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Welfare Caseloads in 27 States Decline in First Quarter of 2003 *Most states show only small caseload fluctuations*

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July 18, 2003

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has collected new data on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseloads through March 2003 for 49 states and the District of Columbia.¹ (Figures from Maine are not yet available, due to the state's transition to a new computer system.) These are the most current and complete data available.² Between December 2002 and March 2003, 23 states reported caseload increases and 27 reported decreases. The changes in most states, whether up or down, were very small; in 32 states, the March 2003 caseload was within 3 percent of the December caseload. Over the past year, between March 2002 and March 2003, 22 states had caseload increases and 28 had decreases. Since the start of the recession in March 2001, 29 states have reported caseload increases, and 21 have reported decreases.

Due to the absence of caseload data from Maine, we cannot present a figure for the national welfare caseload. Not counting Maine, the caseload total for the other 49 states and the District of Columbia decreased 0.4 percent in the first quarter. Because Maine is a relatively small state, however, the addition of their caseload figures to the total is unlikely to substantially affect the national total.

Since March 1997, the national TANF caseload has declined each year, but the rate of decline has slowed over time. Drawing from DHHS official data and state data reported to CLASP, we find that the national caseload declined by 20.1 percent between March 1997 and March 1998, but declined by a little more than 2 percent between March 2001

¹ CLASP has been gathering caseload data with the cooperation of state TANF agencies (for simplicity's sake, we refer to the District of Columbia as a state in the rest of our analysis). These data do not include caseload information for Puerto Rico, Guam, or the Virgin Islands.

² CLASP has posted these figures in an effort to supplement data available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS's most recent official TANF caseload data (through September 2002) are posted at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/2002tanffamilies.htm>. The National Conference of State Legislatures also has posted unofficial caseload data at <http://www.ncsl.org/statefed/welfare/caseload02.htm>. Please note that the initial caseload data reported to CLASP are sometimes subsequently modified, and some states report data slightly differently from how they are reported at DHHS's website, so these numbers may change by the time they are formally posted by DHHS.

and March 2002, and by a little less than 2 percent over the last year. The table below documents the change in annual declines over this time period.

	Change in National TANF Caseload	Number of States with Annual Caseload Declines Greater Than 15 Percent
March 1997 – March 1998	-20.1%	39
March 1998 – March 1999	-16.9%	28
March 1999 – March 2000	-14.6%	17
March 2000 – March 2001	-6.9%	5
March 2001 – March 2002	-2.2%	3
March 2002 – March 2003 ³	-1.9%	2

Most states continue to report fluctuating caseloads on a month-to-month basis. However, six states (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Tennessee, and Washington) reported a steady caseload increase for the past six months (September-March). No state has experienced a steady decline over the same six months.

In reviewing the new caseload data, CLASP also finds:

- **In the last quarter, 27 states reported decreases.** From December 2002 to March 2003, 23 states reported caseload increases, while 27 reported decreases. Over the same period last year (December 2001 to March 2002), 27 states experienced caseload increases.
- **Over the year, from March 2002 to March 2003, TANF caseloads increased in 22 states.** Over this period, for states with increases, the average increase was 6.6 percent. In comparison, during the prior year, from March 2001 to March 2002, 33 states reported increases, averaging 10.4 percent.
- **One state experienced caseload growth of at least 15 percent in the past year.** Idaho’s caseload grew by 22.5 percent between March 2002 and March 2003.
- **Two states experienced a caseload decline of at least 15 percent in the past year.** Between March 2002 and March 2003, Illinois reported a caseload decline of 23.3 percent and Nevada reported a decline of 15 percent.
- **Most states are experiencing relatively small caseload changes each quarter.** In the current quarter, between December 2002 and March 2003, 32 states saw their caseload change by less than 3 percent. Six states (Alaska, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Wisconsin) saw their caseloads change by more than 5 percent.

³ Figures for this year are from data CLASP collected. Change in the national caseload for March 2002-March 2003 does not include data from Maine. Other years are from DHHS’s official caseload figures.

- **Twenty-nine states have experienced an overall caseload increase since the recession began.** Between the “official” start of the recession in March 2001 and March 2003, 29 states have experienced a caseload increase. On average, states experiencing an increase in this period have seen a caseload increase of 15.1 percent. The states experiencing the largest increases over this period are Nevada (53.7 percent), Idaho (32.1 percent), Arizona (30.6 percent), Indiana (30.2 percent), Mississippi (28.8 percent), and Montana (28.8 percent). For the 21 states experiencing caseload declines during the recession, the average decrease has been 12.3 percent, with the largest declines in Illinois (39.5 percent), New York (34.1 percent), Wyoming (27.5 percent), and Hawaii (25.1 percent).

