Child-Only TANF: A Call for Collaboration

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Expanded from a presentation on:

"TANF Child-only Case Characteristics, Dynamics, and Context: California, Florida, Illinois, and New York"

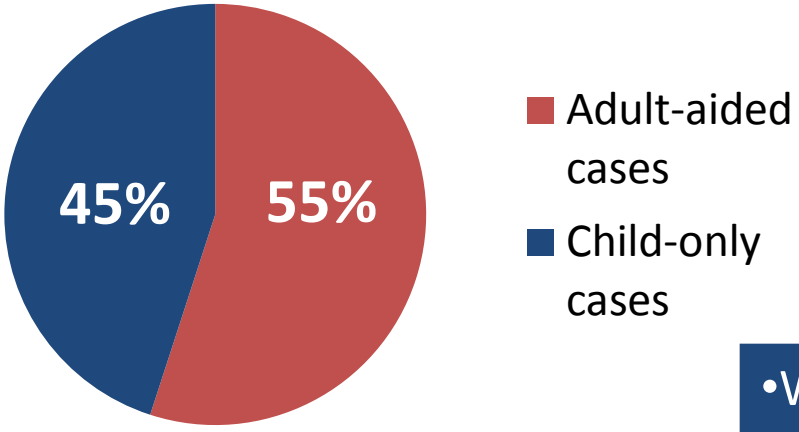
-- by Robert Goerge, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago; Jane Mauldon, University of California at Berkeley; and Richard Speiglman, Child and Family Policy Institute of California

-- with contributions from Angela Sheehan and Kinsey Dinan, New York City Human Resources Administration; Jeff Barnes, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance; and Matthew Stagner, John Dilts, and Pete Ballard, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

-- presented at the Welfare Research and Evaluation Conference, Washington, DC, June 1, 2011

Why study TANF "Child-only" cases?

U.S. TANF cases by type 2009*



Child-only cases are almost half of all U.S. TANF cases

What are the key questions about child-only cases?

- What is the composition of cases by case type?
- What happens to the cases over time?
- Beyond income, what are service needs?
- What services are available?
- What coordination with Child Welfare or other agencies is needed?

Why study California, Florida, Illinois and New York?

These states account for about 40% of TANF child-only cases nationwide.

*Average monthly TANF caseload for Calendar Year 2009
Source: Administration for Children and Families

Today's presentation

- Study overview
- What is known about child-only families
- Policy background
- Preliminary findings
  - Caseloads, case types, and grant amounts from administrative data
  - Policy context from key informant interviews
- Discussion about service partnerships

In progress

- County-level analysis
- Dynamics of case entry and exit

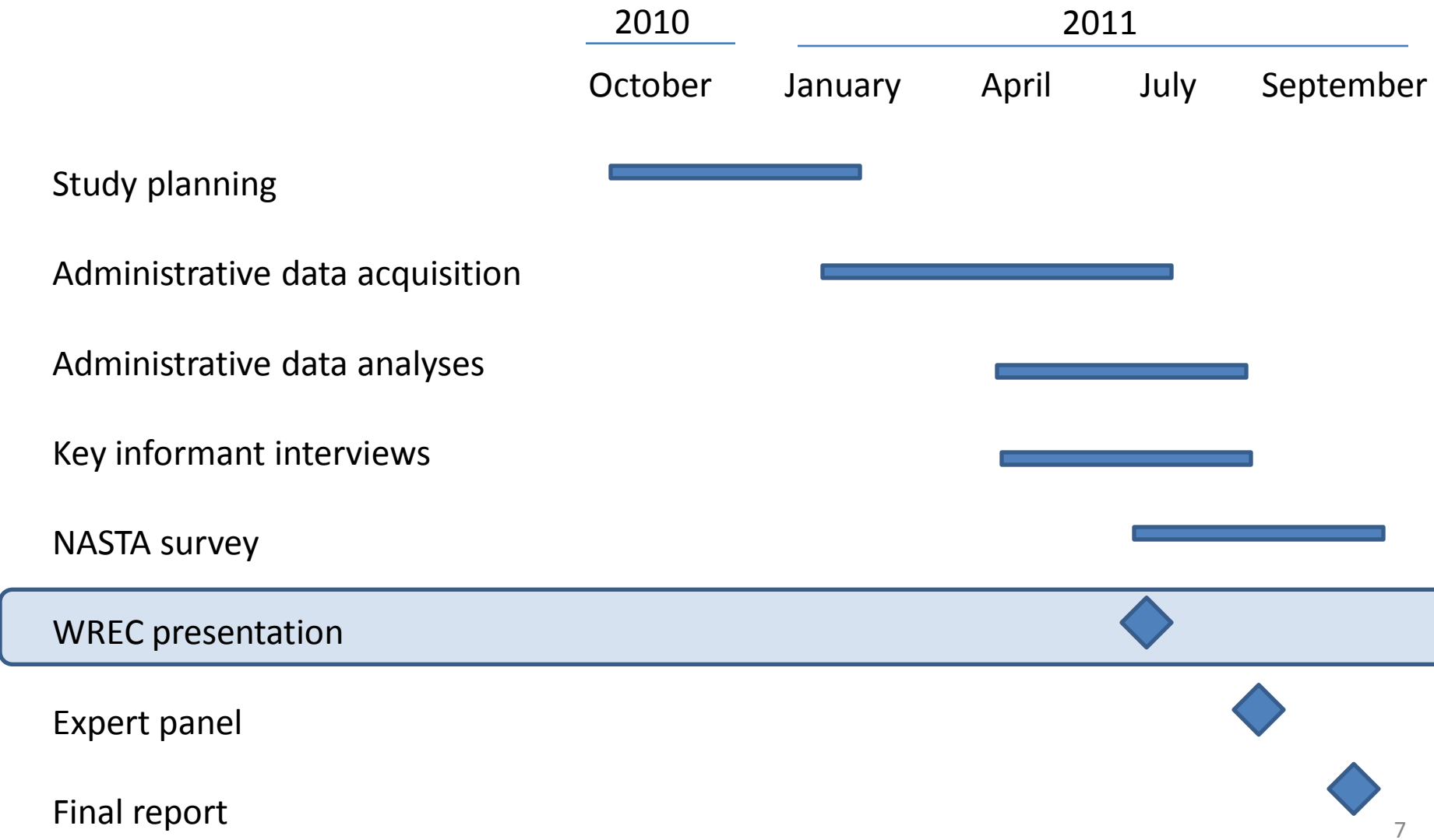
Sources of information

	California	Florida	Illinois	New York
Administrative data	Department of Social Services annual Quality Control TANF sample and monthly caseload data	Department of Children and Families monthly caseload data	Department of Human Services monthly data extracts	NYC Human Resources Administration; NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance monthly data
Key informant interviews	• State, county, and city agency administrators, managers, and supervisors • Community-based service providers • Advocates working in fields of cash assistance, family safety/child welfare, and employment, immigrant, substance abuse, kinship, and homeless services			
NASTA Survey	Survey of State TANF administrators in 50 states			

Lessons from California's Linkages Program (2001-2011)

- By establishing mutual goals between Child Welfare and TANF, better results in both programs:
  - TANF/Welfare to Work functions as a child abuse prevention program
  - Child Welfare functions as a support for self-sufficiency
  - Dual-service families: increased work participation and decreased re-entry to foster care and recurrence of abuse/neglect
  - Families benefit from streamlined services
- Clear example of benefits of systematic cross-program partnerships

Study timeline



Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act

From Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)…

- Funded jointly by states & Feds; federal share was a match to state funding; most funds went to cash aid.
- No financial incentives to decrease caseload; caseload growth partly funded by federal match.
- Entitlement program, with eligibility largely per federal rules; states had very limited authority to cut families from aid.
- Limited work requirements and no time limits on aid.

…to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- Federal block grant plus state MOE and SSP funds–funds can be used for non-cash-aid programs consistent with goals of PRWORA.
- Financial incentives to reduce caseloads; states provide support where federal aid is restricted.
- Adult eligibility defined at state level; most child eligibility still per federal rules; many states adopted options to “remove” parents from grant.
- Work requirements for most adults, backed by sanctions; time-limited aid (except for most child-only cases)

Child Welfare Funding

Title IV-E ($6.75 billion)

- Categorical program that only provides funding for foster care or imminent risk
- Federal participation relies on eligibility for AFDC per 1997 rules
- Experiments with federal waivers allow funding for preventive family support services that demonstrate effectiveness of working with families who otherwise would fall through cracks

Title IV-B ($712 million)

- Federal block grant to provide supportive services to childen and families in the Child Welfare System
- Support for community based prevention services
- In some circumstances can provide assistance for child-only families
- Need dramatically exceeds available resources for famiiles in child welfare system

Major Child-Only Case Types

	Child-only case type	Definition
NPC	Children in care of a non-parental caregiver	Non-parental caregivers have the option of applying for a TANF grant for the children in their care, without applying for themselves. In these instances, the caregiver's income is excluded from eligibility and benefit calculations.
SSI	Children whose parents receive Supplemental Security Income	Parents who receive SSI are ineligible for a TANF grant for themselves, but they may apply for their children. The parent's SSI income is excluded from eligibility and benefit calculations.
IIP	Children of ineligible immigrant parents	Parents who are income-eligible for TANF, but are ineligible based on their immigration status, may apply for a TANF grant on behalf of their eligible children.

Other child-only case types

Case type	Definition
Felon	An adult in the case is ineligible to receive aid due to a prior drug-related felony conviction.
Timed-out aid	An aided adult reaches the federal maximum of 60 months of aid (or a state maximum of fewer months), but aid continues for children in the case.
Sanctioned	The TANF grant is converted from an adult-aided to a child-only grant because the adult fails to meet program requirements.

