

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. Although Washington boasts the nation's highest minimum wage, Bellevue residents require strong earnings in order to be self-sufficient. In order to get living wage jobs, workers must possess significant education or job skills. The recent economic downturn highlighted the need for an advanced education as well as the limited number of positions available in King County offering living wages. Affordable, quality childcare is also important so that families can work and provide for themselves, and as many consumers and providers have told us, reliable public transportation is another key component in people being able to access employment.

What's Working?

- East King County participants in the Washington State WorkFirst program surpassed state averages in median job search placement wages, earnings progression, job retention and exits to employment.¹
- In 2012, 96% of adults enrolled in Bellevue College's ESL Preparing For Work classes improved their speaking and listening skills, and 95% in the Intermediate Level class improved their reading skills.
- During the 2013 State Legislative session, early learning fared better than expected in terms of funding in the 2013-2015 biennial budget. Some of the successes include \$1

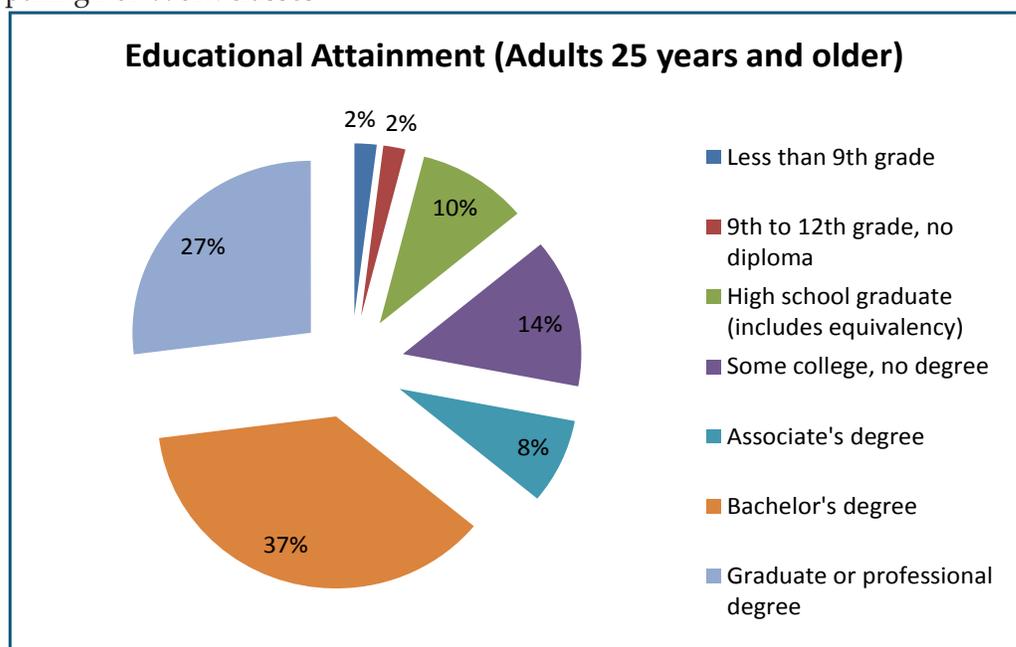
million for expanded home visiting services, \$14.8 million for a modest 2% increase in child care subsidy rates and an additional 2% enhancement for some providers in Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Early Achievers.

- Bellevue School District's Department of Equity and the Department of Early Learning and After School Programs are piloting a family engagement strategy for four elementary schools: Bellewood, Sherwood Forest, Phantom Lake and Bennett. The Action Team for Partnership model was launched in selected elementary, middle and high schools in the 2012-2013 school year.

Prevalence

Educational Attainment, Age, Race and Gender Effects on Income

- King County is one of the most highly educated communities in the country: 44% of county residents hold a Bachelor's degree or higher and more than 90% graduated from high school.² In Bellevue, as the chart below shows, the percentage of adults age



Source: 2012 American Community Survey, "City of Bellevue, WA".

