

Welfare Use by Racial/Ethnic Groups and Immigrants in Illinois

by

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Executive Summary

This report examined the racial/ethnic and foreign-born status of recipients of welfare programs managed by the state of Illinois. Selected findings of the report include:

Racial/Ethnic Analysis

- African Americans form the largest number of welfare recipients, at 745,237, followed by 724,267 non-Latino Whites and 345,685 Latinos. (Unless otherwise indicated, numbers are for FY2004.)
- The African American share of welfare recipients has declined recently. Blacks were 42.5 percent of recipients in 2001 but 39.5 percent in 2004. The portion comprised of Non-Latino Whites rose from 37.1 percent 38.4 percent. Latinos increased from 17.1 percent of the population to 18.3 percent.
- Of current welfare recipients, Asians are the group most likely to be getting Medicaid. That is, 95.8 percent of the Asians in the state's welfare programs are getting Medicaid. African Americans are the group most likely to be receiving Food Stamps (72.2 percent). Asians again are most likely to get AABD (33.5 percent). Latinos are the group most likely to get TANF (45.5 percent).

Immigrants¹

- Immigrant use of welfare is low. This is due in part to the welfare reform legislation of 1996, which reduced immigrant eligibility for public assistance.
- There are 105,839 foreign-born recipients of welfare in Illinois, or 5.6 percent of the welfare population. The representation of the foreign born in welfare programs has declined steadily, from 6.3 percent in 2001, to 6.0 percent in 2002, 5.7 percent in 2003, and 5.6 in 2004.
- Among programs, the representation of foreign-born persons ranges from a high of 37.3 percent of all recipients of TANF Two-Parent to a low of 1.0 percent of recipients in TANF Single Parent. A large percentage of the foreign-born TANF Two-Parent families are newly arrived refugees who generally remain on the program for less than 18 months.
- In the major medical programs, the representation of immigrants is lowest in MAG, where they are 4.5 percent of recipients, and highest in Medical Only Spenddown, where they are 7.7 percent of recipients. MAG recipients are mostly below the poverty level, while persons on Spenddown are above poverty by definition. In the food stamp program, immigrants are a relatively low 3.0 percent

¹ Immigrants include the naturalized foreign born and noncitizens.

of recipients. Immigrants are 11.9 percent of all AABD recipients; of these persons, a large percent are refugees.

- The number of native-born recipients grew by 22.0 percent over the last three years while foreign-born recipients grew by 8.2 percent. Native-born persons were nearly 98 percent of all the increase in welfare recipients.
- The State of Illinois manages six welfare programs or categories of service that are designed to serve the immigrant population and their families. In all, 21,827 foreign-born persons were receiving these programs, which include emergency medical care to immigrants, medical care to certain legal immigrant children, and other programs.
- Most immigrants are in the “mainstream” welfare programs. Less than one fifth of the foreign born are receiving the specialized programs for immigrants, such as Refugee Cash Assistance.
- Latinos are the overwhelming majority of immigrants getting emergency/prenatal medical assistance, comprising 76.8 percent of the foreign-born caseload.
- The State of Illinois provides medical assistance to legal immigrant children who arrived in the U.S. after August 1996 (these children are ineligible for federal Medicaid matching funds). Of medical assistance to these legal immigrant children, the racial/ethnic composition is 32.1 percent White Non-Latinos, 32.8 percent Latinos, and 26.5 percent Asian/Pacific Islanders.

English-Language Ability

- There are 213,000 Spanish speakers in the welfare system who cannot read or speak English. This population has grown by 33.2 percent in the last three years. The 213,000 Spanish speakers who cannot read or speak English represent the majority of the 345,685 Latinos in the welfare system.

Caseloads at Local Offices

- Immigrant cases are concentrated in a few IDHS offices. In the major welfare programs of Medicaid, Food Stamps, AABD and TANF, ten offices account for more than a third of all foreign-bon recipients of these programs.
- The Northern Office is the leading office serving White Non-Latinos, Asians and American Indians/Alaskan Natives. The office serves 4.5 percent of White Non-Latinos, yet 28.6 percent of Asian welfare recipients.

- About 67.0 percent of the foreign born are served by ten offices, compared to 35.0 percent of the native born.
- The leading office serving the native born is the South Suburban office which has 4.7 percent of all native-born cases. In contrast, one fifth or 19.0 percent of immigrants are served by the Northern Office.
- Six offices saw their immigrant welfare caseloads grow by more than one hundred percent over a three-year period: Clay, Pershing, Wayne, Warren, Morgan and Cass. These offices had numeric increases of at least 25 immigrants in the period.

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Introduction

The State of Illinois manages more than a dozen welfare programs that provide income, medical and nutrition assistance to more than 1.9 million persons annually.² The programs have varying eligibility rules in terms of income and nativity characteristics of recipients, program duration, and the activities expected of recipients such as job search or employment. Some programs explicitly serve children, others serve families, while others are targeted toward persons with disabilities or the elderly.

The population using these programs is diverse, and includes large numbers of African Americans, White Non-Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders and other groups. About one in twenty persons receiving one of the state's welfare programs was born abroad.

The use of welfare by immigrants is important because federal and state laws governing immigrant access to public benefits has been evolving considerably in the past decade. Much of the change has been due to the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The PRWORA severely limited the welfare eligibility of immigrants arriving after passage of the act. Illinois has proactively provided state funding for assistance to some immigrants that lost eligibility for federally funded benefits.

Two previous analyses of immigrants in Illinois welfare programs have been published by the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law,³ but many aspects of immigrant participation in Medicaid, Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (AABD), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and other services have been unknown.

For example, the earlier analyses published by the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law examined participation by major categories of immigrants such as naturalized immigrants and noncitizens, but did not address more specific categories of immigrant status such as persons Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL) nor did they include all programs available such as state-funded medical care for legal immigrant children arriving since 1996. Also unaddressed was the question of which foreign-born national-origin groups were using welfare. While IDHS caseworkers do not inquire as what country an applicant was born in, they do collect data on race/ethnicity, which in combination with nativity permits identification of groups such as foreign born Latinos, foreign-born White Non-Latinos, etc., which gives useful insight into which national-origin groups are in the welfare programs. For example, in the case of foreign-born Latinos, the great majority can be expected to be of Mexican origin, given that most Latino immigrants are from Mexico.

² The exact number of welfare programs depends on how they are defined. Medicaid, for example, could be broken down into KidCare, Medicaid Spenddown, Medical Assistance with a Grant, etc.

³ Parol 1999 *Immigrants and Illinois Welfare: In Most Programs, Immigrant Caseload Declines Outpace Those of Natives* Chicago: National Center on Poverty Law, and Parol 2001 *TANF MAG Caseload Cancellations: Trends Among Immigrants and the Native Born* Chicago: National Center on Poverty Law

To date, no analysis has been conducted on the regional distribution of welfare recipients, either across Illinois counties or IDHS offices, broken down by nativity and race. The 2000 census found an increasing dispersion of immigrants into areas outside of Chicago, both in the Chicago suburbs and downstate, and information on IDHS offices that are interacting with immigrants would help to describe new trends in immigrant settlement and identify areas where agency staff may be in need of increased linguistic ability, training in immigration-related public assistance rules, and other topics. Similar implications in terms of staffing preparation may be derived from data on the distribution of racial groups across IDHS service areas.

