

**A STATEWIDE SURVEY OF MARYLAND RESIDENTS
ABOUT
LOW-WAGE WORKERS AND MARYLAND'S ECONOMY**

-- Survey Findings --

These are the results of a telephone survey of 800 Maryland residents, age 18 and older, conducted November 2-6, 2000. Lake, Snell Perry & Associates conducted this survey on behalf of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Open Society Institute - Baltimore, and Jobs for the Future. The margin of error is plus or minus four percentage points.

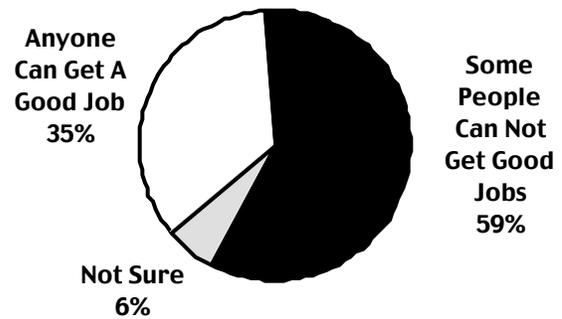
If you have questions about the survey, please contact Ed Hatcher of the Hatcher Group at (301) 652-1558 or Susan Kannel of Lake Snell Perry & Associates at (202) 776-9066.

Some In Maryland Left Behind By The Economic Boom

The majority of Maryland residents believe the state's strong economy has left some of their neighbors behind. As Figure One shows, six in ten (59%) Maryland residents believe that, despite the strong economy, some people cannot get good jobs. Only a third (35%) believe the economy is so strong that anyone who wants to can find a good job with a good wage.

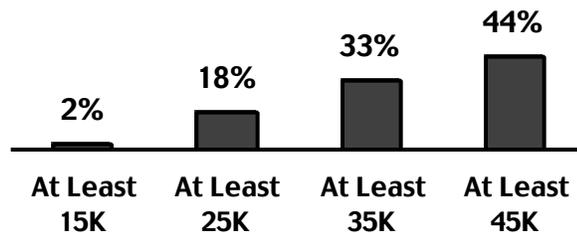
The perception that some Maryland residents cannot find good jobs despite good economic times exists across all groups, but is particularly strong in some. Those with incomes under \$50,000 (66%) are especially likely to feel some have missed the boom. However, even among higher-income individuals more believe a job can be hard to come by (51%), than feel anyone can get a good job in today's economy (41%).

Those from metropolitan areas (59%) and rural parts of the state (60%) agree equally that good jobs are hard to come by for some in Maryland.



What It Takes To Earns A Living . . . More Than Minimum Wage

Survey respondents were asked how much a family of four in Maryland needs to earn in a year to make ends meet. As Figure Two shows, almost half (44%) believe it takes at least \$45,000 a year. Most (77%) said a family of four needs an annual income of at least \$35,000 to make it in Maryland. By comparison, two parents working full-time earning Maryland's minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour would only make about \$22,000 a year.



Maryland State Government Should Help Low-Income Families

Maryland residents see a role for the government in making sure working people earn enough to support their families. As Table One shows, over nine in ten (93%) agree with the statement “Here in Maryland, government should make sure that people who work full-time can earn enough to keep their families out of poverty.” Three quarters (75%) strongly agree with this statement.

Table One also shows that those with lower incomes are somewhat more likely than wealthier people to believe government should ensure full-time workers can keep their families out of poverty. However, even in the highest income bracket a two-thirds majority (65%) agrees strongly that government has this obligation. Similarly, while Democrats feel especially deeply (98%) that government should help working families stay out of poverty, the large majority of Republicans (85%) agree. Similarly, majorities in both metropolitan areas (95%) and outside of them (89%) agree that government should ensure that full-time workers should earn a living wage.

