

The logo for the Orlando Sentinel's 'Laborland' series. It features the word 'Orlando Sentinel' in a bold, black, serif font at the top. Below it, the word 'Laborland' is written in a large, stylized, black font with a blue and white gradient, set against a blue banner that curves upwards. To the left of the banner is a black starburst graphic. To the right of the banner is a small black silhouette of a castle tower.

# Orlando Sentinel

# Laborland

A four-part series on the challenges facing tourism workers in the most popular vacation destination in the nation

Part 1 | Dec. 8, 2019

## In a theme park parking lot, a worker sleeps in her car

... this is life in America's most visited city

BY CHABELI CARRAZANA

You're not supposed to see them like this, their polyester prince costumes unbuttoned and backpacks hanging from the shoulders of their colonial period dresses.

Flip flops on, lunch boxes in hand, legions of workers stream into an employee parking lot at Walt Disney World, weary from another shift of making magic at the world's busiest theme park.

This is the place where the pixie dust loses its sparkle.

It's where the low-wage workers who power Orlando's tourism machine leave the attractions, hotels and eateries and fade into a community that doesn't have enough affordable housing, public transportation or opportunities in industries with higher-paying jobs.

A year after a landmark decision by Disney to raise its minimum wage for about 40,000 union workers to \$15 an hour by 2021, many of those employees are better off. By October, the number of unionized workers earning more than \$15 an hour had more than quadrupled to 13,057 compared to August 2018, according to the Service Trades Council Union.

### About the series

**Part 1:** Life on low wages

**Also:** Historic pay raises benefit family's three generations of workers

**Part 2:** An affordable housing crisis

**Part 3:** Too few buses, not enough routes

**Part 4:** The tourism industry's power



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Gabby Alcantara-Anderson unwinds in her car after a day of work at Magic Kingdom. She has spent nearly a decade at Disney and serves as a union steward, but at \$14.75 an hour still struggles to make ends meet.

But people earning near the \$15 mark, long considered the gold standard for a living wage, still find their paychecks barely cover the basics — so they move farther from the attractions to find lower rent and make difficult decisions each month about whether they can pay overdue medical bills or buy enough groceries to feed a family.

They're people like Gabby Alcantara-Anderson.

She hops off an employee bus at the lot for Magic Kingdom workers at 12:12 a.m. on a humid September night and makes a beeline for her Kia Soul where a permit on the back window reads: Frontierland Cast Member. After almost seven years at Disney, she spends her shifts monitoring rides while also answering guest complaints at the park's Old West-themed land, home to the Splash Mountain flume and Country Bear Jamboree.

She slips out of sneakers and into black Crocs, climbs into the car, pulls out of the parking lot and heads to a 7-Eleven on Disney property. It happens to be a good night: She has enough cash stowed in the sunglasses case above her head to buy gas for the 63-mile drive to her home south of Lakeland.

But sometimes on the worst nights, when the tank is on E and she can't scrounge even a few bucks for gas, she doesn't leave the lot.

Instead, she pulls into a dark corner, cracks the windows and reclines the seat all the way back. She calls her family, and she checks to make sure there's a clean uniform in the back seat for the next day. And then she falls asleep waiting for her paycheck to deposit overnight.

That doesn't happen as often lately.



Alcantara-Anderson's wages jumped from \$11.50 an hour in September 2018 to \$14.75 today. After Disney's agreement with the unions last year to increase pay, no unionized Disney workers earn less than \$13 an hour today compared to last year when nearly 21,000 people made less than \$11.

But Alcantara-Anderson is still one of about 25,600 Disney workers in the union making less than \$15 an hour. And life in the world's vacation kingdom is still a calculus of choices: rent, food, medicine, a birthday gift for her child.

She and her husband, who works at an auto repair shop, will make about \$45,000 this year, wages that will also support her daughter and her sick mother. That lands them squarely in the low-wage bracket, according to guidelines from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"We have no savings. We have no nest egg. We have nothing to fall back on," said Alcantara-Anderson, 28. "We pretty much live hand to mouth."

