In 2010, there were 10.5 million individuals classified as working poor in the United States: people who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force – that is, working or looking for work – but whose incomes still fell below the official poverty level.

THE WORKING POOR

In 2010, there were 10.5 million individuals classified as working poor in the United States: people who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force – that is, working or looking for work – but whose incomes still fell below the official poverty level.

THE LIKELIHOOD OF BEING WORKING POOR IS THE HIGHEST IN TWO DECADES

$7.65 MONTANA MINIMUM WAGE

$18.00 ESTIMATED LIVING WAGE

MONTANA HAS THE 12TH HIGHEST MINIMUM WAGE IN THE NATION

WHO ARE THE WORKING POOR?

National population by family type:
- Married couple w/ children: 34%
- Single father: 8%
- Single mother: 42%
- Other w/o children: 16%

Likelihood of that family type being working poor:
- Married couple w/ children: 7%
- Single father: 18%
- Single mother: 28%
- Other w/o children: 16%

In MONTANA

34% of working families are LOW INCOME.

The typical working poor person is a white female with a high school diploma and with family responsibilities.

JOBS LIKE:
- Security guards
- Nurses’ aides
- Home health care aides
- Child care workers
- Educational assistants
- Ambulance drivers
- Bank tellers
- Pharmacy assistants
- Etc.

ARE CONSIDERED LOW-WAGE, LOW-REWARD POSITIONS

HOW OLD ARE THE WORKING POOR?

Montana population, broken down by age:
- 16-24 years: 9%
- 25-34 years: 21%
- 35-44 years: 23%
- 45-54 years: 30%
- 55+ years: 9%

THE LIKELIHOOD OF BEING WORKING POOR IS INVERSELY RELATED TO A PERSON’S LEVEL OF EDUCATION

HOW EDUCATED ARE THE WORKING POOR?

Montana population, broken down by education level:
- Less than high school diploma: 16%
- High school graduate, no college: 16%
- Some college, no degree: 21%
- Two-year degree: 21%
- Bachelor’s degree or higher: 23%

WHY CAN’T THE WORKING POOR EARN MORE INCOME?

There are three major labor-market problems: unemployment, involuntary part-time work, and low earnings.

SOURCES:

Thale Dillon is the director of Montana KIDS COUNT at the Bureau.