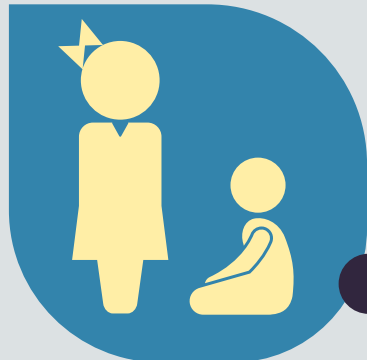


Education and Job Skills to Help Individuals Reach Their Full Potential



Bellevue household of three (one adult/two children) must make **\$96,060** per year (\$46.18/hr) to have a living wage.

71% of Bellevue adults hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.



Childcare in Bellevue for two children (toddler and preschooler) in full-time care cost **\$46,176/year**.

In the provider's survey, **54%** reported that transportation was a barrier for their clients to access services.



Unemployment in King County peaked at **15.1%** in April **2020** and was down to **4.4%** in October **2021**.

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.

We recognize that disparate outcomes based on race exist regarding prevalence of and responses to the issues covered in this chapter. As part of the City's ongoing efforts to continue growing as a culturally competent and racially equitable organization and city, we have, when possible, highlighted racial disparities throughout this report, denoted by the phrase **Racial (In)Equity Data Point**.

While gender is a spectrum that includes transgender people and those who identify as neither male nor female, the sources referenced in this chapter reported data by male and female and did not report data encompassing the entire gender spectrum.

Key Findings

The majority of Bellevue residents have a high level of education, however, there are not many vacancies in some of the growing sectors that pay a living wage. Some residents are underemployed and do not have enough income from one job to make ends meet.

- 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.
- 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.

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

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.

Prevalence

- King County is one of the most highly educated communities in the country: 54% of county residents hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. In Bellevue, the percentage of adults age 25 and older in 2019 who had earned a Bachelor's degree or above was 71%, an increase from 59% in 2010.¹ As Figure 1 shows, Bellevue residents with more education have higher median earnings.

