

The Washington State Budget & Policy Center works to advance the economic well-being of all Washingtonians.

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Our Equity Statement

Equity is just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. In the context of the Washington State Budget & Policy Center's work, we believe equity is achieved when a Washingtonian's race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ability, immigration status, language ability, or neighborhood of residence does not determine their health, income, wealth, educational attainment, or access to opportunity.

Inequities are not random, but are the consequences of past and persistent policy and budget decisions that are embedded and reinforced in our social, economic, and political systems, institutions, practices, and norms.

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Our Equity Statement (cont.)

As a statewide policy and research organization, we are committed to advancing equity by promoting key social and economic policies to dismantle barriers, grow great jobs, clean up our state tax code, build strong communities, expand access to opportunities, and improve the quality of life for all Washington residents.

We lead with race because racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive. When we work to advance policies that eliminate racial inequity, we are better equipped to transform systems and institutions impacting other groups who also face barriers to opportunity.

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Racial equity goals for working with data:

- Disaggregate data by race, ethnicity, nationality as often as data allows
- Incorporate discussion of impacts of policies on communities of color into all analysis to the extent possible
- Engage in conversation with the communities who are reflected in the data to understand the context for data, its limitations, and areas for further inquiry
- ***In 2019 with our Kids Count State of Washington Kids Report: “treating the responses of communities of color to data *as data.*”



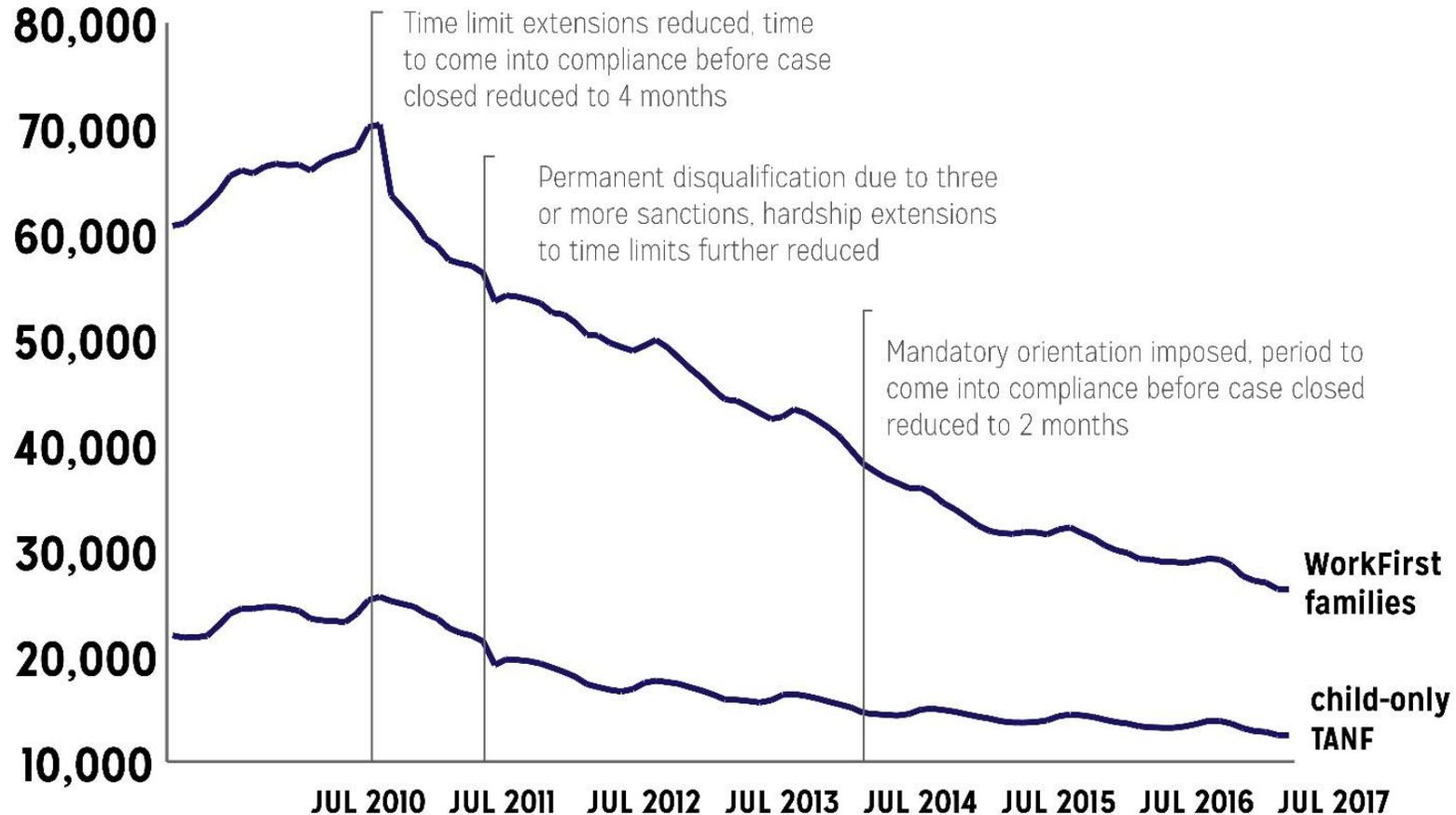
The Statewide Poverty Action Network

We fight against root causes of poverty and advocate for equitable policy reform that creates more opportunities for low-income communities and communities of color in Washington state.

