State policies that promote the economic security of our nation’s families can help offset larger economic and social conditions that make it difficult for families to get by and get ahead. This four-part profile provides data on District of Columbia’s low-income children and families and highlights state policy choices regarding families’ work attachment and advancement, income adequacy, and asset development.

In District of Columbia, there are 51,860 families, with 97,626 children. Among these children, 48 percent live in families that are low-income, defined as income below twice the federal poverty level (nationally, 45 percent of children live in low-income families). Young children are particularly likely to live in low-income families.

Low wages and a lack of higher education contribute to families having insufficient incomes. Nationally, 48 percent of low-income children have at least one parent who works full-time, year-round; in District of Columbia, the figure is 29 percent.

Parents without a college education often struggle to earn enough to support a family, but only 46 percent of adults in District of Columbia have a bachelor’s degree. A substantial portion of children in District of Columbia whose parents only have a high school diploma--77 percent--are low income.

Children of foreign-born parents are also more likely to be low income than children of native-born parents.
Children in District of Columbia by income level, 2011

- Above low income: 52%
- Less than 100% FPL: 30%
- 100-200% FPL: 19%
- Low income: 48%

Employment status of parents of low-income children, 2011

- Not employed: 29%
- Part-time or part-year: 32%
- Full-time, year-round: 42%

Percent of children who are low-income by parents' nativity, 2011

- Children with native-born parents: 50%
- Children with immigrant parents: 52%

WORK ATTACHMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

State Choices to Promote Child Care Affordability and Access

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Subsidies

- Earnings limit for a single-parent family of 3: $40,225/year
- Co-payment as percent of income for family of 3 at 150% FPL, 1 child in care: 5%
- Providers prohibited from charging additional fees: Yes

Provider payment rates at least 75th percentile of market rate: No
Low-income children who have parents working full- or part-time, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District of Columbia</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent employed full-time</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent employed part-time</td>
<td>29%</td>
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</tbody>
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State Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit

Refundable credit available

No

Benefit structure

Credit of 32% of federal credit

Max benefit for family with 2 qualifying children

$672/year

State Choices to Promote Access to Health Insurance

Public Health Insurance for Parents

Applicant earnings limit for single parent with 2 children

$36,396/year

Parents eligible up to same limit as children, single parent with 2 children

No

Legal immigrants eligible for state-funded benefits when barred from federal

Yes (no immigration test)

Legal immigrants otherwise barred from benefits eligible for prenatal care

No

Public Health Insurance for Children

Medicaid income eligibility limit as % of FPL for children ages 1-5 in family of 3

300%

Medicaid income eligibility limit as % of FPL for children ages 6-19 in family of 3

300%

SCHIP (separate program) income eligibility as % of FPL for children in family of 3

No separate SCHIP

Health insurance status by age, 2007

Employer-based health insurance coverage, 2000 and 2006
State Choices to Promote Access to Benefits for the Under- and Unemployed

**Unemployment Insurance**
- State counts most recent earnings when determining eligibility\(^{17}\), Yes
- Eligible if seeking part-time work\(^{19}\), Yes, in some cases\(^{18}\)
- State has general provision recognizing "good cause" for quitting work\(^{20}\), No\(^{18}\)

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance**
- Earnings limit for a single-parent family of 3\(^{21}\), $6,468/year

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**INCOME ADEQUACY**

**State Choices to Increase and Supplement Wages**

**Minimum Wage Standards**
- Indexed to inflation\(^{24}\), No

**State Earned Income Tax Credit**
- Refundable credit available\(^{25}\), Yes
- Percent of federal EITC\(^{25}\), 40%

**State Choices to Reduce Tax Burdens**

**Income Tax Liability**
- Income tax threshold for single-parent family of 3\(^{26}\), $26,200/year
- Income tax threshold for two-parent family of 4\(^{26}\), $27,300/year
- Income tax burden for single-parent family of 3 at 100% FPL\(^{26}\), $-1,246/year

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Official unemployment rate, 2007\(^{22}\)

- U.S.: 4.6%
- District of Columbia: 5.7%

Part-time workers who want full-time work, 2003\(^{23}\)

