The job crisis among central city single parents: persistent labor force participation, but in low-wage, intermittent jobs.

The 2011 Wisconsin income tax filing data by neighborhood revealed a continuing job gap crisis for Milwaukee single parents with dependents. The 2011 tax returns (filed in 2012) for 34,525 single parent filers in 9 Milwaukee central city zipcodes showed 59% earning less than $20,000 a year and 80% earning less than $30,000. Most (approximately 95%) of the single parents continued working during the recession.

According to 2010 ACS Census data, single mothers in Milwaukee County have high concentrations of jobs in child care centers, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, department and discount stores, eating establishments, social service agencies, and temp agencies. Many of these jobs have variable or irregular hours and seasonal swings in employment.

State tax credits (EIC) for central city “working poor” single parent families dropped by 26% in one year.

The Wisconsin earned income tax credit established to help lower income employed families was reduced for families with more than 1 child under legislation passed in 2011. The state earned income tax credits for single parents in the 9 zipcodes dropped by 26% (from $15.1 million in 2010 to $11.2 million in 2011). Reductions in EIC support were also seen countywide, with a one-year 23% drop for single parent families and a 16% drop for married parent families.

Income tax data source: Employment and Training Institute analysis of tax return data of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue for Milwaukee zipcodes 53204, 53205, 53206, 53208, 53210, 53212, 53216, 53218 and 53233. Note: The DOR data are not adjusted for inflation; according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics purchasing power of the dollar decreased by 10.5% from 2007 to 2011 in the Milwaukee-Racine area. Monthly drilldown data sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development (11/26/2012).