Our work starts and ends within the community, ensuring accountability to those most directly impacted by the effects of poverty.

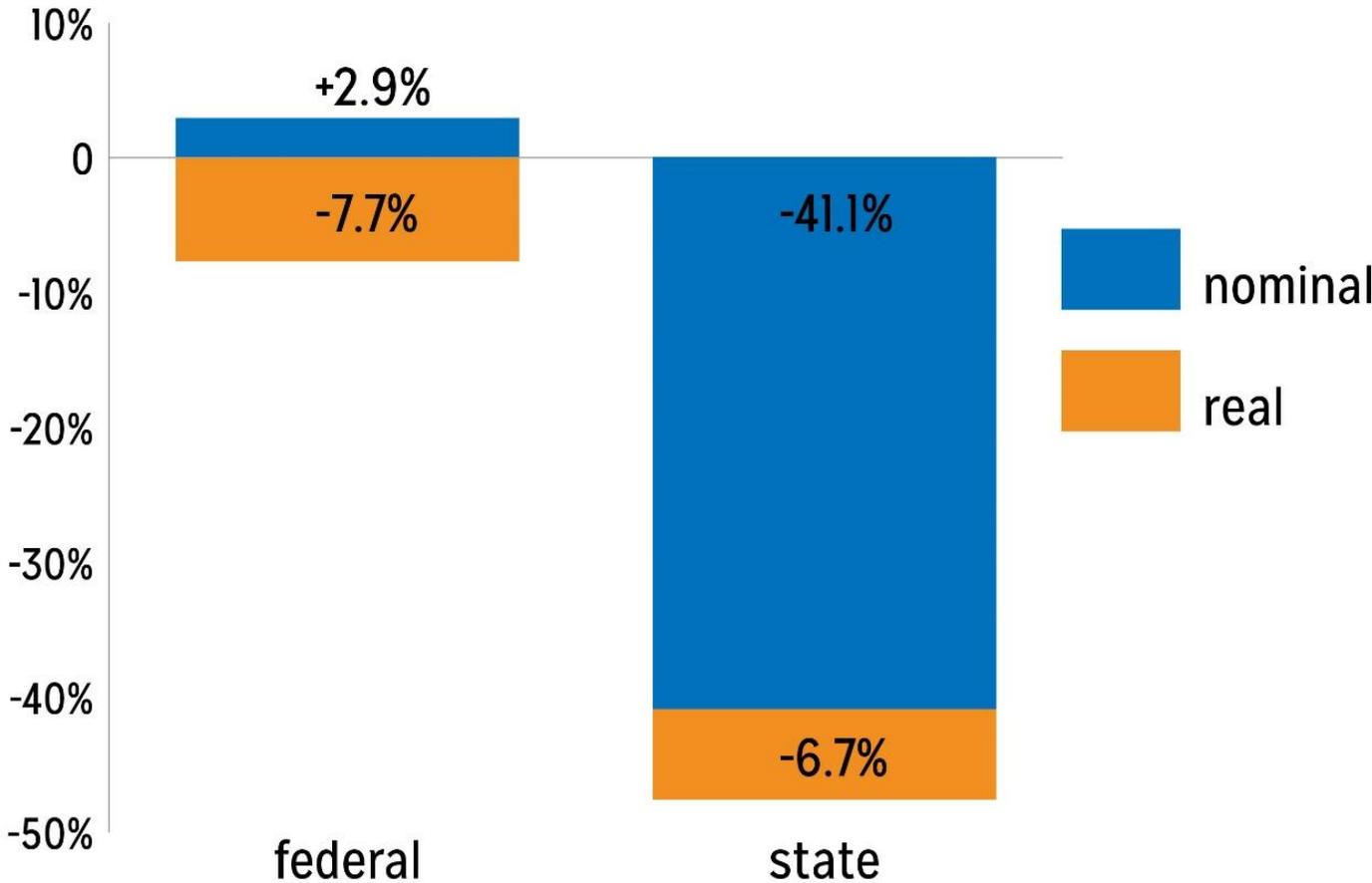


Harmful policy changes caused a sharp decline in WorkFirst caseload



Based on actual caseload data July 2009-November 2017, Office of the Forecast Council

State Workfirst funding has been cut by nearly half since 2008



Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of actual expenditures in the WorkFirst budget 2008-2016, adjusted for inflation.

