



Wider Opportunities for Women

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Connecticut

How much income do families require in order to live without assistance?

The Standard

The Self-Sufficiency Standard is the income a working family needs to meet their basic expenses – housing, child care, health care, transportation, miscellaneous and taxes – based on geography and the number of adults and children in the family.¹ Within the US there are currently 36 state Standards used by state-wide coalitions representing over 2,000 community-based organizations, state and local governments, employers, and labor organizations. The Connecticut Self-Sufficiency Standard measures income requirements within cities, metro areas and regions suggested by established Connecticut Workforce Development Areas. The Standard derives local living costs based on a consistent methodology and the best available private market rate surveys and public federal, state and county government data.

Self-Sufficiency Standards for Selected Family Types in Selected Connecticut Cities, Metro Areas and Regions, 2008

Jurisdiction	Adult	Adult + Infant	Adult + Preschooler + Schoolage	2 Adults + Preschooler + Schoolage
Greater Waterbury	\$26,099	\$48,122	\$62,900	\$69,526
Greater Danbury	\$26,383	\$48,672	\$63,530	\$69,994
Northwest Corner	\$20,485	\$40,659	\$55,312	\$61,958
Bridgeport	\$17,362	\$38,234	\$54,610	\$57,899
Upper Fairfield (<i>high, Adult</i>)	\$29,536	\$53,152	\$70,257	\$76,415
Hartford (<i>low, Adult</i>)	\$16,146	\$34,873	\$48,713	\$51,847
Hartford Suburbs	\$23,472	\$43,678	\$58,012	\$64,915
North Central	\$22,576	\$42,330	\$56,785	\$63,814
New Haven	\$17,357	\$36,271	\$50,128	\$52,943
Upper Connecticut River (<i>median, Adult</i>)	\$22,238	\$42,105	\$56,372	\$62,971
Greater New Haven	\$23,757	\$43,562	\$57,859	\$64,837
Greater New London	\$21,073	\$36,995	\$48,432	\$54,754
Northeast Corner	\$18,928	\$35,309	\$46,496	\$52,908

Notes: The Standard is calculated by summing expenses and taxes and subtracting Earned Income, Child, and Child and Dependent Care Tax Credits.

Connecticut regions are based on Connecticut Workforce Development Areas.

Source: *The Real Cost of Living In 2005: The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Connecticut*

(<http://www.wowonline.org/ourprograms/fess/state-resources/Connecticut.asp>), Wider Opportunities for Women and Diana Pearce: Washington, DC. Values inflated to 2008 using Department of Labor Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Policy Implications

In many parts of the country, including Connecticut, low-wage work does not pay Self-Sufficiency wages. In fact, there are huge gaps between the income families must have to meet their basic needs, the wages available to them, and the availability and accessibility of supports that might help to close those gaps. These gaps between wages and needs present policymakers with a challenge: how to aid families who are striving for self-sufficiency. The two basic approaches to address these gaps are to raise the income of low-income families and/or to reduce their costs through public or private assistance.

To close the gap between what low-income families have and what they need, states, communities and case managers should use a real measure of how much it costs for a family to become self-sufficient. A realistic measure that reflects the actual cost of living as defined by a measure like the Standard will increase the likelihood that federal programs affecting low-income families will be structured to increase families' economic security. Steps such as increasing the minimum wage, expanding education and job training opportunities, and making work supports accessible and available to working families to help them meet their basic costs of living are vital to helping low-income working families in Connecticut.

To learn more about self-sufficiency tools and utilizations of self-sufficiency in policy, programs, please contact Wider Opportunities for Women at (202) 464-1596. For a copy of the Connecticut Self-Sufficiency Standard report, visit WOW online: www.wowonline.org.

This update was produced in December of 2008 in conjunction with