25 and older who had earned a Bachelor's degree or above was 64%, an increase from 54% in 2000. Only 2% of Bellevue adults (over 25) have less than a high school diploma, the lowest percentage in the state.³

- The chart below shows the pay benefits and lower unemployment rate for persons

Unemployment Rate in 2012 (2010)	Degree	Median Weekly Earnings in 2012 (2010)
2.5% (1.9%)	Doctoral	\$1,624 (\$1,550)
2.1% (2.4%)	Professional	\$1,735 (\$1,610)
3.5% (4.0%)	Master's	\$1,300 (\$1,272)
4.5% (5.4%)	Bachelor's	\$1,068 (1,038)
6.2% (7.0%)	Associate	\$785 (\$767)
7.7% (9.2%)	Some College	\$727 (\$712)
8.3% (10.3%)	High School Diploma	\$652 (\$626)
12.4% (14.9%)	Less than High School Diploma	\$421 (\$444)
Average 6.8% (8.2%)		Average: \$815 (\$782)

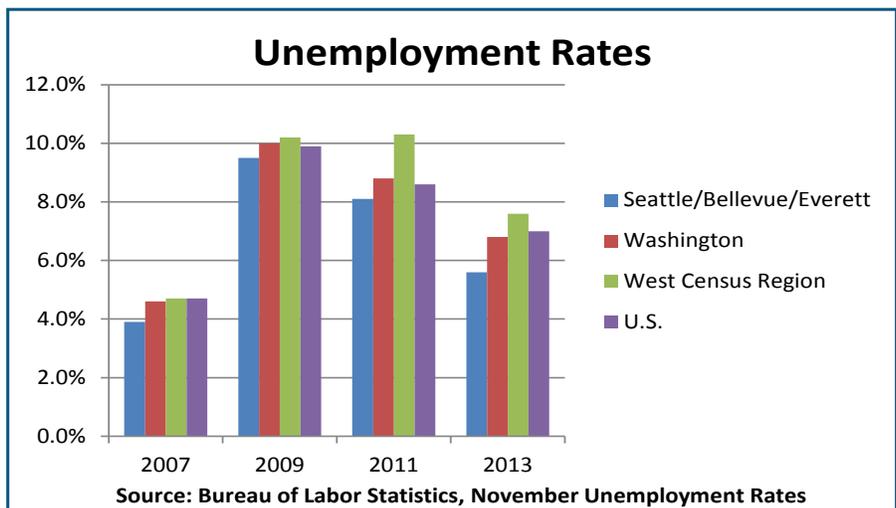
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 5/22/13

There is no industry in Washington where women earn the same as men, even when accounting for educational background.⁵ Unemployment increased significantly for women at the beginning of the recession, then declined, but increased again at the end of 2010. This seems to be due to the greater likelihood that women will be employed in education, health and social services, which experienced many cuts during the recession due to shrinking state budgets. Overall lower earnings coupled with care giving responsibilities puts women, especially single women with children, at greater risk for poverty than men; for a single woman with children the poverty rate statewide is 37%.⁶

- The aging of the population has enormous implications for the workforce. More older adults are delaying retirement or returning to the workforce because they need employment to make ends meet. However, the average unemployed time for older workers is greater than for the younger workforce. For those over 55 years old, the average time out of work before getting rehired is 50.2 weeks compared to 36.9 weeks for those under 55 years.⁷
- During the Great Recession, Washington experienced an increase in the unemployment rate; for example, in

age 25 and over that can result from higher levels of educational attainment on a national basis in 2012 as unemployment rates began to slowly decrease. The figures in parentheses are 2010 data for comparison.⁴

- Data shows that the "wage gap" between men and women is significant. Women who work full time still earn, on average, just 76 cents for every dollar men earn-\$41,055 annually compared to \$54,194 for men.



