

**FINANCIAL HARDSHIP CLAIM
FOR
FEDERAL BENEFITS OFFSETS**

Self-Help Packet

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP CLAIM FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS OFFSETS

What is a Federal Benefits Offset?

The government can take a portion of certain benefits to collect on government student loans, including Social Security benefits, benefits under Part B of the Black Lung Benefits Act, and some Railroad Retirement benefits. This is called an “offset.” (There are other benefits the government cannot take, including Supplemental Security Income, veteran’s benefits, and benefits under Part C of the Black Lung Benefits Act. To see a complete list of all federal benefits that cannot be taken, see the NCLC Student Loan Borrower Assistance website, www.studentloanborrowerassistance.org.)

The government can take the lesser amount of one of the following:

- (1) Any amounts that exceed \$9,000/year or \$750/month. This means that no matter what, you are entitled to keep \$750 per month.
- (2) 15% of your total benefit.

Example: Francis receives a monthly benefit payment of \$850. The amount that is offset is the lesser of \$127.50 (15% of \$850) or \$100 (the amount by which \$850 exceeds \$750). In this example, \$100 would be offset.

What Are Your Options?

Depending on your circumstances, there are a number of ways to stop or reduce federal benefits offsets.

Financial Hardship

You can get the most immediate relief by submitting a financial hardship claim. Through this type of claim, you may ask the Department of Education to stop or reduce a federal benefits offset based on your financial circumstances. This packet contains instructions for submitting a financial hardship claim.

Please be aware that the Department is not required to consider or grant any financial hardship claim, but may do so in its discretion if you are able to show that an offset will leave you unable to cover your basic living expenses. In the event the Department decides to grant your claim, it will either stop the offset or reduce it to a lesser amount that it determines you can afford.

Relief for financial hardship, however, may only be temporary. The government may at some future date try again to offset your federal benefits. In addition, there is no guaranty that the Department will grant your claim. Therefore, you may want to consider a few other options.

Requesting a Hearing

You may object to the offset for reasons other than financial hardship by filing a request for review within 20 days of receiving a notice of offset. You may object on the grounds that you have filed a loan discharge application (see “Other Options” below), that you filed or had your student loan discharged in bankruptcy, that you disagree with the amount of the debt, that you are making payments under a pre-existing payment agreement, that the debt is not yours, or that the debt is not enforceable for other reasons. You may obtain a Request for Review form, as well as instructions for where to submit the form, on the Department’s website, www.MyEdDebt.com.

If you submit your written request within the 20-day time frame, the Department will not offset your benefits until after it has reviewed your request. If you miss this deadline, you may still submit a request for review, but the Department will not delay the offset.

You also have the right to first review and copy relevant documents. You may request an oral hearing instead of a written review, but you must send an explanation of why you think a written review is inadequate. You also have the right to set up a repayment plan with your loan holder prior to offset.

Other Options

Other options to consider include loan cancellation (such as temporary and permanent disability discharges, school-related discharges, and bankruptcy), getting your loans out of default (through rehabilitation or loan consolidation), or compromise and settlement of your student loan debt. If you are able to successfully complete any of these, the government will stop offsetting your federal benefits. However, these options are not appropriate or available for everyone.

This self-help packet only provides information about the financial hardship claim option. For more information about the other options, see the Student Loan Borrower Assistance website at www.studentloanborrowerassistance.org.

When Should You Submit a Financial Hardship Claim?

Although the offset process is managed by the Financial Management Service of the Department of Treasury, the Department of Education must notify you in writing before your Social Security or other eligible benefits can be taken. When you receive this notice, you may request that the Department of Education (the Department) review the offset on the basis of financial hardship. Although the Department is not required to stop or reduce the offset based on financial hardship, it may do so in its discretion.

To claim financial hardship, you must fill out and submit a Financial Disclosure Statement along with supporting documents. Because the Department may offset your benefits while it is reviewing your financial hardship claim, you should submit these documents as soon as you can after you receive a notice of offset. In the event the Department grants your hardship claim, it will refund amounts offset if it determines that the hardship existed while your claim was pending.

Will Your Hardship Claim be Granted?

For a claim to be granted, the documentation you submit must show that an offset will leave you unable to meet the basic living expenses for you and your dependents.

To evaluate a hardship claim, the Department typically compares your expenses with averages spent for basic living expenses by families of the same size and income. The Department uses standards for basic living expenses published by the Internal Revenue Service. If your expenses do not exceed these standards, and you do not have any remaining income after paying your expenses, the Department should grant your hardship claim.