- U.S.: 13%
- District of Columbia: 22%

Income tax burden for two-parent family of 4 at 100% FPL\(^{26}\), $-805/year
Median annual household income for family of four, 2006:

- U.S.: $70,354
- District of Columbia: $71,571

Workers covered by a union, 1987 and 2007:

- 1987: District of Columbia 20%, U.S. 14%
- 2007: District of Columbia 19%, U.S. 13%
**State Choices to Promote Access to Paid Leave**

*Family and Medical Leave*

State provisions for paid leave<sup>29</sup> None

**State Choices to Promote Adequate Benefits for the Under- and Unemployed**

**Unemployment Insurance**

| Minimum weekly benefit (no dependents)<sup>30</sup> | $50/week |
| Additional dependent allowance provided<sup>30</sup> | No |
| Weekly benefit amount is indexed to average weekly wage<sup>31</sup> | Yes |
| Potential duration of benefits<sup>32</sup> | 19 - 26 weeks |

**Food Stamps**

| Legal immigrants eligible for state-funded benefits when barred from federal<sup>34</sup> | No |

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance**

| Annual maximum benefit for family of 3<sup>21</sup> | $4,548/year |
| Treatment of child support income<sup>35</sup> | Up to $150 passed through. Amount disregarded for purposes of eligibility and benefits. |
ASSET DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION

State Policy Choices to Promote Asset Development

Individual Development Accounts

State-supported IDA program in operation\textsuperscript{36} Yes

State Choices to Promote Asset Protection

Public Health Insurance for Parents

Assets disregarded for eligibility determination\textsuperscript{13} Yes

Public Health Insurance for Children

Assets disregarded for Medicaid eligibility\textsuperscript{27} Yes

Assets disregarded for SCHIP (separate program) eligibility\textsuperscript{13} No separate SCHIP

Food Stamps

Treatment of vehicles in asset test\textsuperscript{38} Aligned to TANF cash assistance rules

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance

Assets disregarded for eligibility determination\textsuperscript{21} No

Treatment of vehicles in asset test\textsuperscript{21} Excludes all vehicles owned by household

Children who are “asset poor,” 2004\textsuperscript{39}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S.</th>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
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Homeownership rate, 2007\textsuperscript{40}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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DATA NOTES AND SOURCES

Data were compiled from 50-state sources. Some state policy decisions may have changed since these data were collected.

1. National data were calculated from the 2011 American Community Survey, representing information from 2011. State data were calculated from the 2009-2011 American Community Survey, representing information from the years 2009 to 2011.
3. If the state calculates co-payments based on the cost of care, figure reflects the co-payment for a 4-year-old in licensed, nonaccredited center care at the maximum state payment rate.
5. States were asked to report state reimbursement rates and the 75th percentile of market rates for their state's most populous city, country, or region. Data reflect state reimbursement rates (higher rates may be available for particular types of care). Rates are considered below the 75th percentile if they are based on an out-dated market rate survey (more than 2 years old).
7. The benefit cannot exceed the claimant’s tax liability.
8. Figure reflects limit under Medicaid plan with highest income eligibility limit for parents, taking into account the value of earnings disregards (which may be time-limited in some cases).
9. Value reflects comparison of applicant earnings limit for a single parent with 2 children to the highest Medicaid or SCHIP program’s income eligibility limit for children ages 6-19.
10. Lawful permanent residents (LPRs) are generally barred from federal benefits during their first 5 years as LPRs, unless they entered the U.S. before 8/22/96. Exceptions include refugees and U.S. veterans (and their families). See data source for more details.
11. States have the option of using federal State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) funds to provide prenatal care to women regardless of immigration status. They can also extend prenatal care to immigrant women using state funds.
12. Limit includes SCHIP-funded Medicaid expansions, where applicable.
14. .
15. Figures reflect the percent of of children (under age 18) and adults (ages 18-64) who did not have health insurance coverage at any point during the year.
16. .
17. Figures reflect the percent of children under age 18 and the percent of adults under 65 who were covered by employer-based health insurance during at least part of the year.
18. .
19. Figures reflect the percent of children under age 18 and the percent of adults under 65 who were covered by employer-based health insurance during at least part of the year.
20. In most states, the base period consists of the first 4 of the 5 most recently completed quarters. Some states allow claimants to use an alternative base period that includes more recent earnings.
21. State extends eligibility to persons seeking part-time work only if they have a history of part-time work or meet other limited criteria.
23. A general “good cause” provision extends eligibility to persons who leave their jobs for “personal emergencies” or “compelling circumstances”, which should include—among others—child care conflicts, illness, domestic violence, and spousal relocation.
Eligibility determinations, however, may vary in practice. States may also specifically recognize certain reasons as "good cause"; for more information see Appendix B in Rebecca Smith, Rick McHugh, Andrew Stettner, and Nancy Segal, Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Confronting the Failure of State Unemployment Insurance Systems to Serve Women and Working Families, National Employment Law Project, 2003. Rebecca Smith, Rick McHugh, Andrew Stettner, and Nancy Segal, Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Confronting the Failure of State Unemployment Insurance Systems to Serve Women and Working Families, National Employment Law Project, July 2003.


