



## CHILDREN'S ACTION ALLIANCE

4001 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Suite 160  
Phoenix, Arizona 85012  
(602) 266-0707  
Fax: (602) 263-8792  
<http://www.azchildren.org>

# FACT SHEET

## Why Women Work: The Economic Realities of Working Families

### Families Often Can't Afford To Make It on One Income

- One out of every five of Arizona's full-time working parents had earnings that were below the poverty level for a family of four.<sup>1</sup>
- It takes two wage earners today to have the same standard of living as single earner families a generation ago. Indeed today's two-income families often have less money left over after paying their monthly bills, largely due to increased housing costs.<sup>2</sup>

### Married Couples At Risk

- Married couples are the fastest growing segment of poor families in the nation: U.S. Census data showed that 400,000 more U.S. families were poor in 2002 than in 2001, and that 300,000 of them were married couple families.<sup>3</sup>
- Most poor working families (60%) are headed by a married couple.<sup>4</sup>

### Working Mothers Are the Norm in Arizona

- In 2000, 60% of Arizona's mothers worked, as did 55% of mothers of children under the age of 6.<sup>4</sup>
- African-American mothers were the most likely Arizona mothers to work (68%), followed closely by Caucasian mothers (67%). Latina/Hispanic mothers were the least likely to work, but still just over 50% of them do.<sup>1</sup>

### Mothers Work Because They Have To

- The majority (55%) of working mothers earn over half of their family's income.<sup>5</sup>
- Most Arizona women earn less than \$26,000 a year, and over 80% earn less than \$40,000 a year.<sup>6</sup>

## Women Often Earn Low Pay

Many professions that are dominated by women have low annual earnings.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>% Female</b>	<b>Median Hourly Wage</b>	<b>Annual Wage</b>	<b>% of Federal Poverty for Family of 3</b>
Maids/housekeepers*	88%	\$7.39	\$15,371	101%
Cashiers*	72%	\$8.14	\$16,931	111%
Home Health Aide*	84%	\$8.69	\$18,075	118%
Preschool Teachers*	97%	\$8.87	\$18,450	121%
Telephone Operators*	76%	\$8.89	\$18,491	121%
Receptionists*	92%	\$10.10	\$21,008	138%
Library Technicians	81%	\$11.72	\$24,378	160%

\* May be eligible for Food Stamps at this income level

(All wage data is for 2003, and obtained from the Arizona Department of Economic Security Workforce Informer site, <http://www.workforce.az.gov>. Poverty level is also for 2003, and obtained from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

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<sup>1</sup> "The Poverty Despite Work Handbook: Data and Guidelines for Preparing a Report on the Working Poor in Each State," Tenny, Daniel and Zahradnik, Bob, for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. August 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *The Two Parent Trap*. Warren, Elizabeth and Tyagi, Amelia Warren, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Poverty in the United States: 2002*, September 2003.

<sup>4</sup> "The Status of Early Care and Education in the States," Williams, Erica and Mitchell, Anne, for The Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Whirlpool Foundation Study by the Families and Work Institute (May 1995), *Women: The New Providers*, New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

<sup>6</sup> Economic Policy Institute Analysis of Current Population Survey Data.