

MAY 2013

## **Mother's Day 2013: The Importance of Mothers for Family Economic Security**

Over the past several decades, mothers have played a greater role in their families' economic security. Nearly two-thirds of mothers are employed outside the home either part- or full-time, and mothers are the sole earners in 35 percent of families. Among married-couple families, mothers contribute over one-third of the total family income. Lower-income families are especially dependent on the money earned by mothers who work outside the home—in families in the lowest ten percent of the income distribution, mothers account for over half of family income.<sup>1</sup> As we prepare to celebrate Mother's Day, this JEC fact sheet highlights the critical role mothers play in the financial well-being of their families and underscores the importance of supporting women and the children who depend on them.

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**THE U.S. CONGRESS JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE DEMOCRATIC STAFF  
Senator Amy Klobuchar, Vice Chair**

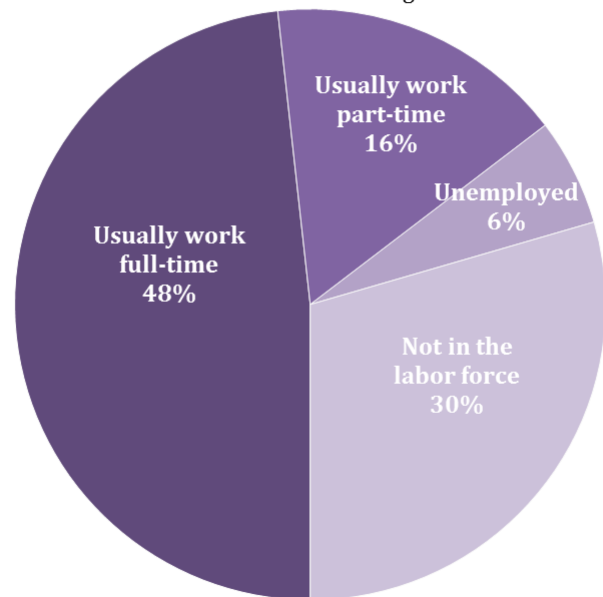
**Nearly half of all mothers work full-time outside the home.** Of the 35.9 million mothers with children under the age of 18, more than two-thirds are in the labor force—48 percent are employed full-time, 16 percent are employed part-time, and 6 percent are unemployed. **(Figure 1)** In all, 23.2 million mothers work outside the home, and another 2.1 million mothers want a job but cannot find one.<sup>2</sup>

**Many mothers are their families' only jobholder.** Most mothers who work outside the home live in dual-income families, where both spouses are employed outside the home.<sup>3</sup> However, the steep job losses in male-dominated industries during the recession and the rising number of single-parent families mean that a significant number of mothers are the only jobholders in their family.<sup>4</sup> One in three moms employed outside the home (35 percent) is the sole earner in her family. **(Figure 2)** Of those, 5.8 million (27.8 percent of mothers who work outside the home) are the heads of their households, and 1.5 million (7.1 percent of mothers employed outside the home) are married with a spouse who is either unemployed or out of the labor force.<sup>5</sup> Over one-third of children (37.0 percent or 16.8 million children) with a mom in the labor force live in a family where their mother is the only earner.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in 36.1 percent of married-couple families with children, the woman was the primary earner, out-earning her husband.<sup>7</sup>

**Mothers employed outside the home are concentrated in particular industries.** Nearly one-quarter of mothers employed outside the home (23.1 percent) work in health care and social assistance, and an additional two-fifths (39.0 percent) work in professional and business services, retail trade, state and local education, and leisure and hospitality. **(Figure 3)** In the three sectors with the largest shares of mothers, employment has grown over the past 12 months, and women's share of job gains has equaled or surpassed men's. However, in state and local education, which employs 9.8 percent of mothers working outside the home, employment

