

DEFINITION

This indicator reports on a living wage calculated for each county using an online tool developed by the Living Wage Project. The living wage is the hourly pay rate that an individual must earn to support his or her family working full time (2,080 hours per year). It is based on 2010 estimates of the cost of living in each county using a set of typical expenses for the location, including food, child care, health care, housing, transportation, other necessities, and taxes (Glasmeier, 2014).

Two additional indicators—minimum wage and poverty wage—are included in the table and the chart for comparison to the living wage. The minimum wage of \$7.25, which totals \$15,080 annually at full time, is the legally required minimum hourly wage for all workers in the state. By comparison, the poverty wage of \$7.00 an hour is the gross annual income of, for example, a single-parent, single-child household living at the federal poverty threshold of \$14,570, converted to an hourly wage (Glasmeier, 2014a).

CONTEXT

The number of working poor in the United States now exceeds 47 million, due in part to declining wages. The real value of the federal minimum wage has fallen by almost 30 percent since the 1970s. Even with recent federal increases, the minimum wage is still too low to meet the basic needs of working families (NELP, 2014).

A study conducted just before the Great Recession (Kenyon, 2008) found that 79 percent of jobs in New Hampshire do not pay a wage sufficient for single-parent families with two children to cover necessities such as housing, food, transportation, child care, and health care. Approximately one in three New Hampshire workers is employed in a low-wage services position. As New Hampshire's service-based economy continues to grow, it is likely that the proportion of jobs paying a livable wage will decline (Kenyon, 2008).

NEW HAMPSHIRE FINDINGS

The livable wage for single-parent families with two children in New Hampshire is \$27.01 per hour; nearly four times the current minimum wage of \$7.25, and somewhat lower for two-parent families at \$20.15, reflecting the assumption that both parents work. Two of New Hampshire's counties were calculated to have livable wages higher than the statewide average for a single-parent household with

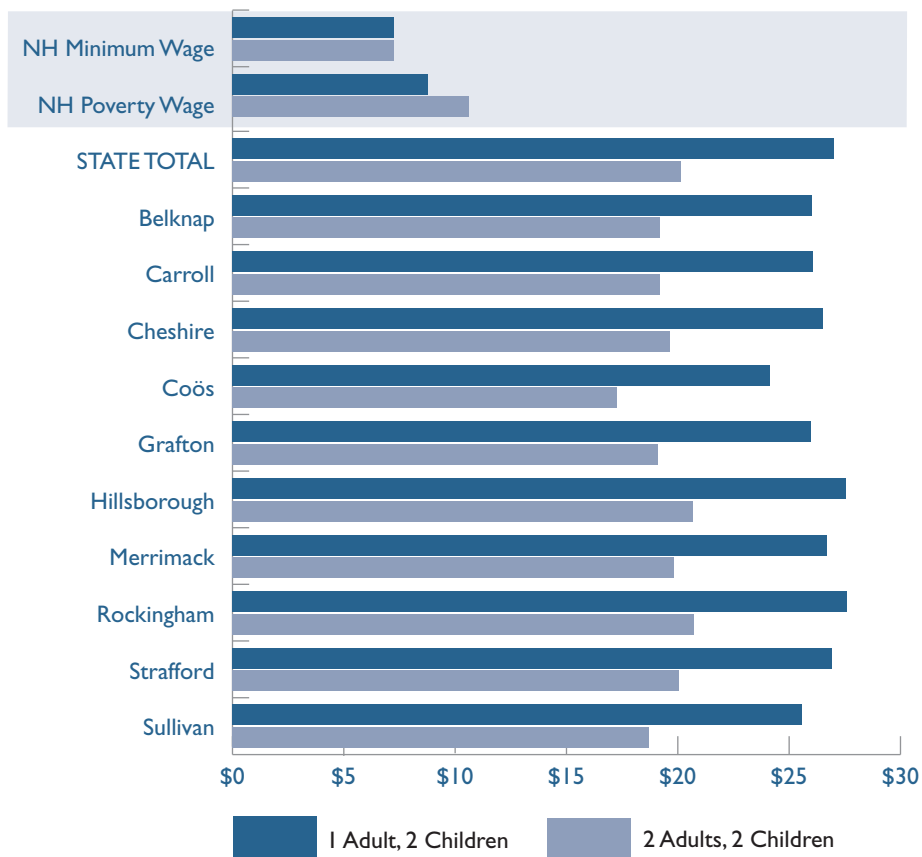
Livable Wage by County, 2010

	1 ADULT 1 CHILD	1 ADULT 2 CHILDREN	2 ADULTS 2 CHILDREN
N.H. Minimum Wage	\$7.25	\$ 7.25	\$ 7.25
N.H. Poverty Wage	\$7.00	\$ 8.80	\$ 10.60
2014 LIVABLE WAGE: STATE TOTAL	\$21.29	\$27.01	\$20.15
Belknap	\$20.34	\$26.04	\$19.19
Carroll	\$20.37	\$26.06	\$19.21
Cheshire	\$20.81	\$26.51	\$19.65
Coös	\$18.44	\$24.13	\$17.29
Grafton	\$20.27	\$25.97	\$19.11
Hillsborough	\$21.87	\$27.57	\$20.70
Merrimack	\$21.01	\$26.71	\$19.85
Rockingham	\$21.90	\$27.61	\$20.74
Strafford	\$21.21	\$26.91	\$20.05
Sullivan	\$19.86	\$25.56	\$18.71

two children—\$27.57 in Hillsborough County and \$27.61 in Rockingham County. Coos County had the lowest livable wage in the state at \$24.13.

For all ten of New Hampshire's counties, the livable wage for families of any size and composition is at least two to three times the minimum wage. Getting by on a minimum wage is particularly challenging for families due to the expenses of raising children, including, for example, child care, adequate clothing and food, larger housing, and expenses related to school and extracurricular activities. Communities with greater access to jobs paying a livable wage create more opportunities for parents to meet their children's needs and reduce the risk of families falling into poverty.

Livable Wage by County, 2010



SOURCE OF DATA FOR ILLUSTRATION/METHODOLOGY

Glasmeyer, Amy K. (2014). *Poverty in America Living Wage Calculator*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

► <http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/33/locations>

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