

# WISCONSIN JOBS AND LOW-INCOME WORKING FAMILIES

## Toward Stronger Standards, Skills, and Supports

Since the Great Recession began four years ago, the Wisconsin economy has been defined by economic turmoil, lost jobs and unemployment, home foreclosures, closing plants, and struggling companies. Economic collapse also ushered in both state budget deficits and political transitions that have resulted in dramatic changes in public-sector bargaining rights, equally dramatic resistance to those changes, and severe cuts in state programs that support working families.

And while the intense political fights may have attracted the most attention and press, less has been made of the state's working families who have faced the stress and strain of the economic collapse, the jobless recovery, and the cuts to supporting programs. This report focuses on the one in four working families in the state who earn too little to make ends meet and the tens of thousands of workers whose jobs provide low wages and few benefits. Many of Wisconsin's working families were struggling before the recession and these families have lost jobs, hours of work, and even the minimal stability they had before the recession. And families that had stability before the recession now find themselves in a similarly precarious situation. Though working, they struggle to pay bills, put food on the table, and to save money for medical or other life emergencies.

This report draws a more complete picture of these families. With data from the Working Poor Families Project and other sources, this report shows the very real economic price paid by the Wisconsin economy when so many workers can't make ends meet. It identifies the scale of the problem in the workforce and the opportunities for skill development that could help some of these workers move ahead. We also discuss the ways that recent policy changes have undermined, rather than strengthened, the position of these workers and their families.

The last four years have been difficult for families across the state, mirroring national trends. *Overlooked and Underpaid*, released by our partners at the Working Poor Families Project, shows that the number of working families that are low-income (income less than twice the poverty line) has steadily increased over the past three years in the United States to more than 10 million households. Forty-six million people live in these low-income families, 23 million of them children. Low-income working families now comprise nearly one-third of working families in the country. On the other end of the spectrum, the richest 20 percent of working families now take home nearly half of all income generated in the United States. But differences in outcome for working families in the United States do not stop there. Working families that are composed of at least one minority parent are twice as likely to be low-income (44 percent) than their white counterparts (22 percent). And analysis of the 2010 Census clearly demonstrates that place matters to the economic position of working families; low-income working families make up one-third or more of the working families in 21 states, most of which are in the South and West.

We know there are ways to help support workers, connecting them to the employers that need them and building economic opportunity and the state economy at the same time, so that families and children can thrive. We know how to do these things, but it seems that as times have become more difficult, leaders are deciding to do less when we need these policies and approaches even more. Moving the state forward in hard economic times requires greater attention to the neediest families, not less.

## Acknowledgements

This report was produced by COWS as part of the Working Poor Families Project (WPPF), a national initiative launched in 2002 to strengthen state policies that can assist families striving to work their way into the middle class and achieve economic security. The WPPF supports in-depth assessments of the economic conditions and state policies affecting working families and promotes actions to strengthen those conditions and policies.

WPPF is active in 22 states and the District of Columbia; COWS leads the project in Wisconsin. The project is managed by Brandon Roberts + Associates and supported by the Annie E. Casey, Ford, Joyce, and Kresge Foundations. More information on the project can be found online at [www.workingpoorfamilies.org](http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org).

Much of the data in this report was made available through federal census surveys, particularly the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Current Population Survey (CPS). Special thanks goes to the Working Poor Families Project for their compilation of updated outcome and policy indicators drawn from these and other sources. We also made use of *The State of Working Wisconsin 2010* and *The State of Working Wisconsin Update 2011*, produced by COWS. Finally, we relied on our friends at the Wisconsin Budget Project for timely and incisive analysis of state budget changes and their impact on low-income families in the state. Find them at [wisconsinbudgetproject.org](http://wisconsinbudgetproject.org).

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## Overlooked and Underpaid

To read more about low-income working families in the United States, see the Working Poor Families Project's policy brief, *Overlooked and Underpaid*, at: [www.workingpoorfamilies.org](http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org)

For a summary of the impact of the Wisconsin budget on working people and economic development, see: [www.cows.org/pdf/ds-BudgetTable.pdf](http://www.cows.org/pdf/ds-BudgetTable.pdf)

## STRUGGLING TO GET BY: WISCONSIN'S LOW-INCOME WORKING FAMILIES

In the U.S. economy, standards of living are determined to a large degree by jobs. This is not as true in other developed nations where health care is a right and standards on the structure of work – for instance, parental leave or vacation – are universal. Here, good jobs tend to come with decent benefits, predictable hours, vacations, and sick leave. Lower-wage jobs, however, rarely offer strong health or pension benefits. They often provide variable, low, and unpredictable (even “on call”) hours. Sick leave and paid vacations are the exception, not the rule. For low-wage workers, then, it isn't just that income is lower, but also that in numerous other ways, work is more difficult and less supportive of basic living standards and family life.

As a result, the connection to work is not sufficient to secure a decent standard of living for many working families. In this report we start with data from the Working Poor Families Project that provides comparable information on low-income working families for the nation and for each state. The data paints a stark picture.

In Wisconsin, more than one in four working families has income below two times the poverty line, a level defined as “low income” in this report, and a level below which researchers have consistently documented material struggles for family life. (For the definition of a low-income working family, please refer to the text box on the next page.) Further, fully 30 percent of children in the state live in these low-income families, meaning that the stress of low incomes, difficult work schedules, and lack of vacation or sick leave for parents increases the pressure felt by nearly one in three children, and their classmates and schools.

Commitment to work is not the issue for these families. Indeed, in Wisconsin, families are working more and harder than the national average. Fully three in four low-income families in the state showed substantial commitment to work, exceeding the national commitment (73 percent of low-income families working). And among those employed, Wisconsinites were more likely to hold multiple jobs, with 7 percent of working people holding more than one job, compared to 5 percent nationally. Labor force participation for women and minorities is especially high: 66 percent of Wisconsin women work (compared to 59 percent nationally) and 69 percent of non-whites in the state work (compared to 63 percent nationally). Women's labor force participation is seventh highest in the nation. Non-white participation is the third highest.

In spite of the strong commitment to work in the state, perhaps especially of non-whites, many families struggle. While 27 percent of all the state's working families were low-income, fully half of non-white families in the state fall into the low-income category. COWS has consistently documented extreme racial disparity in the state (see *The State of Working Wisconsin Update 2011* for information on unemployment, for example) and this is yet more evidence of the struggles of non-whites in the state. Indeed, Wisconsin does a bit better than the national average and ranks number 18 of all states for the share of working families that are low-income. But Wisconsin is at the back of the pack for non-whites with 41 states showing better outcomes for these families.

