



# Livable Wages in Southwest Colorado 2019 Update



*A healthy community has a diverse and sustainable economy that pays livable wages and offers meaningful work.*



Photo: Kendra Cook

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## Livable Wages in Southwest Colorado (Region 9) – 2019 Update

### Executive Summary

A healthy community has a diverse and sustainable economy that pays livable wages and offers meaningful work. But what level of income is necessary to support a given size and type of household? A livable wage addresses the essential financial needs for basic living tools such as shelter, healthcare, childcare, and nutrition. When one earns less than a livable wage, he or she is forced to make undesirable choices such as working two or more jobs, working longer hours, making longer commutes, sharing a residence, or giving up basic items such as a vehicle or insurance.

The Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado (Region 9) has estimated livable wages since 1999, using a consistent method in order to compare costs and wages each year. In this 2019 Update, Region 9 uses estimated expenditures for our counties from the *Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2018<sup>1</sup>(the Standard)*, prepared for the Colorado Center on Law and Policy (CCLP). The *Standard* defines the income needed to realistically support a family, without public or private assistance. For most workers throughout Colorado the *Standard* shows that earnings above the official Federal Poverty Level are nevertheless far below what is needed to meet families' basic needs.

In Colorado, the amount needed to be economically self-sufficient varies considerably by geographic location. The 2018 Colorado minimum wage is \$10.20 per hour, which amounts to \$21,542 per year working full time. Using housing and childcare costs specific to each community we found that Durango is the most expensive community in the region for a family of four (\$31.74 per hour) due to the high cost of housing. Dove Creek is the least expensive community for a family (\$23.99 per hour), while the Town of Dolores is least expensive for a single person (\$10.68).

When we link our livable wage findings to average annual wages by sector in each county in our region, we find that most employment sectors do not provide enough income to meet the basic needs of a family of four, especially if there is only one bread winner in the household.

*The Standard* report proposes (and we concur) that closing the wage gap between current wages and the Self-Sufficiency Standard requires both **reducing costs** and **raising incomes**. Raising public awareness at the local level is also essential to closing the wage gap.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/sites/default/files/selfsuff/docs/CO18\\_SSS\\_Web.pdf](http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/sites/default/files/selfsuff/docs/CO18_SSS_Web.pdf)

## Background

The Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado (Region 9) has estimated livable wages since 1999, using a consistent method in order to compare costs and wages each year. In this report, *Livable Wages in Southwest Colorado – 2019 Update*, Region 9 uses estimated expenditures for our counties from the *Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2018 (the Standard)*, prepared for the Colorado Center on Law and Policy (CCLP). The *Standard* defines the income needed to realistically support a family, without public or private assistance. It calculates the costs of six basic needs: housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and miscellaneous (clothing, shoes, household items, etc.) plus taxes and tax credits. The *Standard* is updated periodically (2001, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2018). In the interim years adjustments have been made using the West Region Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The Consumer Price Index is a key statistic for purposes of economic and social policy-making, and has substantial and wide-ranging implications for governments, businesses and workers. The Colorado Constitution requires the Colorado minimum wage to be adjusted annually for inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index used for Colorado. However, the 2018 *Standard* report found that estimating the increase in costs using the CPI drastically underestimates the real increases in the cost of basic needs faced by Colorado families.

Many of the expenditures assigned by the *Standard* are applied to southwest Colorado. However, for this *2019 Update* we have substituted housing and childcare costs with those that are specific to our communities, as was done in past reports. Housing information is collected by calling property managers, looking at online listings, and following ads in local newspapers over a period of several months to obtain a **median** housing cost for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom rental units in each county / community. This information is not readily available in some very small communities, such as Rico (Dolores County).

Childcare costs are obtained through the Tri-county Early Childhood Program; they provided childcare expenses averaged for all age groups per child (per day) for each county. A mileage allowance is also added for the communities of Silverton, Rico, and Dove Creek to recognize the extra distance that people in those towns must travel for many basic goods and services. Commuting is common in the region as residents juggle the cost of housing with job availability.

