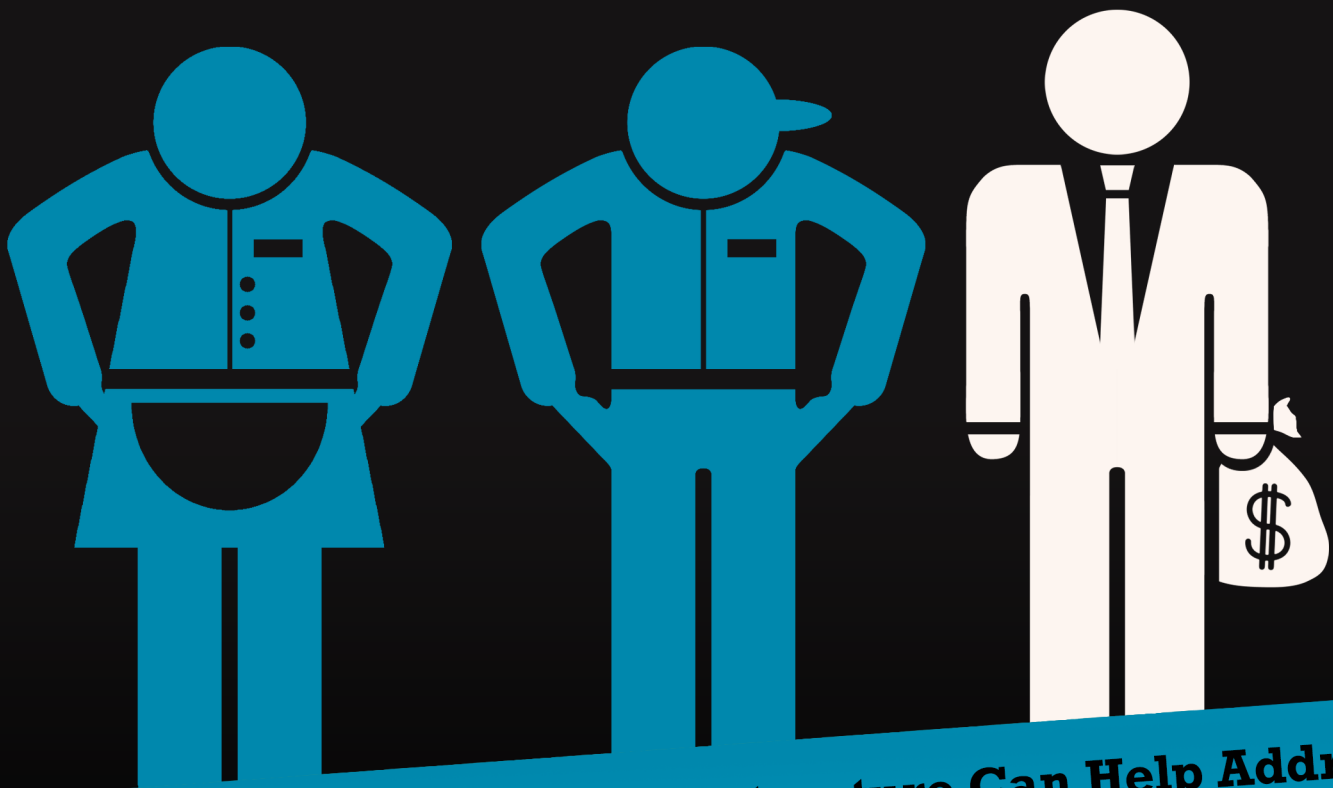


The Job Gap Economic Prosperity Series:

PROSPERITY, NOT POVERTY

By Allyson Fredericksen | February 2017



How Public Investment in Infrastructure Can Help Address

Racial, Gender, and LGBTQI Wealth Gaps

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The Job Gap Economic Prosperity Series:

PROSPERITY, NOT POVERTY

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The Job Gap Economic Prosperity series examines the ability of working families to move beyond living paycheck-to-paycheck in today's economy, seeking to understand both the barriers keeping families from achieving economic prosperity and what actions policymakers can take to help families and communities thrive. www.thejobgap.org.

Executive Summary

Workers and their families are hurting. In October, People's Action Institute released living wage figures for all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and at the national level, finding that the cost of living in every state is well above the minimum wage. Unfortunately, while there has been solid job growth since the Great Recession, much of that growth has been through low-wage jobs,¹ leaving too few jobs that pay enough for workers to make ends meet.

And, while this impacts people of all races, genders, and sexual orientations, individual, institutional, and structural discrimination continue to make it more difficult for women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community to access what high-wage jobs are available.

At the same time, these communities are the hardest hit by dilapidated local and national infrastructure that makes water toxic, roads impassible, and access to digital information unreliable. While a national infrastructure spending plan could be the key to beginning to solve both problems, it could just as easily exacerbate both if done poorly.

Nationally, this report finds that there are seven job seekers for every job opening that pays the national single adult living wage of \$17.28 per hour. This leaves six out of seven job seekers unable to secure employment that allows a single adult to make ends meet, much less support a family.

This lack of good paying jobs reinforces income inequality that continues to play a major role in perpetuating existing wealth gaps for women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community. While occupations that traditionally employ high rates of women and people of color include occupations with the most openings, those jobs are more likely to be low-wage. This contributes to existing wealth gaps by diminishing the ability of women and people of color to save and build up wealth.

A strong public infrastructure plan can address racial, gender, and LGBTQI wealth gaps while providing a large number of good paying jobs through a number of mechanisms, such as targeted hiring from struggling communities – including women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community – and strong wage floor requirements. Equally as important are the types of infrastructure projects that are prioritized. Ensuring access to clean water for marginalized communities, for example, must come first while any plan that would privatize public assets must be rejected.

Introduction

Since the Great Recession, much of the country's job growth has been in low-wage work. Occupations in fast food and retail have had the most openings,² while higher-wage occupations have experienced inadequate growth with few job openings. Various types of discrimination continue to push women, people of color, and much of the LGBTQI community – and especially those at the intersection of these groups – into low-wage work.

There are simply not enough living wage jobs to go around. Based on 2015 data, there are more than 15 million job seekers nationwide, and only 4.6 million job openings that pay any wage. With only 47 percent of openings paying at least the national single adult living wage of \$17.28 per hour,

this report finds that there are seven job seekers for every job opening that pays enough for a single adult to make ends meet. That means that six out of seven job seekers will not obtain a job that supports a single adult, and many will be unable to find any job at all.