Table 1  
LOW-INCOME WORKING FAMILIES IN WISCONSIN AND THE UNITED STATES, 2009

	<i>Wisconsin</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>United States</i>
Labor Force Participation Rate*			
Overall	69.4%	12	64.7%
Women	65.6	7	58.6
Non-Whites	69.2	3	63.0
Percent workers over 18 who hold more than one job**	7.0	36	5.0
Percent working families that are low income	27.1	18	30.2
Percent all workers not fully employed**	14.7	21	16.6
Unemployed	8.5	26	9.4
Percent low-income families engaged in work	75.5	n/a	72.8
Percent working families with a minority parent that are low income	51.0	42	43.0
Percent children in low-income working families	31.4	18	35.0
Percent low-income working families spending over one-third of their household income on housing	59.3	26	61.0
Percent low-income working families with at least one parent without health insurance, 2007-2009 <sup>i</sup>	22.6	4	39.5
Percent workers 18 and older without employer-provided pensions, 2007-2009 <sup>i</sup>	52.0	2	58.6
Percent workers ages 18-64 without health insurance, 2009 <sup>ii</sup>	12.2	4	18.7

Source: Working Poor Families Project, data generated by:

\*Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 2010

\*\*Population Reference Bureau, analysis of Basic Monthly Current Population Survey, 2010

Population Reference Bureau, analysis of American Community Survey, 2009

<sup>i</sup>Population Reference Bureau, analysis of Basic Monthly Current Population Survey March 2008-2010 Supplements

<sup>ii</sup>Population Reference Bureau, analysis of Current Population Survey March Supplement, 2010

## Low-Income Working Families: A Definition

*Low-income families* are defined as those earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold. According to 2010 Census Bureau federal guidelines, a family of four was officially living in poverty if its annual income was less than \$22,113. Using the 200 percent gauge, that family is considered low-income if its earnings were less than \$44,226.

A *family* is defined as a married couple or single parent family with at least one child under 18 years of age. A family is considered to be a working family if, in the last 12 months, family members aged 15 and older show combined work effort of at least 39 weeks – or combined work effort of at least 26 weeks, plus one currently unemployed parent actively looking for work in the past four weeks.

Just as work doesn't necessarily secure decent income, it also does not necessarily secure health or pension benefits. Health insurance makes this insecurity clear. One in five adults among Wisconsin's low-income working families has no health insurance. To be clear, this level of coverage is fourth highest in the nation, owing both to Wisconsin's stronger tradition of employer provision of health insurance and our broadly available public health insurance, BadgerCare. Even with these strengths, 20 percent of working adults with children in low-wage jobs go without health insurance. And the share without health insurance is sure to rise in coming years given recent changes in policy for the BadgerCare program (more on this will follow).

Insecurity for families is high now and into the future as well. Pensions are not common in the low-wage labor market and just less than half of adults in low-income working families have access to a pension through their work. For these workers, Social Security, under constant policy threat at the national level, is the only resource available to support their retirement.

Low-income families in the state are also challenged by high housing costs, with Wisconsin performing essentially at the national average on this measure. Nearly 60 percent of all low-income working families in the state have housing costs that are considered "unaffordable" – that is, they require more than one-third of a family's income.

When families are economically stressed, the results for children can be devastating. Parents don't have the time or energy to look at homework. Parents don't have the flexibility to attend parent/teacher conferences. Parents don't have the money to invest in quality child care. Parents must choose between food for their children and rent or utility payments. Children may arrive at school with serious learning and language deficits from the start. Three of every ten children in the state of Wisconsin live in low-income families and face these stresses.

### 700,000 Wisconsin Adults Need Skills for Better Wages

As part of the RISE Initiative, COWS, working with partners from the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), has identified more than 700,000 Wisconsinites who are working or looking for work and need additional skills to get better jobs. Wisconsin can build a more productive economy by ensuring that these workers have the skills they need to connect with opportunity in their regions. (See Table 2 on next page.)

## WHAT TO DO? JOBS AND STANDARDS, SKILLS AND SUPPORTS

The data are clear: Wisconsin's working families are straining to make ends meet. The severe recession and weak recovery have deepened the serious problems of families in the state who were already struggling. One in four families, half of our minority families, and three in ten children in the state are living with low income. Wisconsin families need more good jobs, skills to move up, and help to obtain the health care and child care they need to stay healthy and safe. In the past, Wisconsin has supported these workers in many ways, but our commitment is shrinking even as the needs of these families are on the rise.

Policies to build stronger jobs, skills, and supports for Wisconsin's working families aren't just good for the families. They will also help build the state's economy. Wisconsin's economic strength will be built on the skills and productivity of its workforce. This report identifies more than 700,000 workers already in the labor market who could contribute more to the state economy if they had stronger skills and better connections to the employers that need those skills. For higher productivity in the long term, Wisconsin needs to continue to build the public systems that will allow workers to build the skills employers need.

Our agenda for working families requires and builds for the state:

1. More jobs that can support a decent living.
2. Stronger skills for working people.
3. Stronger supports for health care and child care so low-income workers and their families can thrive.

### 1. Growing Jobs, Quality Jobs

A large jobs deficit confronts Wisconsin. According to COWS' Labor Day report, more than 200,000 Wisconsin workers are still looking for jobs with more than one in 20 Wisconsin workers stuck in part-time jobs when they want full-time hours. And again, these hardships are most severely felt by the state's most vulnerable workers: fully one-third of the African-American workforce in the state is looking for work or holding a part-time job and wishing for full-time hours. It is little wonder that all politicians are talking about jobs in this context. Unfortunately, the talk about jobs has not closed the gap. Indeed, Wisconsin

Table 2

## THE WISCONSIN RISE TARGET POPULATION, 2010

<i>Wisconsin Adults Who Need Better Skills and Wages</i>	<i>Number</i>
Number of adults (ages 25-54) with no college credential and/or speak English “not well” or “not at all”	1,433,180
Number of those adults who worked last year	1,220,146
Number of those working adults with wages under \$10.63 per hour*	304,177
Number of those working adults with wages between \$10.63 and \$15.68 per hour*	369,503
Number of adults with no college degree and/or speak English “not well” or “not at all” who are unemployed**	35,195
<b>Total RISE Target Population:</b> Adults (ages 25-54) with no college credential and/or speak English “not well” or “not at all” who are earning less than \$15.68 or unemployed	708,875

\*\$10.63 is a poverty-level wage: workers who earn less than \$10.63 per hour cannot make enough money to keep a family of four out of poverty. \$15.68 is the median wage (2010 dollars).