## Summary of Key Findings

**Housing Costs** – Many estimates of Fair Market Rent (FMR), including those used by the *Standard*, are drawn from surveys conducted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Those rental costs include utilities. However, most of those surveys are conducted in metropolitan areas, and often do not reflect the reality of rental costs in small, rural areas. We are assuming that a single adult would rent a one bedroom unit, while an adult with a preschooler or two adults with a preschooler and a school-aged child would rent a two bedroom unit. It is also conceivable that a family of four would make the choice to rent a one bedroom unit, especially in the areas with high rent.

We found that in almost every community actual rental costs are substantially higher than FMR estimates. In some communities, such as Rico, rental rates are not readily available so we did use FMR estimates – available at the county level.

2019 Comparison of Median Rental Costs to Fair Market Rent Estimates Region 9	Actual Rental Cost (1)		Fair Market Rent (2)	
	1 BDR	2 BDR	1 BDR	2 BDR
Archuleta County - Pagosa Springs	\$ 850	\$ 1,250	\$ 708	\$ 913
Dolores County - Dove Creek	\$ 610	\$ 625	\$ 607	\$ 697
Dolores County - Rico	NA	NA	\$ 607	\$ 697
La Plata County	\$ 900	\$ 1,325	\$ 775	\$ 982
La Plata County - Bayfield	\$ 737	\$ 1,190	\$ 775	\$ 982
La Plata County - Durango	\$ 950	\$ 1,400	\$ 775	\$ 982
La Plata County - Ignacio	\$ 650	\$ 750	\$ 775	\$ 982
Montezuma County	\$ 695	\$ 872	\$ 610	\$ 726
Montezuma County - Cortez	\$ 690	\$ 900	\$ 610	\$ 726
Montezuma County - Dolores	\$ 650	\$ 750	\$ 610	\$ 726
Montezuma County - Mancos	\$ 850	\$ 972	\$ 610	\$ 726
San Juan County - Silverton	\$ 687	\$ 900	\$ 960	\$ 1,238

NA = Actual rents not available for this community.

(1) Source: compilation of online listings, newspapers and property managers.

(2) Fair Market Rent from National Low Income Housing Coalition, <http://nlihc.org/oor>.

In many communities landlords pay for public services such as water, sewer and trash collection, but not utilities such as gas and electric. To account for these utility costs we have added an average energy consumption rate (\$128/month) for Colorado from the U.S. Energy Information Administration to monthly expenditures. This average does not include utility costs subsidized through the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), which could reduce the overall cost of utilities.

For most workers throughout Colorado the *Standard* shows that earnings above the official Federal Poverty Level are nevertheless far below what is needed to meet families’ basic needs. In Colorado, the amount needed to be economically self-sufficient varies considerably by geographic location. The 2018 Colorado minimum wage is \$10.20 per hour, which amounts to \$21,542 per year working full time. The *Standard* reports that the amount needed to make ends meet for one adult and one preschooler varies from \$13.97 per hour (\$29,499 annually) in Baca County to \$33.75 per hour (\$71,274 annually) in Pitkin County.

Region 9 - 2019 Average Annual Living Expense by County	Adult	Adult + Preschooler	2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age
Archuleta County	\$ 25,572	\$ 51,048	\$ 61,860
Dolores County	\$ 24,684	\$ 39,155	\$ 51,672
La Plata County	\$ 27,984	\$ 55,472	\$ 68,120
Montezuma County	\$ 23,088	\$ 43,225	\$ 53,953
San Juan County	\$ 28,308	\$ 50,339	\$ 62,231

We found that in Region 9, Dolores County is the least expensive (\$39,155 annually), and La Plata County is the most expensive place to live (\$55,472 annually) for an adult and one preschooler.

