



# CASH MATTERS:

Reimagining anti-racist TANF policy  
in Georgia

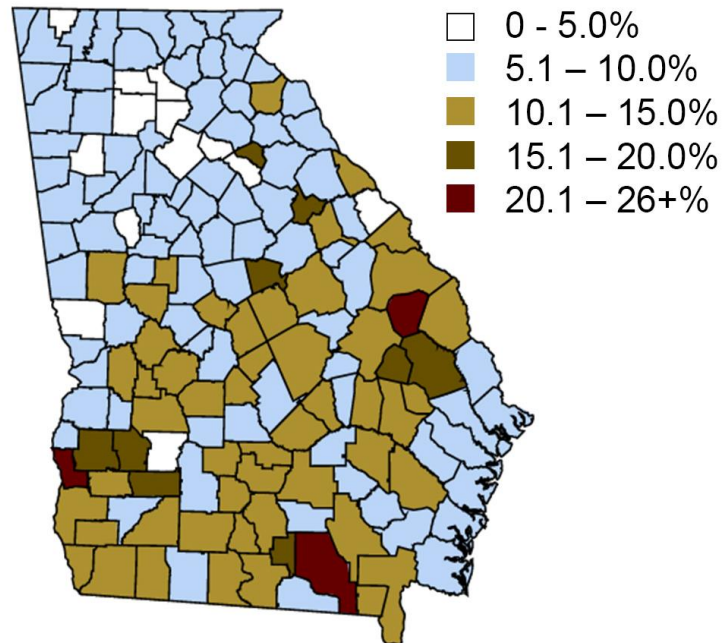
Alex Camardelle, Ph.D.



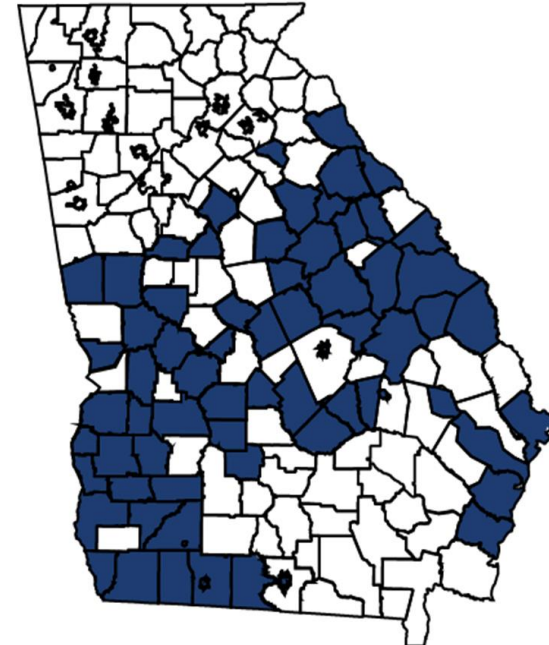
# WHY CASH MATTERS

***Many Counties with 10% or More of People Living in Deep Poverty are in the Black Belt***

Deep Poverty in Georgia (50% of FPL, or \$905 per month for a family of three), 2019