\*\*These adults have not worked in the last 12 months; their employment status is “unemployed” though they are technically in the labor force.

*Demographics of the Wisconsin RISE Target Population***Race/Ethnicity**

548,971 white	30.0% of white adults in the labor force
60,277 black	53.1% of black adults in the labor force
69,625 Hispanic	64.5% of Hispanic adults in the labor force
30,002 other	38.3% of other adults in the labor force

**Gender**

341,812 men	30.0% of adult men in the labor force
367,063 women	36.7% of adult women in the labor force

**Geography**

15,146 in Madison	16.3% of adult labor force in Madison
108,133 in Milwaukee	47.2% of adult labor force in Milwaukee

Developed by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy for RISE

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010

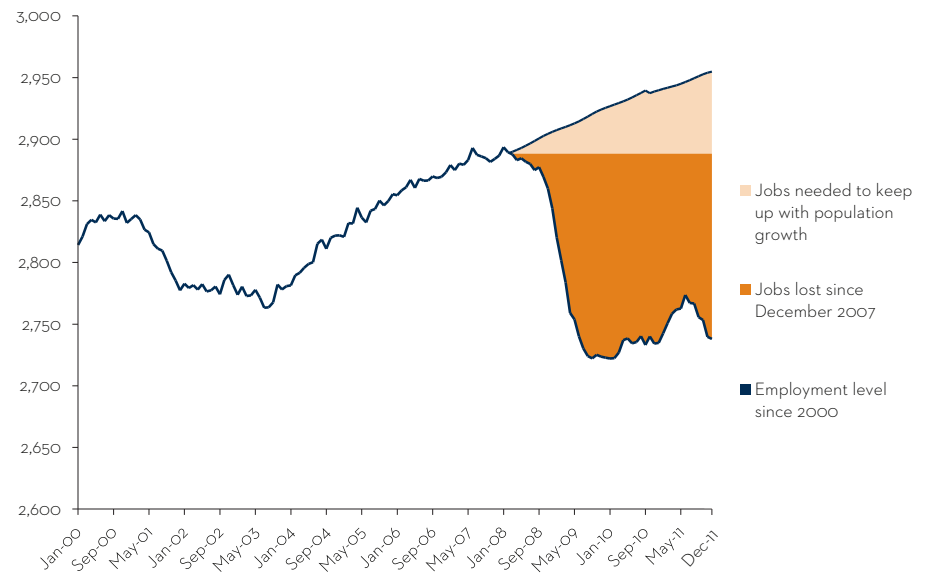
still has a jobs deficit of some 215,000 jobs, more than four years after the Great Recession began. (See Figure 1.) And Wisconsin lost jobs in each of the last six months of 2011.

The nation has produced more jobs over the recovery than Wisconsin, especially over the course of 2011. Unfortunately, national data shows not only that job production in this recovery remains anemic, but also that most of the jobs that have been created don't pay much. The picture of job loss and job recovery in this recession shows a loss of jobs in all pay categories. And the strongest growth in jobs has been mostly at the bottom of the pay scale. (See box on next page.) If this trend continues, this recovery will have created a substantial shift downward in terms of job quality in the nation.

Given the lack of quality jobs in this recovery, states must do all they can to both build jobs and secure and support job quality. Unfortunately, in Wisconsin, policymakers have undermined the quality of the very jobs they have the greatest influence over by reducing pay for the state's 388,000 public-sector workers. Due to wage and benefit changes passed in our most recent budget, public-sector workers are dealing with an average 8 percent income cut. But for workers at the bottom of the wage distribution – building custodians and other service workers – the pay cut can be well over 10 percent. Supporting low-income working families in this state includes supporting those who work for the state. And this is one area where Wisconsin has chosen the wrong direction for low-income working families.

Beyond the state's impact on public-sector jobs, the state has some influence on economic development and state strategies for building business. It is obvious that Wisconsin (like nearly all

Figure 1  
WISCONSIN'S JOBS DEFICIT THROUGH DECEMBER 2011



### Wisconsin Jobs Data

*Wisconsin Job Watch*, a monthly publication of COWS, provides a snapshot of Wisconsin's jobs picture and reports on key recession trends. The numbers provided in this report are based on seasonally-adjusted Bureau of Labor Statistics data compiled by the Economic Policy Institute ([www.epi.org](http://www.epi.org)). To review the reports, go here: [www.cows.org/jobwatch](http://www.cows.org/jobwatch)

*The State of Working Wisconsin Update 2011* provides data and analysis on the unemployed and underemployed in the state. The update is available in its entirety here: [www.cows.org/soww](http://www.cows.org/soww)

states) needs to close its jobs deficit. Doing so will be largely the product of national, and even international, economic forces. Even so, to the extent that state policy can influence job creation, Wisconsin needs to focus not only on building the base of jobs, but also consistently improving the quality of our jobs base. State policy can do this through building more accountability into our business subsidy programs, ensuring that jobs at decent wages come from the deals that are made at the state and local level. And state policy can consistently emphasize and encourage compliance with basic wage and safety standards in the labor market. At the bottom of the labor market, too many workers simply cannot expect that basic protections apply to them.

Building Wisconsin’s base of quality jobs will require attention to securing and expanding demand, while also ensuring that standards in our labor market are strengthened and extended upward. We outline key elements of this agenda below:

### RAISE AND INDEX THE MINIMUM WAGE FOR WISCONSIN

Currently, Wisconsin’s minimum wage mirrors the federal rate at \$7.25 per hour. Just two years ago, however, our minimum exceeded the national rate, and today eighteen states and Washington D.C. still have minimum wages that surpass the national rate. To help the wage stay relevant for living standards, it needs not only to be raised, but also to be indexed to keep up with inflation. Ten states already *annually update their minimum wages to the cost of living*. Such indexing protects working families and keeps the floor under the labor market strong.

This figure, from the National Employment Law Project (NELP), shows that not only is there still a significant jobs deficit, the jobs that have been created are mostly jobs that do not provide family-sustaining wages.

