

Goal #5: Education and Job Skills to Lead an Independent Life

Why is this Goal Area Important?

Education, job skills and childcare, in addition to the economic climate, contribute to a person's ability to find employment. Despite Washington having the highest minimum wage in the country, Bellevue residents require strong earnings in order to be self-sufficient. In order to get living wage jobs, laborers must possess significant education or job skills. The current economic crisis has highlighted the need for an advanced education as well as the limited number of positions available in King County that offer living wages. Affordable, quality childcare is also an important component for families so they can work and provide for their families.

What's Working?

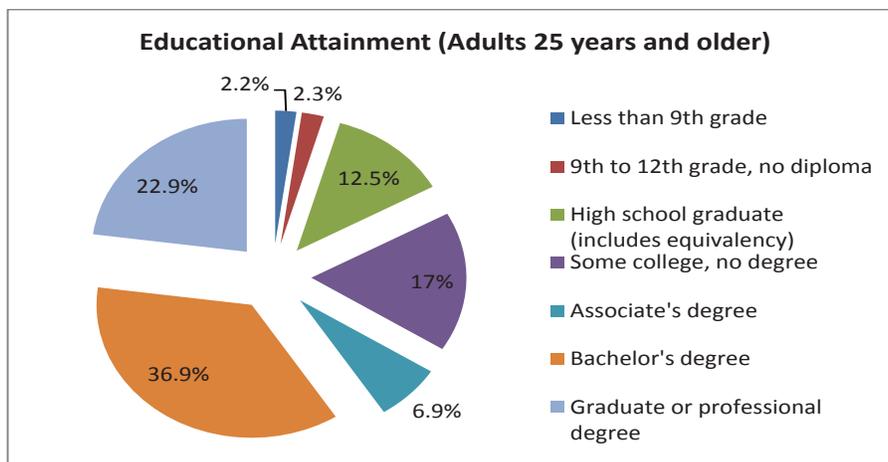
- East King County participants in the Washington State WorkFirst program surpassed State averages in job search placements, earnings progression, job retention and exits to employment.¹

- Eighty-nine percent of adults enrolled in Bellevue College's ESL Preparation for Work classes improved their speaking and listening skills, and 85% improved their writing skills.

Employment and Training Prevalence

Educational Attainment, Age and Gender Effects on Income

- King County is one of the most highly educated communities in the country: nearly 45% of County residents hold a bachelors degree or higher and almost 92% have graduated from high school.² In Bellevue, the percentage of adults age 25 and older who had earned a bachelors degree or above was 59% according to 2006-2008 ACS estimates, an increase from 54% in 2000, and 95% graduated from high school, up one percent from 2000.³



Source: 2006-2008 American Community Survey, "City of Bellevue, WA".

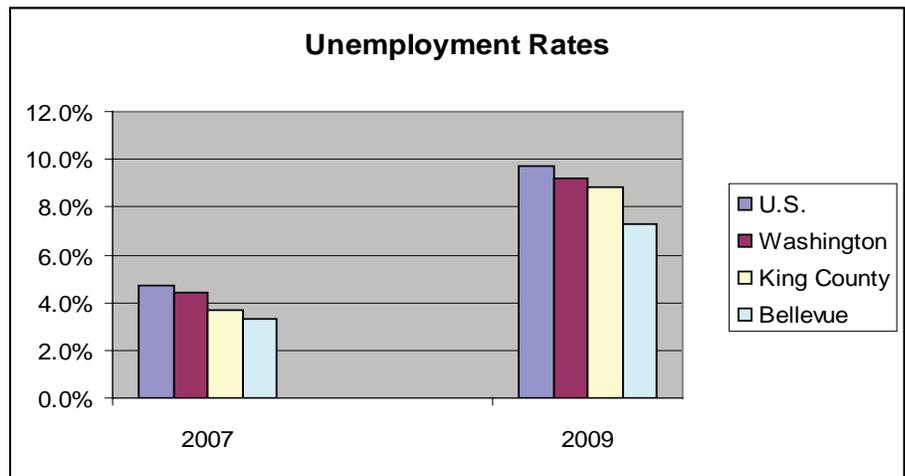
- Enrollment in WorkFirst employment based training and community or technical college training has increased over the past two years.

