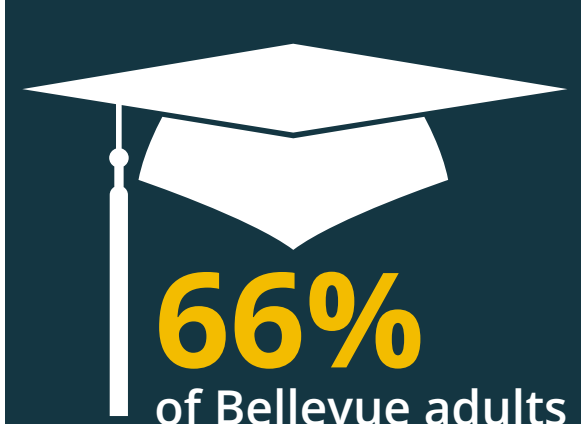
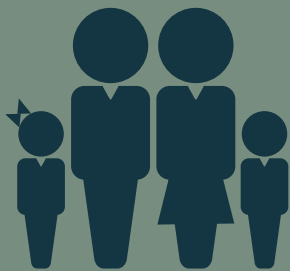


# Education and Job Skills to Help Individuals Reach Their Full Potential



Bellevue  
**household of four**  
(two adults/two children)  
must make  
**\$86,951/year**  
(\$51.18/hr)  
**to have  
a living  
wage**

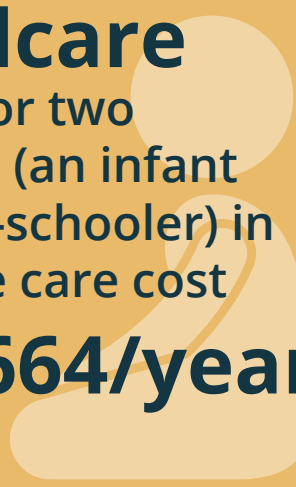


**66%**  
of Bellevue adults  
hold **Bachelor's  
degree or higher**



Job growth  
continues to  
outpace  
population  
growth in  
Bellevue

**Childcare**  
in EKC for two  
children (an infant  
and pre-schooler) in  
full-time care cost  
**\$32,664/year**



# Goal #5

## Education and Job Skills to Help Individuals Reach Their Full Potential

This chapter includes data about:

- Education/Training
- Employment
- Living Wage
- Childcare
- Transportation

This chapter discusses these topics as they pertain to the broader community. For more information about how this goal area relates to specific populations within our community (Older Adults, Refugees and Immigrants, People with Disabilities, School-Aged Children and Youth, and Veterans), please see their respective chapters.

### Key Findings

- 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 in some of the growing sectors like hospitality 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 and quality childcare, limited English speaking skills, the absence of coordinated transportation and lack of training and education opportunities to secure higher wage jobs are key issues to be addressed to help people improve their economic conditions and the quality of their lives.

# Education/Training

To obtain living-wage jobs in Bellevue, workers must possess significant education or job skills. Limited opportunities for advanced education for living-wage jobs present barriers to people becoming self-sufficient. Job training opportunities must align with the current market for jobs paying more than the minimum wage.