Region 9 - 2019 Livable Hourly Wage by Area	Adult	Adult + Preschooler	2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age
Archuleta County - Pagosa Springs	\$12.11	\$ 24.17	\$ 29.29
Dolores County - Rico	\$11.69	\$ 18.54	\$ 24.47
Dolores County - Dove Creek	\$11.64	\$ 18.07	\$ 23.99
La Plata County - Bayfield	\$12.32	\$ 25.50	\$ 31.49
La Plata County - Durango	\$13.47	\$ 26.53	\$ 31.74
La Plata County - Ignacio	\$11.77	\$ 22.84	\$ 28.05
Montezuma County - Cortez	\$10.90	\$ 20.63	\$ 25.71
Montezuma County - Dolores	\$10.68	\$ 19.77	\$ 24.85
Montezuma County - Mancos	\$11.81	\$ 21.03	\$ 26.11
San Juan County - Silverton	\$13.40	\$ 23.83	\$ 29.47

Using housing costs specific to each community we found that Durango is the most expensive community in the region for a family of four (\$31.74 per hour) due to the high cost of housing. Dove Creek is the least expensive community for a family (\$23.99 per hour), while the Town of Dolores is least expensive for a single person (\$10.68).

**Wages by Job Sector** – Since almost all working-age families meet their income needs with employment, a crucial question is whether the jobs available provide sufficient wages. When we link our livable wage findings to average annual wages by sector in each county in our region, we find that most employment sectors do not provide enough income to meet the basic needs of a family of four, especially if there is only one bread winner in the household. The highlighted cells in this table indicate that the average annual wage for that industry provides a livable wage for a family of four in that county.

2017 Average Annual Wages	Archuleta	Dolores	La Plata	Montezuma	San Juan	Region 9
Agriculture	\$ 42,929	\$ 24,203	\$ 28,762	\$ 25,386	ND	\$ 30,320
Mining	\$ 42,112	\$ 66,588	\$ 108,810	\$ 77,830	ND	\$ 73,835
Utilities	\$ 79,007	ND	\$ 81,076	\$ 63,326	ND	\$ 74,470
Construction	\$ 37,703	\$ 40,996	\$ 50,777	\$ 36,627	\$ 36,225	\$ 40,466
Manufacturing	\$ 26,154	\$ 48,746	\$ 40,556	\$ 36,688	ND	\$ 38,036
Wholesale Trade	\$ 55,981	ND	\$ 54,172	\$ 50,733	ND	\$ 53,629
Retail Trade	\$ 27,543	\$ 21,783	\$ 29,522	\$ 28,788	\$ 18,794	\$ 25,286
Transportation & Warehousing	\$ 56,524	\$ 33,592	\$ 59,005	\$ 48,494	ND	\$ 49,404
Information	\$ 48,917	\$ 36,991	\$ 61,508	\$ 44,458	ND	\$ 47,968
Finance Activities	\$ 55,755	ND	\$ 78,913	\$ 46,364	ND	\$ 60,344
Real Estate	\$ 38,801	ND	\$ 46,975	\$ 39,452	ND	\$ 41,743
Professional & Business Services	\$ 65,322	\$ 61,108	\$ 64,859	\$ 45,210	\$ 23,795	\$ 52,059
Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$ 100,551	ND	\$ 90,417	\$ 80,223	ND	\$ 90,397
Administration and Waste Management	\$ 25,494	\$ 41,254	\$ 32,087	\$ 25,370	ND	\$ 31,051
Education	\$ 8,772	ND	\$ 43,956	\$ 30,778	ND	\$ 27,835
Health Services	\$ 28,329	ND	\$ 49,369	\$ 36,184	ND	\$ 37,961
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$ 18,762	ND	\$ 20,777	\$ 200,709	ND	\$ 80,082
Accommodation and Food	\$ 18,732	ND	\$ 19,327	\$ 16,972	\$ 21,706	\$ 19,184
Other Services, except Public Administration	\$ 29,143	ND	\$ 30,731	\$ 26,795	\$ 23,957	\$ 27,656
Government	\$ 50,900	\$ 39,038	\$ 57,017	\$ 46,025	\$ 40,926	\$ 46,781
Total	\$ 33,944	\$ 33,765	\$ 44,789	\$ 34,988	\$ 26,729	\$ 34,843

Source: www.colmigateway.com - Colorado Department of Labor & Employment / QCEW. ND=Not disclosed

The average annual wage in Montezuma County for the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector (\$200,709) is unusually high, but has been verified as correct.