There is a clear need for policies that will increase the number of good paying jobs. A public infrastructure bill could be used to create a large number of high wage jobs; however, it must do so in a way that also addresses historic racial, gender, and LGBTQI wealth and wage gaps, and that does not reward companies that have contributed to the growth of low wage jobs.

What is a Living Wage?

A living wage allows families to meet their basic needs, without public assistance, and provides them some ability to deal with emergencies and plan ahead. It is not a poverty or survival wage.

In this report, living wages are calculated on the basis of family budgets for several household types. Family budgets include basic necessities such as food, housing, utilities, transportation, health care, child care, clothing and other personal items, savings, and state and federal taxes. This assumes full-time work at 40 hours per week, for 52 weeks per year (year-round).

Living wage calculations are based on data from 2015 or the most recent year available, adjusted for inflation, and use publicly available datasets from state and federal sources.

Who are Job Seekers?

Job seekers in this report include not only those in the official unemployment estimate, but those who are underemployed (involuntary part-time workers), workers marginally attached to the labor force, and discouraged workers who would want a job if one was available.

What is the Job Gap Ratio?

The Job Gap Ratio is the proportion of the number of job-seekers to the number of projected job openings that pay wages at various levels.

For more information, see the Technical Notes section of this report.

Race, Gender, and LGBTQI Wealth Gaps

Amid public discourse that emphasizes the value of individual work and individual merit, the accumulation of wealth continues to be group-based, with women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community holding fewer assets and having fewer opportunities to build wealth. This is a continuation of a trend dating back to the country's founding, when married women were barred from owning property,³ Native peoples were forced from their land,⁴ and black people were owned as property through slavery.⁵

Recent studies show that women and people of color, and especially women of color, continue to hold less wealth. For example, for every dollar in wealth owned by white households, black households hold only six cents and Latinx households only eight cents.⁶ And, for every dollar in wealth owned by single men, single women hold only 32 cents.⁷ Women of color own even less wealth, with single black and Latinx women holding only one cent each per dollar of wealth held by white women, and less than one cent per dollar of wealth held by white men.⁸

Since 1983 white wealth has grown significantly more than that of people of color. White families have seen their wealth grow by 84 percent, while Latinx families' wealth has grown only 70 percent and black families' wealth has grown by only 27 percent.⁹ Housing and educational policy play a large role in the racial wealth gap – from a legacy of redlining to “the retreat from desegregation in public education”¹⁰ – as does “increased exposure to wealth-stripping products and services”¹¹ like payday loans to people of color. Additionally, income inequality and lower returns on that income also plays a major role in perpetuating the racial wealth gap.

While much of the available racial wealth gap research focuses on white, black, and Latinx wealth, disparities in building and keeping wealth also exist for other races. Though aggregated data shows that income and wealth for Asian-American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) equals or surpasses those for white people, this community lost over half of their wealth after the Great Recession.¹² The aggregation of all AAPI people into one category also hides disparities within the group and conceals the increase of AAPI poverty since the recession – second

Demographic	Median Wealth
White Household	\$111,146
Black Household	\$7,113
Latinx Household	\$8,348
White Women	\$15,640
Black Women	\$200
Latinx Women	\$100
White Men	\$28,900
Black Men	\$300
Latinx Men	\$950

Table 1: Wealth by Race & Gender
Source: Demos and Institute for Assets & Social Policy at Brandeis University; Asset Funders Network

only to the Latinx community. For Native communities, while a lack of economic data often causes economic disparities to be overlooked, high rates of poverty¹³ point to a wealth gap here, too.

Though less extreme than the racial wealth gap, the gender wealth gap also persists. While “women and men are equally as likely to own the most common types of financial assets,”¹⁴ the value of those assets is lower for women than for men. Additionally, women are more likely to have debt, cutting into savings and other assets. Low rates of paid family leave mean women – who are more likely to be single parents¹⁵ and still bear a “heavier load than men in balancing work and family”¹⁶ – often must go without pay to care for a sick child or take unpaid time off from their career while pregnant or to care for young children.¹⁷ And, women are less likely to have access to wealth-building benefits in the workplace, like employer-sponsored retirement funds and employer-sponsored health care.¹⁸ Additionally, as with the racial wealth gap, income plays a key role in perpetuating the gender wealth gap.

While there is less available data, evidence also points to a wealth gap for LGBTQI people, and perhaps especially for those who are transgender. For example, a 2014 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index poll found that LGBTQI people fell far short of those not in the LGBTQI community in financial health.¹⁹ LGBTQI people are more likely to live in poverty,²⁰ with some estimates showing transgender poverty is nearly four times that of the general population, including when accounting for education.²¹

Income, Job Quality & Wealth

While there are numerous structural and policy-related roots to existing wealth gaps, income inequality and lack of access to wealth-building employment benefits remain a barrier to building wealth for women, people of color, the LGBTQI community, and for those at the intersection of these groups.

While many people do not have enough money saved for an emergency, let alone to help purchase a home and build wealth or save for retirement, saving is significantly more difficult when workers are paid less than a living wage. When workers are not paid enough to make ends meet, they must make difficult decisions on what to cut; for many, this starts with foregoing savings, cutting into any ability to build wealth.

A lack of savings is not limited to those with low-incomes,²⁴ but workers paid less than a living wage often face little choice but to forego savings to cover for other expenses like rent or food. While more than 73 percent of households in the top income quintile reported some savings – including more than 83 percent of those in top 10 percent – the same was true for only 32 percent of those households in the lowest quintile.²⁵ And, those who are non-white or Latinx are less likely to have savings than those who identify as white non-Hispanic.

Additionally, those with higher incomes save more of that income than do those with lower incomes. The bottom two quintiles have a savings rate of less than one percent compared to a rate of 24 percent for the top quintile, including a savings rate of more than 50 percent for those in the top one percent.