- The chart on the next page shows the pay benefits and lower unemployment rate that can result from higher levels of educational attainment on a national basis in 2008 before unemployment rates began to dramatically increase.⁴

- On average, women take an 18% cut in pay for taking two years off from work in order to care for children or other family members; women in the business sector take a 28% cut.⁵ According to a study by Columbia University, women who are mothers earn 27% less than men, and single mothers earn as much as 44% less.
- The aging of the population has enormous implications for the workforce. As large numbers of employees retire within a relatively short time-span, they will be taking with them a great deal of knowledge and experience, possibly affecting firms' productivity. Specifically, workers between the ages of 45 and 54 made up nearly 14% of all job holders in 1990, but that portion jumped to nearly 22% in 2005.⁶ Additionally, in 2007, workers older than 55 make up 15% of the workforce. In King County, the two youngest age groups (14-24 and 25-34) are decreasing while the mid-aged job holders have retained a similar portion of all job holders over time. This means that there will be a smaller number of workers in the pipeline to replace retiring workers.

Unemployment Increases at the National, State, County and City Level

- The Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) reports that Washington has experienced an increase in the unemployment rate over the past two years.⁷ ESD estimates that in September 2009, 9.3% of the state population was unemployed and seeking work. In June 2007, it was 4.4%. King County's rate in September 2009 was 8.8% compared to 3.7% two years ago. Bellevue's unemployment rate in September 2009 was 7.2% compared to 3.3% two years ago.⁸ Nationally, the unemployment rate is 9.8% compared to 4.7% two years ago.⁹



Sources: Washington State Employment Security Department. (2009, July). Labor Market and Economic Analysis Report, U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics. (2009, September). City of Bellevue labor force, employment, unemployment, and unemployment rate estimates from 1999 to September 2009.

Unemployment rate in 2008 (Percent)	Education attained	Median weekly earnings in 2008 (Dollars)
2.0%	Doctoral degree	\$1,555
1.7%	Professional degree	\$1,522
2.4%	Master's degree	\$1,228
2.8%	Bachelor's degree	\$978
3.7%	Associate degree	\$736
5.1%	Some college, no degree	\$645
5.7%	High-school graduate	\$591
9.0%	Less than a high school diploma	\$426

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics. (2009) Current Population Survey.

Note: Data are 2008 annual averages for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.

- A recent report from the Human Services Policy Center concludes that with the unemployment rate in Washington State surpassing nine percent, an additional 37,000 children are expected to enter poverty in 2009.¹⁰ Children living in poverty have lower birth rates, are more likely to lack health insurance, have poor health outcomes, and have less access to quality early learning experiences.¹¹ Recent estimates are that children who

grow up in poverty cost the U.S. at least \$500 billion annually in the form of decreased economic output as adults, involvement with crime, and the costs associated with poor health outcomes. Washington's share of this loss is \$8.7 billion.¹²

Unemployment Assistance Provides Support

- Unemployment insurance is calculated based on a percentage of an individual's past year's earnings rather than financial need. Therefore, individuals who were working low-paying jobs before unemployment often fall deeper into financial hardship while unemployed. As of 2007, for 56% of claimants, unemployment insurance makes up the majority or entirety of their income, down 14% from 2005.¹³
- In Washington State, initial unemployment insurance claims increased to 15,951 in the last week of November 2009, from 6,553 in the last week of June 2007, a 143% increase.¹⁴
- Studies have shown that people on unemployment benefits spend their money on the basics, with nearly 70% going to food, housing and transportation.¹⁵ As a result of having unemployment insurance, the amount of money an unemployed household spends on food decreases 7%, but would decline a total of 22% without benefits. In 2007, Washington unemployed households spent two thirds of their income on food, housing and transportation.¹⁶

Recent and Future Job Market

- In April of 2009, there were 32,635 job vacancies statewide, down 63% from the 87,447 vacancies available in 2007.¹⁷ In King County, the number of job vacancies reported in April 2009 was 13,868, down 65% from 40,158 in April of 2007. The median wage offered for vacant positions in King County is \$11.00, down from \$11.56 in 2007. Not only are there significantly less jobs available in King County, they also pay less than they did two years ago.

