

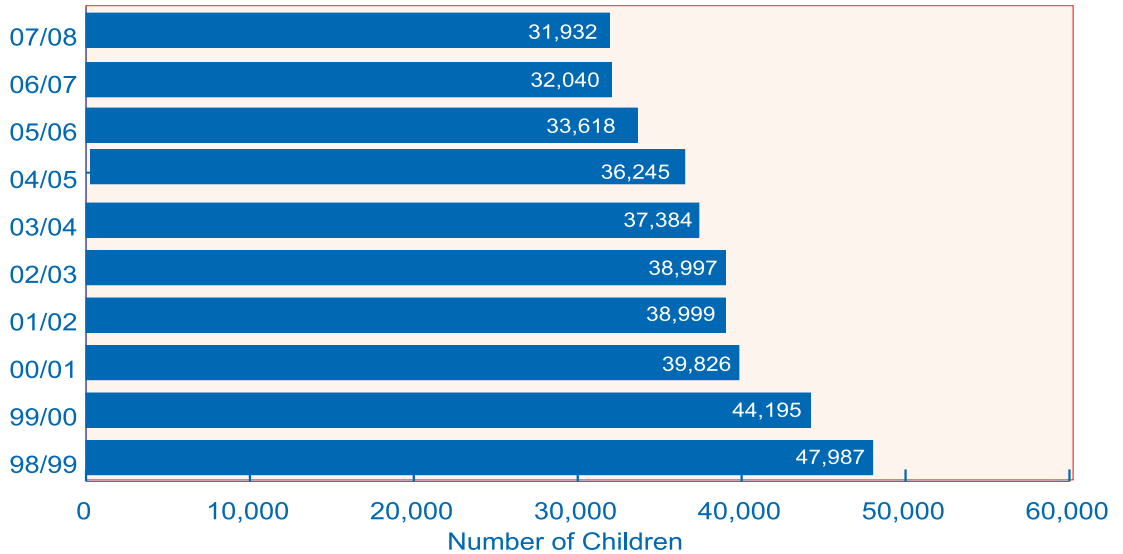
Definition of Indicator

The federal welfare reform legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, known in California as the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program, provides financial assistance to needy children and families in Orange County. This indicator reports the average number of children per month under the age of 18 receiving financial assistance through CalWORKs.

Findings

In 2007/08, 31,932 children per month on average received financial assistance through CalWORKs. These children represent 83% of the total CalWORKs recipients. In Orange County, 4% of all children receive financial assistance through CalWORKs compared to the 10.7% of all children in California.

Children Receiving Financial Assistance Through CalWORKs*, 1998/99 to 2007/08



*CalWORKs replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in January 1998.

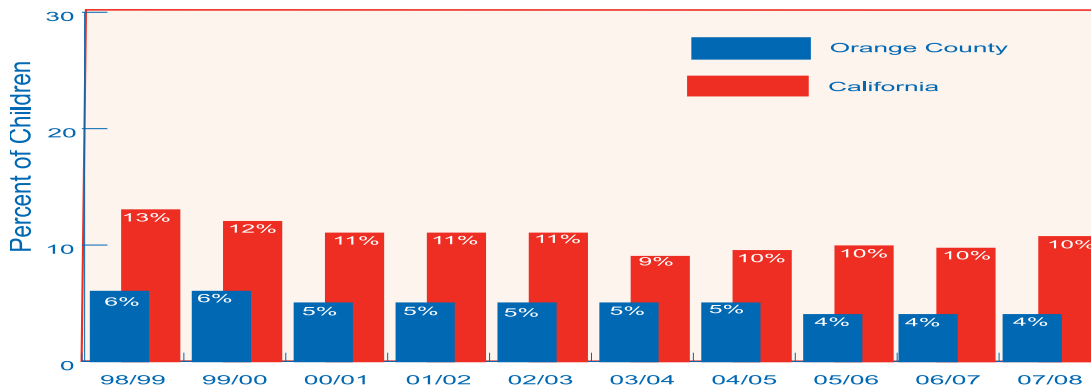
RELATED INDICATORS:

- Free and Reduced Lunch
- Supplemental Nutrition Programs
- Child Support
- Access to Healthcare
- Early Prenatal Care

Trends

Over a 10-year period, there was a 33.5% decrease in the number of children receiving financial assistance, from 47,987 in 1998/99 to 31,932 in 2007/08. Of the total population of children under the age of 18 in Orange County, the percent of children receiving financial assistance decreased from its high of 6% in 1998/99 to 4% in 2007/08. In context, the child population in Orange County increased from 777,723 in 1998/99 to 800,820 in 2007/08.

Percent of Children Receiving CalWORKs* of the Total Population Under 18 Years of Age, 1998/99 to 2007/08



*AFDC prior to January 1998.
Sources: Orange County Social Services Agency

Why is this Important?

The CalWORKs program has multiple goals, including reduced welfare dependency, increased self-sufficiency, and decreased non-marital childbearing. In addition, some county agencies have placed improved child well-being as a foremost goal. CalWORKs legislation sought to achieve the goals of improving child well-being by enhancing work opportunities and support services, preventing out-of-wedlock births, and encouraging family formation. Elements that focus on child well-being include school attendance requirements, child immunizations, and assisting with paternity and child support enforcement activities.¹ The CalWORKs program includes a “safety net” for children, meaning children continue to receive aid when adults reach their five year time limit to receive aid, or if an adult is sanctioned for not cooperating with program requirements.

What’s Happening in Orange County?

The percent of children receiving CalWORKs is an indicator of Orange County’s capacity to successfully meet welfare reform program priorities and help families achieve self-sufficiency through employment income.

- SSA has implemented a CalWORKs program that focuses on job attainment, job retention, and supportive services to enable successful employment outcomes and family stability.
- Orange County is recognized as an innovator in implementing CalWORKs strategies designed to prevent child maltreatment and improve family well-being.
- The California Linkages Project supports collaborative strategies for providing services and case management to families at the intersection of the CalWORKs and Child Welfare systems.

What’s working:

- Initial Services Workers (ISWs) perform eligibility determinations and provide employment and family services at a single point of contact for CalWORKs applicants and newly-approved participants. ISWs are able to gain a broad understanding of the financial status, employment readiness and family stability of each participant. This model allows for early identification of family needs and employment barriers, and promotes successful program participation.
- Substance abuse and mental health services, domestic abuse services, childcare, transportation, and employment and support services meet the needs of the harder-to-serve clients.

✓ See page 154 in Supplemental Tables for additional data

NATIONWIDE:

In 2008, the total number of recipients for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was 3,950,357. From 1998 the number of families receiving TANF assistance has increased by 23.5%.²

DATA SOURCE:

Orange County Social Services Agency

NOTES:

¹RAND Statewide CalWORKs Evaluation
²U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, 2009