Figure reflects the percent of people age 16 and above who do not have a job but are available for and actively seeking work. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Unemployment Rates for States, Annual Average Rankings, 2007," http://www.bls.gov (accessed March 14, 2008).

Figure reflects the percent of part-time workers who are available to work full-time, but usually work less than 35 hours per week due to slack work or unfavorable business conditions, inability to find full-time work, or seasonal declines in demand. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 2003, "Estimates for States, Table 16: Employed and Unemployed Persons by Full- and Part-Time Status, Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity," http://www.bls.gov (accessed March 14, 2008).


State EITC Online Resource Center, http://www.stateeitc.com (accessed June 3, 2009); with additional information from NCCP.

Calculations include income tax credits that are available to all low-income families in the state, such as state earned income tax credits. Jason A. Levitis and Andrew C. Nicholas, The Impact of State Income Taxes on Low-Income Families in 2007, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2008. Available at: http://www.cbpp.org (Accessed March 19, 2009).


Potential duration is the maximum number of weeks of benefits that a claimant is eligible for under the regular state program. In most states, it is determined based on the amount and distribution of the recipient's earnings in the base period; eight states have a uniform potential duration for all claimants. U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Security, Comparison of State UI Laws, 2006, http://www.ows.doleta.gov (accessed July 11, 2007).

Food Insecurity:
Figure reflects the percent of households forced to reduce food intake, disrupt normal eating patterns, or go hungry because they lack the money or resources to obtain adequate food. Mark Nord, Margaret Andrews, and Steven Carlson, Household Food Security in the United States, 2006, Economic Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 2007, http://www.ers.usda.gov (accessed March 14, 2008).

Housing Insecurity:
Figure reflects the percent of families living in rental units who pay 30 percent or more of their income on housing. U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey Custom Tables, 2006: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months," http://factfinder.census.gov (accessed March 14, 2008).


A child support pass-through is the amount of collected child support that the state gives to families on whose behalf the child support was collected. A child support disregard is the amount of child support that the family can keep without lowering their TANF benefits. Jan Justice, State Policy Re Pass-Through and Disregard of Current Month's Child Support Collected for Families Receiving TANF-Funded Cash Assistance, Center for Law and Social Policy, 2007.

Community-based IDA programs are operating in all states but often without state support. Also, in some states without state-supported IDA programs, IDA legislation was passed but never implemented due to lack of state funding, or IDA legislation expired, and no new state support was allocated. Center for Social Development, Washington University, "Summary Tables: IDA Policy in the States, Table 1," October 2006, http://gsweb.wustl.edu


Households in which all members receive TANF cash assistance or SSI benefits do not have to meet gross income or asset eligibility criteria. Most states also waive these criteria for recipients of certain other benefits; some states waive these criteria for nearly all applicants. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "States' Vehicle Asset Policies in the Food Stamp Program," November 2006.

Figure reflects the percent of children in households that have insufficient net worth to subsist at the federal poverty level for three months in the absence of income. Corporation for Enterprise Development, Assets and Opportunity Scorecard, http://www.cfed.org (accessed February 25, 2008).
40. Figure reflects the percent of households who are homeowners.