

## EXPLAINER JOURNALISM

# Helping Michigan families bridge the gap

## Report calculates economic struggles

By Nancy Hastings  
nhastings@hillsdale.net

LANSING – For 20 years, the Michigan League for Public Policy has been publishing a report to help policymakers understand true economic struggles of Michigan families.

It costs a Michigan family between \$2,580 and \$4,722 a month to pay for necessities and provide for themselves and their family according to Making Ends Meet in Michigan, a new report released by the League.

The monthly income necessary to make ends meet for a single parent with two kids is \$3,943, and it costs a single worker \$1,923 a month to get by.

### Local Impact

**WHAT THE ISSUE IS:** It costs a Michigan family between \$2,580 and \$4,722 a month to pay for necessities and provide for themselves and their family.

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Despite having jobs residents continue to struggle. Last year 51 percent of the 10,000 families served by the CAA in Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee counties were employed.

The report analyzes and compiles state and county data on the costs of housing, food, child care, healthcare, transportation, and clothing and other household necessities along with likely taxes owed, to identify the Basic Needs Income Level.

Communications Director Alex Rossman said the Basic Needs Income Level is the amount of household income a family or individual must have to have in

order to meet basic needs without public or private assistance. It's what it really costs to live in a county.

An online calculator available at [www.mlpp.org/calculator](http://www.mlpp.org/calculator) can be used to calculate the cost of living by county and family size, Rossman said. This report analyzes four different household sizes in each county – single, single parent, two parents (both working) and two parents



Events like the annual Loaves and Fishes Day helps area residents make ends meet. [FILE PHOTO]

(one working). All families assume two children under age 5.

“For too long, policymakers have only used the poverty level and unemployment to assess how people in Michigan are doing, but there’s so much

more to every Michigan family’s story and struggles than that,” said Gilda Z. Jacobs, president and CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy in a press release.

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