60-month Time Limits

This policy created a firm lifetime limit of 60 months on receipt of TANF. As a result, families meeting all the requirements of their Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) began to be cut off from the program when they hit this limit.

Enacted: 2010

Impact: In 2017, 839 parents and 1,763 children were removed from TANF due to time limits.

Source: DSHS Economic Services Administration.

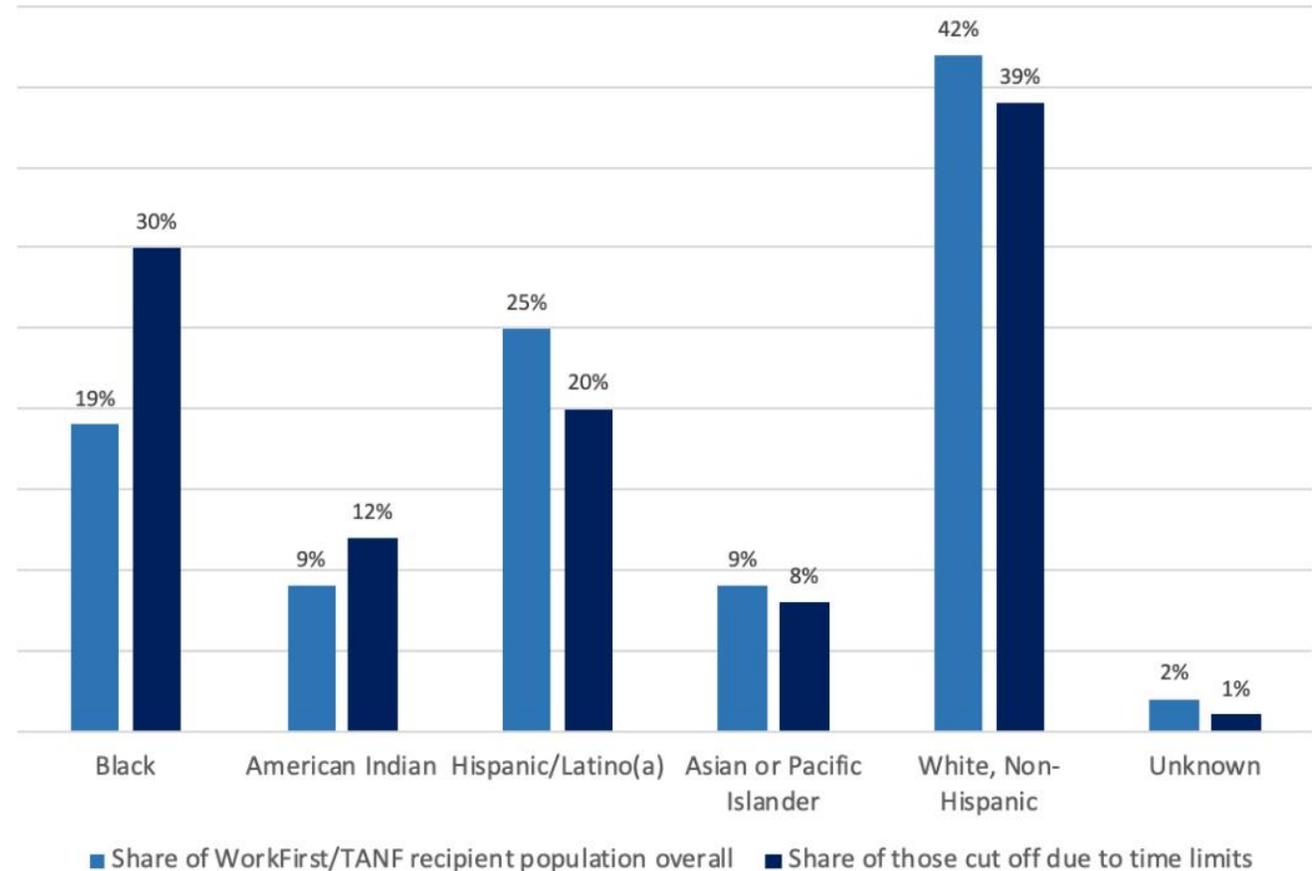
Families who were cut off

TANF/WorkFirst due to time limits:

- 1 in 3 were homeless at the time they were cut off
- 7 in 10 had a mental health challenge
- Half had a *serious* mental health challenge
- 1 in 3 were Black, even though Blacks only represent 1 in 5 people participating in TANF.

