% | 6% | 6% | 14% |
| 8-30 Days | # Applications | 226 | 262 | 224 | 357 | 968 |
| | % Applications | 29% | 27% | 25% | 32% | 43% |
| 31-45 Days | # Applications | 67 | 83 | 71 | 131 | 338 |
| | % Applications | 8% | 9% | 8% | 12% | 15% |
| >45 Days | # Applications | 246 | 365 | 358 | 358 | 182 |
| | % Applications | 31% | 37% | 40% | 32% | 8% |
| Total | # Applications | 793 | 980 | 901 | 1,126 | 2,268 |

Data Details: These data count only unique households where there could be the possibility of multiple eligibility decisions; however, any case must have a household member with potential eligibility for CHIP and/or another MaineCare related program.

Data Source: ACES

J. & K. Data on Calls to the Office for Family Independence

Data below reflect the average waiting times, by month, for a person calling the Department's call center to speak to a person, not including an interactive voice response system. Additionally, this includes the number and percentage, by month, of telephone calls to the Department's call center that are terminated by a caller prior to the caller's speaking to a person, not including an interactive voice response system.

| Month Ending | Average Speed of Answer (min) | Calls Received | Calls Terminated | % Calls Terminated |
|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 10/31/2021 | 9:15 | 38,014 | 12,375 | 33% |
| 9/30/2021 | 11:36 | 41,195 | 15,752 | 38% |
| 8/31/2021 | 4:25 | 41,687 | 7,478 | 18% |
| 7/31/2021 | 3:18 | 43,976 | 5,435 | 12% |
| 6/30/2021 | 2:19 | 39,328 | 3,546 | 9% |
| 5/31/2021 | 2:22 | 40,686 | 3,527 | 9% |
| 4/30/2021 | 4:39 | 45,125 | 7,027 | 16% |
| 3/31/2021 | 5:41 | 52,669 | 9,139 | 17% |
| 2/28/2021 | 7:25 | 44,014 | 9,769 | 22% |
| 1/31/2021 | 13:14 | 52,058 | 16,476 | 32% |
| 12/31/2020 | 16:21 | 51,967 | 18,261 | 35% |
| 11/30/2020 | 11:03 | 42,548 | 12,151 | 29% |
| 10/31/2020 | 8:17 | 52,868 | 16,077 | 30% |
| 9/30/2020 | 6:32 | 64,518 | 14,301 | 22% |

| | | | | |
|------------|-------|--------|--------|-----|
| 8/31/2020 | 3:53 | 52,253 | 8,867 | 17% |
| 7/31/2020 | 0:28 | 38,388 | 1,266 | 3% |
| 6/30/2020 | 0:11 | 34,218 | 914 | 3% |
| 5/31/2020 | 0:12 | 33,046 | 675 | 2% |
| 4/30/2020 | 0:20 | 11,477 | 321 | 3% |
| 3/31/2020 | 4:06 | 55,295 | 9,088 | 16% |
| 2/29/2020 | 4:54 | 46,615 | 7,624 | 16% |
| 1/31/2020 | 9:39 | 63,995 | 18,628 | 29% |
| 12/31/2019 | 7:38 | 51,816 | 12,995 | 25% |
| 11/30/2019 | 5:59 | 46,924 | 10,419 | 22% |
| 10/31/2019 | 2:01 | 49,832 | 4,939 | 10% |
| 9/30/2019 | 3:14 | 51,258 | 9,057 | 18% |
| 8/31/2019 | 3:19 | 56,603 | 8,731 | 15% |
| 7/31/2019 | 3:38 | 54,096 | 8,572 | 16% |
| 6/30/2019 | 1:56 | 43,885 | 4,296 | 10% |
| 5/31/2019 | 3:20 | 43,321 | 6,142 | 14% |
| 4/30/2019 | 3:19 | 18,605 | 2,233 | 12% |
| 3/31/2019 | 29:56 | 35,267 | 17,034 | 48% |
| 2/28/2019 | 24:48 | 36,874 | 17,749 | 48% |
| 1/31/2019 | 39:17 | 39,993 | 23,289 | 58% |
| 12/31/2018 | 25:54 | 36,427 | 19,637 | 54% |
| 11/30/2018 | 20:58 | 39,811 | 17,292 | 43% |
| 10/31/2018 | 22:24 | 46,295 | 19,899 | 43% |
| 9/30/2018 | 21:24 | 36,725 | 14,526 | 40% |
| 8/31/2018 | 26:36 | 47,475 | 22,336 | 47% |
| 7/31/2018 | 22:51 | 40,833 | 18,194 | 45% |
| 6/30/2018 | 23:35 | 44,135 | 19,440 | 44% |
| 5/31/2018 | 23:02 | 46,028 | 19,471 | 42% |
| 4/30/2018 | 23:21 | 43,133 | 16,684 | 39% |
| 3/31/2018 | 24:12 | 42,423 | 13,955 | 33% |
| 2/28/2018 | 24:28 | 43,977 | 19,555 | 44% |
| 1/31/2018 | 25:33 | 57,281 | 31,930 | 56% |
| 12/31/2017 | 24:57 | 52,090 | 23,790 | 46% |
| 11/30/2017 | 22:13 | 64,123 | 28,727 | 45% |
| 10/31/2017 | 24:41 | 54,172 | 19,447 | 36% |
| 9/30/2017 | 15:04 | 38,720 | 16,373 | 42% |
| 8/31/2017 | 25:27 | 57,683 | 26,182 | 45% |