Jobs in the mining and utilities sectors provide a good income in each county where they exist. Professional and management services also provide sufficient wages in most areas. The most numerous jobs in Region 9 are government (18%), health services (12%), and retail trade (11%). These occupations generally do not provide sufficient wages to support a family of four.

A healthy community has a diverse and sustainable economy that pays livable wages and offers meaningful work. But what level of income is necessary to support a given size and type of household? A livable wage addresses the essential financial needs for basic living tools such as shelter, healthcare, childcare, and nutrition. When one earns less than a livable wage, he or she is forced to make undesirable choices such as working two or more jobs, working longer hours, making longer commutes, sharing a residence, or giving up basic items such as a vehicle or insurance.

*The Standard* report proposes (and we concur) that closing the wage gap between current wages and the Self-Sufficiency Standard requires both **reducing costs** and **raising incomes**.

**Reducing costs** means ensuring families who are struggling to cover basic costs have access to work supports. These offer stability and resources while they become self-sufficient, and include child care assistance, food benefits, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. Most individuals cannot achieve self-sufficiency through stopgap measures or in a single step, but require support through transitional work supports and programs, as well as the removal of barriers to help families work towards self-sufficiency over time.

**Raising incomes** means enhancing skills as well as improving access to jobs that pay self-sufficient wages and have career potential. A strong economy will mean good jobs that pay self-sufficient wages, a workforce with the skills necessary to fill those jobs, and enhancing links and removing barriers between those jobs and the workers that need them. Key to raising incomes are public policies such as living/minimum wage policies and paid sick and family/medical leave, that increase wages directly. Likewise, access to education, training, and jobs that provide real potential for skill and career advancement over the long term is also important.

**Livable Wage by County/Community** – The livable wage per hour (and annually) for each community is summarized in the following pages, as well as how many jobs an individual would need (at minimum wage) to sustain just the basic needs of a household. The notes below pertain to each of the tables on the following pages:

<sup>1</sup> The *Standard* assumes adults work eight hours per day for 22 days per month and 12 months per year. Each cost component in the Standard is first calculated as a monthly cost. Hourly and annual Self-Sufficiency Wages are calculated based on the monthly Standard by dividing the monthly Self-Sufficiency Standard by 176 hours per month to obtain the hourly wage and multiplying by 12 months per year to obtain the annual wage. Tax Credits are subtracted (-) from monthly costs.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Compilation of online listings, newspapers and property managers.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Tricounty Early Childhood Programs. Childcare expenses are averaged for all age groups per child per day. Assumes that one child in the family is in full time child care.

<sup>4</sup> According to the U.S. Energy Information Association the average annual household energy cost for Colorado was \$1,536 (monthly \$128) [EIA.gov/state/?sid=co](http://EIA.gov/state/?sid=co).