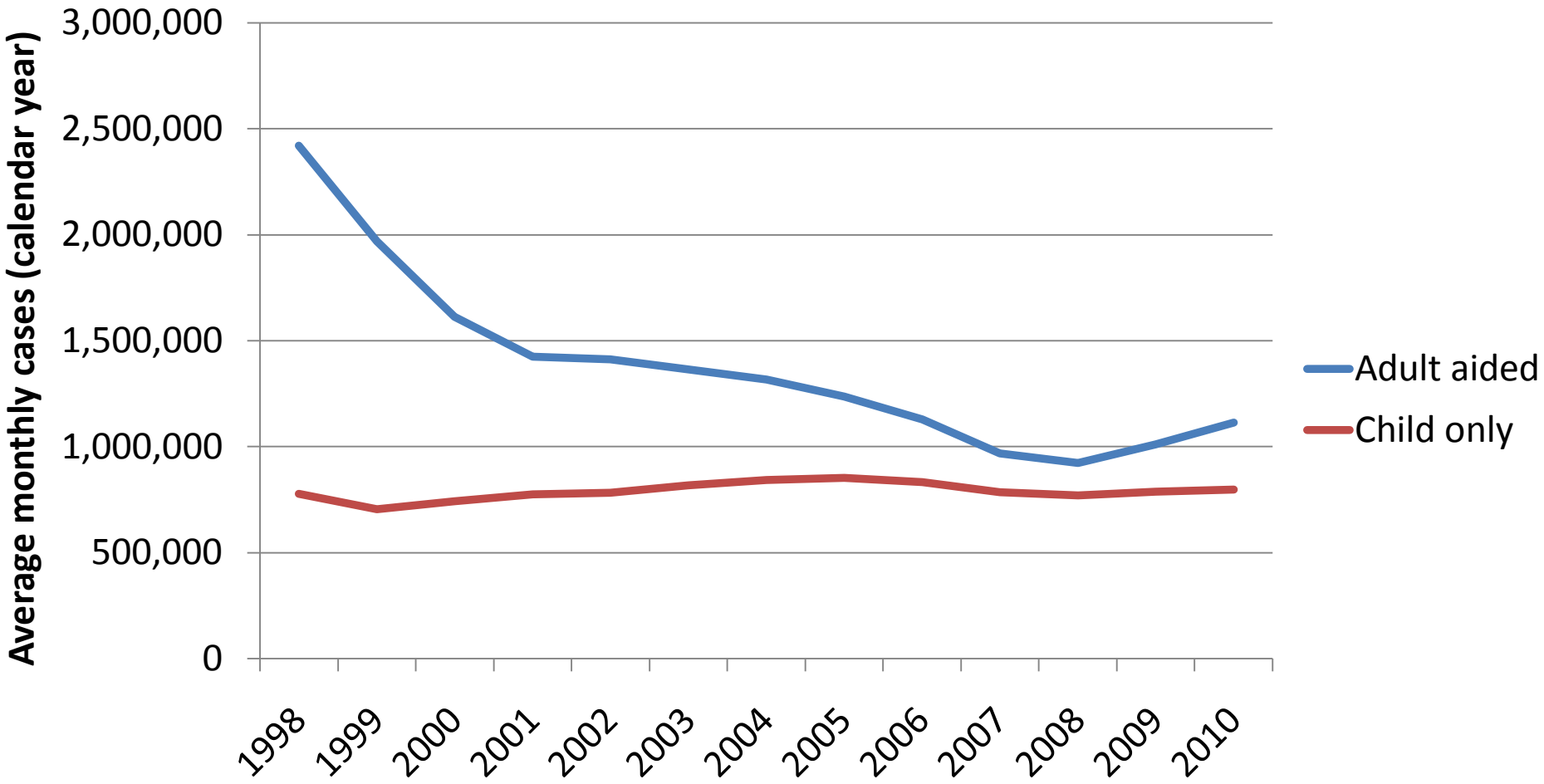
Concerns about Well-Being 1

	Children	Parents/Caregivers
NPC	Exposure to trauma prior to placement (grief and loss associated with parents' mental health problems, desertion, substance abuse, incarceration; child abuse; neglect), unmet physical and emotional health and developmental needs, lack of permanence, anxiety attacks, depression, promiscuity, aggressive behavior, poor relationship with parents, learning difficulty, academic performance (grade repetition, school suspension, expulsion), educational aspirations, self-esteem, health poorer than children in TANF aided adult cases, behavior problems (Bavier 2011, Billings et al. 2002, Edelhoch 2002, Farrell et al. 2000, Gibbs et al. 2004, Kortenkamp and Ehrle 2002, Sun 2003, Wood and Strong 2002)	Caregivers typically older than TANF parents, health problems, disability, complicated relationship with parents of the children, lack of needed personal and financial resources for caregiving, lack of contact with others raising young children, risk of lost contact with own support network (Farrell et al. 2000, Gibbs et al. 2004, Wood and Strong 2002)
SSI		
IIP		

Concerns about Well-Being 2

	Children	Parents/Caregivers
NPC		
SSI	Physical (including chronic) health, mental health, and behavior problems (including school suspension, fighting, use of drugs or alcohol); lack of access to child care and early childhood education; CPS contacts (Mauldon et al. 2010, Speiglman et al. 2010)	Older than typical TANF parent, poor mental and physical health, mobility and other ADL limitations, hunger and other material hardships, difficulties in parenting, lack of emotional support (Dunifon et al. 2004, Mauldon et al. 2010, Speiglman et al. 2010, Wood and Strong 2002)
IIP	Relatively little known . . . Concerns about severe poverty; housing composition, stability and crowding; food security; educational support; children's adultification (Shields and Behrman 2004, Speiglman et al. in preparation, Wood and Strong 2002)	

Child-only caseloads have been relatively stable over time at the national level.



Nationwide caseload comparison (Sum of TANF, SSP, and MOE)
Source: Administration for Children and Families

Preliminary findings: Snapshot

Children receiving TANF, compared to child population in state

	California	Florida	Illinois	New York State*	New York City*
Child population, 2009	9,431,766	4,056,356	3,169,817	4,422,300	1,890,885
Children on TANF, 2009	1,050,448	88,172	52,543	301,901	192,001
Percent of children receiving TANF	11%	2%	2%	7%	10%
Children on child-only TANF, 2009§	581,672	49,310	26,601	94,661	56,410
Percent of children on child-only TANF	6%	1%	1%	2%	3%

*Unless otherwise indicated, values reported for New York State include New York City data.
§ In New York State and New York City, "children on child-only TANF" figures are for 2010.

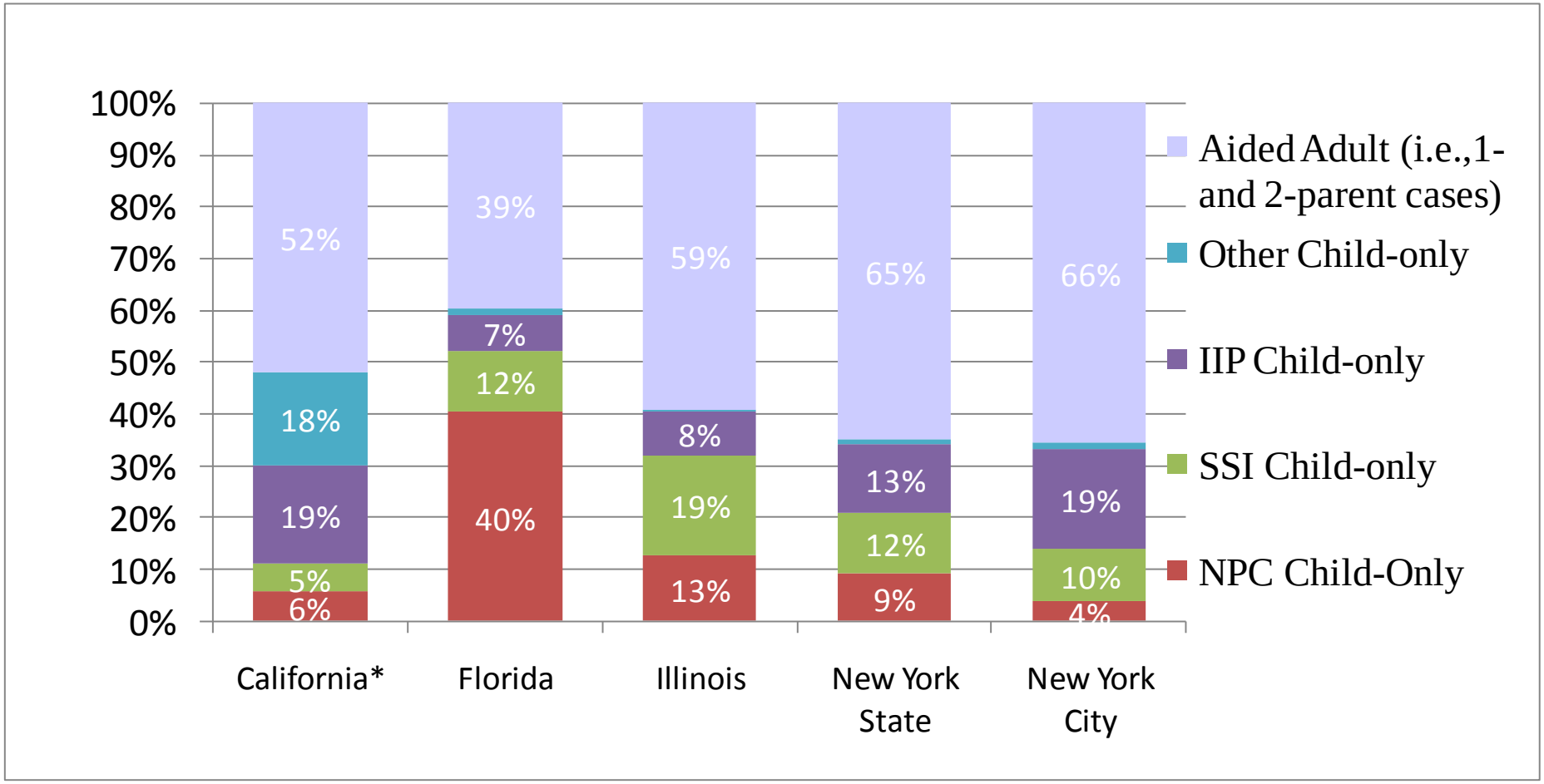
California Child Welfare Allegations and Foster Care Enrollments

- Allegations (1/1/2010 – 12/31/2010): 479,470
  - Substantiated 87,311 (General neglect 50,770; Caretaker absence/incapacity 4,679)
- In foster care (July 1, 2010): 57,737
  - 18,732 kin
  - 5,649 foster
  - 3,814 group
  - 5,044 other
  - -- 17,087 foster family agency
  - -- 4,727 guardian, other
  - -- 2,684 guardian, dependent

Source: Needell, B., et al. (2011). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved 8/6/2011, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