Counties in the Black Belt

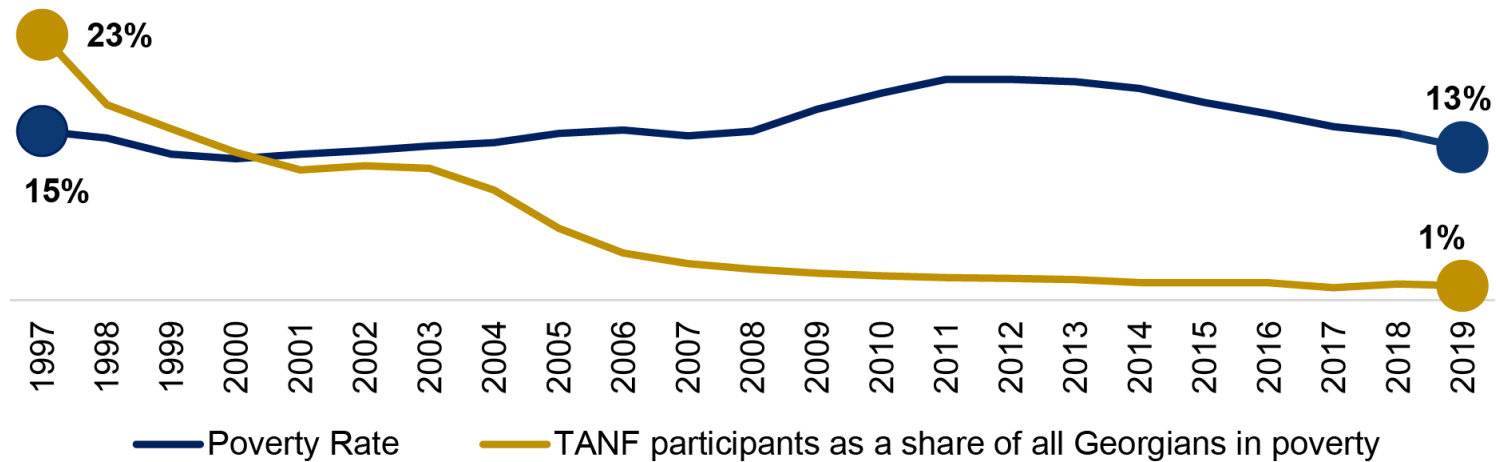


Source: GBPI county-by-county analysis of deep poverty using data provided by the University of Michigan Poverty Solutions Project.

# WHY CASH MATTERS

## *Despite Stubborn Poverty Rates, TANF Does Not Meet the Need in Georgia*

Poverty rates and TANF participants as a share of the entire population in poverty, 1997-2019



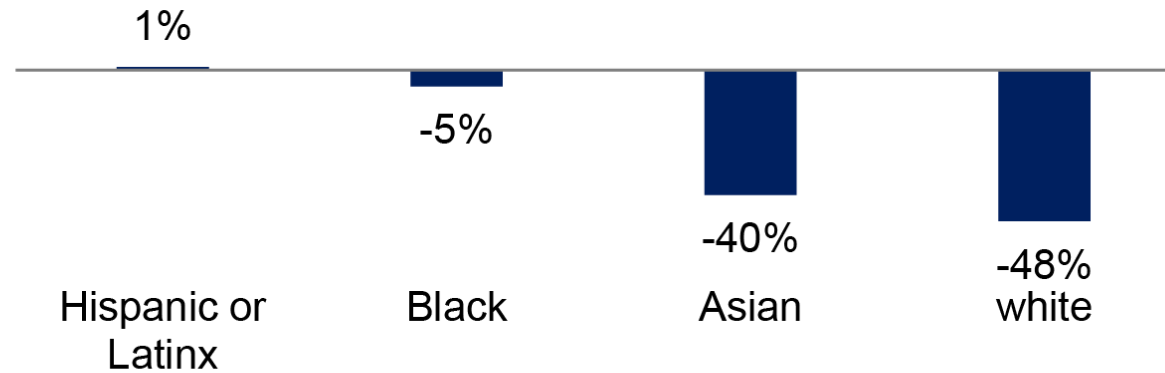
Source: GBPI analysis of data retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.



# WHY CASH MATTERS

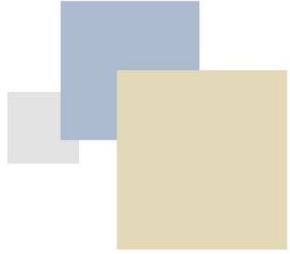
## ***Economic Recovery is Already Proving to be Slowest for Black and Latinx Georgians***

Change in unemployment claims by race from April 2020 to August 2020



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

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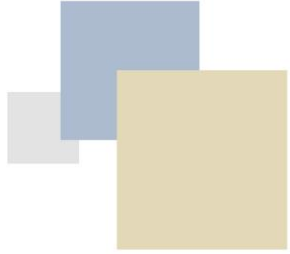