Finally, a review of participation rates in welfare programs by racial/ethnic groups and the foreign born is called for given the expansions of eligibility and the creation of new programs over the last decade. For example, large numbers of elderly and disabled persons have become able to receive Medicaid without a Spenddown in recent years; Family Care and KidCare health programs have become established, certain elderly immigrants have become eligible for income assistance, and legal immigrant children arriving since 1996 are eligible for a state-funded program of health care that was created after the 1996 welfare-reform legislation ended access to Medicaid for many newly arriving legal immigrants.

The report was made possible with support from the state of Illinois. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services manages the Refugee and Immigrant Citizenship Initiative, through which grants are competitively issued for specialized services to immigrants. These services include instruction in English, training for the citizenship exam, and other activities. In 2003, the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law submitted a proposal to IDHS to develop a profile of immigrant use of welfare programs in the state. As part of the analysis of the foreign-born status of welfare recipients, the SSNCPL proposed to further analyze the use of welfare by the major racial/ethnic groups. This proposal was accepted and work on this project began in the latter half of 2003.

This report is based on data provided by IDHS consisting of 6.9 million individual records of persons using one of the state-managed welfare programs during the four fiscal years 2001-2004.⁴ The data records were stripped of any information that would permit identification of an individual. The variables in the data records included the race/ethnicity, nativity, detailed citizenship status (e.g., PRUCOL), type of program in which the person was enrolled, age, gender, and certain other items. The data were point-in-time collections of welfare recipients in each of the fiscal years. Because the information in this analysis comes from actual administrative data, there are no considerations of error margins in reporting results of tabulations. The data are subject to inputting errors, but there is no way to assess the extent of such errors and they are assumed to be minimal overall.

⁴ For each of fiscal years 2001-2003, data in this report represent all cases active in the program at any time during the year. For fiscal year 2004, the data represent cases active at any time during the period October 2003 to February 2004; fiscal year 2004 does not include the small percentage of cases newly entering the system after February. For all fiscal years, the data represent unduplicated counts of persons.

Note: A separate chart book accompanies this report. The chart book provides census and IDHS programmatic data on racial/ethnic and immigrant use of welfare for each welfare office in the state.

Racial/Ethnic Groups and Welfare

The total number of persons in welfare programs is 1,884,958 in 2004. Over the 2001-2004 period 87.2 percent of these persons received some form of medical assistance, 50.5 percent received Food Stamps, 27.2 received TANF, and 21.1 percent were AABD recipients. Overall, the number of welfare recipients has steadily grown over the past four years, from 1,556,602 in 2001 to the almost 1.9 million in 2004, representing a 21.1 percent increase in four years.

The racial/ethnic composition of the state’s welfare recipients is diverse. In all welfare programs, the largest number of persons in 2004 was African Americans, at 745,237, followed by 724,267 non-Latino Whites and 345,685 Latinos. In 2004, African Americans were 39.5 percent of welfare recipients and Non-Latino Whites were 38.4 percent of recipients. Latinos were 18.3 percent of recipients.

Racial/Ethnic Groups in Illinois Welfare Programs: 2001-2004

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Black not Hispanic	661,237	709,043	703,756	745,237
White not Hispanic	577,555	639,342	661,848	724,267
Hispanic	265,812	308,756	308,632	345,685
Asian or Pacific Islander	39,940	44,408	43,874	48,732
American Indian or Alaskan	2,683	3,026	3,289	3,813
All other, including uncoded	9,375	13,348	13,500	17,224
Total	1,556,602	1,717,923	1,734,899	1,884,958

Racial/Ethnic Groups in Illinois Welfare Programs: 2001-2004

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Black not Hispanic	42.5%	41.3%	40.6%	39.5%
White not Hispanic	37.1%	37.2%	38.1%	38.4%
Hispanic	17.1%	18.0%	17.8%	18.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.6%	2.6%	2.5%	2.6%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
All other, including uncoded	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The African American population, the largest group among recipients in 2004, has seen its share of all recipients decline in the last four years. The slow growth of Black welfare recipients is due largely to a -80,000 decline of Blacks in TANF, even as all other groups increased their TANF caseload. At the same time, the numeric growth of Blacks in medical assistance and Food Stamps was lower than the growth among Whites in these programs.

Blacks were 42.5 percent of recipients in 2001 but 39.5 percent in 2004. The portion comprised of Non-Latino Whites rose from 37.1 percent in 2001 to 38.4 percent in 2004. Latinos increased from 17.1 percent of the population in 2001 to 18.3 percent in 2004.

Notwithstanding the shifts in racial/ethnic proportions of welfare recipients, all groups saw their numbers increase in welfare programs in the 2001-2004 period. The group with the fastest growth rate were American Indian and Alaskan Natives, whose number among welfare recipients grew by 42.1 percent in the four year period. American Indians and Alaskan Natives, however, represented only 0.2 percent of all persons in 2004. Among larger groups, Latinos increased in number by 30.0 percent, followed by Non-Latino Whites at 25.4 percent, Asian Pacific Islanders at 22.0 percent, and African Americans at 12.7 percent.

**Percentage Change by Race/Ethnicity in All
Programs: 2001-2004**

Black not Hispanic	12.7%
White not Hispanic	25.4%
Hispanic	30.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	22.0%
American Indian of Alaskan Native	42.1%
All other, including uncoded	51.7%
Total	21.1%

Numerically, the largest growth in the 2001-2004 time period was among White Non-Latinos. This group saw its numbers grow by 147,000 in Illinois welfare programs. African American and Latino growth were comparable over the period, with 84,000 Blacks and nearly 80,000 Latinos being added to the welfare population.

**Numeric Change by Race/Ethnicity in All
Programs: 2001-2004**

Black not Hispanic	84,000
White not Hispanic	146,712
Hispanic	79,873
Asian or Pacific Islander	8,792
American Indian of Alaskan Native	1,130
All other, including uncoded	7,849
Total	328,356

Racial/Ethnic Makeup of Welfare Programs

The racial and ethnic composition of individual welfare programs varies widely. Overall, African Americans are 39.5 percent of all welfare recipients, compared to 38.4 percent of White Non-Latinos and 18.3 percent of Latinos. (Page 17 provides the total number of recipients in these programs.)

In Medicaid, the representation of the major groups varies among the sub-categories. African Americans, for example, are only 11.4 percent of Kidcare recipients but are 65.9 percent of MAG recipients. Whites, in contrast, are 49.4 percent of Kidcare recipients and only 23.8 percent of MAG participants.

The majority of food stamp recipients are African Americans, representing 53.0 percent of all persons in the program. Whites are 33.2 percent of Food Stamps recipients, while Latinos are 11.8 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders are 1.5 percent, and American Indian/Alaskan Natives are 0.2 percent.

TANF overall is evenly distributed among African Americans, White Non-Latinos and Latinos. TANF recipients in 2004 were 33.6 percent Latino, 32.5 percent Black and 29.9 percent White Non-Latino. There is substantial difference, however, in the component programs of TANF. Whites, for example, are a majority, 55.1 percent of TANF Two Parent families. African Americans are the great majority, 79.3 percent, of TANF Single Parent program, and Latinos are the largest percentage, 37.4 percent, of TANF Child Only cases.

