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[View family budgets for 10 different family types in 18 different Pennsylvania communities.](#)

Family Budget Calculator Shows What Families Need to Get By in Pa. *Data Highlight Need for Pa. Policymakers to Raise the Minimum Wage*

(HARRISBURG, Pa.) – The Economic Policy Institute released today an update to its signature Family Budget Calculator, which shows what is required for families to attain a secure yet modest standard of living in rural and urban communities in Pennsylvania.

The Family Budget Calculator is a stark reminder that many workers in Pennsylvania do not earn enough to meet their family’s basic needs ([view the basic family budget in 18 Pennsylvania regions](#)). In rural Pennsylvania communities where the cost of living is low compared to cities like Philadelphia, a modest standard of living that covers the basics -- such as food, transportation and housing -- requires just over \$27,000 in annual income, a figure well above the \$15,000 a year a worker would make in a full-time job earning the minimum wage ([view the components of a basic family budget in rural Pennsylvania](#)). Low-wage single parents in rural Pennsylvania face even greater challenges as their basic family budget climbs to \$43,500 a year. Even two-parent families, where both parents work at minimum-wage jobs, would earn an annual income that falls well short of their basic needs of \$52,300.

“These figures reveal why efforts to raise minimum hourly wages to \$15 resonate with so many people across Pennsylvania. It’s only as your wages begin to approach that rate that your family finances balance,” said Keystone Research Center labor economist Mark Price. “And when you consider that 40 percent of workers in Pennsylvania earn less than \$15 an hour, you can see why there is such broad support for efforts to raise the minimum wage.”

EPI’s Family Budget Calculator improves on traditional poverty thresholds by taking into account geographic differences in cost of living and factoring in a broader range of expenses. The federal poverty line, which was created to measure serious economic deprivation, is set at the national level and does not account for community-specific costs.

The Family Budget Calculator includes the cost of housing, food, transportation, child care, health care and other basic necessities such as clothing and household supplies. Costs vary widely by family type as well as geographic area. Notably, among two-parent/two-child families child care costs exceed rent in every Pennsylvania community.

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