| | | | | |
|------------|-------|--------|--------|-----|
| 7/31/2017 | 24:06 | 54,066 | 27,615 | 51% |
| 6/30/2017 | 16:26 | 53,889 | 22,105 | 41% |
| 5/31/2017 | 23:41 | 58,361 | 26,822 | 46% |
| 4/30/2017 | 29:17 | 54,541 | 27,726 | 51% |
| 3/31/2017 | 29:11 | 66,437 | 32,772 | 49% |
| 2/28/2017 | 20:16 | 50,255 | 18,912 | 38% |
| 1/31/2017 | 22:69 | 64,143 | 27,940 | 44% |
| 12/31/2016 | 19:21 | 56,454 | 20,825 | 37% |
| 11/30/2016 | 16:19 | 56,437 | 19,129 | 34% |
| 10/31/2016 | 16:09 | 54,004 | 15,169 | 28% |
| 9/30/2016 | 16:33 | 57,849 | 17,563 | 30% |
| 8/31/2016 | 11:37 | 58,634 | 13,605 | 23% |
| 7/31/2016 | 10:58 | 51,669 | 11,197 | 22% |
| 6/30/2016 | 13:05 | 59,614 | 18,478 | 31% |
| 5/31/2016 | 9:50 | 55,787 | 13,362 | 24% |
| 4/30/2016 | 8:49 | 52,598 | 8,688 | 17% |
| 3/31/2016 | 9:27 | 60,272 | 12,624 | 21% |
| 2/28/2016 | 10:13 | 54,950 | 10,736 | 20% |
| 1/31/2016 | 15:19 | 70,898 | 28,071 | 40% |

Data Details: Beginning 4/21/2019, all OFI incoming calls are handled by staff assigned to an OFI Call Center in Wilton, Maine. Prior to April 2019 all calls, included incoming calls were distributed to the following queues: Food Stamp Interview, General Eligibility, My Maine Connection, Provider Line, and TANF. Each of these queues was responded to by dedicated teams trained on specific topics.

Data Source: Avaya Call Manager System (CMS)

NOTE: "Average Speed of Answer" indicates the time it takes to speak with a live person. From that person, a caller may be redirected to a relevant staff person. Depending on call volume, this may require additional wait time.

Summary - Program and Policy Considerations

The Office for Family Independence (OFI) assists Maine people to meet their basic needs while supporting their path to independence and employment. OFI is made up of approximately 900 employees who determine eligibility for three main programs included in this report, TANF, SNAP and MaineCare. OFI also offers several employment and training programs: ASPIRE for TANF recipients, FSET or SNAP E & T for SNAP recipients and HOPE for parents who are post-secondary students who don't also receive TANF or PaS benefits and services.

