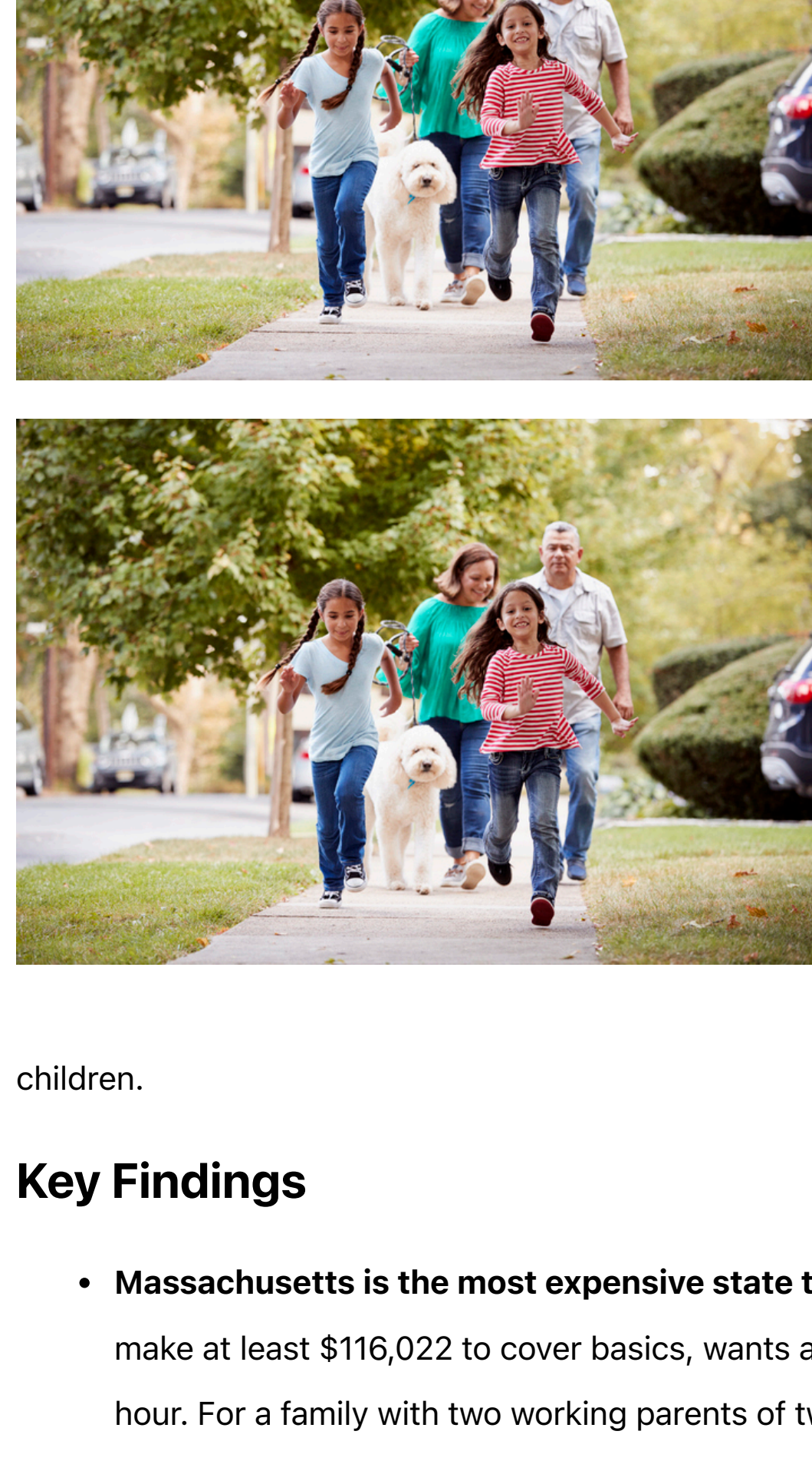


Here's the Income It Takes to Live Comfortably in Each U.S. State – 2024 Study

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Outside of the big cities, life can be cheaper for many Americans. Though, after years of high inflation, cost increases have affected almost everyone. If you aspire to maintain a comfortable lifestyle, the 50/30/20 budget rule recommends spending approximately 50% of your income on basic needs like food and housing, 30% on wants and putting away the remainder toward savings or paying off debt.

Keeping this in mind, SmartAsset applied the 50/30/20 budget rule to cost of living data in each U.S. state to determine how much income a single adult needs to live comfortably, as well as two working adults raising two

children.

Key Findings

- Massachusetts is the most expensive state to live comfortably in.** A single adult needs to make at least \$116,022 to cover basics, wants and savings in Massachusetts, or \$55.78 per hour. For a family with two working parents of two children, the total family income will need to be about \$301,184 for the same level of comfort.
- Relatively, it's less expensive to raise a family in California than live comfortably alone.** While California ranks third-most expensive for a single adult to live comfortably at \$113,652, it only ranks fifth-most expensive for two working adults raising two children. The total family income should be at least \$276,724 in the latter case. Connecticut (\$279,884) and New York (\$278,970) cut ahead of California when it comes to costs of raising a family comfortably.
- Connecticut is third-most expensive for raising a family comfortably – and only 11th-most for single adults.** While single adults in Connecticut have a bit of reprieve supporting themselves comfortably, requiring \$100,380, the income needed across two working adults with kids comes out to \$279,884, or third-most studywide.
- It requires least for an adult to live comfortably in West Virginia: \$78,790.** West Virginia is least expensive for a single adult, who only needs to make an estimated \$37.88 per hour pre-tax. When it comes to two working adults raising two children, the state is third-least expensive with the family requiring \$189,364 in income across needs, wants and long-term goals.
- Two working adults need the least money to raise children in Mississippi.** A family in Mississippi would need about \$177,798 to cover the basic needs, wants and savings goals. It's relatively more expensive for a single adult to achieve the same at \$82,742, which makes The Magnolia State eighth-least expensive.