Orlando earned its place among the world's leading vacation spots after years of dizzying growth. Today, nearly 50 years after the Magic Kingdom opened, the region's 75 million visitors surpass London and Paris combined.

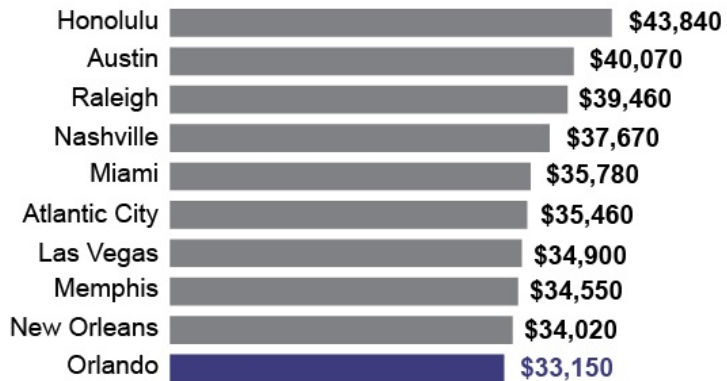
The tourism industry employs nearly 280,000 workers in the four counties surrounding Orlando, accounting for the largest portion of the entire local labor force, more than 20%. Disney employs more than a quarter of those workers or about 77,000 people.

So many tourism jobs in one place, many of them low-wage, come with a consequence: Paychecks across all industries in Central Florida rank dead last among the top 50 metropolitan areas in the United States.

The median annual wage in the Orlando metro is \$33,150, lower than in smaller regions such as Austin, Nashville, Memphis and Raleigh, N.C. Orlando also falls behind other big tourism towns, including Las Vegas, New Orleans, Atlantic City and Honolulu, according to an analysis of 2018 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And wages in the hospitality sector are even lower than the local overall median at \$28,289 in the Orlando metro.

## Orlando wages are among the lowest in America

Orlando's median annual wages for all occupations came in at the bottom of the largest 50 metros by workforce in the U.S. in 2018. They are also lower than major tourism destinations and other similarly-sized metros.



Source: Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2018

Orlando Sentinel





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Eric Gray, executive director for United Against Poverty Orlando, said the reason for lower wages in the Orlando metro region, even in higher-paying jobs, is an abundance of low-skilled workers all vying for jobs in tourism.

The severe shortage of affordable housing — Central Florida is last in that national ranking list, too — a public transit system in dire need of funding and the region’s fits and starts at luring higher-wage industries bring the fragility of Orlando’s low-wage workers into focus.

“It’s like the Gordian knot,” said Eric Gray, executive director for social service agency United Against Poverty Orlando. “It’s so complicated that people hesitate to want to try and untie it.” Desmond Burns, a former cook for a contractor at a Disney hotel, lives in Lakeland and drives two hours, four days a week, to pursue a culinary degree in Tampa, hoping more education will lead to a higher-paying job. Diego Henry, after six years at Disney, still doesn’t make enough to move his family of three out of a one-bedroom apartment. And Nicky Wilkins endures a more than three-hour commute to her job as one of the many theme park employees who rely on the struggling Lynx bus system.

Those workers, along with Alcantara-Anderson, are all active or hold leadership roles in one of the six unions that represent people who work at Disney. The Sentinel also interviewed workers at Universal Orlando and other hotels and restaurants outside of Disney who discussed similar worries about wages, housing and transportation. Many of those workers, who do not have protection from a union, were reluctant to share their stories publicly for fear of job repercussions.

Many said they feel left behind amid the region’s attractions boom. Some, like Alcantara-Anderson, say tourists, by design, don’t see the whole picture.



**“We had eaten the last of our food. She came over to me like, ‘Hey, Mommy, are we going to have dinner today? Are we going to eat?’ ” That was one day where I felt like I had legitimately failed her.”**

— Disney worker  
Gabby Alcantara-Anderson, describing a conversation with her 11-year-old daughter, Chastity McConnell

“They don’t realize that when this worker goes home, they have a separate life that’s not doing so great,” she said.