Preliminary findings: Snapshot

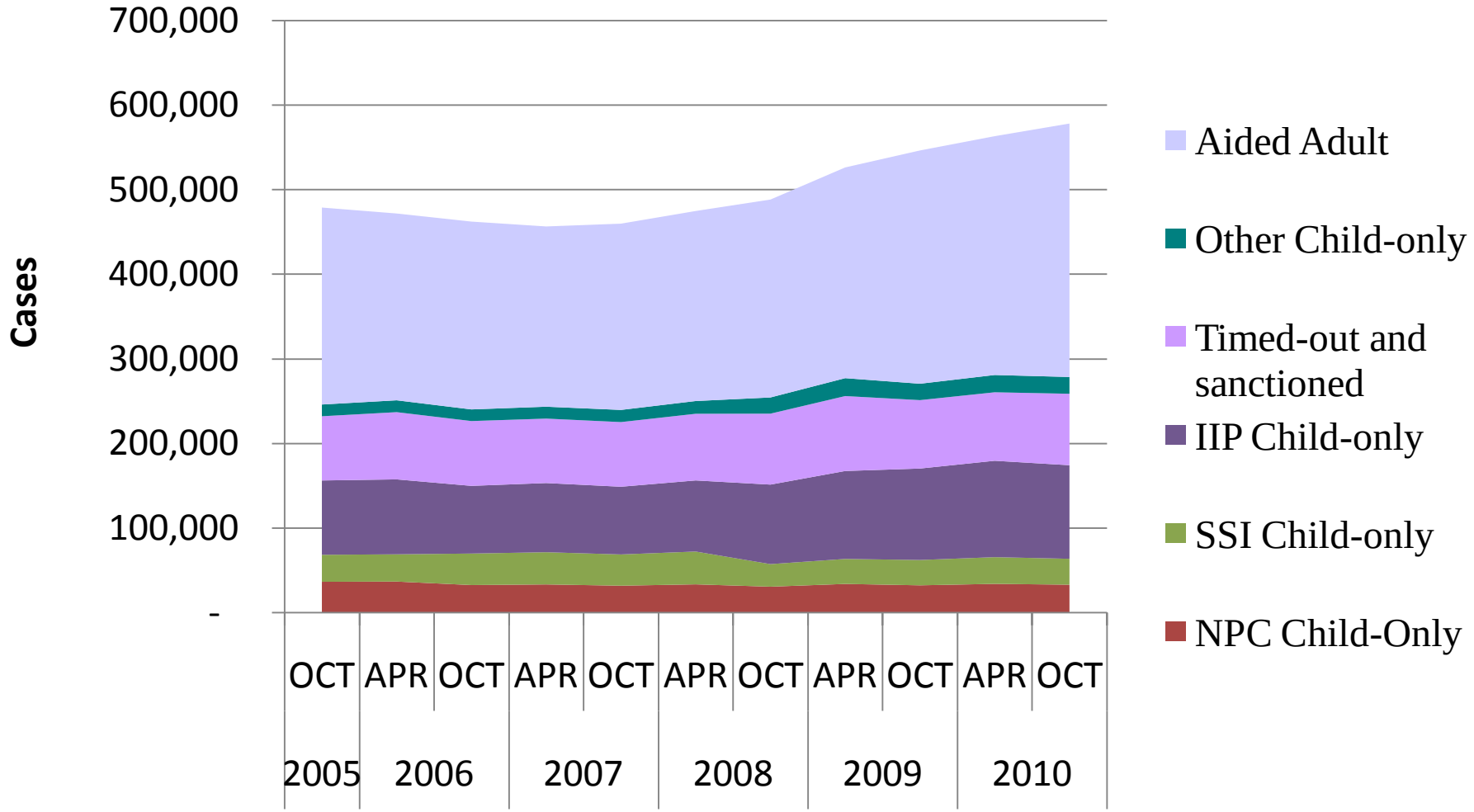
Distribution of TANF Cases by Type, by study sites, as of October 2010



*California's "other" category is large because it includes timed-out and sanctioned cases.