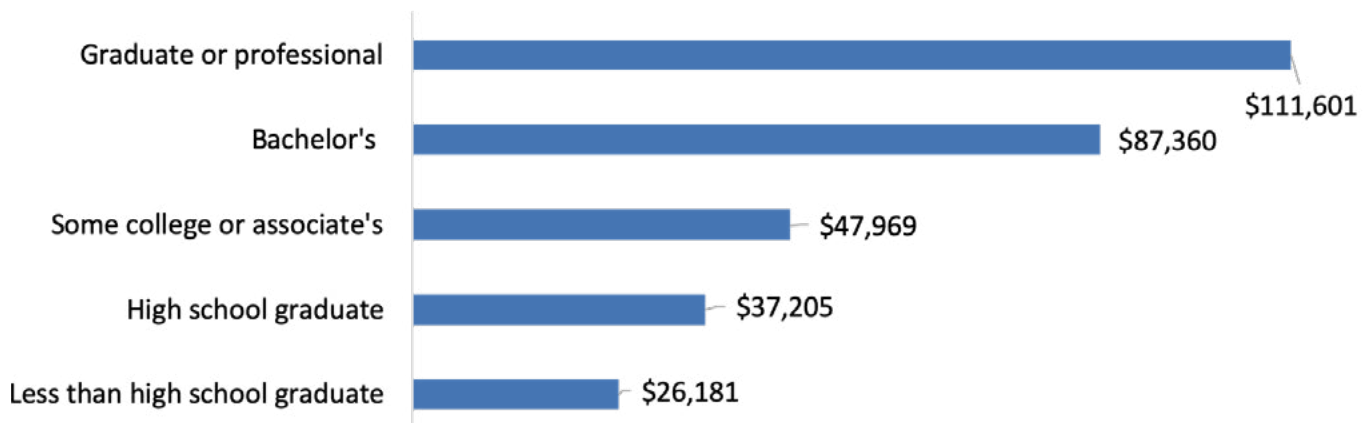
## Community Voice

- Hopelink’s workforce development program provides employment support and adult basic education to low-income individuals in East King County (EKC). Hopelink staff reported in the providers’ survey that even with the low unemployment rate, there are individuals who can’t get a job due to multiple barriers to employment such as low English language skill, unreliable transportation and lack of a high school diploma or GED.<sup>1</sup>
- A theme that emerged from a number of the community conversations indicated that upward mobility out of poverty is increasingly difficult. There are many short term and survival programs, but the lack of living wage jobs, social and relational support, and specialized employment programs means individuals and families cycle in and out of crises.<sup>2</sup>

## Prevalence

- King County is one of the most highly educated communities in the country: 50% of county residents hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher.<sup>3</sup> In Bellevue, the percentage of adults age 25 and older in 2017 who had earned a Bachelor’s degree or above was 66%, an increase from 37% in 1970. Only 2% of Bellevue adults (over 25) have less than a high school diploma, the lowest percentage in the state.<sup>4</sup>
- Higher levels of education typically result in higher pay benefits and lower unemployment.<sup>5</sup> Workers with a postsecondary education have benefitted from advantageous employment opportunities in the post-recession recovery, while those with a high school diploma or less have been largely shut out. Of the 11.6 million jobs added to the economy in the U.S since January 2010, 99% have gone to workers with at least some college education.<sup>6</sup> As Figure 1 shows, Bellevue residents with more education have higher median earnings.

**Figure 1. Bellevue Median Earnings by Educational Attainment Level, 2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau <sup>7</sup>

## Service Trends

- Hopelink’s English for Work and GED preparation programs served 105 Bellevue residents in 2018. These programs’ goals are to help people, many new to this country, learn English and be prepared to increase their incomes with additional education.
- Bellevue College’s Preparing for Work program served 154 Bellevue residents with workshops and trainings to help them prepare resumes, job search and English skills.

## Employment

Though unemployment rates are low both nationally and in the Seattle-Bellevue area, there are still people who are underemployed: they do not have enough income to make ends meet.

## Community Voice

- Ratings of *unemployment* as a community problem had continued to significantly increase every year since 2003, peaking in 2011 at 55%. In 2019, *unemployment* was considered a major/moderate problem by 11% of respondents, a significant decrease compared to 2017 when it was 20%, moving from the first tier to the third tier of community problems.<sup>8</sup>
- The majority of phone/online survey respondents (71%) were employed either full or part-time. Eleven percent of those survey responders who are working have a second job; nearly half of those could not afford to live in Bellevue without another job.<sup>9</sup>
- In the phone/online survey, over half of the respondents said it would not be difficult to meet expenses if their paycheck was delayed; however, residents with incomes under \$75,000 were significantly more likely to answer that it would be difficult to meet their household expenses, and 44% of those with incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 stated it would be very difficult.<sup>10</sup>
- Staff at Bellevue College report that students who are single mothers face challenges in the job search largely due to lack of childcare.<sup>11</sup>
- Participants in several community conversations brought up the need for more access to computers for job search and applying for jobs, as well as for more universal, free or low-cost access to the internet. Even though some agencies and the libraries offer some access to the internet, access is time limited and can be problematic.<sup>12</sup>
- 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. Staff report that most of their clients’ experience homelessness due to their inability to work as a result of their mental illness.<sup>13</sup>

“We’ve seen a higher number of clients that are working poor and seeking increased employment or returning to the workforce to make ends meet.”

