

BEYOND THE HEADLINES

At a Glance: Jobs, Workers & the Economy

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FOCUS: CITY OF SEATTLE

Poverty in Seattle

Seattle has long been touted as a center of relatively well-educated and affluent residents as well as low levels of poverty when compared to other major metropolitan areas. And recent news articles have pointed out that during the slow U.S. economic recovery, Seattle is doing better than most of the country in terms of median earnings, wage growth and unemployment.

But just how many people are “poor” in Seattle? How many are “working poor”, and who are they? The following brief answers to these questions are based on a definition of “poverty” as living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This line roughly equates to a “living-wage” in Seattle – the minimum amount an individual or family needs to meet very basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and transportation (equating to roughly \$44,100 annual income for a family of four).

The following diagram shows the percentage of Seattle residents who are living below 200% FPL:



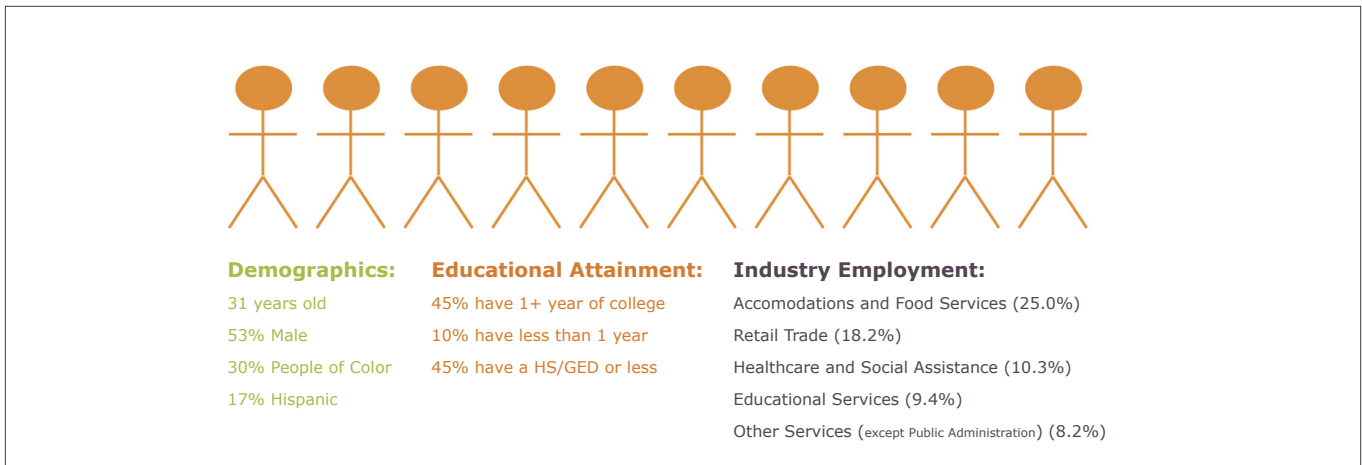
While some of these residents are children, the elderly and the chronically unemployed, a surprisingly large number of them are working adults:



These working poor adults typically have low levels of education and training:



The following diagram depicts some of the characteristics of Seattle’s working poor adults who have less than an AA degree:



What these charts portray is a “tale of two cities” in Seattle. We have – and continue to attract – a large number of highly-educated workers for a relative abundance of well-paying jobs. At the same time, we have a surprising number of people in Seattle who are poor, many despite the fact that they are working hard. This population could significantly benefit from more education and training that leads to college credentials and helps them compete for higher-wage jobs.

Source: numbers based on analyses of the American Community Survey 2009.

BEYOND THE HEADLINES: Policy & Labor Market Updates for Those Working to Help Low-Income and Low-Skill Individuals Advance through Education, Training & Living-Wage Jobs

About Seattle Jobs Initiative

Seattle Jobs Initiative creates opportunities for students, workers and business to succeed by helping education and job training programs meet the demands of a new economy. We find and apply solutions for people to gain the skills they need for good jobs that create prosperity for all in today’s marketplace.

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Contact Information

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