

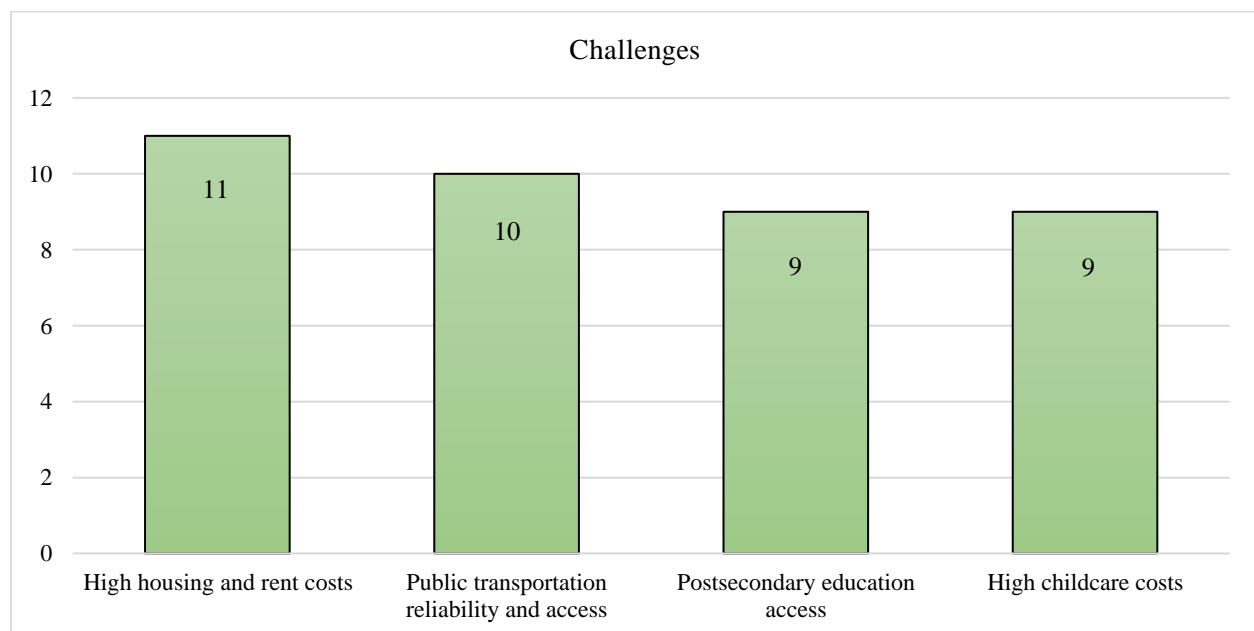
## Living Wage Report 2019 – Discussion Responses Summary

The 2019 update to the Living Wage Report, prepared by The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development and The University of Scranton, seeks to understand better what constitutes a living wage in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) and shed light on how conditions have changed since the first report in 2016.

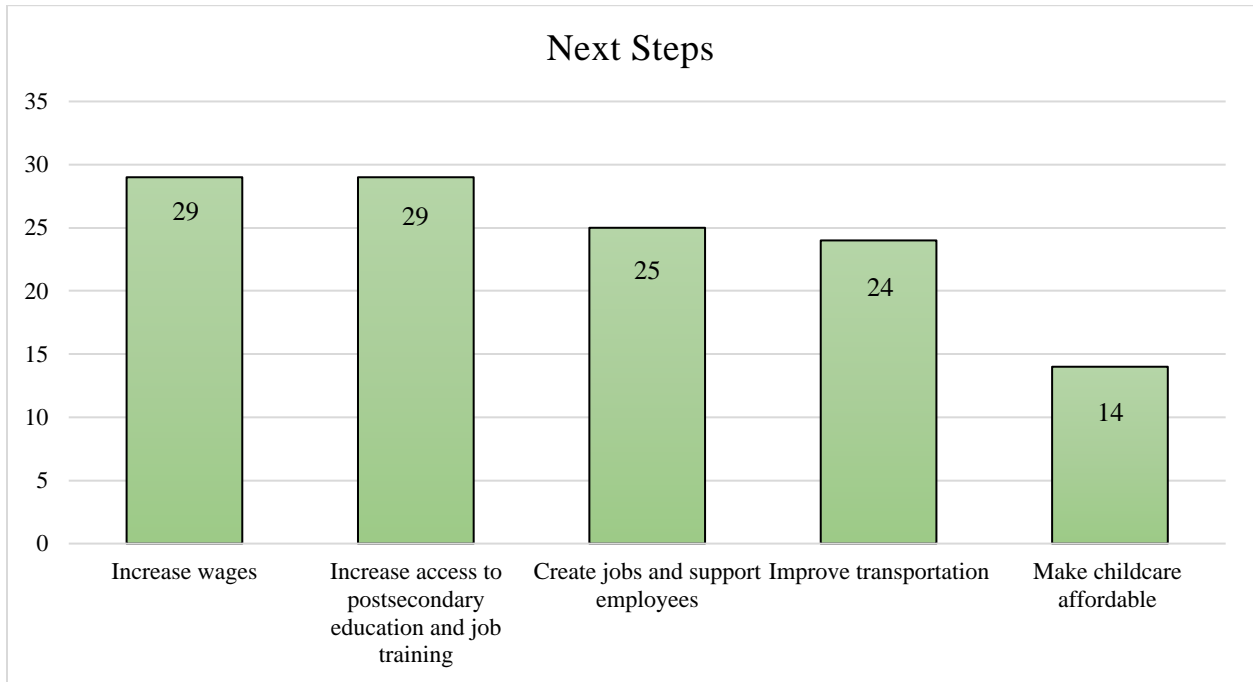
Families in NEPA continue to confront severe economic challenges and poverty and the federal (and current PA) minimum wage of \$7.25 remain inadequate to enable families in the region to reach a living wage threshold where they can meet their “essential basic needs and live a modest but dignified life.” In order for families to meet basic needs, living wage data accounts for the estimated costs of several categories of household spending: food, childcare, medical care, housing, transportation, taxes, and other expenses. The 2019 report catalogues challenges posed by various cost increases, particularly housing, and details how the living wage threshold has increased; it includes policy recommendations rooted in Catholic Social Teaching.

The 2019 report was released at a State of Scranton seminar luncheon titled “Living Wage Study: Three Years On” on November 15, 2019. In addition to presentations on the updated report, the more than 150 community leaders, business professionals, government officials and faculty, students and staff in attendance discussed in small groups how we can collectively respond to issues of economic insecurity in our region. They were asked to discuss and record the two greatest challenges to attaining economic security and the two most important next steps to collectively respond. Each group designated someone to record the group’s responses. The graphs below show the top four responses for each question tallied by the number of times each response was recorded.

**Challenges:** As you review the report findings and consider your own experience (work, volunteer, personal, etc.) in Northeastern Pennsylvania, what do you see as the top challenges to attaining economic security?



**Priorities:** In considering the different recommendations, what do you see as the most important next steps for us as a community (business, non-profit, government, individuals) to respond to our economic insecurity?



***Living Wage Initiative Next Steps:***

We will continue to share the results of the 2019 report with key organizations, elected officials and other local, regional and state contacts and bodies. In particular, we are working to ensure that this information is utilized in current and related processes and working groups. In addition, we plan to continue to gather information from local residents through focus groups and neighborhood discussions. If you are interested in collaborating on information-gathering activities, please contact Julie Schumacher Cohen at [julie.cohen@scranton.edu](mailto:julie.cohen@scranton.edu).