

DORCHESTER COUNTY TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE ACTIVE CASELOAD: 2011

SUMMARY

Caseload Characteristics

- Dorchester County has a very small caseload, making up about one percent of Maryland's TCA caseload. However, the county did experience a 32% increase in its caseload from 220 cases in 2007 to 291 cases in 2011. The caseload began to decline in 2011, however.
- A typical TCA recipient was an African American (75.2%) woman (95.3%) who was about 34 years of age and had received at least her high school diploma (60.2%).
- A typical TCA case had two or fewer people in the assistance unit (56.2%). The youngest child in the assistance unit was approximately five years old.
- More than half (54.0%) of cases were work-exempt, largely consisting of child-only cases (31.3%).
- Single-parent cases, a part of the work-eligible caseload, increased by 54.4% from 68 cases in 2007 to 105 cases in 2011.

TCA Participation

- Dorchester County clients had a slight increase in the number of months of TCA receipt. In 2007, families received an average of 23 months of TCA in the previous five years; this increased to 26 months in 2011.
- Between 2007 and 2011, TCA recipients had between 13 and 22 months of assistance counted toward the federal time limit.

Employment and Wages

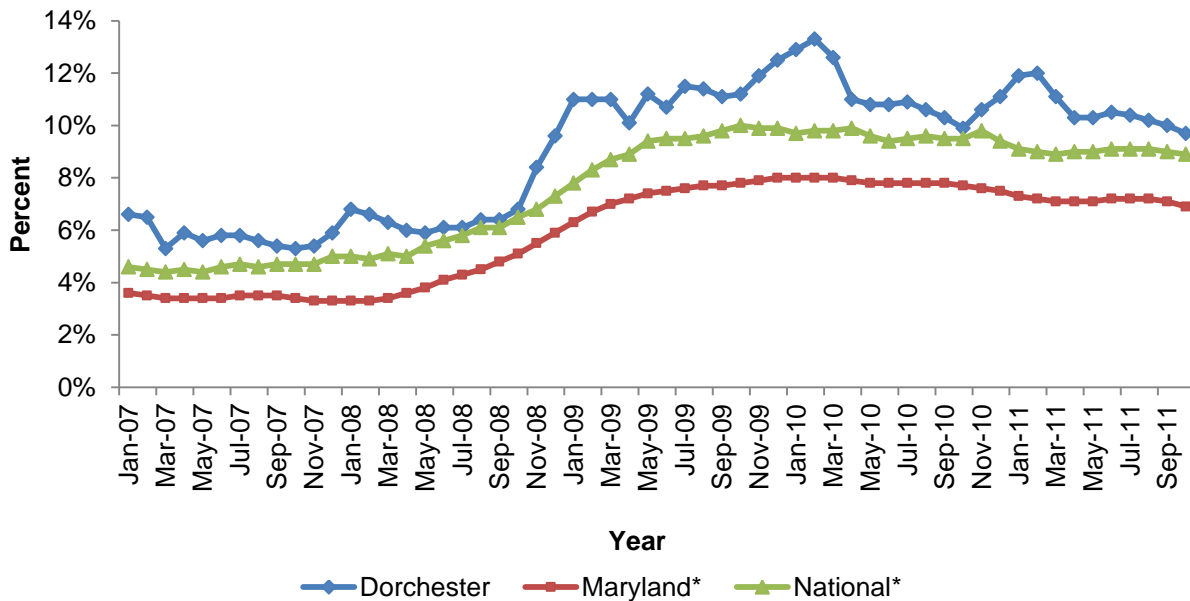
- Dorchester County's recipients were slightly more likely to have worked in the previous two years compared to their counterparts in the rest of Maryland. Two-thirds (65.9%) of caseheads receiving TCA in 2007 worked at some point in the two years before October 2007; however, only half (50.5%) of 2011 caseheads worked in the previous two years.
- Working caseheads' median total earnings also decreased. In 2007, two-year median total earnings were \$10,044 and decreased by 60% to \$3,972 in 2011.



INTRODUCTION

This report is a supplemental resource to *Life on Welfare: Characteristics of Maryland's TCA Caseload since the Great Recession*.ⁱ While the main report focuses on the statewide trends of the active caseload, this report provides trends specifically for Dorchester County by utilizing the same methodology and data. Dorchester County shares a border with Delaware on the east side of Maryland on the Chesapeake Bay and has a very small population. As Figure 1 shows, the unemployment rate in Dorchester County has been above the state average in all time periods examined. The peak of unemployment was in February 2010 at 13.3%, but decreased by 3.6 percentage points by October 2011 to 9.7%, still above the state average of 6.9%.ⁱⁱ

Figure 1. Unemployment Rate, 2007-2011



* Indicates seasonal adjustment.