- In Washington State, registered nurses and retail employees were the occupations with the greatest number of vacancies.¹⁸ Compared to years past, around 50% of job openings do not require education beyond high school/GED. This is illustrated in the fact that 70% of job vacancies pay less than \$15.00; only eight percent of vacancies were for positions offering \$30.00 or higher.
- While the increase in Bellevue's population has been vigorous over the past few decades, the increase in the number of jobs located in Bellevue has been even greater. In 1970, Bellevue had about 61,000 residents and about 21,000 jobs (a ratio of about 1 job to 3 residents). By 2008, Bellevue had substantially more jobs than residents (a ratio of about 6 jobs to 5 residents).¹⁹ In 2008 employment was at 142,345 and the population had grown to 120,600. Current City forecasts for 2030 are 148,400 in population and 193,000 in jobs.
- Some industries are more likely to have a "last person hired is the first person laid off" response to business downturns. Such industries will naturally select against keeping young workers long enough for those workers to become middle age workers in the industry. Responding to this issue by repeatedly training fresh batches of young workers would not address this kind of structural issue.²⁰

Minimum Wage vs. Living Wage

- Washington State's minimum wage in 2009 is \$8.55, the highest in the country.²¹ However, an adult making the minimum wage and supporting two children is under the federal poverty level (FPL), \$18,310 for a family of three.²²
- A living wage is often defined as the minimum income that is needed to purchase the basic necessities without assistance from public programs. Living wage calculations often include the cost of housing, food, transportation, health care, taxes, childcare and household, clothing and personal items. Communities Count calculates a Living

Living Wage Comparison			
Family Type	Communities Count	NWFCO	Sustainability Report
Single Adult	\$12.35/hr	\$13.11/hr	\$11.90/hr
	\$25,685	\$27,269	\$25,126
Single Adult with a school-aged child (6-8 years)	\$19.56/hr	\$20.83/hr	\$19.79/hr
	\$40,694	\$43,326	\$41,800
Single Adult with a school-aged child and a toddler (12-24 months)	\$28.03/hr	\$29.83/hr	\$26.83/hr
	\$58,293	\$62,046	\$56,675
Two Adults (both working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$11.98/hr	\$12.66/hr	\$14.40/hr
	\$49,812	\$52,666	\$60,838
Two Adults (one working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$17.16/hr	\$36.62/hr	N/A
	\$35,687	\$76,170	N/A

Wage for King County for several different family types (see the table above).²³ The Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO) has developed a living wage calculation for each county in the state. While their methodology for calculating the cost for a family to live in King County is similar to the Communities Count estimate, NWFCO numbers are higher because they include

a savings figure of 10% of the income after childcare and taxes.²⁴ The savings considers funds needed to survive an emergency. Associate Director of NWFCO, Gerald Smith

states, “Families need to have a small savings pot so they are not one emergency away from financial ruin.” Another methodology for determining a living wage, developed by the Center for Women’s Welfare at the University of Washington, calculates a Self-Sufficiency Wage, or the amount of money a certain family type would have to make in order to live without public supports or assistance.²⁵ The web-based King County Self-Sufficiency Calculator computes self-sufficiency wages for different family types anywhere in the county. This figure is for residents living in the City of Bellevue and as such has adjusted higher housing and childcare rates.

- In Washington State a living wage for a single adult is \$3.35 more than the current minimum wage and a living wage for a single adult with two children is \$18.28 more than the State’s current minimum wage of \$8.55/hour in 2009.

- An examination of the occupations with the highest number of vacancies in King County in April 2009 reveals that there were only

Seattle/King County			
Occupation Title	Estimated Job Vacancies	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett PSMA Mean Hourly Wage	Entry Level Hourly Wage (10th Percentile)
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	732	\$45.50	\$32.49
Recreation Workers	713	\$13.42	\$9.00
Registered Nurses	651	\$36.69	\$26.05
Waiters and Waitresses	614	\$13.28	\$8.69
Retail Salespersons	456	\$13.95	\$8.71
Marketing Managers	419	\$61.70	\$35.31
Protective Service Workers, All Other	324	\$19.58	\$12.76
Cashiers	263	\$11.86	\$8.45
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	247	\$24.27	\$11.70
Computer and Information Systems Managers	242	\$65.88	\$41.74

