

# 1 parent, 2 kids need \$66,966 to live in O.C.



FILE PHOTO: BRUCE CHAMBERS, THE REGISTER

**NECESSITIES:** Besides the rise in housing costs, child care is up 22 percent and health care costs have soared 26 percent.

United Way says family self-sufficiency is hurt by soaring costs, especially a 31 percent rise in housing.

By **MARY ANN MILBOURN**  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

A single parent with two young children needs to make \$31.71 an hour – \$66,966 a year – to afford housing, food, child care, transportation and other necessities in Orange County, according to the Orange County United Way.

The California minimum wage is \$8 an hour (\$16,640 a year).

The cost of self-sufficiency includes \$1,595 for housing. An adult with no children could get by on \$15.24 an hour (\$32,177 a year) because the adult could pay less for housing – \$1,330 – and would not have to pay for child care, the report says.

The numbers come from a California

family economic self-sufficiency standard created jointly by the United Way, the Insight Center for Community Economic Development and more than 13 community-based organizations and other agencies. It was designed to show the gap for the working poor whose income exceeds the poverty levels that would allow them to get government aid but who still can't make ends meet because of the high cost of living here.

The United Way says part of the problem for local families is that they have been beset by skyrocketing costs over the past five years, including a 31 percent jump in housing costs. Child

# FAMILIES: Over 150,000 live on less than \$25,000

FROM PAGE 11

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care costs 22 percent more, and health care is up 26 percent.

Over the next year, the United Way project plans to have pilot agencies use the self-sufficiency calculator in conjunction with job training, workforce development, education, housing and other family support programs as a larger program and policy strategy to get families off public benefits and into high-wage, family-sustaining jobs for the long term.

“Our pilot agencies and net-

work of community partners have provided the resources to connect families to services and programs they need to truly prosper,” said Maria Chavez Wilcox, president of Orange County United Way.

“With the over 150,000 households in Orange County earning less than \$25,000 a year, we know the need to build self-sufficient lives is great.”

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