AABD overall has a majority White Non-Latino caseload, as 52.0 percent of AABD recipients are White Non-Latino, 34.9 percent are African American, 8.5 percent are Latino, and 4.3 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander.

AABD involves three major sub-categories relating to an age or disability: aid to the aged, to the blind and to the disabled. The AABD Disabled is the largest program, with 267,964 participants in 2004. AABD-Blind is a fairly small program of 1,226 participants, while AABD-Aged has 110,244 participants. White Non-Latinos are a majority or a near majority of recipients in each category, constituting 60.5 percent of AABD-Aged, 56.5 percent of AABD-Blind and 48.5 percent of AABD-Disabled. The highest representation of African Americans is in the AABD-Disabled category, in which Blacks are 41.1 percent of recipients. For Latinos, the highest representation is in AABD-Aged, where Latinos are 9.4 percent of recipients.

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Racial/Ethnic Composition by Major Program: 2004

	African American	White Non-Latino	Latino	Asian or Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaskan Native	All Other Including Uncoded	Total
All Programs	39.5%	38.4%	18.3%	2.6%	0.2%	0.9%	99.9%
Medicaid	37.2%	38.9%	19.8%	2.8%	0.2%	1.0%	99.9%
Medical Only Non-Spenddown Exc. Kidcare	35.8%	39.0%	20.9%	2.9%	0.2%	1.1%	99.9%
Kidcare	11.4%	49.4%	32.3%	2.7%	0.3%	3.8%	99.9%
Medical Only Spenddown	26.9%	51.0%	18.5%	2.5%	0.2%	0.8%	99.9%
MAG	65.9%	23.8%	8.5%	1.9%	0.2%	0.0%	100.3%
Food Stamps	53.0%	33.2%	11.8%	1.5%	0.2%	0.3%	100.0%
AABD	34.9%	52.0%	8.5%	4.3%	0.2%	0.1%	100.0%
Aged	19.8%	60.5%	9.4%	9.9%	0.2%	0.3%	100.1%
Blind	34.4%	56.5%	6.7%	2.2%	0.2%	0.0%	100.0%
Disabled	41.1%	48.5%	8.1%	2.0%	0.2%	0.1%	100.0%
TANF	32.5%	29.9%	33.6%	2.2%	0.2%	1.6%	100.0%
2-Parent	29.8%	55.1%	11.4%	3.0%	0.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Single Parent	79.3%	15.0%	5.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	100.0%
Child Only	26.3%	31.9%	37.4%	2.5%	0.2%	1.8%	100.1%

Note: Columns do not add to 100 due to rounding

Another viewpoint on the use of programs by the racial/ethnic groups is the question of which programs the groups are likely to be using. For example, considering the large programmatic areas of Medicaid, Food Stamps, AABD and TANF, Asians are the group most likely to be getting Medicaid. That is, 95.8 percent of the Asians in the state's welfare programs are getting Medicaid, compared to 83.0 percent of African Americans. Blacks, meanwhile, are the group most likely to be receiving Food Stamps (72.2 percent of Blacks in the state welfare system are getting Food Stamps) compared to only 30.8 percent of Asians. Asians again are most likely to get AABD (33.5 percent) and Blacks are the least likely (17.8 percent). Latinos are most likely to get TANF (45.5 percent) and White Non-Latinos are the least likely (19.3 percent).

Which General Programs Are Race/Ethnic Groups Most Likely to Receive?

	Pct. Receiving Medical Care	Pct. Receiving Food Stamps	Pct. Receiving AABD	Pct. Receiving TANF
Black not Hispanic	83.0%	72.2%	17.8%	20.4%
White not Hispanic	89.4%	46.5%	27.2%	19.3%
Hispanic	95.4%	34.6%	9.3%	45.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	95.8%	30.8%	33.5%	21.2%
American Indian of Alaskan Native	89.3%	50.6%	17.4%	24.4%
All other, including uncoded	98.3%	17.8%	2.7%	42.1%
Total	88.2%	53.8%	20.1%	24.8%

In the sub-categories of medical assistance, of AABD and of TANF, clear differences are evident between racial/ethnic groups and their likelihood of using a program. Blacks, for example, are the least likely to use Medicaid without a Spenddown (excluding KidCare), Medicaid Spenddown, or KidCare, while they are the group most likely to get MAG. In the AABD sub-categories, Asians are the group most likely in AABD-Aged (22.4 percent), while White Non-Latinos are the group most likely to be getting AABD-Disabled assistance (17.9 percent). Finally, in the TANF categories, Blacks are the group

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most likely to get TANF single parent (5.8 percent), while Latinos are the group most likely to get TANF child only assistance (44.6 percent).the group

Which Detailed Programs Are Race/Ethnic Groups Most Likely to Receive?

	Medicaid			
	Non			
	Spenddown			
	Excluding Kidcare	Medicaid Spenddown	MAG	Kidcare
Black not Hispanic	64.3%	5.3%	13.0%	0.5%
White not Hispanic	72.0%	10.3%	4.8%	2.2%
Hispanic	81.0%	7.8%	3.6%	3.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	80.9%	7.5%	5.7%	1.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	72.1%	7.4%	7.0%	2.7%
All other, including uncoded	84.3%	6.9%	0.0%	7.1%
Total	70.9%	7.8%	7.8%	1.7%

	AABD		
	AABD Aged	AABD Blind	Disabled
Black not Hispanic	2.9%	0.1%	14.8%
White not Hispanic	9.2%	0.1%	17.9%
Hispanic	3.0%	0.0%	6.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	22.4%	0.1%	11.1%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4.8%	0.1%	12.5%
All other, including uncoded	1.6%	0.0%	1.1%
Total	5.8%	0.1%	14.2%

	TANF		
	TANF 2- Parent	Single Parent	TANF Child Only
Black not Hispanic	0.0%	5.8%	14.5%
White not Hispanic	0.0%	1.1%	18.2%
Hispanic	0.0%	0.8%	44.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.4%	20.7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.1%	2.4%	22.0%
All other, including uncoded	0.0%	0.0%	42.1%
Total	0.0%	2.9%	21.9%

Note: For example, 64.3 percent of African Americans in the IDHS database receive Medicaid without a spenddown (excluding Kidcare).

Racial/Ethnic Enrollment Trends in Medicaid, Food Stamps, AABD and TANF

Medicaid

Medical programs cover eight of ten welfare recipients in Illinois. The number of Medicaid recipients rose by 22.0 percent in the 2001-2004 period, from 1,362,527 to 1,662,932 persons. The largest increase among race/ethnic groups in the period was

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among American Indian/Alaskan Natives, whose number grew by 39.0 percent. Latinos getting Medicaid grew by 30.7 percent, compared to 25.5 percent growth among Non-Latino Whites, 21.8 percent growth among Asian and Pacific Islanders, and 13.7 percent growth for African Americans.