# HISTORY

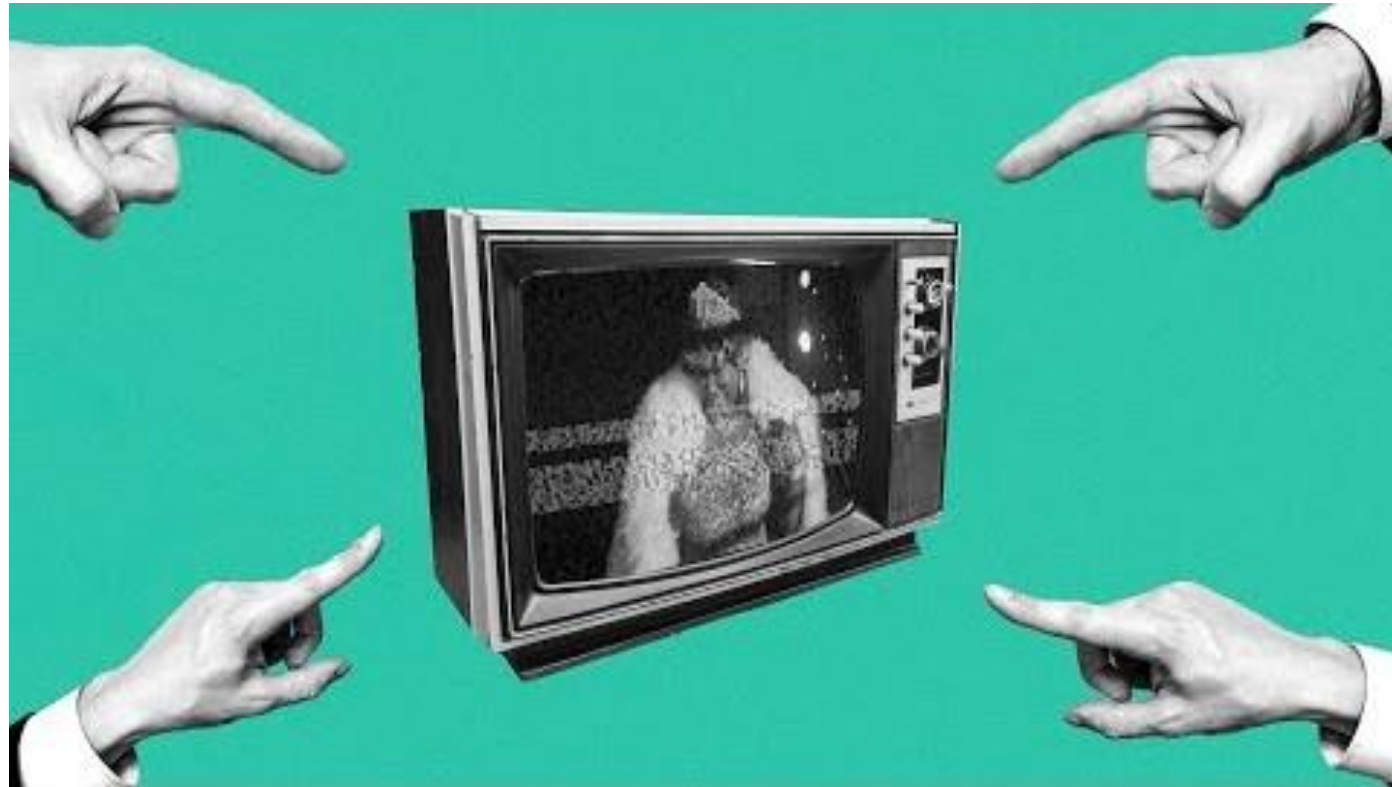
- *“This period of race-blind public policy has resulted in the creation and maintenance of racial inequality through stealth methods. The racially encoded discourse of personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, single-motherhood and culture of dependency suggests the undeservingness of welfare participants, who are increasingly becoming Black.”*

– *Shannon Monnat, in Toward a Critical Understanding of Gendered Color-Blind Racism Within the U.S. Welfare Institution*





# HISTORY



LINK: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPYpiML-M08&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPYpiML-M08&feature=emb_logo)

# NEWS THIS MORNING

*April 29, 1972*

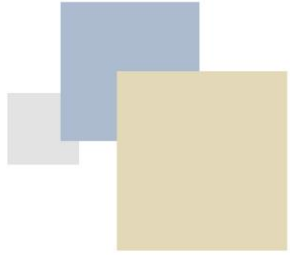
GOOD MORNING! Saturday's weather should be cloudy and mild, with rain likely, for Georgians. Cooler weather with less chance of rain is forecast for Saturday night, with Sunday clear and mild. Details on Page 2-A.

## WORLD

OXFORD, England — After 750 years, women undergraduates will be admitted to five of Oxford's men's colleges. But it's only on an experimental basis, and won't

# Senators: Work Or Lose Aid

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate Finance Committee voted 10 to 4 Friday to knock President Nixon's new family assistance plan out of his welfare reform bill and substitute a tough work-or-else program for many recipients.



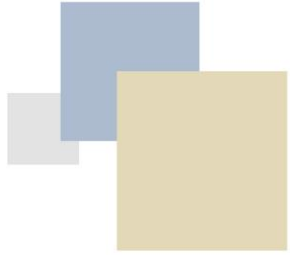
# HISTORY

In 1951, Governor Herman Talmadge sought to “put an end to illegitimate baby-having as a business in Georgia.”

The state’s Director of the Department of Public Welfare, Alan Kemper, supported the governor’s call to implement a family cap by arguing that “70 percent of the cases of multiple illegitimacy in a family were in Negro families.”

He claimed that a family cap would halt a “growing tendency to produce illegitimate children as a good business” and “save the state \$444,000 annually.”





# HISTORY

Racial terror in Georgia also played a role in erecting barriers that prevented access to benefits.

In the 1960s, the state's Department of Welfare had to send investigators to Webster County in Southwest Georgia because there were "reports that Negroes eligible for welfare benefits—particularly aid to dependent children—refused to apply for the benefit for fear that their homes would be burned or their lives placed in jeopardy."