Salary Needed to Live Comfortably in Each State

States are ranked by the highest annual salary needed for a single adult to live in sustainable comfort using the 50/30/20 budgeting rule.

Rank	State	Hourly wage needed for a single working adult	Salary needed for a single working adult	Rank of income needed for a family	Income for 2 working adults raising 2 children
1	Massachusetts	\$55.78	\$116,022	1	\$301,184
2	Hawaii	\$54.66	\$113,693	2	\$294,611
3	California	\$54.64	\$113,651	5	\$276,723
4	New York	\$53.72	\$111,738	4	\$278,970
5	Washington	\$51.20	\$106,496	7	\$257,421
6	Colorado	\$49.66	\$103,293	6	\$264,992
7	New Jersey	\$49.52	\$103,002	9	\$251,181
8	Maryland	\$49.48	\$102,918	15	\$239,450
9	Oregon	\$48.60	\$101,088	8	\$257,338
10	Rhode Island	\$48.48	\$100,838	10	\$249,267
11	Connecticut	\$48.26	\$100,381	3	\$279,885
12	Virginia	\$48.06	\$99,965	17	\$235,206
13	New Hampshire	\$47.16	\$98,093	13	\$244,109
14	Arizona	\$46.80	\$97,344	19	\$230,630
15	Georgia	\$46.58	\$96,886	27	\$212,826

This study considered 50 U.S. states and used the latest data from the MIT Living Wage Calculator, last updated on Feb. 14, 2024. Source: [SmartAsset 2024 Study](#) - [Get the data](#) - [Embed](#)

Top 10 States Where It's Most Expensive to Live Comfortably

States are ranked by the income needed to live comfortably as a single adult according to the 50/30/20 budget.

- Massachusetts**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$55.78
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$116,022
 Rank of income needed for a family: 1
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$301,184
- Hawaii**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$54.66
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$113,692
 Rank of income needed for a family: 2
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$294,612
- California**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$54.64
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$113,652
 Rank of income needed for a family: 5
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$276,724
- New York**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$53.72
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$111,738
 Rank of income needed for a family: 4
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$278,970
- Washington**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$51.20
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$106,496
 Rank of income needed for a family: 7
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$257,420
- Colorado**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$49.66
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$103,292
 Rank of income needed for a family: 6
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$264,992
- New Jersey**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$49.52
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$103,002
 Rank of income needed for a family: 9
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$251,180
- Maryland**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$49.48
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$102,918
 Rank of income needed for a family: 15
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$239,450
- Oregon**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$48.60
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$101,088
 Rank of income needed for a family: 8
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$257,338
- Rhode Island**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$48.48
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$100,838
 Rank of income needed for a family: 10
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$249,268

Top 10 States Where It's Least Expensive to Live Comfortably

States are ranked by the income needed to live comfortably as a single adult according to the 50/30/20 budget.

- West Virginia**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$37.88
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$78,790
 Rank of income needed for a family: 3
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$189,364
- Arkansas**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$38.20
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$79,456
 Rank of income needed for a family: 2
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$180,794
- Oklahoma**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$38.66
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$80,412
 Rank of income needed for a family: 8
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$194,106
- North Dakota**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$38.72
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$80,538
 Rank of income needed for a family: 13
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$202,176
- Kentucky**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$38.80
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$80,704
 Rank of income needed for a family: 5
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$190,112
- Ohio**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$38.80
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$80,704
 Rank of income needed for a family: 20
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$209,332
- South Dakota**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$39.16
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$81,452
 Rank of income needed for a family: 6
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$192,608
- Louisiana**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$39.64
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$82,452
 Rank of income needed for a family: 4
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$189,612
- Mississippi**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$39.78
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$82,742
 Rank of income needed for a family: 1
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$177,798
- Iowa**
 Hourly wage needed for a single working adult: \$40.08
 Salary needed for a single working adult: \$83,366
 Rank of income needed for a family: 23
 Salary needed across two working adults raising two children: \$211,412

Data and Methodology

SmartAsset used MIT Living Wage Calculator data to gather the basic cost of living for an individual with no housing and for two working adults with two children. Data includes costs of necessities that cover housing, food, transportation, income taxes and other miscellaneous items. It was last updated to reflect the most recent data available on Feb. 14, 2024.

Applying these costs to the 50/30/20 budget for 50 U.S. states, MIT's living wage is assumed to cover needs (i.e. 50% of one's budget). From there the total wage was extrapolated for individuals and families to spend 30% of the total on wants and 20% on savings or debt payments.

Questions about our study? Contact us at press@smartasset.com

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Jaclyn is Managing Editor of Economic Analysis at SmartAsset. With a bachelor of arts in economics from The College of New Jersey, she evaluates data for trends that affect your financial life. As a spokesperson for SmartAsset, she has been cited by Bloomberg, CNBC, Business Insider, Fox News, The Hill and many more. Jaclyn was previously an editor for CNET Money, where she covered banking, investing, credit cards and real estate. She also served as managing editor of small business content for Bizfluent, Work.Chron and AZCentral, and as a research consultant for NAPCO Media. As a past real estate licensee and Realtor®, Jaclyn managed contracts for residential properties, while working closely with first-time homebuyers, investors and mortgage brokers.

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