

Unfinished Business: Why Cities Matter to Welfare Reform

Georgia

An analysis of welfare caseloadsⁱ in the 89 urban counties that contain the 100 largest US citiesⁱⁱ between 1994 and 1999 found that:

- In 1999, ten states, including Georgia, accounted for nearly 70 percent of the nation's welfare caseloads, up significantly from 42.5 percent in 1994. The bulk of the national welfare population can be found in: California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington. These ten states contained 53 percent of the overall national population in 1999.
- While urban welfare caseloads are declining rapidly, they are shrinking

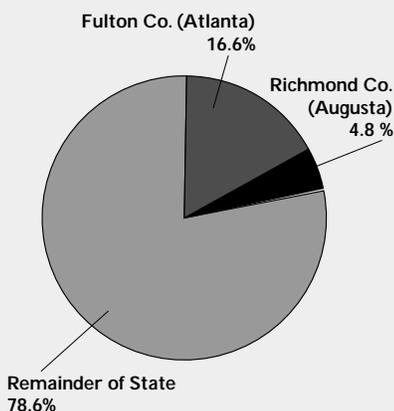
more slowly than national caseloads. Georgia has a few exceptions to this trend. While the nation's welfare caseloads dropped by 51.5 percent between 1994 and 1995, the state and Fulton County (Atlanta) reduced their caseloads by slightly faster rates: 53.4 and 53.5 percent, respectively. However, Richmond County (Augusta) lagged behind the nation, with a caseload decline of 35 percent.

- Richmond County's share of the state's families on welfare has grown between 1994 and 1999; Fulton County's proportion has remained the same. Richmond County contained 6.7 percent of Georgia's welfare caseloads in 1999, up from

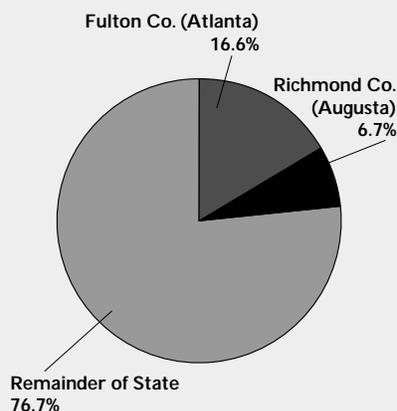
4.8 percent in 1994. Fulton County's share of the state's welfare caseload remained the same in that period, at 16.6 percent.

- Both Georgia counties are shouldering a disproportionate share of their state's welfare cases when compared to their share of the state's total population. While Richmond County contained only 2.4 percent of Georgia's population in 1999, it contained 6.7 percent of the state's welfare caseload, nearly three times (2.8) its "fair share." Fulton County was home to 9.6 percent of the state's residents but was home to 16.6 percent of its welfare recipients, a fair share index of 1.7.ⁱⁱⁱ

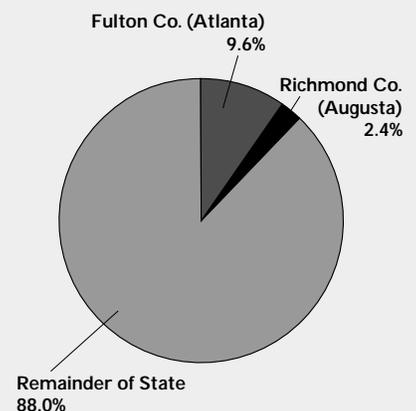
A. Share of Georgia's Welfare Caseload, 1994



B. Share of Georgia's Welfare Caseload, 1999



C. Share of Georgia's Population, 1999

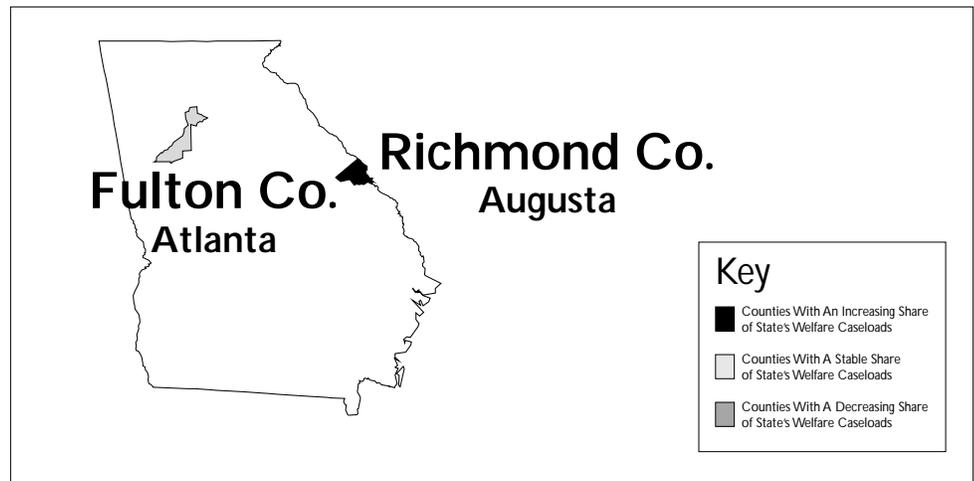




Georgia Data Table

	Welfare Cases 1999	% Decline in Welfare Cases 1994–1999	% of State Caseload 1994	% of State Caseload 1999	% of State Population 1999	Fair Share Index ⁱⁱⁱ	City Concentrated Poverty Rate 1990 ^{iv}	% of County Population Central City 1998 ^v
Georgia	65,198	53.4%						
Fulton Co. (Atlanta)	10,804	53.5%	16.6%	16.6%	9.6%	1.7	23.3%	54.8%
Richmond Co. (Augusta)	4,381	35.0%	4.8%	6.7%	2.4%	2.8	n/a	98.1%

Right: The map indicates the change in concentration of state welfare caseloads in the two Georgia counties between 1994 and 1999. Richmond County (Augusta) experienced an increased concentration of Georgia's welfare cases, while Fulton County's share of the state caseload (Atlanta) remained stable during that time period.



Endnotes

- i. The caseload data reflect the number of welfare cases, not individual recipients. Welfare cases may include a two-parent household with children, a single-parent household with children, or cases where there is no adult in the assistance unit (child-only cases). The data also reflect the number of cases that received cash assistance under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and its successor, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
- ii. Because welfare programs, both AFDC and TANF, are typically administered at the county-level, the caseload data reflect the county caseloads, not the number of cases within the central cities. For the most part, the use of county-level caseload data may understate the central city welfare trends because of the inclusion of welfare cases from suburbs.
- iii. The Fair Share Index conveys the share of the state welfare population contained in a county, compared with the county's share of the overall state population. The Fair Share Index is a ratio of two figures: the county's percentage of the state welfare caseload in 1999 divided by the county's percentage of the state total population in 1999.
- iv. The concentrated poverty rate reflects the percentage of the city population that lived in census tracts where 40 percent of the residents were poor in 1990 (the most recent year for which concentrated poverty data is available). Concentrated poverty is associated with the social characteristics and behaviors that define the so-called "hard-to-serve" welfare population: illiteracy, chronic unemployment, poor work history, no high school diploma, low skills, teenage pregnancy and out-of-wedlock births.
- v. The percentage of the county population that lives in the central city indicates how "urban" the county and, by extension, the welfare caseload actually is. Counties in the Southwest and West are relatively larger than the Northeastern and Midwestern counties and contain larger suburban populations. We would expect that the welfare population is more urban even in relatively more suburban counties. The indicator serves as a rough estimate of how well the county welfare data captures city-specific welfare trends.

Full Report Available at:
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