

California's Welfare Recipients

Caroline Danielson

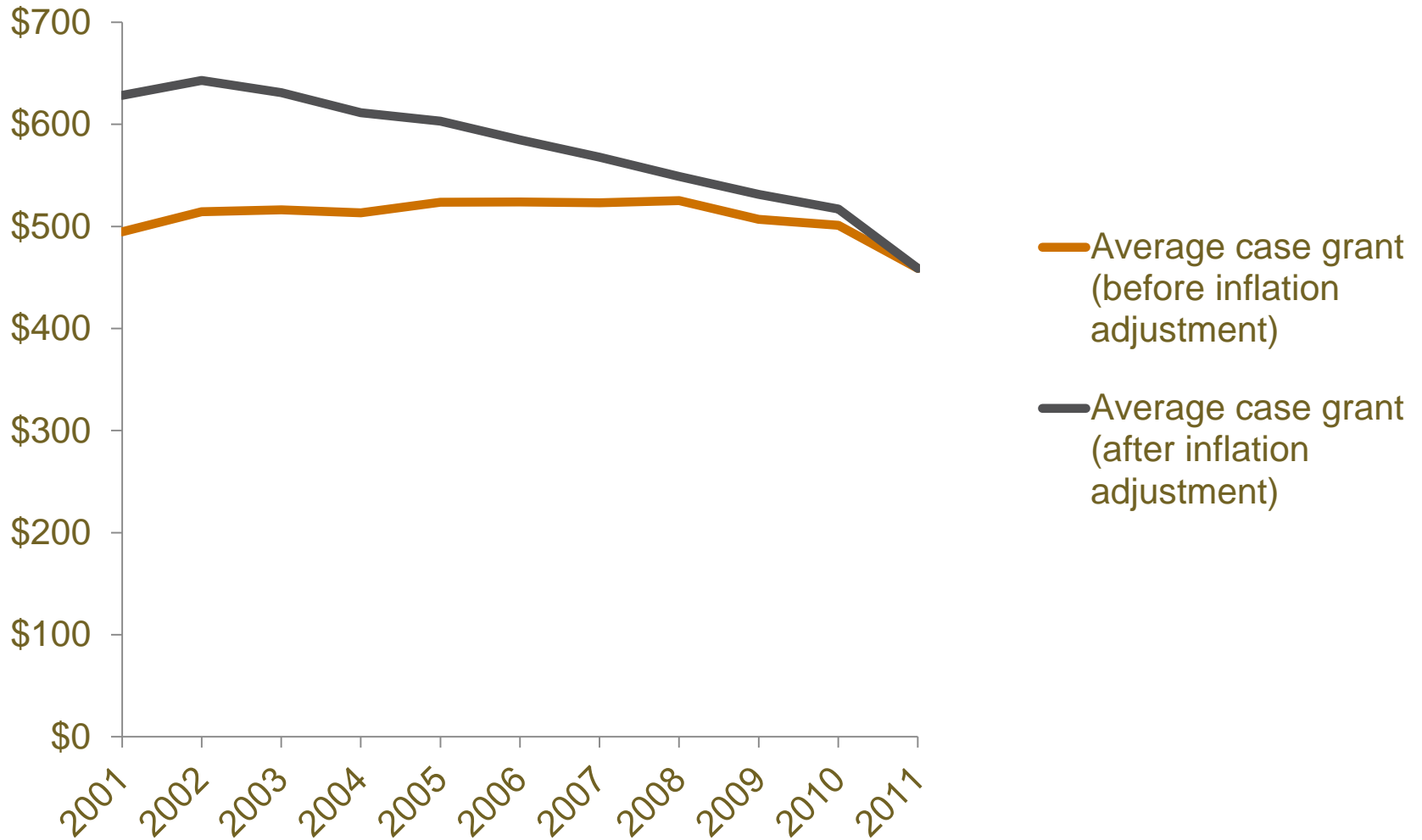


CalWORKs Is Central to California's Social Safety Net

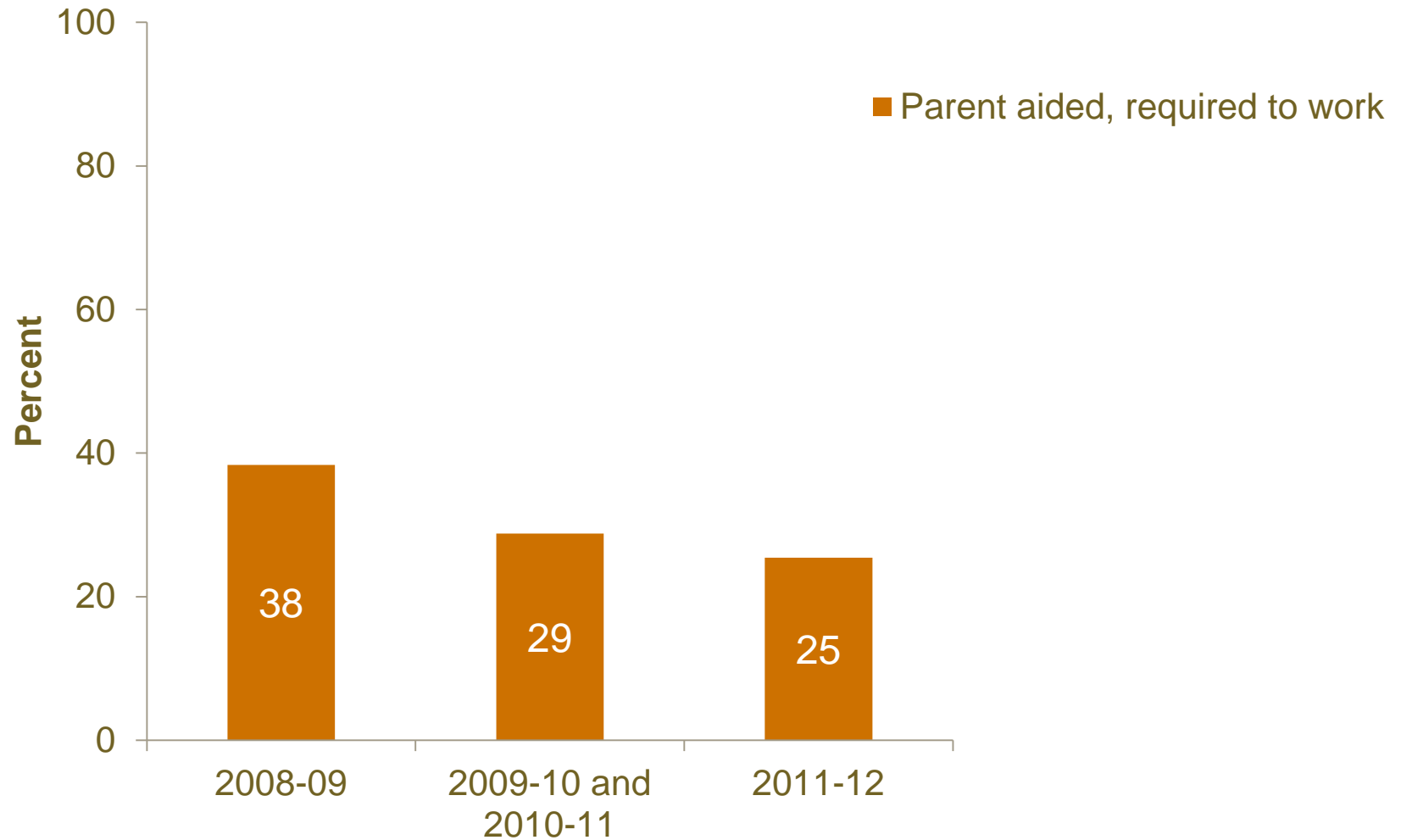
- Has two aims:
 - Provide immediate income support
 - Improve family self-sufficiency through work and access to work supports
- Changing context
 - 1998, CalWORKs created
 - 1995-2007, large reduction in recipients
 - 2008-2011, smaller but notable caseload growth
 - Since 2008, program resources reduced



CalWORKs Grants Have Declined...



...And Work is Required of Fewer Parents



Governor Brown Is Proposing Major Restructuring

- Temporary young child exemptions ended
- Parent time limit potentially halved if not meeting work activities hours target
- Sanctions no longer stop time limit clock
- Financial incentive to engage in unsubsidized employment
- Grants cut if no parent eligible



What Did We Find?

