**WDC Releases 2014 Self-Sufficiency Standard**

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Contact:
Danielle Wallace
Project Manager - Communications, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County
Email: dwallace@seakingwdc.org
Phone: 206-448-0474 ext. 3002

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County releases *2014 Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State* - A Washington family of four must spend 46 percent more on average to make ends meet today than 13 years ago, according to the 2014 Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State, a report released by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) and the University of Washington.

The *Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State 2014*, released Thursday (Nov. 20), provides a sobering look at how much it costs individuals and families statewide to meet basic needs — and how far short they’re falling.

The study found that Washington families with two adults, a preschooler, and a school-aged child saw the costs of meeting their most basic requirements jump as much as 72 percent between 2001 and 2014, depending on where they live. But median wages increased just 21 percent during that time.

“We’re looking at a bigger and bigger crunch for people struggling to survive economically,” said Dr. Diana Pearce, author of the report and the director of the *Center for Women’s Welfare* at the UW School of Social Work. “Everything’s going up, even though people’s wages are not,” Pearce said. "Costs for basic needs are even going up faster than overall inflation."

Just in the last three years, the cost of basic needs increased 10 percent on average for four-person Washington families, while wages increased just 4 percent.

The report calculates how much individuals and families must earn in each of the state’s 39 counties to cover housing, food, child care, health care, taxes, transportation and other necessities without outside assistance. Costs are based on the numbers of adults and children of varying ages in each household and where the family lives, with 152 different family types included in the report.

The WDC uses the report in conjunction with its statewide Self-Sufficiency Calculator to help job-seekers make informed decisions on what employment and training options would help them move toward self-sufficiency.

“The standard serves as an accurate and robust cost-of-living benchmark that supports good career planning and allows us to measure the extent to which our programs help customers progress toward economic self-sufficiency,” said Marléna Sessions, WDC Chief Executive Officer. “Despite our economy’s gradual recovery, increases in the cost of living have dramatically outpaced wage growth in Washington State.”

Stay tuned for an upcoming *2014 Self-Sufficiency Standard Webinar* for an in-depth discussion on the report’s findings and applications in December 2014.