Bellevue Residents/Median Earnings by Education Attainment Level, 2019

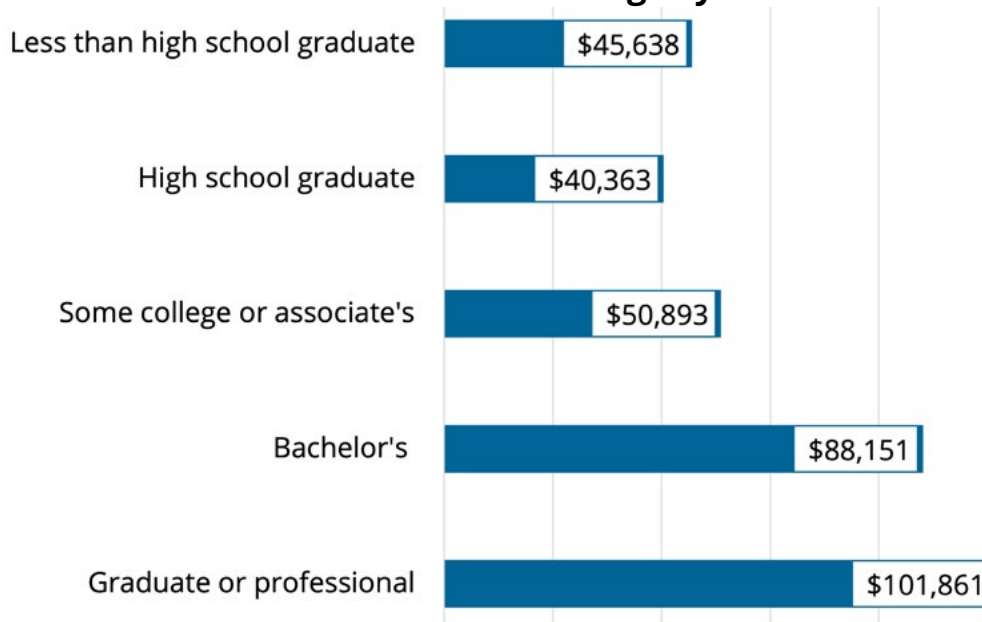


Figure 1 | Source: 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

- Higher levels of education typically result in higher pay benefits and lower unemployment.² During COVID-19, we saw the unemployment gap increase between those with a high school diploma or less and a bachelor's degree or more. Pre-Covid, the difference between the two groups was 2.2% and as of May 2020 it had increased to 8.8%. One factor contributing is the ability to telework. Approximately 65% of workers with a bachelor's degree or more teleworked, while 22% of workers with a high school diploma or less teleworked. Data also show that workers with higher levels of education are more likely to hold jobs that involve less interpersonal contact; therefore, individuals with high levels of education were less impacted by social distancing and other health precautions.³

Service Trends

- Hopelink’s English for Work and GED/High School Diploma programs served 209 individuals, 45 Bellevue residents in 2020. English for Work classes help immigrants and refugees improve their English language skills and prepare for employment in the United States. These programs goals are to help people increase their incomes with additional education. All classes are being offered remotely due to Covid-19.⁴
- Bellevue College’s Preparing for Work program served 218 individual, 154 Bellevue residents in 2020 with workshops and trainings to help them prepare resumes, job search and English skills.⁵
- Bellevue College’s Center for Career Connection program served 2,139 individuals, 680 Bellevue residents in 2020. Staff report that many Eastside residents sought help returning to the labor force, planning a career change, or just finding a new gig while their former employer remained shuttered. They held a fall event series called “Breaking Barriers,” and it focused on diversity and inclusion in the workplace, which featured included representatives from over 20 employers interested in diversifying their workforce.⁶

Employment

There has been a rise in unemployment rates both nationally and in the Seattle-Bellevue area due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, there are also people who are underemployed and do not have enough income to make ends meet.

Community Voice

- In the 2021 phone/online survey, *unemployment* was considered a major/moderate problem by 26% of respondents, a significant increase compared to 2019 when it was 11%, moving from the third tier to the second tier of community problems. Ratings of *unemployment* as a community problem peaked in 2011 at 55%.⁷
- The majority of phone/online survey respondents (73%) were employed either full or part-time. Only 4% (14 respondents) of those survey respondents that are working have a second job; only 3 of those that works two jobs said they could not afford their mortgage or rent with only one job. Five percent of the respondents reported currently being unemployed and looking for work.⁸

Prevalence

- Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unemployment rate in King County peaked to 15.1% in April 2020, which is significantly higher than the peak during the recession in 2010 when it peaked at 8.8%. The average unemployment rate was 5.1% from January through September 2021, compared to 7.6% in 2020, 2.6% in 2019, and 3.3% in 2018. Although the data is showing the economy is recovering, there are still 39,701 unemployed individuals (4.4% unemployment rate) in King County in October 2021. The data indicates to expect to see lasting effecting on the needs in the community.⁹
- The service sector remains Bellevue’s largest job sector. Job growth in the service sector represented 61% of all jobs, making Bellevue a regional hub for service sector employment especially in information technology (26%) and professional, scientific, and technical jobs (25%).¹⁰

Service Trends

- Hopelink's Employment Program served 59 Bellevue residents in 2020 with advanced job coaching, job search and goal setting to obtain the training for a living wage job.¹¹
- The YWCA's Employment Program provided training to 30 Bellevue residents in 2020 to obtain living wage jobs.¹²
- Jewish Family Service provided 57 Bellevue residents job coaching, resume building, job search and job retention support in 2020.¹³
- IKRON provided 19 Bellevue residents with job searching, training workshops, and on the job training and coaching.
- Seattle Business Education HUB provides technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring to aspiring micro and small entrepreneurs who are economically and socially disadvantaged. Between January to June 2021, they served 18 Bellevue residents.