If you report expenses that are higher than the national standards, you must explain why the amount you claim is reasonable and necessary. If the Department does not agree with your explanation, or if your income exceeds your expenses, the Department will most likely deny your hardship claim or reduce the amounts being offset to an amount it determines you can afford.

How to Submit a Financial Hardship Claim

You must make sure you include all the information requested and supporting documentation.

- Please carefully review and complete each of the attached forms, and follow all the directions.
- Make sure you use blue or black ink and print legibly, or type in the answers.
- If the person reviewing your claim cannot read your answers, or if you provide incomplete information, your hardship claim may be denied even if you meet the hardship standards described above.

What to Expect After You Submit a Hardship Claim

Although we have provided the most up-to-date forms, after the Department receives your claim, it may ask you to complete a different form or to provide additional documentation.

Based on the information you submit, the Department will determine whether the offset will cause you financial hardship. The Department should notify you of its decision in writing. If the Department decides you will not experience financial hardship, it will deny your claim and offset your federal benefits in the amount first proposed. If the Department decides you will experience financial hardship, it will grant your claim and either stop the offset or reduce the amount of the offset.

If your hardship claim is granted, at some future date the Department may request updated information about your income or expenses. Make sure you provide any information requested by the Department as soon as you receive such a request. If you fail to respond, or do not respond in a timely manner, the Department may again decide to offset your federal benefits.

STEP 1: Gather Supporting Documents

Before completing the Financial Disclosure Statement, gather all documents applicable to your situation using this checklist:

- The letter notifying you about the offset;
- The most recent letter that shows the monthly amount you receive in federal benefits (for example, a letter from the Social Security Administration stating how much you receive in Social Security benefits);
- If you work, your two most recent pay stubs;
- If you work, your most recent W-2 tax forms;
- The two most recent pay stubs for anyone in your household who is working;
- The most recent W-2 tax forms for anyone in your household who is working;
- Your most recent IRS income tax filing (1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ), if any;
- The most recent IRS income tax filing (1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ) for anyone in your household who is earning income if they filed taxes separately from you;
- Documentation of any other source of income, such as child support, unemployment benefits, food stamps, or other government benefits;
- Your rental lease or, if you own your home, your monthly mortgage statement;
- If you own your home, documents that show how much you pay for insurance (homeowner's insurance, earthquake, etc.) and property taxes (if they are not escrowed and included in monthly mortgage payment);
- Most recent utility bills (electric, water/sewer, gas);
- Most recent telephone bill;
- Most recent basic cable bill and internet bill, if applicable (you will only include these if cable or internet are essential for you, see Step 2 below);
- Any monthly medical insurance bills;
- Any medical bills not covered by insurance (including bills or receipts for necessary medications);

- If you own or lease a car, your monthly payment bill;
- If you own or lease a car, any car insurance bill;
- Documentation of child care costs (such as a bill or contract);
- Documentation of child support payments (such as a court order);
- Documentation regarding any other necessary expenses; and
- Any other documentation that would demonstrate how a federal benefits offset will cause you financial hardship, such as an eviction notice, past-due rent or mortgage notice, foreclosure notice, utility shut-off notice, medical documents, or disability-related documents (such as medical records, letters from doctors, or determinations of disability by government agencies).

STEP 2: Complete the Financial Disclosure Statement

Using the documents you have gathered, you should complete the Financial Disclosure Statement. Make sure you complete all items – do not leave any spaces blank. If an answer is zero, write zero.

INCOME INFORMATION – Pages 1 and 2

- 1) **Identifying Information:** Provide all the requested information. If you are employed, provide information about your employer, your position, and your income. Otherwise, enter zero for net and gross income.
 - Your gross income is your total earnings before any amounts are deducted for taxes, medical insurance, and other similar deductions.
 - Your net income is your total earnings after deductions.
 - Make sure you check the box indicating whether your income is paid weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or for some other time period.

- 2) **Other Household Members:** Provide information regarding other household members, including their incomes if they work. If they do not work, or you do not have other household members, enter zero for income.
 - Number of dependents: At a minimum you should enter the number 1 for yourself, more if you have children, a dependent spouse, or other dependent family members who live with you.
 - Check the appropriate box for your marital status.
 - If you are married, enter all requested information regarding your spouse, including his/her gross and net income if he/she is employed.
 - Starting on the top of page 2, also enter the names, social security numbers, and total gross and net income of any other household members who are employed.