The Department and OFI strive towards program and policy changes that aim to further assist Maine's low-income residents. In this summary you will find a list of changes initiated or implemented in the past year, 2021. The list below is not exhaustive and does include some program flexibilities that initially were thought to be of a temporary nature yet were sustained throughout the full 2020 calendar year and some beyond. Also included in this summary is helpful information around the nature of TANF eligibility and benefit determination which may prove helpful in spotlighting changes which may improve the economic security of low-income families in Maine.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Program Changes

Several program changes that will increase financial supports for parents and their children have been implemented statewide in the TANF Program. These changes provide access to financial support for non-traditional families and support a gradual termination of benefits for working parents. Recent work also adds family-centered services aimed at improving the well-being of both children and their parents.

Elimination of the Full Family Sanction

In the first session of the 130th Legislature, the Department submitted, in partnership with sponsor Rep. Michele Meyer and co-sponsor Sen. Marianne Moore, a bill to eliminate what is known as the "full family sanction." This change ensures that if an adult member of the household is not compliant with program requirements, only the benefit for that adult are terminated. With this change, children and compliant adults will still receive benefits, even when others on the case are not in compliance. This seeks to ensure access to support for basic needs for children and family members who comply with program requirements. The implementation of full family sanctions ended in October 2021.

Whole Family Services

The Department has current contracts with 11 agencies across the state to provide two generational family services based on a family-centered coaching service model. As of October 2021, 139 families are enrolled with a total statewide program capacity of 550 families. These services prioritize goals for both parents and children to improve the family's economic stability and overall wellbeing. Goals are created by the families and supported by a Family Coach, who provides and coordinates wraparound supports through partnership with a variety of programs and service agencies. Pursuant to 22 MRS §3769-G³, the Department shall fund these supports at \$2 million annually through the TANF federal block grant. The Department has been provided technical assistance from national whole family services experts with the support of the J.T. Gorman Foundation.

Step Disregard and HOPE Evaluation

The Department has contracted with a national evaluation team at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), formerly known as IMPAQ International. AIR will provide an evaluation report including quantitative and qualitative research, assessing the impacts of the TANF enhanced earnings disregards and the HOPE program for Maine families. Participant surveys and interviews have been completed and the full evaluation report is expected in 2022.

³ <http://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec3769-G.html>

SNAP (formerly known as Food Supplement) Benefits

Many program changes have been implemented statewide in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which will improve access to critical nutrition support. The specific changes include:

Suspension of work requirements

Due to high unemployment and economic conditions in the state, Maine was approved for a statewide waiver allowing non-exempt adults ages 18-59 to receive SNAP benefits without work or volunteer requirements in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021 and 2022, effective through September 30, 2022. The Department plans to request annual waivers for eligible geographic areas into the future.

Telephonic Signature

OFI has implemented the state option to allow applicants and recipients to “sign” an application, six-month reports or recertifications over the telephone. The conversation is recorded and the applicant or recipient attests to the information that they provided. This flexibility is for SNAP, MC and TANF.

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

OFI with the Department of Education (DOE) implemented a Pandemic EBT program throughout 2021. The purpose of this program was to replace free lunch benefits that students missed because of remote learning. Children under 6 on SNAP also received P-EBT. This was a SNAP benefit that could be used to purchase eligible foods. From May 2020 through December 2021 approximately \$35,000,000 in P-EBT was distributed to Maine children for the time period of March 2020 through August 2021.

Emergency Maximum Allotments

OFI issued Emergency Maximum Allotments beginning in April 2020 and will continue to do so until at least January 2022. Approval to issue these benefits is dependent on the National Public Health Emergency (PHE). If a household was eligible for any amount of SNAP benefits they received an allotment equal to the maximum benefit for their household size. SNAP benefits to Mainers increased from approximately \$17 million to \$32 million per month. During 2021 the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) instructed state agencies to ensure that every household received a minimum increase of \$95 per month, further enhancing nutrition supports available to eligible Mainers.

MaineCare Eligibility

Several short- and long-term program changes have been implemented statewide in the MaineCare Program which will improve access to critical health care.

Expansion of Presumptive Eligibility

The Department has promulgated rules and finalized procedures to provide short term coverage to families, children, pregnant women, and other income eligible adults. Presumptive eligibility allows trained medical providers to determine temporary eligibility based on statewide standards. The purpose of allowing medical providers to determine presumptive eligibility is to provide individuals with short term, immediate health care assistance and help individuals connect to ongoing health coverage.

