

## New report demonstrates need for policies promoting economic stability

In order for a single mother in Erie County with one preschooler and one school-age child to meet her most basic expenses, she needs an income of at least \$22.43 per hour — or \$47,362 annually — according to a study released on Tuesday.

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for New York State details how much it costs for families across the state of New York to meet their basic needs, without any public or private support.

Prepared by Dr. Diana Pearce of the University of Washington, the report was discussed Tuesday at an event held at the WNET-TV studios, sponsored by the New York State Self-Sufficiency Standard 2010 Steering Committee, Everywoman Opportunity Center and the WNY Women's Fund.

"This Self-Sufficiency Standard demonstrates why federal and state policies need to fill the gaps for working families here in New York," said Susan Antos, senior staff attorney with the Public Benefits & Health Unit of the Empire Justice Center. "We want to send a strong message to decision-makers in the public sector, the education and business sectors, and to our community-based organizations that we now know what it takes for families to make ends meet in every county in New York State."

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for New York State charts the actual costs of living and working in the state. It measures how much income a family needs to pay for housing, food, child care, health care, transportation and taxes — provided they do not receive any help from relatives, friends or the government — based on the number and ages of children in each household and also where

the family resides.

Frank Mauro, executive director of the Fiscal Policy Institute, said that by presenting an accurate and updated picture of the costs of living and working for families of various sizes across the state, the Self-Sufficiency Standard provides policymakers at the federal, state and local levels with an invaluable tool.

"The data presented ... underscores the importance of public structures, such as child care assistance in helping low- and moderate-wage working families to make ends meet," he said.

According to Denise Harlow, CEO of the NYS Community Action Association, such public-sector programs as nutrition assistance, tax credits, job training and placement assistance are in place but are not fully funded or used by all families who need them.

"We can and must be innovative in our approach to defining and funding programs and policies that offer these families a real shot at financial stability," she said. "Working together, we can make a difference by ensuring that families have access to all the components necessary for moving along a path toward economic stability and, ultimately, economic security."

New York State is said to be joined by several other states around the country in calling critical attention to the financial needs of families and the costs to live and work in their own communities.

For more information or to download a copy of the report, call 847-1120 or visit [www.nyscommunityaction.org](http://www.nyscommunityaction.org) or [www.fiscalpolicy.org](http://www.fiscalpolicy.org).

