

Quality of life comes with high costs of living

In 2006, The Morgan Quitno Press compared states in more than 44 categories and deemed Vermont the nation's fourth most livable.¹¹ Yet Vermont's promise of quality living is shadowed by the state's rising cost of living and hefty tax burden. Many families are forced to choose which basic needs they will meet, including groceries, housing, utilities and transportation.

the FACTS

- Cost of living factors include the price of groceries, housing, utilities and transportation. These costs are aggregated to produce a cost of living index. Nationally, the median index is 100. Vermont's index exceeds that median notably at 114.2.¹²
- When their state and local taxes are combined, Vermonters contend with a tax burden that is consistently among the ten highest in the nation. Meanwhile, Vermonters place 22nd for income per capita, and the state's annual wages are ranked 34th in the nation. It is important to note, however, that a large number of Vermont residents receive income from investments and other non-wage sources.
- Nationally, the median hourly wage is \$14.28. In Vermont, that median is \$14.13—the second lowest in New England, which has a collective median of \$15.92.¹³
- Another issue related to cost of living is the availability and expense of childcare. Sixty-eight percent of Vermont's children under age six live in households where both parents work outside the home, compared to a national rate of 59%. According to a report released by the Vermont Child Care Advisory Board, "Vermont is failing to ensure that families have access to affordable, quality childcare services." A family of four that has two working parents and two preschool-age children and that earns Vermont's median household income will spend 21% of that gross income on childcare.¹⁴

CHILDCARE MATTERS



68%

**of Vermont's children
under age six are in families
where both parents work
outside the home.**

The national rate is 59%.