November 2011, the unemployment rate was 8.3%, almost double the same month in

2007 (4.64%). Over the same time period, the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett Metropolitan Division also increased from 3.9% in 2007 to 8.3% in 2011. These changes mirror trends at the national, census region, and state level. In November 2012, the unemployment rate began to decrease, and in November 2013, the rate dropped to 5.6% in the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett Metropolitan Division.⁸

“During the economic downturn, people began working in jobs they were over-qualified for due to the lack of available jobs. Many of our families still struggle to find employment.”
Provider Survey, Hopelink

- In 2013, 626,445 (38%) of children statewide live in households earning less than the basic needs threshold, 200% of the federal poverty level (in 2013, \$47,100 for a family of four). The percentage is higher for children of color: 66% of Latino and 62% of Black children live in poverty. Children living in poverty are more likely to lack health insurance, have lower scores in reading in third grade, and are less likely to graduate from high school in four years. Again, children of color are over-represented in these outcomes.⁹ In 2011, an analysis by the Washington Budget and Policy Center showed that a lifetime of restricted opportunity meant a loss of \$240 million in wages for the current working population of blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans in Washington State. As the state, and Bellevue, becomes more diverse, this data has even more impact. Those earnings could have been used to start a business, buy a home, or send a child to college, all actions that contribute to the vitality and health of a community.¹⁰

Unemployment Assistance Provides Support

- Unemployment insurance is calculated using a percentage of an individual’s past year’s earnings rather than financial need. Therefore, individuals who worked low-

paying jobs before unemployment often fall deeper into financial hardship while unemployed. In 2007, the most recent data available, for 56% of claimants, unemployment insurance makes up the majority or entirety of their income, down 14% from 2005.¹¹ Some workers, many of them who earn low wages, are not covered under unemployment insurance so they do not have any “back-up” salary when they lose their jobs.

- In King County, initial unemployment insurance claims are steadily decreasing. In June 2009 at the end of the recession, there were 14,912 claims; in June 2013, these claims dropped to 7,696.¹² Statewide, between June 2009 and June 2013, initial unemployment claims also decreased (from 56,222 to 33,018).¹³
- Studies show that people on unemployment benefits spend their money on the basics, with nearly 70% going to food, housing and transportation.¹⁴ 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, unemployed Washington households spent two thirds of their income on food, housing and transportation.¹⁵ With the rising cost of living in all these areas, the percentage spent is now likely higher.
- In April 2011, the Washington State Employment Security Department conducted a survey of people in the state who had used up all of their unemployment benefits to learn about their current employment situation, barriers and helpful resources. Only about 25% of those who participated found work and of those, 8 in 10 were making less money than they did prior to becoming jobless. The average wage of those re-employed dropped to \$18.12/hour compared to \$25.38 prior to becoming unemployed. Nearly half of the 86% who were still looking for work said that age was their greatest barrier to finding work.¹⁶

Recent and Future Job Market

- Washington State’s job market seems to be slowly improving: in spring 2012,

there were 51,934 job vacancies statewide; however, due to changes in methodology, results from the current State job vacancy annual report cannot be compared to past surveys. Using only survey results from 2009, 2010 and 2011 which are comparable there were three consecutive increases in vacancies since the end of the recession in June 2009. Most job vacancies are found in the West Urban region, (40,673 or 78% of all job vacancies). King County is part of both the West Urban and West Rural regions. The number of job vacancies reported in just King County, before the regional categories were implemented, in spring 2011 was 27,735, up 42% from 10,637 in spring 2010.¹⁷

“Ninety percent of our clients are at 30% of the Area Median Income. There is an appearance of a one-to-one relationship between their educational level/vocational training and employment, despite the decreasing of the unemployment rate in King County.”