Because some occupations pay more and provide more benefits, occupation can also play a role in building wealth. Sixty-nine percent of households that reported the head

of household working in a managerial or professional occupation had some savings, compared to only 49 percent of those in technical, sales, or service occupations.²⁶

When race, gender, and LGBTQI wealth gaps intersect, as for women of color and LGBTQI people of color, the combination puts assets and wealth further out of reach. For example, women of color hold significantly less wealth than white men (or than white women),²² and LGBTQI families of color are more likely to live in poverty than families of color not in the LGBTQI community.²³

Income Level (by Percent of All Incomes)	Percentage of Families that Saved
Bottom 20 Percent	31.7
20–39.9 Percent	40.9
40–59.9 Percent	49.6
60–79.9 Percent	64.5
80–89.9 Percent	73.3
90–100 Percent	83.4

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Families that Saved
White non-Hispanic	57.3
Nonwhite or Hispanic	44.2

Table 2: Savings by Income and Race/Ethnicity
Source: The Federal Reserve Board

of household working in a managerial or professional occupation had some savings, compared to only 49 percent of those in technical, sales, or service occupations.²⁶

Additionally, some occupations are much more likely to provide access to other wealth-building benefits – sometimes called the “wealth escalator.”²⁷ For example, while 84 percent of those in management and professional occupations have access to employer-sponsored retirement benefits, only 47 percent of those in service occupations and 37 percent of those working part-time, have access to this benefit.²⁸

Similarly, while 87 percent of those in management and professional occupations have access to employer-sponsored medical benefits, only 45 percent of service workers and 19 percent of part-time workers have access to those benefits.²⁹

It is important to note that unionized workers are also more likely to have access to high wages and wealth-building benefits. The Economic Policy Institute found that unionized workers are 28.2 percent more likely to have employer-sponsored medical benefits, and 53.9 percent more likely to have employer-sponsored pension plans.³⁰

Income inequality for women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community means less ability to save and less access to the “wealth escalator.” Women and people of color are more likely to work part-time and in service occupations,³¹ so less likely to have extra income to save or to receive wealth-building benefits in the workplace.

In fact, “a woman’s average lifetime earnings are more than \$434,000 less than a comparable male counterpart over a 35-year working life.”³² And, the lack of savings and retirement

plans means women of color must live on one-third to 45 percent less per month during retirement than a white male.

Though census data shows that same sex couples have higher average incomes than opposite-sex households,³³ when adjusting for education, members of the LGBTQI community are paid less than their similarly educated straight counterparts.³⁴ And, while only seven percent of the population overall have incomes below \$10,000 per year, 15 percent of transgender respondents in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey had such low incomes.³⁵ Transgender people are also much less likely than the general population to have access to employer-sponsored health coverage.³⁶

People of color in the LGBTQI community – and especially lesbian and transgender people of color – also see greater income inequality. For example, black same-sex couples have a median income more than \$20,000 less than white same-sex counterparts.³⁷ And, more than one-third of black transgender or gender non-conforming people reported incomes below \$10,000, compared to nine percent of the black population overall.³⁸

The Job Gap Ratio

Those with lower incomes, including women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQI community, also cannot simply find better paying jobs. There are not enough living wage jobs to go around.

In 2015, there were 4.6 million job openings nationwide. However, our analysis finds that only 2.2 million of those job openings paid at least \$17.28 per hour – the national living wage for a single adult. This means that only 47 percent of all job openings nationwide pay enough for a single adult to make ends meet.

Additionally, with just over 15 million job seekers,³⁹ the job gap ratio of seekers to living wage job openings is seven to one. In other words, only one of every seven job seekers can attain employment that pays a living wage for a single adult. And, only about one third of job seekers will find employment at all.

Job openings are not equally distributed across the country. In North Dakota, Utah, and Washington, D.C., there are approximately three job seekers for every opening that pays a living wage, while Connecticut, Maine, Mississippi, New Jersey, South Carolina, and West Virginia all see 10 or more job seekers per living wage job opening.

In other words, only one of every seven job seekers can attain employment that pays a living wage for a single adult. And, only about one third of job seekers will find employment at all.

State	Single Adult Hourly Living Wage	Total Job-Seekers	Total Openings	Percent of Openings Greater than Living Wage	Job Gap Ratio (Seekers to Living Wage Openings)
Alabama	\$15.49	284,000	65,780	48%	9 to 1
Alaska	\$17.92	43,000	10,060	53%	8 to 1
Arizona	\$16.18	442,000	118,850	48%	8 to 1
Arkansas	\$14.58	130,000	43,250	47%	6 to 1
California	\$19.90	2,526,000	651,030	42%	9 to 1
Colorado	\$17.48	254,000	123,900	52%	4 to 1
Connecticut	\$19.57	290,000	54,300	51%	10 to 1
Delaware	\$18.33	40,000	13,950	44%	6 to 1
District of Columbia	\$21.92	38,000	20,570	63%	3 to 1
Florida	\$17.29	1,127,000	356,970	38%	8 to 1
Georgia	\$16.48	589,000	148,370	43%	9 to 1
Hawaii	\$21.73	54,000	20,030	34%	8 to 1
Idaho	\$14.90	62,000	17,527	57%	6 to 1
Illinois	\$17.57	754,000	187,470	46%	9 to 1
Indiana	\$15.46	313,000	106,320	47%	6 to 1
Iowa	\$15.10	106,000	57,950	52%	4 to 1
Kansas	\$15.23	124,000	42,120	47%	6 to 1
Kentucky	\$15.03	183,000	83,060	52%	4 to 1
Louisiana	\$15.87	270,000	65,950	48%	9 to 1
Maine	\$16.27	72,000	17,200	44%	10 to 1
Maryland	\$20.40	361,000	110,190	52%	6 to 1
Massachusetts	\$19.98	354,000	106,120	50%	7 to 1
Michigan	\$15.78	503,000	139,490	49%	7 to 1
Minnesota	\$16.52	240,000	85,820	53%	5 to 1
Mississippi	\$15.18	173,000	35,910	40%	12 to 1
Missouri	\$15.39	306,000	86,630	48%	7 to 1

Table 3-1: Living Wages, Job Openings, and Job Seekers by State

State	Single Adult Hourly Living Wage	Total Job-Seekers	Total Openings	Percent of Openings Greater than Living Wage	Job Gap Ratio (Seekers to Living Wage Openings)
Montana	\$14.93	48,000	14,050	44%	8 to 1
Nebraska	\$15.03	66,000	34,680	51%	4 to 1
Nevada	\$16.62	217,000	61,960	38%	9 to 1
New Hampshire	\$17.68	58,000	20,940	43%	6 to 1
New Jersey	\$20.08	613,000	129,380	44%	11 to 1
New Mexico	\$15.60	96,000	26,170	42%	9 to 1
New York	\$20.42	1,060,000	357,430	43%	7 to 1
North Carolina	\$15.88	549,000	158,540	46%	8 to 1
North Dakota	\$14.98	24,000	15,360	55%	3 to 1
Ohio	\$14.96	705,000	168,300	51%	8 to 1
Oklahoma	\$14.96	177,000	57,090	50%	6 to 1
Oregon	\$16.49	204,000	68,140	49%	6 to 1
Pennsylvania	\$16.73	689,000	183,190	47%	8 to 1
Rhode Island	\$17.33	60,000	15,180	49%	8 to 1
South Carolina	\$15.79	278,000	66,160	42%	10 to 1
South Dakota	\$14.50	38,000	13,970	44%	6 to 1
Tennessee	\$15.27	275,000	101,520	49%	6 to 1
Texas	\$15.91	1,068,000	543,510	48%	4 to 1
Utah	\$16.06	116,000	67,890	50%	3 to 1
Vermont	\$17.89	28,000	9,530	45%	6 to 1
Virginia	\$18.95	405,000	128,070	44%	7 to 1
Washington	\$17.59	358,000	144,770	54%	5 to 1
West Virginia	\$15.00	104,000	20,220	40%	13 to 1
Wisconsin	\$15.69	249,000	95,200	50%	5 to 1
Wyoming	\$15.05	28,000	8,350	55%	6 to 1

