

Michael Fletcher, *The Washington Post*, for Urban Institute forum
“A New Safety Net for Working Families: Getting the Skills and Support to Make It in Today’s Job Market” (September 9, 2008)

Methodology

The Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation-Harvard University *Survey of Low Wage Workers* was conducted by telephone from June 18 to July 7, 2008 among 1,350 randomly selected low wage workers nationwide. Low wage workers were defined as adults ages 18 to 64 working at least 30 hours per week, not self-employed and earning \$27,000 or less in 2007 (this income cutoff was chosen as it roughly corresponds to the bottom 40 percent of the wage distribution). Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish via landline telephone (1,200) as well as via cell phone (150). Results are weighted to ensure the data are reflective of the demographics of the nation’s low wage worker population. The margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Do you think government programs that try to improve the condition of working families in this country are generally making things better, are making things worse, or aren't having much impact one way or another?

Making things better	22%
Making things worse	20%
Aren't having much impact	53%
Don't know	6%

I’m going to read you a list of things the government might do to try to improve people’s financial situation. For each, please tell me if the item should be a top priority for government, an important but lower priority, not too important, or not a priority? (first/next) should (insert item) be a top priority for government, an important but lower priority, not too important, or not a priority?

	Top priority	Lower priority	Not too important	Not a priority	Don't know
Helping people like yourself get more affordable health insurance	72	19	5	3	1
Taking some short-term emergency measures to lower gas prices in your community	71	16	5	7	1
Providing financial assistance for people like yourself to afford college or technical school	58	32	5	4	1
Creating new jobs in your community by spending more to fix schools, highways, and government buildings	52	33	8	5	2
Cutting your taxes	48	31	12	7	1

In the past year, have you and your family received the earned income tax credit, or not?

Yes	48%
No	47%
Don't know	5%