Selected state-by-state caseload data are attached. To view more complete month-by-month caseload figures, please visit the CLASP website at www.clasp.org.

State TANF Caseload Data, Selected Months, March 2001-March 2003⁴

	Mar-01	Mar-02	Dec-02	Mar-03	Change 3/01 – 3/03	Change 3/02 – 3/03	Change 12/02 – 3/03
Alabama	18,396	18,203	18,802	18,987	3.2%	4.3%	1.0%
Alaska	6,181	6,453	5,246	5,549	-10.2%	-14.0%	5.8%
Arizona	36,870	43,367	47,840	48,148	30.6%	11.0%	0.6%
Arkansas	12,022	12,246	11,689	11,169	-7.1%	-8.8%	-4.4%
California	471,668	467,749	448,798	449,165	-4.8%	-4.0%	0.1%
Colorado	10,696	12,289	12,900	13,321	24.5%	8.4%	3.3%
Connecticut	25,101	23,171	22,363	22,754	-9.4%	-1.8%	1.7%
Delaware	5,887	5,778	6,024	5,961	1.3%	3.2%	-1.0%
District of Columbia	16,241	16,267	16,940	16,882	3.9%	3.8%	-0.3%
Florida	58,723	61,679	62,551	59,876	2.0%	-2.9%	-4.3%
Georgia	49,814	53,587	56,553	55,325	11.1%	3.2%	-2.2%
Hawaii	13,252	11,294	10,402	9,924	-25.1%	-12.1%	-4.6%
Idaho	1,311	1,414	1,642	1,732	32.1%	22.5%	5.5%
Illinois	63,626	50,137	41,229	38,472	-39.5%	-23.3%	-6.7%
Indiana	40,421	49,072	53,154	52,624	30.2%	7.2%	-1.0%
Iowa	19,916	20,430	19,832	19,806	-0.6%	-3.1%	-0.1%
Kansas	12,659	13,646	14,469	14,694	16.1%	7.7%	1.6%
Kentucky	34,633	32,270	32,016	31,893	-7.9%	-1.2%	-0.4%
Louisiana	25,776	24,331	24,584	23,082	-10.5%	-5.1%	-6.1%
Maine	9,710	9,934	9,505	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maryland	28,040	27,869	26,784	26,008	-7.2%	-6.7%	-2.9%
Massachusetts	42,250	46,915	48,239	48,407	14.6%	3.2%	0.3%
Michigan	70,192	77,470	71,897	74,961	6.8%	-3.2%	4.3%
Minnesota	38,316	35,816	35,969	36,257	-5.4%	1.2%	0.8%
Mississippi	15,213	17,346	20,280	19,597	28.8%	13.0%	-3.4%
Missouri	48,670	49,379	46,949	45,996	-5.5%	-6.9%	-2.0%
Montana	4,990	6,041	6,238	6,427	28.8%	6.4%	3.0%
Nebraska	10,482	11,538	11,995	12,218	16.6%	5.9%	1.9%
Nevada	7,240	13,089	11,497	11,130	53.7%	-15.0%	-3.2%
New Hampshire	5,580	6,150	6,210	6,321	13.3%	2.8%	1.8%
New Jersey	45,581	42,032	41,853	41,899	-8.1%	-0.3%	0.1%
New Mexico	20,986	18,850	16,468	16,093	-23.3%	-14.6%	-2.3%
New York	227,409	164,085	150,159	149,947	-34.1%	-8.6%	-0.1%
North Carolina	43,309	44,242	42,330	41,294	-4.7%	-6.7%	-2.4%
North Dakota	2,909	3,082	3,288	3,284	12.9%	6.6%	-0.1%
Ohio	87,283	87,224	87,335	86,263	-1.2%	-1.1%	-1.2%
Oklahoma	13,919	14,399	15,101	14,370	3.2%	-0.2%	-4.8%
Oregon	16,031	18,428	18,409	18,928	18.1%	2.7%	2.8%
Pennsylvania	87,903	87,559	85,816	85,917	-2.3%	-1.9%	0.1%
Rhode Island	15,245	14,554	13,684	13,424	-11.9%	-7.8%	-1.9%
South Carolina	16,513	20,080	21,234	19,953	20.8%	-0.6%	-6.0%
South Dakota	2,702	2,924	2,891	2,777	2.8%	-5.0%	-3.9%
Tennessee	59,520	62,683	67,409	68,897	15.8%	9.9%	2.2%
Texas	129,602	129,781	135,960	132,677	2.4%	2.2%	-2.4%
Utah	8,163	8,603	8,769	9,082	11.3%	5.6%	3.6%
Vermont	5,586	5,144	4,973	4,904	-12.2%	-4.7%	-1.4%
Virginia	29,410	30,669	30,545	30,568	3.9%	-0.3%	0.1%
Washington	55,019	55,933	54,460	56,513	2.7%	1.0%	3.8%
West Virginia	13,380	14,639	13,809	14,096	5.4%	-3.7%	2.1%
Wisconsin	17,207	18,688	20,000	21,078	22.5%	12.8%	5.4%
Wyoming	575	490	425	417	-27.5%	-14.9%	-1.9%

