

BEYOND THE CLIFF:

The Challenge of Benefits Cliffs and How to Fix Them

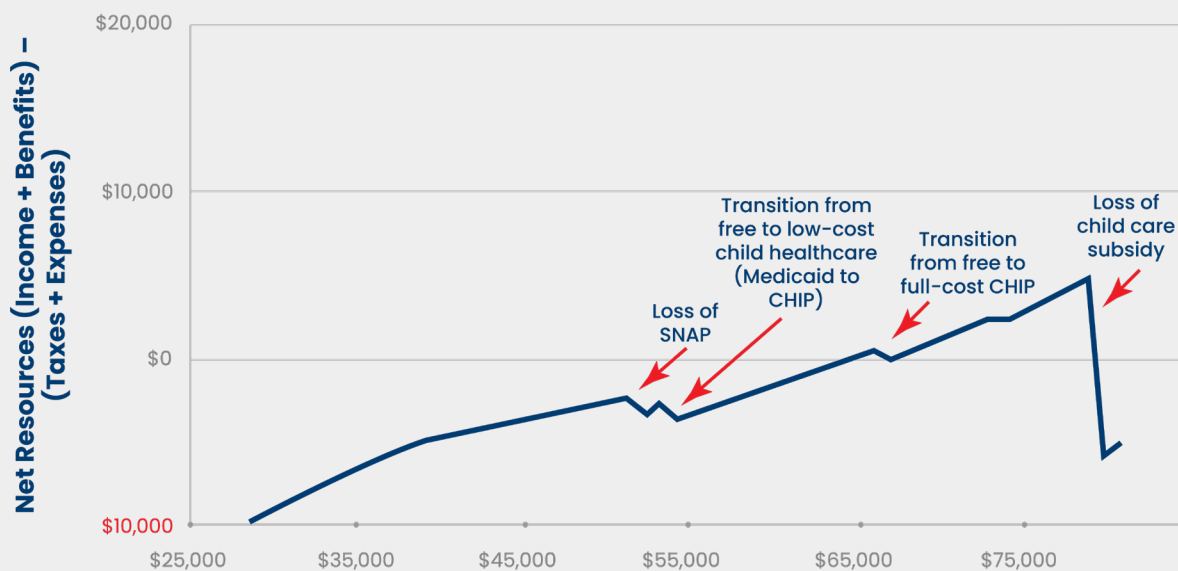
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Benefits cliffs represent a significant challenge within the American public benefits system, including programs like SNAP, Medicaid, HUD-supported housing, and childcare subsidies. These means-tested programs support families with low income, but their complex, rigid eligibility rules unintentionally punish employment and economic advancement.

As families earn more, they face steep reductions or losses in benefits, leaving them worse off financially despite higher earnings; these are benefits cliffs in action.

Often, workers will make the financially reasonable decision to reduce work and earnings to maintain the benefits that help them make ends meet. Nearly one in four workers receiving public benefits have taken some action, such as reducing work, to avoid benefits cliffs.

Experience of a Single Parent of Two Children (Ages 2 and 5) in Bucks County, PA, in 2025



This creates a barrier to economic mobility, impacting millions nationwide with significant implications for the labor market and the American taxpayer.

Learn more at beyondthecliffcoalition.org or email beyondthecliff@marthaobryan.org