

BEYOND THE HEADLINES

At a Glance: Jobs, Workers & the Economy



MAY 2013 | FOCUS: WASHINGTON STATE

New Data on Working Poor Families and Employment Conditions in Washington State

The Working Poor Families Project (WFPF) is a national initiative focused on strengthening state workforce development policies to help low-income working families advance to economic self-sufficiency. WFPF has recently released comprehensive new state-level data for its State Policy Assessment Reports that describe:

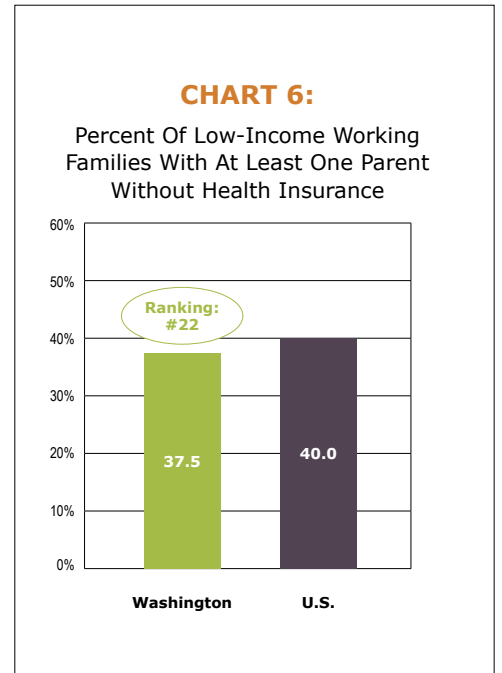
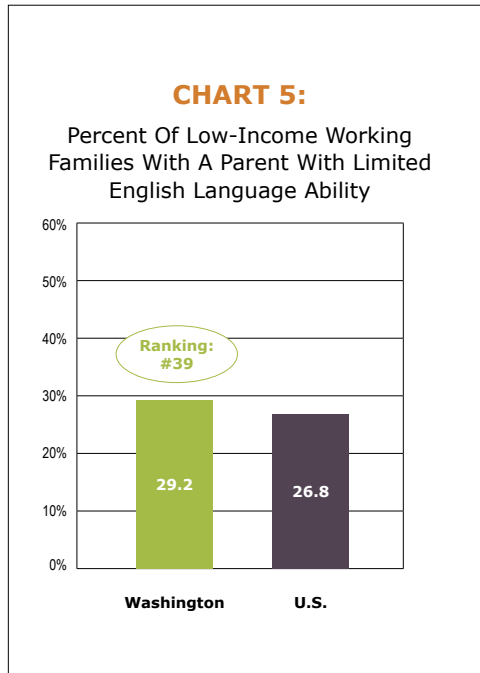
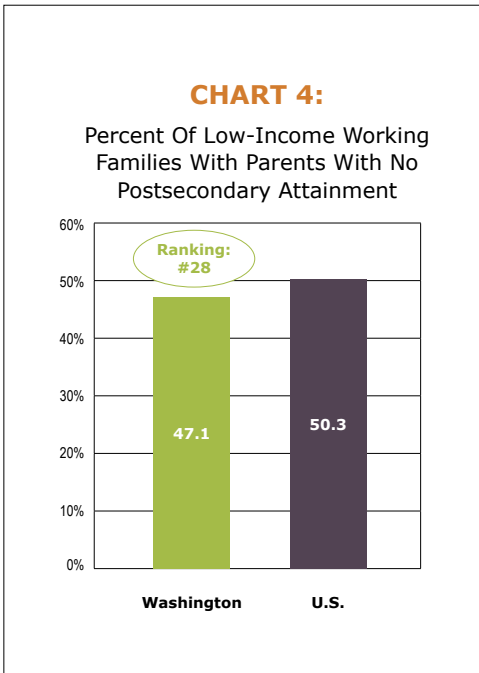
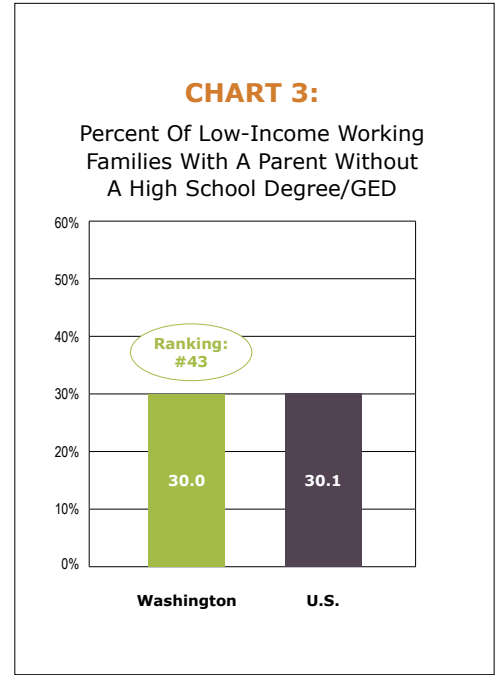
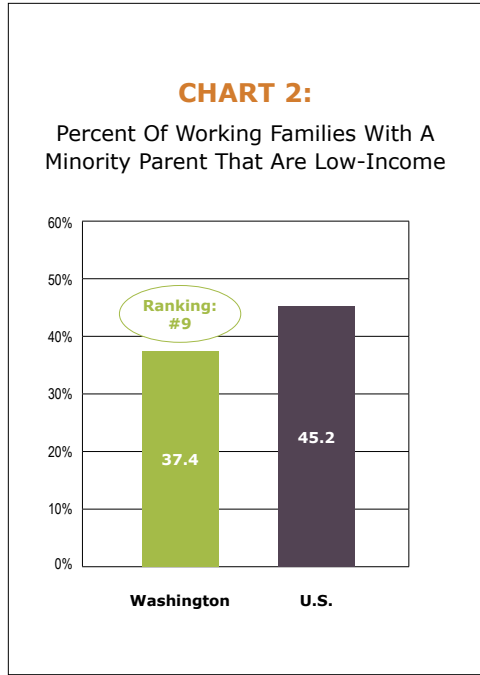
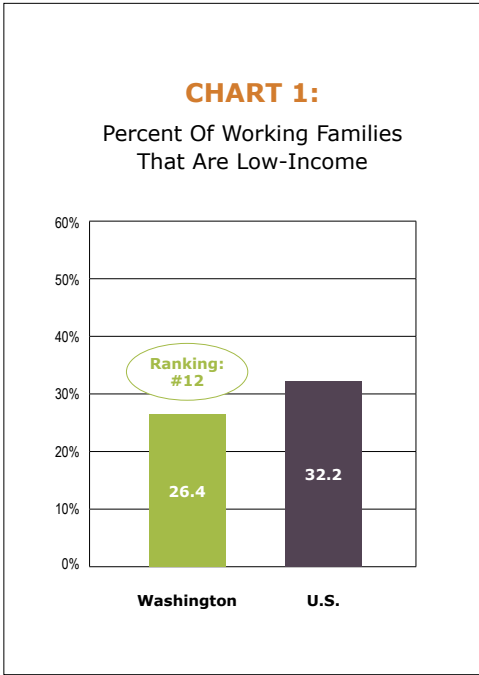
- **The conditions of low-income working families**
- **Education and skills training available to working adults**
- **Employment opportunities for entry-level and low-wage workers**
- **Conditions/employee benefits at existing jobs**