Living Wage

Although Washington has the highest minimum wage in the nation, 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 2021 phone/online survey, 49% of respondents rated *having a job that does not pay enough for the basics* as a major/moderate problem in their community.¹⁴
- Thirty three percent of the phone/online survey respondents rated *lack of money for basic services* as a major/moderate problem in their community. This is similar to the rating in 2019 and higher than the rating in 2013.¹⁵
- At the household level, 12% of respondents in 2021 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, 2017, and 2019.¹⁶
- In the 2021 consumer survey, 36% of the respondents with an income below \$50,000 reported that they either rarely or never *can find work that supports themselves or their family*.
- During community conversations, many of our providers stated that they are experiencing a staffing shortage due to their inability to pay a competitive wage. They reported that with the cost of living so high in East King County, it has added an extra challenge in maintaining staff since many cannot afford to live here.

Prevalence

- Washington State's minimum wage in 2021 is \$13.69 an hour, the highest in the country. Though an adult making the minimum wage working full time and supporting two children earns about \$28,500, it is barely over the federal poverty level (FPL).
- "Low wages" is defined as two-thirds of the median hourly wage for full-timeworker. For Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA a low-wage is \$18.94 per hour in 2018 compared to \$16.67 nationally. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, nationally, low-wage earners comprised 43% of the workforce. More than a year into the pandemic, they comprise 52% of the displaced

workers, nearly 10% higher than we would expect if low-wage and mid/high-wage jobs were recovering at an equal pace. Losing a job is especially devastating for those already living paycheck to paycheck or without alternative sources of income and about two in five low-wage workers were living below 200% of the poverty line. More than one in four low-wage workers were receiving safety net benefits such as food assistance or Medicaid. **Racial (In) Equity Data Point:** The displaced low-wage workforce is far younger, more racially and ethnically diverse, and have completed less formal education than the displaced mid/high-wage workforce.¹⁷

- 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).¹⁸ Figure 2 demonstrates data from the Self-Sufficiency Calculator for a Bellevue resident. For example, a single parent with a school age child and a toddler earning minimum wage would need to work 127.5 hours per week, which is nearly impossible, to be self-sufficient in Bellevue based on the Self-Sufficiency calculator.¹⁹

Bellevue Living and Minimum Wage Comparison

Family Type	Bellevue Living Wage	Gap Between Living and Minimum Wage
Single Adult	\$21.05/hr. \$43,774.497/yr.	\$6.56
Single adult with a school-aged child (6-8 years)	\$31.85/hr. \$66,248.03/yr.	\$17.36
Single adult with a school-aged child and a toddler (12-24 months)	\$46.18/hr. \$96,060.29/yr.	\$31.69
Two working adults with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$23.67/hr./adult \$98,470/yr.	\$9.18/adult
Two adults (one working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	\$47.34/hr. \$98,470/yr.	\$32.85

Figure 2 | Source: The Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State/Work Force Development Council Seattle-King County²⁰

Service Trends

- Washington State’s WorkFirst temporary cash assistance program (TANF) 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 January 2021, there were 30,451 cases in the state, up from 25,110 in January 2020.²¹

“We have seen an increase of people experiencing financial instability due to the impacts of COVID-19 has had on the economy. Many people have lost their jobs and entered an unstable financial state. This has led to an increasing need for services.”

~ Provider’s Survey

- Employment Programs, including those at Hopelink, IKRON, Jewish Family Services, and YWCA focus on working with individuals to find employment that pays a living wage and/or creating a plan to increase their wages through education or job training.

Childcare

Affordable, quality childcare is critical 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. Many families struggled to find accessible, affordable childcare during the pandemic.