Expansion of Pregnancy Related Coverage

The Department is promulgating rules and finalizing procedures to increase the eligibility period for pregnant women, and to provide coverage to unborn children during pregnancy. The rule also provides coverage to pregnant women who would be otherwise eligible but for their citizenship status. Increasing coverage for women and children during pregnancy improves health outcomes for both mothers and babies.

Employment and Training Programs

The Department expanded options and services within OFI's employment and training programs and developed a new program focused on supporting adults with their education and training goals.

Higher Opportunity through Pathways to Employment (HOPE)

The HOPE program is a workforce development program aimed at assisting low income parents with meeting their higher education goals. HOPE supports the active pursuit of a higher education program that will result in a universally-recognized credential of value. While in school, eligible parents can count on HOPE to provide financial support for education-related expenses such as tuition, books, child care, transportation, national licensing exams, and other costs related to training and education. Application submissions slowed this year, though enrollment continued to increase despite the effects of the pandemic. HOPE's enrollment has surpassed 400 and 62% of HOPE students are enrolled in a healthcare-related program. HOPE has expanded supported occupations and Bachelors degree programs and HOPE already has accepted students under these new guidelines, which took effect in October of 2021. At the end of 2021, HOPE had graduated 101 students with a total of 105 credentials earned. This is a healthy increase over the 34 HOPE graduates in 2020. HOPE's graduates have enhanced skills that allow them to become more competitive in the workforce and provide Maine's employers with exemplary candidates for employment and promotion.

ASPIRE Employment and Training

ASPIRE offers employment and training opportunities to work-eligible individuals who are receiving TANF benefits. The program helps TANF recipients move towards financial independence through case management, job training, and education. Needed supports such as childcare, transportation, auto insurance, auto repairs, clothing, and tuition assistance are offered to ensure participants' success.

Although ASPIRE supports both long-term and short-term education and training programs, a collaboration with Destination Occupation has resulted in a certification course for careers in manufacturing. The training begins with a four-week training course through ToolingU, an online industry-training platform. During the second part of the program, participants develop an "elevator pitch", create new resumes, and meet with local manufacturers. Upon successful completion of the course, participants receive industry-recognized certifications from the Manufacturers Association of Maine and the Society of Mechanical Engineers. All enrollees receive a refurbished laptop that they may keep after the course concludes. This course has been successfully run with an ESOL component for participants who speak other languages.

A healthcare pipeline has been designed to include an on-ramp for participants needing barrier remediation. Examples include ESOL classes, academic remediation or assistance, digital literacy, financial literacy, transportation, and job skills.

Other Cross-Program Initiatives

The Department is dedicating resources towards improving the client experience when accessing needed services and benefits. These exciting technology enhancements and projects include:

Resource Dashboard – Benefits Cliff Calculator

The Department continues its partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (Atlanta Fed) to develop and provide a state specific Family Resources Dashboard and a Family Financial Planner tool. The Atlanta Fed has developed an interactive tool called the Dashboard that depicts wages along select career pathways to indicate barriers presented by benefits cliffs. Through this agreement the Atlanta Fed is also developing a personalized Financial Planner, which is intended for more intensive career and financial counseling of families with low income. The Financial Planner allows users to create individually customized career paths which considers benefits, taxes, and expenses over time. The Dashboard and Financial Planner also calculate the net returns to the taxpayer from career advancement. Training on the new Maine-specific tool will begin in January 2022. DOL continues to be an eager and critical partner in the development and planned rollout of these tools.

Online services

OFI is working to replace the current My Maine Connection Portal with new client-centric services offering dynamic flows, self-service, mobile access, and document upload capability. In addition to client benefits, the Department will implement further integrations between the replacement product and the eligibility determination system ACES for enhanced client and staff experience and processing procedures, including auto client clearance methodologies and auto import of client reported data. Applicants and recipients will experience a dynamic communication flow which will only trigger relevant questions for the programs requested. There will be an increase to accessible data sources to reduce consumer burden in providing verifications for eligibility determinations, and ultimately an increase in automation of MAGI MaineCare eligibility determinations for quicker application, recertification, and change processing. OFI has made significant progress on this project since the last report and expect the My Maine Connection replacement to be in use by the public by mid-2022. Work is already under way on the next phase, which will add HOPE, Emergency Assistance, and Alternative Aid programs to the new self-service model.