Provider Survey, Catholic Community Services

- Three industry groups accounted for about 45% of all vacancies: healthcare/social assistance, retail, and accommodation and food services. The survey found that 59% of openings required only a high school diploma or had no requirement, though that was the minimum requirement and the employer could hire someone with more education. Most vacancies required previous experience and fewer than half required a license or certification. Employers hired 117,729 people statewide, 5% of those covered by unemployment insurance between January and March 2012.¹⁸
- From 1970 to 2000, job growth in Bellevue exceeded population growth such that Bellevue went from having 1 job for every 3 residents in 1970 to having 1.2 jobs for every resident in 2000. From 2000 to 2010 Bellevue’s economy experienced two economic

cycles with peaks in employment occurring in 2000 and 2008 and troughs occurring in 2004 and 2010. If one just looks at the two data points of 2000 and 2010, one sees a decline in employment over the decade due to the first point being at the peak of the dot com bubble and the second point being at the bottom of the great recession. However, if one considers the peaks and troughs and looks at the overall trend, employment has been increasing in Bellevue since 1995 at an average annual rate of about 1.6 percent per year. With continued growth in population and the addition of Bellevue’s most recent annexation areas Bellevue’s job to population ratio is projected to be about 1.1 in 2013.¹⁹

Minimum Wage vs. Living Wage

- Washington State’s minimum wage in 2013 is \$9.19, the highest in the country.²⁰ However, an adult making the minimum wage and supporting two children is under the federal poverty level (FPL), \$19,530 for a family of three.²¹
- A “living wage” is often defined as the minimum income needed to purchase basic necessities without help from public assistance. Living wage calculations often include the cost of housing, food, transportation, health care, taxes, childcare and household, clothing and personal items. Al-

2012 Living Wage Comparison Bellevue WA		
Family Type	Alliance WA State Avg.	Self Sufficiency Standard Bellevue, WA
Single Adult	\$16.13/hr.	\$14.10/hr.
	\$33,544/yr.	\$29,775.83/yr.
Single Adult with a school aged child (6-8 years)	\$21.47/hr.	\$22.84/hr.
	\$44,644/yr.	\$48,353.16/yr.
Single Adult with a school-aged child and a toddler (12-24 months)	\$28.71/hr.	\$30.37/hr.
	\$59,715/yr.	\$64,145.74/yr.
Two Adults (both working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$29.42/hr.	\$16.37/hr.
	\$61,188/yr.	\$69,158.29/yr.
Two Adults (one working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$38.21/hr.	NA
	\$79,478/yr.	NA

liance for a Just Society (formerly called the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations) developed a living wage calculation for each county in the state.²² Another way to determine 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 earn in order to live without public supports or assistance.²³ The web-based King County Self-Sufficiency Calculator computes self-sufficiency wages for different family types anywhere in the county. The figures in the chart on the previous page from the Self-Sufficiency Standard have been calculated for Bellevue residents but costs would be similar for all of East King County. The calculation has adjusted higher housing and childcare rates. The calculations using the Alliance calculator are for statewide averages and are weighted by each county’s population.

- In Washington State, the lowest calculated living wage for a single adult is \$6.94 more than the current minimum wage and a living wage for a single adult with two children is \$19.52 more than the State’s current

“Our clients can’t afford to use the 520 bridge so they spend extra time driving around.”

Provider Survey, YWCA

minimum wage of \$9.19/hour in 2013.²⁴

- In 2012, according to the Job Gap Report, of all job openings in Washington, 42% pay less than the \$16.13/hr. living wage for a single adult; 74% pay less than the \$28.71 needed for a single adult with two children. There are more people looking for work than there are job openings that pay a living wage: for each job opening in Washington State that pays at least \$16.13/hr., the living wage for a single adult, there are 20 job seekers on average.²⁵