NET CHANGE IN OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT, DURING AND AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION



**Source:** NELP Analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Files, prepared by the Economic Policy Institute. See, *The Good Jobs Deficit: A Closer Look at Recent Job Loss and Job Growth Trends Using Occupational Data*.

**Note:** NELP defines the occupational breakdown as follows: lower-wage occupations earn median hourly wages ranging from \$7.51 to \$13.52 (in 2011 dollars), mid-wage occupations earn median hourly wages ranging from \$13.53 to \$20.66 (in 2011 dollars), and higher-wage occupations earn median hourly wages ranging from \$20.67 to \$53.32 (in 2011 dollars).

## STRENGTHEN THE ENFORCEMENT OF WAGE AND HOUR STANDARDS

Wisconsin could also increase resources devoted to *enforcing wage and hour standards* across the state to ensure that workers receive the wages due them, and to ensure that employers do not get a competitive advantage by breaking the law. The vast majority of employers operate well above reasonable and legal standards, but some bad actors routinely violate the law. When essential labor standards are overlooked or violated for any workers, labor standards are weakened for many workers. District Attorneys, community organizations, workers' centers, and other local and state leaders can actively support job quality by devoting resources to enforcing standards.

*Winning Wage Justice from the National Employment Law Project offers a comprehensive guide to fight wage theft in states and cities. [www.nelp.org](http://www.nelp.org)*

Another way to strengthen our basic labor standards is to *make it easier to identify employers that chronically violate them*. The state should shine a spotlight on chronic violators by gathering publicly available data on violations of occupational safety and health, wage and hour, and labor law. An online database could bring more attention to violators, providing important data for businesses, governments, or individuals, and providing extra incentive to keep worksites legal.

## REQUIRE AND MONITOR JOB QUALITY IN STATE ECONOMIC DEALS

*State grants, tax credits, and other supports* should reinforce the creation and viability of jobs which provide a decent standard of wages and benefits. State economic development leaders should carefully consider wage and benefit quality when extending grants, loans, training, or other supports. And the state should follow up to make sure that promised wage and benefit standards are being met or that, if they are not, resources are recouped via clawback provisions.

## FOCUS PUBLIC PURCHASING POWER ON JOB QUALITY

*Public-sector purchasing power* should also enforce and support job quality in the state. As certain segments of the public sector seek competitive bids for the provision of services, we should pay careful attention to the job quality offered by prospective providers. A low bid from a provider whose workers are likely to end up on Medicaid may actually cost the state more than a

higher bid from an employer offering better jobs. Further, the state should never contract with chronic violators of basic labor law.

## BUILD JOBS AND PURSUE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

*Increasing the energy efficiency of buildings* can create jobs and save the state money. The State of Wisconsin should be tracking the energy use in all the buildings it owns and leases, and should work to lower that use via improvements to buildings and their management. Doing so would create good jobs in the construction industry. The state should also make it easier for local governments, businesses, and homeowners to conduct energy efficiency improvements on their buildings, by providing technical assistance and financing. Not only would this create jobs, it would save energy and money.

*Making M.U.S.H. Energy Efficient from COWS explores the potential for energy efficiency upgrades in the governmental and institutional sectors. [www.cows.org/pdf/rp-MUSH.pdf](http://www.cows.org/pdf/rp-MUSH.pdf)*

## GET CREATIVE ABOUT JOB CREATION

During a recession, there is too little work to go around. But it is clear that there are needs everywhere that continue to go unmet. In the past, the government has stepped in as an employer to ensure that workers don't lose skills or hope while doing work that needed to get done. From cleaning our lakes and rebuilding our bridges to strengthening our communities, there is no less of that work needed today. And there are thousands of Wisconsinites who need the paycheck. The federal and state governments both need to think about programs that could provide work and strengthen our communities.

## 2. Building Skills for Stronger Opportunity and a Stronger Economy

Beyond the weak labor market and jobless recovery is a surprising fact that within the next decade, as baby boomers move into retirement, the annual growth in the labor force that helped propel the Wisconsin economy forward will grind to a near halt. Wisconsin companies will need to do more with the workers they have, rather than rely on new immigrants or entrants to fill vacancies. And doing more with the existing workforce will require building relevant skills in the workers who need them.



Supporting more education and skills for workers pays off for both firms and workers. Higher levels of education secure greater income for workers. (See Table 3.) This is truer today than it was a generation ago, as the payoff to postsecondary degrees has grown (both because college payoffs are growing, and wages for workers with less education are falling). Strong education systems with broadly equal access are a foundation for economic growth and family security.

Table 4 (next page) provides data on education levels, English language facility, and access to education in the state. As has been consistently documented, Wisconsin does well in ensuring that workers complete high school degrees, compared to national averages. In Wisconsin, just one in five (20 percent) low-income working families has a parent without a high school degree or its equivalent, compared to 30 percent nationally with this educational level. In Wisconsin, as in the United States, half of low-income working families have no parent with a postsecondary degree (including Associates or Bachelors degrees).

The table also shows that Wisconsin has fewer workers who are limited by their lack of facility with English than the national average. This should come as no surprise, given the relatively low share of immigrants in the state, compared to national levels. Even so, one in ten of Wisconsin's low-income working families likely need to build stronger English skills in order to secure more lucrative work.

Finally, in terms of postsecondary educational access and attainment, Wisconsin looks average or slightly above average. Forty-four percent of young adults in Wisconsin are enrolled in postsecondary education and just over half of first-year technical college students return for the second year of school, a measure where Wisconsin ranks 21st among states, suggesting at least standard levels of degree completion and enrollment. Wisconsin ranks 11th for the share of adults enrolled in training, which again demonstrates the strength and reach of the Wisconsin Technical College System.

Wisconsin has strong educational infrastructure and an established tradition of getting students through high school graduation. Our technical colleges and two- and four-year university system provide access to postsecondary degrees for a range of workers. This is strong infrastructure to build on, and we will need to do so in order to extend educational opportunity to the many workers who need it to make ends meet.

Table 3  
**MEDIAN WAGES AND SHARE OF WORKFORCE BY EDUCATION, WISCONSIN AND U.S., 2009**  
 (2009 dollars)

	<i>Wisconsin</i>	<i>United States</i>
<b>WAGE</b>		
Dropouts	\$ 9.16	\$10.01
High School	13.78	13.29
Some College, No Degree	12.87	13.44
Associate Degree	17.40	16.96
Occupational/Vocational	17.24	16.82
Academic	17.81	17.08
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	23.07	24.81
<b>SHARE</b>		
Dropouts	4.3%	8.7%
High School	29.9	28.4
Some College, No Degree	21.4	19.9
Associate Degree		
Occupational/Vocational	8.8	4.6
Academic	4.4	5.7
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	31.0	32.4
<b>SHARE WITHIN ASSOCIATE DEGREES</b>		
Occupational/Vocational	66.3%	44.8%
Academic	33.6	55.1

Source: COWS analysis of CPS ORG data.