Community Voice

- *Lack of affordable childcare* was rated as a top-ranked community problem in the 2021 phone and online community survey. 51% rated it as a major/moderate household problem, which is the same as 2019 but an 21% increase from 2013.²²
- In 2021, 21% of the phone and online community survey respondents rated *Not being able to find affordable childcare* as a major/moderate household problem.²³
- Thirty-six percent of community phone and online community survey respondents rated *Lack of available childcare* as a major or moderate community problem. This was a new question in 2021, so there is no past data available for comparison.²⁴

Prevalence

- As of October 2021, there were 458 childcare centers and childcare homes in EKC. This represents approximately 22,989 slots with the majority in childcare centers. The number of slots represents a 6% reduction in total slots in EKC from 2019.²⁵
- About 35% of childcare providers in East King County offer what is called “non-standard” hours, such as childcare after 6:30 pm, overnight, and/or during weekends. However, the demand of working parents needing childcare during “non-stand” hours is much higher than the slots available. 82% of care during evenings, nights, and weekends is done by family, friend, or neighbor (FFN) caregivers.²⁶
- Nearly 75% of King County’s young children 0-5 are not in formal early learning programs, such as licensed childcare, Head Start, and ECEAP. 25% are in the care of FFN caregivers while their parents are at work or school. FFN caregivers include grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, good family friends, and others who are an important part of parents’ social support network. **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** FFN care is preferred by Black, Indigenous, People of Color families because FFN caregivers are people that they know and trust to care for their child within the family’s home culture and language. FFN care is also more prevalent among immigrant families and children with special needs.²⁷
- Washington ranks among the top five highest in the country in the cost of childcare, especially for infants.²⁸ Childcare for an East King County (EKC) family with an infant and a preschooler in full-time care at childcare center costs, on average, \$50,988/year; EKC childcare costs are the highest in the county. In EKC, the average annual cost of infant care is \$29,832, 26% of the Seattle-Bellevue 2019 area median household income.²⁹

Average Monthly Cost of Care at Center 2021

Age	Bellevue
Infant (under 12 months)	\$ 2,486
Toddler (12 mos - 2 1/2 yrs)	\$ 2,085
Preschool (2 1/2 - 5 yrs)	\$ 1,763
School Age (full day K and up)	\$ 600

Figure 3 | Source: Child Care Resources

- Many childcare centers and homes accept only a few families using Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidies because the reimbursement rates are lower than market rate. As of June 2021, 51% of EKC childcare centers, family childcare homes and after-school programs accept WCCC subsidies, a decrease from 62% in June 2019.³⁰
- In the Seattle-Bellevue-Tacoma Metropolitan Service Area, the median annual salary of a teacher in a childcare center is \$35,240 (\$16.94 per hours) while a kindergarten teacher makes a median annual salary of \$68,340 (\$32.86 per hour). The lack of competitive wages makes it difficult to recruit and retain educated childcare workers.³¹

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, they must request other locally funded scholarship programs. Ten Bellevue resident have been served with subsidy in 2021.³²
- 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.³³
- CCR case managers helps families experiencing homelessness to secure stable, quality childcare so they can find housing, look for work, and go to domestic violence related meetings, court, or medical appointments. In 2021, the program averaged 5 family intakes per month which was fewer than in previous years due to changes in federal funding and the pandemic.³⁴

“Affordable childcare is a huge barrier for many working parents. The problem became an even larger challenge during the pandemic, because many families needed full-time child care while their children were doing school remotely and there was limited capacity at childcare centers. 50% of the household we serve are single parent households making it even more difficult to afford the additional cost of full-time childcare.”

~ LifeSpring, Community Conversation

- 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.³⁵

Transportation

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

Community Voice

- Forty one percent of the 2021 phone/online survey respondents rated *inadequate public transportation* as a moderate or major community problem, similar to responses in the last several surveys. Seventeen percent of respondents rated it as a household problem.³⁶
- In the 2021 phone/online survey, 41% rated *lack of other transportation option (besides public transportation)* as a major/moderate community problem.³⁷
- In the 2021 provider survey, 63% of respondents reported that their clients needed, but could not find, help with transportation. Fifty four percent reported that transportation was a barrier for their clients to access services.