The largest industries within Dorchester County were educational services, and health care and social assistance; manufacturing; and retail trade.ⁱⁱⁱ County residents were willing to commute for employment; 31.8% of residents traveled for employment outside the county, and an additional 5.0% left the state for employment.^{iv} The majority of Dorchester residents age 25 and older received a high school degree or higher (81.0%); less than one in five (16.5%) residents held a Bachelor's degree or higher.^v About 27.0% of Dorchester households earned under \$25,000 with an average household income of \$59,850 in 2010 and a median household income of \$45,151 compared to the state median household income of \$90,500.^{vi} The three year estimated poverty rate for 2009-2011 was 15.5%^{vii} in Dorchester County, which was 4.1 percentage points higher than the state average of 8.6%.^{viii}

| | Dorchester | Maryland |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 2010 Population | 32,618 | 5,773,552 |
| 2009-2011 Poverty Rate | 15.5% | 8.6% |
| 2010 Median Household Income | \$45,151 | \$90,500 |

FINDINGS

Caseload Characteristics

TCA caseloads across Maryland increased since the start of the Great Recession, although they began to decline in 2011. As displayed in Figure 2, Dorchester County also saw a small increase in its TCA caseload from 220 cases in October 2007 to 291 cases October 2010, a 32.3% increase. By October 2011, the caseload had already begun to decline, likely due to the slowly improving economy. Regardless of any increase in size, Dorchester County’s caseload only represented about one percent of Maryland’s statewide caseload over time.

Figure 2. TCA Caseload for Dorchester County, 2007-2011



Note: The active caseload for this and all other analyses are from October of each year between 2007 and 2011.

The general profile of Dorchester County TCA recipients, as displayed in Table 2, was an African American (75.2%) woman (95.3%) who has completed high school but received no additional education (54.9%). She never married (66.8%) and was 34 years old, on average. This profile has not changed between 2007 and 2011. It was similar to that of the average TCA casehead in Maryland which was an African-American (75.0%) woman (94.4%) who has never married (78.8%) and was in her mid-30s (mean=35.14 years). She was likely to have finished high school (61.8%) but not to have obtained further education (4.6%).

Table 2. Dorchester County Payee Demographic Characteristics: 2011 (n=278)

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Gender | |
| % Women | 95.3% (265) |
| Race | |
| % African American^ | 75.2% (200) |
| % Caucasian^ | 19.9% (53) |
| % Hispanic | 4.5% (12) |
| Education | |
| Finished 12th grade | 54.9% (160) |
| Beyond 12th grade | 5.3% (14) |
| Marital Status | |
| Never married | 66.8% (183) |
| Age at Study Month | |
| Mean [median] | 34.45 [30.22] |
| Range | 18.02-79.46 |

Note: ^=non-Hispanic. Counts may not sum to actual sample size because of missing data for some variables. Some information was excluded to protect recipient confidentiality when the sample was under 10 cases. Valid percentages are reported.

As shown in Table 3, most assistance units were relatively small: over half (56.2%) of all cases contained just one or two recipients, and less than one in five (18.3%) assistance units consisted of four or more people. On average, assistance units had one adult or less and two children. The average age of the youngest child in the assistance unit was five years. This was consistent with the average case in Maryland, where 57.8% of cases contained just one or two recipients and 19.7% had four or more people. The only difference was the average age of the youngest child in a Maryland assistance unit was six (mean=5.92).

Table 3. Dorchester County Case Demographic Characteristics: 2011 (n=278)

| Size of Assistance Unit (AU) | |
|--|-------------|
| 1-2 people | 56.2% (156) |
| 3 people | 25.5% (71) |
| 4 or more people | 18.3% (51) |
| Mean [median] | 2.56 [2] |
| Number of Adults in AU | |
| Mean [median] | 0.72 [1] |
| Number of Children AU | |
| Mean [median] | 1.71 [2] |
| Age of Youngest Recipient Child | |
| Mean [median] | 5.41 [3.38] |
| Range | 0.01-17.79 |

Note: Counts may not sum to actual sample size because of missing data for some variables. Valid percentages are reported.

