



Economic Security Database

BEST Index

The Basic Economic Security Tables™ (BEST) Index, developed by WOW and the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis, is a measure of the income that workers and their families need to meet basic needs and develop the savings that promotes life-long and intergenerational security. The BEST Index is specific to family size, ages of children, location and receipt of employment-based benefits. It includes the cost of:

- Housing & Utilities
- Food
- Transportation
- Child Care
- Personal & Household Items
- Health Care
- Emergency Savings
- Retirement Savings
- Taxes & Tax Credits
- Savings for Children's Higher Education
- Homeownership Savings

BEST INITIATIVE

The BEST Index is the foundation of national, state and community-based efforts to promote policies and programs that build economic security for workers and their families. Through the BEST Initiative™, WOW supports the work of state and local partners who promote economic security by: providing job training; promoting jobs that pay economic security wages; promoting employment-based benefits and equitable workplaces; creating asset building programs and policies; supporting affordable housing and child care; and strengthening public assistance programs. For more information on the BEST Initiative and BEST Index uses, see the [More Information](#) page.

[Choose BEST >>](#)

More Information

Additional information on the Economic Security Database and the projects supported by this data

[Get More Info >>](#)

Questions or Comments? Contact us Info@wowonline.org

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Elder Index

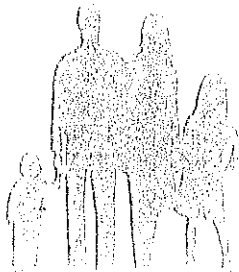
The Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index (Elder Index), developed by WOW and the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, is a measure of the income that older adults need to meet their basic needs and age in place with dignity. The Elder Index is specific to household size, location, housing status and health status. It includes the cost of:

- Housing
- Health Care
- Transportation
- Food
- Miscellaneous Essentials

ELDER INITIATIVE

The Elder Index is the cornerstone of national, state and community-based efforts to promote policies and programs that build economic security for elders and their families. The national Elder Economic Security Initiative™ offers a conceptual framework and concrete tools to advance the well-being of elders through research, organizing, education, advocacy and outreach. Through the Initiative, WOW supports state and local partners who promote economic security by: strengthening social insurance programs for all; increasing opportunities for workers and families to save for retirement; and enhancing community-based services and supports for elders and caregivers. For more information on the Elder Initiative and Elder Index uses, see the [More Information](#) page.

[Choose Elder Index >>](#)





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Economic Security Database

Elder Index Result

Location

Pennsylvania, York County

Remove

Submit

Elder Index Result

Pennsylvania, York County

Expenses/Monthly and Yearly Totals	Single Elder				Elder Couple	
	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter, one bedroom	Owner w/ Mortgage	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter, one bedroom	Owner w/ Mortgage
Housing (inc. utilities, taxes & insurance)	\$513	\$626	\$1,222	\$513	\$626	\$1,222
Food	\$252	\$252	\$252	\$463	\$463	\$463
Transportation	\$246	\$246	\$246	\$380	\$380	\$380
Health Care (Good)	\$364	\$364	\$364	\$728	\$728	\$728
Miscellaneous	\$275	\$275	\$275	\$417	\$417	\$417
Elder Index Per Month	\$1,650	\$1,763	\$2,359	\$2,501	\$2,614	\$3,210
Index Per Year	\$19,800	\$21,156	\$28,308	\$30,012	\$31,368	\$38,520

The Elder Index measures how much income a retired older adult requires to meet his or her basic needs—without public or private assistance. The Elder Index measures basic expenses for elders age 65+ living in the community, not in institutions.

In select states, additional data is available on the cost of home- and community-based long-term services and supports. State reports are available on the Elder Initiative webpage.

Links

[See additional indexes](#)
[Learn more about the Elder Index](#)

Each Elder Index component is a conservative estimate of need, and the Elder Index does not include any "extras" such as vacations, entertainment, electronics, gifts or meals out. As a result, those living below an economic security income may be forced to go without, or make difficult choices among basic needs such as nutritious foods, prescription medications or adequate heating or cooling.

All budget components are calculated using publicly available data obtained from government and industry sources and market rate studies. For detailed information on expense components, including data sources and assumptions used in specific calculations, see the Elder Index expenses and savings definitions. Additional information can be found in The WOW-GI National Elder Economic Security Standard: A Methodology to Determine Economic Security for Elders, available at www.wowonline.org.

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DEFINITIONS OF ELDER INDEX EXPENSES

Housing

Renters: Elder Index rent expenses are values reported by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD reports Fair Market Rents (FMRs) by county and number of bedrooms. These values typically reflect the 40th percentile of rent costs in an area. In some cases, the HUD FMR values reflect the 50th percentile of rent costs.

Owners: Housing expenses for owners are median "selected monthly owner costs" (SMOC) as reported by the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey data. Values are for owners 65 and older, with and without a mortgage. SMOC values include property taxes, insurance, heat and utilities, condo fees and mortgage payments (if any).

Food

Elder Index food costs are taken from the USDA Low-Cost Food Plan, which presents an age-specific diet consisting entirely of foods prepared and eaten at home. Per the USDA calculation, food costs for single adults are increased by 20% to reflect lesser economies of scale.

Health Care

Elder Index health care costs include Medicare Part B health insurance premiums and out-of-pockets costs. Average costs are calculated assuming Medicare Advantage (with prescription coverage) costs or separate Medigap Supplement and Medicare Part D coverage. Data is drawn from the US Department of Health and Human Services Medicare Options Compare Tool and Part D Contract and Enrollment Data.

Transportation

Elder Index transportation costs are generally calculated assuming car ownership. Estimated annual mileage data, as reported by the National Household Travel Survey, is multiplied by the IRS per mile cost reimbursement rate to calculate costs for single elders and elder couples.

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous expenses are 20% of costs of other Elder Index basic expenditures—housing, food, health care and transportation. This expense includes all other essentials: clothing, shoes, paper products, cleaning products, household items, personal hygiene items and a landline telephone. Because these types of expenses are unlikely to vary whether an individual is a renter or homeowner, this category is calculated for owners with no mortgage; the same dollar value is applied to "miscellaneous expenses" for other housing types.

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