Numeric Change in Persons Receiving Medical Care: 2001-2004

	Medical Only Non			Medical Only	
	All Medical Programs	Spnddown, Exc. Kid Care	KidCare Only	Spnddown	MAG
Black not Hispanic	74,442	230,077	304	(41,891)	(114,048)
White not Hispanic	131,467	201,729	5,405	(57,152)	(18,515)
Hispanic	77,440	102,128	5,427	(15,505)	(14,610)
Asian or Pacific Islander	8,372	11,816	386	(2,626)	(1,204)
American Indian of Alaskan Native	955	1,247	55	(143)	(204)
All other, including uncoded	7,729	7,259	172	298	n/a
Total	300,405	554,256	11,749	(117,019)	(148,581)

Percentage Change in Persons Receiving Medical Care: 2001-2004

	Medical Only Non			Medical Only	
	All Medical Programs	Spnddown, Exc. Kid Care	KidCare Only	Spnddown	MAG
Black not Hispanic	13.7%	92.5%	9.0%	-51.5%	-54.1%
White not Hispanic	25.5%	63.0%	51.4%	-43.4%	-34.5%
Hispanic	30.7%	57.4%	108.7%	-36.4%	-53.7%
Asian or Pacific Islander	21.8%	42.8%	80.4%	-41.9%	-30.1%
American Indian of Alaskan Native	39.0%	82.9%	117.0%	-33.5%	-43.3%
All other, including uncoded	83.9%	100.0%	16.3%	33.4%	n/a
Total	22.0%	70.8%	57.4%	-44.5%	-50.2%

Medicaid in Illinois may be categorized in four ways: Medicaid Only Without a Spnddown, Medicaid Only with a Spnddown, KidCare, and Medicaid with a Cash Grant (MAG). For this analysis we separate out KidCare from Medicaid Only Without a Spnddown because KidCare has its own eligibility requirements and programmatic history.

Over the 2001-2004 period, the number of persons getting Medicaid Without a Spnddown (and excluding KidCare) has grown by 70.8 percent. At the same time, the KidCare program grew by 57.4 percent. The number of persons declined in the Medicaid Only with Spnddown program,⁵ by 44.5 percent and the number of persons getting

⁵ Declines in the Spnddown program are likely due in part to the establishment of more generous Medicaid eligibility rules for elderly and disabled persons phased in during the 2001-2004 period. The income threshold was raised for elderly and disabled persons to qualify for Medicaid without a Spnddown.

Medicaid along with a cash grant fell by 50.2 percent. The net increase in persons getting Medicaid was 300,405 in the 2001-2004 period.

Among the racial/ethnic groups, each group experienced increasing enrollment in Medicaid Only Without a Spenddown (excluding KidCare), and in KidCare. All groups had declining enrollment in Medical Only Spenddown and in MAG.

African Americans had the highest growth in the category of Medicaid Without a Spenddown (and excluding KidCare). The number of Blacks in this program nearly doubled, by 92.5 percent. The African American increase in KidCare was the lowest among the racial/ethnic groups, with Blacks increasing by 9.0 percent compared to 51.4 percent increase by Non-Latino Whites and a doubling of the number of Latinos and American Indians/Alaskan Natives. African Americans also had the greatest decline among groups receiving MAG. Blacks getting MAG fell in number by 54.1 percent, although the decline among Latinos was comparable, at 53.7 percent.

African Americans also represent the largest numerical increase in persons getting Medicaid Without a Spenddown (excluding KidCare). The number of Blacks in this program area grew by more than 230,000 persons in the 2001-2004 period, followed by Non-Latino Whites at nearly 202,000 persons. African Americans had the largest declines in persons getting MAG. The number of Blacks getting MAG fell by more than 114,000, and Blacks accounted for three quarters of the fall in number of persons getting MAG.

As a result of these differing growth rates, the racial proportions of medical assistance recipients shifted in recent years. The African American percent of medical recipients fell from 39.9 percent in 2001 to 37.2 percent in 2004. The representation of all other groups in medical assistance remained constant or grew during the 2001-2004 period.

Food Stamps

More than 1.0 million Illinois residents receive Food Stamps. The number of food stamp recipients rose in each year over the 2001-2004 period, increasing by 226,000 persons overall. Over the 2001-2004 period, American Indian/Alaskan Natives had the largest percentage growth in the number of food stamp recipients, 59.2 percent. Among the other major groups, the largest growth was among Latinos, at 49.4 percent, followed by White Non-Latinos, 39.4 percent and Asian/Pacific Islanders, at 31.3 percent. The number of African Americans getting Food Stamps increased by only 18.6 percent over the period. The greatest numerical growth in Food Stamps was among White Non-Latinos. The number of White Non-Latinos getting Food Stamps grew by a net 95,161 persons over the four year period, followed by an increase of 84,424 among African Americans and 39,565 among Latinos.

Change in Persons Receiving Food Stamps: 2001-2004		
	Pct. Change	Number Change
Black not Hispanic	18.6%	84,424
White not Hispanic	39.4%	95,161
Hispanic	49.4%	39,565
Asian or Pacific Islander	31.3%	3,575
American Indian of Alaskan Native	59.2%	717
All other, including uncoded	321.6%	2,341
Total	28.6%	225,783

TANF

Some 467,474 persons were receiving TANF in 2004. This number was a 1.1 percent decline since 2001. Over the 2001-2004 period the number of Blacks receiving TANF fell sharply, by 34.4 percent, while the number of White Non-Latinos grew by 23.0 percent and the number of Latinos increased by 37.6 percent. Among the sub-categories of TANF, every group except Latinos saw its numbers fall in the TANF Two Parent category. The number of Latinos in this program, however, more than doubled, growing by 128.6 percent. All groups saw their numbers fall in the category of TANF Single Parent, while each group experienced increases in TANF Child Only program.

The 34.4 percent decline in African American TANF recipients is attributable to large declines in the TANF Single Parent program. The number of Blacks in TANF Single Parent fell by 105,837 persons. This loss overwhelmed the growth of 26,508 Blacks in the TANF Child Only program. In contrast to the situation with Blacks, for each of the other groups, declines in persons receiving TANF Single Parent were more than offset by increases in the Child Only program. Thus in the 2001-2004 period, all groups saw a shift of their TANF population away from Single Parent cases into Child Only cases. The different rates at which groups saw declines in one program and increases in another meant that over the period the TANF population lost a net 79,525 Blacks while gaining a net 26,189 White Non-Latinos and 42,975 Latinos.

	Percentage Change in Persons Receiving TANF: 2001-2004			
	TANF All Programs	TANF 2-Parent	TANF Single Parent	TANF Child Only
Black not Hispanic	-34.4%	-54.0%	-71.0%	32.4%
White not Hispanic	23.0%	-59.0%	-63.5%	45.2%
Hispanic	37.6%	128.6%	-79.2%	53.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	31.5%	-73.8%	-87.2%	59.4%
American Indian of Alaskan Native	23.3%	-20.0%	-65.8%	72.6%
All other, including uncoded	49.4%	n/a	n/a	49.4%
Total	51.1%	-53.8%	-70.8%	44.9%

Numeric Change in Persons Receiving TANF: 2001-2004

	TANF All Programs	TANF 2- Parent	TANF	
			Single Parent	TANF Child Only
Black not Hispanic	(79,525)	(196)	(105,837)	26,508
White not Hispanic	26,189	(444)	(14,263)	40,896
Hispanic	42,975	36	(10,902)	53,848
Asian or Pacific Islander	2,467	(48)	(1,252)	3,766
American Indian of Alaskan Native	176	(1)	(175)	352
All other, including uncoded	2,398	n/a	n/a	2,398
Total	(5,320)	(653)	(132,429)	127,768

AABD

The AABD program involves 379,434 participants in 2004, a number that is a 7.4 percent increase since 2001. Taken in their totality, the AABD programs have had fastest growth among the Latino population, whose number of AABD recipients rose by 14.1 percent over a three-year period, 2001-2004. All groups had an increase in AABD recipients over the period. Numerically, there was a net increase of 26,131 AABD recipients over 2001-2004, with the largest increase in the White Non-Latino population (14,972 persons), followed by Blacks (5,678) and Latinos (3,994). Blacks and Latinos had their largest numeric growth in the AABD Aged program. For White Non-Latinos, however, the increase in AABD-Disabled (13,748) far outpaced growth in AABD-Aged (1,196). In fact, about half of all growth in AABD over 2001-2004 was due to White Non-Latino growth in AABD-Disabled.