~Provider’s Survey

## Prevalence

- The unemployment rate in Washington State in June 2019 was 4.6%, similar to June 2017 (4.0%) and much lower than in 2011 during the recession when it peaked at 8.3%. The rate is currently similar to what it was pre-recession. (2007, 4.64%).<sup>14</sup> Throughout the recession and recovery, the unemployment rate in King County was lower than the state in the 3 to low 4 percent range; in June 2019 it was 2.9%.<sup>15</sup> The unemployment rate in the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett Metropolitan Division was 8.3% in 2011; in June 2019 it was 2.9%.<sup>16</sup>
- In June 2019 in the King County Work Force Development Area, of the ten jobs that had the largest number of postings, six required advanced training including computer-related such as software developers, registered nurses and marketing managers.<sup>17</sup>
- The service sector remains Bellevue's largest job sector. Job growth in the service sector represented 72% of all job growth between 2011 and 2018, making Bellevue a regional hub for service sector employment especially in information technology. Job growth in the construction/resource sector picked up between 2011 and 2018 representing 13% of job growth. Retail followed, comprising 9% of job growth during that same time.<sup>18</sup>

## Service Trends

- Hopelink's Employment Program served 66 Bellevue residents in 2018 with advanced job search and goal setting to obtain the training for a living wage job.<sup>19</sup>
- The YWCA's Employment Program provided training to 52 Bellevue residents in 2018 to obtain living wage jobs.<sup>20</sup>
- Jewish Family Service provided 27 Bellevue residents job coaching, resume building, job hunting and job retention support in 2018.<sup>21</sup>

## Living Wage

Although Washington has the second highest minimum wage in the nation and unemployment is low, Bellevue residents need to have substantial wages in order to be self-sufficient. 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.

## Community Voice

- In the 2019 phone/online survey, 7 of the 11 top-tier community problems had some connection to jobs that do not pay enough and issues of affordability. The same theme was seen in household problems: lack of jobs that pay enough to cover necessities like food and shelter remain a major household concern.<sup>22</sup>
- Fifty percent of 2019 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 2017 and higher than the rating in 2013. This problem area ranks third amongst all the community problem areas.<sup>23</sup>
- At the household level, 10% of respondents in 2019 ranked *not being able to find work that supports yourself or your family* as a major/moderate problem, about the same as 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017.<sup>24</sup>

- Staff from the King County Bar Association report that they are serving more working poor people needing help with eviction often because they have fallen behind on their rents due to big rent increases with their wage increases not keeping up.<sup>25</sup>

## Prevalence

- Washington State’s minimum wage in 2019 is \$12.00 an hour, one of the highest in the country. Though an adult making the minimum wage working full time and supporting two children earns about \$24,000, it is barely over the federal poverty level (FPL), \$21,330 for a family of three and less than what is needed to support a family in this economy.
- Wage inequality has been increasing; in 1990, the median wage in Washington was 82% of the average but by 2017 it was only 69%. Wages in the state have generally moved upward but much more so at the upper end. The bottom 20% of jobs took home 7% of total wages in 2017 compared to the top 20% which captured 11% of total wages. There are also stark wage differences between industries: low wage jobs (\$12.00/hr or less) included “fast food” restaurants and childcare services. Four of the five top high wage jobs were tech related, many of which paid \$54.00/hr or more.<sup>26</sup>
- The Self-Sufficiency Calculator measures the amount of money families would have to earn in order to live without public supports or assistance (another form of living wage).<sup>27</sup> The lowest calculated living wage for a single adult is \$15.93, which is \$3.93 more than the current minimum wage and a living wage for a single adult with two children is \$39.23, which is \$27.23 more than the current minimum wage. The numbers in Figure 2 from the Self-Sufficiency Standard have been calculated for Bellevue residents, but costs would be similar for all EKC.

Figure 2. Bellevue Living and Minimum Wage Comparison		
Family Type	Bellevue Living Wage	Gap Between Living and Minimum Wage
Single Adult	\$15.93/hr. \$33,647/yr.	\$3.93
Single adult with a school-aged child (6-8 years)	\$27.16/hr. \$57,371/yr.	\$15.16
Single adult with a school-aged child and a toddler (12-24 months)	\$39.23/hr. \$82,850/yr.	\$27.23
Two working adults with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$20.59/hr./adult \$86,951/yr.	\$19.18
Two adults (one working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$51.18/hr. \$86,951/yr.	\$39.18

Source: *The Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State/Work Force Development Council Seattle-King County*<sup>28</sup>

## Service Trends

- WorkFirst is Washington State’s temporary cash assistance program and it provides training and education to help low-income families stabilize their lives. Participants must be working or actively seeking a job and assistance is limited to 60 months in a person’s lifetime. In June 2019, there were 25,214 WorkFirst cases in the state, a 3% decrease compared to two years ago.
- For EKC, 467 low-income parents enrolled in WorkFirst, similar to 2 years ago. The median wage earned by EKC WorkFirst clients is \$17.81/hour, substantially higher than the statewide median wage for all WorkFirst clients of \$14.36.<sup>29</sup> However, this median wage is still below the living wage calculated by the Self Sufficiency Calculator.

“Poor credit or lack of stable income prevents our clients from being able to obtain stable housing. Lack of stable housing prevents them from obtaining a job.”

~Provider’s Survey

## Childcare

Affordable, quality childcare is also important so that families can work and provide for their families. Research shows that the quality of early education has a direct impact on future success: when children impacted by early education disparities enter kindergarten, they can fall up to two years behind their peers.<sup>30</sup>

## Community Voice

- In 2015, 40% of those asked about childcare in the phone/online survey rated it as a major/moderate problem in the community. In 2017 and 2019, 44% and 51% rated affordable childcare as a top community problem, respectively.<sup>31</sup>
- Similarly, from 2015 to 2019, between 21% and 25% of those asked about childcare in the phone/online survey rated it as a major/moderate household problem.<sup>32</sup> In 2015, 2017 and 2019, affordable childcare was a top-ranked household problem.

## Prevalence

- As of December 2017, there were more than 5,500 licensed family childcare homes and centers statewide with 178,700 slots. Statewide, there were about 36 more licensed providers in December 2018 compared to December 2017. The overall capacity of childcare statewide has increased 8%, but there was a 18% decrease in licensed family childcare homes over the past five years.<sup>33</sup>
- As of June 2019, there were 515 child care centers and child care homes in EKC. This represents approximately 24,464 slots with the majority in child care centers.<sup>34</sup>
- For many families, their first choice for childcare is extended family (referred to as family, friend & neighbor care, FFN), especially for infants and toddlers. In King County, roughly 60,000 are in FFN care; children under 5 account for more than half (32,000) of those in FFN care. Overall, an estimated 75% of the 127,205 young children in King County are not involved in formal childcare or any early learning programs; such as licensed child care, Head Start, and ECEAP.<sup>35</sup>



- About 24% of providers in King County offer what is called “non-standard” hours such as childcare after 6:30 pm, overnight, and/or during weekends. In EKC, only 16 providers offer this service; this has stayed about the same over the past several years even as more parents working night shifts and weekends usually have a very difficult time finding licensed childcare.<sup>36</sup>
- Washington ranks among the top five highest in the country in the cost of childcare, especially for infants.<sup>37</sup> Childcare for an East King County (EKC) family with an infant and preschooler in full-time care costs, on average, \$32,664/year; EKC childcare costs are the highest in the county. In EKC, the average annual cost of infant care is \$17,772, 20% of the Seattle-Bellevue 2019 area median household income.<sup>38</sup>

**Figure 3. Average Monthly Cost of Care 2019**

	East King County
Infant (under 12 months)	\$ 1,481.52
Toddler (12 mos - 2 1/2 yrs)	\$ 1,372.62
Preschool (2 1/2 - 5 yrs)	\$ 1,241.49
School Age (full day K and up)	\$ 679.47

Source: *Child Care Resources*

- Many childcare centers and homes accept only a few families using Working Connection Child Care (WCCC) subsidies because the reimbursement rates are lower than market rate. Despite a legislature-approved increase in the 2019-2020 biennial budget, the reimbursement is still not enough to cover the cost of quality care.<sup>39</sup> As of June 2019, 62% of EKC childcare centers, family childcare homes and after-school programs accept WCCC subsidies, a substantial increase compared to 2 years ago.<sup>40</sup>
- Currently, any provider who wants to receive WCCC vouchers must participate in State of Washington Department of Early Learning Early Achievers quality rating and improvement program. In Washington State almost 4,000 providers have joined since July 2012. In King County, there are 1,229 child care centers, family child care, and Head Start and State Pre-School sites enrolled in Early Achievers.<sup>41</sup>
- In the Seattle-Bellevue-Tacoma Metropolitan Service Area, the median wage of a teacher in a childcare center is \$24.43/hour while a kindergarten teacher makes a median wage of \$34.94/hour.<sup>42</sup> The lack of competitive wages makes it difficult to recruit and retain educated childcare workers. In 2017, the turnover rate for child care teachers in King County was 43%, far greater than the turnover rate found among elementary school teachers.<sup>43</sup>

## Service Trends

- Child Care Resources (CCR) assists Bellevue families in accessing quality childcare. In 2018, they helped 4,207 clients in need of childcare to search for matching providers in Bellevue and 12,738 statewide. 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 July 15, 2019, there were 8 Bellevue families on the waiting list for CCR’s scholarship program.<sup>44</sup>



- Funding for Head Start and the State Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) in King County is insufficient to meet the need for quality early learning for children from families with incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. In 2016, all 151 Head Start preschool slots in Bellevue School District (BSD) were eliminated.<sup>45</sup>
- Two hundred and seventy-five children received tuition assistance to attend preschool in the 2018-19 school year with support provided through the district, Bellevue Schools Foundation, City of Bellevue, CCR and state funding supports. One-hundred and thirty elementary school age children received tuition assistance to attend the district's before/after, breaks and summer Early and Extended Learning programs. The district will serve up to 2400 students in these programs in the 2019-20 school year. There are an estimated 269 three- and four-year-olds that are eligible for ECEAP. BSD has 171 ECEAP slots for the 2019-20 school year.<sup>46</sup>
- CCR case managers helps families experiencing homelessness secure stable, quality childcare so they can find housing, look for work, and go to domestic violence related meetings, court or medical appointments. In 2018, the program averaged 20 family intakes per month which was fewer than in previous years due to changes in federal funding.<sup>47</sup>
- Bellevue College (BC) provides a Head Start program with 27 slots which are blended with the other child care slots to provide the same rich environment for all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, for a total enrollment of more than 200 children annually in the Early Learning Center. Fifty percent of the children are from BC student and staff families and fifty percent are children from the families of Costco employees. Some of the challenges staff see for the families they serve is lack of transportation, lack of affordable housing, language barriers and issues with domestic violence.<sup>48</sup>
- The State's childcare subsidy program Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) serves low-income families earning up to 200% FPL who are working or participating in a DSHS-approved training activity. Families may still have a substantial co-pay: a family of three earning \$38,000 a year would pay \$425.50 per month for two children in childcare, about 13.5% of their annual income.<sup>49</sup> As of August 2019, there were no wait lists for WCCC.

## Transportation

Reliable public transportation is another key component in people being able to access and retain employment.

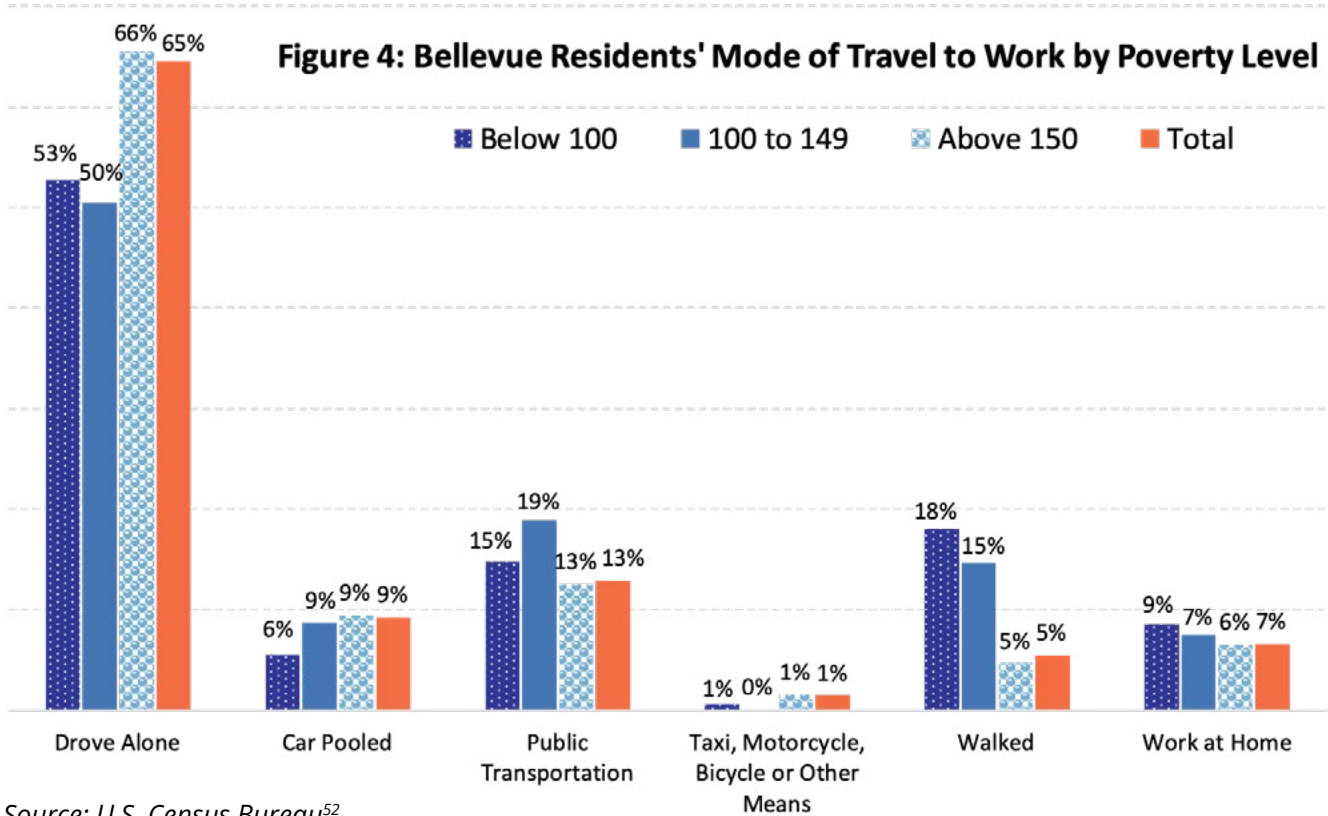
### Community Voice

- More than one-third (40%) of 2019 phone/online survey respondents rated *inadequate public transportation* as a moderate or major community problem, similar to responses in the last 6 phone surveys.<sup>50</sup> Over that same time period, respondents have also rated it as either the highest or second highest-rated household problem.<sup>51</sup>
- In the 2019 provider survey, 62% of respondents reported that their clients needed, but could not find, help with transportation. This was one of the highest rated barriers identified.

"In the area that I live with my family there is no public transportation."

~Consumer Survey

- Both consumers and providers of human services identified lack of bus tickets and services cuts as major gaps. The discount bus tickets that non-profit agencies purchase from King County Metro are the only way many low-income or no-income residents can get to appointments or to work.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau<sup>52</sup>

## Prevalence

- The percentage of Bellevue residents commuting to work by means other than driving alone has slightly increased from 26% in 2000 to 28% in 2013-2017. An increasing percentage of residents took public transportation to get to work. In 2013-2017, about 13% of residents used public transportation to get to work, up from only 7% in 2000.<sup>53</sup>
- As Figure 4 shows, workers in households with incomes below FPL or between 100 and 149% of FPL had the highest proportions of people using public transportation with about 15 and 19% respectively.<sup>54</sup> However, public transportation is not inexpensive, especially if the trip includes transfers and/or a family with multiple members.

## Service Trends

- King County Metro manages the largest commuter van program in the nation. In January 2019 there were 165 vans with the average ridership at 5 participants commuting into Bellevue. With 2 trips per day, this averages 249 working days or 410,850 annual vanpool trips. Recently there has been an increase in vanpool trips to 181 vans which could make the calculation as high as 450,850 trips annually.<sup>55</sup>
- Hopelink has an Education and Outreach Program that provides Getting Around Puget Sound and Public Transit Orientations to help people learn how to use public and volunteer transportation. In 2018 the Hopelink Travel Programs provided a total of 63 events to over 1,764 participants to in Bellevue, including at Bellevue College.<sup>56</sup>

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