- CalWORKs families rely heavily on their grant
- Many families have used CalWORKs for a few years
- Families currently targeted by welfare-to-work services have the highest earnings
- Still, relatively few have part- or full-time jobs



Outline

- **Family characteristics**
- Income sources and work
- Time on assistance
- Considerations for policymakers



We Studied Families with a Current CalWORKs Grant

- TANF Data Reports (U.S. DHHS)
- Strengths
 - Representative sample, statewide
 - Data collection standardized
 - Collects family, income and work details
- Limitations
 - Restricted detail within subgroups
 - Point in time: Family trajectory not known
 - Most recent public release: FFY 2009



CalWORKs Families Have Young Children and Little Education

- 41% of families have one child
 - Average 2.1 children and 1.3 adults
- 25% have a child younger than 2
- Most parents have low educational attainment
 - Among those with 4 years or less toward their time limit, 40% lack a high school degree



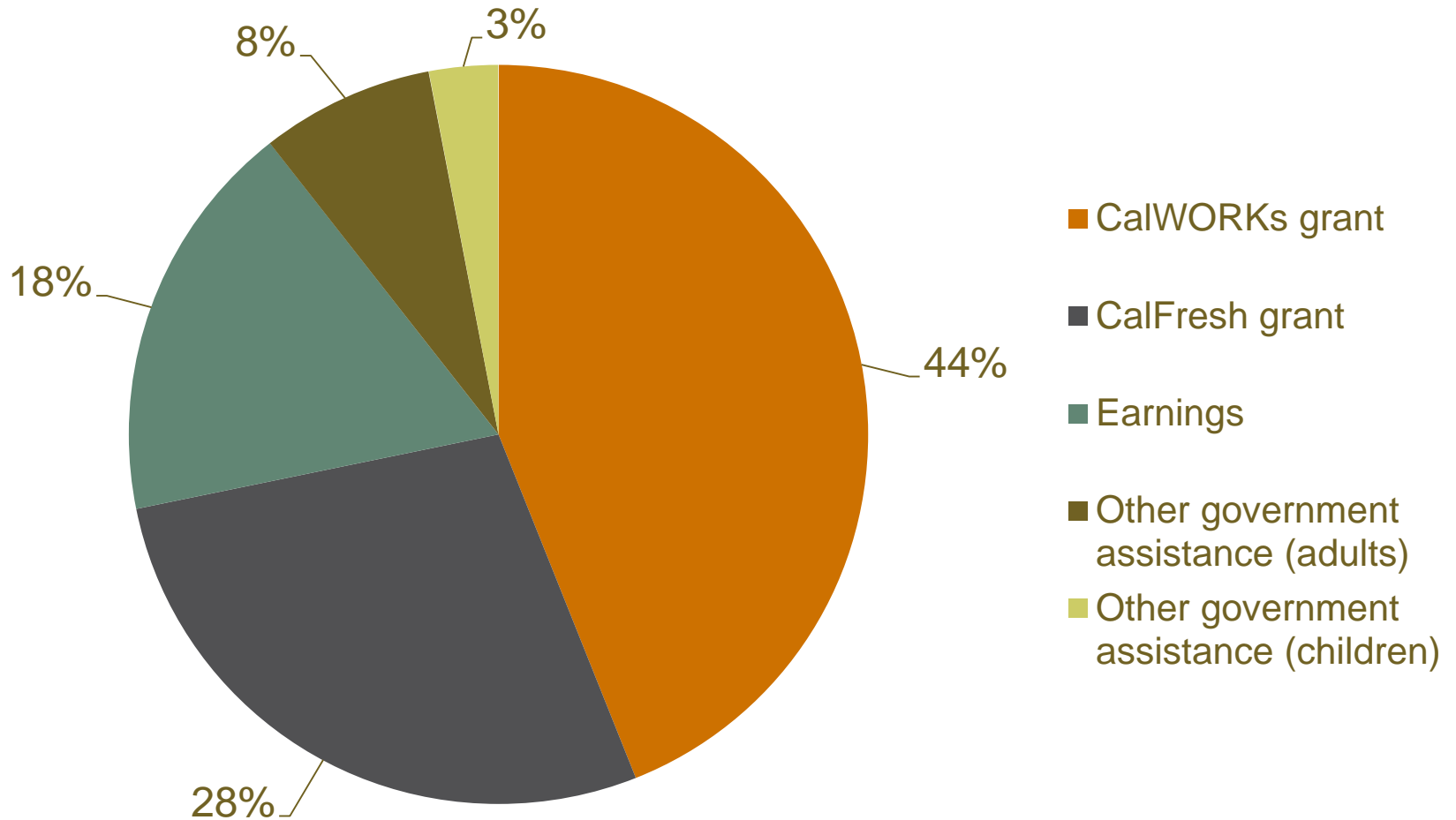
Outline

- Family characteristics
- **Income and work**
- Time on assistance
- Considerations for policymakers

