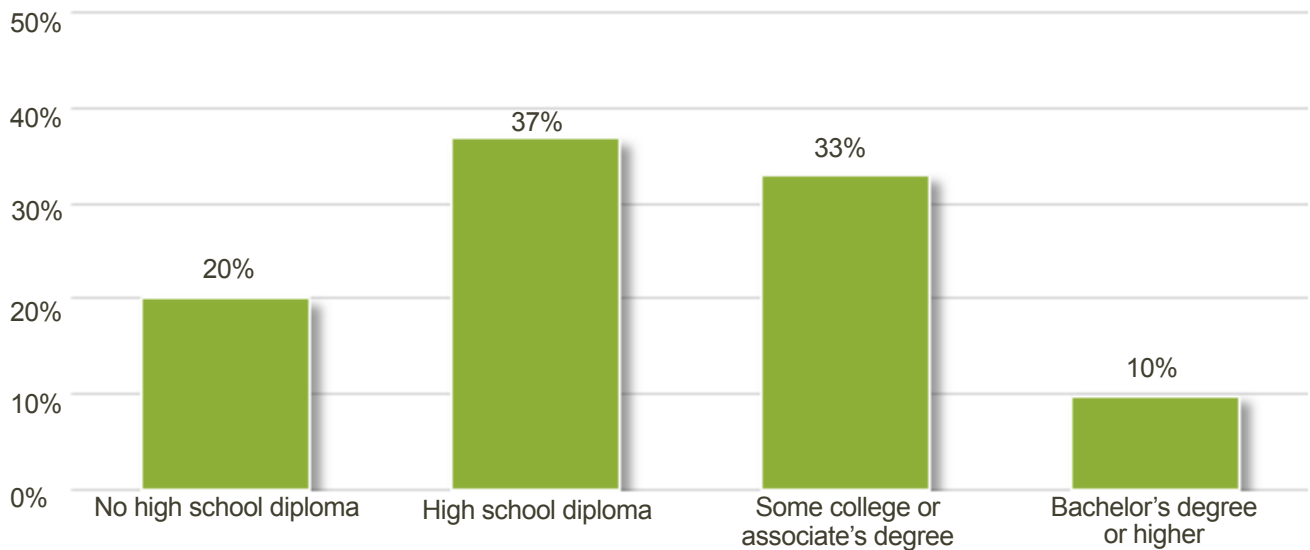


# The women in the low-wage workforce may not be who you think

Anne Morrison & Katherine Gallagher Robbins

**THE WOMEN WHO MAKE UP THE LOW-WAGE WORKFORCE**, who work in jobs that typically pay \$10.50 per hour or less, may not be who you think. The vast majority are neither high school dropouts nor teenagers. Most don't have a spouse's income to rely on. Many are supporting children—and their family incomes are low. Over half of the women in the low-wage workforce work full time and nearly three-quarters work all year. Nearly half are women of color.