Table 4

EDUCATION LEVELS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE FACILITY, AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ENROLLMENT IN WISCONSIN

	<i>Wisconsin</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>United States</i>
Percent low-income working families with at least one parent without a high school degree or G.E.D.	20.2%	13	31.3%
Percent low-income working families where no parent has some postsecondary education	48.4	22	52.2
Percent low-income working families with at least one parent that has difficulty speaking English very well	11.6	21	26.4
Percent young adults enrolled in postsecondary education	44.0	15	41.7
Percent first-year community college students returning second year*	53.0	21	n/a
Percent adults enrolled in postsecondary education at least part time**	6.5	11	7.0

Source: Working Poor Families Project, data generated by:

American Community Survey Microdata, 2009  
 Population Reference Bureau, analysis of American Community Survey, 2009  
 \*National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Measuring Up*, 2008  
 \*\*NCHEMS Information Center for Higher Education and Policymaking, 2009

ARE THERE ANY JOBS TO AIM AT?

While the labor market is weak and the jobs deficit significant, over the next ten years, using federal methodology, the state projects significant growth in specific occupations. Working with partners at DWD and WTCS, COWS has produced a list of key occupations that can provide opportunity to Wisconsin’s low-wage workers (see appendix). We have screened the state’s occupational projections, identifying those projected to produce a minimum of 50 average annual openings and with a 25th percentile hourly wage of at least \$11. Further, we limit our set to occupations that do not typically require a four-year college degree or experience in a related occupation. With these screens, we identify 109 critical occupations in the state which, taken together, are projected to produce an average of 21,180 openings each year over the next ten years.

Three occupations stand out for having projected annual openings greater than one thousand. Customer service representatives are projected to have 2,140 openings and a median hourly wage of \$14.96; registered nurses are projected to have 2,010 openings and a median hourly wage of \$29.73; and truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer, are projected to have 1,240 openings and a median hourly wage of \$18.22.

Building skills in Wisconsin that meet both workers’ and employers’ demands will require that leaders from the private and public sector continue to collaborate and innovate. Some elements of this program are already under way. Some elements will require the commitment of significant resources, unlikely in the present environment, but critical to the economic future of the state. Elements of a Wisconsin skills agenda include the following:

CONTINUE TO BUILD CAREER PATHWAYS IN WISCONSIN

Our economy will not prosper without an educated and skilled workforce. And our workers cannot get ahead in the workplace without higher-level training and skills. Fortunately, Wisconsin has already begun to build the infrastructure required to provide its workforce with the skills and education necessary to move into these occupations through the **Regional Industrial Skills Education (RISE) Initiative**. RISE focuses on the development and implementation of career pathways and career pathway bridges to educate and train adult workers in the skills demanded by employers offering good jobs. Career Pathways organize college-level occupational training as a sequence

of certificates that lead adult learners toward such jobs and a degree or technical diploma in attainable steps. Each step improves the learner's career and provides a skill set wanted by an industry or industry sector. Career Pathway Bridges help adults in need of basic skills or English Language Learning succeed in career pathways. Bridges consist of courses that link basic skills development with occupational skills development and accelerate the transition from pre-college to college-level work. Coupled with the supply-side focus of RISE, Wisconsin has built sector strategies which match industry leadership with support from multiple partners: industry and trade associations, organized labor, workforce development organizations, educational institutions, training providers, economic development groups, community-based organizations, local government agencies, and philanthropic foundations, to ensure that employers in key industry sectors can connect to employees with the skills they need to grow, and that job seekers and workers in these industry sectors receive the skills and training they need to secure good-paying jobs.

Building from the strong foundation for training already provided by our technical college system and other workforce system partners, RISE coupled with sector work is modernizing and strengthening Wisconsin's skill system.

### ENHANCE RESOURCES FOR SKILL BUILDING

Innovation is critical, but resources at key institutions for building skills are becoming scarcer. In this biennial budget, Wisconsin cut over \$70 million from the state's technical college system. The state will not be able to build skills for tomorrow while in pursuit of an agenda that cuts funding to education – in this budget, Wisconsin's cut was the second-largest in the country on a dollars-per-student basis. The skills required by the economy we should seek to build will require *increases in per-pupil spending* across the board including *investment in adult basic education*. For many working and unemployed adults, lack of basic math, literacy, and computer skills stand in the way of any opportunity to move toward family-supporting work. The state should invest more heavily in building this first rung toward decent jobs. Without this support, it is unclear how the state will ensure that low-wage workers will move up the rungs of a career ladder to obtain the better jobs required that provide family-supporting wages.

The state could better guarantee that working people get the skills they need to secure higher-paying jobs if it encouraged employers to offer *more workplace education*. One way to ensure that those who do not have the time or means to pursue skills development outside of work is to deliver technical college instruction at the workplace. This is also beneficial because instructors work with firms to link the instruction to actual jobs, so it is viewed by employers and workers as particularly relevant and practical.

Finally, the state should *make education more affordable*. According to the 2008 study *Measuring Up* by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, low-income families in Wisconsin need to spend over two-fifths (44 percent) of their income, even after aid, to attend a four-year public college or university. And financial aid ranks fairly low compared to top states – Wisconsin spends 62 cents for every dollar of Pell Grant aid. To make matters worse, the financial aid that is available is limited to those students who are enrolled at least half-time. For many working adults, especially those with children, carrying a half-time load is simply impossible. Were the state to make less-than-half-time students eligible for financial aid and expand financial aid to students pursuing short-term, non-degree courses, Wisconsin could help low-income working adults access and complete valuable training and programs at our technical colleges. In addition to expanding the pool of applicants eligible for financial aid, the state would also need to revisit its decision to freeze financial aid amounts (despite a 5.5 percent increase in tuition at all UW campuses) if it is to provide adequate support to working families so they are able to pursue the skills training that our economy needs.