⁴ Please see full spreadsheet for information about how data may differ from numbers reported to ACF.

State TANF Caseload Data, Change During First Quarter 2003

	December 2002	March 2003	Change
Alaska	5,246	5,549	5.8%
Idaho	1,642	1,732	5.5%
Wisconsin	20,000	21,078	5.4%
Michigan	71,897	74,961	4.3%
Washington	54,460	56,513	3.8%
Utah	8,769	9,082	3.6%
Colorado	12,900	13,321	3.3%
Montana	6,238	6,427	3.0%
Oregon	18,409	18,928	2.8%
Tennessee	67,409	68,897	2.2%
West Virginia	13,809	14,096	2.1%
Nebraska	11,995	12,218	1.9%
New Hampshire	6,210	6,321	1.8%
Connecticut	22,363	22,754	1.7%
Kansas	14,469	14,694	1.6%
Alabama	18,802	18,987	1.0%
Minnesota	35,969	36,257	0.8%
Arizona	47,840	48,148	0.6%
Massachusetts	48,239	48,407	0.3%
Pennsylvania	85,816	85,917	0.1%
New Jersey	41,853	41,899	0.1%
California	448,798	449,165	0.1%
Virginia	30,545	30,568	0.1%
North Dakota	3,288	3,284	-0.1%
Iowa	19,832	19,806	-0.1%
New York	150,159	149,947	-0.1%
District of Columbia	16,940	16,882	-0.3%
Kentucky	32,016	31,893	-0.4%
Indiana	53,154	52,624	-1.0%
Delaware	6,024	5,961	-1.0%
Ohio	87,335	86,263	-1.2%
Vermont	4,973	4,904	-1.4%
Wyoming	425	417	-1.9%
Rhode Island	13,684	13,424	-1.9%
Missouri	46,949	45,996	-2.0%
Georgia	56,553	55,325	-2.2%
New Mexico	16,468	16,093	-2.3%
Texas	135,960	132,677	-2.4%
North Carolina	42,330	41,294	-2.4%
Maryland	26,784	26,008	-2.9%
Nevada	11,497	11,130	-3.2%
Mississippi	20,280	19,597	-3.4%
South Dakota	2,891	2,777	-3.9%
Florida	62,551	59,876	-4.3%
Arkansas	11,689	11,169	-4.4%
Hawaii	10,402	9,924	-4.6%
Oklahoma	15,101	14,370	-4.8%
South Carolina	21,234	19,953	-6.0%
Louisiana	24,584	23,082	-6.1%
Illinois	41,229	38,472	-6.7%

Note: Data from Maine are unavailable at this time.