# HISTORY

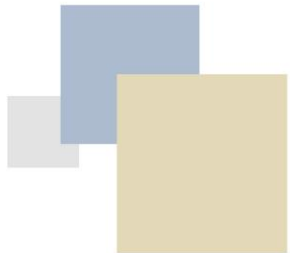




# RACIALIZED TANF IN GEORGIA

*“The most important barriers impacting Georgians of color in poverty are structural, and policies like TANF that do not address structural racism and in turn blame individual participants for failing to overcome those barriers are therefore racialized policies.*

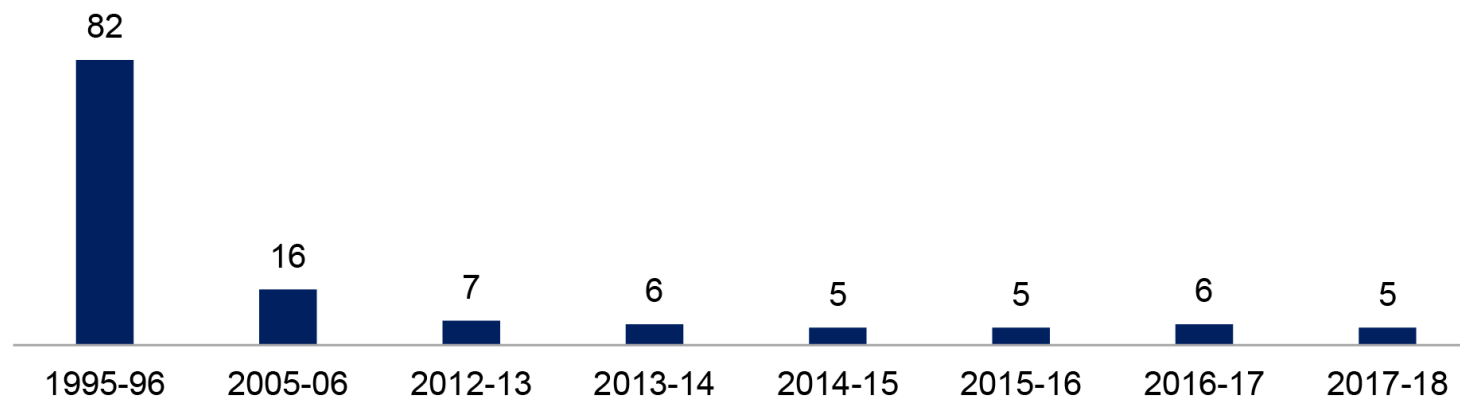
*Refusing to account for inequitable opportunity in the economy makes TANF a policy that reproduces rather than mitigates racial disadvantage among participants.”*



# RACIALIZED TANF IN GEORGIA

***Number of Families in Georgia Receiving TANF Cash Assistance for Every 100 Families with Children in Poverty Has Decreased Over Time***