### 3. Supporting Working Families: Current Policy Undermining Historic Strength

This year, Wisconsin celebrates the 100th anniversary of Workers Compensation and Apprenticeship. These programs were born in Wisconsin's progressive era and disseminated through the United States. Wisconsin has consistently been at the forefront of innovation on the sorts of programs that support workers and low-income working families. Even in the 1990s, Wisconsin developed innovative supports for families alongside its welfare reform. The state would both expect and support the work of families. Wisconsin Shares, which subsidizes child care for low-income families, and BadgerCare, which provides health insurance to low-income families, were designed in that era and have both been more progressive than many states in terms of the sorts of families included and the resources committed to benefits by the state. These programs are facing severe cutbacks in the current budget. Our Unemployment Insurance (UI) program has also been restructured to reduce benefits that workers will receive, and given budget deficits in the UI fund, further negative policy action is likely.

BadgerCare, Wisconsin's health care insurance program for the low-income uninsured, has long been nationally recognized for comprehensive provision of quality care. Currently, however, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is making sweeping changes to the policy that will have wide-ranging repercussions for those who depend on that care. DHS is pursuing three objectives: 1) a waiver of the federal "maintenance of effort" (MOE) requirements, 2) the narrowing of income eligibility for coverage if the MOE waiver is not granted, and 3) the creation of an "alternative benchmark plan" that would reduce benefits and increase copays for families who live above the poverty line. In every way then, the current approach of the state is to reduce the program, to make it more expensive for those who do stay on, and to move the state away from comprehensive health insurance.

These changes are at odds with federal health care reform law that stipulates that states must maintain their current standards concerning eligibility and enrollment. If DHS obtains the MOE waiver, more than 29,000 children and about 35,000 adults will lose health care coverage across the state. But even without the waiver, health care coverage for some of Wisconsin's low-income working families may still be in jeopardy. Language in the 2011-2013 budget directs DHS

#### Wisconsin Budget Project

The Wisconsin Budget Project is an initiative of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) engaged in analysis and education on the state budget and tax issues, particularly those relating to low- and moderate-income families. The budget project examines the biennial budget of the state, comparisons of the Wisconsin budget picture to other states, and federal budget issues. An invaluable resource, the Wisconsin Budget Project strives to make the state budget process and its attendant outcomes transparent and intelligible for the public and works to widen the debate on tax policy and budget priorities to include and empower the residents of Wisconsin.

[www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org](http://www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org)

to reduce the income limit for eligibility of parents and childless adults from 200 percent federal poverty level to 133 percent federal poverty level, beginning in July 2012, because the MOE waiver was not secured by the state's self-imposed deadline of December 31, 2011. DHS and the Walker Administration have indicated recently that they do not plan to implement this eligibility change, but the provisions remain in the budget should they choose to proceed at a later date. At the same time, DHS also seeks federal approval to change the amount of care provided to those whose family incomes are higher than the federal poverty line and to charge them higher copayments for the care they do receive with its formulation of an "alternative benchmark plan." The impact of such a change is startling – almost 263,000 BadgerCare recipients would be adversely affected by the new plan, and children will share this pain with their parents, as those adults use limited income to obtain emergency medical services or lose income altogether when they are too sick to go to work.

Wisconsin Shares, Wisconsin's program to help low-income working parents pay for the child care they need, is also undergoing restructuring that will leave more families and children in precarious situations. First, funding for the program fell by 2.5 percent in the current budget. And while this may sound like a minimal cut, it is truly a problem for children in the state. In part the cut seems small, because current demand for the program is down. The severe job losses of the Great Recession actually decreased demand for the program as parents who lost jobs were able to stay with their children. But as the economy grows, especially with the expansion of low-wage jobs, the ranks of families that need this subsidy will grow again. And access to quality child care will be in limited supply due to diminished support for the program.

Further, recent law also gave the Department of Children and Families (DCF) sweeping authority to alter the administration and management of the subsidy program, without consultation or input from legislators, consumers, providers, or experts. As a result, DCF has implemented a new mechanism to calculate the reimbursements rates due to family child care providers. Departing from payments based upon enrollment rates (i.e., the number of spaces or slots occupied by children, a method used by such programs as Head Start and used by public and private schools), the DCF has elected to base rates on hours of attendance as a way to cut costs of the program. Rather than save money, such a move merely shifts the costs of care to family child care providers themselves who will take a 7 to 8 percent pay cut. This reduction in reimbursement rates for family child

care providers will lead to diminished access to care for the working families who need it. Providers will no longer choose to provide care to children of low-income working families if the wage they earn in exchange does not match rates the market pays for the same kind of care. Absent fair and reasonable payment for work, family child care providers will opt to serve only those families who can afford care on their own, and not those who rely on a subsidy program that helps pay for care.

Finally, the state's Unemployment Insurance program has just instituted a one-week waiting period for benefits, a move that will reduce the benefits of this program for workers. This change is likely a harbinger of things to come in the Unemployment Insurance program, as the program is in a substantial deficit that will require increasing taxes paid into the program to support it or reducing the benefits workers receive from it.

The state's work support programs are critical to working families. Unfortunately, state budget pressure and political priorities are tearing at the structure and funding of these programs, even as families need them more than ever. Our policy agenda for work supports is simple: restore the cuts and put the resources back into health insurance, child care, and unemployment benefits programs. More can be done with these support programs, but for now, simply returning to their previous structure is critical.

## CONCLUSION

The Great Recession has unleashed a torrent of unpredictable economic and political forces across the globe. Wisconsin has been awash in the flood. Too often forgotten in the intensity of our politics, our working poor families have actually suffered the brunt of the storm, not only losing jobs and facing precarious employment, but also losing benefits on the job and watching as resources to support the working poor have been pulled away by the state. The suffering of specific communities – our African-American community, manufacturing towns, construction workers – has been intense. It is time now to find a way, as impossible as it seems, to work as a state to relieve the suffering in those communities and build a real future for our economy and all our children.

## APPENDIX: KEY MIDDLE SKILL OPPORTUNITIES IN WISCONSIN

Developed by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy for RISE  
November 1, 2011

This list was compiled from Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) data screened for jobs that are projected to have a minimum of 50 openings per year (2008-2018), a 25th percentile hourly wage of at least \$11,<sup>1</sup> and do not typically require a 4-year college degree or experience in a related occupation (excluding almost all supervisory and managerial positions).