Percentage Change in Persons Receiving AABD: 2001-2004

	AABD All	AABD	AABD	AABD
	Programs	Aged	Blind	Disabled
Black not Hispanic	4.5%	17.3%	-5.0%	2.3%
White not Hispanic	8.2%	1.8%	4.2%	11.8%
Hispanic	14.1%	25.1%	34.4%	9.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	7.6%	4.2%	-6.9%	15.4%
American Indian of Alaskan Native	11.4%	20.3%	100.0%	8.1%
All other, including uncoded	124.6%	60.3%	n/a	463.6%
Total	7.4%	6.9%	2.2%	7.6%

Numeric Change in Persons Receiving AABD: 2001-2004

	AABD All	AABD	AABD	AABD
	Programs	Aged	Blind	Disabled
Black not Hispanic	5,678	3,215	(22)	2,485
White not Hispanic	14,972	1,196	28	13,748
Hispanic	3,994	2,080	21	1,893
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,161	444	(2)	719
American Indian of Alaskan Native	68	31	1	36
All other, including uncoded	258	105	n/a	153
Total	26,131	7,071	26	19,034

Immigrants and Welfare

Immigrants in Mainstream Programs

There are 105,839 foreign-born recipients of welfare programs in Illinois, constituting 5.6 percent of the welfare population. The representation of the foreign born in welfare programs declined in the 2001-2004 period, from 6.3 percent in 2001, 6.0 percent in 2002, 5.7 percent in 2003, and 5.6 in 2004. In that period, the number of foreign born persons grew from 97,814 to 105,839, for a net growth of 8,025, but the more rapid growth of the native born population meant that the relative presence of immigrants declined.

The representation of foreign-born persons ranges from a high of 37.3 percent of all recipients of TANF Two-Parent to a low of 1.0 percent of recipients in TANF Single Parent. The foreign-born use of AABD-Aged, where the foreign born are 24.0 of all recipients in 2004, is relatively high.⁶

Foreign Born Percent of Major Programs: 2004	
All Programs	5.6%
All Medical Programs	6.3%
Medical only non-spenddown exc. Kidcare	6.4%
Kidcare	5.4%
Medical only spenddown	7.7%
MAG	4.5%
Food Stamps	3.0%
TANF	2.7%
Two-Parent	37.3%
Single Parent	1.0%
Child Only	2.9%
AABD	11.9%
Aged	24.0%
Blind	5.5%
Disabled	6.9%

In the major medical programs, the representation of immigrants is lowest in MAG, where they are 4.5 percent of recipients, and highest in Medical Only Spenddown, where they are 7.7 percent of recipients. MAG recipients are mostly below the poverty level, while persons on Spenddown are above poverty by definition. In the food stamp program, immigrants are a relatively low 3.0 percent of recipients. Immigrants are 11.9 percent of all AABD recipients. As noted, a quarter of AABD-Aged recipients are foreign born, and AABD-Aged foreign-born recipients are 58.7 percent of all immigrants in the AABD program (compared to AABD-Aged representing 25.1 percent of all native born in AABD).

⁶ The AABD-Aged program includes approximately 2,300 elderly refugees.

Another way to look at the distribution of immigrants across programs is to consider the percent of all persons getting a particular benefit. The table below shows, for example, that of immigrants in Illinois welfare, 99.7 percent get Medicaid, while only 87.5 percent of native born persons are getting Medicaid. The native born are more likely to receive Medicaid through MAG, but a higher percentage of immigrants get Medical Only via a Spenddown. Less than a third of immigrants in the state system are getting Food Stamps, compared to more than half of the native born. Nearly 43 percent of immigrants are getting AABD, while less than 19 percent of the native born are in that programmatic area. Finally, immigrants are half as likely to get TANF as the native born.⁷

Which General Programs Are the Foreign Born Most Likely to Receive?

	Pct. Receiving Medical Care	Pct. Receiving Food Stamps	Pct. Receiving AABD	Pct. Receiving TANF
Foreign born	99.7%	29.0%	42.6%	12.1%
Native born	87.5%	55.3%	18.8%	25.6%
Total	88.2%	53.8%	20.1%	24.8%

Immigrant Enrollment Trends in Medicaid, Food Stamps, AABD and TANF

Among all the major Illinois welfare programs, the number of native-born recipients grew much faster, by 22.0 percent, over the 2001-2004 period, than the number of foreign-born recipients, whose number grew by 8.2 percent. Note that these rates of change refer to the overall, unduplicated number of persons getting welfare. Native-born persons were nearly 98 percent of all the increase in welfare recipients.

The relative rates of growth, however, differed among the programs. In medical programs the native born grew in number by 23.1 percent compared to 8.1 percent of foreign born. In KidCare, however, the foreign-born number grew by 261 percent compared to only 52.5 percent growth among the native born. Native-born persons getting MAG fell almost twice as fast as the foreign born decline, at -50.9 percent for the native born and -27.3 percent for the foreign born. For both foreign- and native-born persons, the size of the Medical Only Spenddown and MAG caseloads declined, while growth took place in Medical Only Without Spenddown and in KidCare.

In the food stamp program, the growth rate of immigrants and the native born were nearly the same over the 2001-2004 period. The number of native-born food stamp recipients rose by 28.7 percent and immigrants getting Food Stamps grew by 27.6 percent. The two groups start at very different bases, however. The native-born food stamp recipients increased by more than 219,000 compared to an increase of less than 7,000 among

⁷ The immigrant provisions of Welfare Reform have had an impact on immigrant eligibility for all programs; in the case of AABD, high use of the program by refugees makes it an important program for the foreign born.

Welfare Use by Racial/Ethnic Groups and Immigrants in Illinois

immigrants. The native born accounted for more than 97 percent of increase in the food stamp program.