TANF-to-poverty ratios by year

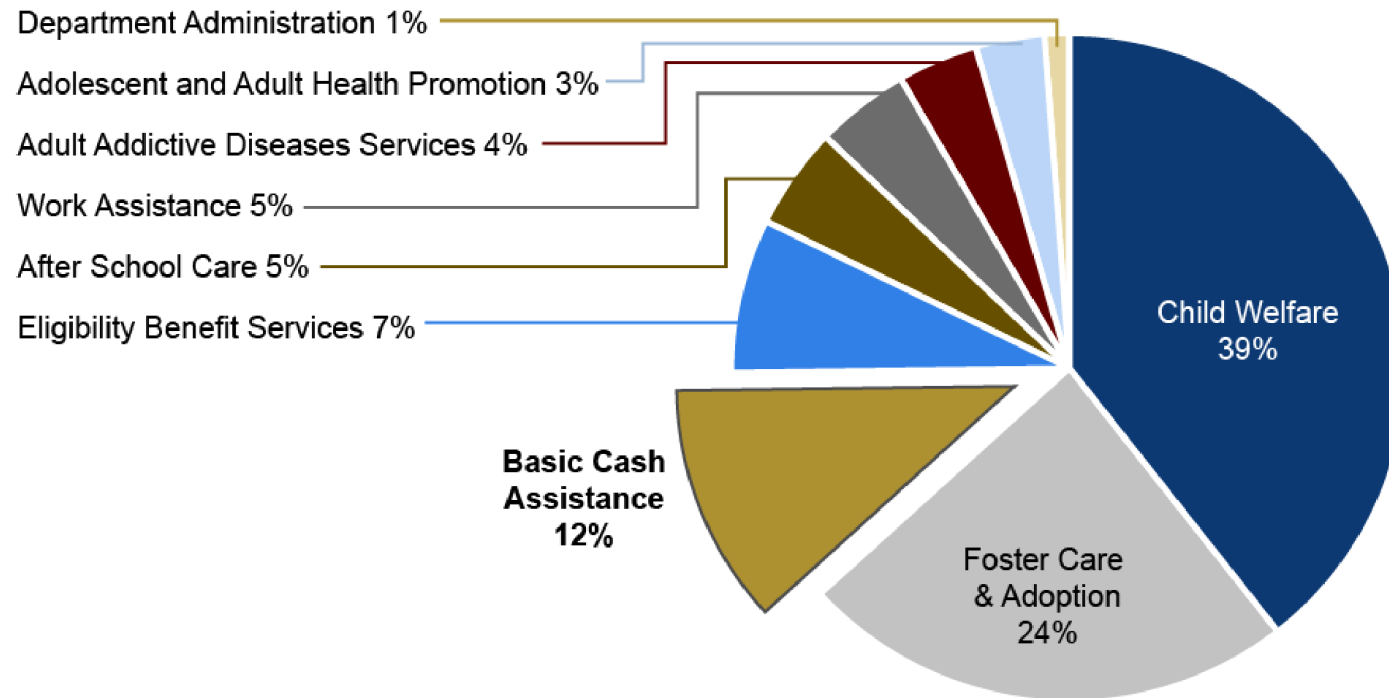


*Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of poverty data from the Current Population Survey and AFDC/TANF caseload data from Department of Health and Human Services and (since September 2006) caseload data collected by CBPP from state agencies.*

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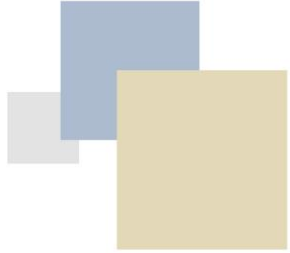
# RACIALIZED TANF IN GEORGIA

## *How Georgia Spends its Federal TANF Block Grant in FY 2021*



Source: GBPI analysis of Georgia's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget.

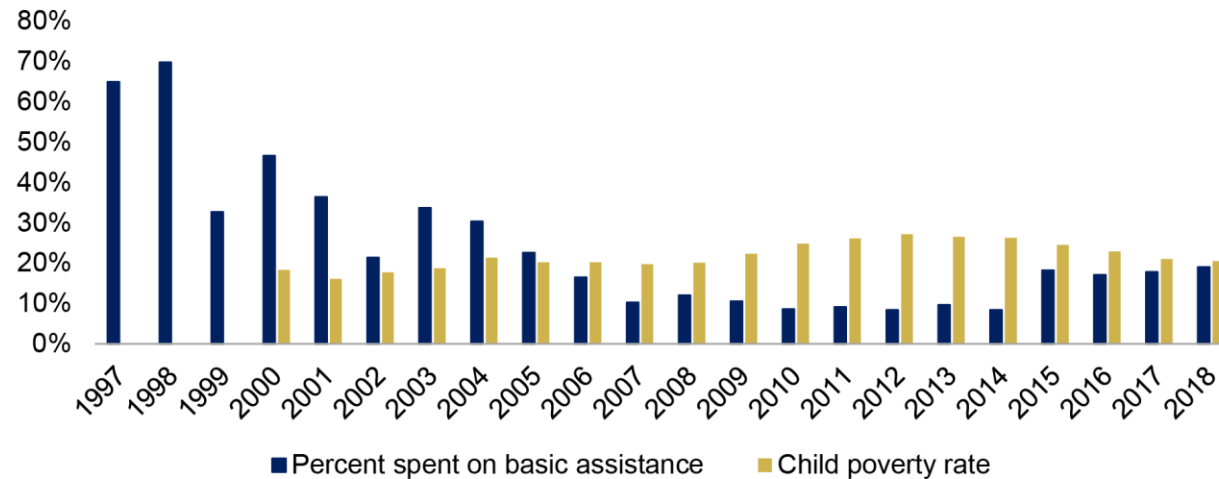
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# RACIALIZED TANF IN GEORGIA

## *Spending on Direct Cash Aid Through TANF Dwindling Despite Stubbornly High Child Poverty Rates*

Share of Georgia's block grant spent on direct cash assistance compared to child poverty rates, 1997-2018

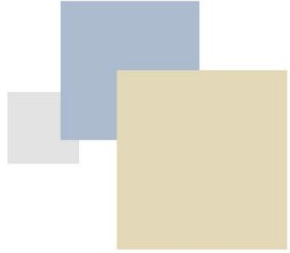


*Note: Child poverty data for Georgia only available beginning in the year 2000.*

*Source: GBPI analysis of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services TANF Financial Reports and U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey.*