**Figure 1. Nearly Half of All Mothers Work Full-Time Outside the Home**

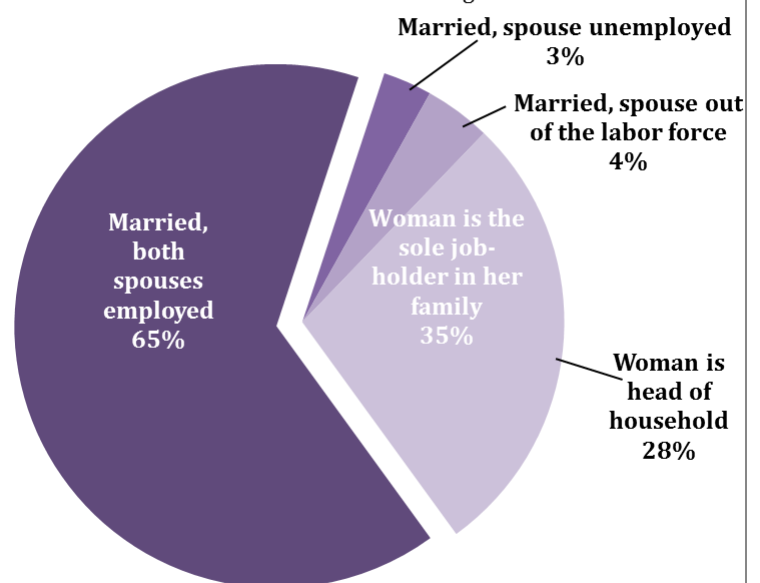
Labor Force Status of Women with Children Under 18  
2012 Annual Average



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Figure 2. One in Three Mothers Working Outside the Home is the Only Jobholder in Her Family**

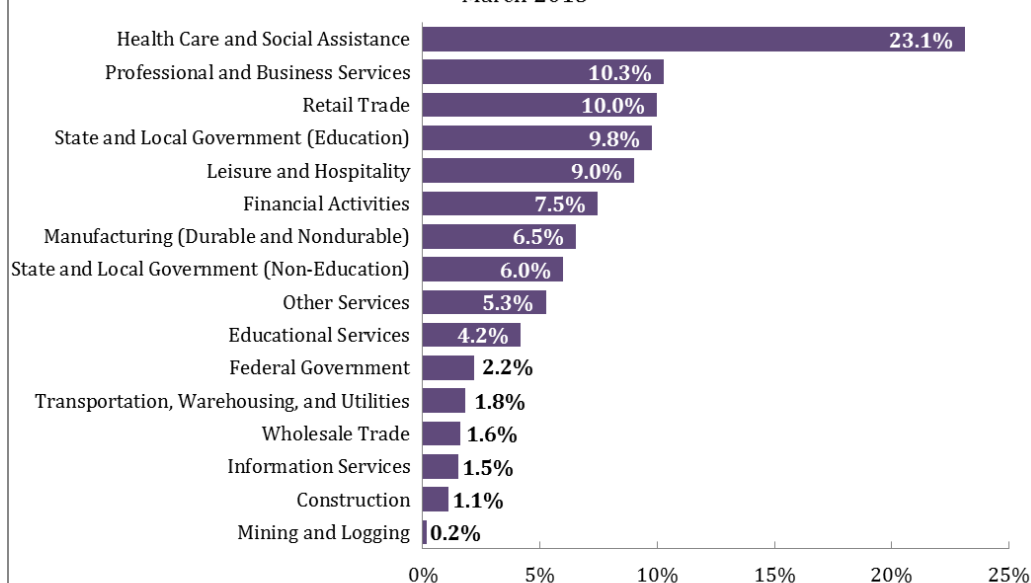
Women Employed Outside the Home with Children Under 18  
2012 Annual Average



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Figure 3. Mothers' Employment by Industry**

March 2013



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey and Current Employment Statistics.

declined over the past year, and women lost 17,800 jobs. Employment in the leisure and hospitality sector expanded, and while women gained jobs, they added comparatively fewer than men did.<sup>8</sup>

**Dependency on mothers' earnings varies across states.** On average, a mother in a two-parent family earns 44.4 percent of her family's income, though

the rate varies among states. Mothers contribute the smallest share in Utah (39.2 percent) and the highest share in the District of Columbia (48.3 percent). **(Table)** The percent of mothers working outside the home who are their families' primary earner also varies across states. Nationally, 36.1 percent of mothers are the primary earner in their family, with the rate across states spanning from 29.6 percent in New Hampshire to 45.9 percent in Montana.<sup>9</sup> Despite these differences, it is clear that across the United States, mothers contribute a significant share of family income.

More than ever, families depend on mothers for their financial security. In tough economic times, every dollar makes a difference, and it is important to support mothers and the children who depend on them.

#### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. In the typical two-earner family with children (with family income at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile), wives' earnings make up 37.7 percent of family income. In two-parent families in the bottom 10 percent of the income distribution, mothers contribute 54.5 percent of income.

