

**GST MICHIGAN WORKS! POLICY 15-04**

**TO:** GST Michigan Works! Service Providers and Agency Staff  
**FROM:** Jody Kerbyson, CEO  
**SUBJECT:** Economic Self-Sufficiency  
**EFFECTIVE:** October 1, 2015  
**PROGRAMS AFFECTED:** All Programs

**BACKGROUND:** The state defines the minimum level for self-sufficiency as employment that pays at least the lower living standard income level for the most recent year. However, local areas are permitted to define self-sufficiency at a higher income level than the state minimum, as long as it can be supported by documentation.

Self-sufficiency level should be defined as the level at which a household is able to meet all of its basic needs without relying on the government or non-profit assistance. The state’s measurement tool does not reflect the true cost incurred by families in today’s economy. A single parent with two children who works full-time at minimum wage cannot rise above the poverty level based on earnings alone, much less attain economic self-sufficiency. Many families living above the poverty line still cannot meet their basic needs based on their wages alone. However, when public supports augment low minimum wages, the income available to the family increases dramatically. To move individuals and families away from public support into self-sufficiency, it is clear there is an ongoing need for a benchmark that can more precisely determine economic self-sufficiency.

**POLICY:** The goal of GST Michigan Works! is to enable individuals and families, at a minimum, to meet their basic needs without relying on the government or non-profit assistance. In order to achieve this goal there must be a realistic benchmark established for self-sufficiency we should all aspire to meet. To this end, GST Michigan Works! is adopting the Basic Needs benchmarks established by Michigan League for Human Services located on the following tables:

County	Single Adult		Single Parent*		Two Parent* (Both Working)		Two Parent* (One Working)	
	Hourly	Annual	Hourly	Annual	Hourly	Annual	Hourly	Annual
Genesee	\$10.63	\$22,110	\$22.10	\$45,973	\$12.98	\$26,989	\$13.28	\$27,629
Huron	10.73	21,569	20.77	43,201	12.34	25,669	12.49	25,974
Lapeer	11.35	23,608	23.10	48,057	13.47	28,023	14.31	29,772
Sanilac	9.88	20,547	19.98	41,557	11.98	24,921	12.49	25,974
Shiawassee	10.81	22,477	21.54	44,810	12.72	26,449	13.81	28,722
Tuscola	10.22	21,255	20.61	42,860	12.21	25,393	12.49	25,974

\*With two children under 5.

Wage level needed for each parent.

**SOURCE:** Michigan League for Human Services published report titled Making Ends Meet in Michigan: A Basic Needs Income Level for Family Well-Being, June 2014.

**ACTION:** GST Michigan Works! Service Providers and Agency Staff shall take the appropriate actions necessary to implement the directives of this policy issuance. Service Provider officials shall ensure the information contained in this policy is disseminated to all appropriate staff.

**INQUIRIES:** Questions regarding this policy issuance should be directed to John Anderson at 810-233-5974 Ext. 159

**SIGNED:**

  
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Jody Kerbyson, CEO

10/1/15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date