Prevalence

Bellevue Resident’s Mode of Travel to Work by Poverty level

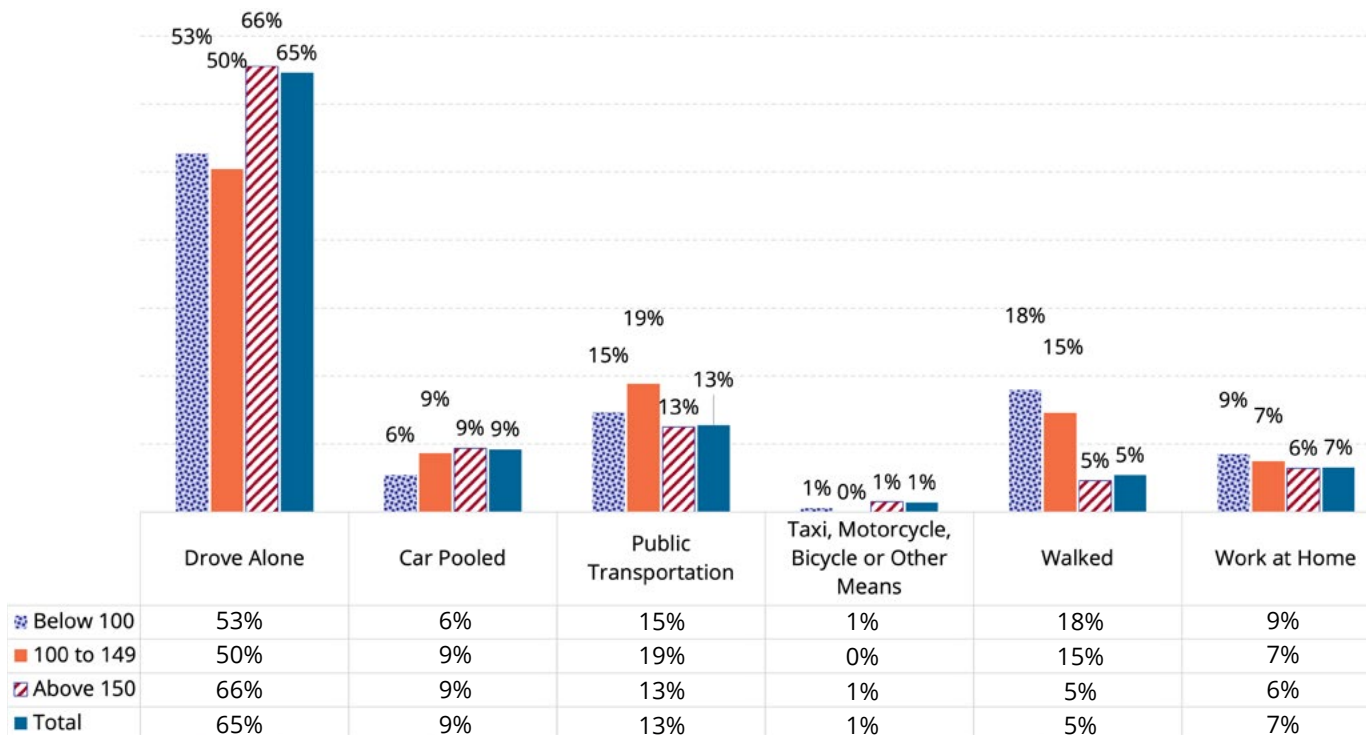


Figure 4 | Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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.³⁸ However, public transportation is not inexpensive, especially if the trip includes transfers and/or a family with multiple members.

Service Trends

- Hopelink provides non-emergency medical transportation in King and Snohomish counties for medical services covered by Medicaid. In 2020, they provided 816,800 rides to 31,924 individuals.³⁹
- Hopelink also provides public DART Transit through a contract with King County Metro. DART offers bus routes in some neighborhoods using mini buses that can go off regular routes to pick up and drop off passengers. DART operates on a fixed schedule, but one that has more flexibility than regular Metro Transit buses. In 2020, they provided 428,876 rides in King County.
- Sound Generation’s Volunteer Drivers program offers older adults (60 and older) free, personalized transportation to and from essential healthcare appointments through volunteer drivers. They provided 827 one-way trips to 71 individuals.

Endnotes

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