

Low-paid workers stretched to meet basic needs

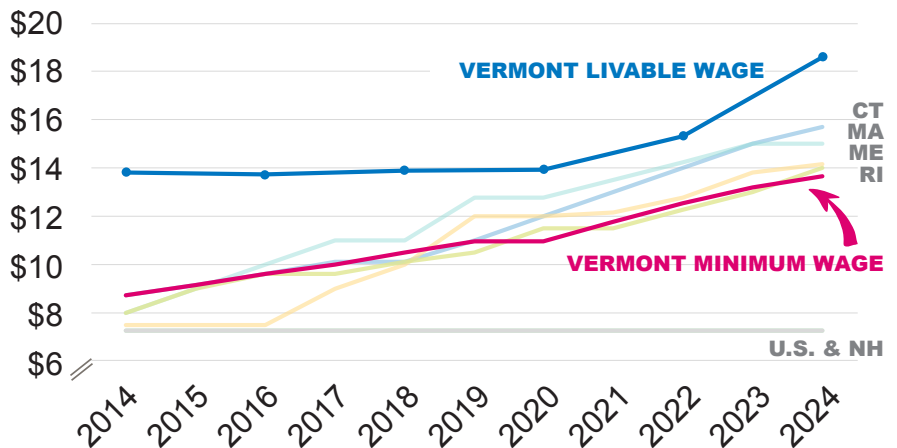
A recent [report](#) by the Joint Fiscal Office shows that Vermont's 2024 livable wage was nearly \$19 an hour—exceeding the state minimum wage by almost \$5. Vermont defines livable wage as the hourly earnings necessary for a single person working full time and living in shared housing to meet their basic needs. The gap was the largest in a decade, making it harder for workers to make ends meet.

While the state's minimum wage increased from 2022 to 2024, it did not keep up with rising costs or wages in neighboring states. The minimum wage increased

again at the start of 2025, but not enough to close the gap. At the new rate of \$14.01 per hour, a full-time minimum wage earner is still nearly \$10,000 in the hole each year. And the minimum wage does not even cover all workers. The tipped minimum wage is set at half the standard minimum wage, and agricultural workers can earn even less.

Vermont minimum wage fell further behind livable wage

Minimum wage, New England states and U.S., and Vermont livable wage, 2014-2024



Note: The chart uses the Joint Fiscal Office's 2024 definition of livable wage: the amount a single person in shared housing must earn to meet basic needs.

Data Sources: U.S. Department of Labor and Vermont Joint Fiscal Office
 ©2025 Public Assets Institute

THIS MONTH

The number of Vermonters who are unemployed and looking for work increased for the sixth straight month in December, growing by nearly 1,300 people over the half-year period. Meanwhile, the number of workers employed and the total number of Vermonters in the labor force (those working plus those looking for work) continued to fall. Despite these trends, Vermont had the second-lowest unemployment rate in the nation in December, at 2.4 percent.

LATEST BLS DATA - JANUARY 28, 2025			
	DEC 2024	NOV 2024	DEC 2023
Labor Force	357,297	357,401	353,412
Employment	348,580	348,926	345,433
Unemployment	8,717	8,475	7,979
Unemployment Rate	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics