

Exploratory Dashboard of Cost of Living and Living Wages

Pre-reading and Reflection

- A) How is "a living wage" defined?
- According to the [methodologies page](#) on the [Living Wage Calculator website](#), the **Living Wage** is the “employment earnings... that a full-time worker requires to cover or support the costs of their family’s basic needs where they live.”
- B) How many family types does the Living Wage Calculator support? Which one or two family types do you foresee for your own family fitting into in the future?
- The Living Wage Calculator supports 12 family types, with differing quantities of children and working adults. I foresee my own family fitting into either the “2 kids, 2 adults working” or if I’m lucky the “2 kids, 1 adult working”, but I have to get a good job first!!
- C) What are eight basic needs used to compute the cost of living for the living wage?
- The eight basic needs are: “food, childcare, health care, housing, transportation, civic engagement, broadband, and other necessities”.
- D) The data sources for basic needs do not have consistent data (publication) dates. How do the makers of Living Wage Calculator account for this?
- They mathematically adjust all of the data for inflation using government data. They choose a recent date to make the results of the adjustment as accurate and relevant as possible.
- E) What components other than the eight basic needs are factored into the cost of living for a household?
- The calculator also takes into account costs for income and payroll taxes, which vary depending on the number of working adults.
- F) Think back to when you were in high school. Can you think of any example expense your family may have had in the "Civic engagement" category of basic needs?
- TVs, payments to school as well as sports teams/clubs we were a part of, and homeowners associations.
- G) Which items are covered under the "Other necessities" category of basic needs?
- The “other necessities” category contains clothes, services, housekeeping supplies, furnishings, and anything else we need to live comfortably that falls outside of the other categories.
- H) What assumption regarding the income contributions ratio does that the Living Wage Calculator make for families that have multiple earners?
- In the case of multiple earners, the Living Wage Calculator assumes that they contribute equally .
- I) How is an hourly living wage calculated?
- The hourly living wage is calculated from the annual family budget, (consisting of the eight basic needs) which is adjusted to account for income/payroll taxes, divided by the number of working adults, and then converted from annual to hourly by dividing it by 2,080 (=40 hour weeks * 52 weeks)
- J) What's new to the Living Wage Calculator this year?
- They “applied a family size index that accounts for both the size and composition of consumer units” to all of their data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey. This is part of an attempt to keep the data as up-to-date and accurate as it can be.