



## Not your imagination: It really does cost more to live in Seattle

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If it feels like your paycheck doesn't go as far as once did, it's not your imagination. A study from the University of Washington has found that the cost of living has risen in Seattle and the state, largely due to rising housing and healthcare expenses.

For a family of two adults and two young kids in Seattle, the cost of living grew by 13 percent since 2009. For a single person with no kids, making ends meet is now 19 percent more expensive.

Statewide, cost of living has grown by an average of 8 percent.

"Even though many people are working hard, they still can't make ends meet, and these cost increases make it even harder," said Diana Pearce, the report's author and director of the [Women's Welfare Center](#) at the UW School of Social Work.

The report ([pdf](#)) showed that while wages have stagnated and unemployment has doubled during the recession, the cost of living has continued to rise.

It measured how much a family must to earn to pay for housing, food, child care and other basic needs without public assistance. Released in October, the study was funded by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County.

Statewide, the report found East King County was the most expensive, with a single parent of two young kids needing \$65,690 to meet basic needs. That was a 14 percent increase from 2009.

The cheapest place was Wahkiakum County in southwest Washington. The same size family needed \$32,997 for living expenses, the study found.

Pearce said rising health care and housing costs were the main culprits. She said health care costs had grown by an average of 12 percent statewide, while housing costs had risen by 10 percent.

In King County, the housing costs were significantly higher, with increases of 19 to 25 percent. Pearce said that's mostly due to rising rental markets.

"These are bare-bones budgets," Pearce said. "They cover minimum necessities and leave no room for extras such as a latte or a take-out pizza."

The bad news comes after [Seattle landed on a list](#) of "25 Worst Cities to Be Young." That was due to the city's high unemployment rate, which is 18.8 percent for people age 20 to 24.

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