As presented in Table 4, work-eligible cases made up 46.0% of the total caseload in 2011, which was slightly higher than the state level of 44.9%. Work-eligible cases, in which the casehead is required to participate in work-related activities, increased from one-third (32.9%) of Dorchester County's caseload in 2007 to nearly half (46.0%) in 2011. This increase is mainly due to the growth in single-parent cases from 68 to 105 cases, an increase of 54.4% between 2007 and 2011. On the other hand, work-exempt cases decreased from two-thirds (67.1%) of the caseload in 2007 to just over half (54.0%) of the caseload in 2011. Among the work-exempt caseload, child under one cases decreased by 13 percentage points, and child-only cases decreased by six percentage points, even though the actual number of child-only cases grew. However, the increase in child-only cases (7.4%) was more modest than the growth among single-parent cases (54.4%), so child-only cases were a smaller percentage of the overall caseload.

Table 4. Dorchester County Caseload Designations, 2007-2011***

| | 2007 (n=220) | 2008 (n=219) | 2009 (n=257) | 2010 (n=291) | 2011 (n=278) |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Work-Eligible | 32.9% (72) | 39.7% (87) | 35.4% (91) | 41.9% (122) | 46.0% (128) |
| Single-Parent Cases | 31.1% (68) | 36.1% (79) | 30.7% (79) | 38.1% (111) | 37.8% (105) |
| Earnings | - - | - - | - - | - - | 5.4% (15) |
| Work-Exempt | 67.1% (147) | 60.3% (132) | 64.6% (166) | 58.1% (169) | 54.0% (150) |
| Child-Only | 37.0% (81) | 36.5% (80) | 35.4% (91) | 33.7% (98) | 31.3% (87) |
| Child Under One | 21.5% (47) | 12.3% (27) | 12.5% (32) | 10.0% (29) | 8.3% (23) |
| Caring for Disabled Family Member | - - | - - | - - | - - | 4.0% (11) |
| Long-term Disability | 5.9% (13) | 6.8% (15) | 10.9% (28) | 10.3% (30) | 7.2% (20) |

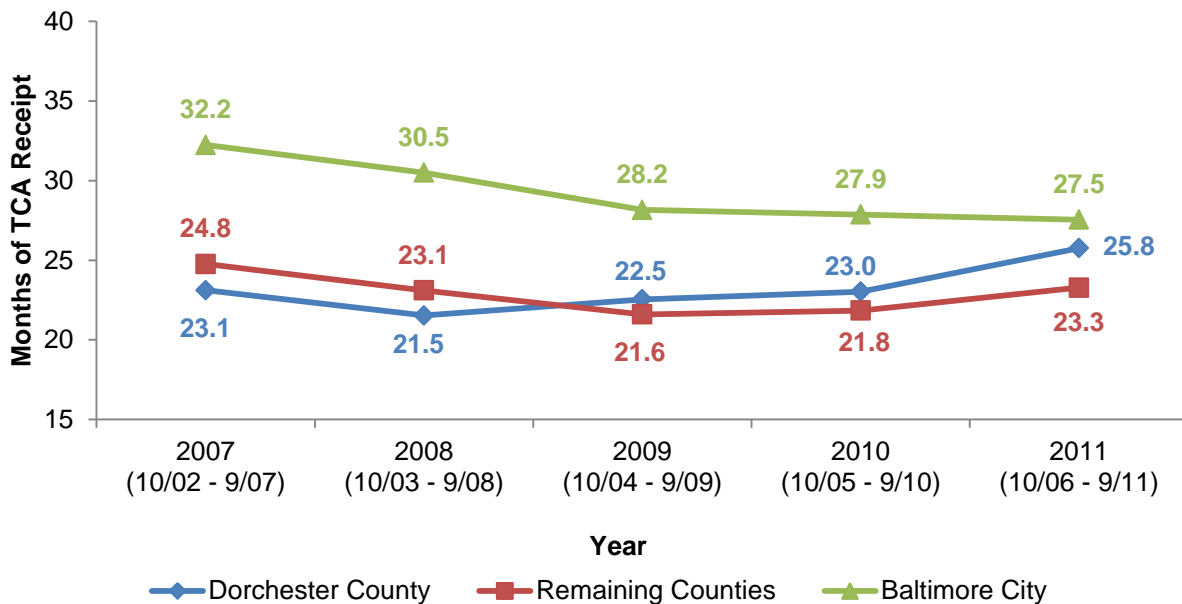
Note: Counts may not sum to actual sample size because caseload designations were excluded to protect recipient confidentiality when the sample was under 10 cases. The caseload designations completely excluded were short-term disabled, legal immigrant, domestic violence, two-parent, and needy caretaker relative. Valid percentages are reported.

