



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, May 21, 2013
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As workers and families continue to struggle in an uneven economic recovery,

STATES FALL SHORT ON PROMOTING ECONOMIC SECURITY

National Report Card Grades Policies in 50 States and DC; Finds Majority of States Fail to Support Working Families and Seniors

WASHINGTON, DC—While working families struggle to make ends meet in an economy marked by [stubbornly high long-term unemployment](#), [growth in low-wage jobs](#) and [increased need for public assistance](#), a new report card from [Wider Opportunities for Women \(WOW\)](#) finds that all 50 states and the District of Columbia are falling short on promoting economic security for their citizens. [The Economic Security Scorecard: Policy and Security in the States](#) is a comprehensive evaluation of how well each state's policies improve economic security for working families and seniors. [Previous reports](#) from WOW show that 53 percent of seniors and 43 percent of families are living without economic security—the ability to cover basic expenses, including childcare, housing, health care, transportation and savings.

View the report card and state grades [here](#).

The *Scorecard* highlights the important role that state governments play in addressing income inadequacy, building a strong workforce, and supporting seniors. The *Scorecard* evaluates states on over 80 policies within five issue areas: income, job quality, education and training, savings and assets and supports. Washington State earned the highest overall grade with a B-. The majority of states received grades between C- and C+, indicating that most states are failing to promote *comprehensive* economic security and adequately respond to an uneven economic recovery. Four states—Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Utah—receive the lowest grade of D+.

“Rebuilding a strong economy and community stability should be a top priority for lawmakers at every level of government, and that starts with promoting economic security for working families and seniors,” said **Shawn McMahon, Acting President and CEO of Wider Opportunities for Women**. “The *Scorecard* can help lawmakers, advocates and others better understand the full picture, how many policies together interact and improve, or fail to improve, families’ lives for the better.”

While no state performed well across all issue areas, there are certain policy categories where states earned comparatively higher marks: income and assets and savings. Several states are improving low-wage workers’ incomes through minimum wage and state tax credit policies, while other states lack minimum wage policies and tax credits all together. Washington State, for example, which received the highest overall grade of any state, has the nation’s highest minimum wage, which is well above the federal minimum wage. Many states receive fair or good grades for assets and savings due to increasingly common consumer protection laws and elimination of asset eligibility tests from public support programs.

Nearly all states, however, still fail in their response to the growth of low wage jobs which do not offer basic employment benefits. Only a few states ensure that all workers have access to paid sick and family leave and are able to build needed retirement savings.

With the federal government in partisan gridlock, state governments' priorities and decisions are increasingly important in determining how well working families and seniors are able to make ends meet. The *Scorecard* finds that a state's policy grades are not strongly connected to a state's median income, budget size or fiscal health, which suggests that a state's performance in promoting economic security is largely a matter of political will and good planning.

"Many policies which dramatically improve families' economic security can be low cost—both in their initial investments and long-term net cost. Policymakers who implement a number of the policy choices we studied can do a lot to rebuild their states' middle class," McMahon stated.

The Scorecard will be shared with lawmakers across the country and promises to guide future decisions in how to best promote economic security across the lifespan, and ensure that their states' citizens are able to achieve basic security as their states' economies improve.

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) is a national non-profit that promotes empowerment, equity and economic security across the lifespan, around the country and in its home community of Washington, DC.

wowonline.org
[*The Economic Security Scorecard: Policy and Security in the States*](#)
[WOW's new Economic Security Institute](#)

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