

Unfinished Business: Why Cities Matter to Welfare Reform Ohio

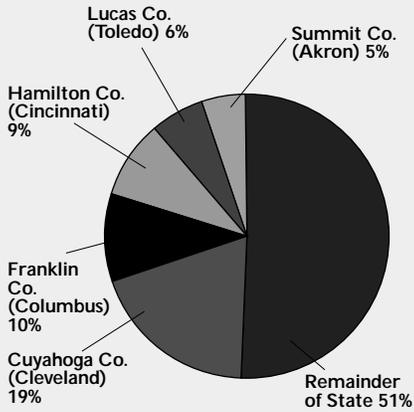
An analysis of welfare caseloadsⁱ in the 89 urban counties that contain the 100 largest US citiesⁱⁱ found that:

- In 1999, ten states, including Ohio, 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. Ohio has a few exceptions to this trend. While the nation's welfare caseloads dropped by 51.5 percent between 1994 and 1999, the state, Franklin County (Columbus), and Hamilton County (Cincinnati) reduced their caseloads even faster, at rates of 57.5 percent, 56.9 percent, and 60.8 percent, respectively. However, Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), Lucas County (Toledo), and Summit County (Akron) lagged behind the nation, with caseload declines of 45.8 percent, 49.1 percent, and 41.7 percent, respectively.
- Cuyahoga, Lucas, and Summit counties' shares of Ohio's families on welfare grew between 1994 and 1999; Franklin and Hamilton counties' proportion remained stable. Cuyahoga County contained 24.5 percent of the state's welfare caseload in 1999, up from 19.2 percent in 1994. Lucas and Summit counties contained 7.6 percent and 7.1 percent of the state's caseload, respectively, in 1999. Franklin and Hamilton counties' shares of the state's welfare caseload stayed relatively stable in that period, with 10.6 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively.
- All of Ohio's counties are shouldering a disproportionate share of the state's welfare cases when compared to their share of Ohio's total population. While Cuyahoga County contained only 12.2 percent of Ohio's population in 1999, it contained 24.5 percent of the state's welfare caseload, twice its "fair share". Lucas County was home to 4.0 percent of the state's population, but contained 7.6 percent of its welfare rolls, a fair share index of 1.9. Franklin, Hamilton, and Summit counties also had more than their fair shares of welfare caseloads, but maintained slightly lower Fair Share Indices of 1.2, 1.1, and 1.5, respectively, in 1999.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented on the Franklin County welfare rolls compared to their numbers in the total county population. In Franklin County (Columbus), the only Ohio county for which racial and ethnic data was available, whites comprise nearly 80 percent of the total population, but less than a third of the welfare rolls. Blacks are less than a fifth of the total population, but 64 percent of the welfare caseload.^{iv}

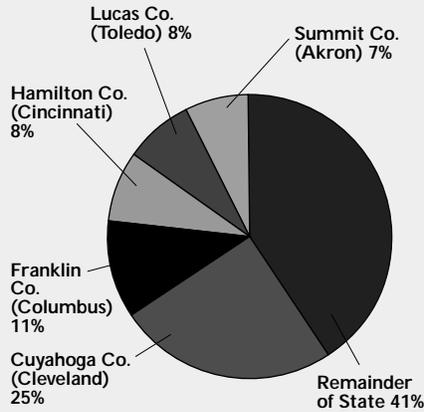




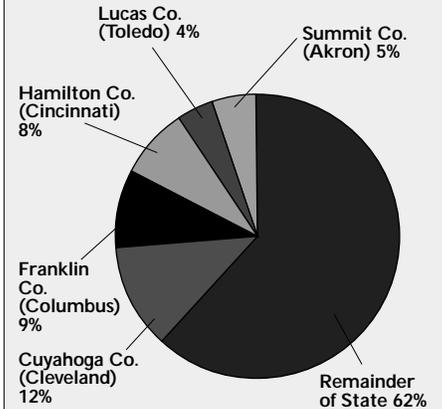
A. Share of Ohio's Welfare Caseload, 1994



B. Share of Ohio's Welfare Caseload, 1999



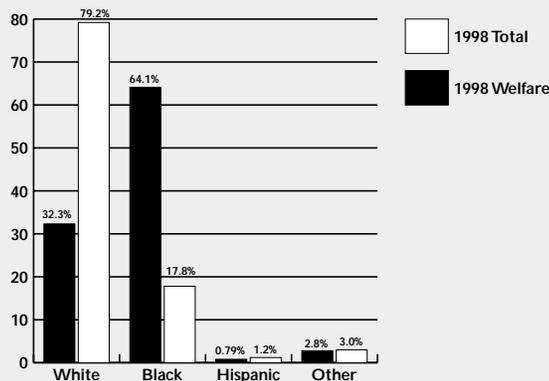
C. Share of Ohio's Total Population, 1999