Childcare

Childcare Availability

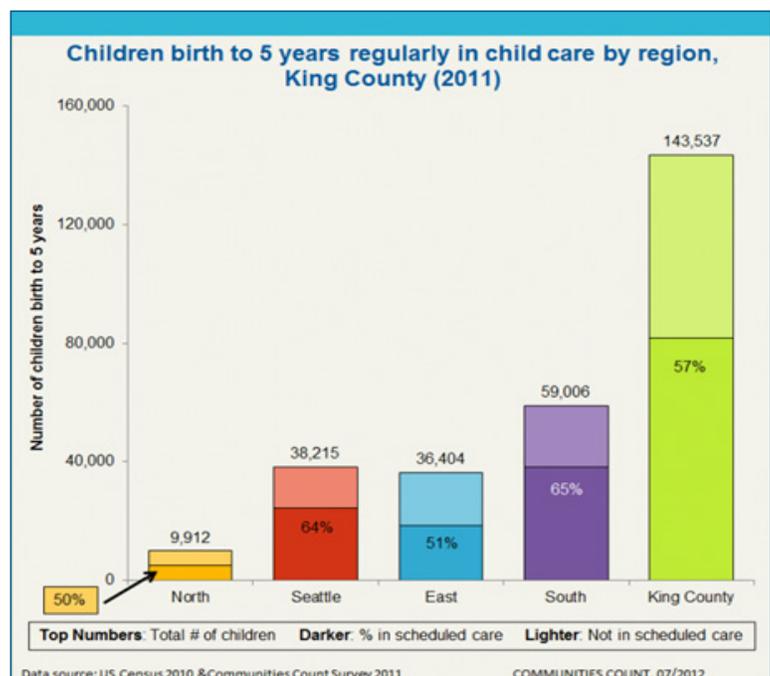
- More than half of children in King County birth to five years old are in regularly scheduled childcare, as the chart shows.²⁶ As of June 2013, there were 2,135 licensed childcare homes and centers in King

“Child Care Resources Early Achievers coaches are saying that they see Bellevue providers implementing new ideas that improve the quality of their care.”

Provider Survey, Child Care Resources

County, almost identical to 2010; 68% of them are center-based and 30% are family childcare. This represents a slight increase (12%) compared to 2007 when the total was 1,908. In King County, there were 59,830 slots in 2012 compared to 55,074 slots in 2010.²⁷ In East King County, in 2012, there were 10,843 slots; 7,488 in child care centers and 3,355 in family child care homes. The East King County total represents an 18.5% decrease compared to 2010.²⁸

- For many families their first choice is extended family (referred to as family, friend & neighbor care), especially for infants and toddlers. As children grow, and parents seek out child care, families may experience barriers including cost, transportation, and cultural or system navigation. 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. Almost a quarter of providers in King County offer what is called “non-standard” hours such as childcare after 6:30 pm, overnight and/or during weekends. This accommodation has increased over the past two years as parents working night shifts and weekends usually 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 \$22,932 and \$29,744/year. Childcare costs in East King County are the highest in the County.³⁰ Currently, East King County childcare centers have a median cost of \$17,472/year for an infant, almost one-fifth of the county’s 2012 median household income. Family childcare, although a less-expensive option, costs \$12,116, 14% of median household income.
- The State’s childcare subsidy program Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) serves low-income families. For most of its history, WCCC has served families with earnings of up to 200% of the federal poverty level.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 About 23% of households receiving WCCC subsidies live in King County; about 76% of households are not recipients in the state WorkFirst program.³³ Enrollment is still capped at 33,000 families, and currently there is no waitlist.³⁴

- Many childcare centers and homes accept only a few families using WCCC subsidies because the reimbursement rates are lower than market rate; this can present a financial hardship for providers. As of June 2013, of the 167 childcare centers and family childcare homes in Bellevue, 56% report accepting subsidies, about the same as 2 years ago.³⁵

Childcare Quality

- High quality childcare has been shown to help children get ready for success in school and in life but childcare quality varies considerably around the state. In 2011, the State Department of Early Learning (DEL) rolled out *Early Achievers*, the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System which offers training, coaching and consultation to early learning providers in childcare centers.. This is a voluntary, no-cost program which will help providers improve the quality of their programs. Providers will be rated on scale of 1-5, and eventually, information about these ratings will be posted on websites such as DEL and Child Care Resources to assist parents in selecting quality childcare for their children.³⁶
- Though the quality needed for children in childcare is highly influenced by childcare staff, childcare staff receives fairly low wages for their work. In Washington, a teacher in a childcare center makes, on average, \$21,600/year, about \$24,000 less than kindergarten teachers.³⁷ 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 only 30%.³⁸