Table 3-2: Living Wages, Job Openings, and Job Seekers by State

How the Job Gap Reinforces Wealth Gaps

The lack of living wage jobs impacts women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community in part because these groups are more likely to face individual discrimination in hiring, creating an additional barrier to obtaining high-wage employment.⁴⁰ However, it goes beyond individual discrimination; women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQI community face individual, institutional, and structural discrimination at all stages of the employment process.^{41 42 43}

Work done by women and people of color appears to be valued less than that done by white men. Within occupations, women and people of color are paid less than their white, male counterparts.⁴⁴ And, because women and people of color are more likely to work in tipped occupations⁴⁵ – where, in most states, they can be paid a lower subminimum wage⁴⁶ – and are more likely to work part-time, they are also less likely to be paid wages sufficient to making ends meet.⁴⁷

Additionally, occupations with a high percentage of women or people of color with the most job openings

overwhelmingly pay less than a living wage, while those with a lower percentage of women or people of color pay higher wages.

For example, all but one of the top five female-dominated occupations with the most job openings pay less than the national single adult living wage of \$17.28, while all but one of the five male-dominated occupations with the most job openings pay a living wage. Similarly, while the top five disproportionately-black occupations with the most openings include no high-wage jobs, the five occupations with the most job openings and the lowest concentration of black workers include only one below \$17.28 per hour. And, while all but one of the five disproportionately-Latinx occupations with the most job openings pay less than a living wage, none of the five disproportionately non-Latinx occupations with the most openings are low wage.

Majority-Female Occupations			Majority-Male Occupations		
Occupation	Openings	Median Wage	Occupation	Openings	Median Wage
Cashiers	152,380	\$9.28	Maintenance and repair workers, general	44,370	\$17.61
Waiters and waitresses	125,500	\$9.25	Construction laborers	37,860	\$15.34
Registered nurses	108,840	\$32.45	Police and sheriff's patrol officers	25,840	\$28.04
Office clerks, general	75,620	\$14.22	Automotive service technicians and mechanics	23,720	\$18.20
Personal care aides	60,110	\$10.09	Electricians	18,180	\$24.94

Table 4-1: Occupations with the Most Job Openings by Race and Gender

Disproportionately-Black Occupations			Majority-Male Occupations		
Occupation	Openings	Median Wage	Occupation	Openings	Median Wage
Cashiers	152,380	\$9.28	Cost estimators	7,950	\$29.03
Customer service representatives	88,870	\$15.25	Construction managers	7,010	\$42.02
Stock clerks and order fillers	68,900	\$11.17	Editors	4,250	\$26.93
Personal care aides	60,110	\$10.09	Sheet metal workers	3,980	\$21.99
Maids and house-keeping cleaners	45,940	\$9.97	Photographers	3,450	\$15.24
Disproportionately-Latinx Occupations			Disproportionately Non-Latinx Occupations		
Occupation	Openings	Median Wage	Occupation	Openings	Median Wage
Cashiers	152,380	\$9.28	Registered nurses	108,840	\$32.45
Waiters and waitresses	125,500	\$9.25	Accountants and auditors	49,800	\$32.30
Stock clerks and order fillers	68,900	\$11.17	Management analysts	20,850	\$39.10
Maids and house-keeping cleaners	45,940	\$9.97	Computer systems analysts	19,160	\$41.25
Maintenance and repair workers, general	44,370	\$17.61	Lawyers	15,770	\$55.69
Disproportionately-Asian Occupations			Majority-Female Occupations		
Occupation	Openings	Median Wage	Occupation	Openings	Median Wage
Registered nurses	108,840	\$32.45	Maintenance and repair workers, general	44,370	\$17.61
Personal care aides	60,110	\$10.09	Construction laborers	37,860	\$15.34
Accountants and auditors	49,800	\$32.30	Police and sheriff's patrol officers	25,840	\$28.04
Management analysts	20,850	\$39.10	Sales representatives, services, all other	25,240	\$24.86
Computer systems analysts	19,160	\$41.25	Electricians	18,180	\$24.94

Table 4-2: Occupations with the Most Job Openings by Race and Gender

While the top five disproportionately-Asian occupations with the most job openings included the same number of high-wage occupations as the least-Asian occupations, again it is important to note that there are significant income disparities within the Asian community that are masked.

An analysis of 2013 American Community Survey data disaggregating Asian workers into separate subgroups based on country of origin found that while some of the most populous subgroups had high numbers of workers paid more than \$15 per hour, others had significantly lower rates of high-wage employment. For example, while Chinese, Asian Indian, and Filipino subgroups all had rates of high-wage employment above 60 percent, Cambodian, Mongolian, and Hmong have more low-wage workers.⁴⁸

Due in part- to the low population of Native peoples, comparable data on disproportionately-Native job openings

is not available. However, with Native unemployment rate nearly double the rate of the country's population overall,⁴⁹ the job gap will do little to help Native communities address unemployment, let alone build wealth.

While the same data is not collected for the LGBTQI community, it is most likely that the lack of low-wage job openings reinforces the LGBTQI wealth gap, as well. The LGBTQI community, and especially the transgender community, has rates of unemployment higher than for those outside of the LGBTQI community. Transgender people are more likely to have incomes below \$10,000 annually and twice as likely to be unemployed compared to rates nationally.⁵⁰ Unemployment rates are also higher for LGBTQI people of color than for non-LGBTQI people of color.⁵¹ These high unemployment rates, like those in the Native community and other communities of color, are unlikely to budge when there are too few living wage jobs to go around.