### SUMMARY

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Number of Occupations</i>	<i>Estimated Average Annual Openings<sup>2</sup></i>
Clerical and Sales	20	5,400
Health Care	19	4,930
Manufacturing	29	4,040
Logistics	9	2,630
Construction and Utilities	15	2,190
Other	13	1,990
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>21,180</b>

### DETAIL

<b>SOC Code</b>	<b>Occupational Title</b>	<b>Est. Avg. Annual Openings</b>	<b>Typical Education and Training Path<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Estimated Wage (25th-75th Percentiles)</b>		
				<b>25th<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>50th<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>75th<sup>6</sup></b>
<b>Clerical and Sales</b>						
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	2,140	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$12.28	\$14.96	\$18.59
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	570	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$12.64	\$15.34	\$18.41
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	410	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.81	\$14.39	\$17.38
43-6014	Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	380	Postsecondary vocational training	\$12.69	\$14.94	\$17.62
15-1041	Computer Support Specialists	250	Associate degree	\$16.43	\$20.23	\$24.65
43-3021	Billing and Posting Clerks and Machine Operators	210	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.16	\$15.29	\$17.90
13-1031	Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	190	Long-term on-the-job training	\$20.03	\$25.56	\$32.28
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	180	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$15.82	\$19.51	\$24.41
43-3011	Bill and Account Collectors	170	Short-term on-the-job training	\$12.53	\$14.72	\$17.39
43-9041	Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	110	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.34	\$15.46	\$18.80
43-4131	Loan Interviewers and Clerks	110	Short-term on-the-job training	\$13.05	\$15.46	\$18.53

SOC Code	Occupational Title	Est. Avg. Annual Openings	Typical Education and Training Path <sup>3</sup>	Estimated Wage (25th-75th Percentiles)		
				25th <sup>4</sup>	50th <sup>5</sup>	75th <sup>6</sup>
43-4199	Information and Record Clerks, All Other	110	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.59	\$15.33	\$18.92
43-4161	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	100	Short-term on-the-job training	\$14.75	\$17.36	\$20.33
43-3051	Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	100	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.93	\$16.72	\$19.59
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	80	Associate degree	\$16.49	\$20.06	\$24.77
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	80	Postsecondary vocational training	\$13.63	\$18.44	\$31.34
41-3011	Advertising Sales Agents	60	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.46	\$18.23	\$25.09
43-6012	Legal Secretaries	50	Postsecondary vocational training	\$14.80	\$17.44	\$21.27
43-3061	Procurement Clerks	50	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$14.13	\$16.92	\$19.64
43-5111	Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	50	Short-term on-the-job training	\$12.06	\$14.71	\$17.32
<b>Health Care</b>						
29-1111	Registered Nurses	2,010	Associate or Bachelor's degree	\$25.73	\$29.73	\$34.74
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	490	Postsecondary vocational training	\$17.01	\$19.29	\$22.25
31-9092	Medical Assistants	320	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$12.77	\$14.44	\$16.39
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	300	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$11.12	\$13.22	\$15.33
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	260	Postsecondary vocational training	\$11.78	\$14.11	\$17.34
31-9091	Dental Assistants	240	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.72	\$15.97	\$18.38
29-2021	Dental Hygienists	200	Associate degree	\$26.64	\$29.37	\$32.25
31-9099	Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	150	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.79	\$13.75	\$15.86
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	140	Associate degree	\$21.71	\$24.97	\$29.01
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	130	Postsecondary vocational training	\$18.47	\$21.23	\$24.44
29-2071	Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	130	Associate degree	\$13.09	\$16.50	\$20.44
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	90	Associate degree	\$22.46	\$25.72	\$29.24
29-2099	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	90	Postsecondary vocational training	\$16.30	\$20.89	\$27.18

SOC Code	Occupational Title	Est. Avg. Annual Openings	Typical Education and Training Path <sup>3</sup>	Estimated Wage (25th-75th Percentiles)		
				25th <sup>4</sup>	50th <sup>5</sup>	75th <sup>6</sup>
29-2012	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	90	Associate degree	\$16.19	\$19.15	\$22.58
49-9062	Medical Equipment Repairers	70	Associate degree	\$17.73	\$23.71	\$30.16
31-9094	Medical Transcriptionists	70	Postsecondary vocational training	\$14.01	\$16.00	\$18.17
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	50	Associate degree	\$19.22	\$21.80	\$24.53
19-4099	Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other	50	Associate degree	\$15.86	\$19.99	\$24.28
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	50	Associate degree	\$12.71	\$14.83	\$17.78
<b>Manufacturing</b>						
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	460	Postsecondary vocational training	\$15.22	\$17.75	\$20.48
49-9042	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	460	Postsecondary vocational training, apprenticeship	\$14.18	\$17.97	\$21.99
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	290	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$11.78	\$15.05	\$18.82
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	240	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$16.02	\$19.39	\$22.81
51-4041	Machinists	240	Postsecondary vocational training, apprenticeship	\$14.89	\$18.71	\$23.31
51-4072	Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	210	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$11.15	\$13.64	\$16.96
51-4031	Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	190	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$12.77	\$15.57	\$18.22
51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	180	Postsecondary vocational training	\$13.72	\$16.70	\$19.71
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	170	Postsecondary vocational training, apprenticeship	\$18.36	\$21.82	\$25.57
51-5023	Printing Machine Operators	140	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$14.33	\$17.70	\$21.99
51-9121	Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	130	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.12	\$16.03	\$19.01
51-9023	Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	110	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.39	\$16.40	\$20.69
51-2022	Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers	110	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.23	\$13.99	\$17.27
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers	100	Long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship	\$17.27	\$23.94	\$31.79



SOC Code	Occupational Title	Est. Avg. Annual Openings	Typical Education and Training Path <sup>3</sup>	Estimated Wage (25th-75th Percentiles)		
				25th <sup>4</sup>	50th <sup>5</sup>	75th <sup>6</sup>
51-9032	Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	100	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$12.65	\$15.24	\$18.25
51-4081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	90	Postsecondary vocational training	\$13.01	\$16.09	\$18.90
17-3013	Mechanical Drafters	80	Postsecondary vocational training	\$18.04	\$22.17	\$26.92
51-4122	Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	80	Postsecondary vocational training	\$14.39	\$17.01	\$19.59
51-4033	Grinding, Lapping, Polishing, and Buffing Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	80	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$12.06	\$14.72	\$17.92
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	70	Long-term on-the-job training	\$17.64	\$20.94	\$24.66
51-2041	Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	70	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$15.71	\$18.22	\$20.84
51-9041	Extruding, Forming, Pressing, and Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	70	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$11.66	\$15.14	\$18.32
53-7063	Machine Feeders and Offbearers	70	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.05	\$13.53	\$16.25
51-9012	Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	50	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$15.01	\$18.62	\$22.63
51-4034	Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	50	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$14.46	\$17.58	\$20.74
51-4194	Tool Grinders, Filers, and Sharpeners	50	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$14.64	\$18.24	\$21.75
49-9099	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	50	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.12	\$17.90	\$23.66
51-2023	Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers	50	Short-term on-the-job training	\$12.27	\$15.54	\$19.62
51-5011	Bindery Workers	50	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.03	\$13.86	\$17.62
<b>Logistics</b>						
53-3032	Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	1,240	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$14.94	\$18.22	\$22.81
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	510	Short-term on-the-job training	\$12.61	\$15.03	\$17.94
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	290	Postsecondary vocational training	\$13.14	\$17.33	\$22.23