Percentage Change in Persons Receiving Major Programs: 2001-2004

	Total	Native Born	Foreign Born
All Programs	21.1%	22.0%	8.2%
All Medical Programs	22.0%	23.1%	8.1%
Medical only non-spendown exc. Kidcare	70.8%	75.0%	26.5%
Kidcare	57.4%	52.5%	261.1%
Medical only spendown	-44.5%	-44.5%	-43.9%
MAG	-50.2%	-50.9%	-27.3%
Food Stamps	28.6%	28.7%	27.6%
TANF	-1.1%	-1.8%	31.5%
Two-Parent	-53.8%	-39.2%	-67.1%
Single Parent	-70.8%	-70.8%	-72.6%
Child Only	44.9%	44.3%	69.0%
AABD	7.4%	6.9%	11.0%
Aged	6.9%	6.4%	8.2%
Blind	2.2%	2.8%	-8.2%
Disabled	7.6%	7.1%	15.4%

Numeric Change in Persons Receiving Major Programs: 2001-2004

	Total	Native Born	Foreign Born
All Programs	328,356	320,331	8,025
All Medical Programs	300,405	292,472	7,933
Medical only non-spendown exc. Kidcare	554,256	536,273	17,983
Kidcare	11,749	10,493	1,256
Medical only spendown	(117,019)	(108,217)	(8,802)
MAG	(148,581)	(146,077)	(2,504)
Food Stamps	225,783	219,140	6,643
TANF	(5,320)	(8,379)	3,059
Two-Parent	(653)	(227)	(426)
Single Parent	(132,429)	(131,006)	(1,423)
Child Only	127,768	122,862	4,906
AABD	26,131	21,647	4,484
Aged	7,071	5,056	2,015
Blind	26	32	(6)
Disabled	19,034	16,559	2,475

In TANF, the number of foreign born grew by 31.5 percent while the native-born number declined somewhat by -1.8 percent. Both groups had strong growth in TANF Child Only cases, though foreign-born growth exceeded native-born growth, at 69.0 versus 44.3 percentage increase. In the case of immigrants, growth in TANF Child Only cases was sufficiently great – 4,906 new cases over the 2001-2004 period – that the overall numbers of immigrants in TANF grew. Among native born, the 122,862 new TANF Child Only cases were not enough to surpass the decline of -131,006 TANF Single Parent cases decline.

In AABD, foreign-born recipients grew in number by 11.0 percent in the 2001-2004 period, compared to 6.9 percent growth among native born. The greatest area of growth for both foreign born and native born occurred in AABD Disabled. Among the native born however, the AABD Disabled category represented 76.5 percent of the increase in overall AABD. Among the foreign born, the growth in AABD occurred more evenly between AABD Disabled (55.2 percent of foreign born growth) and AABD Aged (44.9 percent of foreign-born growth).

Immigrants and Race/Ethnicity

The extent to which the major racial/ethnic groups include immigrants varies considerably. Some 45.7 percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders receiving welfare are foreign born. At the other extreme, only 0.9 percent of Blacks in welfare programs are foreign born. For almost all groups the growth in welfare recipients has occurred among the native born population. For example, native-born Asian/Pacific Islanders in welfare programs grew by 37.9 percent in the 2001-2004 period, compared to only 7.3 percent growth among Asian/Pacific Islander foreign born. Comparable growth differentials between native born and foreign born are seen among Latinos and White Non-Latinos. An exception is among Blacks, where the growth of foreign born persons in welfare programs exceeded the growth among the native born.

**Foreign-Born Percentage of Race/Ethnic
Groups: All Programs 2004**

Black not Hispanic	0.9%
White not Hispanic	4.5%
Hispanic	12.1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	45.7%
American Indian of Alaskan Native	8.3%
Total	5.6%

**Percentage Change by Race/Ethnic Groups and Nativity:
All Programs 2001-2004**

	Native Born	Foreign Born
Black not Hispanic	12.6%	21.6%
White not Hispanic	26.1%	12.8%
Hispanic	35.1%	2.1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	37.9%	7.3%
American Indian of Alaskan Native	46.4%	7.1%
Total	22.0%	8.2%

Immigrant-Specific Programs

The State of Illinois administers six welfare programs or categories of benefits that are specifically serve the immigrant population and their families. These include:⁸

- Cash assistance to certain elderly immigrants who arrived in the U.S. prior to August 22, 1996 yet who did not become 65 years of age until after that date.
- Emergency medical care and prenatal services to immigrants otherwise ineligible for these services through Medicaid.
- Medical assistance to legal immigrant children who are not U.S. citizens and who arrived in the U.S. after August 22, 1996.
- Medical assistance to persons who are permanently residing under the color of law (PRUCOLs).
- Cash assistance to refugees and asylees.
- TANF-like assistance to immigrant victims of domestic violence.

In all, 21,827 foreign-born persons were receiving the above programs in 2004.⁹ Another 6,182 persons were receiving these programs and were coded as native born. Most of these, 5,176 persons, were recipients of emergency and prenatal services. These could be children whose immigrant mother is receiving childbirth and post-natal medical care. Another 790 of the persons coded as native born in immigrant programs were in the program providing medical care to legal immigrant children arriving after August 1996. The presence of these cases in the data set are harder to explain. Coding errors may be responsible for some of these instances.

Of foreign-born persons in the welfare programs analyzed for this report, a minority are receiving the above programs. The number of foreign-born recipients of the six programs equals less than a fifth of the 105,839 foreign-born welfare recipients in the state. Thus, most immigrants are in the “mainstream” welfare programs. Within the immigrant-specific programs, however, the preponderance of recipients is receiving emergency/prenatal services (19,346 persons) or are legal immigrant children who arrived since 1996 (8,002 children). About 13.4 percent of all foreign-born welfare recipients get emergency/prenatal services, and 6.8 percent get services for legal immigrant children who came since August 1996. A very small number of immigrants are using the special cash assistance for the elderly or the TANF domestic violence program (although it should be noted that there are 6 foreign-born TANF-DV recipients coded and 66 native-born TANF-DV recipients, suggesting coding error).

⁸ Some of these categories are seen as programs, such as Refugee Cash Assistance, while others not programs but rather policies that extend benefits to certain classes of immigrants such as legal permanent resident children arriving since 1996.

⁹ This number may include some double-counting to the extent that an individual is in more than one program.

Use of Immigrant-Specific Programs by the Foreign Born: 2004

	# of FB Recipients	Percent of FB Using the Program*
All Programs	105,839	100.0%
Elderly Immigrants	3	0.0%
Emergency and Prenatal Services	14,170	13.4%
Immigrant Children	7,212	6.8%
PRUCOL	294	0.3%
Refugee	142	0.1%
TANF Domestic Violence	6	0.0%

*Expressed as a percent of all foreign-born persons in the IDHS client database

The racial/ethnic diversity is different in the two largest immigrant-specific programs. In emergency/prenatal services, Latinos are the overwhelming majority, comprising 76.8 percent of the foreign-born caseload. White non-Latinos are 8.9 percent and Asian/Pacific Islanders are 7.6 percent of the caseload. In the program providing services to legal immigrant children arriving since 1996, the racial/ethnic composition is more evenly balanced. Some 32.1 percent of recipients are White Non-Latinos, 32.8 percent are Latinos, and 26.5 percent are Asian/Pacific Islanders. In the former program, emergency/prenatal services, a portion of the population served consists of undocumented immigrants. This may explain the large Latino presence, as Latinos are a disproportionately large part of the undocumented immigrant population. The program of services to legal immigrant children, however, is available only to green card holders, and this probably explains why it has a more balanced racial/ethnic mix, which is relatively comparable to the racial/ethnic mixture of legal immigrants arriving in Illinois.

English-Language Skills of Welfare Recipients

IDHS collects data on the English-language ability of Spanish speakers.¹⁰ Individuals are categorized by whether they read and speak English, read but cannot speak English, speak but cannot read English, or cannot read or speak English. Of the 1.9 million welfare recipients in the state in 2004, 350,897 persons have information on their English ability in the database. There are 213,000 persons (presumably Latinos) who cannot read or speak English in the welfare programs, followed by 135,094 persons coded as reading and speaking English, 2,212 persons who speak but cannot read English, and 599 persons who read but can't speak English. This population that cannot read nor speak English has grown by 33.2 percent in the last three years.