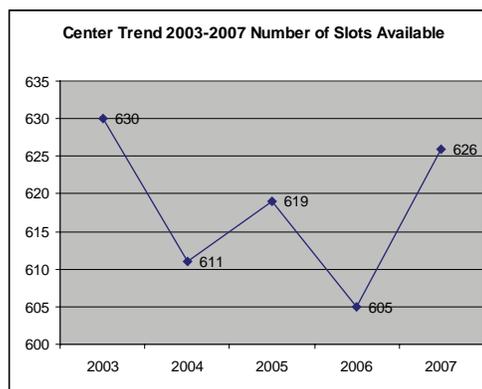
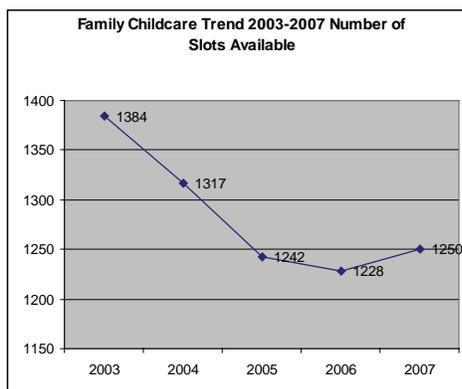
Source: Washington State Employment Security Department (April 2009) “March 2009 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates” and “Vacancies by Detail Level Occupation, April 2009”.

13,868 job vacancies available.²⁶ The table on the previous page shows the occupations with the highest number of vacancies and their mean and entry level wages. Each of the highest vacancy positions pay above the three standards of living wage for a single adult, however, only four of the occupations pay more than a living wage for a single adult with two children.²⁷ Of all the job vacancies in King County in April 2009, only 3,121, or 23%, pay more than a living wage for a single adult with two children, by any of the three standards.

Childcare

Childcare Availability

- In 2007, there were 1,908 licensed family childcare businesses and centers in King County; two-thirds of them are family childcare businesses and one-third are center-based.²⁸ Over the past five years, the overall number of licensed facilities has declined by a net 138, or 7%, but the number of centers is stabilizing. Family childcare homes have declined 10% since 2003, but there were 21 new centers in 2007. In Bellevue, there are currently 5,880 licensed slots in both family childcare and centers, but this does not meet the demand.
- Licensed childcare is not the choice of some



Source: Childcare Resources. (September 2008). Child Care in King County.

families. Nearly 21% of children ages 0-5 are cared for by a family member, friend, or neighbor (FFN) as their primary care arrangement. In King County, this would be

about 60,000 children; for 28,000 of those children, they are the primary source of care while parents are working or attending school.²⁹ Families more likely to have FFN childcare arrangements include those who are low or moderate-income, Latino, African American, refugees and immigrants, and those with a child with special needs. Given the growing number of refugees and immigrants with young children settling in Bellevue, it is likely that many of these families use FFN care.

- Issues such as language and culture, location and transportation, hours of operation, quality concerns and cost all affect childcare availability for a family. Very few providers offer childcare after 6:30 pm, overnight or during weekends. Parents working non-standard shifts have a very difficult time finding licensed childcare.

Childcare Affordability

- Childcare for an East King County family with an infant and pre-schooler in full-time care can cost between \$21,424 and \$26,312/year.³⁰ This is 31-38% of the county's median household income. Currently, East King County childcare centers have a median cost of \$15,392/year for an infant, more than one-fifth of the county's median household

income. Family childcare, although a less-expensive option, costs \$11,388, 17% of median household income.

- The State's childcare subsidy program, *Working Connections (WC)*, currently serves parents who earn up to 200% of the federal

poverty level (FPL), including participants in WorkFirst, the welfare-to-work program.³¹ That eligibility level was changed briefly in 2006, cutting it back to 175% of the FPL as a

cost-cutting measure, causing many families to lose their eligibility. Advocates opposed these cuts because they believed it could cause many people to return to welfare if they lost their subsidized childcare, and eventually the program was restored to the 200% FPL eligibility level.³² The number of children in subsidized care in the state increased 44% from 41,677 in 1997-1998 to 60,070 as of May 2009, only a 1.4% drop from May of 2007. About 22% of households receiving WC subsidies live in King County.³³

