



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MA costs of living for single parent with two children
hit \$61,618 a year**

**Companion study finds just 11 “Hot Jobs” in state
for middle-skilled workers**

BOSTON—Crittenton Women’s Union (CWU), a Boston-based nonprofit innovator in breaking the cycle of poverty, released today the Massachusetts Economic Independence Index (Mass. Index), which reveals a single parent with two children needs an annual income of \$61,618 in Massachusetts just to get by. Its companion report, “Hot Jobs 2010,” also released today, identifies just 11 hot jobs—occupations requiring two years or less of higher education that pay at the Mass. Index level and have more than a 100 vacancies statewide—down from 26 three years ago.

“The figures we’re releasing today are sobering,” said Elisabeth D. Babcock, CWU president/CEO. “Essential living costs have continued to escalate in the state, when at the same time median incomes here are now lower than in 2002. And it’s worse for those at the bottom twenty-five percent of the economic ladder, who have not only seen their earnings drop by seven percent in the past twenty years, but have fewer and fewer job opportunities that will gain them a foothold in the middle class.”

Crittenton Women’s Union produces a real cost-of-living budget and a Hot Jobs report every three years as essential tools in its work to help low-income women and their families become economically self-sufficient. This data helps low-income women determine what career choices pay enough to support a family, are attainable, and offer the most long-term opportunity.

Massachusetts Economic Independence Index 2010 (Mass. Index)

The Mass. Index measures how much income various family types across the Commonwealth require to meet their most basic expenses—housing, utilities, food, basic transportation, child care, health care, clothing, essential personal and household items, and taxes—without public or private assistance. The Mass. Index is calculated at the state and county levels and for the City of Boston.

For example, according to the Mass. Index, the statewide average income necessary for a household with one adult, one preschooler and one school-age child to meet essential living expenses is \$61,618 (\$29.01 per hour)—approximately three and one-half times the federal poverty level of \$18,310. In Boston, this family would require an annual income of \$62,421; in Norfolk County, the state’s most expensive area, the family would require \$68,021 year; in Franklin, the least expensive county, \$48,874. And no matter where a single adult working full time lives in Massachusetts, he or she needs an income of \$27,084—60% higher than the state’s minimum wage—to be economically self-sufficient. (For a full listing by county, see end of release.) The online Mass. Index calculator at www.liveworkthrive.org allows users to enter their specific family size and city/town of residence to calculate their Mass. Index income.

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Child care is the largest expense for a single-parent family with a preschooler and a school-age child, taking up 31% of the family budget, followed by housing and utilities, which take up 22% combined.

“The Mass. Index is a bare bones budget that calculates how much income people need to break even without help from family or friends or government supports,” said Babcock. “In this budget, there’s no money left over for any kind of savings—not for emergency reserves in case you lose your job or your car breaks down or you face a major illness.”

“Hot Jobs 2010”

CWU’s “Hot Jobs 2010” report defines Hot Jobs as careers that require two years or less of post-secondary education, meet the Mass. Index income level for a single-parent family with two children, and currently post high vacancy rates. “Hot Jobs 2010” identifies just 11 jobs in Massachusetts that meet the criteria, down from 26 in 2007 when CWU last published its Hot Jobs report.

“While it is difficult to talk about Hot Jobs in a struggling economy, it is also a very important time to evaluate the labor market,” said Deborah C. Youngblood, CWU’s vice president of research and innovation. “Those hit hardest during a period of rising unemployment and diminishing vacancy rates are the economically most vulnerable. With a drop from 26 to 11 Hot Jobs in three years, our report clearly demonstrates there are now fewer routes out of poverty. This makes it all the more critical to identify those job opportunities that do exist.”

Each Hot Job listed pays a Mass. Index wage at the 75th percentile of the job’s wage range (meaning 75% of people are paid at or below the represented wage) and has a vacancy rate of 100 openings or more. (See full listing at end of release.) The complete “Hot Jobs 2010” report is available online at www.liveworkthrive.org.