Black and American Indian families are disproportionately penalized by harsh WorkFirst time limit policy

Individuals by race/ethnicity as a percentage of all WorkFirst recipients and as a percentage of those removed due to time limits, Washington state, 2015-17



B&PC analysis of Department of Social and Health Services TANF recipient data. Figures are 3-year averages of SFY 2015, 2016, and 2017 data.

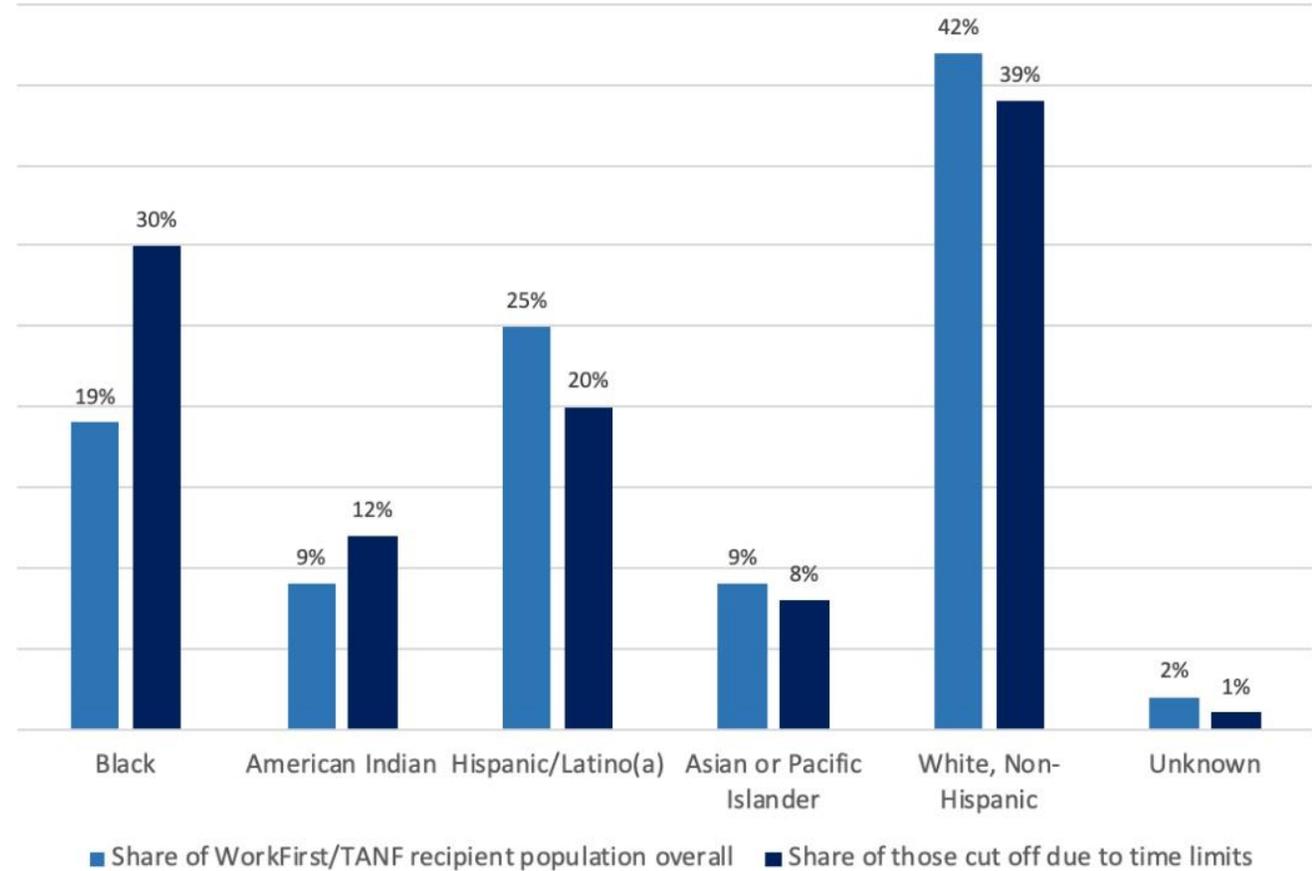
“These findings are consistent with research done in other states, which reveals that *racism* – in the form of caseworker bias and structural barriers to economic security – is to blame for the disparate rate at which recipients of color (especially those who are Black) are penalized under TANF.”

- Liz Olson, State Priorities Partnership Fellow, B&PC



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Current and next steps:

- Outreach to leaders in Black and Indigenous communities to discuss the findings, their insights and opportunities for changing state policy and practices (ongoing, early stages)
- Continue to advocate for House Bill 1603 to include the broadest possible time limit extension policy (ongoing through legislative session.)
- Identify what further data is needed to understand the role implicit bias and institutional racism is playing in human services policy and service delivery (next step.)