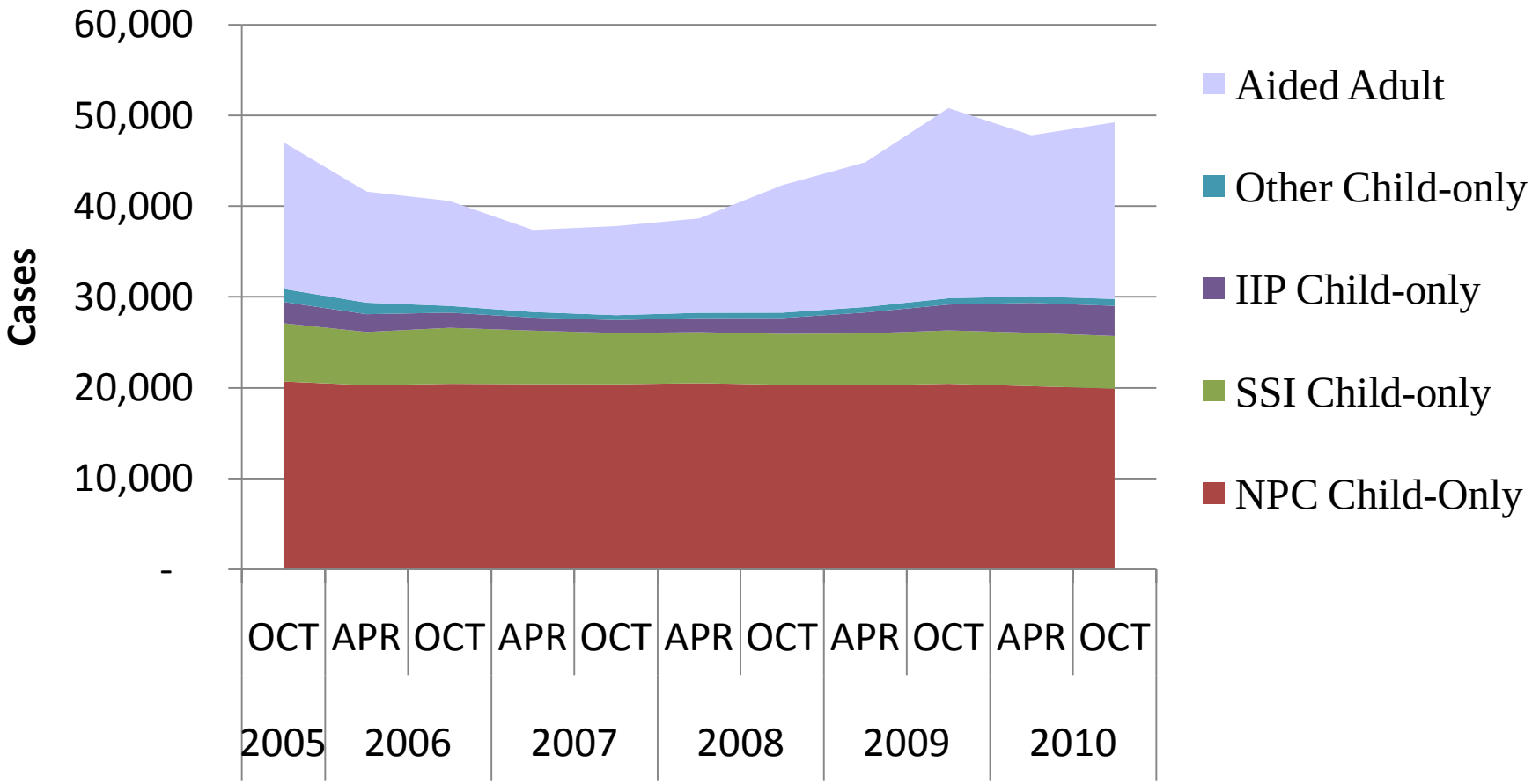
Preliminary findings: Trends

TANF Case Types, over Time California



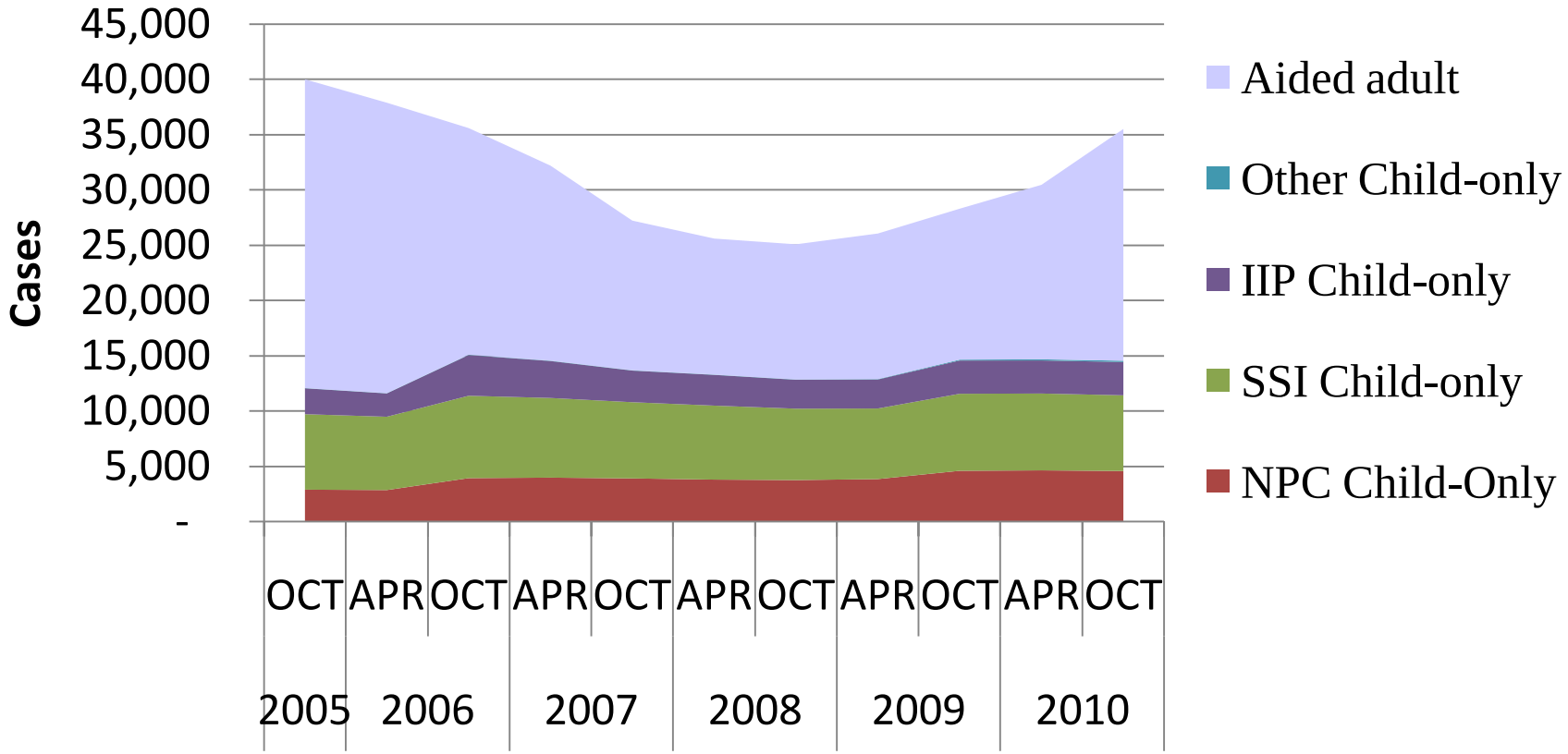
Preliminary findings: Trends

TANF Case Types, over Time Florida



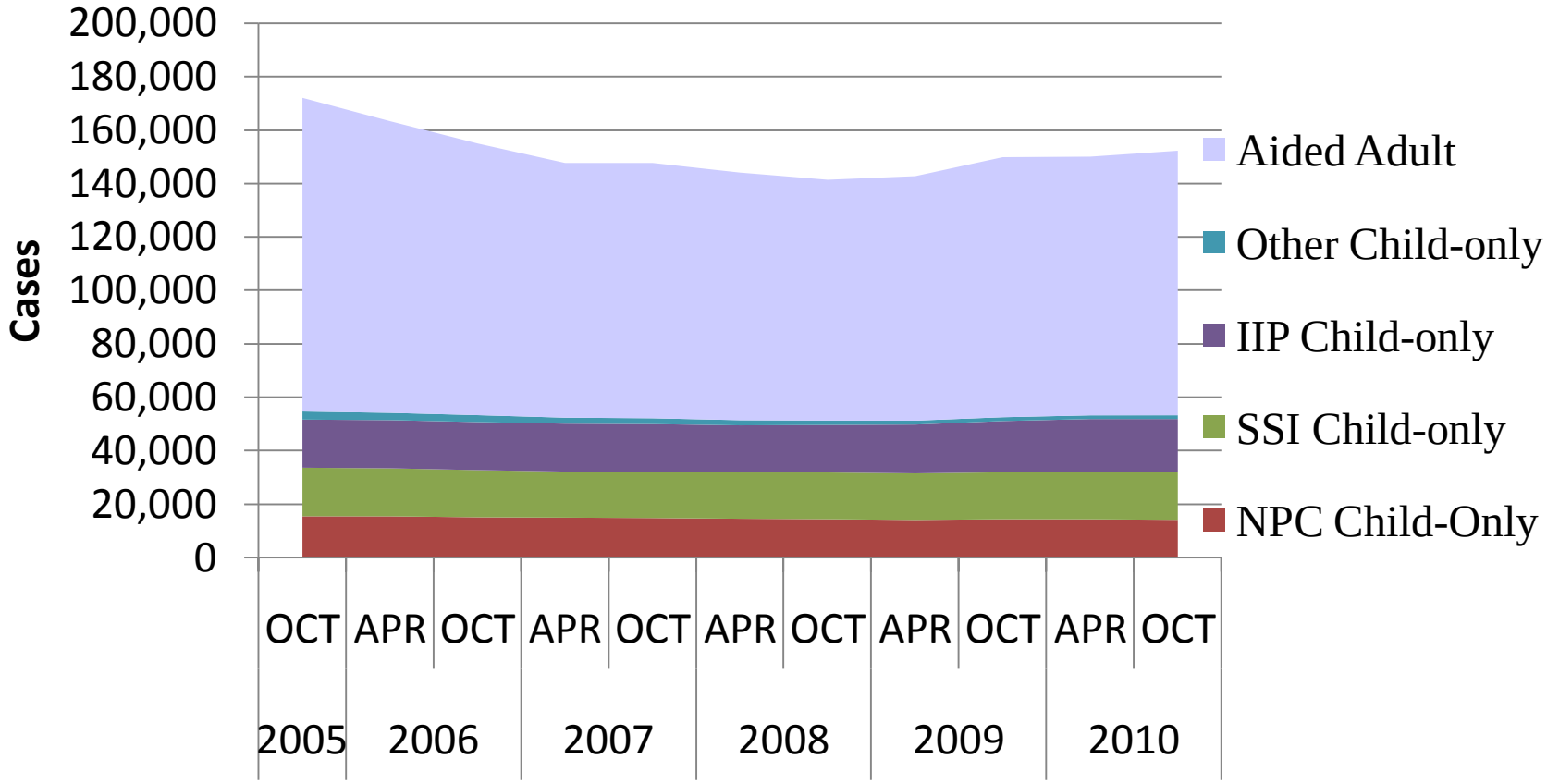
Preliminary findings: Trends

TANF Case Types, over Time Illinois



Preliminary findings: Trends

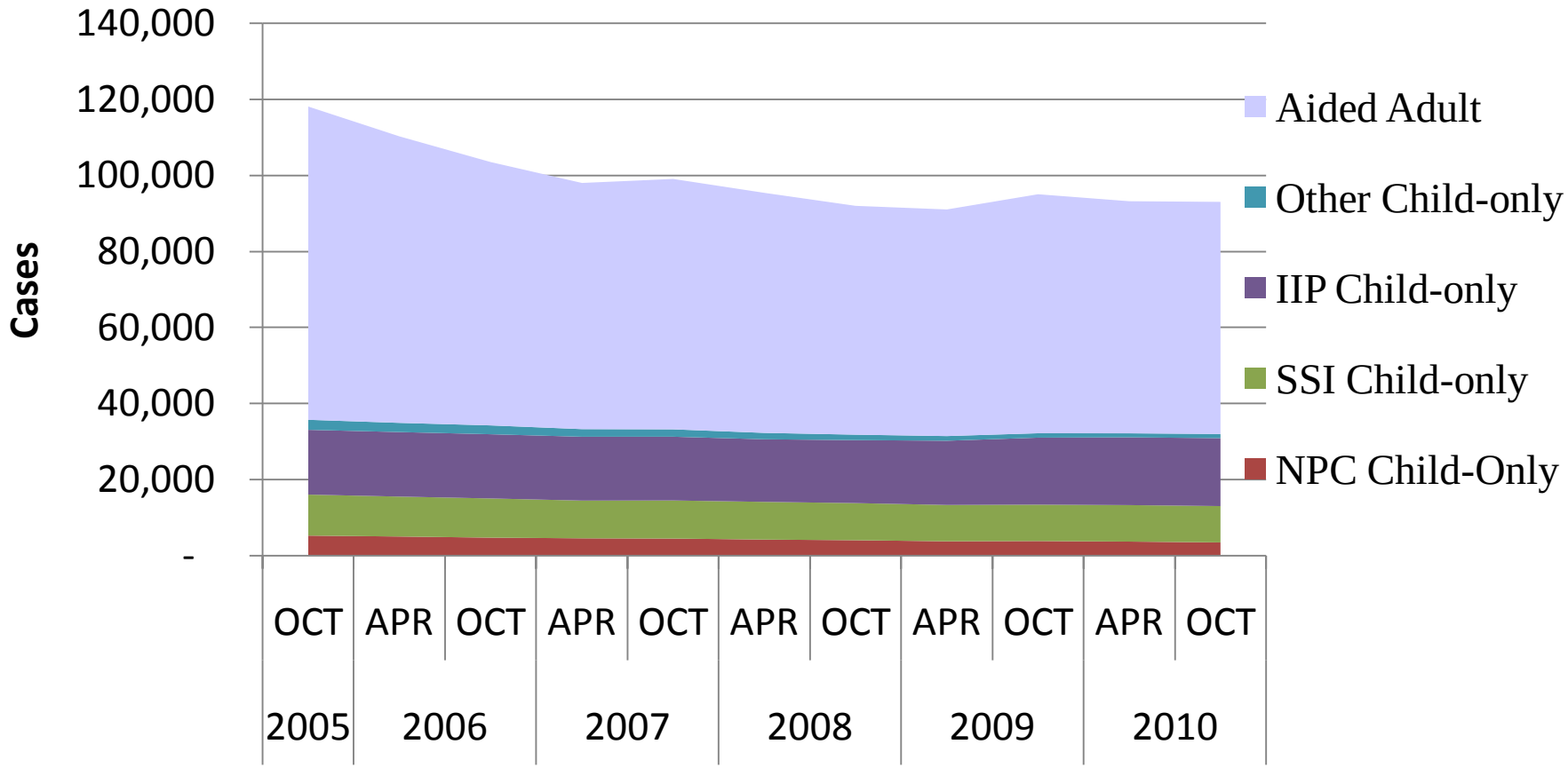
TANF Case Types, over Time
NY State*



*A small proportion of parents in the IIP cases receive state-funded cash assistance.