- Many childcare centers and homes accept only a few families using *Working Connections* subsidies because the reimbursement rates are lower than market rate; this can present a financial hardship for providers. Efforts in the 2009 State Legislative session were unsuccessful in increasing the rate; more increases are needed especially as many new jobs pay less than a living wage which makes childcare unaffordable. As of January 2009, of the 151 childcare centers and family childcare homes in Bellevue, 58% report accepting subsidies, slightly fewer than 2 years ago.³⁴

Childcare Quality

- Studies have shown that higher quality childcare does make a difference in the development of greater cognitive, language and social skills in young children, critical for school readiness. Many factors, such as accreditation, language and cultural competency and employee skill, influence quality.³⁵ Only 10% of operating childcare centers in Bellevue are accredited; only two of the 78 family childcare homes have accreditation.
- Quality is highly influenced by childcare staff. However, childcare staff receive fairly low wages for their work.

"There is more need for computer access. Maybe cities could work with King County Library System to improve access. Now there are wait lists for computers at the library. Refugees and Immigrants especially need access. Job applications are now mostly on line."

Community Conversation, Cultural Navigators

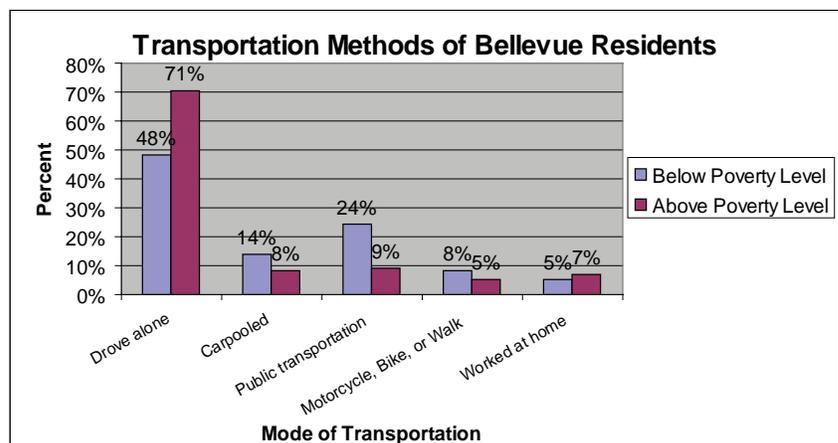
On average, in Washington, a teacher in a childcare center makes a little over \$21,000/year, about \$24,000 less than Washington kindergarten teachers.³⁶ The lack of competitive wages makes it difficult to recruit and retain educated childcare workers. Washington State Department of Social & Health Services found that among childcare providers earning only \$7.00/hour, annual attrition is over 60% whereas those earning at least \$13.00/hour have an attrition rate of 30%.³⁷

Specific Populations

- *Note: See People with Disabilities and Immigrants and Refugees sections for more information on education and job skills within these two populations.*

Transportation

- Bellevue residents who earn a wage below the poverty line are more reliant on public transportation than residents who earn more than the poverty line (24% vs. 9% respectively). Seventy-one percent of Bellevue residents who earn more than the



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey. (2009). CTP Part 1 Profile 2.

FPL drive alone to work and eight percent who carpool compared to the 48% of residents who earn less than the FPL and drive alone or the 14% who carpool.³⁸

Community Perceptions

- One-third of 2009 phone survey respondents rated *inadequate public transportation* as a moderate or major community problem, a slight increase over 2007 responses. Respondents living in a single family dwelling are significantly more likely than those in a multi-family dwelling to say that *inadequate public transportation* is a major/moderate community problem (39% vs. 28% respectively). Respondents with two adults and children are more likely than households with two adults and no children to report that transportation is a problem (41% vs. 30% respectively).
- In 2009, *inadequate public transportation* rose to the highest rated household problem for Bellevue residents with nearly 18% citing it as a major/moderate problem. This is a significant increase over the 14% who indicated it was a major/moderate problem in 2007 when it was the 4th highest rated household problem. Those with incomes under \$25,000 are significantly more likely to say that *inadequate public transportation* is a major/moderate problem facing their household compared to those with incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 (31% compared to 14%).
- Twenty percent of the respondents to the consumer survey reported *having difficulty finding public*

"I would like to drive less. Bus routes are limited and the buses don't run late. I don't want to wait 30 minutes for the next bus."
Community Conversation, Jubilee REACH Center

"Many single women don't know how to network to get jobs. There is also a lot of depression and frustration in trying to find a job, and it's getting harder. I used to be able to get jobs through Labor Ready in Bellevue. Now, I see clean cut guys in suits with resumes in their hands coming into Labor Ready. They don't look like they have ever held a shovel in their hands in their lives."