Female and Disproportionately-Black Occupations			Male and Disproportionately Non-Black Occupations		
Occupation	Openings	Median Wage	Occupation	Openings	Median Wage
Cashiers	152,380	\$9.28	Carpenters	16,910	\$20.24
Personal care aides	60,110	\$10.09	Civil engineers	10,670	\$39.53
Maids and house-keeping cleaners	45,940	\$9.97	First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	10,360	\$29.84
Childcare workers	44,130	\$9.77	Mechanical engineers	10,250	\$40.19
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	32,220	\$20.76	Painters, construction and maintenance	8,390	\$17.59

Table 5-1: Occupations with the Most Job Openings by Race and Gender

Female and Disproportionately-Latinx Occupations			Male and Disproportionately Non-Latinx Occupations		
Occupation	Openings	Median Wage	Occupation	Openings	Median Wage
Cashiers	152,380	\$9.28	Firefighters	11,230	\$22.53
Waiters and waitresses	125,500	\$9.25	Mechanical engineers	10,250	\$40.19
Maids and house-keeping cleaners	45,940	\$9.97	First-line supervisors of police and detectives	4,300	\$39.47
Medical assistants	26,210	\$14.71	Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	3,670	\$21.53
Tellers	20,360	\$12.70	Engineers, all other	3,300	\$46.11

Table 5-2: Occupations with the Most Job Openings by Race and Gender

And, once again, when race and gender intersect, the impact is compounded. Job openings in occupations that are predominately female and disproportionately-black or disproportionately-Latinx are mostly low-wage. Conversely, in the top five occupations that are predominately male and disproportionately non-black or disproportionately non-Latinx all of the openings pay a living wage.

The lack of living wage jobs in occupations with high rates of women and people of color reinforces existing wealth gaps. When most job openings do not pay a living wage, and a

majority of those that do are in white- and male-dominated occupations, women and people of color are less likely to obtain employment that pays enough to make ends meet.

While there are job openings in occupations with high rates of women and people of color, they are predominately low-wage and in service occupations that are less likely to provide other wealth-building benefits. And, high rates of unemployment in communities of color and the LGBTQI community mean more people in those communities fighting for few jobs that may not even pay a decent wage.

The Job Gap Ratio for Jobs that Support Families with Children

In the previous report in this series, living wages for families with children were calculated for 18 states and Washington, D.C. The hourly living wage for a single adult with two children in those states ranged from a low of \$26.39 per hour in South Carolina to \$41.11 in California, and \$43.86 per hour in Washington, D.C.⁵²

As the cost of living for families goes up with children, so does the gap between job seekers and job openings that pay that living wage. In states studied, the percent of job openings that pay at least enough for a single adult with two

children to make ends meet ranges from a low of 11 percent in Florida to a high of 22 percent in Michigan, and 29 percent in Washington, D.C.

And, in no state studied are there fewer than 13 job seekers for every job opening that pays enough for a single adult with two children to make ends meet, with six job seekers per living wage job opening in Washington, D.C., where the actual number of job seekers may be greater if including those from nearby suburbs in Virginia and Maryland.



California

42%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

9 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in California. There are 2.5 million job seekers, but only about 651,000 total job openings. Of those, only 42 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 16 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are nine job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 25 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

**TABLE 6:
California**
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$19.90

\$29.66

\$41.11

\$36.09

\$25.08

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

274,840

181,470

102,450

121,180

223,470

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

42%

28%

16%

19%

34%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

9 to 1

14 to 1

25 to 1

21 to 1

11 to 1



Connecticut

51%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

10 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Connecticut. There are 290,000 job seekers, but only about 54,000 total job openings. Of those, only 51 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 15 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are 10 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 35 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 7:
Connecticut
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$19.57

\$29.54

\$41.09

\$35.12

\$25.33

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

27,870

17,030

8,210

12,280

20,830

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

51%

31%

15%

23%

38%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

10 to 1

17 to 1

35 to 1

24 to 1

14 to 1



District of Columbia

63%

Percent of Openings Greater than Living Wage

3 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Washington, D.C. There are 38,000 job seekers, but only about 21,000 total job openings. Of those, 63 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 29 percent pay enough for a single adult with

two children to make ends meet. This means there are three job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and six job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 8:
District of Columbia
Job Gap Ratio and Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with a school-age child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with a toddler (12-24 months) and a school-age child (6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one of whom is working) with a toddler and a school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both of whom are working) with a toddler and a school age child

Living Wage (per working adult)

\$21.92

\$31.66

\$43.86

\$37.64

\$26.87

Job Openings at Household Living Wage

12,880

10,780

5,900

8,920

11,950

Percent of Job Openings that Pay Household Living Wage

63%

52%

29%

43%

58%

Job Gap Ratio of Job Seekers to Living Wage Job Openings

3 to 1

4 to 1

6 to 1

4 to 1

3 to 1



Florida

38%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

8 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Florida. There are 1.1 million job seekers, but only about 357,000 total job openings. Of those, only 38 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 11 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are eight job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 28 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 9:
Florida
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$17.29

\$23.78

\$30.10

\$32.63

\$20.17

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

136,740

82,790

40,250

34,590

107,600

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

38%

23%

11%

10%

30%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

8 to 1

14 to 1

28 to 1

33 to 1

10 to 1



Idaho

57%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

6 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Idaho. There are 62,000 job seekers, but only about 18,000 total job openings. Of those, 57 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 19 percent pay enough for a single adult with

two children to make ends meet. This means there are six job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 19 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 10:
Idaho
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$14.90

\$20.89

\$26.85

\$29.52

\$18.64

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

9,980

5,425

3,325

2,031

6,507

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

57%

31%

19%

12%

37%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

6 to 1

11 to 1

19 to 1

31 to 1

10 to 1



Illinois

46%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

9 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Illinois. There are 754,000 job seekers, but only about 187,000 total job openings. Of those, only 46 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 15 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are nine job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 28 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 11:
Illinois
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$17.57

\$26.99

\$35.33

\$32.93

\$22.78

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

87,140

51,640

27,340

30,780

66,640

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

46%

28%

15%

16%

36%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

9 to 1

15 to 1

28 to 1

24 to 1

11 to 1



Iowa

52%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

4 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Iowa. There are 106,000 job seekers, but only about 58,000 total job openings. Of those, only 52 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 14 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are four job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 13 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 12:
Iowa
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$15.10

\$21.09

\$28.32

\$30.06

\$19.57

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

29,980

17,960

7,940

7,080

19,190

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

52%

31%

14%

12%

33%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

4 to 1

6 to 1

13 to 1

15 to 1

6 to 1



Kansas

47%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

6 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Kansas. There are 124,000 job seekers, but only about 42,000 total job openings. Of those, only 47 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 13 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are six job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 22 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 13:
Kansas
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$15.23