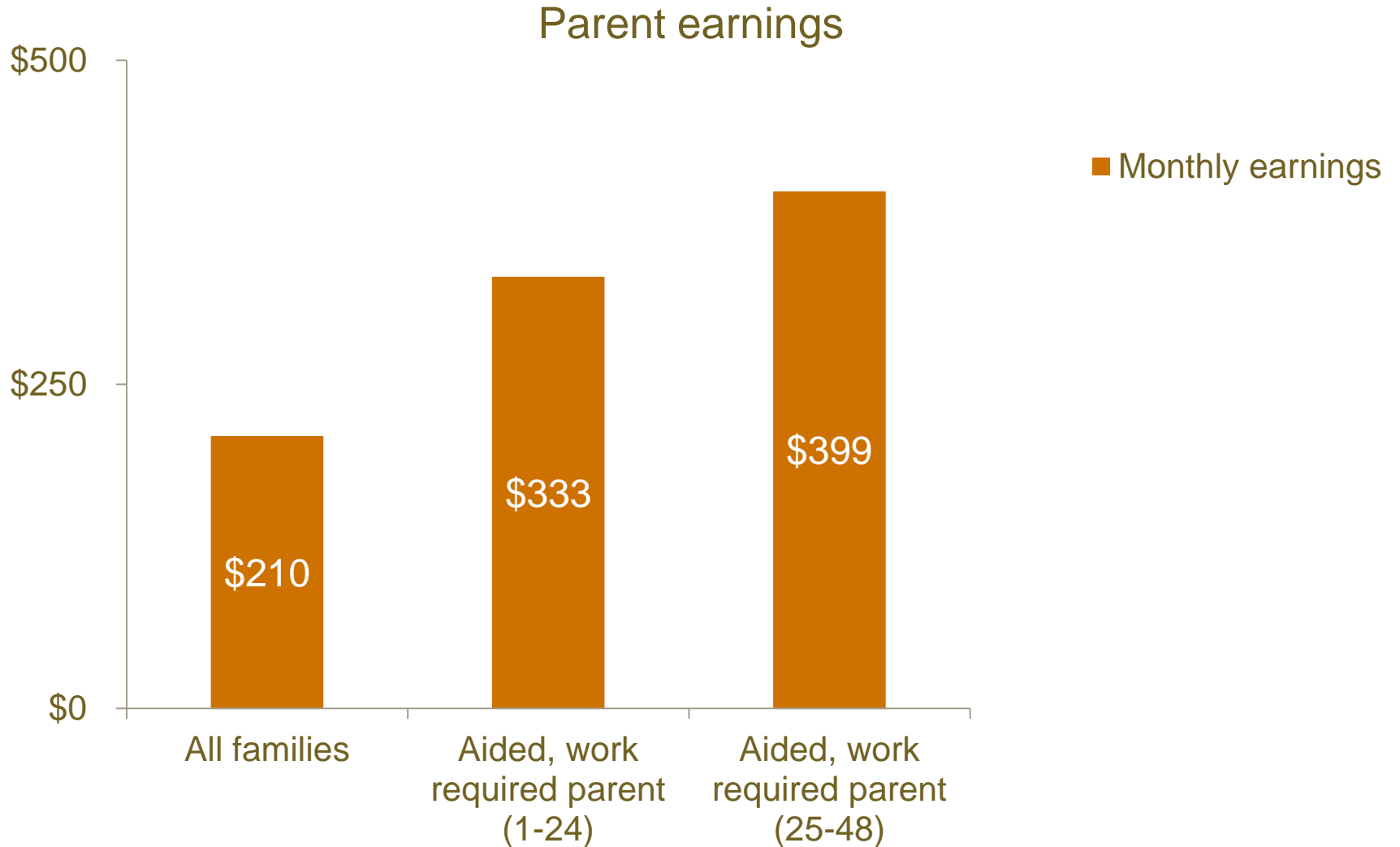


CalWORKs Grant Is Largest Source of Family Income