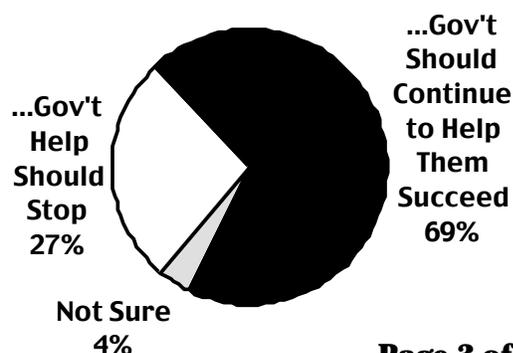
Table One: Government Should Ensure Full-Time Workers Can Earn Enough To Keep Their Families Out Of Poverty

	Total	Household Income -----				Party ID -----		
		Under 20K	20K - 30K	30K - 50K	Over 50K	Dem	Ind	Rep
Agree (total)	93	96	96	95	90	98	91	85
Agree Strongly	75	81	83	77	65	79	72	70
Disagree (total)	6	2	3	5	10	2	7	14

Other survey findings reaffirm that Maryland residents see a role for the government in helping the states less-skilled, poorer residents. Three quarters (75%) of Marylanders believe state government has a responsibility to make sure that “Maryland’s workers have the right skills and enough education to get jobs that pay enough to support a family.” Even more (87%) feel Maryland’s public high schools and community colleges have a responsibility in this area.

Many residents feel the state should do more than just help people get jobs, it should also help them succeed in those jobs. As Figure Three shows, seven in ten (69%) believe government should continue to help lower-income people even after they find jobs by offering training, help with child care, or other assistance. Just over a quarter (27%) disagree.

By a three-to-one margin Democrats feel government help should be continued once a person is working rather than stopped (75% vs. 22%). Among Republicans, twice as many feel help should continue (62%), as



feel it should cease (32%). Those in and around the state’s metropolitan areas feel especially strongly that government help should continue (73%), but even in more rural areas the large majority believe the state should go beyond simply helping people find work (64%).

Maryland Residents Support Measures To Help People Find And Keep Good Jobs . . .

Survey respondents were asked about a number of government policy measures designed to help lower-income Maryland residents enter and succeed in the workplace. As Table Two shows, majorities support all the proposed ideas. These efforts fall into three categories:

- *Education and Training:* Most residents (88%) support helping to pay for training and education for people with low skill levels. A majority also support workforce retraining (78%).
- *Tax Incentives:* Over eight in ten (87%) support tax credits for people who, despite working full-time, do not earn enough to keep their families out of poverty. Three-quarters (75%) support tax credits for businesses that employ low-wage workers.
- *Support Services:* Most (87%) back helping low-income workers get and pay for quality childcare. There is also strong support for improving public transportation systems (84%).

Table Two: Support For Assistance Measures

	----- Support -----		Total
	Total	Strongly	Oppose
Helping to pay for education and job training for people with low skill levels	88	56	10
Tax credits for people who work full-time but do not earn enough to keep their families out of poverty	87	55	11
Helping low-income workers get and pay for quality childcare	87	59	11
Improving public transportation systems for getting low-wage workers to jobs	84	53	14
Retraining for Maryland’s workforce so Maryland businesses can stay competitive	78	47	19
Tax credits for businesses that employ low wage workers who might otherwise be unemployed	75	33	21

...Even If It Means An Increase In Government Spending

Those in favor of these measures were asked whether they would still support them if it meant an increase in government spending. The large majority – between 80 and 90 percent – say they would remain committed to these actions regardless of increased spending. As Table Three shows, when these two data points are considered together, a majority of Maryland residents support these measures regardless of potential budgetary implications.