State TANF Caseload Data, Annual Change, March 2002 – March 2003

	March 2002	March 2003	Change
Idaho	1,414	1,732	22.5%
Mississippi	17,346	19,597	13.0%
Wisconsin	18,688	21,078	12.8%
Arizona	43,367	48,148	11.0%
Tennessee	62,683	68,897	9.9%
Colorado	12,289	13,321	8.4%
Kansas	13,646	14,694	7.7%
Indiana	49,072	52,624	7.2%
North Dakota	3,082	3,284	6.6%
Montana	6,041	6,427	6.4%
Nebraska	11,538	12,218	5.9%
Utah	8,603	9,082	5.6%
Alabama	18,203	18,987	4.3%
District of Columbia	16,267	16,882	3.8%
Georgia	53,587	55,325	3.2%
Massachusetts	46,915	48,407	3.2%
Delaware	5,778	5,961	3.2%
New Hampshire	6,150	6,321	2.8%
Oregon	18,428	18,928	2.7%
Texas	129,781	132,677	2.2%
Minnesota	35,816	36,257	1.2%
Washington	55,933	56,513	1.0%
Oklahoma	14,399	14,370	-0.2%
New Jersey	42,032	41,899	-0.3%
Virginia	30,669	30,568	-0.3%
South Carolina	20,080	19,953	-0.6%
Ohio	87,224	86,263	-1.1%
Kentucky	32,270	31,893	-1.2%
Connecticut	23,171	22,754	-1.8%
Pennsylvania	87,559	85,917	-1.9%
Florida	61,679	59,876	-2.9%
Iowa	20,430	19,806	-3.1%
Michigan	77,470	74,961	-3.2%
West Virginia	14,639	14,096	-3.7%
California	467,749	449,165	-4.0%
Vermont	5,144	4,904	-4.7%
South Dakota	2,924	2,777	-5.0%
Louisiana	24,331	23,082	-5.1%
North Carolina	44,242	41,294	-6.7%
Maryland	27,869	26,008	-6.7%
Missouri	49,379	45,996	-6.9%
Rhode Island	14,554	13,424	-7.8%
New York	164,085	149,947	-8.6%
Arkansas	12,246	11,169	-8.8%
Hawaii	11,294	9,924	-12.1%
Alaska	6,453	5,549	-14.0%
New Mexico	18,850	16,093	-14.6%
Wyoming	490	417	-14.9%
Nevada	13,089	11,130	-15.0%
Illinois	50,137	38,472	-23.3%

Note: Data from Maine are unavailable at this time.

State TANF Caseload Data, Change Since Recession, March 2001 – March 2003

	March 2001	March 2003	Change
Nevada	7,240	11,130	53.7%
Idaho	1,311	1,732	32.1%
Arizona	36,870	48,148	30.6%
Indiana	40,421	52,624	30.2%
Mississippi	15,213	19,597	28.8%
Montana	4,990	6,427	28.8%
Colorado	10,696	13,321	24.5%
Wisconsin	17,207	21,078	22.5%
South Carolina	16,513	19,953	20.8%
Oregon	16,031	18,928	18.1%
Nebraska	10,482	12,218	16.6%
Kansas	12,659	14,694	16.1%
Tennessee	59,520	68,897	15.8%
Massachusetts	42,250	48,407	14.6%
New Hampshire	5,580	6,321	13.3%
North Dakota	2,909	3,284	12.9%
Utah	8,163	9,082	11.3%
Georgia	49,814	55,325	11.1%
Michigan	70,192	74,961	6.8%
West Virginia	13,380	14,096	5.4%
District of Columbia	16,241	16,882	3.9%
Virginia	29,410	30,568	3.9%
Oklahoma	13,919	14,370	3.2%
Alabama	18,396	18,987	3.2%
South Dakota	2,702	2,777	2.8%
Washington	55,019	56,513	2.7%
Texas	129,602	132,677	2.4%
Florida	58,723	59,876	2.0%
Delaware	5,887	5,961	1.3%
Iowa	19,916	19,806	-0.6%
Ohio	87,283	86,263	-1.2%
Pennsylvania	87,903	85,917	-2.3%
North Carolina	43,309	41,294	-4.7%
California	471,668	449,165	-4.8%
Minnesota	38,316	36,257	-5.4%
Missouri	48,670	45,996	-5.5%
Arkansas	12,022	11,169	-7.1%
Maryland	28,040	26,008	-7.2%
Kentucky	34,633	31,893	-7.9%
New Jersey	45,581	41,899	-8.1%
Connecticut	25,101	22,754	-9.4%
Alaska	6,181	5,549	-10.2%
Louisiana	25,776	23,082	-10.5%
Rhode Island	15,245	13,424	-11.9%
Vermont	5,586	4,904	-12.2%
New Mexico	20,986	16,093	-23.3%
Hawaii	13,252	9,924	-25.1%
Wyoming	575	417	-27.5%
New York	227,409	149,947	-34.1%
Illinois	63,626	38,472	-39.5%

Note: Data from Maine are unavailable at this time.