Community Conversation, YWCA Eastside Angeline Center

transportation to get to work or other places.

- In the 2009 providers survey, almost 80% of respondents rated transportation as the biggest barrier that their clients face.

Service Trends

WorkFirst Participation Among Bellevue-area Residents

- WorkFirst participants must be working or actively seeking a job and assistance is limited to 60 months in a person's lifetime. The program provides training and education for low-income parents working at least 20 hours per week. By June 2009, 4,105 low-income parents in Washington State are enrolled in job skills trainings customized for specific employers, up nearly 11% from 2006.³⁹ In May 2009, 2,688 parents, 6.1% of all WorkFirst participants, received free tuition at a community or technical college as part of the WorkFirst program, an increase of 19% from May 2007. The average wage earned by WorkFirst clients is \$12.59/hour, more than a dollar higher than two years ago.⁴⁰

Available Supports and Training for Employment

- The Women's Center for Career Connections at Bellevue College (BC) helps people enrolled in WorkFirst, immigrants, homemakers and others to find living-wage jobs and obtain job training through career transition courses, job placement and job-specific training. Staff report that this year more clients are in need of basic services, so it is difficult for them to focus on jobs. There is also more competition for existing jobs.⁴¹
- BC also offers courses for English-as-a-Second-Language. In 2008, they provided about 100 people with assistance in English reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Some courses specifically include job-seeking related content.⁴²

- Washington’s Employment Security Department’s WorkSource Centers around the State provide on-site resources for both employers and workers. Unemployed workers can file for unemployment insurance, get information about education and training, and a number of other resources to assist in job search and skills development.⁴³ WorkSource provides information about program and service eligibility that participants may not know about. Participants in a Community Conversation stated that the needs of clients were much more “white collar” than in the past.⁴⁴ Some newly unemployed clients do not have the computer or technical skills and knowledge to successfully execute a job search.

Childcare Supports and Services

- Child Care Resources (CCR) provides assistance to Bellevue families in accessing quality childcare. They report that changes in subsidy eligibility means that fewer families can receive state funding and, as a result, request other locally funded scholarship programs. As of August 2009, there are 15 families on the waiting list for CCR’s scholarship program for Bellevue residents; the wait time averages 12-16 months, twice the time compared to past years.⁴⁵
- Programs specifically providing childcare for homeless families is a growing need in King County. Child Care Resources provides case managers to help families secure stable, quality childcare so they can find housing, look for work, and go to court or medical appointments. In Bellevue, the program serves about 50 children and parents annually, but this only serves a portion of the demand.⁴⁶
- Child Care Resources also supports a network of Play and Learn groups, play groups specifically designed to provide culturally appropriate support for FFN caregivers and parents. Over 50 groups meet weekly around the county, holding sessions

in 10 languages led by trained facilitators; participants receive information about child development and community resources. It also gives young children cared for by FFNs a chance to develop socialization and early literacy skills which will increase their readiness for school. Three Play and Learn groups are currently meeting in Bellevue.

- Bellevue School District provides full day childcare and half day pre-school to children 6 weeks to 5th grade.⁴⁷ They utilize Bellevue funds for scholarships for those families who cannot afford the full cost of care.
- During the 2007 State Legislative session, lawmakers passed a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), a voluntary system offering help and rewards to providers to increase the quality of care in centers, family childcare homes, and school-aged programs.⁴⁸ The program, to be piloted in five areas around the State, including one in King County beginning in 2008, has been put on hold by the 2009 State Legislature because of the State’s current budget situation.⁴⁹
- United Way of King County launched an initiative to assist childcare centers obtain national accreditation. They are helping the centers with this effort by partnering with Child Care Resources to provide technical assistance and funds for training.⁵⁰

Community Perceptions

- Thirty-four percent of 2009 phone survey respondents rated *people having jobs that do not pay enough for the basics of food, shelter and clothing* as a major/moderate problem in their community. There is a slightly decreasing trend in people seeing this as a problem since 2005. This category ranked seventh in importance in 2003 (37% major/moderate), fourth in 2005, fifth in 2007, and now- sixth in 2009. In 2009, women were more likely to rate this as a major problem (18% vs. 8% of men). Households with no seniors in the home are significantly more likely to rank this category as a major/

moderate problem compared to households with seniors.