Average monthly income: \$1,193

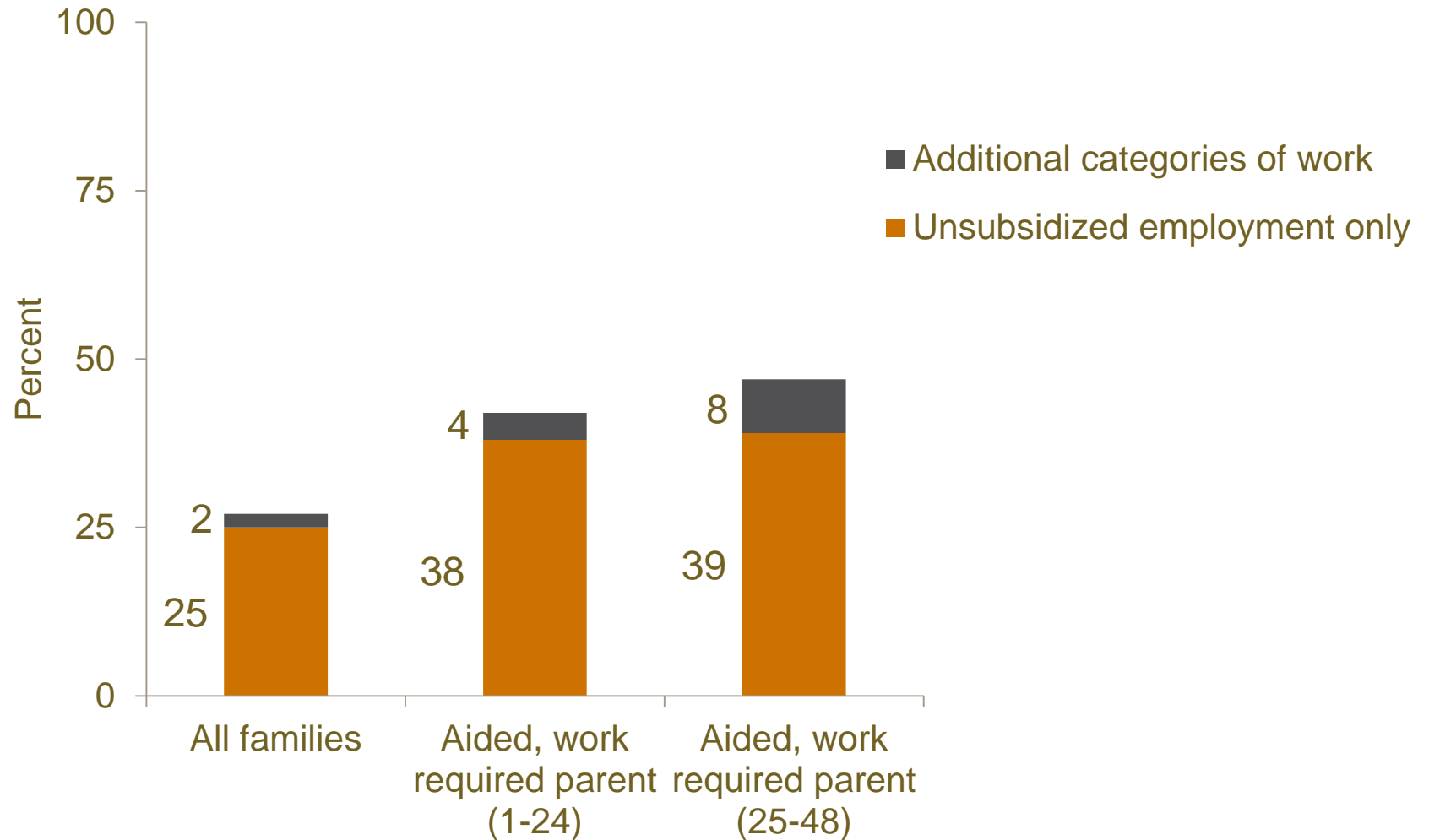


Earnings Differ Across Subgroups...

