



Cost of Living - Reality Check

The middle class built this country by working hard, starting businesses, inventing new things, building communities, and constructing an economy that provides for the many, not just the few.¹

Today our country's current economic policies are devastating the middle class.

2013 Cost of Living Facts:

- The median household income has declined by about \$4000 per month (down 4.4%) since 2008.²
- Gasoline prices have doubled (from \$1.84 average price per gallon of regular at the end of 2008 to around \$3.50 today). In 2011, the average American spent over \$4000 on gasoline.³
- Electricity bills have skyrocketed for 5 years in a row to \$1419 in 2010, and they continue to climb. The jump added \$300 per year to household costs.⁴
- Food prices have increased by almost 20% since 2006.⁵
- One out of every 7 Americans (47 million) relies on food stamps (up 48% since 2008). Food stamp recipients have grown by 15 million, increasing an average of 11,000 per day.⁶
- Health insurance costs rose 29% from 2008 to 2013.⁷ Beginning in 2013, insurance premiums may skyrocket as a result of the 2010 national health care law (Obamacare).
- Americans will pay an average of 29.4% of their income on federal, state, and local taxes in 2013, more than the average family spends on food, clothing, and housing combined.⁸
- More than 1 in 4 homeowners (23.8%) are underwater (owe more on their mortgage than their home is worth).⁹ The housing crisis destroyed over \$7 trillion in household wealth.¹⁰
- The national debt (what the federal government spends over what it takes in) has increased to over \$17 trillion (up from \$10 trillion in 2008). It is growing by \$2 million per minute and will cost every family \$148,000 to pay off.¹¹

¹ The Middle Class and Economic Growth. A Project of the Center for American Progress. Center for American Progress. www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2012/08/01/11997/the-middle-class-and-economic-growth/.

² U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. Census Bureau. www.census.gov/.

³ Historical Price Charts. 60 Month Average Retail Price Chart. GasBuddy Organization. http://gasbuddy.com/gb_retail_price_chart.aspx?time=60.

⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. www.bea.gov/. and U.S. Energy Information Administration. www.eia.gov/.

⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. www.ers.usda.gov/.

⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture. Food and Nutrition Service. Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). www.fns.usda.gov/snap.

⁷ 2013 Employer Health Benefits Survey. Kaiser Family Foundation. <http://kff.org/private-insurance/report/2013-employer-health-benefits/>.

⁸ Tax Freedom Day 2013 is April 18. Tax Foundation. <http://taxfoundation.org/article/tax-freedom-day-2013-april-18-five-days-later-last-year>.

⁹ The U.S. Housing Crisis: Where are home loans underwater? Zillow Real Estate. www.zillow.com/visuals/negative-equity/#4/39.98-106.88.

¹⁰ Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. Flow of Funds Reports. www.federalreserve.gov/releases/z1/default.htm.

¹¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury. Bureau of the Public Debt. www.publicdebt.treas.gov/.