New Database Provides Economic Security Data for Families Across the Country
What Does it Take to Make Ends Meet Where You Live?

Wouldn’t it be nice to know what families need to make ends meet in your community? Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) has unveiled its new Economic Security Database (www.BasicEconomicSecurity.org) which provides that exact information in a user-friendly tool. The database provides comprehensive information on how much it costs for families and retired elders to cover their most basic expenses, including housing, food, health care and transportation. It places reliable economic security data conveniently at the fingertips of policy makers, advocates, service providers and families.

The Basic Economic Security Tables™ (BEST) Index is a wide-ranging measure of the incomes that families of all shapes and sizes need to achieve economic security. For the first time, all of the available BEST data (currently available in 16 states and the District of Columbia, with more on the way) will be gathered in one domain. The Economic Security Database allows users not only to find data for their county and family type but also to compare their personal budgets to the expenses of their local BEST Index; compare expenses across locations and family types; and download state and county-specific data that is relevant to them, demonstrating the importance of reducing major expenses and increasing incomes for the many families across the country. In applying the BEST portion of the database to policy-making, community-building and other public awareness and advocacy work, some possible uses include: career counseling and planning, case management, financial literacy training and more. Also available through this unique tool is data from WOW’s Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index (Elder Index), a similar measure of well-being that looks at the income older adults need to meet their basic needs.

The Economic Security Database is the latest addition to WOW’s assortment of tools. WOW is a national organization with a 45-year track record of building economic security for women and families across the lifespan through job training and career literacy programs in the DC metro area, an innovative research and policy agenda that is the cornerstone for programs and organizing in more than 40 states, and efforts to educate policymakers at all levels of government. WOW has been and remains a leader in crafting women’s non-traditional employment, job training and education program and policy solutions. In collaboration with organizations across the country, WOW opens doors through workforce development and career literacy programs, and fosters the economic security of older Americans. Overall, WOW seeks to link women and low-income workers with opportunities to meet their basic needs, provide for their families and plan for the future.

Now is not the time to waver in light of mounting economic uncertainties across the country. With more than half of Americans struggling to meet their basic needs (according to the Living Below the Line
WOW’s Economic Security Database suggests the most realistic framework of building economic security for American families.

Additional information about the database, including a step-by-step guide for new users, is available on WOW’s website. If you are interested in learning more about integrating WOW’s data into your work or have any questions, please contact Matt Unrath at munrath@wowonline.org or 202.464.1596. To access the database, please visit www.basiceconomicsecurity.org.

Abbreviated 292-word version

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