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

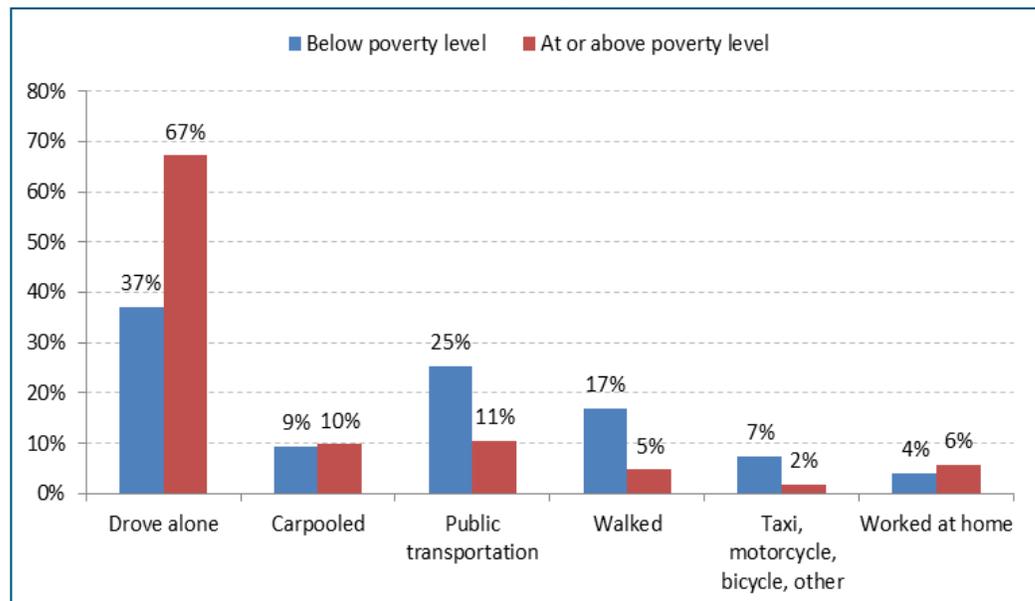
- The percentage of Bellevue residents commuting to work by means other than driving alone has steadily increased going from 26% in 2000 to 33% in 2008-2010. An increasing percentage of residents took public transportation to get to work. In 2008-2010, about 11% of residents used public transportation to get to work, up from only 7% in 2000. In 2005-2009, Crossroads (19%), Factoria (15%) and Downtown (13%) were the three neighborhood areas with the highest percentages of residents commuting to work via public transit. In contrast, Somerset and Northwest Bellevue had around 4%.³⁹
- The City of Bellevue is currently updating its Transit Master Plan. While the city does not operate its own transit system, it can leverage additional transit investments to/from existing transit facility investments. As part of that work, beginning in 2012 through the present, Transportation staff engaged many community members, business groups, boards and commissions in conversations about the vision they have for the future of transit in Bellevue. A common theme was the need for reliable transit options for all people who work in the city, not only

during peak hours, but also, for those who work non-peak hours, such as those in the hospitality or medical industries. Business leaders also stressed that in order to continue the vitality of the economic climate in Bellevue, a robust transit system was critical.⁴⁰

- In 2013, the King County Council approved a motion to establish an Advisory Council to study and recommend potential new fare options to assist in meeting the mobility needs of low-income persons. Currently there is a discounted fare option for seniors and people with disabilities but none based on income. One of the two groups that would benefit from such a discounted fare is the working poor who struggle to pay for the basics, including transportation. The other group is people with no income and/or are homeless. The recommendation of the Advisory Council was that such a fare be established, as funding allows; another strong recommendation was that eligibility for this fare would be at 200% of the federal poverty level to include more people who earn low-wages.⁴¹

Community Perceptions

- More than one-third of 2013 phone/online survey respondents rated *inadequate public transportation* as a moderate or major community problem, slightly less than in 2011, and very similar to 2009 responses. It was



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2010 American Community Survey

the fourth highest community problem in 2013.

