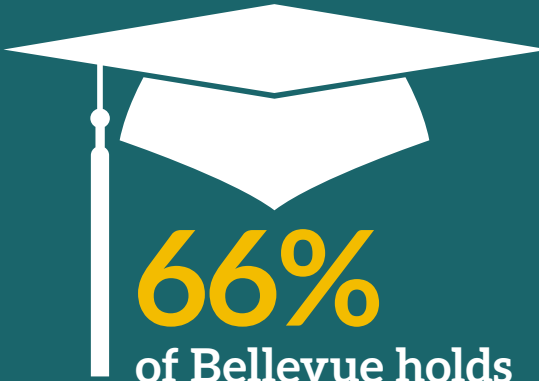


Education and Job Skills to Help Individuals Reach Their Full Potential

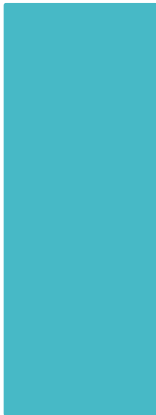
Bellevue **household of four**
(two adults/two children)
must make **\$83,020.56/year**
(\$39.30/hr)



66%
of Bellevue holds
Bachelor's degree
or higher



Job growth continues to outpace population growth in Bellevue



Childcare in EKC
for an infant and
pre-schooler in
full-time care cost
\$30,876/year



GOAL #5: EDUCATION AND JOB SKILLS TO HELP INDIVIDUALS REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

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 has one of the nation's highest minimum wages and unemployment is low, Bellevue residents need to have substantial wages in order to be self-sufficient. To obtain living wage jobs, workers must possess significant education or job skills. Limited opportunities for advanced education as well as the fewer number of positions available in King County offering living wages present barriers for many individuals and families in East King County to make ends meet. Affordable, quality childcare is also important so that families can work and as many consumers and providers have told us, reliable public transportation is another key component in people being able to access and retain 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. For example, over 50% of East King County Work First clients exited to employment compared to 47% state-wide.¹
- During the 2017 State Legislative session, a paid Family Leave bill was passed which allows workers paid time off for the birth of a child or for a serious medical condition of

the worker or the worker's family member. Eligible workers will get 12 weeks of either leave beginning in 2020 or 16 weeks for a combination of both. This bill closes the loop begun by the 2007 State Legislature that passed a family leave program but did not include a way to fund it.²

- In the November 8, 2016 election, voters in Washington State overwhelmingly approved a ballot initiative to help working families. The passage of Initiative 1433 means more than 730,000 Washingtonians will get a raise in the next four years. Minimum wage workers 18 and older will earn \$11 an hour starting in 2017, \$11.50 in 2018, \$12 in 2019, and \$13.50 in 2020. They will also receive paid sick leave beginning 2018.³

Prevalence

Educational Attainment, Age, Race and Gender Effects on Income

- King County is one of the most highly educated communities in the country: 46.1% of county residents hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. **In Bellevue, the percentage of adults age 25 and older in 2015 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.⁴

- Higher levels of education typically results in higher pay benefits and lower unemployment rate for persons age 25 and over. Figure 2 shows national unemployment rates compared to median weekly earnings by education attained.⁵
- A similar picture is true for Bellevue residents in terms of median earnings being higher for those who have more education as shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4.
- Data shows that the “wage gap” between men and women is significant. Families depend on women’s wages more than ever, but women working full time, year round are typically paid less than full-time, year-round male workers in every state. Nationally, women working full time, year round typically make only 78.3 cents for every dollar a man makes and the size of the disparity varies by state. Additionally, women represent about two-thirds of workers who make minimum wage in the U.S. In 2015, Washington State ranked 25th in the wage gap in the U.S.: for every dollar a male earned, a woman earned 79 cents. The gap was the smallest in New York and the largest in Wyoming.⁶ 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

Educational Attainment Trends in Bellevue: 1970 to 2015

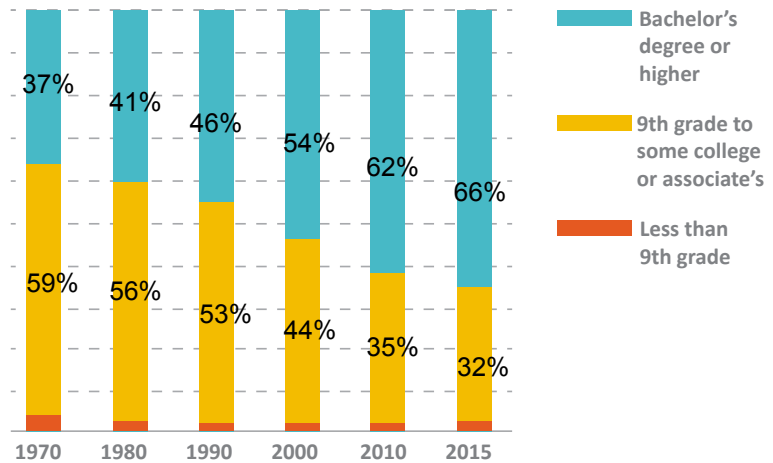
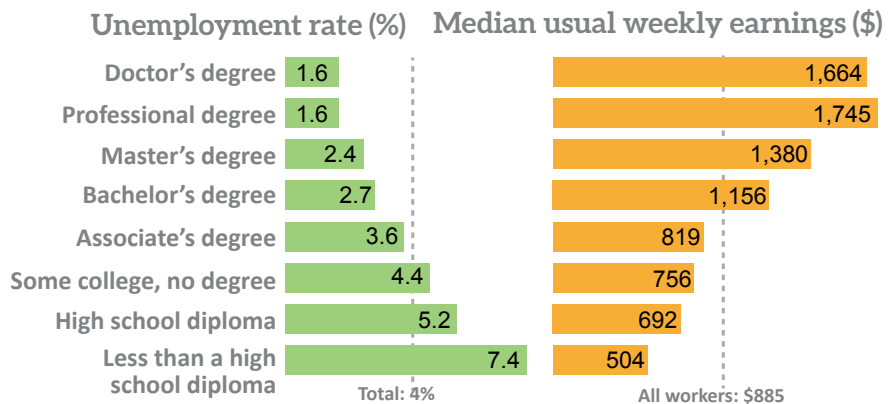


Figure 1 | Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010 Census and 2015 American Community Survey

Unemployment rates and earnings by education attained, 2016



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

Figure 2 | Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics April 2016

Media Earnings of Bellevue Residents by Occupation, 2015

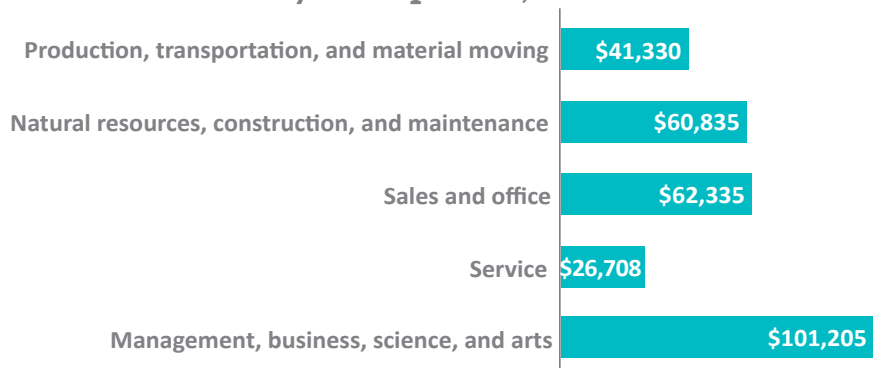


Figure 3 | Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey

children the poverty rate statewide as well as in Bellevue is higher than for two parent families with children.

- 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. According to an analysis by the Pew Research Center, more older Americans – those ages 65 and older – are working than at any time since the turn of the century, and today’s older workers are spending more time on the job than did their peers in previous years. In May 2016, 18.8% of people 65 years and older were employed nationwide compared to 12.8% in May, 2000. Older adults are more likely to be in management, legal and community/social services occupations than the overall workforces and less likely to be in computer and mathematical, food preparation and construction related occupations when compared to the general population.⁷

Economic Well-Being in Washington State and King County

- The unemployment rate in Washington State in June 2017 was 4.5%, lower than in June 2015 (5.3%), and much lower than in 2011 during the recession when it peaked at 8.3%. The rate is now close to what it was pre-recession. (2007, 4.64%).

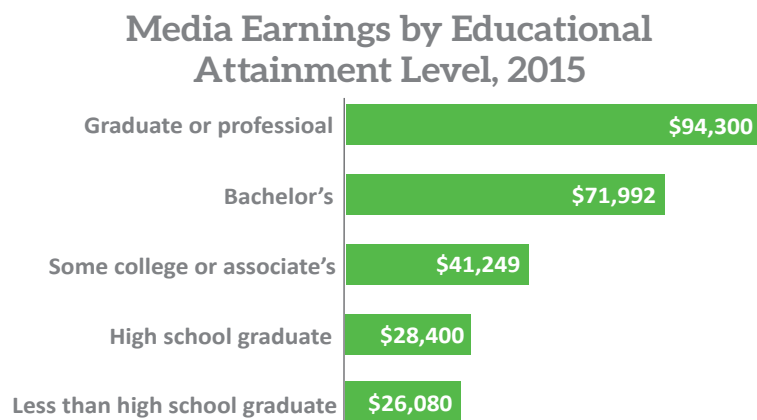


Figure 4 | Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey

During the recession, the unemployment rate in the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett Metropolitan Division also increased, from 3.9% in 2007 to 8.3% in 2011. In 2012, the unemployment rate began to decrease to 5.6%, and in June 2017, the rate dropped even further to 3.4%.⁸

- Despite the lower unemployment rate and a robust economic recovery, national data indicates that many people are still struggling to make enough to pay for all their basic needs. Economists observe that wage growth is the slowest that has been recorded for three years. The U.S. Department of Labor showed a 2.5% wage growth in July 2017 but some economists believe that it should be closer to 3.5% at this stage of an economic recovery. Reasons for this slower growth include fewer number of people who are prime working age- 25-64- who are not looking for a job but might if wages were higher, and more young, inexperienced workers in the labor force who earn less than the older workers who are leaving jobs to retire.⁹
- In 2015, 591,000 (37%) of children statewide lived in households earning less than the basic needs threshold, 200% of the federal poverty level (in 2015, \$48,500 for a family of four). The percentage is higher for children of color: 62% of Latino and 60% 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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

Unemployment Assistance Provides Support

- Unemployment insurance is a federal/state benefit most often implemented by states as a tax on employers. It 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. 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.¹²
- In King County, initial unemployment insurance claims are steadily decreasing. In June 2016 there were 13,674 claims; in June 2017, these claims dropped to 12,800. Statewide initial unemployment claims also decreased.¹³
- Studies show that people on unemployment benefits spend their money on the basics, with nearly 70% going to food, housing and transportation. 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.¹⁴ With the rising cost of living in all these areas, the percentage spent is now likely higher.

Recent and Future Job Market

- In June 2017, there were 57,009 job vacancies statewide compared to 53,403 in June 2016, a 7% increase. Most job vacancies are found in the Seattle-King

County Work Force Development Area (23.3%). In June 2017 Seattle –King County, there were 15,938 vacancies but 35,832 job seekers, resulting in a 33.8% gap. The jobs that had the largest number of vacancies were for jobs that require advanced training including computer-related such as software developers, registered nurses and marketing managers.¹⁵

- **Job growth continues to outpace population growth in Bellevue. About 1.3 to 1.4 jobs are generated by household, which indicates a greater demand for housing, leading to higher house values.**

Between 1995 and 2015, the number of jobs grew at an annual growth rate of 1.8%. Information technology is Bellevue's biggest job cluster, with the largest growth in the number of jobs between 2009 and 2015 making Bellevue a regional hub for IT. Business services is the second highest job cluster, followed by health, beauty and fitness and tourism which witnessed job growth over the last six years.¹⁶

Minimum Wage vs. Living Wage

- Washington State's minimum wage in 2017 is \$11.00, one of the highest in the country. However, an adult making the minimum wage working full time and supporting two children is under the federal poverty level (FPL), \$20,160 for a family of three.
- 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. One 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.¹⁷ The web-based King County Self-Sufficiency Calculator computes self-sufficiency wages for different family types anywhere in the county. The numbers in Figure 5 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.

- Using the calculations from Figure 5, in Bellevue, the lowest calculated living wage for a single adult is \$4.69 more than the current minimum wage and a living wage for a single adult with two children is \$15.30 more.

Community Perceptions

- In the 2017 phone/online survey, 8 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. Forty-four percent of 2017 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 2015 and higher than the rating in 2013. This problem area ranks fourth amongst all the community problem areas.
- Ratings of *unemployment* as a community problem continued to significantly increase every year since 2003, peaking in 2011 at

“Families are having more challenges in making ends meet. Wages not keeping up with rising rental costs.”

— Provider survey

55%. For example, in 2007, only 16.7% of respondents reported unemployment as a major/moderate community problem. In 2017, *unemployment* was considered a major/moderate problem by 20% of respondents, a

significant decrease compared to 2015 when it was 27%, moving from the first tier to the second tier of community problems.

- At the household level, 15% of respondents in 2017 ranked *not being able to find work that supports yourself or your family* as a major/moderate problem, about the same as 2011, 2013 and 2015.
- In 2017 the phone/online survey asked a series of questions about employment issues rather than on the effects of the recession as had been done in previous surveys. Sixty-five percent of respondents (2 out of 3) were employed, either employed full-time 54% and 4% part-time with only 9% unemployed. Of the residents who were employed, 11% have more than one job. Nearly half (44%) of those who have more than one job said they could not afford to live in Bellevue if they only had one job.
- Staff at the King County Library in Bellevue continue to offer programs that provide assistance to job seekers, including drop in employment assistance, and having librarians with laptops at the Crossroads Mini-City Hall help teach people how to apply for jobs on-line. Hopelink offers similar employment assistance at Mini-City Hall as well.
- Two specific populations that staff at Bellevue College identified as having challenges in job search are students who are immigrants and post-prison students. For immigrants the challenge is finding work with limited English skills so they can continue to pay for their college costs. For students with a prison record, they are not

2017 LIVING WAGE BELLEVUE, WA	
Family Type	Self sufficiency standard Bellevue, WA
Single adult	\$15.69/hr
	\$33,135.23/yr
Single adult with a school-aged child (6-8 years)	\$26.30/hr
	\$55,547.62/yr
Single adult with a school-aged child and a toddler (12-24 months)	\$37.28/hr
	\$78,741.93/yr
Two adults (both working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$19.65/hr/adult
	\$83,010.56/yr
Two adults (one working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$39.30/hr
	\$83,010.56/yr

Figure 5 | The Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State

eligible for financial aid and have challenges getting jobs and have an especially hard time finding housing due to their record as well. Overall, lack of funds for transportation, even with low-income bus passes, and lack of late-hour bus service for both students and custodial staff at the college is also an ongoing problem.

- 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. One key informant working in the immigrant community stated that even though many more people have “smart phones’ with internet access, it is very difficult to complete a job application on a small electronic device.
- Results from the Latino Community Survey conducted in 2016 in East King County by

Promotores, outreach workers based on the community health worker model, found that about 16% of the 170 respondents identified economic security as something that is missing for them in the community.

- In the Next Door Survey the third highest household problem identified was (*not being able to find work to support you and your family.*) The second highest community problem was (*people having jobs that don't pay for the basics of food, shelter and clothing.*)

Specific Populations

Note: See *People with Disabilities, Older Adults, Youth and Immigrants and Refugees* sections for more information on education and job skills within these populations.

Childcare

Childcare Availability

- In most parts of the State the number of child care providers and the total capacity for children in care has stabilized after a declining trend that began in 2013. As of December 2016, there were 5,542 licensed childcare homes and centers statewide, with 165,404 slots, about the same as 2015; 28% of them are center-based and 63% are family childcare. In King County, there were 1,902 providers with 62,133 slots in 2016 compared to 1,946 providers with 61,101 slots in 2015.¹⁸ Child Care Resources, the resource and referral agency in King County, reported that in June 2017 in their database for East King County there were 506 child care centers and child care homes, compared to 491 in 2015. This represents 21,647 slots; 16,864 in child care centers and 2,384 in family child care homes. The remainder of the slots are in exempt school age programs (1,009) and school age programs (1,390).¹⁹
- For many families their first choice for childcare 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.²⁰ 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. About 23% 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 several years as more parents working night shifts and weekends usually have a very difficult time finding licensed childcare.

of childcare providers in King County, childcare costs can exceed the cost of housing or college tuition, especially if using rates for full time care for an infant at a child care center.²²

- The State’s childcare subsidy program Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) serves low-income families earning up to 200% of the federal poverty level that are working or participating in a DSHS approved training activity. For some families that qualify for subsidies they may still have a substantial co-pay: a single mother earning \$38,000 a year would pay \$554 per month for two children in childcare, about 17.5% of her annual income. For parents who do not qualify for subsidies and earn the median

“Biggest issue is childcare, especially afterschool for one day a week when there is early release. Many parents don’t qualify for scholarships from any of the groups (school, state, non-profit) so there is a huge gap.”

— Key informant interview

Childcare Affordability

- The cost of childcare and the change of rates over the past year vary greatly around the State. **Childcare for an East King County family with an infant and pre-schooler in full-time care can cost on average \$30,876/year** as shown in Figure 6. Childcare costs in East King County are the highest in the County. Currently, in East King County the average cost of care is \$16,560/year for an infant, 21% of the Seattle-Bellevue 2015 median household income.²¹ According to a survey

income, childcare costs for an infant could consume between 15% and 52% of the family budget.²³

- 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. In August 2016 the State’s Quality Rating and Improvement System, Early Achievers, became mandatory for providers that accept WCCC subsidies. Some providers chose not to enroll in Early Achievers, but the impact on the availability of slots for these subsidies was smaller than expected. As of June 2017, of the 506 childcare centers and

Slots	Center	Family Child Care	School Age Only (licensed)	School Age Only (exempt)	Total
East	16864	2384	1390	1099	21647

Cost	Child Care Centers	Family Child Care
Infant (under 12 mos)	\$1,855.02	\$1,205.90
Toddler (12 mos-2.5 yrs)	\$1,550.97	\$1,141.49
Preschool (2.5-5 yrs)	\$1,299.88	\$1,104.67
School age (full day K and up)	\$955.00 (FT)	\$733.33 (F)

Figure 6 | Source: Child Care Resources

family childcare homes in East King County, 134 (26%) report accepting WCCC subsidies, fewer than 2 years ago.²⁴

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. 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.²⁵ In 2011, the State Department of Early Learning (DEL) rolled out Early Achievers, the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System that offers training, awards, scholarships, coaching and consultation to early learning providers in childcare centers. This began as a voluntary, no-cost program that will help providers improve the quality of their care. In Washington State almost 3,607 providers have joined since July 2012. In King County, there are 1,170 child care centers, family child care, and Head Start and State Pre-School sites enrolled in Early Achievers with an estimated 23,854 children in those programs.²⁶ During the 2015 State Legislative session, the program became part of the Early Start Act, and on August 1, 2016, Early Achievers became mandatory.

Additional funds were allocated for technical assistance and training for providers to participate in the Early Achievers program, and organizations like Child Care Aware, a program of Child Care Resources, provides required training and get help from a Technical Assistance

Specialist. When the program is ready for rating, the University of Washington provides an on-site evaluation.

- 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 between \$24,450-\$29,450/year while a kindergarten teacher earns on average \$58,180-\$73,470.²⁷ The lack of competitive wages makes it difficult to recruit and retain educated childcare workers. In 2012 the turnover rate for teaching assistants and teachers in King County was 38% and 18% respectively, far greater than the turnover rate found among elementary school teachers. High turnover rates have two negative impacts: they cost the employer additional costs to recruit, hire and train new workers, which is especially significant for child care providers that operate on slim margins. Another impact is the effect on the child, as studies have shown that high turnover discourages the development and maintenance of consistent relationships between children and their caregivers.²⁸

Community Perceptions

- People’s perception of affordable and quality childcare as a community problem increased significantly from 2009 to 2011. 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. In 2015 in the phone/online survey only the respondents who indicated that they had children in the household under age 18 were asked questions about childcare, so previous results are not comparable. Of those who were asked the questions about childcare, 40% rated this issue as a major/moderate problem in the community. In 2017, which does provide comparability, 44% rated affordable childcare as a top community problem, ranking 4th highest.

- In the past, 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 in 2013 were 8% and 5% respectively, about the same as 2011. However, in 2015 when only respondents with children under age 18 were asked the childcare questions, 21% rated it as a major/moderate problem making affordable childcare the top ranked household problems. In 2017, affordable childcare again ranked as the top household problem with 22% of respondents rating it as such.

Transportation

- The percentage of Bellevue residents commuting to work by means other than driving alone has steadily increased from 26% in 2000 to 33% in 2008-2010 to 35% in 2011-2013. An increasing percentage of residents took public transportation to get to work. In 2011-2013, about 13% of residents used public transportation to get to work, up from only 7% in 2000.²⁹
- As Figure 7 shows, workers in households, with incomes below poverty or between 100-149% of the poverty level had the highest proportions of people using public transportation with about 21 and 19 percent respectively. However, public transportation is not inexpensive, especially if the trip includes transfers or a family with multiple members. 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. Previously there was only 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,

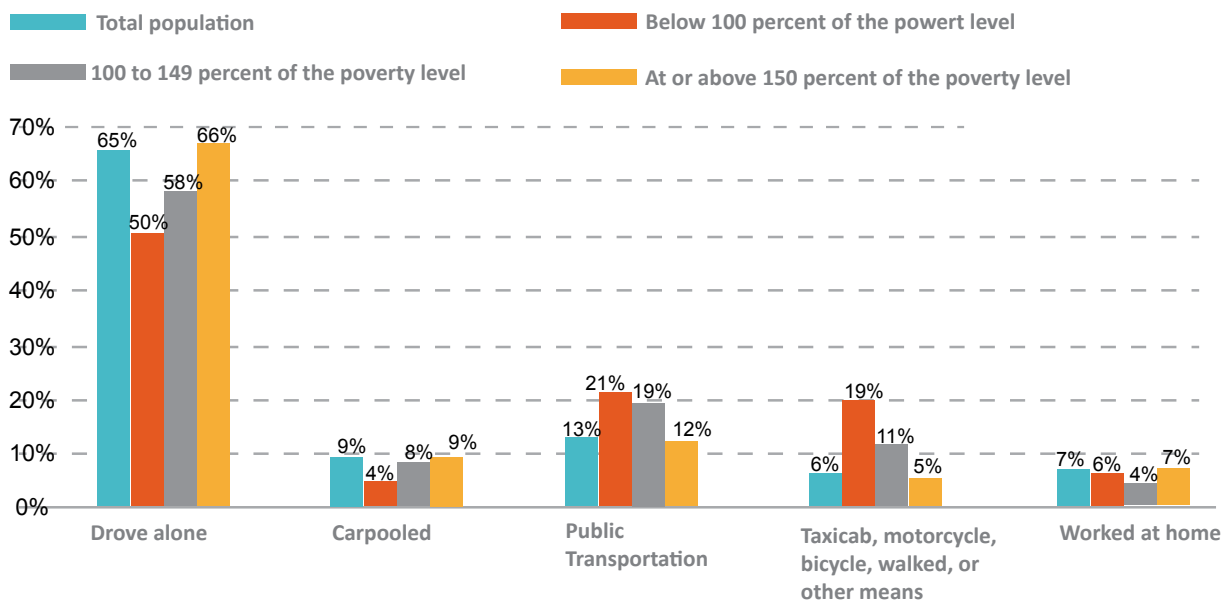


Figure 7 Bellevue Residents' Mode of Travel by Federal Poverty Level | Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2013 American Community Survey

including transportation. The other group is people with no income and/or experience homelessness. The recommendation of the Advisory Council was that such a fare be established, as funding allowed; 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. In March 2015 the Orca LIFT reduced fare program was rolled out allowing people with a minimum of documentation to apply, purchase a card, then load funds on it for use on King County Metro and Kitsap County buses, Sound Transit Link Light Rail and the Seattle Street Car and King County Water Taxi.³⁰

Community Perceptions

- More than one-third (39%) of 2017 phone/online survey respondents rated inadequate public transportation as a moderate or major community problem, similar to 2015, 2013, 2011 and 2009 responses. It was the sixth highest rated community problem in 2017.
- In the last four phone/online surveys (2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015), Bellevue residents cited inadequate public transportation as the highest rated household problem. In 2017 it was rated by 21% of respondents as the second highest major or moderate household problem.
- In the 2017 provider survey, 70% of respondents reported that their clients needed, but could not find, help with transportation. This was the highest rated barrier identified.
- 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. Residents of the Congregations for the Homeless men's shelter mentioned

missed job opportunities because a bus route to a potential job did not have schedules that worked for their new jobs. Bellevue College staff identified these gaps: lack of money for tickets, lack of late night bus routes and inefficient transportation for job seeking and then for employment. This also affects Bellevue College custodial staff as well as students.

- In the Next Door survey *inadequate public transportation* was rated the top household problem and the second highest community problem.

Service Trends

WorkFirst Participation By Bellevue-area Residents

WorkFirst is Washington State's temporary cash assistance program 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. The program provides training and education for low-income parents working at least 20 hours per week. In April, 2017 there were 27,128 WorkFirst cases in the State, almost 10% less than one year ago; the number has seen fluctuations of increases and decreases due to policy and program changes over the years that affected client eligibility. In July 2017, 427 low-income parents in the King Eastside Local Planning Area which includes Bellevue were enrolled in WorkFirst a 13.9% decrease compared to a year ago. The median wage earned by King Eastside WorkFirst clients is \$12.95/hour, slightly higher than the statewide median wage for all WorkFirst clients of \$12.22.³¹

Available Supports and Training for Employment

- The Women's Center for Career Connections at Bellevue College (BC) helps people enrolled in WorkFirst, immigrants, homemakers, veterans and others to find living-wage jobs and obtain job training

through career transition courses, career pathway planning, job placement and networking connections. Staff report forming a number of collaborations: with employers to provide internships and part-time, seasonal, and full-time jobs; partnerships with STEM associations and funders to provide support to clients interested in STEM careers; collaborations with veterans groups and military bases to promote and leverage services; connections to human service agencies in the area to help clients meet their basic living needs while pursuing job search or career transition; partnership with WorkSource to leverage services.

- The Preparing for Work program at Bellevue College (BC) helps meet the refugee/immigrant community's need for job and English skills training. Three classes are offered: Preparing for Work, On the Job Communication and Working in English. BC served 1,450 immigrant and refugee students in FY 2015-2016 and 1,319 in FY 2016-2017. English language learners focus on skills to choose a career pathway, find and keep a job. Staff reports about an important change to the ESL program because of a new federal law called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or WIOA. Under this new law, ESL programs can help students to improve their English skills for academic or job readiness goals. The new law excludes students who want to learn English for life and survival skills or to be active community participants. The implications of WIOA is a gap in services being created for the refugees and immigrants who do not want to improve their English for an academic or job readiness goal.³²

“There is a need for more opportunities for job advancement. People tell me that when their rents go up, they have to get another job to pay for the increase.”
— Key informant interview

- 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. WorkSource provides information about program and service eligibility that participants may not know about.³³
- 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 2015 HERO House was able to add additional staff to assist members with supported employment opportunities and a program generalist to increase the membership overall of the program. HERO House has extensive partnerships with local employers who provide jobs for members.³⁴
 - Hopelink's workforce development program provides employment support and adult basic education to low-income individuals in East King County. With the low unemployment rate, people tend to think that anyone who wants a job can get a job. But Hopelink's programs continue to receive people who do want a job, but can't get a job due to multiple obstacles to employment, such as no GED or high school diploma, minimal skills, poor work history, lack of an education, low English language skill, inadequate childcare, unreliable transportation, criminal record, and health concerns.³⁵
- The YWCA provides housing, employment and training at The Family Village in Redmond in which a number of former Bellevue residents live. Some of the trends

reported by staff include that though there is an increase in job placement at both ends of the spectrum (high wages requiring technical expertise and low wage jobs in growing sectors like retail and health care), more of their clients are “stuck” in low wage jobs, needing sometimes two or three jobs in order to pay the bills. Job retention rates are improving due to more stable jobs. Clients who have been unemployed long term are still having the most problems finding jobs, though there is some improvement there, too. Lastly, lack of affordable housing and transportation are two of the greatest barriers to people finding jobs and getting to jobs.³⁶

2016, the program averaged 19 family intakes per month which was fewer than in previous years due to changes in federal funding. In July 2017, the Washington Department of Early Learning shifted the distribution of child care subsidy for homeless families from Child Care Resources to DSHS Working Connections Childcare; this may mean that some vulnerable families will no longer be eligible and lose CCR’s full-service approach.³⁹

- Child Care Resources also supports a network of Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups, play groups specifically designed to provide culturally appropriate support for Family, Friends, and Neighbor caregivers and parents. More than 50 groups meet weekly around the county, holding sessions in multiple languages led by

Childcare Supports and Services

- Child Care Resources (CCR) provides assistance to Bellevue families in accessing quality childcare. In 2015 they helped more than 15,000 families in need of childcare to search for matching providers.³⁷ 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 1, 2017, there were 7 families on the waiting list for CCR’s Bellevue residents’ scholarship program.³⁸
- There is a growing need in King County for programs specifically providing childcare to homeless families. Child Care Resources case managers help families secure stable, quality childcare so they can find housing, look for work, and go to domestic violence related meetings, court or medical appointments. This provides children in crisis a safe and stimulating environment with routines, structure and opportunities to thrive. In

“We are seeing more and more families struggling to make ends meet, pay rent and put food on their tables each and every day.”

— Provider survey

trained facilitators; participants receive information about child development and community resources. In 2016 Play and Learn groups reached over 4,000 King County children

and informal caregivers; more than 60% spoke a language other than English at home. 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. Two Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups are currently meeting in Bellevue, one conducted in Chinese and English at the Newport Way Library and one conducted in Spanish and English at the Lake Hills Library.⁴⁰

- Child Care Resources provides training and technical assistance to childcare providers for quality improvement. Staff reports that with the Department of Early Learning

licensing changes, more providers are seeking help from CCR for training and one-on-one in-person support and translation/interpretation services.⁴¹

- In Bellevue, 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 140-160 in the Early Learning Center. Most are BC families but there are also BC staff and faculty families as well as the families of Costco employees. These families receive priority enrollment and are charged on a sliding fee scale. Most quarters, about 25% of families have childcare subsidized from DSHS through the Working Connections Childcare Program. In 2016-2017, 33% of students qualified for free meals with the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program. Some of the challenges staff see for their families is lack of transportation, lack of access to alternate care when their child is sick and they need to miss school, more children with special needs, and difficulty with maintaining DSHS funding.⁴²
- Bellevue School District (BSD) had 151 Head Start slots but in June 2016 was notified by Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) that they would no longer be allocated to BSD due to cuts in federal funding and greater need in other parts of King County as determined by PSESD assessments. BSD staff reached out to the Bellevue Schools Foundation and they, with the BSD School Board, Eastside Pathways, the City of Bellevue and many community members, were able to fund raise for funds to increase childcare slots for low-income families whose children were in those Head Start classrooms. BSD staff advocated with the State Department of Early Learning to perform a new Saturation Study which determines level of need; that study placed BSD in Expansion Priority Group 4 out of

8 which is higher than many areas that received the additional Head Start slots that were lost.⁴³

- Bellevue SD has 149 Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) slots for the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, 39 preschoolers receive tuition-assistance through district, Bellevue Schools Foundation, City of Bellevue and state funds. Eighty-five elementary school age children receive tuition-assistance to attend the district's before/after and summer ELP programs. Approximately 2000 spaces are available in the district's preschool and school age programs combined. Based upon the 2015-2016 DEL ECEAP and Head Start Saturation study, there are an estimated 342 3 and 4 year olds eligible for ECEAP, and the number of unserved, eligible students are 225. With the additional 59 ECEAP slots awarded to the district, this leaves 58 eligible and likely to attend students without access to comprehensive preschool services and programs. Staff reports that demand for their programs is outpacing the supply with school facilities close to capacity. They are seeing an increase in children whose families are homeless, from other countries, and who need tuition assistance. About 21% of the early learning and extended learning program participants receive some form of assistance, more than the 19% of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch. As of April 2017, there were 224 children on the waitlist for childcare for the 2017-2018 school year. The City of Bellevue scholarships to families are quickly allocated even before the school year begins.⁴⁴

Implications for Action

- 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.

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