<b>PAGOSA SPRINGS ARCHULETA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 850	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250
Childcare (3) \$4.66/hr x 176	\$ -	\$ 820	\$ 820
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 267	\$ 405	\$ 820
Transportation	\$ 255	\$ 262	\$ 501
Health Care	\$ 207	\$ 581	\$ 664
Miscellaneous	\$ 144	\$ 316	\$ 441
Taxes	\$ 280	\$ 710	\$ 965
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (50)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 12.11	\$ 24.18	\$ 29.30
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.19	2.37	2.87
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,131	\$ 4,255	\$ 5,156
ANNUAL	\$25,572	\$ 51,062	\$ 61,874

A mileage allowance was also added in the Region 9 2019 Update for the communities of Rico, Dove Creek and Silverton to recognize the extra distance that people in those towns must travel for many basic goods and services. Dolores County is the least expensive county in the region (\$51,672 annually) for the three household types that we examined. **\*Housing costs for Dolores County and Rico are taken from the SSI Report as there were not enough rental costs collected for those areas.**

<b>DOLORES COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
*Housing (2)	\$ 607	\$ 697	\$ 697
Childcare (3) \$2.88/hr x 176	\$ -	\$ 507	\$ 507
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 293	\$ 445	\$ 902
Transportation	\$ 255	\$ 262	\$ 501
Travel Expense <sup>2</sup> (4 trips X 80 miles X .545)	\$ 174	\$ 174	\$ 174
Health Care	\$ 209	\$ 590	\$ 673
Miscellaneous	\$ 136	\$ 259	\$ 387
Taxes	\$ 255	\$ 483	\$ 770
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (55)	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (60)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 11.69	\$ 18.54	\$ 24.47
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.15	1.82	2.40
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,057	\$ 3,263	\$ 4,306
ANNUAL	\$24,684	\$ 39,155	\$ 51,672

Dove Creek is the least expensive community in the region in which to live (\$23.99 per hour).

<b>DOVE CREEK DOLORES COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 610	\$ 625	\$ 625
Childcare (3) \$2.88/hr x 176	\$ -	\$ 507	\$ 507
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 293	\$ 445	\$ 902
Transportation	\$ 255	\$ 262	\$ 501
Travel Expense <sup>2</sup> (4 trips X 75 miles X .545)	\$ 163	\$ 163	\$ 163
Health Care	\$ 209	\$ 590	\$ 673
Miscellaneous	\$ 136	\$ 259	\$ 387
Taxes	\$ 255	\$ 483	\$ 770
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (55)	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (60)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 11.64	\$ 18.07	\$ 23.99
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.14	1.77	2.35
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,049	\$ 3,180	\$ 4,223
ANNUAL	\$24,588	\$ 38,159	\$ 50,675

Our method for calculating costs does not take into account that many residents in Rico commute daily to Telluride (San Miguel County) for work, a distance of 56 miles round trip. San Miguel County is one of the most expensive areas of the state in which to live, so many workers find housing in Dolores County.

<b>RICO DOLORES COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
*Housing (2)	\$ 607	\$ 697	\$ 697
Childcare (3) \$2.88/hr x 176	\$ -	\$ 507	\$ 507
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 293	\$ 445	\$ 902
Transportation	\$ 255	\$ 262	\$ 501
Travel Expense <sup>2</sup> (4 trips X 80 miles X .545)	\$ 174	\$ 174	\$ 174
Health Care	\$ 209	\$ 590	\$ 673
Miscellaneous	\$ 136	\$ 259	\$ 387
Taxes	\$ 255	\$ 483	\$ 770
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (55)	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (60)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 11.69	\$ 18.54	\$ 24.47
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.2)	1.15	1.82	2.40
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,057	\$ 3,263	\$ 4,306
ANNUAL	\$24,684	\$ 39,155	\$ 51,671
*Fair Market Rent			



Many of the jobs in San Juan County/Silverton are in accommodation and food services, with an average annual wage of \$21,706. This is only 77% of the livable wage for one adult. Many of the workers in the county commute from elsewhere in the region.