\$21.83

\$28.75

\$30.06

\$19.58

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

19,820

11,480

5,520

5,040

13,600

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

47%

27%

13%

12%

32%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

6 to 1

11 to 1

22 to 1

25 to 1

9 to 1



Louisiana

48%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

9 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Louisiana. There are 270,000 job seekers, but only about 66,000 total job openings. Of those, only 48 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 14 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are nine job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 28 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 14:
Louisiana
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$15.87

\$22.30

\$28.44

\$31.12

\$19.46

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

31,590

17,830

9,530

6,360

22,470

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

48%

27%

14%

10%

34%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

9 to 1

15 to 1

28 to 1

42 to 1

12 to 1



Maine

44%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

10 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Maine. There are 72,000 job seekers, but only about 17,000 total job openings. Of those, only 44 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 15 percent pay enough for a single adult with two

children to make ends meet. This means there are 10 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 28 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 15:
Maine
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$16.27

\$23.09

\$29.87

\$30.65

\$20.05

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

7,500

4,550

2,550

1,930

5,650

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

44%

26%

15%

11%

33%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

10 to 1

16 to 1

28 to 1

37 to 1

13 to 1



Michigan

49%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

7 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Michigan. There are 503,000 job seekers, but only about 139,000 total job openings. Of those, only 49 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 22 percent pay enough for a single adult with two children to make ends meet. This means

there are seven job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 16 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 16:
Michigan
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$15.78

\$22.32

\$28.79

\$30.31

\$19.69

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

68,000

45,280

31,000

27,530

52,330

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

49%

32%

22%

20%

38%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

7 to 1

11 to 1

16 to 1

18 to 1

10 to 1



Montana

44%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

8 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Montana. There are 48,000 job seekers, but only about 14,000 total job openings. Of those, only 44 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 14 percent pay enough for a single adult with two children to make ends meet. This means

there are eight job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 25 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children

TABLE 17:
Montana
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$14.93

\$21.78

\$28.20

\$29.96

\$19.32

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

6,200

3,420

1,910

1,100

4,170

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

44%

24%

14%

8%

30%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

8 to 1

14 to 1

25 to 1

44 to 1

12 to 1



New Mexico

42%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

9 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in New Mexico. There are 96,000 job seekers, but only about 26,000 total job openings. Of those, only 42 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 17 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are nine job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 22 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 18:
New Mexico
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$15.60

\$22.03

\$27.69

\$30.11

\$19.06

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

11,010

7,310

4,430

4,050

9,040

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

42%

28%

17%

15%

35%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

9 to 1

13 to 1

22 to 1

24 to 1

11 to 1



New York

43%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

7 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in New York. There are 1.1 million job seekers, but only about 357,000 total job openings. Of those, only 43 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 14 percent pay enough for a single adult with two children to make ends meet. This means

there are seven job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 22 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 19:
New York
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$20.42

\$29.23

\$39.58

\$35.32

\$24.66

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

155,350

111,260

48,700

75,980

136,380

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

43%

31%

14%

21%

38%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

7 to 1

10 to 1

22 to 1

14 to 1

8 to 1



Oregon

49%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

6 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Oregon. There are 204,000 job seekers, but only about 68,000 total job openings. Of those, only 49 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 16 percent pay enough for a single adult

with two children to make ends meet. This means there are six job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 18 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 20:
Oregon
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$16.49

\$24.62

\$32.20

\$32.21

\$21.52

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

33,490

18,840

11,170

11,170

22,660

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

49%

28%

16%

16%

33%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

6 to 1

11 to 1

18 to 1

18 to 1

9 to 1



South Carolina

42%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

10 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in South Carolina. There are 278,000 job seekers, but only about 66,000 total job openings. Of those, only 42 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 16 percent pay enough for a single adult with two children to make ends meet. This means

there are 10 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 26 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 21:
South Carolina

Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:

Single adult

Household 2:

Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:

Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:

Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:

Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

Living Wage (per
working adult)

\$15.79

\$21.34

\$26.39

\$29.77

\$18.42

Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage

27,490

17,190

10,720

6,800

21,220

Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage

42%

26%

16%

10%

32%

Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings

10 to 1

16 to 1

26 to 1

41 to 1

13 to 1



Virginia

44%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

7 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Virginia. There are 405,000 job seekers, but only about 128,000 total job openings. Of those, only 44 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 17 percent pay enough for a single adult with two children to make ends meet. This means

there are seven job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 19 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children

TABLE 22:
Virginia
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$18.95

\$27.25

\$36.41

\$34.97

\$23.28

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

56,080

38,920

21,510

24,340

45,860

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

44%

30%

17%

19%

36%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

7 to 1

10 to 1

19 to 1

17 to 1

9 to 1



Washington

54%

Percent of Openings Greater than Living Wage

5 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Washington. There are 358,000 job seekers, but only about 145,000 total job openings. Of those, 54 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 20 percent pay enough for a single adult with

two children to make ends meet. This means there are five job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 13 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 23:
Washington
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

**Living Wage (per
working adult)**

\$17.59

\$24.73

\$33.58

\$32.97

\$21.79

**Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage**

77,490

53,290

28,350

30,870

60,030

**Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage**

54%

37%

20%

21%

41%

**Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings**

5 to 1

7 to 1

13 to 1

12 to 1

6 to 1



Wisconsin

50%

Percent of Openings Greater
than Living Wage

5 Job Seekers

Per Single Adult Living
Wage Job Opening

There are not enough jobs to go around in Wisconsin. There are 249,000 job seekers, but only about 95,000 total job openings. Of those, 50 percent pay a living wage for a single adult and only 14 percent pay enough for a single adult with

two children to make ends meet. This means there are five job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult and 19 job seekers for every job opening that pays a living wage for a single adult with two children.