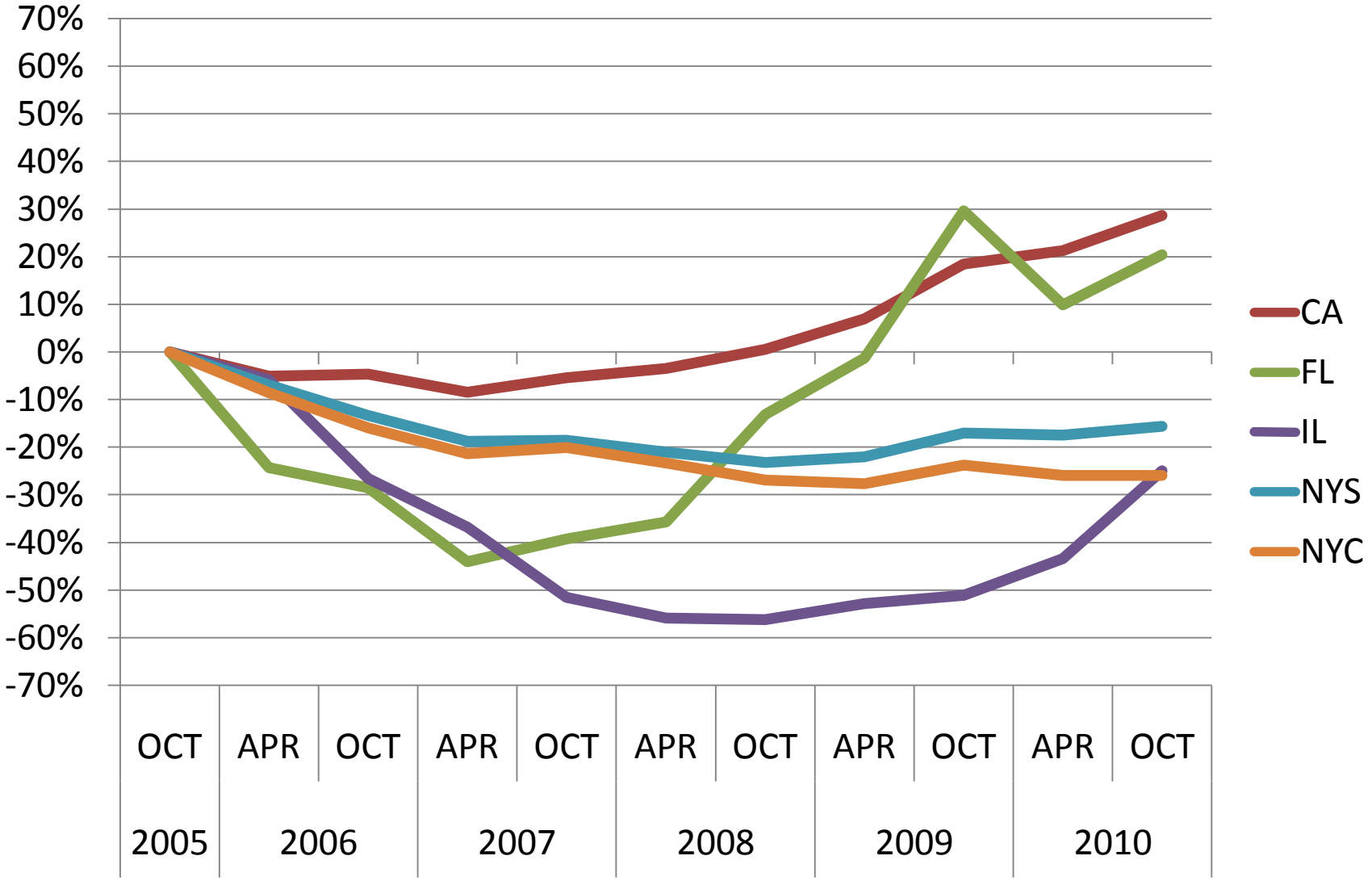
Preliminary findings: Trends

TANF Case Types, over Time
NY City*



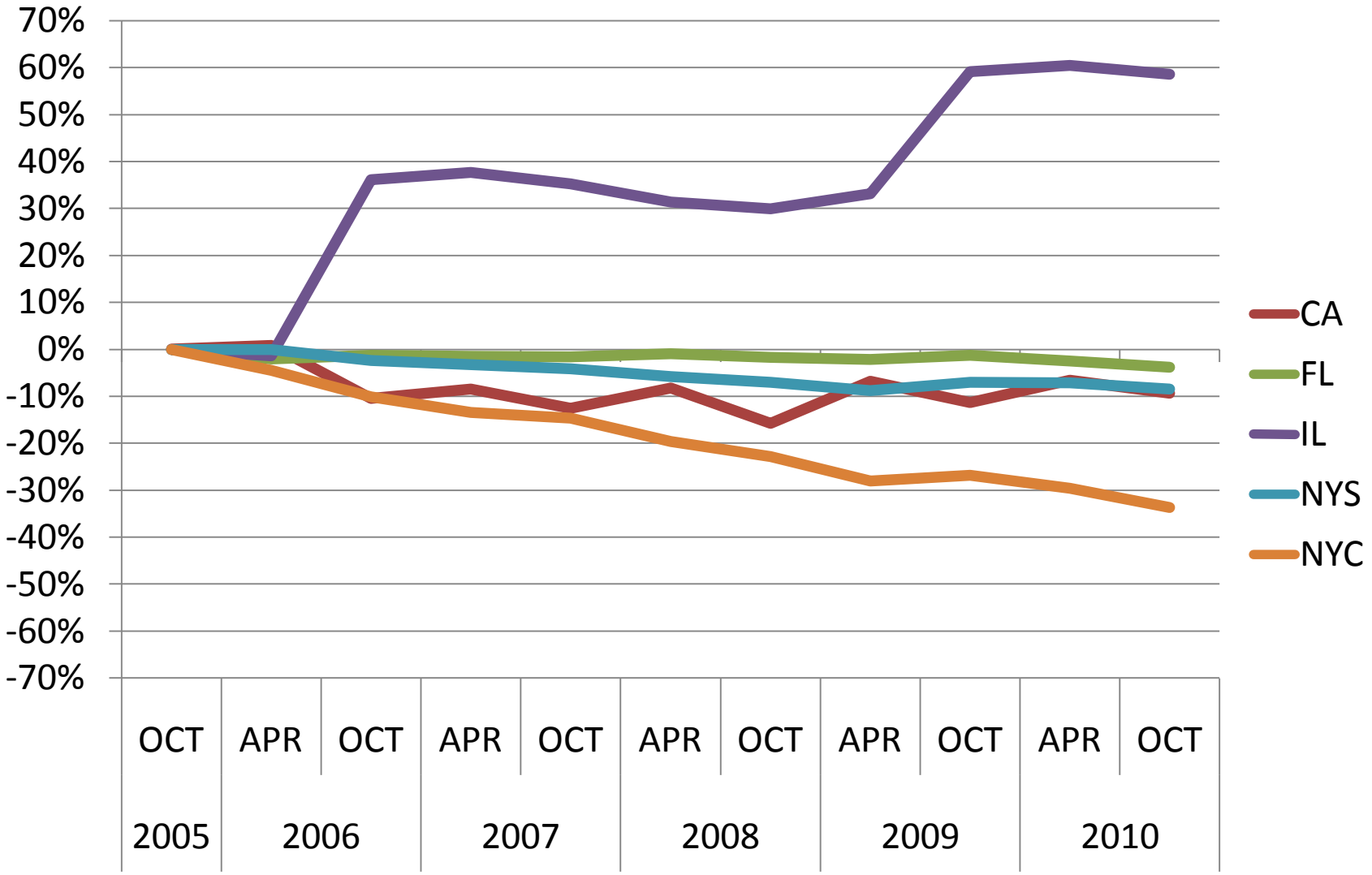
*A small proportion of parents in the IIP cases receive state-funded cash assistance.