## The shadows

For Alcantara-Anderson, even at \$14.75 an hour, there’s little wiggle room. An unexpected expense can mean months of playing catch up.

Like when she was hospitalized for six days in March. A bout of bronchitis worsened when she contracted enterovirus and norovirus. She ended up with pneumonia and spent a night in the Intensive Care Unit.

“I thought then, what would have happened if I would have died. That week was pretty much like I was dead because I wasn’t here to take care of things,” she said.

At the time, she was her family’s sole income earner.

When she arrived home from the hospital, Alcantara-Anderson discovered her husband dipped into the savings they had at the time to keep bills from piling up — with her six sick days used up earlier in the year, she’d only received a few days’ worth of short-term disability.

Then she looked around their kitchen. There was a can of green beans. Some vinegar.

“We had eaten the last of our food,” Alcantara-Anderson said, and her 11-year-old daughter, Chastity McConnell, was hungry.

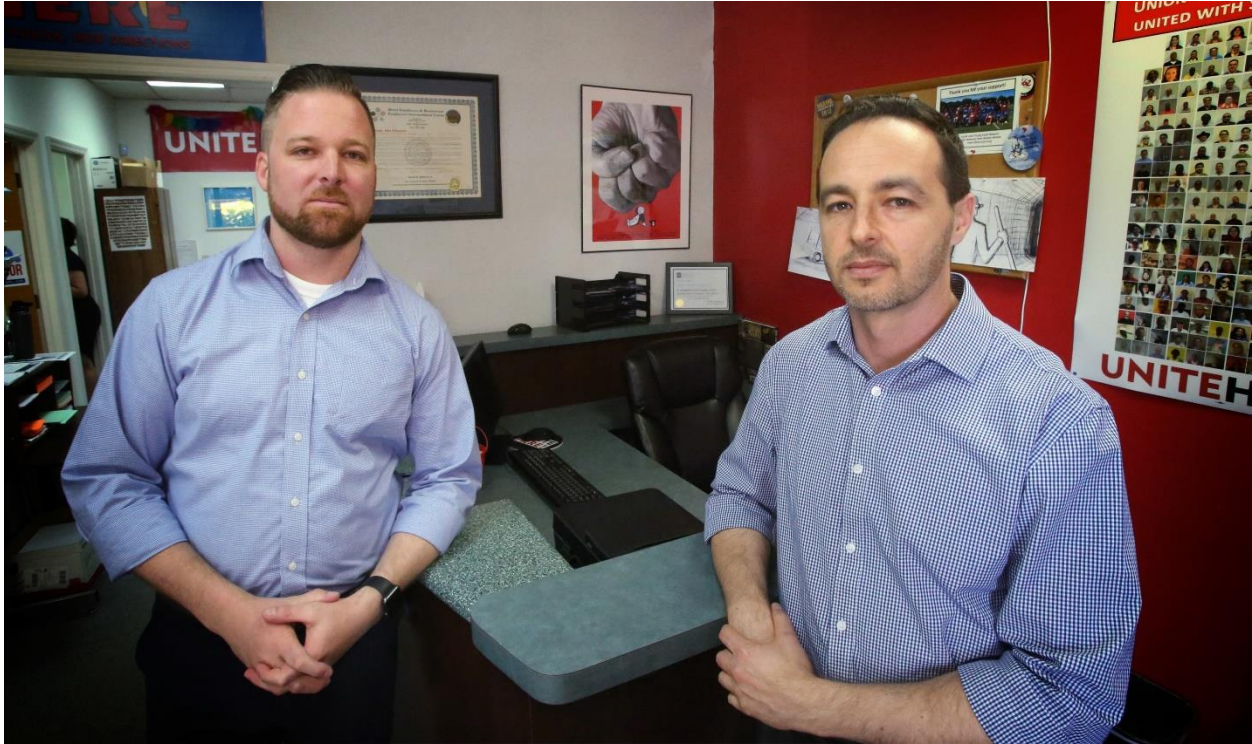
“She came over to me like, ‘Hey, Mommy, are we going to have dinner today? Are we going to eat?’” Alcantara-Anderson recalled. “That was one day where I felt like I had legitimately failed her.”

