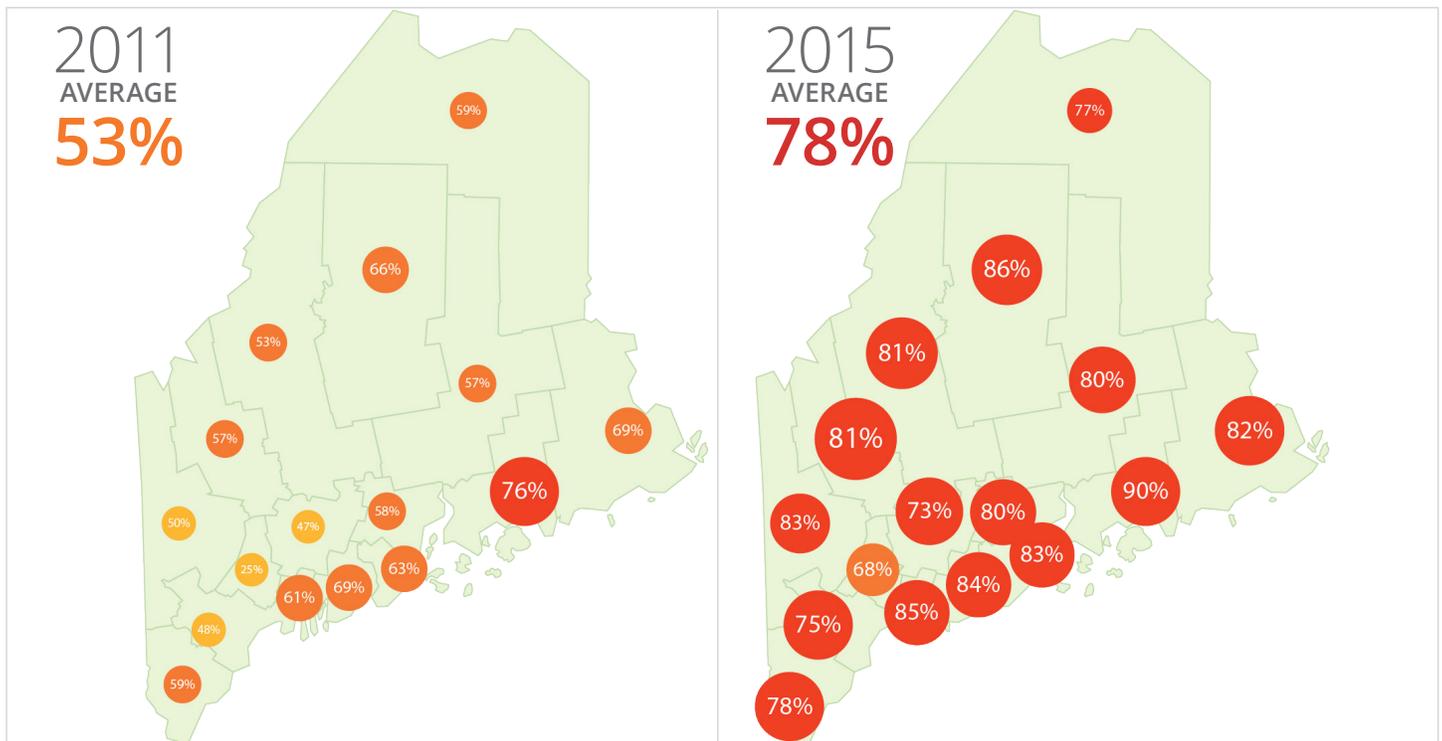


Temporary Assistance for children

Fewer Maine families can access help. The biggest impact is upon Maine's impoverished children.

Percent of poor children **NOT** receiving TANF



Over the last 5 years, **17,000 impoverished children** in Maine have lost help from the TANF program as a result of policy decisions. That's a drop of **more than 50%**.

What is TANF?

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is an anti-poverty program intended to ensure that children don't go without basics like shelter and food, providing modest cash assistance to low income families. **Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment**, known as ASPIRE, is the companion program to TANF that provides

employment, education and training services and supports to help parents find sustainable employment.

Participants are expected to engage in work activities through the ASPIRE program in order to receive TANF cash assistance unless they have "good cause" not to and are exempt from these requirements.

A modest investment with a big return.

As Maine taxpayers, we invest some of our income in the well-being and future success of our neighbors, our communities, and our State.

A small amount of that investment goes to support families with children who are having a tough time making ends meet through the TANF program.

To help put this in perspective, consider a **married couple with 2 kids making \$52,000 a year as an example:**

- ✓ This family pays **\$595** of their income in state income taxes for the year.
- ✓ Of that amount, **\$3.30** a year goes to ensure that Maine's poorest children have shelter and other basic needs through the TANF program.
- ✓ That is **less than the cost of an iced coffee** that goes to ensure kids have shelter and other basic needs met.



Most of the funding for TANF comes from the federal government in the form of a block grant.

Maine is required to make and maintain a contribution to the funding in order to receive the block grant funding. **Maine's federal TANF block grant is \$78 M per year**, and the state makes a maintenance of effort contribution of approximately **\$40M**.

DHHS' Misuse of TANF Funds Hurts Children and Families

- ✓ As of **July, 2016** Maine had stockpiled millions of dollars (\$155 M) in federal TANF funds earmarked for poor children and families while children have gone without the shelter and food they need.
 - » A state audit determined that DHHS **misspent at least \$13.4 million**.¹
 - » DHHS Commissioner Mayhew has been moving these TANF funds around without any input from the Legislature, stakeholders or the public.
- ✓ More than one in five children under the age of 5 lives in poverty in Maine.²
- ✓ Since 2011, the percentage of Maine children living in deep poverty (less than \$10,000 a year for family of three) has increased at a rate eight times greater than the national average.³

FACT:

The total state cost for **TANF, ASPIRE** and the **General Assistance program combined** makes up **less than 1%** of the state's general fund budget.

FACT:

The **maximum TANF benefit for a family of 3 is \$485 a month**. The benefit has not increased since 2001 and is the **lowest in New England**.

When TANF dollars are spent wisely, this program can make a big difference for Maine families with children. Our modest investment in Maine families and kids today will provide opportunities that create a brighter tomorrow for our state.

¹<https://bangordailynews.com/2016/10/27/opinion/editorials/maine-dhhs-broke-the-law-first-asked-questions-later/>

²2015 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey data analysis by Maine Center for Economic Policy

³U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011-2015