

## Cost to support family varies

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Both parents in a family of four in Forrest County must each earn at least \$10.88 per hour to be self-sufficient, according to the Mississippi Economic Policy Center's **Self-Sufficiency Standard**.

In contrast, the same family living in Lamar County must earn \$11.48 an hour.

The report measures how much it takes for families in different counties to meet basic needs and what income a home should earn to be self-sufficient.

The report shows Mississippians, working at the most common jobs, have wages on average below the minimum level of self-sufficiency.

"It will help families understand what incomes are adequate," said Donna Addkison, **Wider Opportunities for Women's** family economic self-sufficiency project Workforce Network, which includes organizations committed to increasing women and girls' access to well-paid work.

According to Diana Pearce, director of the Center for Women's Welfare at the University Of Washington School Of Social Work, Hattiesburg is one of the state's more-expensive areas due to a higher cost of living.

The report contains monthly costs and then breaks down what a person's self-sufficient hourly income should be pertaining to their family's makeup.

For example, in Forrest County the self-sufficient hourly wage for a single adult is \$9.59, while that wage for an adult with a preschool-age child is \$15.05.

"We plan to calculate how much of the each area is at a self-sufficient income and release these findings on our next report," Pearce said.

The Jackson-based policy center is financed by philanthropic groups such as Annie E. Casey, Ford and the W.K. Kellogg foundations.

For more info:

To find county-by-county data and an online personal calculator, visit the Mississippi Economic Policy Center's Web site at [www.mepconline.org/self-sufficiency-standard](http://www.mepconline.org/self-sufficiency-standard).