

BEYOND THE HEADLINES

At a Glance: Poverty Increasing in Seattle

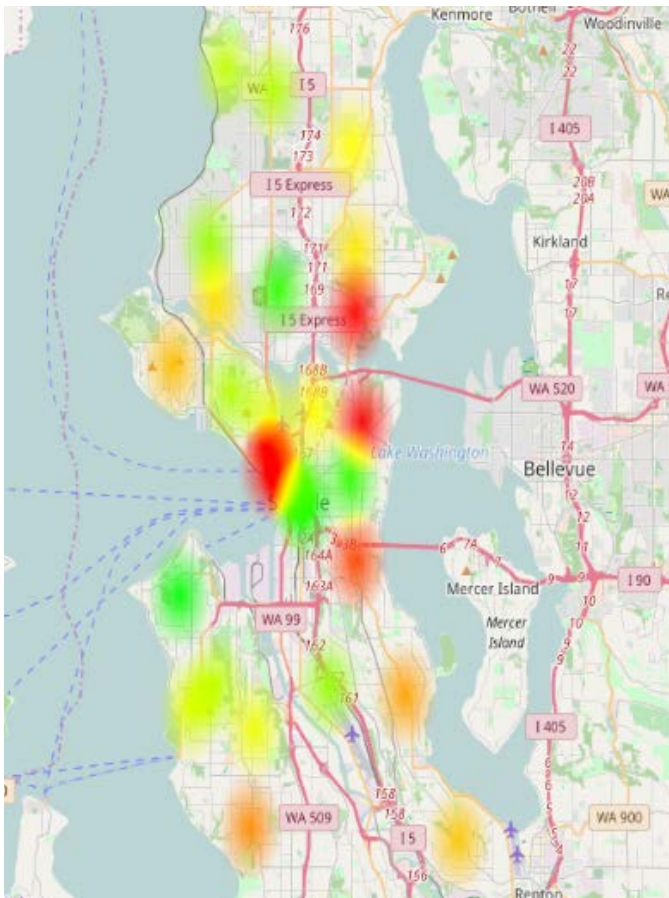
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FOCUS: POVERTY

Poverty Increasing Among Seattle Residents with Some College or an Associate's Degree

The number of individuals in Seattle who are living below poverty increased by 9 percent between 2012 and 2015 according to an analysis of Census data.¹ During this same period, there was an increase in individuals with some college or an Associate's degree living below poverty. In 2015, there were 134 per 1,000 individuals with some college or an Associate's degree living below poverty compared to 115 per 1,000 in 2012 (+19 per 1,000 individuals). This increase was greater than the increase seen among individuals with a high school diploma or less (+6 per 1,000 individuals) and bachelor's degree or higher (+1 per 1,000 individuals). Between 2012 and 2015, the rate of individuals with some college or an Associate's degree who are living below poverty increased in 22 out of 26 zip codes analyzed.

Individuals Living in Poverty in Seattle 2012 to 2015



A few notable zip codes are:

- 98121: An increase from 119 per 1,000 in 2012 to 225 per 1,000 in 2015 (+106).
- 98112: An increase from 87 per 1,000 in 2012 to 150 per 1,000 in 2015 (+63).
- 98105: An increase from 151 per 1,000 in 2012 to 213 per 1,000 in 2015 (+62).
- 98144: An increase from 106 per 1,000 in 2012 to 159 per 1,000 in 2015 (+53).

Changes in Rate Per 1,000 Living Below Poverty

-21 to +20 per 1,000 individuals

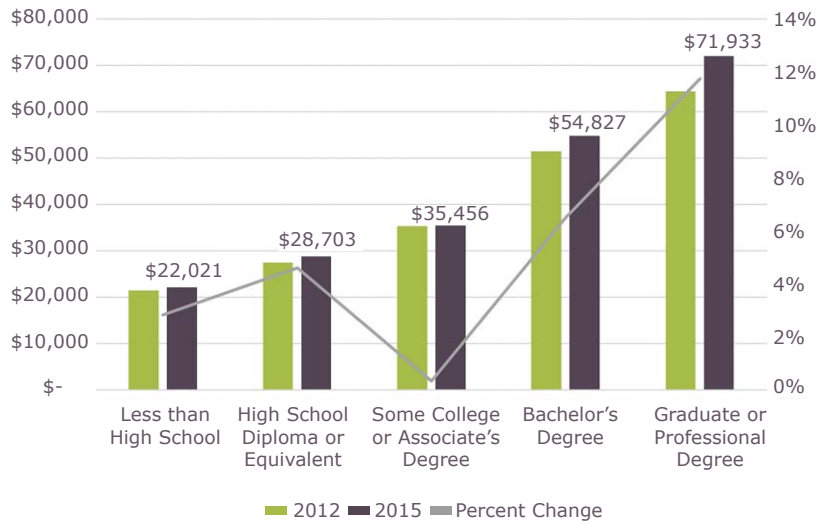
+21 to +62 per 1,000 individuals

+63 to +106 per 1,000 individuals

In 22 Seattle zip codes, the rate of individuals with some college or an Associate's degree living below poverty increased. Decreases in the rate living below poverty were reported in four zip codes.

Individuals with some college or an Associate’s degree also reported no increase in median earnings during this same period. This is a trend that occurred both nationally and in Seattle. That said, in 2015, the median earnings for individuals in Seattle with some college or an Associate’s degree were 5% greater than the national median. In 2015, individuals in Seattle with some college or an Associate’s degree reported median earnings of \$35,456 up slightly from \$35,340 in 2012. Nationally, individuals with some college or an Associate’s degree reported median earnings of \$33,820 in 2015 which is a minor decrease from \$33,857 in 2012.

**Median Earnings in Seattle by Educational Attainment
(among population 25 years of age and older with earnings)**



One explanation for these trends is that many individuals with some college or Associate’s degree are underemployed. A recent *Beyond the Headlines* discusses underemployment for individuals with a college education. In particular, it states “the problem is particularly pronounced for associate’s degree holders, who are underemployed at a rate of 37 percent.”ⁱⁱ **It is recommended that policymakers, educators, and school counselors identify ways to assist students in using labor market data to understand the value of a college major or career.** To avoid underemployment, students should be focused on acquiring the education and skills that meet the requirements of jobs that are in demand.

- i. U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2015 American Community Survey
- ii. To Avoid Underemployment Choose Associate’s Degree Wisely
Available at: <http://www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/beyond-the-headlines-underemployment/>

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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