<sup>2</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on unpublished data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS (Current Population Survey). Table 6: Employment status of persons by presence and age of own children, sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and marital status, Annual Average 2012.

<sup>3</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on unpublished data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS. Table 4: Number of families by presence and age of own children under 18 years old, type of family, employment status of parents, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, Annual Average 2012.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau. Table CH-1: Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years Old: 1960 to Present. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/children.html>.

<sup>5</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on unpublished data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS. Table 4.

<sup>6</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B23008: Age of own children under 18 years in families and subfamilies by living arrangements by employment status of parents.

<sup>7</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on 2012 CPS data.

<sup>8</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics. Other sectors in which women have lost jobs or experienced smaller gains than men are financial activities; manufacturing; state, local, and federal government; wholesale trade; information services; and construction. Women have added comparatively more jobs in other services; transportation, warehousing, and utilities; and mining and logging. Changes calculated between February 2012 and February 2013 for health care and social assistance and all state, local, and federal government jobs (the most recent data available), and between March 2012 and March 2013 for the remaining industries.

<sup>9</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on 2012 CPS data.

## Children Dependent on Mothers' Earnings and Mothers' Share of Family Income

|                             | 1-Year Estimates, 2011                           |                                                                        |                                                            | 2012                            |                                                               |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | Total Children Living with Own Parent or Parents | Percent of Children with <u>Only</u> a Mother Working Outside the Home | Percent of Children with a Mother Working Outside the Home | Mothers' Share of Family Income | Percent of Families in which the Mother is the Primary Earner |
| <b>United States Total</b>  | 70,423,196                                       | 24%                                                                    | 64%                                                        | 44%                             | 36%                                                           |
| <b>Alabama</b>              | 1,058,901                                        | 28%                                                                    | 65%                                                        | 44%                             | 33%                                                           |
| <b>Alaska</b>               | 181,091                                          | 23%                                                                    | 61%                                                        | 41%                             | 31%                                                           |
| <b>Arizona</b>              | 1,542,548                                        | 26%                                                                    | 59%                                                        | 46%                             | 38%                                                           |
| <b>Arkansas</b>             | 666,051                                          | 27%                                                                    | 65%                                                        | 48%                             | 44%                                                           |
| <b>California</b>           | 8,830,346                                        | 22%                                                                    | 60%                                                        | 48%                             | 42%                                                           |
| <b>Colorado</b>             | 1,179,069                                        | 20%                                                                    | 64%                                                        | 42%                             | 36%                                                           |
| <b>Connecticut</b>          | 778,282                                          | 24%                                                                    | 71%                                                        | 42%                             | 33%                                                           |
| <b>Delaware</b>             | 191,327                                          | 28%                                                                    | 69%                                                        | 46%                             | 40%                                                           |
| <b>District of Columbia</b> | 99,355                                           | 40%                                                                    | 67%                                                        | 48%                             | 36%                                                           |
| <b>Florida</b>              | 3,791,541                                        | 28%                                                                    | 66%                                                        | 47%                             | 41%                                                           |
| <b>Georgia</b>              | 2,343,697                                        | 27%                                                                    | 64%                                                        | 47%                             | 40%                                                           |
| <b>Hawaii</b>               | 288,395                                          | 21%                                                                    | 66%                                                        | 48%                             | 44%                                                           |
| <b>Idaho</b>                | 406,995                                          | 18%                                                                    | 59%                                                        | 42%                             | 35%                                                           |
| <b>Illinois</b>             | 2,968,960                                        | 24%                                                                    | 65%                                                        | 44%                             | 36%                                                           |
| <b>Indiana</b>              | 1,509,211                                        | 24%                                                                    | 66%                                                        | 43%                             | 35%                                                           |
| <b>Iowa</b>                 | 695,169                                          | 21%                                                                    | 74%                                                        | 44%                             | 37%                                                           |
| <b>Kansas</b>               | 690,313                                          | 22%                                                                    | 69%                                                        | 44%                             | 32%                                                           |
| <b>Kentucky</b>             | 949,259                                          | 23%                                                                    | 64%                                                        | 42%                             | 31%                                                           |
| <b>Louisiana</b>            | 1,049,484                                        | 31%                                                                    | 66%                                                        | 42%                             | 40%                                                           |
| <b>Maine</b>                | 256,593                                          | 23%                                                                    | 70%                                                        | 40%                             | 30%                                                           |
| <b>Maryland</b>             | 1,280,972                                        | 27%                                                                    | 71%                                                        | 44%                             | 35%                                                           |