Percent change from October 2005 baseline: Aided adult caseload

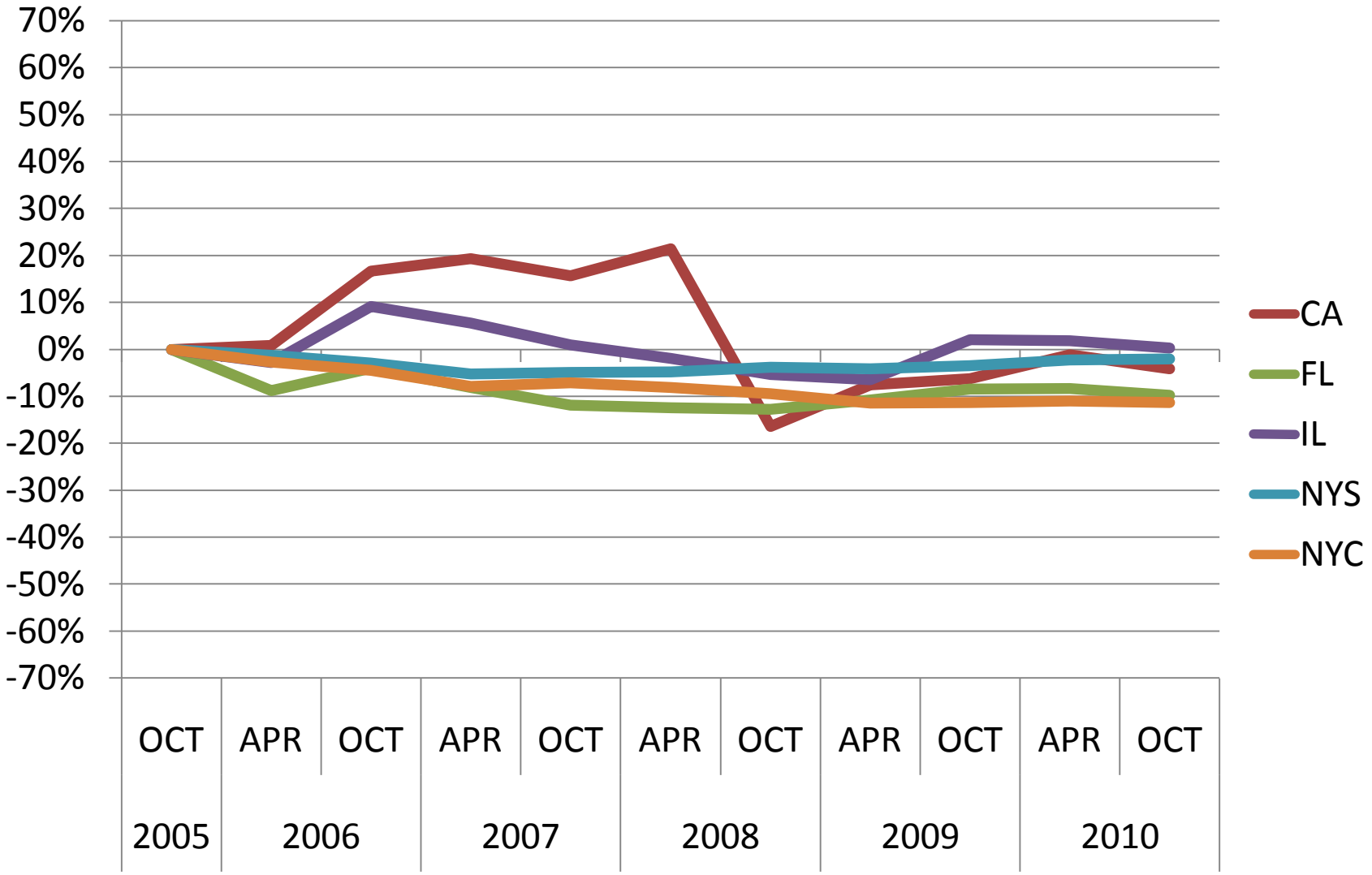


Preliminary findings: Trends

Percent change from October 2005 baseline: NPC Child-Only Caseload

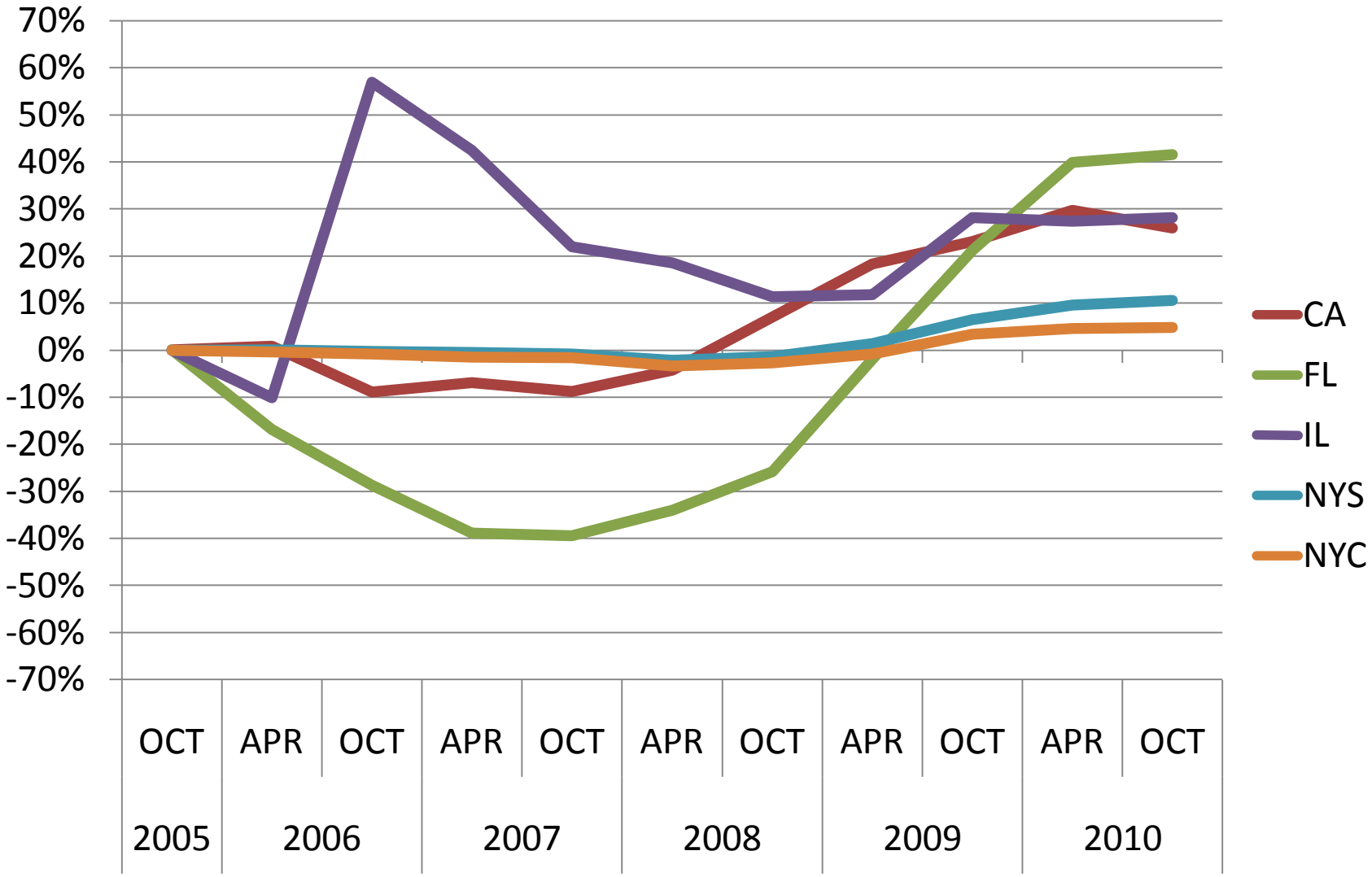


Percent change from October 2005 baseline: SSI Child-Only caseload



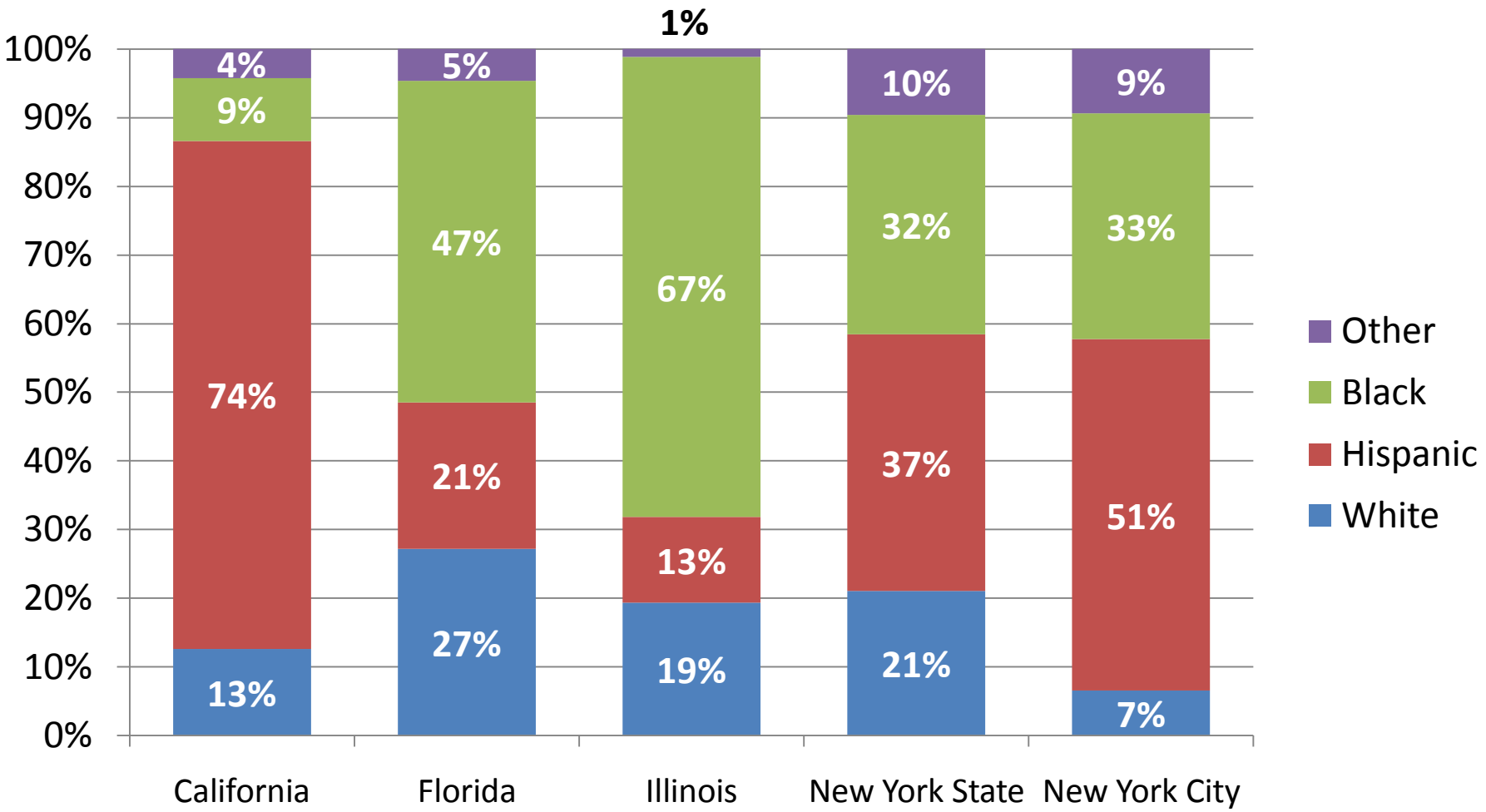
Preliminary findings: Trends

Percent change from October 2005 baseline: IIP Child-Only caseload



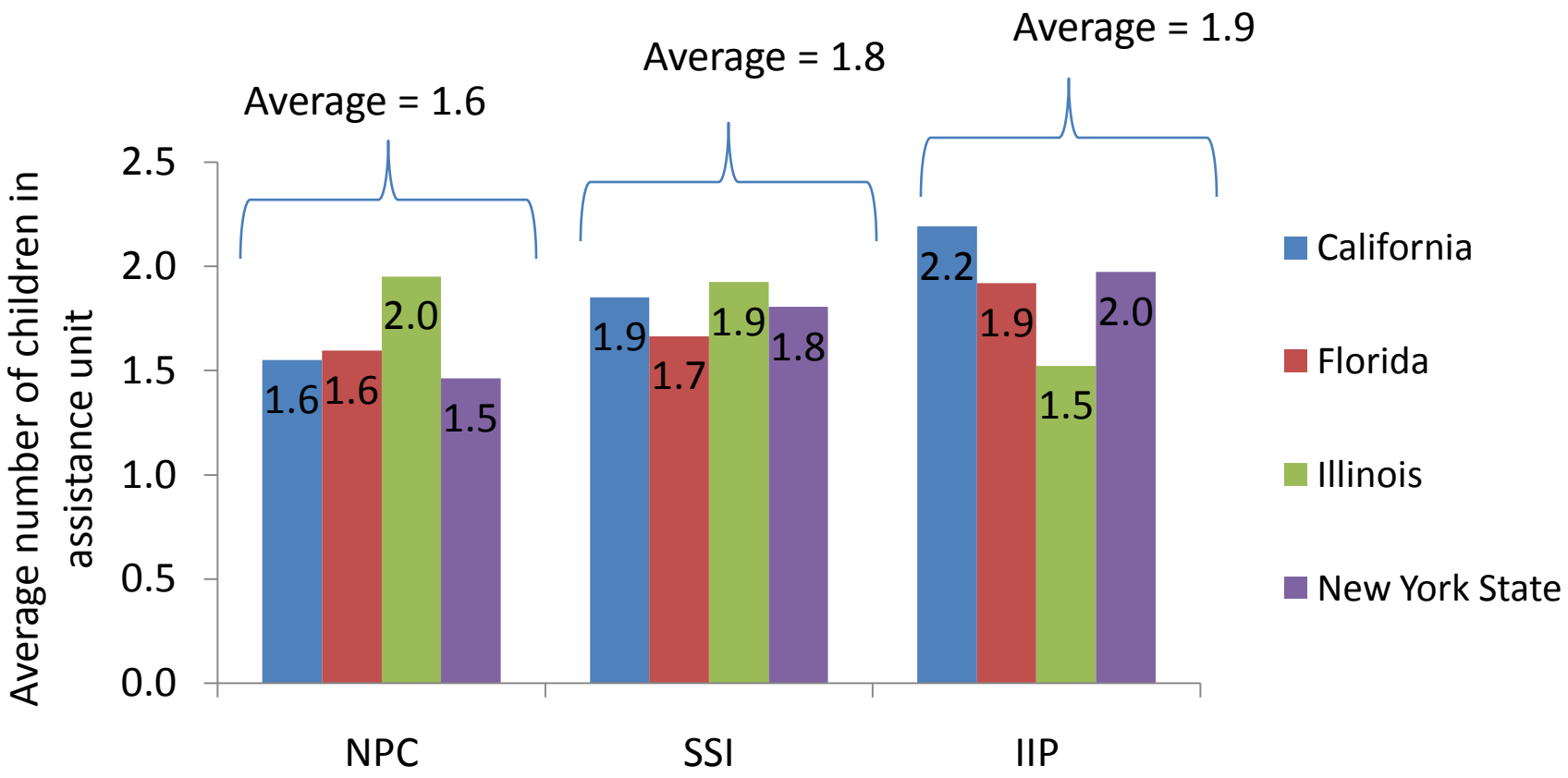