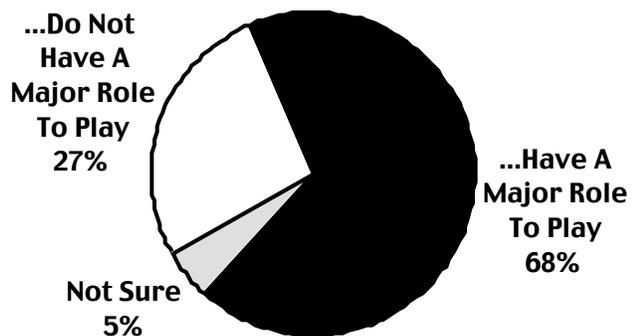
Table Three: Support For Assistance Measures Considering Increased Spending

	Support	Support Despite Increased Spending
Helping to pay for education and job training for people with low skill levels	88	77
Tax credits to people who work full-time but do not earn enough to keep their families out of poverty	87	74
Helping low-income workers get and pay for quality childcare	87	78
Improving public transportation systems for getting low-wage workers to jobs	84	72
Retraining for Maryland's workforce so Maryland businesses can stay competitive	78	65
Offering tax credits to businesses that employ low wage workers who might otherwise be unemployed	75	63

Public-Private Partnership: Maryland Residents Also See A Role For Business

Three quarters (75%) of Maryland residents believe the state’s employers have a responsibility to make sure that “Maryland’s workers have the right skills and enough education to get jobs that pay enough to support a family;” a third (33%) feel they have a lot of responsibility in this area.

Another survey question also demonstrates Marylanders’ feeling that the state’s business community has an obligation to the state’s workforce. Seven in ten (68%) believe that “Maryland's employers have a major role to play in helping to develop and train Maryland's workforce, because the success of their businesses depends on it.” Only a quarter (27%) alternatively agree that “Maryland's employers do not have a major role to play in this area, this is really up to the state government and to individual workers.” Marylanders from all demographic and regional groups agree that employers in the state have a significant contribution to make toward workforce development.



Success Depends On Individuals, Government And Employers

According to Maryland residents, successfully moving lower-income, lower-skilled people in the state into promising jobs depends on a collaborative effort. As Table Four suggests, a great deal of the responsibility lies with individuals themselves. However, state government, the schools and the business community all have a role to play in helping low income people find and succeed in jobs.

Table Four: How Much Responsibility Do The Following Have In Making Sure Maryland’s Workers Have The Right Skills And Enough Education To Get Jobs That Pay Enough To Support A Family?

	A Lot/ Some	A Lot	Some	A Little	None
Individual Job Seekers	91	64	27	6	3
Maryland’s Public High Schools and Community Colleges	87	55	32	9	3
Maryland’s State Government	75	29	46	16	8
Maryland’s Employers	75	33	42	18	6

Marylanders Question The Success Of Welfare Reform

Several years into the welfare reform process, residents of Maryland are divided about its outcomes. As Table Five shows, half (51%) considers the effort a success; only nine percent feel it has been *very* successful. A third (33%) doubt the success of welfare reform, including 11 percent who feel it has not been successful at all. Over one in ten (16%) are not sure whether they feel it has been successful or not.

Table Five: How Successful Do You Think Welfare Reform Has Been In Maryland?

	Total
Very Successful	9
Somewhat Successful	42
Not Too Successful	22
Not Successful At All	11
Not Sure	16

People are less impressed with welfare reform when they examine other considerations. Those who said they consider welfare reform a success were asked whether they would still consider it successful if it turned out that most of those who have moved from welfare to work are still living in poverty despite being employed. Over half (55%) say they would not consider it a success if indeed most of those newly employed people were still impoverished. Four in ten (39%) would feel reforms have worked despite this possibility.

As Figure Five shows, when these two data points are combined, only two in ten (20%) Maryland residents would believe, unconditionally, that reform efforts have been successful. Six in ten (61%) indicate that welfare reform has not worked well; including a third (33%) who told us, without any probing, that they considered welfare reform fairly unsuccessful, and over a quarter (28%) who consider it a success but would revise their opinions if they heard that many are still living in poverty despite being employed. Two in ten (19%) are not sure how they feel about welfare reform's success.

