

# Workers Across West Virginia Need \$15 and One Fair Wage



West Virginia



The Raise the Wage Act, which would raise the minimum wage for all workers in the United States to \$15 an hour and phase out the subminimum wage for tipped workers, would significantly reduce poverty in West Virginia.

➤ In West Virginia, the minimum wage is \$8.75 for all workers, while the subminimum wage stands at only \$2.62 for tipped workers.<sup>1,2</sup>

Although the hourly median wage in West Virginia is \$16.31, the majority of workers make far less. Forty three percent of the total workforce (about 300,000 workers) earns an hourly median wage below \$15 and 13% (88,000 people) earn less than \$10 hourly. Those who earn less than \$10 an hour work primarily in the service industry and are essential workers.<sup>3</sup> Workers earning under \$15 comprise 74% of all workers receiving food stamp benefits in West Virginia.<sup>4</sup> The food service sector is one of the largest employers in West Virginia, and it provides some of the lowest wages in the state.<sup>5</sup>

TABLE 1: TOP 10 LARGEST OCCUPATIONS IN WEST VIRGINIA

JOB TITLE	Workforce	Median Hourly Wage
Fast Food and Counter Workers	22,970	\$9.70
Retail Salesperson	21,770	\$10.80
Cashiers	20,320	\$9.80
Registered Nurses	19,830	\$29.55
Office Clerks, General	18,620	\$13.32
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	15,080	\$9.82
Customer Service Representatives	12,660	\$14.01
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	11,840	\$19.49
Waiters and Waitresses	11,530	\$9.90
General and Operations Managers	11,510	\$14.01

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (May 2019). Occupational Employment Statistics - West Virginia. All Occupations and hourly median wage. [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_wv.htm#00-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_wv.htm#00-0000)

TABLE 2: OTHER OCCUPATIONS UNDER \$15

JOB TITLE	Workforce	Median Hourly Wage
Janitors and Cleaners Except Maids and Housekeepers	8,680	\$11.96
Nursing Assistants	7,830	\$12.26
Cooks, Restaurants	7,390	\$10.82
Maids and Housekeepers	5,960	\$10.40
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving	5,490	\$13.12
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	2,260	\$13.42
Preschool Teachers Except Special Education	1,810	\$12.28

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (May 2019). Occupational Employment Statistics - West Virginia. All Occupations and hourly median wage. [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_wv.htm#00-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_wv.htm#00-0000)



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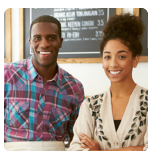
## Most Essential Workers Lack a Living Wage to Feed Their Families

➤ Over a third all workers who earn under \$15 an hour in West Virginia have at least one child. In West Virginia, a single adult with just one child will need \$28.70 hourly or about \$59,600 annually to cover minimal rent, food, transportation, and other basic living costs.<sup>6</sup> However, 79% of West Virginia workers, who work predominantly in the food, health, and general service industry, still fall far below the living wages necessary to provide for their families.<sup>7</sup>

TABLE 5: TIPPED WORKERS DISPROPORTIONATELY REPRESENT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

73%	Women Tipped Workers
11%	People of Color Tipped Workers
28%	Tipped Workers with Children
27%	Tipped Workers Using Food Stamps

Source: Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 10.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V10.0>



## West Virginia Workers Would Thrive with One Fair Wage

➤ Currently, 16% of the total West Virginia population (1,792,147) lives in poverty.<sup>9</sup> Using the federal poverty line,<sup>10</sup> currently at least 98,771 West Virginia workers who are currently employed live under the poverty level. **All of these workers would be lifted out of poverty by raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers, including tipped workers, reducing the poverty level in West Virginia to 10.49%, a 34% reduction in the state poverty level.**

1 U.S. Department of Labor. (January 2021). State Minimum Wage Laws. Accessed 02/08/21. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/minimum-wage/state>.

2 U.S. Department of Labor. (January 2021). Minimum Wage for Tipped Employees. Accessed 02/10/21. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/state/minimum-wage/tipped>.

3 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (May 2019). Occupational Employment Statistics - West Virginia. All Occupations and hourly median wage. [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_wv.htm#00-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_wv.htm#00-0000).

4 Revise to: One Fair Wage calculation based on 2015-2019 ACS 5-year estimates using Steven Ruggles et al., IPUMS

USA: Version 11.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V11.0>.

5 See note 3.

6 MIT Living Wage Calculator - West Virginia as a whole, Accessed 02/07/21, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/54>.

7 See note 3.

8 See note 4.

9 U.S. Census. (2019). Quick Facts: West Virginia. Accessed 02/09/21. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/WV>.

10 The 2019 federal poverty line is \$12,490 for a household of 1 and increases by \$4,420 for each additional household

member. For a conservative estimate, we calculated the number of currently employed workers in households of 1 who earned less than \$10,000 and the number of currently employed workers in households of 2 or more who earned less than \$15,000 to produce the total number of currently employed workers who earn less than the federal poverty line. A \$15 wage would bring all of these workers above the federal poverty line for all households of 1 and 2 or more. <https://usa.abacus.ipums.org/session?session=1-191164%2C191079-2710-191127%211165088%2C191135%211167105-1148724-t-weighted-count>.

11 See note 3.

TABLE 3: MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES (INCLUDING TIPS) IN WEST VIRGINIA

\$16.31	All Workers
\$10.11	All Workers Under \$15
\$12.34	All Tipped Workers

TABLE 4: ALL WORKERS WITH CHILDREN

40%	All Workers
34%	All Workers Under \$15
28%	All Tipped Workers

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. May 2019 Occupational Employment Statistics for Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations. Customarily tipped restaurant positions: Bartenders, Waiters and Waitresses, Dishwashers, Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop, Cooks, Restaurant, Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers. Other non-restaurant tipped positions: Barbers, Hairdressers, Hair Stylists, and Cosmetologists, Baggage Porters and Bellhops, Parking Attendants, Usher, Lobby Attendants, and Ticket Takers, Accessed 02/07/2021.

Source: Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 10.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V10.0>



## Tipped Workers Disproportionately Represent Vulnerable Populations

◀ The subminimum wage for tipped workers, a literal legacy of slavery, disproportionately impacts women and workers of color in West Virginia. Today, 73% of tipped workers in West Virginia are women, and 11% are workers of color.<sup>8</sup> Tipped workers use food stamps at nearly twice the rate of all other workers in West Virginia.

TABLE 6: AMOUNT OF WORKERS IMPACTED BY \$15 MINIMUM WAGE

299,820	Workers Receiving Wage Increase <sup>11</sup>
43%	All Workers Receiving Wage Increase
98,771	Workers Lifted Out of Poverty
34%	Reduction in State Poverty

Source: Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 10.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V10.0>