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001.

TCA Participation

The average number of months of TCA receipt in the last five years is presented in Figure 3 for Dorchester County, Baltimore City, and the remaining 22 counties. Statewide figures are omitted since they tend to reflect Baltimore City trends due to its disproportionately large part of the state's caseload. In all years, Dorchester TCA recipients received assistance for an average of about two years during the previous five years. For example, the 2007 caseload received TCA for an average of 23.1 months in the previous five years (between October 2002 and September 2007). TCA receipt declined by two months in 2008 (21.5 months), but increased each subsequent year until the average number of months of TCA receipt in Dorchester County reached 25.8 months in the previous five years. The other counties had a similar pattern of receipt, although the decline in TCA receipt continued through 2009, and the increase in subsequent years was not as large as in Dorchester County. Baltimore City, on the other hand, saw a continuous decline in the average number of month of TCA throughout this time period.

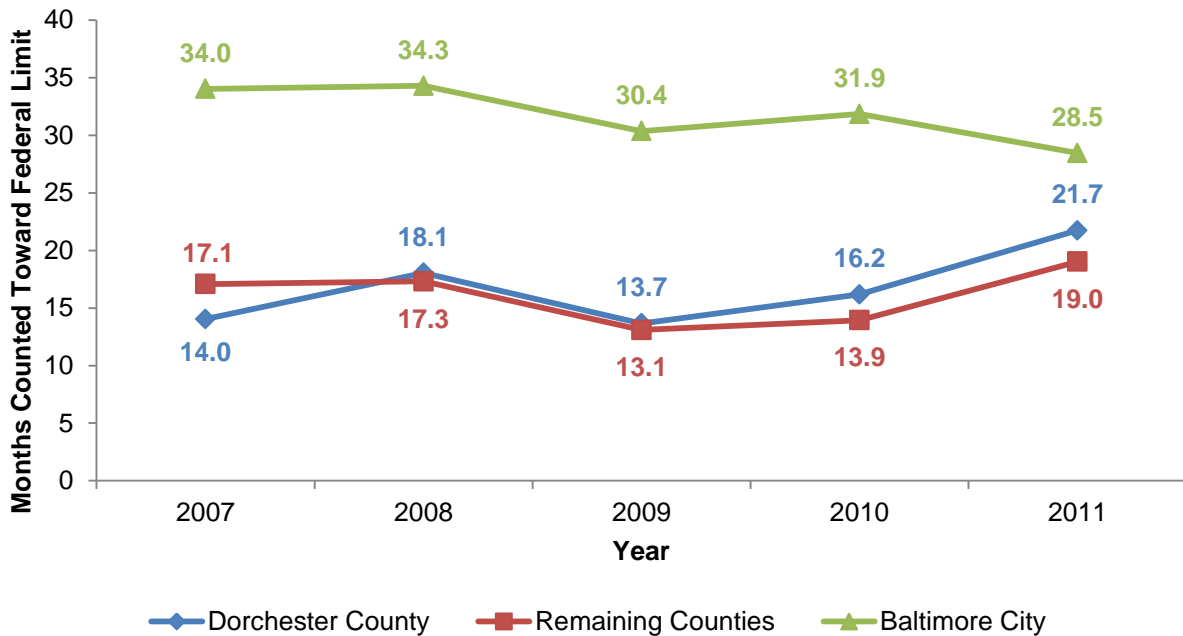
Figure 3. Average Number of Months of TCA in the Previous Five Years: 2007-2011***



*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Most adult TCA recipients are subject to a 60-month lifetime limit on benefit receipt. However, Maryland does allow for hardship exemptions for cases that require additional months of receipt. Statewide, only seven percent of the caseload has received more than 60 months of TCA.^{ix} Figure 4 shows trends in the average number of months counted toward the federal 60-month time limit between 2007 and 2011 for Dorchester County, the remaining 22 counties, and Baltimore City. On average, cases in Dorchester County had between 13 and 22 months of TCA counted toward their 60-month limits between 2007 and 2011.^x Dorchester clients in 2007 had 14.0 months, on average, counting towards their federal time limit, but by 2011, it was 21.7 months. Similar to Dorchester County, the remaining Maryland counties had an initial decrease in the average number of time-limited months, but average time-limited months began to rise again after 2009. Baltimore City, on the other hand, continued to see a decrease in months counted toward the federal time limit, declining from 34.0 months in 2007 to 28.5 months in 2011.