## Four out of five women in the low-wage workforce have a high school degree or higher

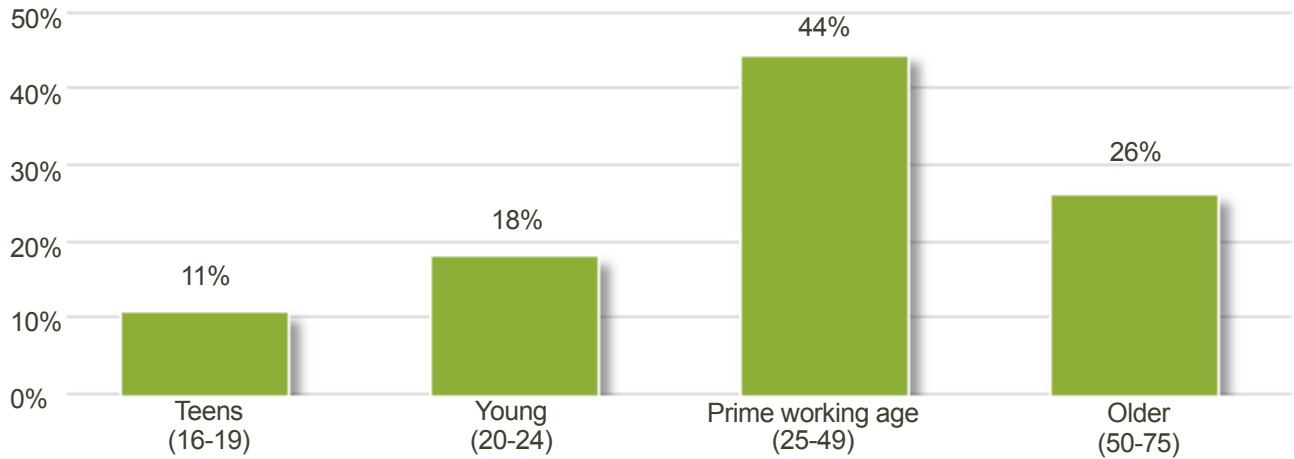


*Source:* NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2014). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics.



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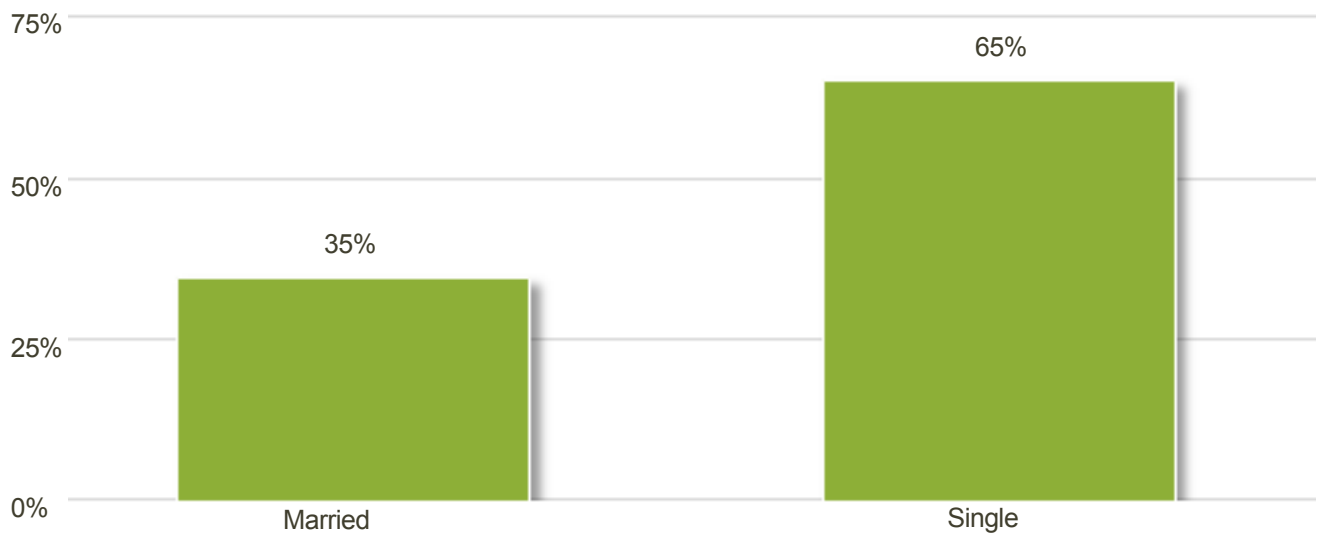
## Nearly nine out of ten women in the low-wage workforce are beyond their teens



Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2014). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics.



