



Board of Directors
and Officers

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Edwin S. Kahn
President

THE HIGH PRICE OF SELF SUFFICIENCY IN COLORADO
New Report Shows How Much It Costs Families in Colorado
to Make Ends Meet

Nancy Wallace
Vice President

Molly Ryan
Secretary

To meet her family’s most basic needs, a single adult in Denver with one preschooler and one school age child must earn \$18.90 per hour. In Yuma County she must earn \$11.26 an hour, and in Eagle County \$20.61 an hour, according to a report released today at a news conference by the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute. The **Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado: A Family Needs Budget**, which defines the income working families need to meet their basic needs without public or private assistance for each county in Colorado, was written by Dr. Diana Pearce, a University of Washington sociologist and Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW).

Frank Brainerd
Treasurer

The report calculates Self-Sufficiency Wages for 70 family types in 63 counties in Colorado. It finds that families in Colorado need to earn at least twice the federal poverty level to meet basic needs like housing, child care, health care, food, transportation and taxes. Families with incomes above the poverty level, but below the Self-Sufficiency Standard do not have enough to cover the costs of basic necessities.

Jonathan Asher

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“What the Standard tells us is that lower-wage jobs alone – even those well above the minimum wage or the official poverty level – simply do not allow families to meet their needs, even at a minimally adequate level,” said Dr. Pearce. “Unfortunately, many families do not earn self-sufficiency wages, particularly if they have recently entered the workforce. They cannot afford their housing and food and child care, much less their other basic needs, forcing them to make painful choices between necessities, or to accept substandard or inadequate child care, insufficient food or substandard housing.”

Maureen S. Farrell
Executive Director

The **Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado** also examines the effects that existing public assistance policies have on the family budget to show how government supports can help families on their path to self-sufficiency. The report is designed to serve as a tool for caseworkers, service providers, employers, advocates and policy makers to assist them in helping working families achieve self-sufficiency.

The Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute is a project of the Colorado Center on Law and Policy.



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Add One

“The Self–Sufficiency Standard tells us what families in Colorado need to thrive, not merely survive,” said Maureen Farrell, Executive Director of the Colorado Center on Law and Policy. “This report will provide families, service agencies, policy makers and advocates with the information they need to understand what families in Colorado must earn to move beyond living in poverty and become self-sufficient.” The report can facilitate a collective effort between individuals, employers and policy-makers to maximize the opportunities for families to become self-sufficient.

“Across the country, we’re finding that families—especially with young children—require incomes well above the federal poverty level to meet their needs,” said Jennifer Brooks, WOW’s Director of Self-Sufficiency Programs and Policy. “To get to those incomes, employers need to pay decent wages and provide benefits; government needs to ensure access to education and training and subsidies to lower costs; and individuals need to take advantage of opportunities to invest in their human capital.”

The Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute (COFPI) is a project of the Colorado Center on Law and Policy. COFPI conducts research and analysis on tax, budget and other fiscal issues that affect low- and moderate-income individuals and families in Colorado. COFPI is the lead organization in a coalition of more than 20 individuals and organizations that came together to develop the **Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado**. The coalition, collectively known as the Colorado Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project (COFESS) will continue to meet regularly in the future to maximize the use and implementation of the **Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado** through increased statewide outreach. The Self-Sufficiency Standard is currently in use or being developed for 25 other states, the District of Columbia and New York City.

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) is a 37 year-old national women’s employment organization that works to achieve economic independence and equality of opportunity for women and girls. WOW leads the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project—a national project to develop the Self-Sufficiency Standard in states across the country; coordinates the National Workforce Network—a network of women’s service and training organizations in all 50 states that reaches more than a million women and girls every year; and is a leader in the areas of nontraditional employment, literacy and welfare-to-work strategies.

To obtain copies of the **Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado**, please contact the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute at (303) 573-5421, or download a copy from www.cclponline.org. For more information about the Self Sufficiency Standard in other states, contact WOW at (202) 638-3143 or download reports from www.SixStrategies.org.