Low-wage workers and their related demographic and socio-economic characteristics are of major consideration in almost all industrialized nations. The resulting wage differential that exists between skilled and unskilled labor is substantial, making the topic of low-wage worker characteristics a major global concern. Historically, the challenges in conducting a research study on low-wage workers have been noteworthy. For decades, it was not possible to accurately estimate the cost-of-living across major metropolitan areas that covered multiple state lines in terms of consumer prices. Most scholars agreed, however, that rural poverty and living standards differed significantly from urban poverty and standard of living. In the United States, and only within the last two decades, have there been strides in the ability to calculate the costs of living across major metropolitan areas in a consistent measure. This paper provides the framework of wage-rate and poverty-level determination to assist in the critical analysis of the interrelationships among poverty and low-wage worker characteristics.

Low-income workers may feel forced to turn down new work responsibilities in return for increased stability, even when those opportunities could bring additional financial resources or career opportunities (Sheely, 2010). Considering Underrepresented Populations in Work and Family Research. Chapter. Results have implications for programs and policies seeking to support disadvantaged women's employment in order to improve family resources and functioning. Poverty remains high among single mothers and their children, welfare recipients experience serious barriers to stable employment, and poor women and children face an uncertain economic and social future as welfare eligibility is exhausted and the economy wanes. The poverty rate for children in single-parent families is roughly five times the rate for children in married-couple families (Semega, Fontenot, and Kollar, 2017). Moreover, as detailed in Chapter 4, the rise of single-parent family structures and the increase in the number of births outside marriage played important roles.
in child poverty trends during the last quarter of the 20th century, although as discussed in earlier chapters they have become less important since 2000. Yet in 2016, only 6 percent of low-wage workers had access to employer-provided paid family leave, compared with 25 percent of higher-wage workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Implications for Policy.