Preliminary findings: Snapshot

Race/ethnicity of children on child-only cases, by study site, October 2010



Preliminary findings: Snapshot

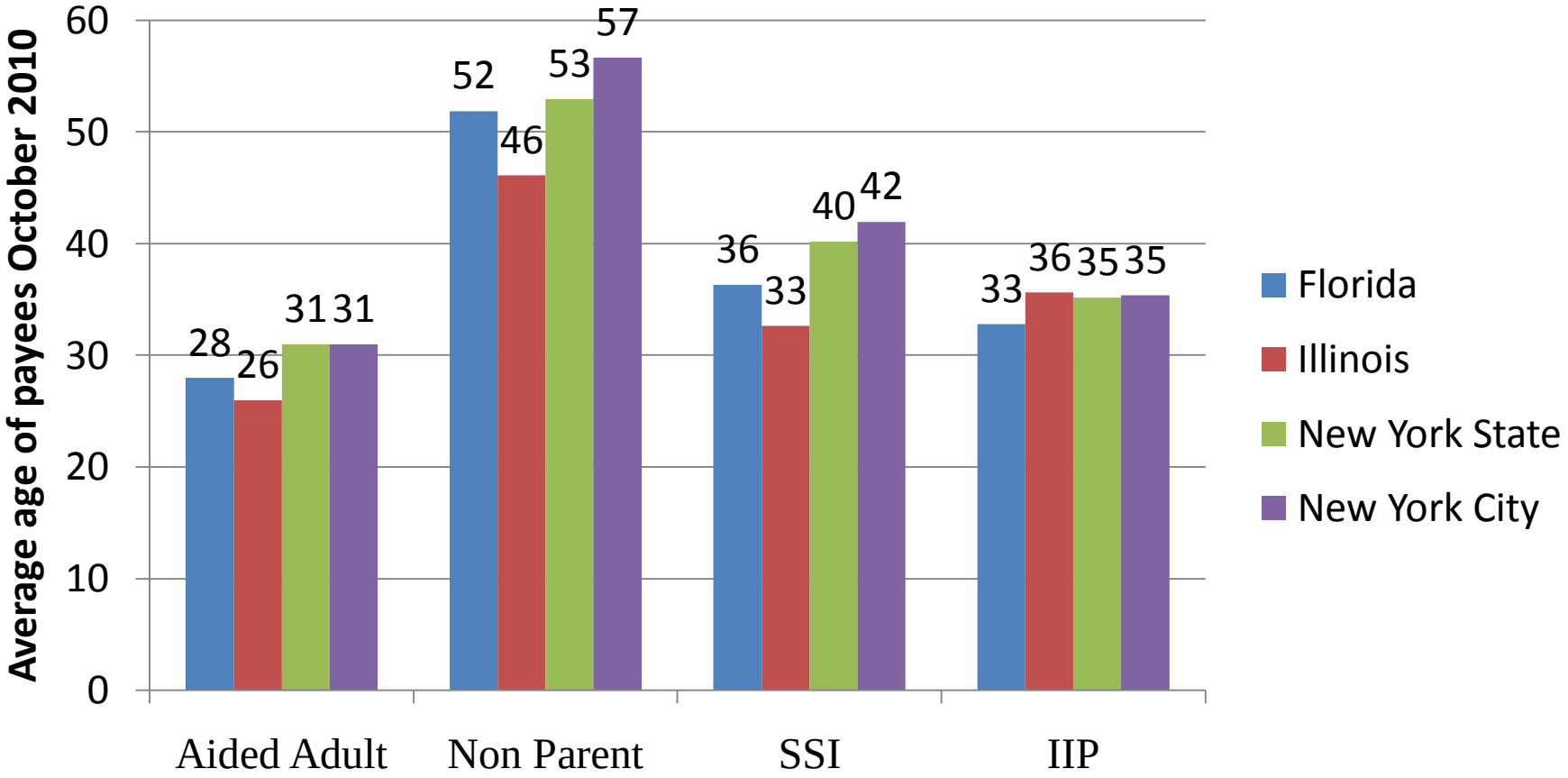
Number of children in assistance unit, by child-only case type and study site*



*The overall averages are raw averages, not weighted by size of caseload.

Preliminary findings: Snapshot

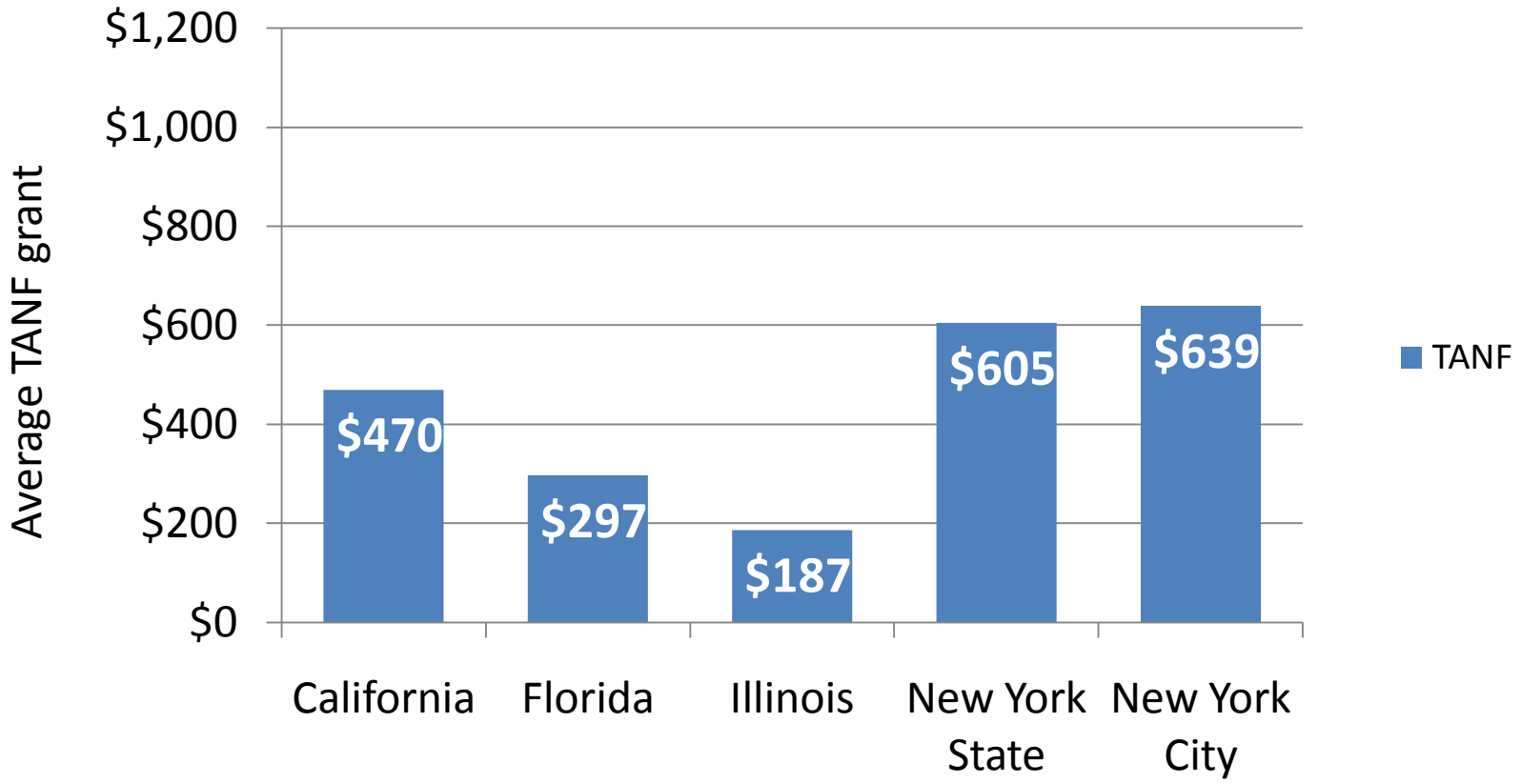
Average age of payee, by child-only case type and study site*