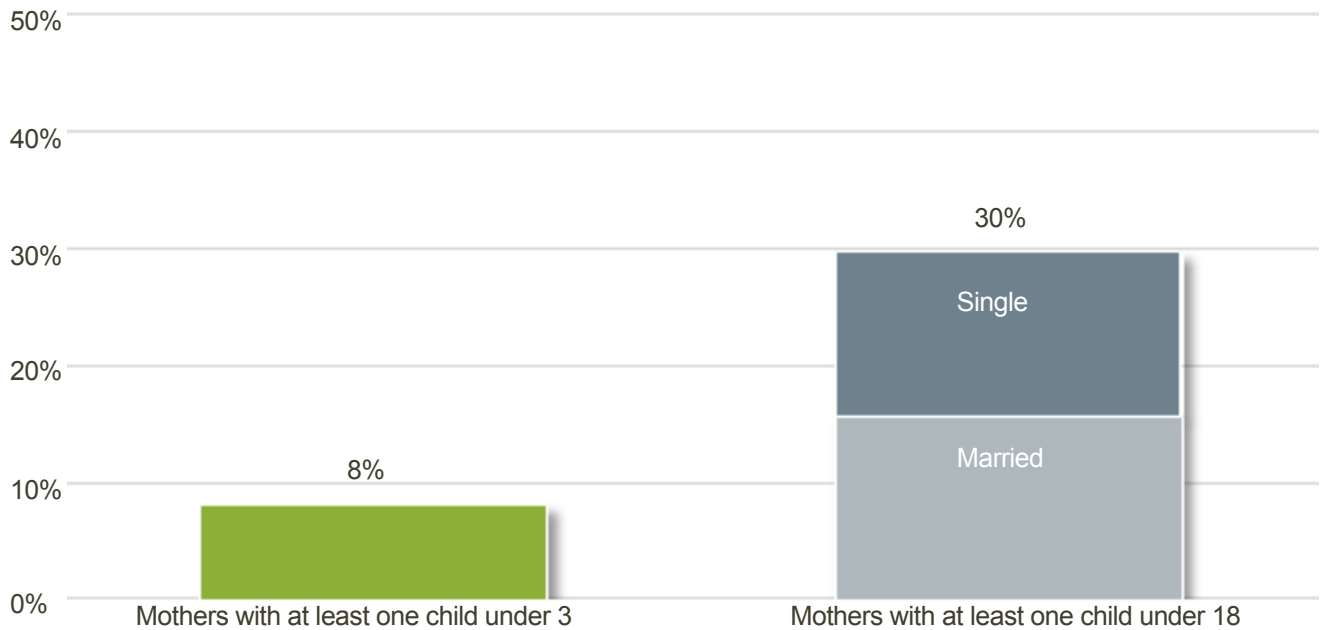
## Most women in the low-wage workforce do not have a spouse's income to rely on



Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2014). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics. "Single" includes married, spouse absent.



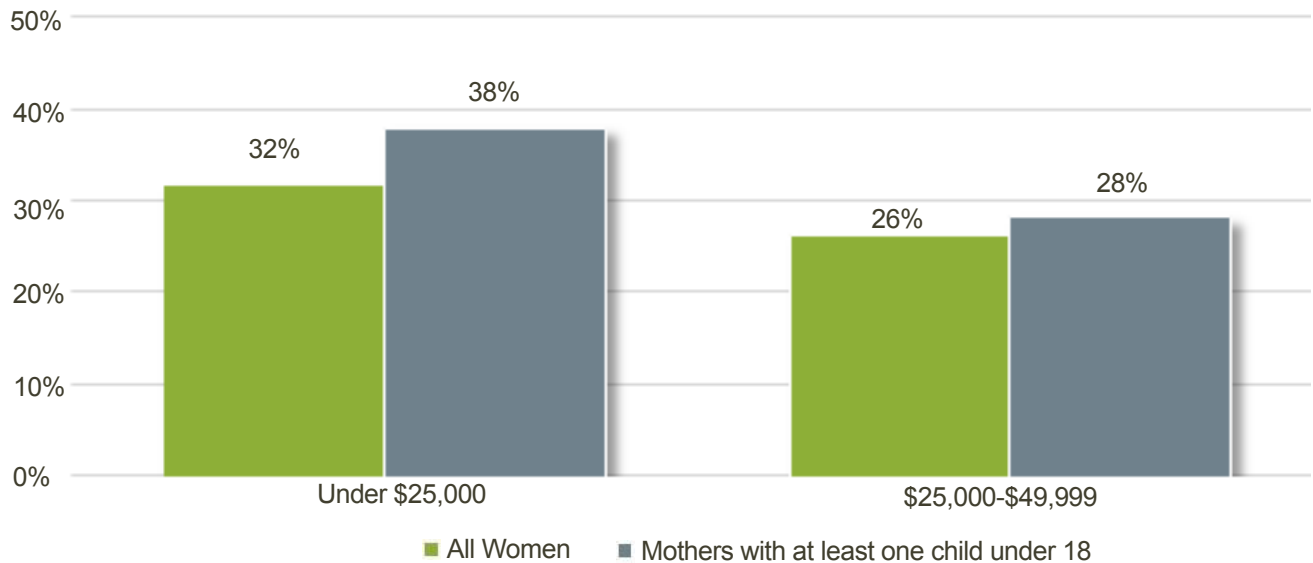
## Many women in low-wage jobs are supporting children



Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2014). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics. “Mothers” have related children at home. “Single” includes married, spouse absent.



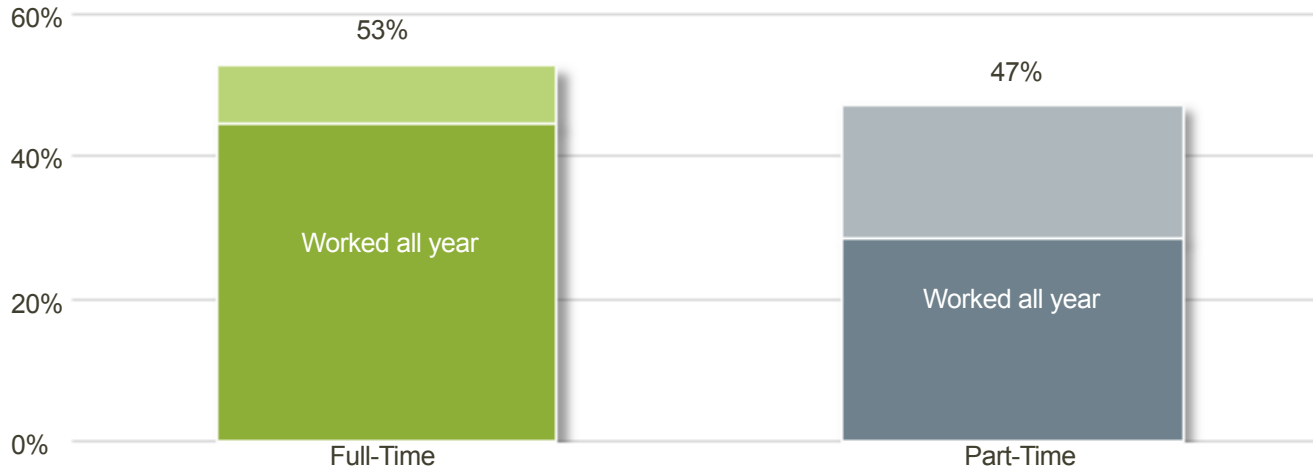
## Family income for mothers in the low-wage workforce is even lower than for women working in low-wage jobs overall



Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2014). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics. “Mothers” have related children at home.



