

INFRASTRUCTURE

FAST FACTS

Joint Economic Committee

@JECDems

In Many States, the Typical Home Health Care Worker Makes Below 80 Percent of the Living Wage

- There are 4.5 million direct care workers in the United States. Eighty-six percent of direct care workers are women, and 59 percent are people of color. About 18 percent live in poverty, and another 44 percent have low incomes.¹
- More than half of direct care workers work in home-based settings.² In all but five states, the typical home health care worker makes less than a living wage in that state. In 18 states, they make less than 80 percent of the living wage.
- In three states, the typical home health care worker makes less than 70 percent of a living wage: Hawaii (69 percent), Louisiana (64 percent) and Virginia (64 percent).
- Research shows that investing in care workers reduces worker turnover and improves the quality of care and patient health outcomes.³

Sample Social Media Content

FACT: In all but 5 states, the typical home health care worker makes less than a living wage in that state.

In 18 states, they make less than 80% of the living wage. #CareEconomy

¹ Kristi L. Kirschner, Lisa I. Iezzoni and Tanya Shah, “The Invisible COVID Workforce: Direct Care Workers for Those with Disabilities,” The Commonwealth Fund, May 21, 2020,

<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/blog/2020/invisible-covid-workforce-direct-care-workers-those-disabilities>.

² Scales, Kezia, “It Is Time to Resolve the Direct Care Workforce Crisis in Long-Term Care,” *The Gerontologist*, August 27, 2020, <https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/61/4/497/5898205>.

³ Christian Weller, Beth Almeida, Marc Cohen and Robyn Stone, “Making Care Work Pay,” *Leading Age*, September 2020, <https://www.ltsscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Making-Care-Work-Pay-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

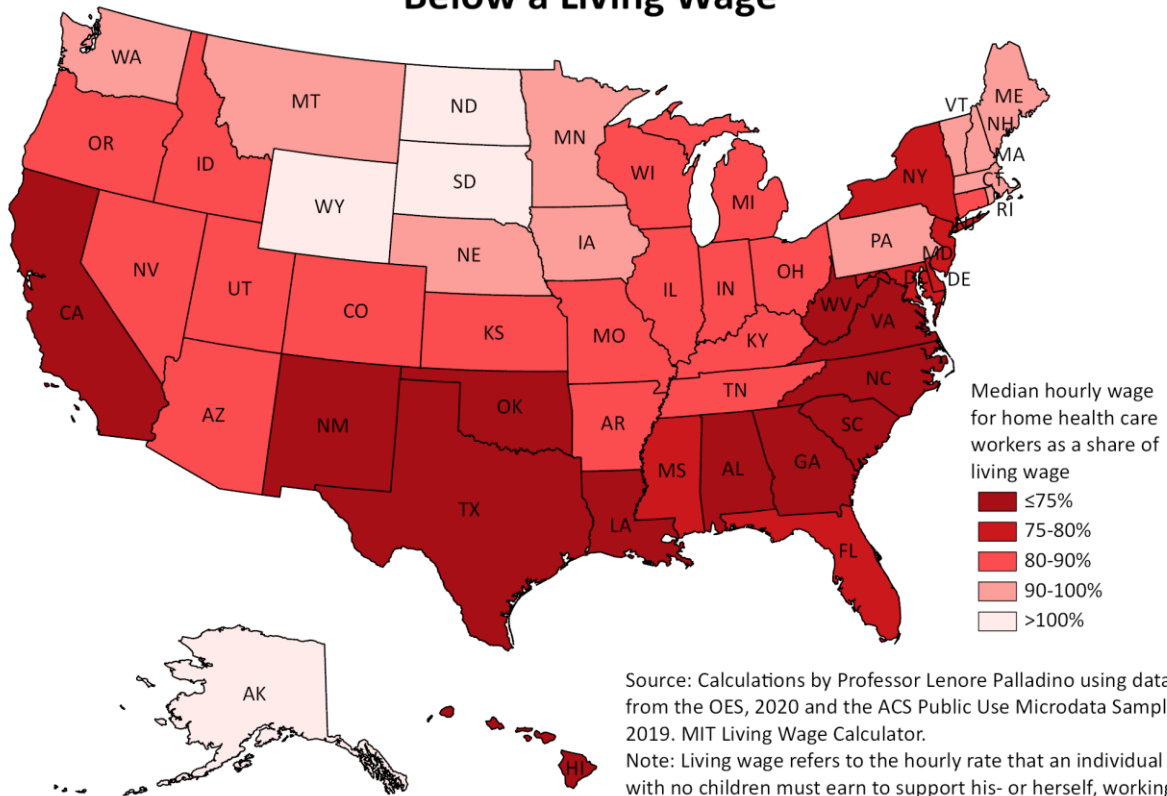
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The Typical Home Health Care Worker Makes Below a Living Wage



In Many States, the Typical Home Health Care Worker Makes Below 80 Percent of the Living Wage

Home Health Care Worker Pay			
State	Living Wage, USD	Median Hourly Wage, USD	Hourly Wage as a Percent of Living Wage
Alabama	13.77	9.58	70%
Alaska	15.06	16.66	111%
Arizona	14.94	12.70	85%
Arkansas	13.29	10.97	83%
California	18.66	14.05	75%
Colorado	16.35	13.83	85%
Connecticut	15.98	13.62	85%
Delaware	15.32	11.65	76%
District of Columbia	20.12	15.04	75%
Florida	14.82	11.61	78%
Georgia	15.36	11.17	73%
Hawaii	19.43	13.35	69%
Idaho	13.95	11.65	84%
Illinois	15.37	13.46	88%
Indiana	13.44	11.63	87%
Iowa	13.62	13.23	97%
Kansas	13.51	10.97	81%
Kentucky	13.48	11.89	88%
Louisiana	14.06	9.04	64%
Maine	14.92	13.80	92%
Maryland	17.25	13.51	78%
Massachusetts	17.74	16.38	92%
Michigan	13.63	11.85	87%
Minnesota	14.90	14.00	94%
Mississippi	13.43	10.25	76%
Missouri	13.72	11.44	83%
Montana	13.94	12.82	92%
Nebraska	13.57	12.70	94%
Nevada	13.67	11.69	86%
New Hampshire	14.47	13.54	94%
New Jersey	16.20	12.76	79%
New Mexico	13.97	10.52	75%
New York	18.62	14.86	80%
North Carolina	14.72	10.74	73%
North Dakota	13.08	16.22	124%
Ohio	13.16	11.41	87%
Oklahoma	13.53	9.80	72%
Oregon	16.85	14.33	85%
Pennsylvania	13.39	12.40	93%
Rhode Island	14.79	14.39	97%
South Carolina	14.58	11.00	75%
South Dakota	12.61	13.08	104%
Tennessee	13.25	10.88	82%
Texas	14.01	10.11	72%
Utah	14.52	13.14	90%
Vermont	14.93	14.87	100%
Virginia	16.61	10.69	64%
Washington	16.34	15.14	93%
West Virginia	13.38	9.97	75%
Wisconsin	14.02	12.32	88%
Wyoming	13.19	13.35	101%

Source: Calculations by Professor Lenore Palladino using data from the OES, 2020 and the ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, 2019. MIT Living Wage Calculator.

Note: Living wage refers to the hourly rate that an individual with no children must earn to support his- or herself, working full-time year-round, based on typical expenses in the location.