English Ability: 2004

	# of Persons	Percent of Total
Reads and speaks English (English)	135,094	7.2%
Reads, can't speak English (English)	599	0.0%
Speaks, can't read English (Spanish)	2,212	0.1%
Can't read or speak English (Spanish)	212,992	11.3%
Not applicable	1,534,061	81.4%
Total	1,884,958	100.0%

Change in English Ability: 2001-2004

	# Change	Percent Change
Reads and speaks English (English)	32,086	31.1%
Reads, can't speak English (English)	100	20.0%
Speaks, can't read English (Spanish)	(188)	-7.8%
Can't read or speak English (Spanish)	53,129	33.2%
Not applicable	243,229	18.8%
Total	328,356	21.1%

For the major welfare programs the percentage of Latinos who cannot read nor speak English appears to reasonably track the Latino population, with the number of non-English speakers being somewhat lower than the number of Latinos. That is, Latinos are 18.3 percent of all persons in the state's welfare programs, and persons who cannot read nor speak English are 11.3 percent of all persons. Similarly, Latinos are 19.8 percent of all Medicaid recipients, and persons reported to neither speak nor write English are 12.4 percent of Medicaid recipients. Comparable ratios are seen in the Food Stamps, AABD and TANF programs, and in most other programs.

¹⁰ The data on language ability appear to be collected largely but not exclusively for Latinos. In FY2004 there were 345,685 Latinos in welfare programs and the language ability information was collected for 350,897 persons.

Welfare Use by Racial/Ethnic Groups and Immigrants in Illinois

Percent Who Can't Read or Speak English

	All Recipients	% Can't Read or Speak English (Spanish Speaker)	% Latino
All Programs	1,884,958	11.3%	18.3%
Medicaid	1,662,932	12.4%	19.8%
Medicaid Only Without Spenddown Exc. Kidcare	1,337,154	13.4%	20.9%
Kidcare	32,212	23.5%	32.3%
Medical Only Spenddown	146,160	10.0%	18.5%
MAG	147,406	4.0%	8.5%
Food Stamps	1,014,154	5.7%	11.8%
AABD	379,434	4.9%	8.5%
AABD-Aged	110,244	7.1%	9.4%
AABD-Blind	1,226	2.9%	6.7%
AABD-Disabled	267,964	4.0%	8.1%
TANF	467,474	26.7%	33.6%
TANF-2 Parent	561	5.5%	11.4%
TANF Single Parent	54,589	0.8%	5.2%
TANF Child Only	412,337	30.1%	37.4%
TANF DV	72	77.8%	20.8%
Transitional Assistance	5,499	4.1%	8.5%
State Children and Family Assistance	1,163	2.8%	3.3%
Emergency and Prenatal Services	19,346	73.0%	79.2%
Immigrant Children	8,002	31.3%	33.2%
PRUCOL	375	52.5%	47.5%
Elderly Immigrants	12	100.0%	50.0%

Note: programs do not sum to total because persons may be in more than one program. Refugee Cash Assistance is excluded because it does not collect the data.

Caseloads at Welfare Offices

Concentration of Major Programs

The Illinois Department of Human Services operates more than 100 field offices. Some 86 Illinois counties have an office serving that specific county. There are six offices that serve two counties each. Kane, Madison and St. Clair counties each have two welfare offices. Cook County is home to multiple offices. The Chicago-area offices have disproportionate numbers of clients, as may be expected given their concentration of population in the area.

The concentration of overall caseload in the major welfare programs of Medicaid, Food Stamps, AABD and TANF is such that ten offices account for more than a third of all recipients of these programs. Some 39.4 percent of Medicaid recipients, for example, are served by just ten offices. Nearly all of the leading offices are in the Chicago area with the exception of the Winnebago office which is one of the larger offices involved with the food stamp program. Certain other types of offices have large numbers of clients such as the Medical Field Operations unit which handles many AABD cases, and the Central Kidcare Unit.

Percent of Cases in Top Ten Offices: 2004

Medicaid	39.4%
Food Stamps	36.1%
AABD	38.2%
TANF	41.9%
Immigrant Children	79.1%
Emergency/Prenatal	67.3%

Medical care for immigrant children and emergency/prenatal medical care serve large numbers of immigrants. In these programs, however, the numbers of immigrants served are much more concentrated in a few offices than is the case with all recipients in the major welfare programs. Some 79.1 percent of immigrant children getting medical care are served through ten offices. Almost 20 percent are served solely by the Northern Office. Two-thirds or 67.3 percent of recipients of emergency/prenatal care are served by ten offices. Again, the Northern Office is the major office serving them, with 13.9 percent of recipients.

Leading Offices Serving Racial/Ethnic Groups

Some racial/ethnic groups are concentrated in a few welfare offices. For example, the ten offices with the largest White caseloads account for only 30.0 percent of all White welfare recipients. The ten offices with the largest Asian caseloads, however, account for 82.5 percent of all Asian welfare recipients.

Welfare Use by Racial/Ethnic Groups and Immigrants in Illinois

The Northern Office is the leading office serving White Non-Latinos, Asians and American Indians/Alaskan Natives. The office's importance for these groups varies considerably, as it serves 4.5 percent of White Non-Latinos, yet 28.6 percent of Asian welfare recipients go through the Northern Office. (In the table below, offices located in the city of Chicago are in capital letters.)

Top Ten Offices for Race/Ethnic Groups			
Black		White	
Statewide Total	745,237	Statewide Total	724,267
Top Ten Offices	49.7%	Top Ten Offices	30.0%
SOUTHEAST (Chicago and Cook)	8.3%	Northern (Cook and Chicago)	4.5%
ROSELAND	7.3%	Winnebago	3.8%
South Suburban (Cook and Chicago)	7.1%	DuPage	3.5%
ENGLEWOOD	5.5%	South Suburban (Cook and Chicago)	3.2%
CALUMET PARK (Cook and Chicago)	4.3%	West Suburban (Cook)	2.8%
NORTHWEST	3.6%	Will	2.7%
AUSTIN	3.6%	Sangamon	2.5%
WOODLAWN	3.4%	Lake	2.5%
PARK MANOR	3.3%	Medical Field Operations	2.4%
PERSHING	3.2%	Central Kidcare Unit	2.3%

Latino		Asian	
Statewide Total	345,685	Statewide Total	48,732
Top Ten Offices	66.0%	Top Ten Offices	82.5%
West Suburban (Cook)	11.0%	Northern (Cook and Chicago)	28.6%
ENGLEWOOD	9.6%	DuPage	12.2%
HUMBOLDT PARK	8.4%	MICHIGAN	9.3%
NORTHWEST	7.3%	WICKER PARK	6.9%
Northern (Cook and Chicago)	6.5%	South Suburban (Cook and Chicago)	5.8%
Lake	5.3%	UPTOWN	5.5%
WESTERN	5.1%	West Suburban (Cook)	5.1%
WICKER PARK	4.8%	HUMBOLDT PARK	4.1%
MICHIGAN	4.5%	Lake	2.7%
Kane/Elgin	3.6%	ENGLEWOOD	2.3%

American Indian/Alaskan Native	
Statewide Total	3,813
Top Ten Offices	45.9%
Northern (Cook and Chicago)	7.9%
Will	6.2%
West Suburban (Cook)	5.8%
South Suburban (Cook and Chicago)	5.6%
DuPage	4.5%
ENGLEWOOD	3.7%
SOUTHEAST (Chicago and Cook)	3.2%
WICKER PARK	3.0%
Central Kidcare Unit	3.0%
Winnebago	3.0%

Concentrations of Native and Foreign Born

Immigrants in general are far more concentrated in a few offices than the native born. About 67.0 percent of the foreign born are concentrated in ten offices, compared to 35.0 percent of the native born. The leading office serving the native born is the South Suburban office which has 4.7 percent of all native-born cases. In contrast, one fifth or 19.0 percent of immigrants are served by the Northern Office. For immigrants, all of the top ten welfare offices that handle their cases are in the metro Chicago area. Nine of ten of the top offices serving the native born are in metro Chicago, with the exception being the Winnebago County office.