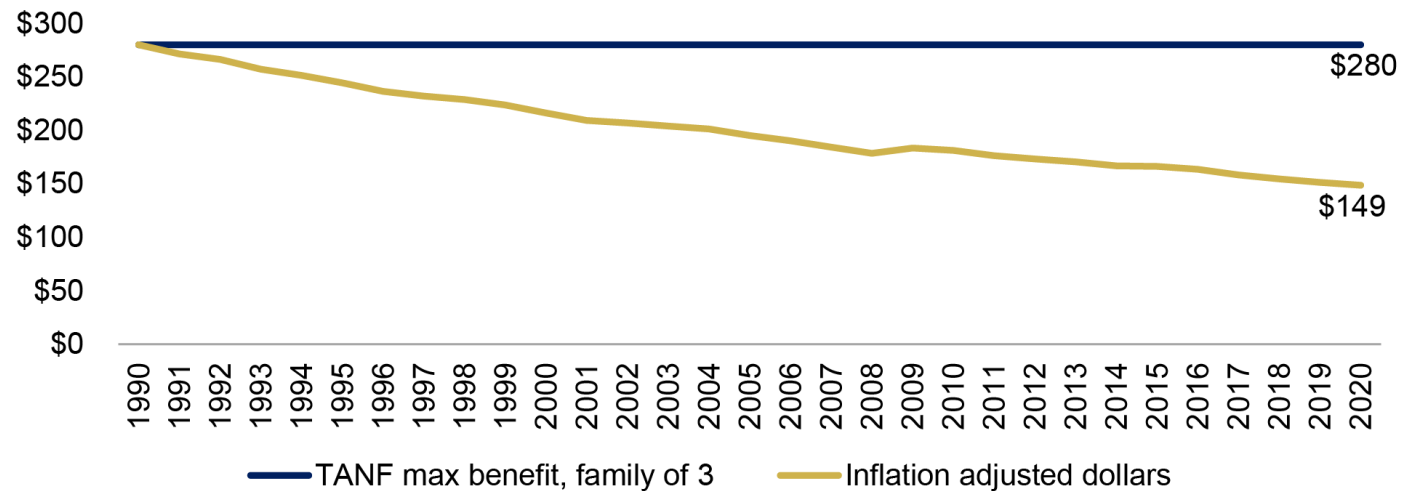
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# RACIALIZED TANF IN GEORGIA

***TANF Benefits in Georgia Cannot Keep Up with the Costs of Basic Needs and Continue to Lose Value***

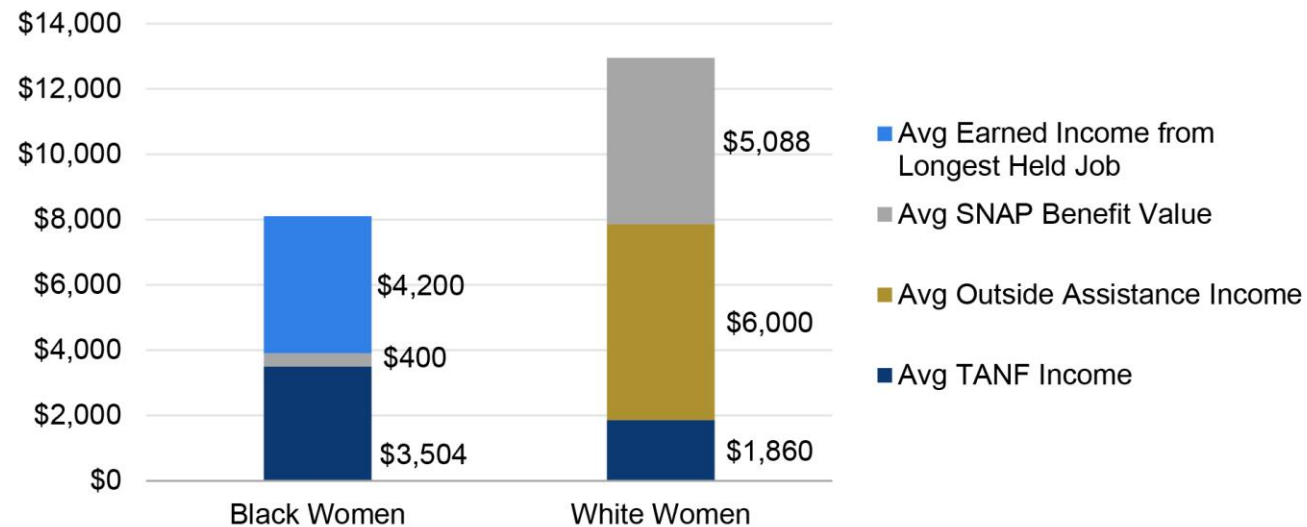


Source: GBPI calculations using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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# RACIALIZED TANF IN GEORGIA