| <b>Massachusetts</b>        | 1,356,652                                        | 22%                                                                    | 70%                                                        | 43%                             | 37%                                                           |
| <b>Michigan</b>             | 2,191,674                                        | 24%                                                                    | 66%                                                        | 44%                             | 37%                                                           |
| <b>Minnesota</b>            | 1,234,642                                        | 19%                                                                    | 72%                                                        | 44%                             | 35%                                                           |
| <b>Mississippi</b>          | 699,937                                          | 33%                                                                    | 67%                                                        | 46%                             | 32%                                                           |
| <b>Missouri</b>             | 1,337,975                                        | 24%                                                                    | 68%                                                        | 44%                             | 32%                                                           |
| <b>Montana</b>              | 212,186                                          | 20%                                                                    | 67%                                                        | 48%                             | 46%                                                           |
| <b>Nebraska</b>             | 440,585                                          | 20%                                                                    | 72%                                                        | 44%                             | 33%                                                           |
| <b>Nevada</b>               | 630,870                                          | 24%                                                                    | 61%                                                        | 47%                             | 40%                                                           |
| <b>New Hampshire</b>        | 270,876                                          | 20%                                                                    | 70%                                                        | 41%                             | 30%                                                           |
| <b>New Jersey</b>           | 1,977,861                                        | 23%                                                                    | 67%                                                        | 43%                             | 32%                                                           |
| <b>New Mexico</b>           | 489,985                                          | 28%                                                                    | 60%                                                        | 42%                             | 34%                                                           |
| <b>New York</b>             | 4,098,553                                        | 24%                                                                    | 64%                                                        | 45%                             | 37%                                                           |
| <b>North Carolina</b>       | 2,185,276                                        | 27%                                                                    | 66%                                                        | 44%                             | 39%                                                           |
| <b>North Dakota</b>         | 145,859                                          | 17%                                                                    | 73%                                                        | 43%                             | 35%                                                           |
| <b>Ohio</b>                 | 2,567,057                                        | 26%                                                                    | 67%                                                        | 43%                             | 33%                                                           |
| <b>Oklahoma</b>             | 882,421                                          | 22%                                                                    | 61%                                                        | 44%                             | 35%                                                           |
| <b>Oregon</b>               | 820,679                                          | 19%                                                                    | 61%                                                        | 44%                             | 34%                                                           |
| <b>Pennsylvania</b>         | 2,649,288                                        | 23%                                                                    | 66%                                                        | 41%                             | 32%                                                           |
| <b>Rhode Island</b>         | 208,399                                          | 27%                                                                    | 72%                                                        | 46%                             | 37%                                                           |
| <b>South Carolina</b>       | 1,023,667                                        | 30%                                                                    | 65%                                                        | 43%                             | 37%                                                           |
| <b>South Dakota</b>         | 190,961                                          | 22%                                                                    | 73%                                                        | 45%                             | 37%                                                           |
| <b>Tennessee</b>            | 1,402,073                                        | 26%                                                                    | 65%                                                        | 42%                             | 34%                                                           |
| <b>Texas</b>                | 6,630,852                                        | 24%                                                                    | 60%                                                        | 44%                             | 35%                                                           |
| <b>Utah</b>                 | 852,472                                          | 15%                                                                    | 55%                                                        | 39%                             | 30%                                                           |
| <b>Vermont</b>              | 120,147                                          | 21%                                                                    | 72%                                                        | 41%                             | 33%                                                           |
| <b>Virginia</b>             | 1,779,946                                        | 23%                                                                    | 66%                                                        | 43%                             | 33%                                                           |
| <b>Washington</b>           | 1,506,122                                        | 20%                                                                    | 61%                                                        | 44%                             | 36%                                                           |
| <b>West Virginia</b>        | 361,246                                          | 23%                                                                    | 59%                                                        | 44%                             | 40%                                                           |
| <b>Wisconsin</b>            | 1,269,211                                        | 22%                                                                    | 71%                                                        | 43%                             | 33%                                                           |
| <b>Wyoming</b>              | 128,165                                          | 21%                                                                    | 65%                                                        | 40%                             | 32%                                                           |

Note: Children include only those younger than 18 living with their own parent or parents.

Source: Democratic staff of the Joint Economic Committee calculations based on 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (Table B23008) and 2012 Current Population Survey data.