Top Ten Offices for Native and Foreign Born Recipients			
Native Born		Foreign Born	
Statewide Total	1,779,119	Statewide Total	105,839
Top Ten Offices	35.0%	Top Ten Offices	67.0%
South Suburban (Cook and Chicago)	4.7%	Northern (Cook and Chicago)	19.0%
ENGLEWOOD	4.3%	West Suburban (Cook)	8.4%
West Suburban (Cook)	4.2%	DuPage	7.3%
SOUTHEAST (Chicago and Cook)	4.0%	ENGLEWOOD	5.5%
Northern (Cook and Chicago)	3.9%	HUMBOLDT PARK	5.3%
ROSELAND	3.1%	WICKER PARK	5.3%
NORTHWEST	3.0%	Lake	4.3%
Lake	2.7%	MICHIGAN	4.3%
Winnebago	2.6%	UPTOWN	4.3%
DuPage	2.5%	South Suburban (Cook and Chicago)	3.4%

Growth of Immigrant Recipients in Offices

While the overall number of foreign-born welfare recipients grew by 8.2 percent in the 2001-2004 period, the growth was far higher in certain offices, mainly in downstate locations. The table below shows offices with the largest percentage increases in immigrant welfare recipients, based on offices where there was an increase of at least 25 immigrants over the last three years. The highest increase was in the Clay County office, where immigrant clients grew in number by 200 percent in a three-year period.

Welfare Use by Racial/Ethnic Groups and Immigrants in Illinois

**Top Ten Offices in Increase in
Immigrant Cases: 2001-2004**

Office	Percent Increase	Numeric Increase
Clay	200.0%	32
PERSHING	172.3%	143
Wayne	165.0%	33
Warren	118.2%	26
Morgan	114.8%	35
Cass	100.0%	34
Kendall	70.5%	62
Kankakee	68.4%	214
ROSELAND	67.8%	185
Saline	66.7%	28

Based on offices with increase of at least 25 immigrants; data for Morgan accounts for merger with Scott in 9/02.

Discussion

This report examined nearly 7 million IDHS data records involving all major welfare programs managed by the State of Illinois over the period 2001-2004. The findings of this analysis addressed trends in the racial and ethnic composition of welfare programs and in the presence of immigrants overall and certain specific categories of immigrants.

The analysis of racial/ethnic characteristics shows an Illinois welfare population that is changing. In just a three-year period the percentage of welfare recipients who are African American has fallen by three percentage points, while other groups, particularly White Non-Latinos and Latinos have increased their share of the welfare population. Annualizing this rate of change over the next decade could suggest dramatic shifts in who is coming into IDHS welfare offices.

This change is not due to a net decline in any group. The number of African Americans getting some form of welfare increased by 84,000 persons over the three-year period. But the numbers of other groups getting welfare services grew more rapidly. For example, 147,000 White Non-Latinos were added to the population as were 80,000 Latinos. The Latino growth was similar to the Black growth even though the Latino population in 2001 was substantially smaller.

The reasons for the shifting racial makeup of Illinois welfare recipients includes changes in the eligibility rules governing programs. For example, the 2001-2004 period saw the phase-in of more generous eligibility for AABD. That is, the income level necessary to participate in AABD without a Spenddown was raised up to 100 percent of the poverty level. This means that persons higher up the income scale could take advantage of AABD and persons higher up the income scale, especially among the elderly, tend to be White Non-Latinos.

Similarly, Kidcare has been promoted to low-income parents by the state, and Kidcare has income eligibility standards that are somewhat over the poverty level, again meaning that groups other than African Americans are more likely to fit income guidelines. Serving families with children at an income range slightly above poverty, Kidcare can be expected to be attractive to Latinos, many of whom fit a “working-poor” profile. At the same time, a five-year cap on participation in TANF promotes declines in that program, as do requirements that recipients be engaged in employment. This tends to lower participation in TANF, which has had a disproportionately African American population.

The changing racial/ethnic makeup of programs suggests that caseworkers are encountering applicants and recipients of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This argues that on an ongoing basis IDHS employees will need to consider whether their communication strategies are adequate to interact with their current recipients, their incoming recipients, and with the population leaving programs who indeed may be eligible for other services.

The participation of immigrants in Illinois welfare programs is low. The foreign born are 12 percent of the state's population but only 5.6 percent of the state's welfare recipients. Indeed, the immigrant percent of welfare recipients fell over the 2001-2004 period. Some of the drop in immigrant representation could be due to the fact that fewer legal immigrants today are eligible for welfare services than prior to the passage of the landmark welfare reform act in 1996. Also, the undocumented are a large portion of immigrants in Illinois – as much as 40% according to estimates by The Urban Institute – and thus many immigrants are only eligible for emergency and prenatal medical services. The presence of undocumented possibly explains the 69.0 percent increase in foreign-born TANF child only cases; these may be cases where the parent is undocumented yet the child is a native-born citizen. The data showing declines in immigrant use of welfare in an era of large-scale immigration call for analysis of the extent to which immigrants are not using welfare due to ineligibility or for some other reason, such as a fear that welfare use has negative consequences for their immigration status or for their eligibility for naturalization.

The data in this report also show that few immigrants are using the special, immigrant-specific welfare categories. This should allay any concerns that immigrants are requiring special treatment. Only 3 persons are in the program for immigrant elderly, and only 6 persons are in the program for immigrant domestic violence victims. The low enrollment suggests that the cost of these programs is very low.

Information contained in the IDHS records on language and on the offices used by immigrants is potentially very helpful for the state's ongoing efforts to adequately reach out to immigrant communities. Some 11.3 percent of all welfare recipients are Spanish speakers who do not speak English. Thus the availability of bilingual information materials is clearly important to a large portion of the welfare recipients.

Immigrants are found to be highly concentrated in a relatively few IDHS welfare offices. This should make it relatively feasible for the state to concentrate outreach and communication efforts, and reach large numbers of persons through efforts in a small number of geographic areas. At the same time, there is a strong percentage increase of immigrants in downstate welfare offices such as Clay, Wayne and Morgan. In these areas, there is probably a need to increase training of local staff in linguistic and cultural sensitivity and in the complex and specific aspects of welfare law that pertain only to immigrants and their families.