***When Considering TANF and Other Sources, White Women Report More Assistance From Other Sources Than Black Women***



*Note: Above chart shows average TANF and other safety net income, and earned income among TANF recipients below SPM poverty line in 2018. It does not include other forms of public assistance, including those labeled as General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, Cuban/Haitian Refugee Assistance, and Indian Assistance, as those forms did not receive large enough survey samples to be reported in the CPS.*

*Source: IPUMS-CPS, University of Minnesota.*

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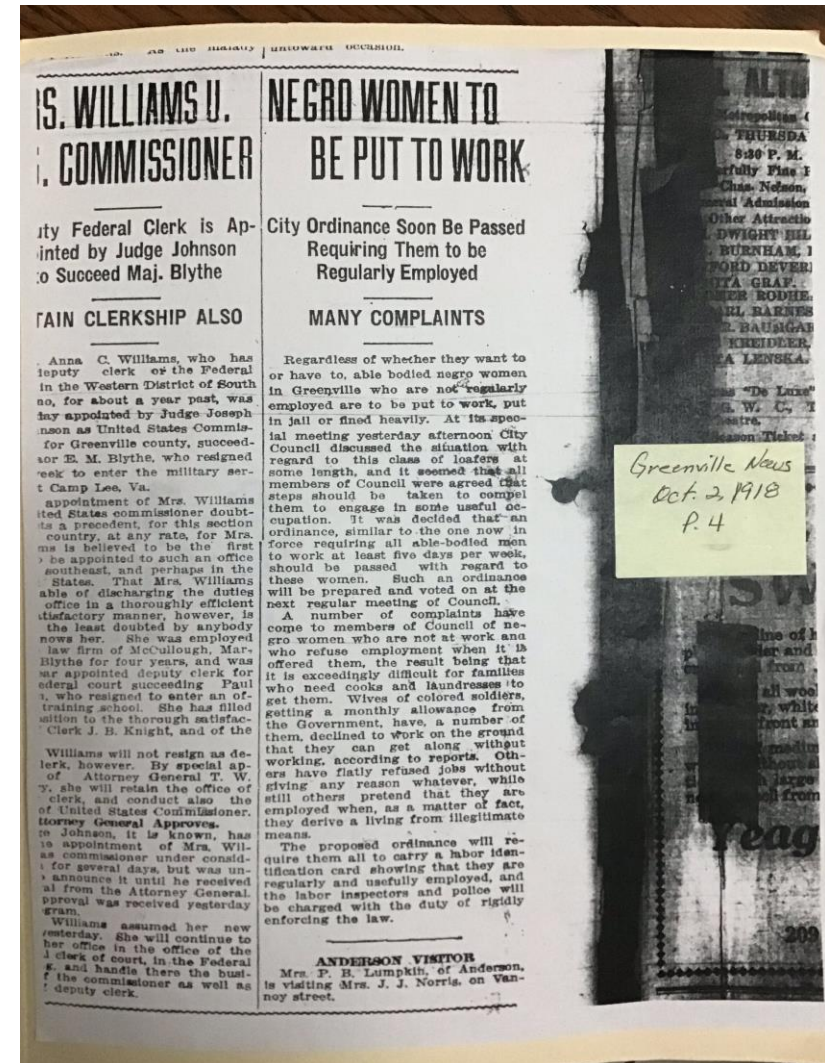
# RACIST BARRIERS TO WELFARE

- Work requirements

“R egardless of whether they want to or have to, able bodied negro women in Greenville who are not regularly employed are to be put to work, put in jail or fined heavily

A number of complaints have come to members of Council of negro women who are not at work and who refuse employment when it is offered to them, the result being that it is exceedingly difficult for families who need cooks and laundresses to get them

The proposed ordinance will require them all to carry a labor identification card showing that they are regularly and usefully employed, and the labor inspectors and police will be charged with the duty of rigidly enforcing the law.”