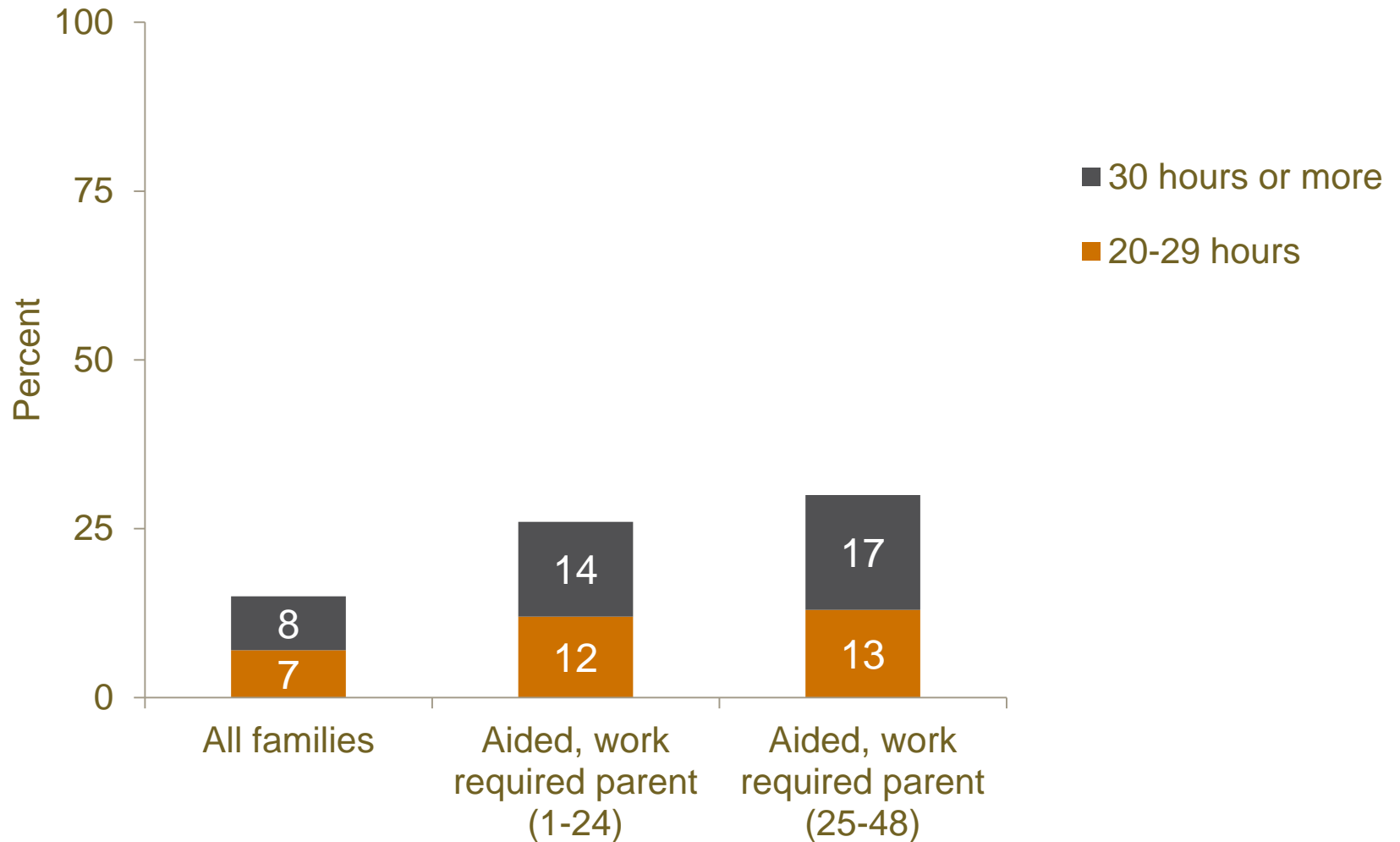


...As Does Employment

Some hours of work



Few CalWORKs Parents Work Part- or Full-Time



