



Increasing income for working women and their families

HF0092 (Winkler)/SF0003 (Eaton)

- Increase the minimum wage to \$9.50

The Facts

- More than 100 million people in the United States live on or over the brink of poverty—and **nearly 70 percent of this group are women and the children who depend on them.**
- **Minnesota is a national leader in women's workforce participation.** While the number of working mothers has declined nationally in recent years, in Minnesota it has only increased. Workforce participation of mothers with children under six has increased the most – now at 79%.
- **With increasing numbers of women breadwinners, the double disadvantage of lower wages across almost all occupations and lower wages in female-dominated professions affects our families and communities.** Not only are female-dominated occupations compensated at lower levels overall, women in these occupations generally earn less than men in the same occupation.
- **Among hourly workers in Minnesota, young workers and women are more likely than others to be paid the minimum wage or less.** Because of this and the fact that they made up 53% of all hourly workers, women accounted for 60% of all hourly workers at or below the minimum.
- **In Minnesota, nonmetropolitan areas showed more of a gender difference than did metropolitan areas with regard to minimum-wage status.** For nonmetropolitan areas, the proportions of hourly workers at or below the minimum were 7.9 for women and 4.7 percent for men; for metropolitan areas, they were 5.1 and 4.3 percent respectively.
- **Raising the minimum wage to \$9.50 an hour would mean better wages for 357,000 Minnesota workers.** About 77% of workers who would see a wage increase are age 20 or older, and 33% are married or are parents. Some 137,000 children would benefit from increased parental income. About 202,100 workers who would see a raise are women.
- **Nationally, more than 3 quarters of the workers in the 10 largest low wage occupations are women and over one-third are women of color.** These occupations include hand packers and packagers, food prep workers, food preparers and servers, waiters and waitresses, cashiers, personal care aides, maids and housekeepers, childcare workers. Women represent 77% of the workforce in these jobs combined. Tipped workers are overwhelmingly women—62% of all tipped workers and 72% of food servers.
- **Women have gained jobs in the recovery but 60% are in the largest low-wage jobs, paying less than \$10.10 per hour.** In contrast, these low-wage occupations accounted for only 20% of men's employment growth.

A woman working full time, year round at a minimum-wage job, or a job close to minimum wage, will not be able to bring her family above the poverty line. Families need an income closer to 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold to escape the brink.