SOC Code	Occupational Title	Est. Avg. Annual Openings	Typical Education and Training Path <sup>3</sup>	Estimated Wage (25th-75th Percentiles)		
				25th <sup>4</sup>	50th <sup>5</sup>	75th <sup>6</sup>
47-4051	Highway Maintenance Workers	170	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$16.32	\$19.07	\$21.67
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	140	Postsecondary vocational training	\$15.68	\$19.06	\$23.04
49-3021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	100	Long-term on-the-job training	\$14.38	\$17.60	\$20.87
43-5032	Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance	70	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.52	\$16.47	\$20.32
53-3021	Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	60	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.45	\$19.92	\$22.67
43-5031	Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers	50	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$16.76	\$19.01	\$21.61
<b>Construction and Utilities</b>						
47-2031	Carpenters	380	Long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship	\$15.33	\$18.84	\$25.27
47-2111	Electricians	340	Long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship	\$19.89	\$24.91	\$30.02
47-2061	Construction Laborers	220	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$14.44	\$19.18	\$23.86
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	210	Long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship	\$16.54	\$19.65	\$25.02
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	200	Long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship	\$21.76	\$29.94	\$36.02
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	170	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$19.49	\$24.80	\$29.76
47-2141	Painters, Construction and Maintenance	120	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.55	\$17.10	\$23.07
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	100	Long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship	\$23.79	\$28.66	\$32.56
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	90	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$16.90	\$21.72	\$28.26
49-2022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	70	Postsecondary vocational training	\$17.46	\$24.44	\$28.32
51-7011	Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	70	Long-term on-the-job training	\$12.33	\$14.77	\$17.61
47-2021	Brickmasons and Blockmasons	60	Long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship	\$20.39	\$27.98	\$31.93
17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians	60	Associate degree	\$19.69	\$24.20	\$29.49
17-3026	Industrial Engineering Technicians	50	Associate degree	\$17.85	\$20.72	\$25.27

SOC Code	Occupational Title	Est. Avg. Annual Openings	Typical Education and Training Path <sup>3</sup>	Estimated Wage (25th-75th Percentiles)		
				25th <sup>4</sup>	50th <sup>5</sup>	75th <sup>6</sup>
47-2181	Roofers	50	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$13.94	\$18.11	\$24.00
			<b>Other</b>			
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	360	Long-term on-the-job training	\$21.01	\$25.50	\$29.80
43-5052	Postal Service Mail Carriers	310	Short-term on-the-job training	\$18.05	\$24.00	\$26.42
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	280	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$11.44	\$14.65	\$17.97
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	180	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$17.97	\$20.79	\$23.81
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	160	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.28	\$14.49	\$18.01
13-1041	Compliance Officers, Except Agriculture, Construction, Health and Safety, and Transportation	130	Long-term on-the-job training	\$17.88	\$22.66	\$29.71
43-4111	Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan	130	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.37	\$13.26	\$15.14
51-3021	Butchers and Meat Cutters	100	Long-term on-the-job training	\$11.59	\$15.29	\$18.84
51-8031	Water and Liquid Waste Treatment Plant and System Operators	90	Long-term on-the-job training	\$16.44	\$19.85	\$23.39
53-7081	Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors	90	Short-term on-the-job training	\$11.37	\$16.27	\$19.86
27-4021	Photographers	60	Long-term on-the-job training	\$11.42	\$14.06	\$23.27
27-3091	Interpreters and Translators	50	Long-term on-the-job training	\$14.33	\$19.06	\$24.23
31-9011	Massage Therapists	50	Postsecondary vocational training	\$11.50	\$16.76	\$22.32

## Notes

(1) The \$11/hour screen eliminates occupations in which a quarter or more of workers are earning poverty-level wages. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a family of four lives in poverty if their annual income is less than \$22,113 (2010). To live in “poverty,” then, means to survive on wages that scarcely support even the most minimal standard of living – anything less than \$10.63/hour for year-round, full-time work.

(2) **Total Openings** are the sum of new jobs and replacements, and indicate how many new people are needed to enter a given occupation. Replacements are an estimate of the number of job openings expected because people have permanently left a given occupation. Permanent exits occur if someone dies, retires, or otherwise leaves the labor force. Openings resulting from people changing employers, but those who stay in the same occupation are not included. Permanent exits also include openings resulting from someone permanently changing occupations. For example, a person leaves their job as a cashier and becomes a truck driver.

(3) **Typical Education and Training Path** gives a general indication of the education or training typically needed in a given occupation. There may be other pathways into the occupation, as well as additional educational, training, or licensing requirements. In those set off by italics, the Wisconsin case differs from the standard BLS description by including postsecondary vocational training and/or specifying apprenticeship.

**Short-Term On-the-Job Training:** These occupations require no more than one month of on-the-job training and the training usually happens at the workplace.

**Moderate-Term On-the-Job Training:** Training for these occupations usually occurs at the workplace and lasts from one to twelve months.

**Long-Term On-the-Job Training:** These occupations require more than one year of on-the-job training, or combined work experience and classroom instruction.

**Postsecondary Vocational Training:** These formal training programs last from a few weeks to more than a year, and are offered at vocational or technical schools.

**Associate Degree:** This degree requires two years of full-time academic work beyond high school.

(4) **25th Percentile Wage:** 25 percent of workers earn less than this wage.

(5) **50th Percentile Wage (median):** 50 percent of workers earn less than this; 50 percent earn more.

(6) **75th Percentile Wage:** 75 percent of workers earn less than this wage.