*Data not available for California

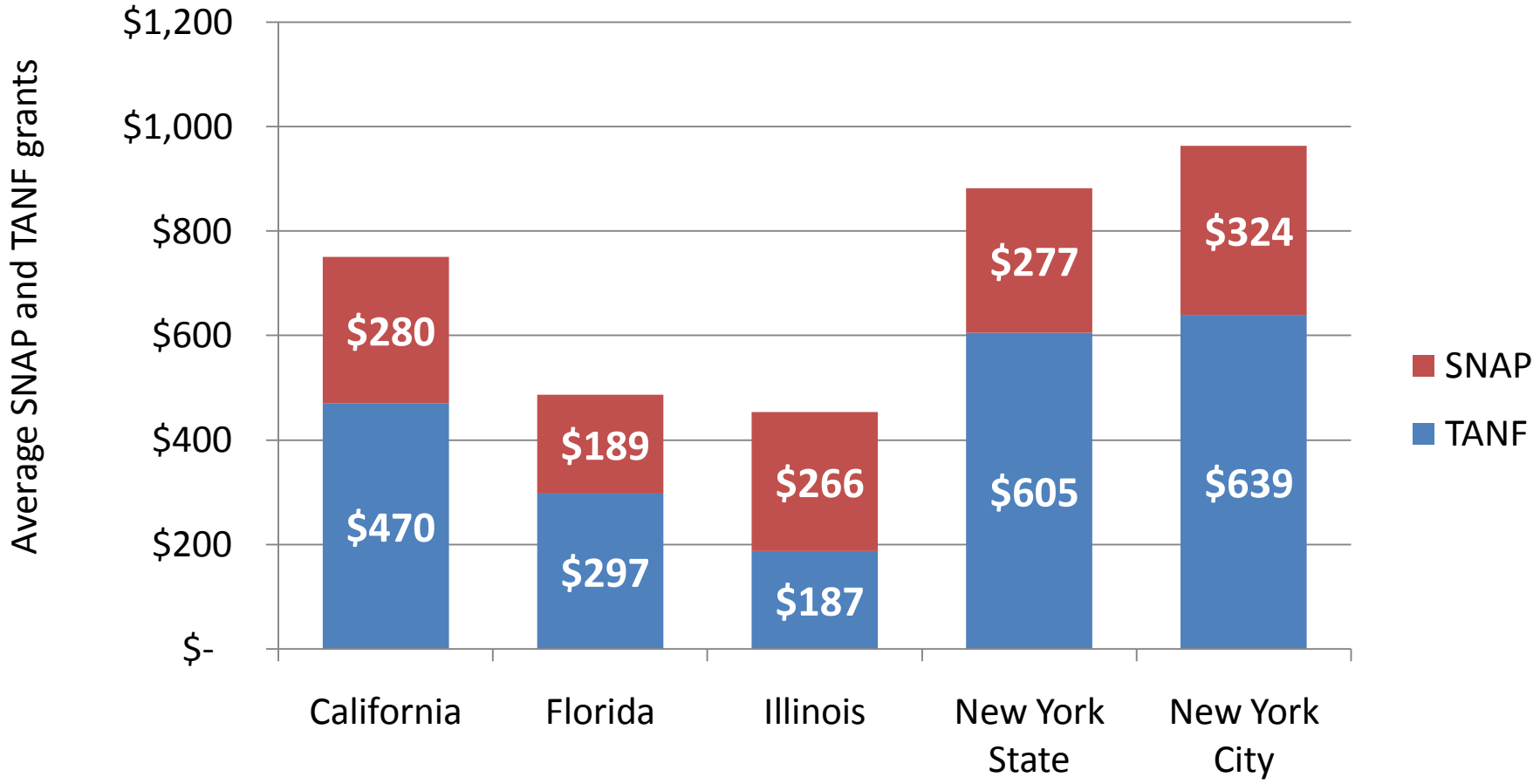
Preliminary findings: Grants

Variation in the average monthly TANF child-only grant amount across study sites*



*As of October 2010

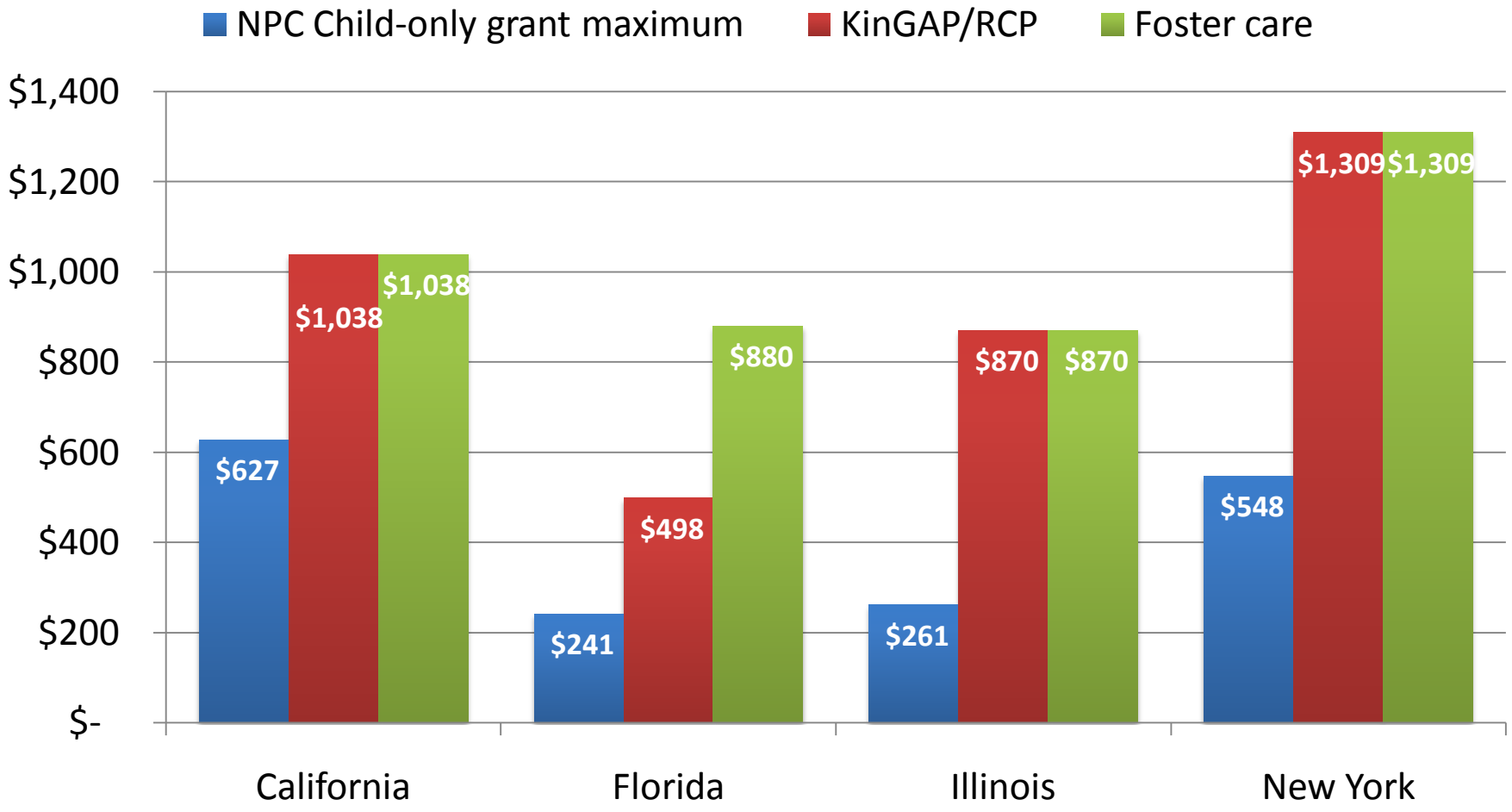
Variation across sites for TANF and SNAP grants combined*



*As of October 2010

Preliminary findings: Grants

Grant maximums for relatives caring for two 9-year-old children



Obstacles to receiving child-only benefits: Overall

- Stigma associated with welfare receipt
- Language challenges to apply, lack of information about interpreter availability
- Challenging application form (in addition to language limitations)
- Fingerprinting (not all states)
- Transportation problems
- Families believe work requirement applies to them
- Lack of outreach, lack of information about grant availability; caseworker focus on SNAP, medical benefits (TANF not offered unless requested) – exacerbated by fewer caseworkers, more cases
- Lack of access; welfare agencies reported especially difficult to navigate for disabled persons and immigrants

Preliminary findings: Policy

Obstacles to receiving child-only benefits by case type

Case type	Obstacle
NPC	• Desire to avoid possible involvement with child welfare system • Concern about requirement to provide access to parents for child support enforcement
SSI	• Uneven screening and advocacy for TANF parents to gain access to SSI benefits across states and jurisdictions within states • Fear of work requirements
IIP	• Lack time to apply (especially among one-parent families with parent engaged in work) • Fear deportation from interaction with government agency • Fear child welfare involvement if housing found to be inadequate • Fear negative consequence of receipt of public aid on regularizing immigration status • Problem of migratory laborers crossing state lines, needing to re-apply for benefits

Summing-up child-only TANF cases

- Prevalence and distribution of cases
- Distinctiveness of child-only groups
- TANF aided adult and TANF child-only cases
  - Welfare to work, time limits, and WPRs
  - Self-sufficiency vs. needed services
  - Caring for children in their homes
  - Children's well-being
- Considering poverty

TANF – Child Welfare Linkages: Benefits and Limitations

- Linkages approach: an indication of the direction people ought to go
  - Service alignment
  - But use expertise and resources of Child Welfare without embedding case within the Child Welfare System
  - Early intervention
  - Services expansion
  - Avoid stigma
- Linkages demonstrates the effectiveness of service partnerships (but services need to be available)
- In some cases Linkages creates something between the two systems – a possible model
  - Social workers come into play
  - TANF staff could be re-deployed to work with families in need of non-financial assistance

Collaboration – what, where, how?

- Should family support services be provided; if so, where (organizationally speaking)?
  - Prevention of child abuse and neglect
  - A form of early intervention
  - Promotion of individual and family well-being
- Can this be accomplished without TANF – Child Welfare collaboration?
  - TANF goals might be established outside WPR goals, where self-sufficiency both reflects and reinforces family stability
  - Look to models of family support evident in UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada
- When should TANF participation trigger a comprehensive family assessment?
  - Parent/caregiver needs (all child-only cases)
  - Children's needs (all child-only cases)
  - Biological parents' needs (NPC cases)

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