TABLE 24:
Wisconsin
Job Gap Ratio and
Availability of Jobs

Household 1:
Single adult

Household 2:
Single adult with
a school-age
child (age 6-8yrs)

Household 3:
Single adult with
a toddler (12-24
months) and a
school-age child
(6-8yrs)

Household 4:
Two adults (one
of whom is
working) with
a toddler and a
school-age child

Household 5:
Two adults (both
of whom are
working) with
a toddler and a
school age child

Living Wage (per
working adult)

\$15.69

\$22.61

\$31.02

\$30.55

\$20.74

Job Openings at
Household Living
Wage

47,440

28,930

12,990

13,220

31,920

Percent of Job
Openings that Pay
Household Living
Wage

50%

30%

14%

14%

34%

Job Gap Ratio of Job
Seekers to Living
Wage Job Openings

5 to 1

9 to 1

19 to 1

19 to 1

8 to 1

How Public Infrastructure Can Help

A strong public infrastructure plan can help create millions of jobs while addressing the country's crumbling infrastructure. However, to ensure that the jobs created are good paying jobs and that the jobs go to those who need them most – including people of color, women, and members of the LGBTQI community – the plan must be carefully crafted. It should not perpetuate structural inequities and it must not lead to the privatization of public goods. It should move us away from dependence on the fossil fuels that are worsening climate change. Finally, how we choose to pay for infrastructure matters as much as the plan itself.

Many people think of infrastructure as “shovel ready” projects like roads and bridges. However, an infrastructure plan can also include such projects as water systems, as well as the full range of public assets, from schools to parks. Investing in publically-owned local services, like water, can create long-term benefits for communities as well as a significant number of jobs; privatizing those systems, though, could be disastrous for communities.

Public water services, for example, are by and large more affordable and have more measures of accountability than do private systems. “When local governments operate water and sewer systems, elected officials make the major policy decisions that determine the cost, availability and quality of these services.”⁵³ Private systems, on the other hand, “are accountable first and foremost to their owners” and “have no responsibility to promote public health and wellbeing.”⁵⁴ This has been directly seen in places like Flint, Mich., where “industry giant Veolia failed to warn of possible lead contamination in Flint, despite documenting inadequate corrosion control measures.”⁵⁵ Additionally, public services tend to be more equitable because they are directly accountable to their residents and provide customers with clear protections from discrimination.

To keep water services and other public goods public, an infrastructure plan must focus on public investments rather than on tax write-offs for private companies. Not only are private services often more expensive, as seen with water companies, but even business and labor executives have noted at a House transportation committee hearing that,

“private investment won’t provide nearly enough to address America’s infrastructure woes.”⁵⁶

Privatization of public goods is also implicitly, if not explicitly, designed to lower wage costs. This defeats the goal of using infrastructure investments to create good-paying jobs. A 2013 Government Accountability Office report on privatization in the public transit sector⁵⁷ highlights one example: A study of 12 transit agencies found that the cost savings touted by the private contractors came primarily from private transit labor consistently earning lower wages and fewer benefits compared to similar public sector employees.

When Washington D.C.’s transit authority contracted with First Transit for the operation of its Circulator downtown bus service, starting salaries were initially 15 percent lower than they were for regular transit drivers, and benefits were less generous. It took protests by drivers, plus a record of erratic service and safety problems, to get the transit authority and First Transit to agree to wage parity between the Circulator and regular bus services.⁵⁸ But that is a rare worker victory.

Instead of relying on privatization, a truly public infrastructure plan could create millions of jobs, address critical infrastructure needs – such as ensuring that people in low-income communities have access to public transportation that can get them to where the jobs are – and ensure that high paying jobs and projects benefit those who need them most. “Infrastructure occupations not only employ thousands of workers with a high school diploma or less, but they also frequently offer higher wages compared to many other jobs.”⁵⁹ In fact, a public plan could produce over 15 million new jobs.⁶⁰

A public infrastructure plan should also move the nation more rapidly toward a green economy, which would open up even more opportunities that range from manufacturing solar panels to retrofitting public buildings to make them more energy-efficient. In “Greening the Global Economy,”⁶¹ economist Robert Pollin finds that every \$1 million spent in clean energy in the United States creates more than twice the number of jobs created by \$1 million spent on fossil fuels – nearly nine jobs per \$1 million versus fewer than four jobs per \$1 million.

If the United States increased its spending on clean energy to roughly double current consumption from renewable sources, Pollin estimates that the economy would gain a net 650,000 jobs even after accounting for job losses in the fossil fuel industry. This infrastructure plan should include training

and require that hires for a bulk of those jobs come from local communities most in need. When done responsibly, this can be one piece of addressing the wealth gap for people of color, women, and the LGBTQI community while simultaneously improving quality of life, education, and health outcomes.

Recommendations

There are not enough living wage jobs to go around. Nationally, there are seven job seekers for every job opening that pays at least the national single adult living wage of \$17.28 per hour.

While this lack of high-wage employment is damaging for all workers, it especially impacts women, people of color, and the

LGBTQI community. Living wage job openings are more likely to be in white- and male-dominated occupations, keeping wages and associated wealth-building benefits low for everyone else. This not only keeps women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community trapped in low-wage work, but reinforces existing wealth gaps.

A strong public infrastructure investment would help create high wage jobs and meet critical needs in communities across the country. Targeting hiring and training to local communities – including women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community – and focusing on public solutions rather than privatization can help address inequities and ensure long-term public goods for years to come.

Other tools to address the lack of high wage jobs and the existing wealth gap for women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community include activities like the following:

Increase the federal minimum wage to a single adult living wage and tie it to inflation. Wages from a full-time job should be enough for at least a single adult to make ends meet. The federal minimum wage (and state minimum wages) should reflect the cost of living, including providing enough for workers to put aside money for emergencies and to save for retirement, and should be adjusted based on inflation each year to ensure it doesn't lose value. While families with children will still need additional supports like child care subsidies, a high wage floor will help workers across the country make ends meet.

Eliminate the tipped subminimum wage. Ensuring that all workers are guaranteed one fair wage, rather than having a lower base wage for tipped workers, will help millions of tipped workers out of poverty and put the responsibility on business owners to pay fair wages rather than relying on

customers to provide enough in tips. This will especially help women and people of color who are more likely to work in tipped occupations.

Invest in state and federal safety net programs. Even if the minimum wage is increased to a living wage for a single adult, many people including caregivers, parents, those with high medical bills, and others may find that the minimum wage falls short of covering all of their expenses, and will continue to face tough choices. Federal programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) should be fully funded and strengthened. State programs like Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) and child care subsidies should be bolstered.

Establish work supports like paid sick days and paid family leave, and expand eligibility for the Family Medical Leave Act to more businesses and employees. Paid sick leave is crucial to the well-being of all workers; it provides recovery time from illness rather than forcing employees to come in sick or risk losing their job. For parents with children, the risk of losing that job to take care of a sick child is a heartbreaking dilemma.

Additionally, women without maternity leave are at risk of losing their jobs. For women paid less than a living wage, this can threaten their housing, health, and chance for them and their children to stay out of poverty.