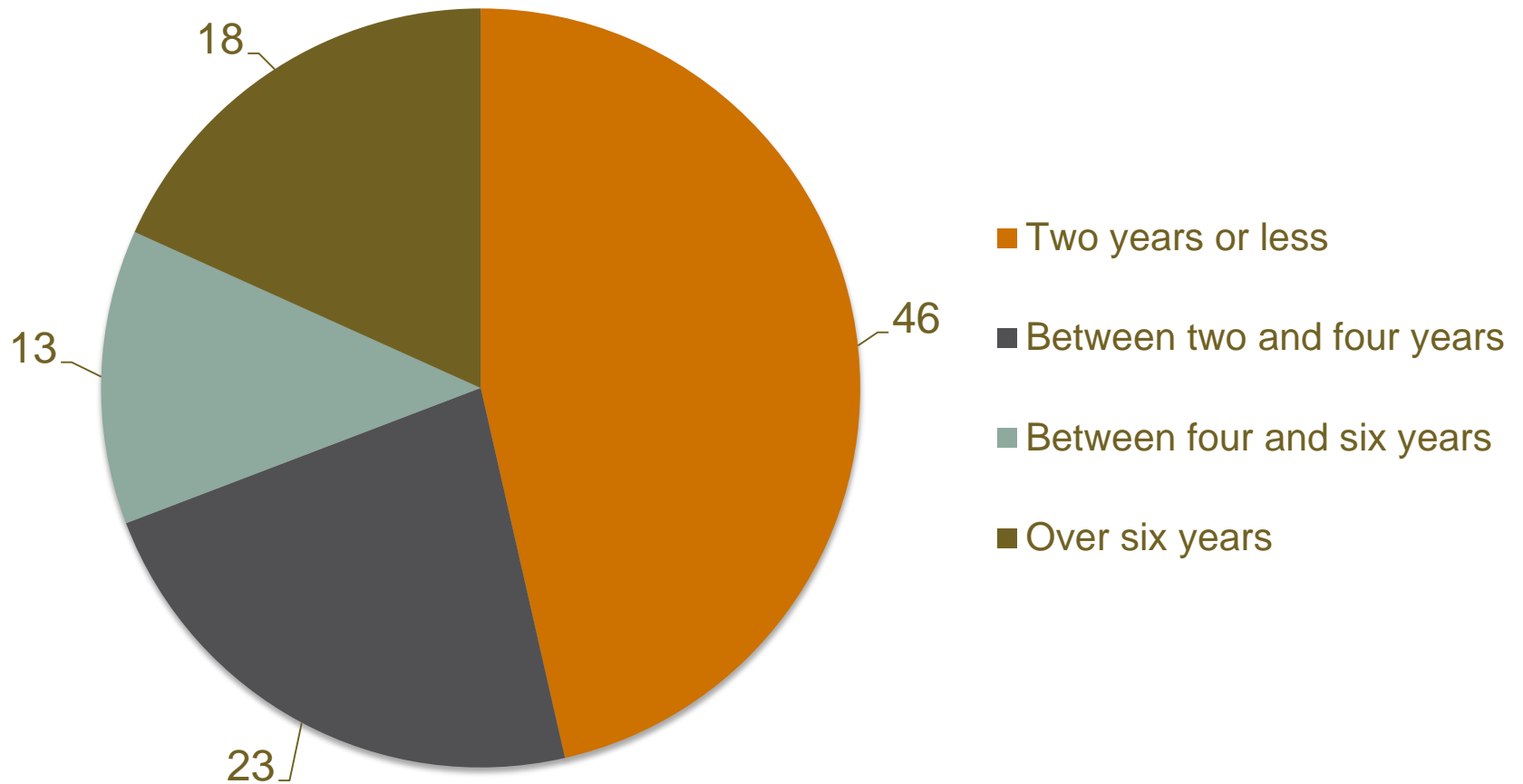
Outline

- Family characteristics
- Income sources and work
- **Time on assistance**
- Considerations for policymakers

