

Benefit Cliff Mitigation in NEW HAMPSHIRE

THE SPARK

Early in 2019, New Hampshire's Governor Christopher T. Sununu authored, *Helping Businesses Thrive and Families Prosper*, which highlighted the state's low unemployment rate and the untapped potential of its workforce. This paper, combined with the Whole Family Approach to Jobs initiative among New England states, catalyzed New Hampshire's efforts to address benefit cliffs. The governor's support and the bipartisan nature of the initiative helped frame the work around workforce development and economic stability.

INITIATIVES

Policy Change through HB4

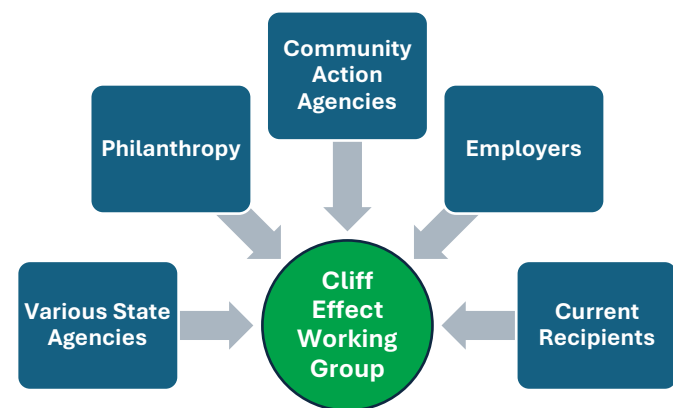
The HB4 legislation was pivotal in New Hampshire's efforts to address benefit cliffs. This legislation mandated the development of a plan to close the cliff effect, including the creation of a benefits cliff calculator and the implementation of policy changes such as TANF income disregards for high-demand jobs, increasing SNAP eligibility to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and transitioning the childcare scholarship to an enrollment-based system.

NH's Vision for Mitigating Benefit Cliffs:

*Parents Working
Children Thriving
Families Well*

Economic Analysis

An economic analysis, in partnership with New Hampshire Employment Security, sought to understand the impact of the cliff effect, looking at the intersection of the business climate, child and family wellbeing, and public assistance and to provide data-driven recommendations. This analysis examined statewide and community-level data, identifying key areas where policy changes could maximize federal dollars and minimize state costs. See their [2024 Economic Analysis Report here](#).



Cliff Effect Working Group

Once the Economic Analysis recommendations were published, a Cliff Effect Working Group came together, established as a part of HB4 legislation, to develop a comprehensive plan around how to mitigate benefit cliffs in the state. This group included a diverse cross-section of stakeholders, such as representatives from various state agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Department of Employment Security (DHES), the Department of Education (NHED), the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA), the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH), and the New Hampshire Finance Authority (NHHFA). The group also included philanthropic organizations, community action agencies, private employers, and individuals receiving public benefits.

Post-Support TANF Program

The Post-Support TANF Program was implemented to provide support for families for one year after they transition off TANF benefits. The program ensures families have access to employment and training services, child care assistance, and supportive services. Case managers are also trained to help these individuals understand which benefits they can expect to lose using the Atlanta Fed's benefit cliff calculator.

FINER DETAILS

Funding

The initiatives were primarily funded through existing program dollars and TANF reserves. The economic analysis was funded through a combination of state dollars, with additional support from pandemic relief dollars.

Key Collaborators

In addition to the diverse perspectives included in the Cliff Effect Working Group as well as New Hampshire's participation in the Whole Family Approach to Jobs Initiative in New England, the state also collaborated with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

TIMELINE

The below timeline shows how this body of work developed over time in New Hampshire:

