Fact Sheet: 
The minimum wage and economic insecurity in Tacoma

Low wages undermining Tacoma’s families, women, people of color

- 77.5% of Tacoma families receiving food stamps had at least one member working, and 25% had 2 or more members working.¹
- Of low-wage workers in Washington: 29% are parents with children at home, and 46% have attended college. They are 55% White; 24% Latino; 21% Black, Asian, and other ethnicities.²
- 6 in 10 minimum wage workers in Washington are women.³ Women comprise a majority of low-wage workers in food service, accommodations, child care, and residential care facilities.
- 49% of Tacoma single moms with kids at home live below the federal poverty level.⁴

Studies show Tacoma’s existing minimum wage falls short

Living wage studies for Tacoma-Pierce County suggest $11.00/hour is necessary for basic support of a single person working full time.⁵ However, a household of one adult and one preschool child requires between $21.21 and $24.06/hour – about $4,000 per month – to meet basic needs.⁶

Average Monthly Wages in Pierce County, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited service restaurants</td>
<td>$1,408</td>
<td>$1,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full service restaurants</td>
<td>$1,864</td>
<td>$1,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars</td>
<td>$1,600</td>
<td>$1,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>$1,999</td>
<td>$1,835</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Opportunity Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Quarterly Workforce Indicators Explorer Application

39,000 workers in Tacoma earn less than $16.00 per hour and would experience wage gains as a result of a $15.00 minimum wage.⁷
Profiles of people working in Pierce County’s low-wage industries

Limited-Service (Fast Food) Restaurants

- 8,000 people in Pierce County are employed in fast food establishments.
- 60% are female; 50% are over age 25, including 26% over age 35; 13% are under age 19.
- Average monthly wages in 2013 were $1,348 for all workers, and $2,374 for men aged 45-54 (the highest-earning demographic group).

Full-Service Restaurants

- 7,500 people in Pierce County are employed in full-service restaurants.
- 54% are female; 71% are over age 25, including 40% over age 35; 4% are under age 19.
- Average monthly earnings (including reported tips) in 2013 were $1,864 for men and $1,713 for women ($2,216 for men aged 45-54, the highest earning demographic group).

Drinking Establishments (Bars)

- 600 people in Pierce County are employed in bars.
- 55% are women; 54% are over age 35; 46% are ages 21-34.
- Average monthly earnings (including reported tips) in 2013 were $1,600 for men and $1,527 for women ($1,747 for women aged 45-54, the highest earning demographic group).

Traveler Accommodations

- 1400 people in Pierce County are employed in hotels, motels, and similar businesses.
- 61% are women; 83% are over age 25, including 59% over age 25.
- Average monthly earnings (including reported tips) in 2013 were $1999 for men and $1835 for women.

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1. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013.