At the time, Alcantara-Anderson’s grandmother gave them some ground beef, milk, bread, eggs and cheese to eat. But they still wear the episode like a scar. As recently as August, their checking account was in the red: -\$504.89. Bill collectors were calling.

And yet, Alcantara-Anderson is nearly always smiling. She started off at Disney in a seasonal cooking job and moved on to positions where she could use her outgoing personality to more closely interact with guests. Her hair is often in two full pigtails and she wears a Boba Fett tattoo, after the Star Wars bounty hunter, on her right shoulder. In 2014, she won one of Disney’s highest cast member honors, the Disney Heroes Award, for performing CPR on a guest at Epcot.

To save money, Alcantara-Anderson lives in a tiny, rural town outside of Lakeland, about an





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Eric Clinton, president of Local 362, left, and Jeremy Haicken, president of Local 737, represent 26,000 of the area's hospitality workers.

hour and a half from Disney, in a three-bedroom house owned by a relative who cuts her a break on rent. The modest home is also close to medical care for her mom, who has battled cancer and is legally blind. She said she wouldn't be able to afford the same amount of space if she lived closer to the theme parks.

Recently, her husband, Zac Anderson, took on a second job part time at O'Reilly Auto Parts four days a week. Alcantara-Anderson, who is now temporarily on leave from the Magic Kingdom to work for the union, picks up overtime when she can. The extra money helps.

At the root of many of her family's challenges, and the problems other workers face — whether they can pay for an education, save for a down payment, get an ailing tooth pulled — is wages, said Jeremy Haicken, president of Local 737, one of two locals in the Unite Here labor union that represent 26,000 of the area's Disney workers.

"As wages go up, people can afford to make healthier choices in how they eat, where they buy groceries, where they live, what kind of housing they have," Haicken said. "As wages go up, there's a better life here."

But industry officials say they're limited in what they can do without hurting the local economy. "The problem we are facing is twofold: The customer will only pay so much for a room," said Mark Waltrip, chief operating officer for timeshare giant Westgate Resorts. "If I said, 'Let's pay



everyone \$25 an hour,' I would have to double my room rates. Central Florida tourism would crash. We are stuck between a rock and a hard place.”

Disney spokeswoman Andrea Finger said the company has set itself apart through its commitment to increase worker pay.

“We’re proud of the bar we set to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2021, which is among the highest in the country for entry-level employees in the service industry,” Finger said.

Disney also provides health care insurance and benefits, including an on-site clinic. The company offers groceries for employees at near wholesale prices at an on-site store, as well as discounted child care on Disney property with flexible hours through a partnership with the YMCA. Employees who take the bus can save money by using pre-tax dollars to buy bus passes.

Disney’s Aspire education program pays 100% tuition at in-network schools including the University of Central Florida or Valencia College for eligible employees. More than 11,000 have enrolled so far.

In addition, Disney notes its philanthropic efforts across the community. The entertainment giant, which reported \$12.6 billion in profit last year, has its name on a pavilion at AdventHealth’s hospital for children as well as the main theater in the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. Disney also supports Second Harvest Food Bank, the Boys & Girls Club and other charities.

Across Central Florida, however, paychecks have barely budged for two decades. Despite population growth at a rate that far outpaces the national average, the region has had some of the slowest growth in per-capita personal income when compared to the 10 fastest-growing metros — just about 8% when adjusted for inflation between 2000 and 2018. That’s lower than the national average of more than 20%, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Last year brought a breakthrough.

Disney agreed to its historic minimum wage increase after about a year of negotiations with its unions. Eric Clinton, president of Local 362, which represents Disney attraction and custodial workers, said the agreement came about, in part, because of surging angst over wages across the country.

Battles to boost minimum wages have erupted from Seattle to New York. The subject is stump

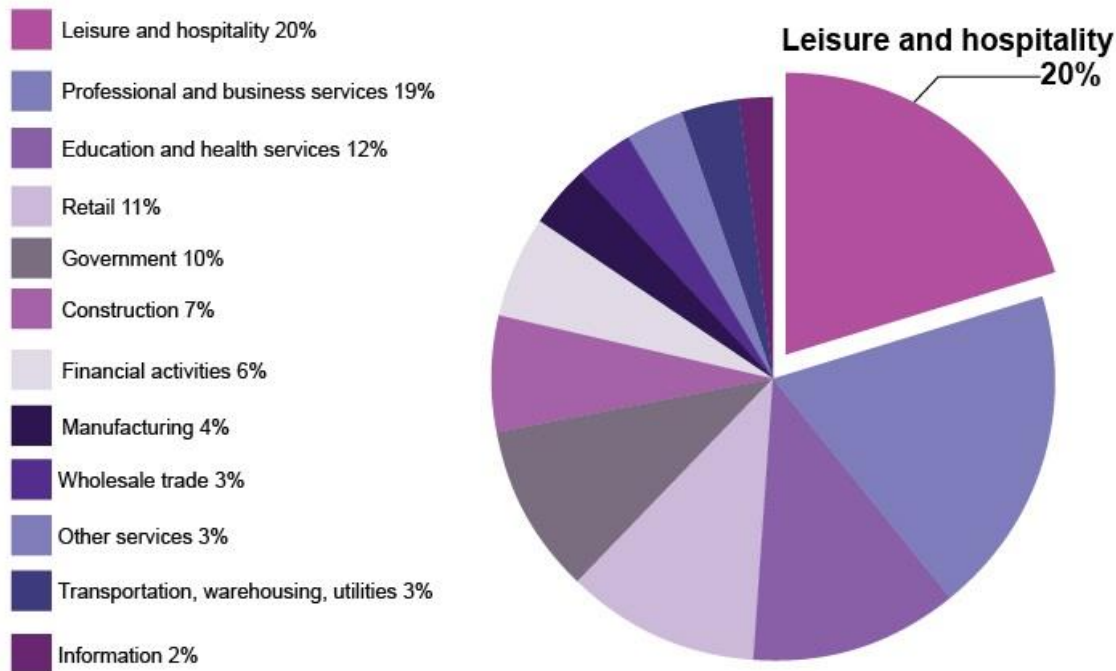
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**— Mark Waltrip, chief operating officer for timeshare giant Westgate Resorts**



## Tourism is Orlando's biggest industry

Occupations in leisure and hospitality make up the largest portion of Orlando's employment base, with 280,000 local workers employed by the industry. Walt Disney World is the largest employer with more than 77,000 workers.



Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Current Employment Statistics (CES), November 2019

Orlando Sentinel

material for 2020 presidential candidates. And a low unemployment rate helped, too, pushing companies to raise pay or benefits to attract candidates.

“There’s a lot of anger in the country and a lot of people mobilizing,” Clinton said. “And our negotiations took place in that sort of context. So, it wasn’t in a vacuum.”

When Disney raises wages, everyone pays attention. SeaWorld rose to \$11 an hour in December 2018 and Universal increased its minimum wage to \$12 an hour. Universal, which has 25,000 workers, will move all employees to \$13 an hour next year and to \$15 when its new park, Epic Universe, opens in 2023.

The median hourly wage for theme park attendants in Orange County is \$10.16 an hour, while housekeepers earn \$10.63 and fast-food cooks make \$10.08, according to the most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Trial attorney John Morgan is seizing the momentum around wages with a proposed constitutional amendment to lift Florida’s minimum pay from \$8.46 an hour today to \$10 by September 2021 and \$15 by September 2026. In the past seven years, the minimum wage has increased by less than \$1.

Morgan acknowledged his amendment isn’t a cure for the many workers who exist just above the poverty line. Even at \$15 an hour, some will still struggle when they leave their shifts and become





**“People don’t want to go out to the food bank and watch people in uniform from their day job get free food with their children in hand. People don’t want to see people sleeping on the street or sleeping in cars. The easiest thing is to shut your eyes when you drive past it, because these people are hidden in the shadows.”**

— Trial attorney John Morgan, who proposed a constitutional amendment to lift Florida’s minimum pay from \$8.46 an hour today to \$10 by September 2021 and \$15 by September 2026

invisible to tourists, as well as locals who work outside the service industry.

“People don’t want to see it,” Morgan said. “People don’t want to go out to the food bank and watch people in uniform from their day job get free food with their children in hand. People don’t want to see people sleeping on the street or sleeping in cars.”

“The easiest thing is to shut your eyes when you drive past it,” he said, “because these people are hidden in the shadows.”

## **‘We survive as a community because of this’**

When the Magic Kingdom opened to fanfare in 1971, Orlando’s economy began its metamorphosis.

Morgan was just a kid when Disney chose Orlando, and like a lot of people, he got a job there. He dressed in character as Fiddler Pig before being promoted to the more coveted role of Pluto.

“We couldn’t believe it was here,” he said, in this land of lakes that previously hadn’t been known for much more than orange groves, smaller attractions like the first reptiles at Gatorland or the mermaids of Weeki Wachee Springs and a whole lot of heat. “I think Walt Disney World made Orlando, Florida.”

SeaWorld opened quickly after in 1973, and Universal followed in 1990.

Disney now has four main gates plus two water parks and continues to open new attractions, such as a Star Wars-themed land and a Toy Story Land. Universal is planning to open a third park in 2023. Orlando International Airport is in the middle of a \$2.8 billion expansion and the Orange County Convention Center plans to open more meeting space by 2023.

“We survive as a community because of this,” said Gray, the nonprofit director. “There is no question.”

Florida collects nearly 9% of its sales tax — \$5.1 billion in 2017 — from tourists, many of them visitors to Orlando. In Orange County, about half of all the sales tax collected is from travelers alone.

The industry is the top property taxpayer in Orange County and is expected to bring in an estimated \$412.8 million between the





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Desmond Burns, a former cook for a contractor at a Disney hotel, drives four days a week to cooking classes in Tampa in pursuit of a culinary degree and a higher-paying job.

theme parks, hotels, golf courses and businesses on International Drive this year, according to the county property appraiser's office. The money pays for a variety of services, including public education, road maintenance, fire rescue and parks.

Bill Peeper, the first CEO of Visit Orlando, the region's marketing arm, said tourism's benefits outweigh the burden brought by a workforce concentrated with low wages. "Are there challenges in that area? Yes. But there are also wonderful opportunities for many of these individuals who would not have another source of livelihood," Peeper said. "Low wages, this sounds like it justifies it, but let's not criticize our own community for something that is prevalent throughout the country. Companies can only do so much."

One of those challenges: The cost of welfare and charity borne by government and private donors. The number of households on food stamps or cash public assistance in the Orlando metro area rose by 46% from 2010 to 2018, far outpacing population growth in that time period — 17% — according to the Census Bureau.

Universal declined an interview for this story, saying through spokesman Tom Schroder that the company has "worked hard to be a good employer, a good neighbor and a good corporate citizen.



We are proud of our record and our contribution to the community. We are proud of the role tourism has played in our community.”

SeaWorld also declined an interview.

Hotelier Harris Rosen, who owns eight hotels, also did not comment. He has earned a reputation as a philanthropist offering his own health care to employees and free schooling and scholarships to children from Tangelo Park and Parramore, two impoverished neighborhoods.

In November he was recognized for those efforts by the Orlando Economic Partnership and noted in his acceptance speech that others in the business community could also do more.

“We’ve been trying for years, 26 years, to convince others to replicate the program,” Rosen said. “Sadly, no takers. Why? We have no idea.”

## A city in transition

For years, Central Florida leaders have tried to lure new high-wage industries like film and biotech. But there’s only been limited success.

The region’s aspirations as Hollywood East fizzled along with the state’s film tax incentive program. A plan to transform Florida into the Silicon Valley of biotechnology also crashed. Medical research group Sanford Burnham Prebys, which state and local leaders promised some \$300 million to come to Lake Nona in southeast Orlando, created fewer jobs than expected and announced plans to leave town in 2016 after 10 years.

Those losses haven’t stopped the region from trying again.

In Kissimmee, Osceola County’s 500-acre NeoCity recently opened a STEM-focused high school with courses in areas like advanced manufacturing and biomedical engineering. Downtown Orlando’s Creative Village development is targeting high-tech media companies, with space for the downtown campuses of UCF and Valencia — and some affordable housing, too.

And Lake Nona in southeast Orange County boasts Nemours Children’s Hospital, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the University of Central Florida College of Medicine.

But even in higher-paying jobs, Orlando workers still see lower wages compared to other cities.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ 2018 figures, the Orlando metropolitan region ranked 47th out of 50 in annual median wages for business and financial occupations, a developing sector that is often touted as a sign of the growing economy. Orlando construction wages, another booming area, ranked 49th, while health career wages came in at No. 39, and engineers and architects made less, too, at 44th out of 50.

**“Are there challenges in that area [tourism]? Yes. But there are also wonderful opportunities for many of these individuals who would not have another source of livelihood.”**

— Bill Peeper, the first CEO of Visit Orlando, the region’s marketing arm



**“I’m trying to build something now, not only for my kids if something happens, but for my grandkids and so on. ... That’s the fire behind this, that my parents were not able to leave me anything.”**

**— Desmond Burns, who drives two hours four days a week to pursue a culinary degree**

compared to other tourism destinations. But when that’s what most of your economy relies on, it can be a problem, said Owen Beitsch, senior director of economic and real estate advisory services at GAI Consultants.

Orlando has only one Fortune 500 company headquarters, Olive Garden parent Darden Restaurants.

“I think we do lose what I would call some quality of life things. We arguably do lose some significant [headquarters] presence that sends a signal to the rest of the world,” Beitsch said. “But the major economic consequence is that the money that does get spent here is not for the highest wage jobs.”

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer said he’s well familiar with the local economy’s pitfalls.

“You’re not going to talk to any elected official that doesn’t talk about diversification of our economy,” Dyer said. “And we’ve actually done a pretty good job of that, but the tourism component of it so outshines everything else that’s there” that the region’s fledgling industries don’t

The reason for the lower wages, said Gray, of United Against Poverty, is an abundance of low-skilled workers all vying for tourism jobs.

“It depresses the wages in those areas,” he said. “The three major reasons why we’re not able to attract a higher paying industry in the community are No. 1 the lack of skilled labor in this community and No. 2 and 3, the lack of skilled labor in this community.”

And because Disney, Universal and major hotel chains are not headquartered in Orlando, the money travelers spend doesn’t necessarily stay here.

Take a family of four visiting Walt Disney World. They may spend about \$6,360, on average, for flights, hotels, souvenirs, food and park tickets during a four-night trip, according to a 2017 analysis by Money Magazine. That’s as much as Alcantara-Anderson, the Frontierland low-level manager, makes in about three months.

About 35% of the money vacationing families spend in the Orlando region goes elsewhere, according to an analysis for the Orlando Sentinel by IMPLAN, a provider of economic impact software used by economists. Those dollars are sent to out-of-state company headquarters and manufacturers overseas.

Known in the industry as leakage, the figure is about average





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Gabby Alcantara-Anderson is pictured with her daughter, Chastity McConnell, at their home in Mulberry.

get as much attention.

While Orlando is cemented as a tourism town, Dyer and other officials haven't stopped showering attractions and hotels with public dollars.

In the past fiscal year, the Orange County Economic Development office spent \$2.9 million to attract high-wage companies, the department said. In that same time, Visit Orlando's budget rose to \$65.4 million, according to the county comptroller's office, money that will largely be spent marketing tourism and convention spaces in Orange County.

So, conservatively, for every \$1 Orange County spent to diversify its economy, it spent about \$22.49 to bring more tourists.

