

Why Working Families Have Trouble Making Ends Meet: The Monthly Budget of a Food-Insecure Vermont Family

*Based on a four-member family living in a rural area of the state:
Two adult wage earners, and two children ages 4 and 6.*

Income:

Two full-time wage earners: \$10.96 @ 40 hours/week x 4.3 weeks/month x 2: **\$3,770**
Note: total yearly income is \$45,242 (171% of the federal poverty level)

Expenses*:

Basic necessities for a family of four, including:

Rent, heat, electricity, transportation, food, etc.: \$4,818
Child Care (minus a 65% subsidy): + \$520
Total monthly expenses: \$5,338

**Estimates from the 2020 Basic Needs Budget of the VT Joint Fiscal Office (see back)*

\$3770 in Income – \$5338 in Expenses = Monthly Deficit of \$1568

Nutrition programs available to this family (per month):

3SquaresVT¹: \$364
WIC²: \$68
School Meals³: \$105
Child care meals (CACFP)⁴: + \$81
Total additional benefits: \$618

Monthly Deficit with Nutrition Programs = \$950

Common State and Federal Tax Credits available to this family (per month):

Federal Child Tax Credit (\$2,000 per child per year): \$333
Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (\$1,633 per year): \$136
Vermont Earned Income Tax Credit (\$587 per year): + \$49
Total tax credit: \$518

**Monthly Deficit with Nutrition Programs and Common Tax Credits = \$432
Annual Deficit = \$5,184**

Vermont's Basic Needs Budget for a Four Member Family ⁵

Family Characteristics:

- 🌿 Two wage earners, working full-time at minimum wage
- 🌿 Two children, ages four and six
- 🌿 Family lives in rural Vermont (outside of Chittenden County)
- 🌿 Receives employer-sponsored health insurance

Monthly Expenses ⁶ as defined by the Vermont Joint Fiscal Office

Category	Cost/Month
Food (moderate cost plan)	\$1052
Housing (includes rent & utilities)	\$970
Transportation	\$1,033
Health Care	\$540
Dental Care	\$68
Clothing, household, personal expenses	\$309
Telecommunications	\$185
Insurance/Savings	\$378
Total Monthly Expenses	\$4,818
Annual Expenses	\$57,816

¹Estimated using "How Much Can I Get?" calculator on vermontfoodhelp.com

²Calculated by VT Department of Health, based on current redemption data from the most commonly purchased WIC foods

³Calculated by Hunger Free Vermont, based on research done on the average cost of school meals

⁴Estimated market value using the "Expenditure on Children by Families, 2015" of the USDA, online at: <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/>

⁵This information was published in the "2019 Basic Needs Budget Report" of the VT Joint Fiscal Office, online at: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/>

⁶Child care not included