Future Initiatives

The Department looks forward to continuing to share updates on the initiatives listed above, as well as information on other changes that are currently under development, in the next annual report and in its ongoing work with the Legislature. In addition to the work articulated above, we look forward to:

- The addition of education navigator services for PaS participants, in addition to those services which are provided to HOPE participants currently
- The expansion of transitional transportation services to employed families
- Completing rulemaking in the General Assistance program regarding Recovery Residences to ensure that individuals in the recovery process are provided appropriate and safe housing
- The routine re-procurement of the ASPIRE contract with significant program redesign and improvements, including the use of a family coaching model, a restorative practices and trauma-informed approach, culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery, a hybrid model and state- and contractor-delivered services, and a heightened focus on two major pathways to economic security: education and job placement.

The Department has contracted with a national evaluation team at IMPAQ to provide an evaluation report on the impacts of TANF enhanced earnings disregards and the HOPE program on Maine families. IMPAQ is utilizing a qualitative and quantitative research approach which will result in an evaluation report, expected in 2022.

Acronyms and Definitions

| Acronyms | |
|----------|--|
| ACES | Automated Client Eligibility System |
| AG | Assistance Group |
| ASPIRE | Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment Program |
| BUC | Bureau of Unemployment Compensation |
| COVID | Coronavirus Disease |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus Disease of 2019 |
| CHIP | Children's Health Insurance Program |
| CSSP | Competitive Skills Scholarship Program |
| CY | Calendar Year |
| DHHS | Department of Health and Human Services |
| DOL | Department of Labor |
| DSS | Decision Support System - (OMS Database for MaineCare claims and eligibility data) |
| FSET | Food Supplement Employment and Training |
| FNS | Food and Nutrition Services |
| FPL | Federal Poverty Level |
| SNAP | Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Supplement Program) |
| GA | General Assistance Program |
| HOPE | Higher Opportunities through Pathways to Employment |
| LIFT | Leveraging Investments so Families Can Thrive |
| MAGI | Modified Adjusted Gross Income |
| MC | MaineCare |
| MeCDC | Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention |
| NOD | Notice of Decision |
| OFI | Office for Family Independence |
| OMS | Office of MaineCare Services |
| PaS | Parents as Scholars |
| SNAP | Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program |
| SPIRIT | Successful Partners in Reaching Innovative Technology - (WIC Client Database) |
| SSDI | Social Security Disability Insurance |
| SSI | Supplemental Security Income for aged, blind, and disabled |
| TANF | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families |
| WIC | Women, Infants and Children Special Supplemental Nutrition Program |

Definitions

Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment (ASPIRE): The TANF employment and training program created by the Governor and the Maine Legislature in July 1988, to provide case management, education, training, support and employment services to help TANF recipients to find or create jobs in the local labor market [10-144 CMR Ch. 607]⁴

Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES): The database of information collected by the Office for Family Independence (OFI). The data within ACES is used by other OFI software to determine eligibility, create notices, and issue payments.

Calabrio: Telephony software for client call tracking

Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP): The state children’s health insurance program under Title XXI of the Social Security Act⁵. “Children’s health insurance program includes the Cub Care program, which is established in 22 MRS §3174-T⁶, the federal Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, and the federal State Children’s Health Insurance Program, or S-CHIP. [22 MRS §3174-W⁷]

CubCare: The medical insurance offered to low-income children in the state of Maine pursuant to 22 MRS §3174-T.⁸ Also known as CHIP, or the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

Federal Poverty Level (FPL): The nonfarm income official poverty line for a family of the size involved, as defined by the federal Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with the United States Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 [MRS §3762(1)(C)]⁹

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): The federal supplemental nutrition assistance program administered by the State pursuant to section 22 MRS §3104¹⁰. Formerly known in Maine as Food Supplement.