“Hot Jobs” key findings

- The 11 Hot Jobs’ occupational categories are computer and data systems, health care, office and administrative support, protective services, and sales.
- The number of occupations that met the Hot Jobs criteria dropped from 26 in 2007 to 11 in 2010. This is likely due to the combined effect of the recession, rising costs of living, stagnant wages, increased workplace specialization, and increased demand for post-secondary education and training.
- Nine out of 11 jobs in “Hot Jobs 2010” were on the 2007 list, suggesting these were particularly recession-resilient. (See asterisked entries in listing at end of release.)
- Two out of 11 jobs listed in 2010 required only a high school diploma (correctional officers and supervisors of administrative workers); in contrast 16 out of 26 listed in 2007 required no post-secondary education.
- The majority of the 2007 jobs that fell off the list did so because of low vacancy rates, most likely a result of the recession. Some though no longer met the wage criteria and in a few cases had both low vacancy rates and wages below the Mass. Index.
- Of the nine jobs included in both the 2007 and 2010 reports, eight have a significantly lower number of vacancies than in the prior report. Registered nurses experienced a 50% reduction in vacancies as compared to 2007.

“This report clearly illustrates that the Massachusetts economy is becoming increasingly knowledge-based,” Youngblood said. “Yet nearly half of Massachusetts 3.2 million workers do not have an associate’s degree. This makes it more critical than ever that we work to provide access to higher education for low-income working adults.”



MASSACHUSETTS ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE INDEX 2010

Massachusetts Economic Independence 2010 by Geographic Area with Representative Family Types			
Jurisdiction	1 Adult	1 Adult, 1 Preschooler, 1 School-age	2 Workers, 1 Preschooler, 1 School-age
Massachusetts	\$27,084	\$61,618	\$68,751
Barnstable County	\$24,696	\$58,012	\$64,490
Berkshire County	\$20,217	\$49,212	\$55,866
Bristol County	\$23,753	\$54,037	\$60,731
City of Boston	\$28,717	\$62,421	\$68,235
Dukes County	\$29,802	\$62,189	\$68,632
Essex County	\$28,361	\$63,921	\$70,858
Franklin County	\$19,991	\$48,874	\$55,286
Hampden County	\$20,272	\$49,673	\$56,347
Hampshire County	\$20,034	\$49,388	\$55,808
Middlesex County	\$29,635	\$67,783	\$75,111
Nantucket County	\$36,089	\$67,417	\$73,731
Norfolk County	\$30,203	\$68,021	\$75,347
Plymouth County	\$29,178	\$63,164	\$70,693
Suffolk County	\$30,750	\$64,922	\$72,673
Worcester County	\$21,358	\$54,859	\$61,473

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CWU publishes a real cost-of-living budget tool every three years. In 2009 CWU contracted with Wider Opportunities for Women to develop the Mass. Index. The Mass. Index uses a revised methodology and replaces the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard, published in 1998, 2003 and 2006.

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HOT JOBS 2010

Hot Jobs	Vacancies	Wage 75 th Percentile	Education/ Training Required
Computers and Data Systems			
Computer Support Specialists*	194	\$70,180	AA
Computer Programmers	132	\$100,160	AA or BA
Network Systems and Data Communications	108	\$98,000	AA or BA
Health Care			
Registered Nurses *	2479	\$97,160	AA or BA
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians*	140	\$78,750	AA
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers*	104	\$84,210	AA
Dental Hygienists*	117	\$85,550	AA
Office and Administrative Support			
First-line Supervisors/ Managers of Office and Administrative Support Workers*	101	\$63,880	On-the-job training, work experience in a related field
Protective Services			
Correctional Officers and Jailers*	164	\$62,290	AA or on-the-job training
Sales			
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (except technical and scientific)*	127	\$84,160	AA or BA
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, (technical and scientific)*	296	\$113,680	AA or BA

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** These jobs also appeared on the 2007 Hot Jobs list as well, suggesting they are particularly recession-resilient.*

About Crittenton Women's Union

Crittenton Women's Union, a Boston-based nonprofit innovator in breaking the cycle of poverty, uniquely combines direct service programs, independent research and public advocacy in its mission to help low-income women and their families achieve economic self-sufficiency. Each year CWU helps more than 1,500 people through its mobility mentoring, housing, education, and workforce development programs. For more information, visit www.liveworkthrive.org.

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