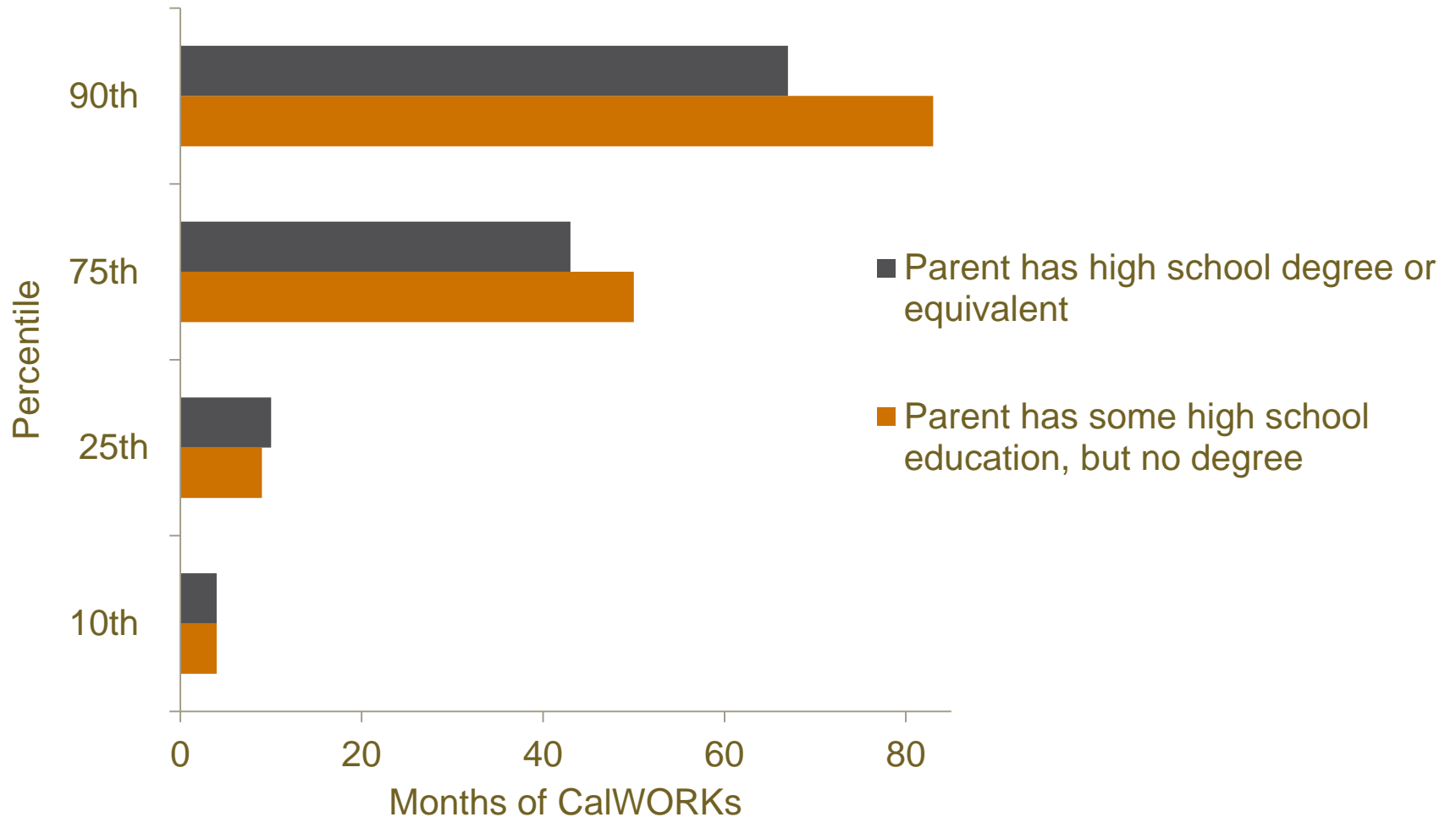


Many Have Relied on CalWORKs for a Few Years

Cumulative length of time on CalWORKs



Long Periods on CalWORKs Differ across Subgroups



Outline

- Family characteristics
- Income sources and work
- Time on assistance
- **Considerations for policymakers**



Meeting the Income Support Goal

- Families are in immediate need
- But receiving CalWORKs is temporary for many
 - More evident during recessionary times
- California continues eligibility for most families, regardless of parents' actions
 - Issue of long stays deserves careful consideration



Meeting the Self-Sufficiency Goal

- Few parents work full-time
 - Working families likely to exit CalWORKs
- But parents targeted for welfare-to-work services work more and in wider variety of jobs



Going Forward

- Ideally, CalWORKs provides
 - Short-term assistance
 - Support in moving toward self-sufficiency
- Recently, resources for both goals reduced
- Current opportunity to think through balance of program's two goals



California's Welfare Recipients

Caroline Danielson



Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Caroline Danielson: 415-291-4462,
danielson@ppic.org

Thank you for your interest in this work.

