

## Work and Wages in Johnson County

Work should offer a pathway out of poverty by providing an income that is sufficient to sustain a household, meet financial obligations, and save for short-term emergencies and long-term goals. Local data tell us that most of the working-age poor are doing just that – working. However, they do not work enough hours or earn high enough wages to rise above the poverty level. Often the jobs these workers hold pay low wages, offer only part-time or temporary work, may have unpredictable schedules and likely do not offer paid benefits such as sick leave. Nor do they offer an opportunity for advancement. As a result, the poor are working hard but not getting ahead.

### The Working Poor in Johnson County

Nearly 1 in 6 poor adults worked full time, year-round in 2014, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And yet, even with full-time wages, their income fell below the federal poverty level. More than 6 in 10 worked part-time or part-year. Only 24% did not work.

### When Work Doesn't Pay

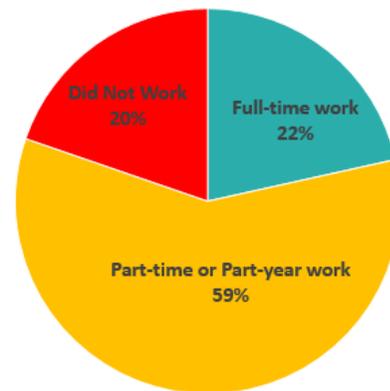
According to data on wages paid by Johnson County employers, 1 in 9 jobs pay less than \$10 an hour. Another 22% pay between \$10 and \$15 an hour. Together one-third of jobs in Johnson County pay less than \$15 an hour, which is equivalent to \$31,200 for full-time year-round work.

Employment projections for the area suggest that the largest employment growth through 2022 will be predominantly low-wage occupations, such as sales clerk, restaurant worker, cashier, and personal care aide. Supporting a family and getting a secure foothold in life is challenging when job opportunities are concentrated in low-wage jobs.

#### 2016 Poverty Thresholds

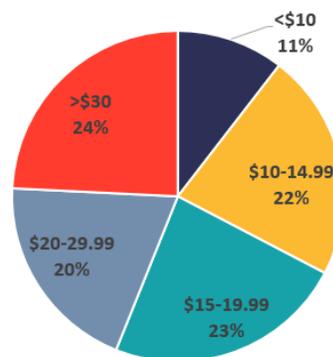
- 1 person: \$11,880
- 2 persons: \$16,020
- 3 persons: \$20,160
- 4 persons: \$24,300

### The Majority of the Poor Work



Adults 18-64 below the poverty level and without a disability that prevents work = 14,830  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year estimate, 2015

### 1 in 9 jobs pay less than \$10 an hour Johnson County average hourly wages



Annual wages for full-time, year-round work  
\$10 = \$20,800  
\$15 = \$31,200  
\$20 = \$41,600  
\$30 = \$62,400

2015 Jobs = 368,200  
Source: Mid-America Regional Council. EMSI 3Q 2015