- Ratings of *unemployment* as a community

problem, however,

have increased significantly compared to the last two times the survey was conducted mirroring regional and national unemployment trends. In 2007, 16.7% of respondents reported *unemployment* as a major/moderate community problem; by 2009 this figure has swelled to 43.8%. *Unemployment* has jumped to the third highest community concern in 2009, whereas it was not even in the top ten in 2007.

- People's perception of affordable and quality childcare as a problem has decreased since 2003. In 2009, 14.5% percent of phone survey respondents said that *lack of quality childcare* was a major/moderate community problem and slightly less than one-fourth rated *lack of affordable childcare* at the same level, both a significant drop from 2007.
- At the household level, 11% ranked *not being able to find work that supports yourself or your family* as a major/moderate problem. Multi-family households, households with respondents under age 65, and households with lower income levels (less than \$75,000 a year) were all more likely to rate this as a more serious problem. Half of consumer survey respondents said that *not being able to find work that supports yourself or your family* was a major/moderate problem in their household, about the same as the 2007 survey. Twenty-nine percent of consumer survey households contain an adult who has difficulty with basic reading or filling out a job application.
- Thirty-seven percent of phone survey respondents who reported major/moderate household problems said they had looked for help but didn't find the help they needed. Twelve percent couldn't find help with

Churches are becoming places that resources are passed along in the community: people looking for jobs, job announcements and resource info are passed during church."

Key Informant Interview, Rev. Phillip Wong, Church of the Holy Apostle

employment assistance, an increase from 2007, and 12% couldn't access childcare assistance in 2009, similar to 2007.

- Fewer phone survey respondents ranked *not being able to find affordable*

or quality childcare as a household problem than as a community problem (5.2% affordable, 4.5% quality compared to 24.7% affordable and 14.3% quality). The rankings for both these issues have decreased since the last survey.

- Bellevue employers who completed a survey ranked healthcare, childcare and childcare for sick children among the top human services needs of their employees.
- Individuals participating in the Community Conversations at WorkSource mentioned that transportation and income eligibility were obstacles to receive the training and human services needed as they search for employment.⁵¹
- In a Community Conversation with Healthy Start Program staff, many had concerns about their clients. Staff reported that there is a long delay in determining eligibility for Working Connections and many parents are wary of working without certainty in their childcare situation.⁵² In the end, many families do not qualify and older children take care of younger siblings while their parents work. Those who do choose to keep their children in the licensed childcare system face long wait lists.
- In a Community Conversation with Child Care Resources, participants voiced a growing need to reduce the language barrier in childcare.⁵³ Staff members mentioned that DSHS paid providers low reimbursement rates and many childcare centers would not accept the participants. As the unemployment rate increases, more parents, particularly fathers, are participating in Play and Learn groups. Additionally, some people are providing childcare from their home to make extra money although

many are unaware of state licensing requirements.

Implications for Action

- The current economic downturn shows that Bellevue workers are not immune to job cuts. It is becoming apparent that individuals receiving unemployment insurance are dependant upon the payments for a majority of their living expenses. Additional support may be needed as the length of unemployment for many workers spans beyond the period of benefit and they deplete their savings.
- The decrease in middle-income job opportunities makes it harder for people at lower incomes to access better job opportunities. There are more low-income job opportunities, but along with these come financial instability, dependence on public supports and less of a chance to obtain additional training to increase skills to find a better job. A living wage for a family living in Bellevue is higher than in other parts of King

"Some programs like Child Care Resources take into account for scholarships that \$25,000 income in Bellevue is not the same as \$25,000 in Federal Way. It costs more to live here. But I want to live here because I am afraid of living somewhere else."

Community Conversation, Jubilee REACH Center

County.

- Bellevue residents have a high level of educational attainment, however, there are few vacancies that pay a living wage. It should be a priority to attract business and industry that pay living wages.
- Barriers to employment such as lack of affordable childcare, availability of more slots to meet the need as more jobs are created, the absence of coordinated transportation and lack of training to secure higher wage jobs are key issues that must be addressed to help people improve their economic conditions and the quality of their lives.

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