# RACIST BARRIERS TO WELFARE

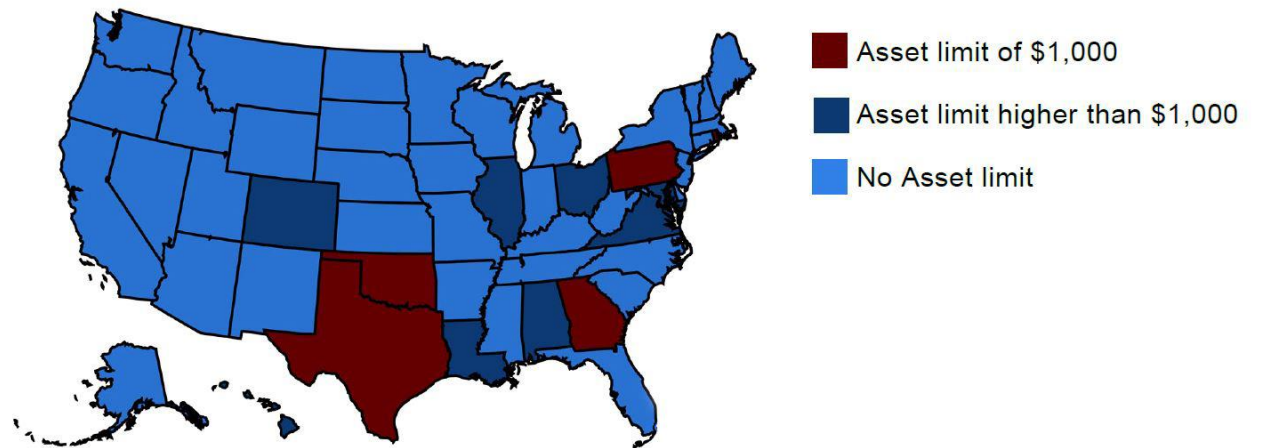
- Family Cap
- This outdated provision is based on inaccurate assumptions that Black women enrolled in cash assistance have children in order to collect additional benefits.[57] The provision denies basic assistance to children who, through no fault of their own, are born while their mothers are on TANF.

# RACIST BARRIERS TO WELFARE

- Asset limits

- Georgia imposes one of the lowest asset limits in the country. While most states have increased the amount of assets prospective TANF participants can own to remain eligible, Georgia's asset limit has remained a flat \$1,000 since 1996.
- The policy requires families to be economically fragile instead of enabling them to build savings, which could help combat racial wealth disparities. The median net worth of white households in Georgia (\$123,830) is seven times higher than for Black Georgians (\$16,790).
- By enforcing policies that prevent very low-income families from building a reasonable savings baseline, Georgia is using the TANF program to actively widen the racial wealth gap.

*Most States Have Asset Limits Higher than Georgia or No Asset Limit at All*



Source: GBPI analysis of the Urban Institute Welfare Rules Database.

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# RACIST BARRIERS TO WELFARE

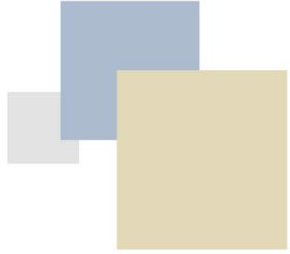
- Drug felony ban
- Federal law bans individuals who have been convicted of a drug-related felony from receiving TANF, although states can elect to opt out of this ban.
- Georgia has maintained this ban, prohibiting even those who complete drug treatment programs and other forms of recovery.
- In other words, despite the program's emphasis on personal responsibility, TANF punishes those who exercise personal responsibility by working to achieve recovery.
- For decades, the War on Drugs has resulted in the targeting of communities of color, resulting in the conviction and incarceration of disproportionate numbers of Black and Latinx people who are currently overrepresented in Georgia's prison population.





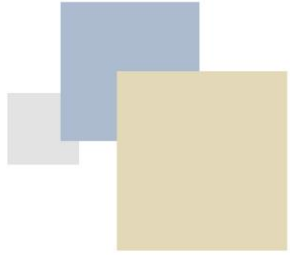
# RACIST BARRIERS TO WELFARE

- Ban on immigrant eligibility
- One of the most egregious and explicit forms of discrimination in TANF is the ban on certain immigrant groups from eligibility. Federal law bars all undocumented immigrants from accessing cash assistance from federal TANF funds.
- The cruel ban on undocumented immigrants receiving benefits negatively impacts immigrants of all ages and citizen children who are eligible for assistance. Currently, 610,000 people, including 270,000 children, live in a Georgia household with at least one parent who is not a citizen
- As a result of these recent anti-immigrant policies, such as the public charge rule, states have seen a decline in participation in public assistance from immigrant families, which has the sharpest negative impact on children.



# SOLUTIONS

Lawmakers must champion solutions that recognize the disparities reinforced by policies driven by harmful tropes, particularly the disparities among Georgia's children and families of color that are in deep poverty.



# SOLUTIONS

- **Allocate a greater share of the TANF block grant to cash assistance**
- **Allocate unused TANF funds to establish a non-recurrent cash assistance program**
- **Increase Georgia's maximum benefit to help lift families out of deep poverty**
- **Increase lifetime limit to 60 months and enact exemptions based on economic conditions**
- **Suspend work requirements in areas with difficult labor markets, using data disaggregated by race/ethnicity**
- **Repeal the TANF family Cap**
- **Georgia should eliminate the TANF asset limit**
- **Repeal the drug felony ban**
- **Repeal the federal ban on all new immigrant access to cash assistance**



# BIG BOLD SOLUTION





# DISCUSSION & Q&A