January 16, 2014

Who earns the minimum?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that 3.6 million workers in the U.S. or 4.7 percent of all hourly workers earned the prevailing federal minimum wage or less in 2012. The current federal minimum wage is $7.25 per hour or about $15,000 per year for a person working 40 hours per week.

In 2012, what percentage of the workers earning $7.25 or less per hour were under the age of 25 years old?

   a) one-third
   b) about half
   c) two-thirds
   d) three-quarters

Answer: b) According to the BLS, 50.6 percent (1.8 million) of the employees earning $7.25 or less per hour in 2012 were young workers 16 to 24 years old.

The majority of the total 3.6 million earning minimum wage or less were women. The BLS reports that women account for 64.4 percent of those paid at or below minimum wage in 2012. Minimum wage employment was also more likely to be part time work. Almost two-thirds of all those earning minimum wages or less were part time employees. However, that also means that 1.3 million full time workers (35+ hours per week) were paid $7.50 or less per hour.


Questions/comments: [cced@uwex.edu](mailto:cced@uwex.edu)