- In the last three phone/online surveys (2009, 2011 and 2013), Bellevue residents cited *inadequate public transportation* as the most prevalent household problem. In 2005, only 11% of residents noted it as a major or moderate household problem, compared to 22% in 2013.
- Twenty-six percent of the respondents to the consumer survey reported *having difficulty finding public transportation to get to work or other places*.
- In the 2013 provider survey, 80% of respondents reported that their clients needed, but could not find, help with transportation. This was the highest rated problem, even more highly rated than housing or health care.

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. In April 2013, 2,300 low-income parents in Washington State were enrolled in vocational and post-secondary education, down 23% from 2010.⁴² The median wage earned by King Eastside WorkFirst clients is \$13.02/hour, higher than the statewide median wage of \$10.48.⁴³

"There are more people than jobs. They take the most qualified person. We don't have a chance to get many jobs."

Community Conversation, The Landing

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 almost all of their participants in 2012 (396) improved their job search skills, and 84% of their participants (32) got jobs and/or are enrolled in training.⁴⁴

- BC also offers courses for English-as-a-Second-Language. In 2012, they provided Bellevue residents with more than 6,000 hours of instruction and assistance in English reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Courses specifically include job-seeking related content. Staff reports that enrollment continues to increase as second language learners seek to find first or better jobs.⁴⁵
- Washington's Employment Security Department's WorkSource Centers around the state provide onsite resources for 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.⁴⁶ WorkSource provides information about program and service eligibility that participants may not know about. WorkSource staff participants in a recent Community Conversation stated that mature workers (over age 45) are not aware of how to access assistance, and are having trouble finding work in a more competitive environment. Long-term unemployed people (longer than 6 months) are staying unemployed. Other needs staff mentioned was drop-in child-care, affordable housing, computer training and transportation.⁴⁷
- HERO House, a clubhouse model for people with chronic mental illness, provides a supported employment program for its members. Supported employment is a key component for people to rebuild their lives. In 2013, HERO House staff launched an effort to increase the number of employers who would hire their members through group education sessions and 1-1 meetings to explain their program.
- Hopelink's Asset Building Program provides employment support and education to low-income families in East King County. Staff report that their clients are still in need of accessible pathways to jobs.⁴⁸

- The YWCA provides housing, employment and training at The Family Village in Redmond in which a number of former Bellevue residents live. Staff report that while jobs are easier to come by again and they are seeing their clients get jobs, salaries seem to have decreased so it again is hard for clients to find affordable rent.⁴⁹

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 May 2013, there were 8 families on the waiting list for CCR's Bellevue residents' scholarship program, and wait times have tripled since 2009.⁵⁰
- There is a growing need in King County for programs specifically providing childcare to homeless families. Child Care Resources case managers helps families secure stable, quality childcare so they can find housing, look for work, and go to court or medical appointments. In 2012, the program averaged 32 family intakes per month, compared to 29 in 2010 and 25 in 2009.⁵¹
- 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. More than 60 groups meet weekly around the county, holding sessions in multiple 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. One Play and Learn group is currently meeting in Bellevue, conducted in Mandarin and English.
- Automatic, across-the-board cuts on Head Start, child care, and early education required by the Budget Control Act of 2011 will total about \$1.2 trillion over nine years beginning in 2013, observes the National Women's Law Center in their report, "Impact of Sequestration Cuts on Head Start, Child Care and Early Education."⁵² In Washington State, in an online survey from the Washington State Association of Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), 68% of state Head Start providers will be forced to drop children from their classrooms in the second half of 2013 due to the across the board cuts; 64% said that they will be eliminating classroom staff positions.⁵³
- In Bellevue, there are Head Start slots at Bellevue College (BC) and the Bellevue School District (BSD). BC provides a Head Start program with 47 slots which are blended with the other child care slots to provide the same rich environment for all students, regards of socioeconomic status, for a total of 160 slots in their Early Learning Center. BC will not at this point need to cut any slots with the loss of their Head Start funding as they are finding other cost savings, but this may not be true in the future. Some of the biggest challenges the low-income families (who are mostly students and many participating in the WorkFirst program) in the BC Early Learning Program face is the decrease in DSHS childcare subsidies money and the restrictiveness of some of the guidelines. For example, subsidies will only pay for the hours that the parent is in class, not for time that the parent needs to study. Student families have no other way to pay for childcare when they attend classes but childcare is critical for their success in school and eventually, becoming self-sufficient.⁵⁴
- Bellevue School District has 133 Head Start slots; due to sequestration, the program had \$30,000 in cuts in 2012-2013 and will lose another \$30,000 in 2013-2014. The district plans to keep the full number of slots but has eliminated transportation to two centers which is a barrier for some parents. BSD also provides full day childcare, half day pre-school and before and after-school programs to children six weeks to 5th grade for a total of 1,548 slots. Staff report more middle income families who are on a "financial edge" and need emergency assistance due to unexpected costs like medical needs or car repairs. Even with those tight