<b>SILVERTON SAN JUAN COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 687	\$ 900	\$ 900
Childcare (3) \$4.38 x 176	\$ -	\$ 771	\$ 771
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 303	\$ 460	\$ 933
Transportation	\$ 255	\$ 262	\$ 501
Travel Expense <sup>2</sup> (4 trips X 100 miles X .545)	\$ 218	\$ 218	\$ 218
Health Care	\$ 209	\$ 590	\$ 673
Miscellaneous	\$ 173	\$ 328	\$ 460
Taxes	\$ 386	\$ 755	\$ 1,035
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (50)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 13.40	\$ 23.83	\$ 29.47
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.31	2.34	2.89
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,359	\$ 4,195	\$ 5,186
ANNUAL	\$28,308	\$ 50,339	\$ 62,231

We found that in this region La Plata County is the most expensive county for a family to live (\$68,120 annually).

<b>LA PLATA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 900	\$ 1,325	\$ 1,325
Childcare (3) \$5.64 x 176	\$ -	\$ 993	\$ 993
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 321	\$ 487	\$ 989
Transportation	\$ 256	\$ 263	\$ 503
Health Care	\$ 207	\$ 581	\$ 664
Miscellaneous	\$ 164	\$ 324	\$ 463
Taxes	\$ 356	\$ 739	\$ 1,045
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (50)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 13.25	\$ 26.27	\$ 32.25
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.30	2.58	3.16
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,332	\$ 4,623	\$ 5,677
ANNUAL	\$27,984	\$ 55,472	\$ 68,120

Many people that live in and around Bayfield commute to Durango for work.

<b>BAYFIELD LA PLATA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 737	\$ 1,190	\$ 1,190
Childcare (3) \$5.64 x 176	\$ -	\$ 993	\$ 993
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 321	\$ 487	\$ 989
Transportation	\$ 256	\$ 263	\$ 503
Health Care	\$ 207	\$ 581	\$ 664
Miscellaneous	\$ 164	\$ 324	\$ 463
Taxes	\$ 356	\$ 739	\$ 1,045
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (50)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 12.32	\$ 25.50	\$ 31.49
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.21	2.50	3.09
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,169	\$ 4,488	\$ 5,542
ANNUAL	\$26,028	\$ 53,852	\$ 66,500

We found that Durango is the most expensive community in the region for a family of four (\$31.74 per hour) due primarily to the high cost of housing.

<b>DURANGO LA PLATA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 950	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,400
Childcare (3) \$5.64 x 176	\$ -	\$ 993	\$ 993
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 199	\$ 199	\$ 199
Food	\$ 318	\$ 482	\$ 997
Transportation	\$ 255	\$ 263	\$ 501
Health Care	\$ 157	\$ 456	\$ 528
Miscellaneous	\$ 147	\$ 291	\$ 397
Taxes	\$ 345	\$ 719	\$ 839
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (50)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (83)	\$ (167)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 13.47	\$ 26.53	\$ 31.74
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.32	2.60	3.11
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,371	\$ 4,670	\$ 5,587
ANNUAL	\$28,452	\$ 56,036	\$ 67,040

<b>IGNACIO LA PLATA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 650	\$ 750	\$ 750
Childcare (3) \$5.64 x 176	\$ -	\$ 993	\$ 993
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 199	\$ 199	\$ 199
Food	\$ 318	\$ 482	\$ 997
Transportation	\$ 255	\$ 263	\$ 501
Health Care	\$ 157	\$ 456	\$ 528
Miscellaneous	\$ 147	\$ 291	\$ 397
Taxes	\$ 345	\$ 719	\$ 839
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (50)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (83)	\$ (167)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 11.77	\$ 22.84	\$ 28.05
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.43	2.78	3.41
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,071	\$ 4,020	\$ 4,937
ANNUAL	\$24,852	\$ 48,236	\$ 59,240

Rental rates for housing in Montezuma County are among the lowest in the region.

