

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: LIVING ON WELFARE

Budgeting on Welfare

*Scenario-*You are a single mother of two children, a boy 5 and girl 2. You lost your job a few months ago and lost your apartment for nonpayment of rent. You're staying with a friend, but it is only temporary. You have gone on TANF for the first time and you need an apartment. Only about 25% of eligible families actually receive housing subsidies and you are not one of them. Let's work out your budget.

Step 1: Figure your income.

- If you have no other income then you can estimate a max of \$577 per month for CNY.
- You also receive Medicaid that provides basic medical care for you and your children.
- You also get food stamps, which would cover about half of your food expenses

Step 2: Now on to expenses

- First rent, what is the average cost of an apartment in Syracuse?
- If you can't afford it, look and see what you can find in the paper.
- Include all relevant expenses in your worksheet. For example, school supplies and school clothes, soap, cleaning supplies, toothpaste and shampoos, basic medicines like aspirin and band-aids must be included as well.
- Transportation must include getting to and from grocery stores, banks, etc several times a month. That includes either bus fare or car insurance/gas costs.

Step 3: Thinking about it

Here are some questions to think about. Where is your apartment? What do you know about that area of the city? How far away are the nearest banks, grocery stores, parks and doctors? What cuts did you have to make? How might you make extra income? What were the hardest cuts to make? What are the results of such cuts?

Remember, you are required to spend a minimum of 30 hrs per week in work related activities. Thus, you need to manage clothing, transportation and child care for this # of hrs per week.

Info Sheet

Housing

New York City Average Apartment \$1600
Syracuse NY, Average for 1 bedroom apt
\$626,
2bd \$715

Food/Utilities

Winter Heating/Electricity per month –
150-300/mo
Average food bill for a family of 3 (basic
Nutritional requirements)- 400-500/Month

Childcare

Daycare centers- \$800 for an infant, \$750
for a toddler and \$700 for a preschooler.
/per month at full time.
Full time \$45/ day, Max 3 days/wk. or 5
days a week less than 5 hrs per day is \$560
/mo for babies, 525/toddlers and
500/preschoolers. Parents provide all
diapers, formula etc.

Transportation

Bus Pass \$50

Communication

Cable \$50
Internet \$50
Telephone \$40

**Average Cost of Health insurance
(Employee Copay)**

Roughly \$250/month/ family
Estimated \$55 /person

Without Employer

\$250/individual/mo
\$900/family/mo

Budget

Income _____

Rent _____

Heat/Electricity _____

Telephone _____

Food _____

Childcare _____

Clothing _____

Transportation _____

Household Items _____

Misc _____

Total _____