budgets, some families still do not fit the financial guidelines for scholarships so they struggle to afford to pay for childcare. The City of Bellevue scholarships to families are quickly allocated even before the school year begins.⁵⁵

Community Perceptions

- Thirty-five percent of 2013 phone/online 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. This is similar to the rating in 2011, which was the highest rating received in 10 years.
- Ratings of *Unemployment* as a community problem had continued to significantly increase every year since 2003, peaking in 2011 at 55%. For example, in 2007, only 16.7% of respondents reported unemployment as a major/moderate community problem. In 2013, *Unemployment* is considered a major/moderate problem by 35% of respondents, a significant decrease compared to 2011 but still in the top ten of community problems.
- People's perception of affordable and quality childcare as a community problem increased significantly from 2009 to 2011. However, in 2013 only 14% of phone/online survey respondents said that *lack of quality childcare* was a major/moderate community problem compared to 20% in 2011, and 30% rated *lack of affordable childcare* compared to 39% in 2011. Both were significantly less in 2013 than in 2011.
- Fewer phone/online survey respondents ranked *not being able to find affordable or quality childcare* as a household problem than as a community problem. The rankings for affordable and quality childcare were both 8% and 5% respectively about the same as 2011.
- At the household level, 17% in 2013 ranked *not being able to find work that supports yourself or your family* as a major/moderate problem, about the same as 2011.
- Almost half of 2013 consumer survey respondents said that *not being able to find work that supports yourself or your family* was a major/moderate problem in their house-

hold, about the same as the 2011 survey. Thirty percent of consumer survey households contain an adult who has difficulty with basic reading or filling out a job application.

- Twenty-one percent of phone/online survey respondents who reported major/moderate household problems said they had looked for help but didn't find the help they needed. In 2013, 9% couldn't find help with employment assistance, a decrease from 2011, and 7% couldn't access childcare assistance in 2013, about the same as in 2011.
- In Child Care Resources' provider survey, staff mentioned that a barrier to finding childcare for working parents was the difficulty accessing the Working Connections Child Care subsidy due to eligibility and language barriers. This was echoed by other providers as well. CCR is receiving more requests for child care financial assistance, and more people accessing their on-line information service now that there is no charge.⁵⁶
- Thirty-eight of the 42 providers who completed an online survey identified unemployment or low wage jobs as a lingering, negative effect of the economic downturn.

Implications for Action

- The economic downturn showed that Bellevue workers were not immune to job cuts. Individuals receiving unemployment insurance typically are dependent upon the payments for a majority of their living expenses. Additional support continues to 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 jobs. There are more low-wage job opportunities, but along with these come financial instability, dependence on public supports that are dwindling due to budget cuts 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 County.

- Bellevue residents have a high level of education, however, there are not many vacancies that pay a living wage. It will be critical to attract business and industry that pay living wages.
- Barriers to employment such as lack of affordable childcare, limited English speaking skills, the absence of coordinated transportation and lack of training to secure higher wage jobs are key issues to be addressed to help people improve their economic conditions and the quality of their lives.

Endnotes

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