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Carsey: Many N.H. Jobs Don't Pay Livable Wage

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DURHAM, N.H. - As the U.S. economy falters and recession looms, a new report finds that 79 percent of jobs in New Hampshire do not pay a wage sufficient for single-parent families with two children to provide basic needs such as housing, food, transportation, child care and health care. The report, from the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire, also finds that Carroll County has the lowest percentage of livable wage jobs, with only 13 percent of jobs paying a livable wage for single-parent families with two children.

"In this strained economic climate, it's important to take an inventory of households' ability to locate gainful employment in this state," says report author Daphne Kenyon, an economist and policy fellow at the Carsey Institute. Allison Churilla, a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at UNH and a Carsey research assistant, was co-author of the report, which updated a similar report from 2001.

The report examines livable wages - the wage sufficient to pay for basic needs - by county and by seven family types. The report finds that in every county in the state, well over half of all jobs pay a livable wage for a two-parent family with one child (both parents working) or for a single-person household. In contrast, no more than a quarter of all jobs in any county pay a livable wage for a single person with two young children.

Livable wages vary by region, with rural Coos County having the lowest livable wages and Hillsborough and Rockingham counties, home to three of the state's largest cities (Manchester and Nashua in Hillsborough and Portsmouth in Rockingham) having the highest livable wage. The lowest estimated livable wage is \$8.49 for a two-parent family with one child (both parents working) in Coos County, while the highest livable wage estimate is \$22.24 for a single person with two children in Rockingham County.

One in three New Hampshire workers is employed in one of 65 jobs - primarily service positions -- in the state with a median hourly wage below \$11.07, the estimated livable wage for a single-person household. To the extent New Hampshire continues in its transition from a production-based to a service-based economy, the proportion of livable wage jobs is expected to decline.

"It's important to understand that just because people have jobs, they may not be doing

O.K.," says Kenyon, noting that workers not making a livable wage may go without basic needs like health insurance or may work more than 40 hours per week.

To download a copy of the report, go to <http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/IB-NHLivableWage08.pdf>.

The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire conducts research and analysis on the challenges facing families and communities in New Hampshire, New England, and the nation. The Carsey Institute sponsors independent, interdisciplinary research that documents trends and conditions affecting families and communities, providing information and analysis to policymakers, practitioners, the media, and the general public. Through this work, the Carsey Institute contributes to public dialogue on policies that encourage social mobility and sustain healthy, equitable communities. The Carsey Institute was established in May 2002 with a generous gift from UNH alumna and noted television producer Marcy Carsey. Visit us online at <http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/>.

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