

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Supporting Working Mothers in Nevada

September 2016

The ability for women with young children to successfully join the workforce is dependent upon having the salary or social supports to care for themselves and their children. When deciding to enter the workforce, individuals must see a benefit from working – largely based upon a variety of social and economic factors. Economically, mothers need to be able to afford their general living expenses which include food, housing and utilities, clothing, health care, transportation, and miscellaneous household and personal expenses. For a single mother with an infant and 4-year old¹, these costs can become staggering.

- **Food:** According to the United States Department of Agriculture, it costs approximately \$93.70, \$107.50, \$163.30 a month to “thrifty” feed a 1-year-old, 4-year-old, and herself, respectively. In total, it would cost \$4,374 a year.²
- **Housing:** In fiscal year 2016, the fair market rent for an efficiency apartment in the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise area is \$632 a month. In Reno, the fair market rent is \$574 a month. Over the course of a year a family would spend \$7,584 to live in the Las Vegas area and \$6,888 to live in Reno.³
- **Clothing:** In the report, Expenditures on Children by Families, 2013, the US Department of Agriculture estimated the average cost of clothing for an infant at \$420 and 4-yr-old at \$340 a year.⁴ The 2015 Consumer Expenditure Survey found that a woman between the ages of 16- 25 spends roughly \$420 a year on clothing. In total, the average amount of money spent a year on clothing is \$1,180.⁵
- **Health Care:** The estimated costs of health care for an infant and 4-year-old is \$550 and \$340, a year, respectively⁶; with the health care and medication costing \$1,956.⁷
- **Transportation:** As of September 21, 2016, the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada charges \$65 for a 30-day bus pass – with children under the age of 5 being able to ride for free. This would result in transportation costing \$780 a year.⁸

In total, it would cost a single mother with an infant and 4-year-old living in the Las Vegas area approximately \$13,918 a year to pay for the bare minimum costs of food, housing, clothing, health care, and transportation. This does not include the costs of utilities or any miscellaneous household and personal expenses. Additionally, the ability for a mother to work requires having care for her children. Unless alternative care is available, mothers typically rely on private child care. In Nevada, the average cost of center based child care ranges from \$10,324 for an infant to \$8,792 for preschoolers (ages 3-5). In total it would cost a mother with an infant and 4-year-old approximately \$33,034 a year to return to the workforce and pay for her family’s child care and living expenses – assuming she is not receiving any type of social welfare. To be able to make a living,

¹ According to the Children’s Cabinet, the majority of clients receiving subsidy payments are single parents with an average of 1.7 children per family.

² <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/CostofFoodJul2016.pdf>

³ https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmr_il_history/data_summary.odn

⁴ http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/expenditures_on_children_by_families/crc2013.pdf

⁵ <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2015/combined/age.pdf>

⁶ http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/expenditures_on_children_by_families/crc2013.pdf

⁷ <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2015/combined/age.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.rtcnv.com/transit/fare-information/>

she would need to make approximately \$16.39 an hour before taxes.⁹ Sadly, for many mothers this salary is beyond reach, as the median hourly salary for women in Nevada is \$15.92 before taxes.¹⁰

Additionally, a mother's ability to work is dependent on their ability to have a work/life balance. According to a Harris Poll conducted in 2014, nearly six in ten single working parents (57%) have chosen to pass up a job they felt would conflict with family obligations and over half of single working parents (54%) believe they've been passed over at some point for a promotion, a raise or a new job due to a need for a flexible work schedule.¹¹ Programs like paid time off and paid sick leave allow a parent to care for themselves and their children. Additionally, the ability to breastfeed/express breast milk while at working is crucial for the development of their child. Unfortunately, employed women currently are less likely to initiate breastfeeding, and tend to breastfeed for a shorter length of time than women who are not employed.¹² Having these family workplace policies in place are essential in the promotion of women with children entering the workforce and ensuring they are successful.

To be able to enter the workforce & care for their children, the majority of single mothers need economic and social supports. For these reasons the Children's Advocacy Alliance recommends Nevada take the following actions to support working mothers in the workforce:

- Support breastfeeding in the workplace, specifically requiring businesses to provide appropriate space for and to allow mothers to have time to breastfeed and/or express breast milk while at work and prohibit a business from retaliating against women for doing so.
- Work to eliminate the gender pay gap through the creation of a state advisory committee on pay equality, raising the minimum wage and protecting employees from discrimination for discussing their wages.
- Allow women to take time off to care for themselves or their children by working with businesses to create paid time off and paid sick leave programs.
- Expand access to social welfare programs that support working mothers including, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infant, and Children (WIC), Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Increase the child care development fund (child care subsidy) contribution to allow more working families access and lowering parent co-payments by raising the subsidy reimbursement rate.



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⁹ Based upon filing as the head of household and claiming two children as dependents.

¹⁰ http://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/womensearnings_nevada.htm

¹¹ http://www.theharrispoll.com/business/Vast_Majority_of_Americans_Favor_Flexible_Workplace_Policies.html

¹² <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/promotion/employment.htm>