General Assistance (GA): A service administered by a municipality for the immediate aid of persons who are unable to provide the basic necessities essential to maintain themselves or their families. A general assistance program provides a specific amount and type of aid for defined needs during a limited period and is not intended to be a continuing “grant-in-aid” or “categorical” welfare program. This definition shall not in any way lessen the responsibility of each municipality to provide general assistance to a person each time that the person has need and is found to be otherwise eligible to receive general assistance [22 MRS §4301].¹⁹

Leveraging Investments so Families Can Thrive (LIFT): LD 1774 An Act to Reduce Child Poverty by Leveraging Investments so Families Can Thrive.

MAGI MaineCare: Medicaid provided pursuant to Title II Subtitles A, B, C, and D, of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (PL 111-148)¹⁵

⁴ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/144/144c607.docx>

⁵ https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title21/2100.htm

⁶ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/22/title22sec3174-T.html>

⁷ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/22/title22sec3174-X.html>

⁸ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/22/title22sec3174-T.html>

⁹ <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec3762.html>

¹⁰ <http://legislature.maine.gov/ros/LawsOfMaine/breeze/Law/getDocById/?docId=65814> ¹⁵

<https://www.congress.gov/111/plaws/publ148/PLAW-111publ148.pdf> ?

MaineCare (MC): The healthcare program in Maine which provides free and low-cost health insurance to Mainers who meet certain requirements, based on household composition and income. There are also additional options for people with disabilities and certain health conditions, young adults who have been in foster care, and those who need long term care.¹¹

MaineRx: The prescription drug discount program Maine provides per PL 2003, c. 494¹², and 22 MRS §2681¹³

Notice of Decision (NOD): The written or electronic correspondence to a household or individual seeking aid from OFI that includes the offices decision, reason for that decision, and the rights and responsibilities of the individual.

Parents as Scholars (PaS): A TANF funded support for needy students with dependent children un 22 MRS § 3789-E.¹⁴ These student parents must be matriculated in a two or four-year degree program at a post-secondary education institution.

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the federal program administered by the State pursuant to section 3104. Formerly known in Maine as Food Supplement.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI): A federal entitlement program to support individuals who, previously, paid an adequate amount of payroll taxes and are now determined to be disabled administered under 42 USC §223 *et seq.*¹⁵

Standard of Need (SON): Figures used in the determination of TANF and PaS eligibility and benefit amounts. The amount of income necessary to meet the full need in relation to household size.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment and Training (SNAP E and T): A workforce development program established in accordance with 7 USC 2015(d)(4)¹⁶ to serve Food Supplement recipients. In Maine this is referred to as the Food Supplement Employment and Training (FSET) Program.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): Payments made by the federal government under 42 USC § 1381¹⁷ *et seq.* to individuals who are determined to be aged, blind, or disabled and meet certain financial means tests.

TANF: The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, under the United States Social Security Act, as amended by the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) (PL 104-193¹⁸).

TANF Closed/Terminated: An individual has been determined to no longer be eligible for TANF benefits. TANF assistance will no longer be issued to the individual, but they may be able to receive transitional benefits [10-144 CMR Ch. 331]¹⁹. Due to adverse notification requirements an individual may receive a notice of closure/termination and receive one final TANF monthly cash payment. In this situation the TANF case is determined closed/terminated following the last day of the month of the final benefit.

¹¹ <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofc/programs-services/health-care-assistance>

¹² <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec2681.pdf>

¹³ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/22/title22sec2681.html>

¹⁴ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/22/title22sec3790.html>

¹⁵ https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title02/0223.htm

¹⁶ <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title7/chapter51&edition=prelim>

¹⁷ <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter7/subchapter16&edition=prelim>

¹⁸ <https://www.congress.gov/104/plaws/publ193/PLAW-104publ193.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/144/144c331.docx>

Unsubsidized Employment: Working for wages or salary where no part of that compensation is paid in full or in part, or is reimbursed to the employer in full or in part by a job placement or training program paid for in full or in part by federal, state, or local government funds.

WIC: The Women, Infants and Children Special Supplemental Food Program is run by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and is described in 22 MRS §3107²⁰. [PL 2019, c. 485, §1 (NEW).]²¹

²⁰ <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec3107.html>

²¹ <http://legislature.maine.gov/ros/LawsOfMaine/breeze/Law/getDocById/?docId=65814>