

## The State of Working Wisconsin 2010 was produced by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS).

The Center on Wisconsin Strategy is a nonprofit, nonpartisan “think-and-do tank” dedicated to improving economic performance and living standards in the state of Wisconsin and nationally. Based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, COWS works to promote “high road” strategies that support living wages, environmental sustainability, strong communities, and public accountability.

The State of Working Wisconsin 2010 relies on a wide range of data sources. For more information, see the full report.

## KEY WISCONSIN STRENGTHS, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

Economic news for workers in Wisconsin and the nation is dispiriting. But Wisconsin brings key strengths to face the challenges:

- **With Indiana, Wisconsin has the highest concentration of workers in the manufacturing sector in the nation.**  
The manufacturing sector has been hard hit by trends in the last decade, and Wisconsin has suffered losses with the rest of the nation. Our manufacturing base remains substantial, however, providing jobs for 15 percent of the workforce and accounting for some one-fifth of the total state economy. Only Indiana has as high a share of its workforce in manufacturing.
- **The Wisconsin workforce maintains a strong work ethic.**  
Wisconsin adults are more likely to work than in many states. This is especially true of women in the state, whose rate of labor force participation (66 percent) substantially exceeds the national rate (59 percent).
- **Wisconsin technical colleges deliver graduates and wages.**  
Wisconsin’s technical college system pays off for employers and workers in the state. Our adult workforce has nearly twice the share of workers with vocational associate degrees, and those workers earn higher wages than their national counterparts.

## TECHNICAL COLLEGE DEGREES DELIVER IN WISCONSIN

(2009 dollars)

	<i>Wisconsin</i>	<i>United States</i>
<b>MEDIAN WAGE</b>		
Associate Degree	\$17.40	\$16.96
Occupational/Vocational	17.24	16.82
Academic	17.81	17.08
<b>SHARE OF WORKFORCE</b>		
Associate Degree		
Occupational/Vocational	8.8%	4.6%
Academic	4.4	5.7

## MOVING TO A STRONGER ECONOMY FOR WORKING WISCONSIN

- Boost family income by cutting energy and transportation costs.
- Build Wisconsin’s green future, and make our existing economy greener.
- Build the skills of workers to keep Wisconsin competitive.
- Make high job quality essential to state economic development.
- Raise and strengthen the wage floor.
- Embrace the opportunity provided by federal health care reform.
- Expand foreclosure mitigation programs.
- Maintain and improve the state retirement system.

# COWS

center on wisconsin strategy

Visit [www.cows.org/soww](http://www.cows.org/soww) to order additional copies of the executive summary or full report.

**WISCONSIN WAGE GROWTH WEAK AND SUBSTANTIAL WAGE INEQUALITY BY GENDER, RACE, AND ETHNICITY CONTINUES**

**Wisconsin's 2009 median wage: \$15.87 per hour.**

- Wages have recovered some over the past two years, but remain just at 2005 levels.
- Adjusting for inflation, **the Wisconsin median wage is less than one dollar per hour higher than it was thirty years ago**, in spite of substantial gains in productivity and education over those three decades.

**Wisconsin women earn \$0.81 for every dollar men earn in the state.**

- Women's median wage, \$14.45 per hour, is 19 percent lower than men's median hourly wage of \$17.94.

**African Americans and Hispanics in the state earn significantly lower wages.**

- With a median wage of \$13.10 per hour, Wisconsin's blacks earn \$3.20 per hour less than whites, for a median black/white wage gap of 20 percent.
- The Hispanic median of \$12.25 per hour is \$4.05 per hour – or fully 25 percent – less than the white median.

**MORE THAN ONE IN FIVE WISCONSIN WORKERS IN POVERTY-WAGE JOBS, SUFFERING LOW WAGES AND WEAK BENEFITS**

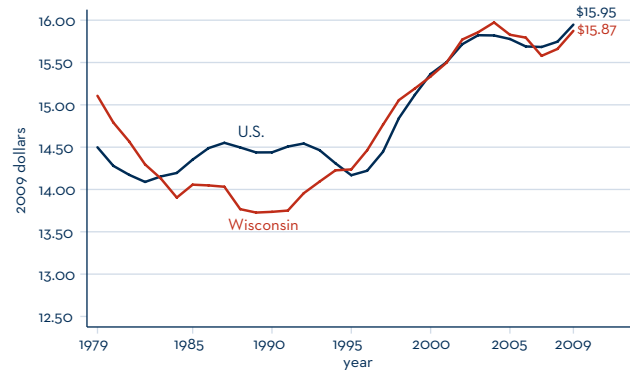
In 2009, 23 percent of Wisconsin workers earned less than \$10.46 per hour (the hourly wage required to keep a family of four above the poverty line, if working full-time, all year, with no time off).

- Nearly one in three black women in the state and one in four white women work in poverty-wage jobs.

Just over one in four workers in poverty-wage jobs get health insurance through work, compared to two-thirds of workers with higher wages.

Just 21 percent of poverty-wage workers participate in a pension plan in the state, while more than 60 percent of workers with higher wages do.

**MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES, WISCONSIN AND U.S., 1979-2009**  
(2009 dollars)



**SHARE OF WISCONSIN WORKERS EARNING POVERTY WAGES, 2009**

(wages less than \$10.46 per hour, 2009 dollars)

<i>Percent Earning Poverty Wages</i>	
All Workers	23.0%
White Men	16.7
Black Men	22.4
White Women	26.3
Black Women	30.7

**POVERTY-WAGE WORKERS GET FEW BENEFITS**

