

Unfinished Business: Why Cities Matter to Welfare Reform Pennsylvania

An analysis of welfare caseloadsⁱ in the 89 urban counties that contain the 100 largest citiesⁱⁱ found that:

- In 1999, ten states, including Pennsylvania, 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 caseloads are declining rapidly, they are shrinking more slowly than national caseloads. Philadelphia County followed this trend, while Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) was an exception to it. While the nation's welfare caseloads dropped by 51.5 percent between 1994 and 1999, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia County lagged behind the national decline. The state's welfare rolls declined by 49.6 percent and Philadelphia County's caseloads decreased by 36.2 per-

cent. Allegheny County reduced its caseloads slightly faster than the nation, at a rate of 53.5 percent. There were 106,318 cases in Pennsylvania in 1999; Philadelphia and Allegheny counties contained 52,251 and 11,407 cases, respectively.

- Philadelphia County's share of the state's families on welfare grew between 1994 and 1999, and Allegheny County's share stayed relatively stable. Philadelphia County contained 49.1 percent of Pennsylvania's welfare caseloads in 1999, up significantly from 38.9 percent in 1994. Allegheny County had 10.7 percent of the state's welfare caseload in 1999.
- Philadelphia County is shouldering a disproportionate share of Pennsylvania's welfare cases when compared to its share of the state's total population. Allegheny County had roughly equivalent percentages of the state welfare and overall populations. While Philadelphia County contained only 11.8 percent of Pennsylvania's total population in

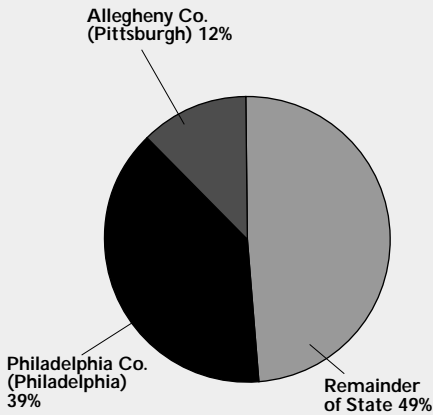
1999, it contained 49.1 percent of the state's welfare caseload, more than four times (or 4.2 times) its "fair share." Philadelphia County had the fourth highest Fair Share Index of the 89 counties surveyed. Allegheny County was home to 10.5 percent of the state's population in 1999 and contained 10.7 percent of the state's welfare recipients (a Fair Share Index of 1.0).ⁱⁱⁱ

- Racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented on the Philadelphia County welfare rolls compared to their numbers in the total population. In Philadelphia County, the only Pennsylvania county for which racial and ethnic data was available, whites comprise more than half of the total population, but only 11 percent of the welfare rolls. Blacks are slightly more than 40 percent of the total population, but comprise nearly 70 percent of the welfare rolls. Hispanics comprise 7.5 percent of Philadelphia's total population, but 15.3 percent of the county's welfare caseload.^{iv}

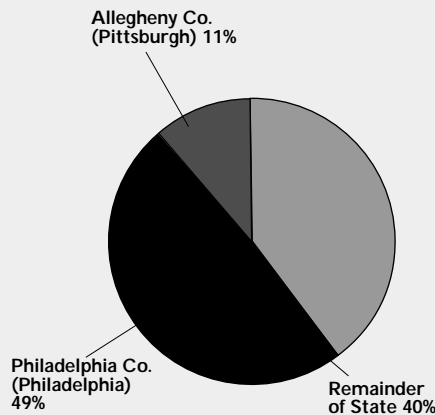




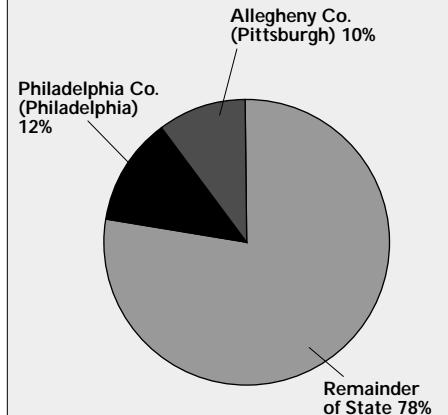
A. Share of Pennsylvania's Welfare Caseload, 1994



B. Share of Pennsylvania's Welfare Caseload, 1999



C. Share of Pennsylvania's Total Population, 1999



Pennsylvania Data Table

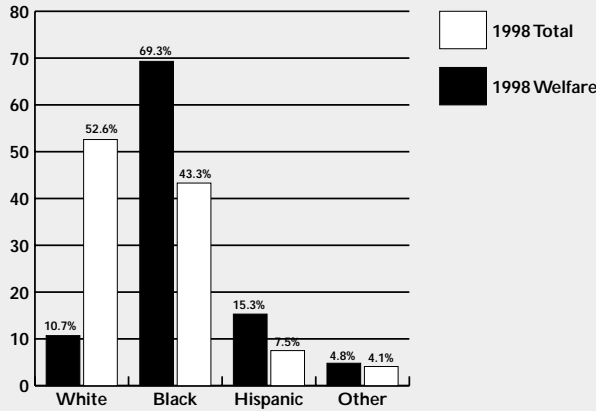
	Welfare Cases 1999	% Decline in Welfare Cases 1994-1999	% of State Caseload 1994	% of State Caseload 1999	% of Total State Population 1999	Fair Share Index 1999	City Concentrated Poverty Rate ^{ix} 1990	% of County Population in Central City ^v 1998
Pennsylvania	106,318	49.6%						
Allegheny Co. (Pittsburgh)	11,407	53.5%	11.6%	10.7%	10.5%	1.0	15.4%	26.9%
Philadelphia Co. (Philadelphia)	52,251	36.2%	38.7%	49.1%	11.8%	4.2	12.1%	100.0%

Right: The map indicates the change in concentration of state welfare caseloads in the two Pennsylvania counties between 1994 and 1999. Philadelphia County experienced an increased concentration of Pennsylvania's welfare cases, while Allegheny County's share of the state caseload stayed relatively stable during that time period.





**Philadelphia County Racial and Ethnic Composition:
Total Population vs. Welfare Caseload, 1998**



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 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
- v 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.

Full Report Available at:
www.brookings.edu/urban

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