Figure 4. Average Number of Months Counted Towards Federal Limit***



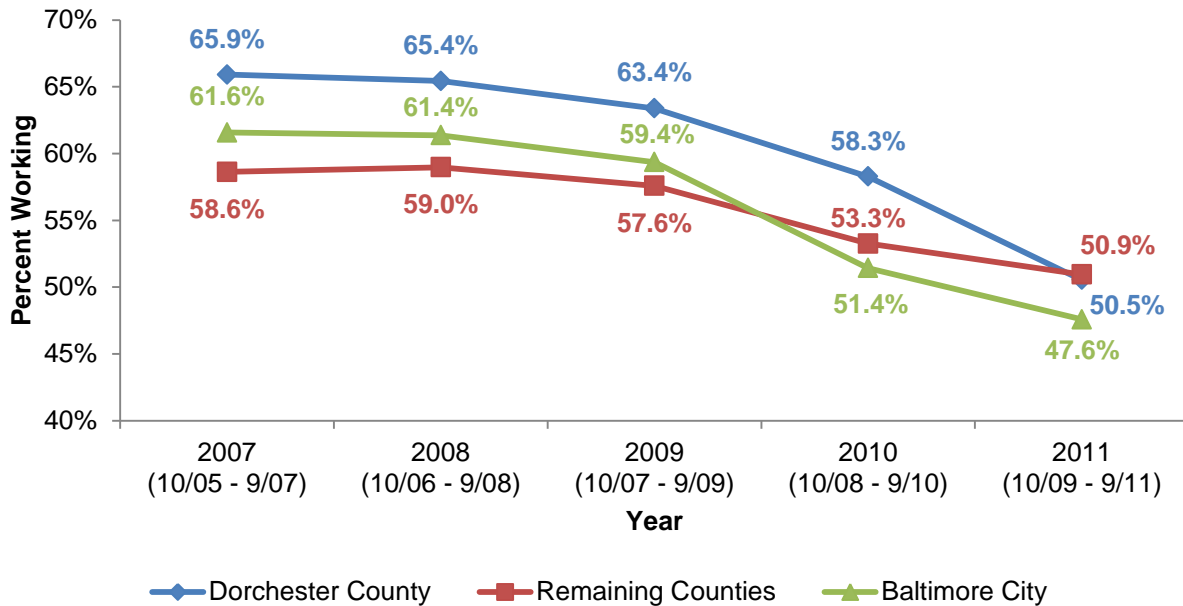
*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Employment and Wages

To encourage self-sufficiency, casehead employment is the ultimate goal of welfare, and research has confirmed that cash assistance recipients are not strangers to the world of work.^{xi} To provide a perspective on employment in Dorchester County, Figure 5 compares Dorchester County, the remaining counties, and Baltimore City on the percent of caseheads who worked in a Maryland UI-covered job in the two years before each study year. Nearly two-thirds (65.9%) of the 2007 Dorchester County caseheads worked at some point in the previous two years (between October 2005 and September 2007). However, there was a steady decline in employment participation of 15 percentage points by 2011 (50.5%). The remaining Maryland counties and Baltimore City saw a similar pattern of work participation with substantial declines in the percent of caseheads with employment.