<b>MONTEZUMA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 695	\$ 872	\$ 872
Childcare (3) \$4.33 x 176	\$ -	\$ 762	\$ 762
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 258	\$ 391	\$ 792
Transportation	\$ 258	\$ 265	\$ 508
Health Care	\$ 207	\$ 581	\$ 664
Miscellaneous	\$ 133	\$ 274	\$ 397
Taxes	\$ 245	\$ 555	\$ 806
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (4)	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (55)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 10.93	\$ 20.47	\$ 25.55
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.07	2.01	2.50
Monthly Costs	\$ 1,924	\$ 3,602	\$ 4,496
ANNUAL	\$23,088	\$ 43,225	\$ 53,953

<b>CORTEZ MONTEZUMA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 690	\$ 900	\$ 900
Childcare (3) \$4.33 x 176	\$ -	\$ 762	\$ 762
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 258	\$ 391	\$ 792
Transportation	\$ 258	\$ 265	\$ 508
Health Care	\$ 207	\$ 581	\$ 664
Miscellaneous	\$ 133	\$ 274	\$ 397
Taxes	\$ 245	\$ 555	\$ 806
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (4)	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (55)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 10.90	\$ 20.63	\$ 25.71
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.07	2.02	2.52
Monthly Costs	\$ 1,919	\$ 3,630	\$ 4,524
ANNUAL	\$23,028	\$ 43,561	\$ 54,289

<b>DOLORES MONTEZUMA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 650	\$ 750	\$ 750
Childcare (3) \$4.33 x 176	\$ -	\$ 762	\$ 762
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 258	\$ 391	\$ 792
Transportation	\$ 258	\$ 265	\$ 508
Health Care	\$ 207	\$ 581	\$ 664
Miscellaneous	\$ 133	\$ 274	\$ 397
Taxes	\$ 245	\$ 555	\$ 806
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (4)	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (55)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 10.68	\$ 19.77	\$ 24.85
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.05	1.94	2.44
Monthly Costs	\$ 1,879	\$ 3,480	\$ 4,374
ANNUAL	\$22,548	\$ 41,761	\$ 52,489

<b>MANCOS MONTEZUMA COUNTY MONTHLY COSTS (1)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Adult + Preschooler</b>	<b>2 Adults + Preschooler + School-age</b>
Housing (2)	\$ 850	\$ 972	\$ 972
Childcare (3) \$4.33 x 176	\$ -	\$ 762	\$ 762
Utilities, Fuels, Public Services (4)	\$ 128	\$ 128	\$ 128
Food	\$ 258	\$ 391	\$ 792
Transportation	\$ 258	\$ 265	\$ 508
Health Care	\$ 207	\$ 581	\$ 664
Miscellaneous	\$ 133	\$ 274	\$ 397
Taxes	\$ 245	\$ 555	\$ 806
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (4)	\$ -
Childcare Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (55)	\$ (100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$ -	\$ (167)	\$ (333)
<b>SELF SUFFICIENCY WAGE</b>			
HOURLY	\$ 11.81	\$ 21.03	\$ 26.11
# of jobs at minimum wage (\$10.20)	1.16	2.06	2.56
Monthly Costs	\$ 2,079	\$ 3,702	\$ 4,596
ANNUAL	\$24,948	\$ 44,425	\$ 55,153

In summary, we found that in Region 9, Dolores is the least expensive county (\$51,672 annually), and La Plata is the most expensive county to live (\$68,120 annually) for a family of four. Using housing costs specific to each community we found that Dove Creek is the least expensive community in the region in which to live (\$23.99 per hour) and Durango is the most expensive community in the region for a family of four (\$31.74 per hour) due to the high cost of housing.

Raising public awareness at the local level is also essential to closing the wage gap. In order to enhance the quality of life through fair wages, La Plata County Thrive! Living Wage Coalition, formed in 2013 to build a coalition of workers, employers, government and organizations who work together in achieving a living wage; educate workers, employers and government officials about the importance of creating a living wage; publicly recognize employers who provide, or aspire to provide, a living wage; and advocate for improving minimum wages at the local, state and national level. Housing and childcare costs were collected for the *2019 Update* by members of the Coalition. We thank them for expanding their data collection beyond communities in La Plata County, to include all cities and towns in the region.