Ohio Data Table

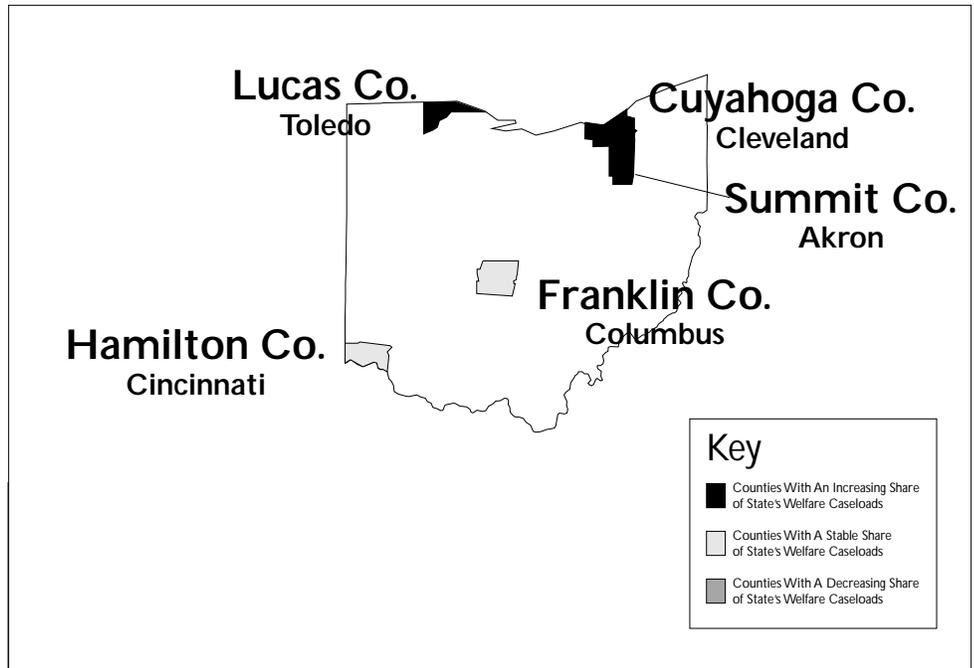
| | Welfare Cases 1999 | % Decline in Welfare Cases 1994-1999 | % of State Caseload 1994 | % of State Caseload 1999 | % of Total State Population 1999 | Fair Share Index 1999 | City Concentrated Poverty Rate' 1990 | % of County Population in Central City ^{vi} 1998 |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Ohio | 104,655 | 57.5% | | | | | | |
| Cuyahoga Co. (Cleveland) | 25,671 | 45.8% | 19.2% | 24.5% | 12.2% | 2.0 | 19.9% | 35.9% |
| Franklin Co. (Columbus) | 11,082 | 56.9% | 10.4% | 10.6% | 9.1% | 1.2 | 11.8% | 65.6% |
| Hamilton Co. (Cincinnati) | 8,612 | 60.8% | 8.9% | 8.2% | 7.5% | 1.1 | 18.8% | 39.7% |
| Lucas Co. (Toledo) | 7,955 | 49.1% | 6.3% | 7.6% | 4.0% | 1.9 | 10.8% | 69.6% |
| Summit Co. (Akron) | 7,475 | 41.7% | 5.2% | 7.1% | 4.8% | 1.5 | 14.6% | 40.2% |

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





Right: The map indicates the change in concentration of state welfare caseloads in the five Ohio counties between 1994 and 1999. Three of the five counties—Cuyahoga, Lucas, and Summit—experienced an increased concentration of Ohio's welfare cases; Franklin and Hamilton counties' share of the state caseload remained stable between 1994 and 1999.



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 Percentages may not add up to 100 percent, since the ethnic category "Hispanic" may overlap with other racial categories.
- 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.
- vi 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:
www.brookings.edu/urban

For More Information:
 Katherine Allen
 Senior Research Analyst
 (202) 797-6075
kallen@brookings.edu

For General Information:
 Brookings Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy
 Phone: (202) 797-6139
 Website: www.brookings.edu/urban/