## 'My job is everything'

Alcantara-Anderson knows what it's like to make good money. She did once, as a radiology technician in Tampa, before bad working conditions pushed her to leave. Burns, the cook, knows it, too. He was a mechanic before pursuing a second career in culinary arts. He worked at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort as a prep line cook making \$13 an hour until September, when he left to look for higher pay.



For the better part of this year, Burns' journey to a new life has been a drive through punishing traffic from his home in Lakeland to cooking classes at the Art Institute of Tampa. It's been long days and even longer nights, traversing the belly of the state with a composition book in his passenger seat door and his daughter's pink backpack — now his — in his trunk.

As a single dad, he worries his kids will one day fall in the same cycle of poverty that he's trying to break. When he has to tell his straight-A daughter that he couldn't afford the \$70 fee to put her in her high school honor society, or his son that he didn't have enough for his \$48 driving learners permit, he wonders if the classes will be worth the extra hours he sacrifices away from home.

"I'm trying to build something now, not only for my kids if something happens, but for my grandkids and so on," he said. "... That's the fire behind this, that my parents were not able to leave me anything."

And there's another fire as well, the one that ignites when you do something you really love. Alcantara-Anderson and many of the theme park and hotel workers interviewed by the Sentinel said they never liked their old jobs as much as their tourism jobs — positions that, in many ways, seemed like dreams come true, the kind of thing animated princesses sing about.

They love the feeling that comes with coaxing a smile out of a child, spending time on a special meal or helping a harried parent relax and get more out of their vacation. Hospitality comes easily to them.

Paying the bills on a service paycheck does not.

"It's not like one of those boring jobs where she's just into it for the money," said Alcantara-Anderson's daughter, Chastity, 11. "She's in it because it's something she wanted to do."

It was Chastity's first day of middle school and Alcantara-Anderson was sitting on her couch in their single-story home near Lakeland listening to her talk.

"But I work a lot, huh?" Alcantara-Anderson responded. "I don't really get to see you that often sometimes."

Chastity nodded.

Most days, Alcantara-Anderson leaves for work two hours early to be sure she's at the Magic Kingdom on time. When she gets out at midnight, the drive back will take an hour if she's lucky.

Then she cooks dinner for her family for the next evening, does laundry, cleans up. Most nights she'll sit outside in her car and play a little Sudoku. The quiet is often interrupted by the sound of cicadas. It's her only alone time.

**"It's not like one of those boring jobs where she's just into it for the money. She's in it because it's something she wanted to do."**

**— Chastity McConnell, 11, about her mother, Gabby Alcantara-Anderson, who works at Disney**



**“To me, my job’s everything. To my family, my job is everything.”**

— **Gabby Alcantara-Anderson, who works at Disney**

She goes to bed at 3 or 4 a.m.

It’s then when the stress catches up with her — those moments without the distractions and the drive, without the go-go-go of checking up on her daughter’s homework, crunching numbers on bills and medical appointments for her mom.

The fear creeps in.

If she calls out of work, she worries: *Will they think I’m unreliable? Will they bump me down from my coordinator role for someone who doesn’t have a sick mom and a pre-teen to care for?*

“I would lose everything. I couldn’t. I couldn’t do it,” she said, her voice breaking up. “I’m just terrified of that.”

Because, for her, two things are true at once: Life at \$14.75 an hour is a daily test of will. But her happiness and her livelihood also depend on being employed at Disney.

“To me, my job’s everything,” she said. “To my family, my job is everything.”

*Orlando Sentinel staff writer Gabrielle Russon, former staff writer Kyle Arnold and data specialist Adelaide Chen contributed to this report. This story is part of Laborland, the Orlando’s Sentinel’s four-part series on the challenges facing tourism workers in the most popular vacation destination in the country nearly 50 years after the opening of Walt Disney World.*

*Want to share your story? [ccarrazana@orlandosentinel.com](mailto:ccarrazana@orlandosentinel.com) or 407-420-5660; Twitter @ChabeliH*

