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**From:** Patricia Tyler <ptyler@naepdc.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 22, 2018 1:27 PM  
**Subject:** NVC: Earning Increases for Less-Educated Workers

**NAEPDC**



*News, Views, and Clues*

January 23, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

The following appeared in the Wall Street Journal, January 20-21, 2018 issue,  
<https://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2018/01/19/less-educated-workers-see-biggest-weekly-pay-bumps/>

Less-Educated Workers See Biggest Weekly Pay Bumps

By  
Sarah Chaney  
Jan 19, 2018 5:19 am ET

Americans with only a high-school diploma are seeing faster earnings growth than their highly educated counterparts, as employers in low-wage industries hungrily search for workers to fill job openings.

In the fourth quarter of 2017, median weekly earnings for workers 25 years and older with only a high-school diploma rose 2.3% from the same period a year earlier, [new Labor Department data show](#). Meanwhile, pay for Americans carrying a bachelor's degree edged up just 0.8% from the fourth quarter of 2016.

The trend has been ongoing, with year-over-year wage growth for high-school graduates outpacing wage growth for college graduates in each quarter of 2017.

Jed Kolko, chief economist at job site Indeed, said the outsize pay growth for the least educated workers underscores the impact of a tight labor market on workers who largely hadn't shared in the gains.

"As the labor market has tightened, more opportunities are opening for people with less education, less experience, and firms are competing more to hire people who they would not have fought as hard for a couple years ago," Mr. Kolko said.

Those wage gains also at least partially reflect rising minimum wages, which increased in 21 states, plus the District of Columbia, in 2017.

Though quarterly earnings data are volatile, the longer-term trend for the least educated workers shows swift gains over the course of the economic expansion. Earnings growth for Americans without a high-school diploma was weak early in the recovery, which began in mid-2009. In the third quarter of 2017, earnings growth since the end of the recession for this less-educated group rose above growth for those with a bachelor's degree and higher.

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