Increase access to retirement plans. For workers without employer-sponsored retirement plans, retirement savings programs outside the workplace can give some of the same benefits. For example, In 2016 Connecticut passed legislation creating the Connecticut Retirement Security Exchange, which will require “covered employers to automatically enroll their employees into a Roth-IRA arrangement.”⁶² Numerous other states have passed or considered similar legislation.

Increase access to affordable health coverage. Lower-wage workers are less likely to have access to employer-sponsored health care than higher-wage workers. This both impacts their cost of living (with affordable care cutting that health care component down) and, in turn, affects workers' ability to build wealth.

The Affordable Care Act has played an important role in mitigating against low-wage work, particularly for working families who qualify for expanded Medicaid and those with incomes below 250 percent of the poverty level, where the ACA exchanges offers affordable premiums, with limits on out of pocket costs. Repeal of the ACA would result in 32 million people – largely working families with low-to-moderate incomes – losing coverage, causing them enormous financial strain and deeply exacerbating the impact of the trend toward low-wage work. Rather than repeal the ACA, the law should be strengthened to further increase subsidies for working families and to lower out-of-pocket costs.

Strengthen and enforce equal opportunity statutes, and expand to apply to the LGBTQI community. Systemic barriers and hiring discrimination continue to mean that women, people of color, and the LGBTQI community are more likely to be paid low wages. Equal opportunity statutes like the Civil Rights Act and affirmative action were designed to help ensure that women and people of color are not discriminated against in the workplace and in other venues, helping give them a fair shot at being paid a higher wage as well as preventing other discrimination. Expanding this to the LGBTQI community is a necessity given the barriers and discrimination they face.

However, enforcement of these policies isn't consistent, leaving the statutes weak and ineffective. Strengthening and enforcing such statutes can help ensure that they actually benefit those experiencing both overt discrimination, as well as institutional discrimination.

Strengthen Social Security. Women and people of color are more likely to depend on Social Security for a significant portion of retirement income. And, because women typically live longer than men, their retirement savings (including Social Security) must last longer. Strengthening Social Security can ensure that all workers have the means to retire with dignity.

Technical Notes

Job Openings

Job openings include the following:

- Job openings due to growth — the result of new jobs being created by new or existing firms.
- Job openings due to replacement — the result of people retiring, entering school or the military, moving across state boundaries, changing occupations, or otherwise leaving the occupation in which they currently work.

The analysis does not include job openings that result from people changing employers but remaining in the same occupation, since these are largely invisible to the average job seeker. Also not included, for similar reasons, are job openings for unpaid family workers and self-employment.

Job openings data comes from Occupational Employment Projections, estimated at the state and national level, using 2014-2024 data to ensure uniformity across states and nationally. This data was collected from Projectionscentral.com, as suggested by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In determining which job openings paid a living wage for each state, the state median wage for an occupation was used where available. For the national job gap ratio, the national median wage for each occupation was used. This means that half the people in the occupation earn less and half earn more than that amount. Not everyone will start at the median wage, but many should progress to that wage over time. For occupations where median wage numbers were shown as a range, mean wages were used instead.

Analysis of Job Openings by Race & Gender

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics detailing the percentage of given occupations who are women and/or people of color⁶³ was analyzed against the same job openings and wage data used for the job gap ratio analysis. 220 occupations had data for women or people of color and had wage and job openings data. To highlight the occupations most disproportionately-female and most disproportionately-people of color, the top quarter of all occupations with data were used. For example, majority-female occupations include those with 70 percent or more women, equal to approximately one-quarter of the 220 occupations. Conversely, majority-male occupations include those with 15 percent or less women, again equal to approximately one-quarter of all occupations analyzed.

To find the top occupations within each category, all occupations within the category were sorted by the number of openings, and the five occupations with the most openings were identified.

Defining Job Seekers

Job-seekers include:

- The unemployed — people who are not employed but are looking for work. Included are those who have been laid off, quit their jobs, are entering the workforce for the first time, or are re-entering it. Not included are those who are unemployed due to temporary layoff or those looking only for part-time work.
- Involuntary part-time workers — people who work less than full-time, but want to work full-time.
- Marginally attached and discouraged workers — people who are not employed and are not seeking work due to personal or financial reasons. This includes discouraged workers, who are not employed and not currently looking for work, but have looked for work within the past year. In the case of discouraged workers, they are not seeking work because they believe there are no jobs available or there are none for which they qualify.

It is important to note that the unemployment rate reflects only the unemployed and, therefore, misses many job-seekers — including discouraged and marginally attached workers. This suggests that there are many more job-seekers for each living wage job opening than conventionally assumed.

The job-seeker figures used are likely an underestimate of the actual number of job-seekers. Ideally, the count of job-seekers would capture everyone, working or not, who needs a living wage job. The figures used here do not count those who are working full-time at less than a living wage but would prefer a living wage job, because data on this group do not exist. They overstate the number in that all the unemployed are counted, even though some may not be looking for a living wage job. Also, people who left the labor market and then re-entered the same occupation are counted among the job-seekers, whereas those who moved directly from one job to another in the same occupation are not. However, assuming even a fraction of the people working at less than a living wage job for a single adult want a living wage job, the count is, on balance, an underestimate.

Living Wage Budgets

A living wage is a wage that provides a household with financial stability, allowing it to meet its basic needs (including a small amount of savings) without government subsidy, with a little left over for to plan for emergencies. For this study, a modified market basket approach was used. Household budgets, upon which living wages are based, include:

- Food;
- Housing and utilities;
- Transportation;
- Health care;
- Child care;
- Household, clothing, and personal items;
- Savings; and
- State and federal taxes

Household Assumptions for Family Job Gap Analysis

Household types are selected to reflect the range of budget requirements for four household types:

- Single adult
- Single adult with one child between the ages of 6 and 8
- Single adult with two children, one between the ages of 6 and 8 and the other between the ages of 1 and 2
- Two adults including one wage earner, with two children, one between the ages of 6 and 8 and the other between the ages of 1 and 2

2015 Living wage findings and methodology were reported on "Waiting for the Payoff," available at www.thejobgap.org.

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Kathy Mulady, Julie Chinitz, Isaiah Poole, LeeAnn Hall, Sarah Warner, Billie Kirkton, and Trevor Davis of People's Action Institute; Amy Traub of Demos; and Matt Broaddus of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities for providing feedback and contributing to the release of this report.

Additionally, the author would like to again thank Matt Broaddus of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities for providing job seeker data for this report.

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