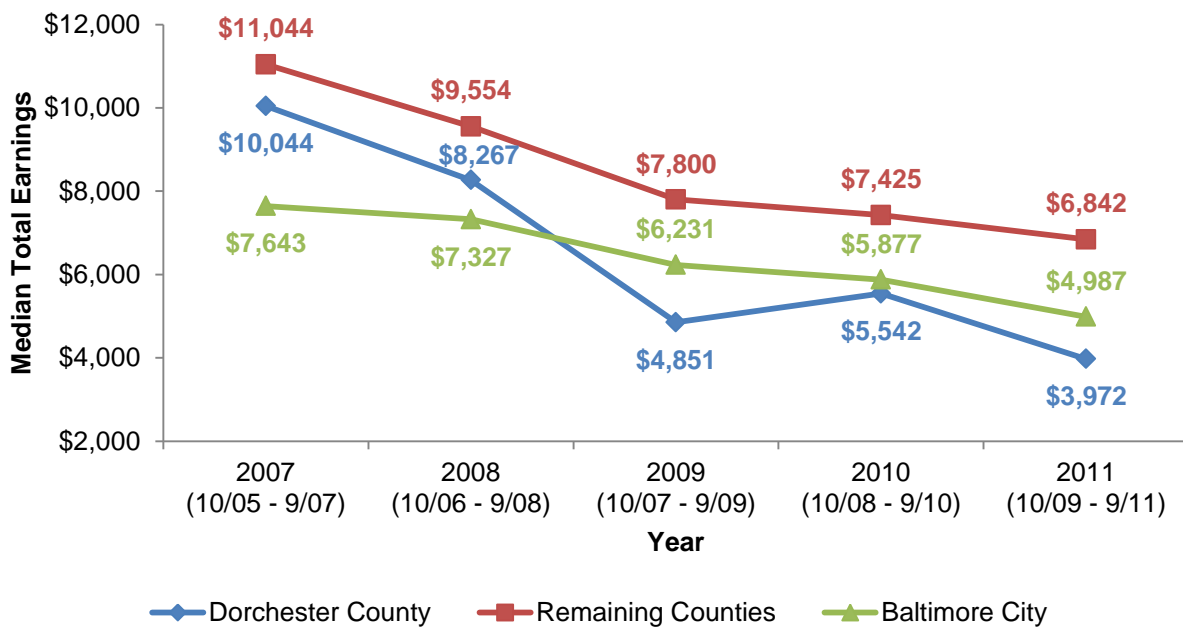
Figure 6 shows median total earnings in the previous two years for each year in this five-year period for Dorchester County, the remaining counties, and Baltimore City. Median earnings among working Dorchester County caseheads in 2007 were \$10,044 over the previous two years, just \$1,000 below the average in the remaining counties and nearly \$3,000 more than working caseheads in Baltimore City. In 2009, there was a substantial decrease of more than \$5,000 in median total earnings in Dorchester County, and working caseheads were earning less than Baltimore City caseheads (\$4,851 vs. \$6,231). Dorchester County caseheads continued to earn less than caseheads in Baltimore City and the remaining counties in 2010 and 2011. Baltimore City and the other counties also saw a decline in median earnings, but Dorchester County's median earnings decreased 60.5%, compared to 34.8% in Baltimore City and 38.0% in the remaining counties.

Figure 5. Percent of Caseheads Working in the Previous Two Years, 2007-2011***



*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Figure 6. Median Total Earnings in Previous Two Years, 2007-2011***



Note: All earning amounts are reported in 2011 dollars. *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

CONCLUSION

In 2011, Dorchester County's TCA caseload was comprised of African American women about 34 years old with high school diplomas. Cases mostly consisted of one or two people, and most of the children were under five years old. This profile was stable over time. Throughout the recession and its slow recovery, Dorchester County had a substantial increase in work-eligible cases, mainly among single-parent cases who are required to participate in work-related activities and whose TCA receipt is counted toward the 60-month federal time limit. Subsequently, TCA receipt increased, including average number of months counting toward the time limit, while employment participation and median earnings declined.

Notes and Sources:

ⁱ Nicoli, L.T., Logan, L., & Born, C.E. (2012). *Life after Welfare: Annual Update*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

ⁱⁱ United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2011, November 22). Regional and state employment and unemployment (monthly) news release. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/laus_11222011.htm.

ⁱⁱⁱ United States Census Bureau. (2012a). American Community Survey. Available from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>.

^{iv} United States Census Bureau. (2012a). American Community Survey. Available from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>.

^v United States Census Bureau. (2012a). American Community Survey. Available from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>.

^{vi} United States Census Bureau. (2012a). American Community Survey. Available from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>.

^{vii} The 2011 estimate was unavailable for Dorchester County. The 3 year 2009-2011 estimate was 15.5%.

^{viii} United States Census Bureau. (2012b). Poverty thresholds. Available from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html>.

^{ix} Logan, L., Saunders, C., & Born, C.E. (2012). *Welfare Time Limits: Hardship Exemptions in Maryland*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

^x Due to the small caseload sizes in Dorchester County, a few outlier cases can skew the means. While the mean number of months had increased drastically, the median number of months towards the federal time limit was only 12 months in 2011, consistent with previous years' findings.

^{xi} Nicoli, L.T., Logan, L., & Born, C.E. (2012). *Life after Welfare: Annual Update*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

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