



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 2026 Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL)

AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Labor.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Title I of WIOA requires the U.S. Secretary of Labor (Secretary) to update and publish the LLSIL tables annually, for uses described in the law (including determining eligibility for youth). WIOA defines the term “low-income individual” as (*inter alia*) one whose total family annual income does not exceed the higher level of the poverty line or 70 percent of the LLSIL. This issuance provides the Secretary’s annual LLSIL for 2026 and references the current 2026 Health and Human Services “Poverty Guidelines.”

DATES: This notice is applicable [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact Donald Haughton, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room C-4526, Washington, DC 20210 or e-mail address: haughton.donald.w@dol.gov.

Federal Youth Employment Program Information: Sara Hastings, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N-4464, Washington, DC 20210; or e-mail: hastings.sara@dol.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of WIOA is to provide workforce investment activities through statewide and local workforce investment systems that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants. WIOA programs are intended to increase the occupational skill attainment by participants and the quality of the workforce, thereby reducing welfare dependency and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.

LLSIL is used for several purposes under the WIOA. Specifically, WIOA section 3(36) defines the term “low-income individual” for eligibility purposes, and sections 127(b)(2)(C) and 132(b)(1)(B)(v)(IV) define the terms “disadvantaged youth” and “disadvantaged adult” in terms of the poverty line or LLSIL for State formula allotments. The Governor and State and local workforce development boards use the LLSIL for determining eligibility for youth and adults for certain services. ETA encourages Governors and State/local boards to consult the WIOA Final Rule and ETA guidance for more specific guidance in applying LLSIL to program requirements. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published the most current poverty-level guidelines in the **Federal Register**, January 15, 2026. The HHS 2026 Poverty guidelines may also be found on the internet at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>.

ETA will have the 2026 LLSIL and the HHS Poverty guidelines available on its website at www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/llsil.

WIOA section 3(36)(B) defines LLSIL as “that income level (adjusted for regional, metropolitan, urban and rural differences and family size) determined annually by the Secretary of Labor based on the most recent lower living family budget issued by the Secretary.” The most recent lower living family budget was issued by the Secretary in fall 1981. The four-person urban family budget estimates, previously published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), provided the basis for the Secretary to determine the LLSIL. BLS terminated the four-person family budget series in 1982, after publication of the fall 1981 estimates. Currently, BLS provides data to ETA, which ETA then uses to develop the LLSIL tables, as provided on the ETA LLSIL website at www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/llsil.

This notice updates the LLSIL to reflect cost of living increases for 2025, by calculating the percentage change in the most recent 2025 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for an area to the 2024 CPI-U and then applying this calculation to each of the

previously published 2025 LLSIL figures. The 2026 LLSIL tables will be available on the ETA LLSIL website at www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/llsil.

The website contains updated figures for a four-person family in table 1, listed by region for both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Incomes in all tables are rounded up to the nearest dollar. Since program eligibility for “low-income individuals,” “disadvantaged adults,” and “disadvantaged youth” may be determined by family income at 70 percent of the LLSIL, pursuant to WIOA section 3(36)(A)(ii) and section 3(36)(B), respectively, those figures are listed as well.

I. Jurisdictions

Jurisdictions included in the various regions, based generally on the Census Regions of the U.S. Department of Commerce, are as follows:

A. Northeast

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

B. Midwest

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

C. South

Alabama, American Samoa, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Northern Marianas, Oklahoma, Palau, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Kentucky, Louisiana, Marshall Islands, Maryland, Micronesia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

D. West

Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Additionally, the LLSIL Excel file provides separate figures for Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam.

Data for selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) are also available. These are based on annual CPI-U changes for a 12-month period ending in December 2025. The updated LLSIL figures for these MSAs and 70 percent of LLSIL are also available in the LLSIL Excel file.

The LLSIL Excel file also lists each of the various figures at 70 percent of the updated 2025 LLSIL for family sizes of one to six persons. Please note, for families larger than six persons, an amount equal to the difference between the six-person and the five-person family income levels should be added to the six-person family income level for each additional person in the family. Where the poverty level for a particular family size is greater than the corresponding 70 percent of the LLSIL figure, the figure is shaded.

The LLSIL Excel file also indicates 100 percent of LLSIL for family sizes of one to six and is used to determine self-sufficiency as noted at section 3(36)(A)(ii) and section 3(36)(B) of WIOA.

II. Use of These Data

Governors should designate the appropriate LLSILs for use within the State using the LLSIL Excel files on the website. The Governor's designation may be provided by disseminating information on MSAs and metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas within the State or it may involve further calculations. An area can be part of multiple LLSIL geographies. For example, an area in the State of New Jersey may have four or more LLSIL figures. All cities, towns, and counties that are part of a metro area in New Jersey are a part of the Northeast metropolitan; some of these areas can also be a portion of the New York City MSA. New Jersey also has areas that are part of the Philadelphia MSA, a less populated area in New Jersey may be a part of the Northeast non-metropolitan. If a workforce investment area includes areas that would be covered by more than one LLSIL figure, the Governor may determine which is to be used.

A State's policies and measures for the workforce investment system shall be accepted by the Secretary to the extent that they are consistent with WIOA and its regulations.

III. Disclaimer on Statistical Uses

It should be noted that publication of these figures is only for the purpose of meeting the requirements specified by WIOA as defined in the law and regulations. BLS has not revised the lower living family budget since 1981 and has no plans to do so. The four-person urban family budget estimates series were terminated by BLS in 1982. The CPI-U adjustments used to update LLSIL for this publication are not precisely comparable, most notably because certain tax items were included in the 1981 LLSIL, but are not in the CPI-U. Thus, these figures should not be used for any statistical purposes and are valid only for those purposes under WIOA as defined in the law and regulations.

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