## Half of women in the low-wage workforce work full time, and a large majority work all year

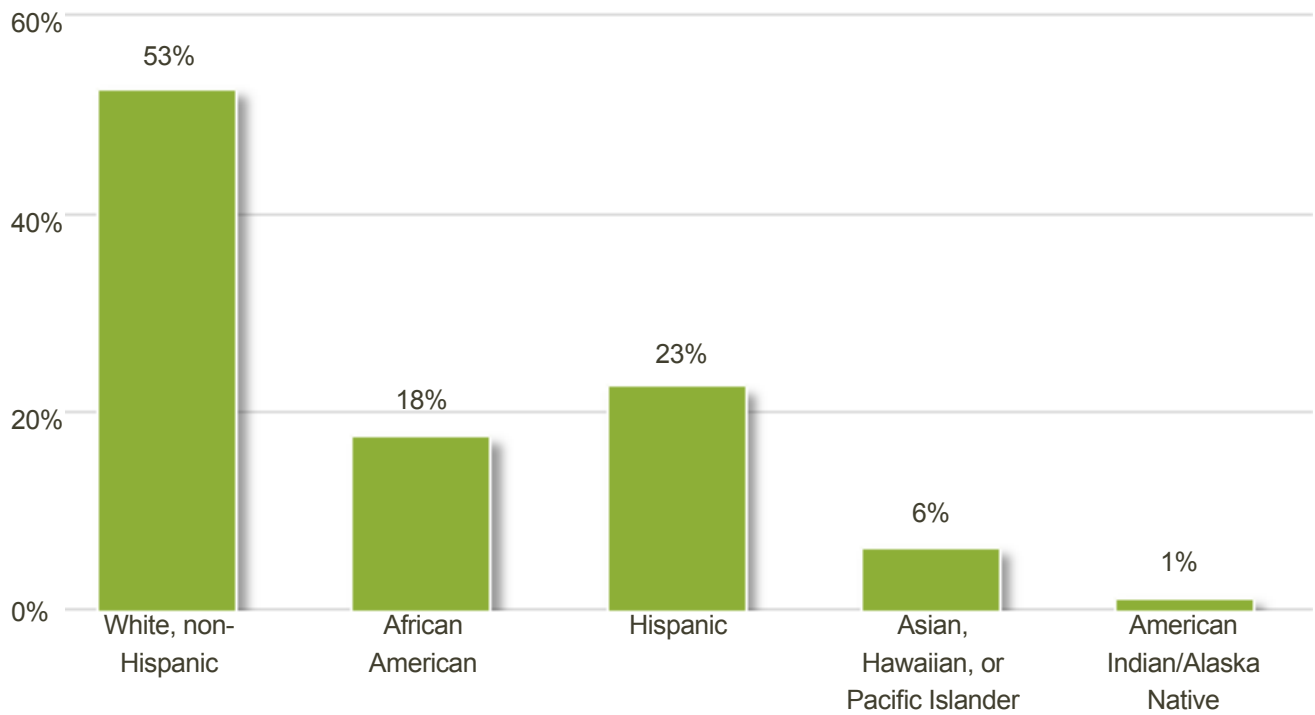


Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2014). Figures are for workers who usually work full or part time. “Full-time” refers to working 35 or more hours per week. “Part-time” refers to working between one and 34 hours per week. “Worked all year” is defined as worked 50-52 weeks in the last year. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics.



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## Nearly half of low-wage women workers are women of color



Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2014). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics. Women of color make up 47 percent of the female low-wage workforce, but just 34 percent of the female workforce overall.



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## Note on methods

“LOW WAGE JOBS” and the “low-wage workforce” could be defined in different ways; this analysis uses \$10.50 or less per hour because \$10.50 in 2014 is roughly equivalent to \$12 in 2020, which is the proposed new federal minimum wage in the Raise the Wage Act pending in Congress (2015), see David Cooper, John Schmitt, & Lawrence Mishel, Economic Policy Institute, We Can Afford a \$12.00 Federal Minimum Wage in 2020 (April 2015) *available at* <http://www.epi.org/publication/we-can-afford-a-12-00-federal-minimum-wage-in-2020/>. Median hourly wages for occupations are determined using the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics data from May 2014 ([http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm)). Unless otherwise noted, data are National Women’s Law Center calculations based on Current Population Survey (CPS) 2014 using Miriam King et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Current Population Survey: Version 3.0 [Machine-readable database] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010). Some detailed occupations listed in the BLS Occupational Employment Statistics are not available using CPS data in which case a broader level of occupation is used.