



HOUSTON, THE POVERTY LINE HAS A PROBLEM

THE FEDERAL POVERTY LINE HASN'T REALLY CHANGED SINCE BEFORE THE MOON LANDING.

Current poverty benchmarks are based on the share of income spent on food in the 1960s, but the average percent spent on food these days is less than half what it was back then.* A modern family spends a bigger share on other needs such as **childcare, transportation, and housing**. A realistic poverty line is important because it gives us a better picture of how families are doing and what they need.



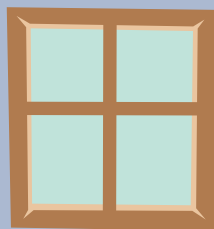
CHILDCARE

The average single mother in Arkansas spends about 30 percent of her income on childcare, which can cost as much as full time tuition at an in-state college. The cost of childcare has shot up 70 percent from 1985 to 2010.



TRANSPORTATION

Gas prices are higher and people are living farther from where they work. We drove an average of 33 percent farther to work in 2009 than we did in 1977.**



HOUSING

The median gross rent in the U.S. has almost doubled since the original poverty guidelines.

MEDICAL CARE

Per capita health care spending grew from \$356 to \$7,538 between 1970 and 2008. The USA's total expenditure on health care as a share of GDP has more than doubled, going from 7.1 percent to 16 percent in 2008.***



* <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-expenditures.aspx#26636>

** <http://nhts.ornl.gov/2009/pub/stt.pdf>

*** <http://kff.org/health-costs/issue-brief/snapshots-health-care-spending-in-the-united-states-selected-oecd-countries/>