In this edition of *Beyond the Headlines*, we look at WFPF data for Washington with a specific focus on providing a snapshot of working poor families as well as relevant employment conditions in our state.

A Snapshot of Working Poor Families

The charts on the following page provide a picture of working poor families in Washington State. WFPF provides data for both “poor” (below the federal poverty level) and “low-income” (below 200% of the federal poverty level – equivalent to \$45,397 for a family of four – which is the threshold for many public assistance programs) families. Here we portray key indices for low-income families, and show Washington’s ranking among the states and a comparison to the U.S. as a whole for these indices. All data is for 2011, except for Chart 6 (2009-11).

Washington ranks fairly high in terms of the overall percentage of working families that are low-income. Compared to other states, however, a very high percentage of individuals in Washington with limited educational attainment (particularly those without a high school diploma) and limited English language ability are low-income.



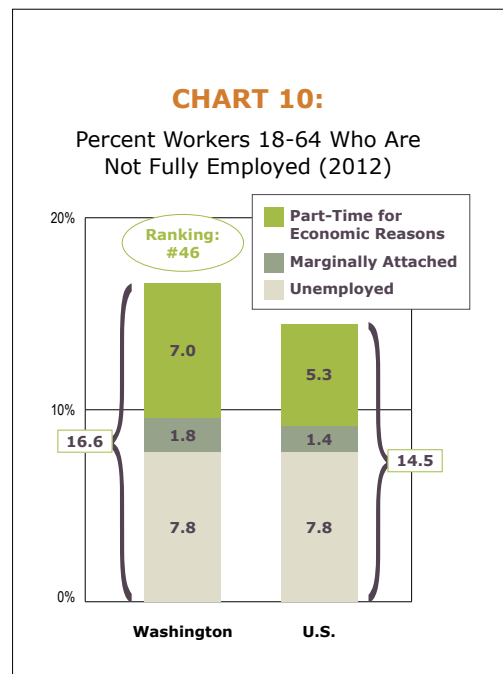
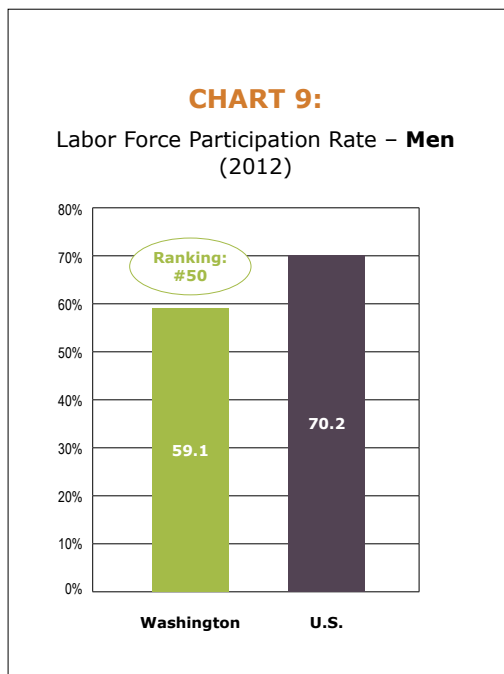
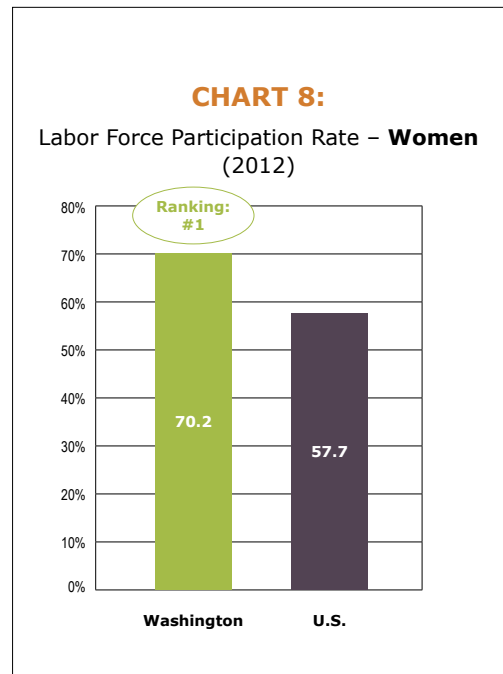
SOURCE, Charts 1-5: Working Poor Families Project, generated by Population Reference Bureau using American Community Survey Data (2011).

SOURCE, Chart 6: Working Poor Families Project, generated by Population Reference Bureau using 2010-2012 Community Population Survey, March Supplements.

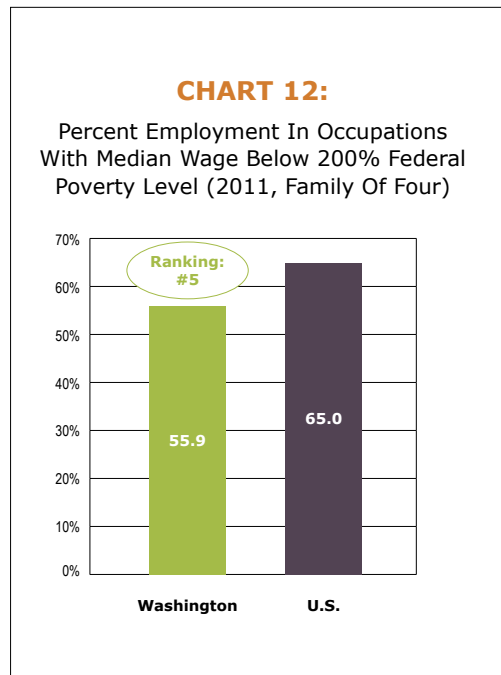
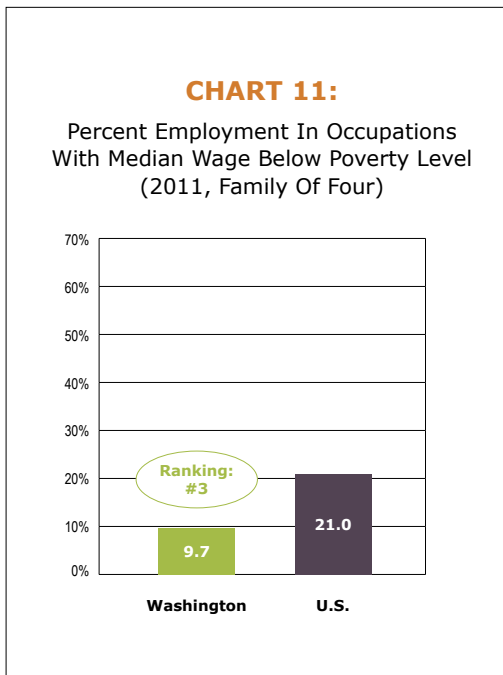
A Snapshot of Employment Conditions Relevant to Working Poor Families

The charts on the following pages provide some key employment data relevant to working poor families in Washington State. They illustrate some interesting facts about employment conditions, for example, the state

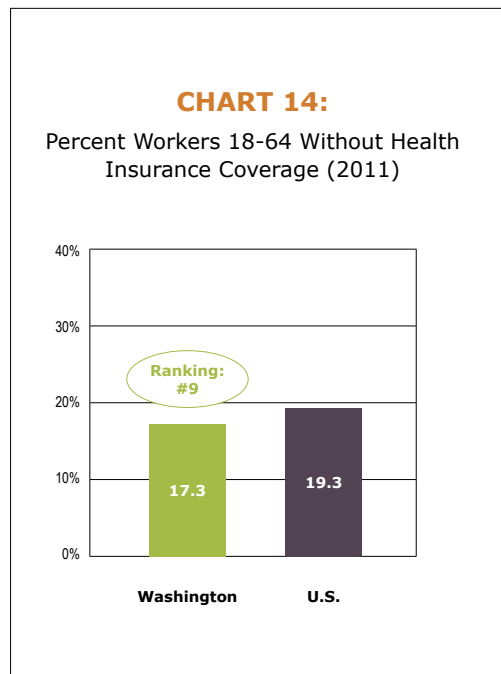
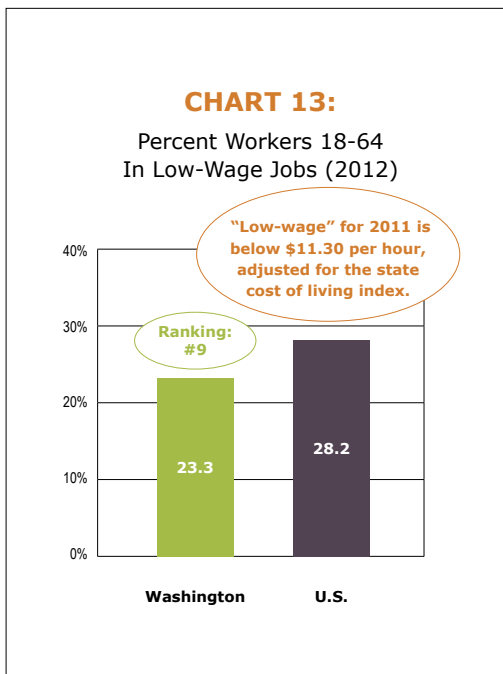
ranks first in terms of labor market participation among women; last in participation among men. It ranks nearly last among states in the percentage of individuals who are not fully employed, largely a result of a relatively high percentage of individuals working part-time for economic reasons. Washington ranks very high in terms of the percentage of total employment in occupations that pay above a poverty or low-income wage. Finally, while Washington has the highest minimum wage in the nation, it also places the largest tax burden on its low-income families among all fifty states.



SOURCE, Charts 7-10: Working Poor Families Project, generated by Population Reference Bureau using 2012 Basic Monthly, Community Population Survey.



SOURCE, Charts 11-12: Working Poor Families Project, generated by Population Reference Bureau using May 2011 Occupational Employment Statistics (Bureau of Labor Statistics).



SOURCE, Chart 13: Working Poor Families Project, generated by Population Reference Bureau using 2012 Basic Monthly, Community Population Survey.

SOURCE, Chart 14: Working Poor Families Project, generated by Population Reference Bureau using 2012 Community Population Survey, March Supplement.

Minimum wage:

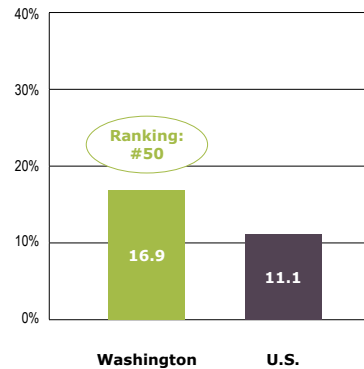
Washington is one of 21 states with a minimum wage that exceeds the federal minimum wage standard.

At \$9.19/hour, this is currently the highest minimum wage standard in the U.S.

SOURCE: Working Poor Families Project, using U.S. Department of Labor data (January 1, 2013).

CHART 15:

State Tax Burden For Working Families In The Bottom Quintile Of Income



SOURCE, Chart 15: Working Poor Families Project, using data from Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy, 2013.

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.

Supported by the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development

Contact Information

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