- 3) **Other Income:** Enter the amount received and check how often you receive it.
 - For “Other,” enter the total amount you receive in Social Security or other benefits. Describe the type of benefit(s) you receive and how often you receive it.

- 4) **Deductions:** Enter the amount and reason for all deductions from any pay stubs from employment for yourself, your spouse, or any other household members. Do not list any deductions for Social Security or withholding taxes.

MONTHLY EXPENSES – Pages 2 and 3

- 1) **Shelter:** Enter the most recent monthly expenses for all that apply. Enter zeros for expenses that you do not pay. If you are a homeowner, include as “other” expenses monthly amounts paid towards property taxes.

- 2) Food and Household: Enter estimated total expenses per month for food and other necessary household living expenses such as housekeeping supplies and personal care products.
- 3) Clothing: Enter estimated monthly clothing expenses.
- 4) Utilities: Enter the most recent monthly expenses for all that apply, and enter zero for any expenses that you do not have. Do not include non-necessary utility expenses such as cable television or internet access unless those expenses are essential for you. As an example, these expense might be essential if you live in a rural area or are not able to leave your home, and you need internet access to order necessary food items or medicine.
- 5) Medical: Enter all monthly medical expenses that apply and enter zero for any expenses you don't have. For "Other" medical expenses, include monthly payments such as medications, medical equipment, eyeglasses, dental services and other on-going medical costs. Make sure you describe the reasons that these other medical expenses are necessary.
- 6) Transportation: Enter all monthly transportation expenses and enter zero for any expenses you don't have.
- 7) Child Care: Enter all monthly expenses and number of children where appropriate. Enter zero in any monthly expenses you don't have.
- 8) Other Insurance: Enter any other monthly insurance expenses and briefly describe the type of insurance.
- 9) Other Expenses: Any other necessary living expenses not included. Do not include credit card payments.

MONTHLY PAYMENT AMOUNT, SIGNATURE AND DATE

- 1) "Based on this Statement, I think I can afford to pay \$": If, based on your income and expenses, you don't think you can afford to make any payments on your student loans, enter zero. If, however, your income exceeds your expenses and you think you can afford some payment, enter the amount you think you can afford.
- 2) Carefully review all the information you have entered and make sure it is correct and matches the documents that you gathered for Step 1. If the information is all true and correct, then sign and date the Statement.

U.S. Department of Education

Financial Disclosure Statement

To evaluate a hardship claim, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) compares the expenses you claim and support against averages spent for those similar expenses by families of the same size and income as yours. The Department considers proven expenses as reasonable up to the amount of these averages. If you claim more for an expense than the average spent by families like yours, you must provide persuasive explanation why the amount you claim is necessary. These average amounts were determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) from different government studies. You can find the average expense amount that the Department uses at the following Web site: www.irs.gov and then search for “Collection Financial Standards.”

- **Complete all items.** Do not leave any item blank. If the answer is zero, write zero.
- **Provide documentation of expenses.** Expenses may not be considered if you do not provide documents supporting the amounts claimed.
- **Disclose and provide documentation of household income.**
- Failure to provide this information and documentation may result in a denial of your claim of financial hardship.

Income

Your Name: _____ **Your Social Security No.:** _____
Address: _____
 _____ **Phone:** _____
 _____ **Country:** _____
Current Employer: _____ **Date Employed:** _____
Employer Phone: _____ **Present Position:** _____
Gross Income: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other _____
Net Income: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other _____

**ENCLOSE: COPY OF YOUR TWO MOST RECENT PAY STUBS AND
 COPIES OF MOST RECENT W-2s AND 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ or other IRS FILING**

Number of dependents: _____ (including yourself)
Marital status: Married Single Divorced
Your spouse’s name: _____ **Spouse’s SSN:** _____
Gross Income: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other _____
Net Income: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other _____

**ENCLOSE: COPY OF TWO MOST RECENT PAY STUBS AND
 COPIES OF MOST RECENT W-2s AND 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ or other IRS FILING**

Other household members(s) with income: _____ SSN: _____

Gross Income: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other _____

Net Income: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other _____

**ENCLOSE: COPY OF TWO MOST RECENT PAY STUBS AND
COPIES OF MOST RECENT W-2s AND 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ or other IRS FILING**

Other Income

Child support: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other

Alimony: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other

Interest: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other

Public assistance: \$ _____ Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Other

Other: \$ _____ Describe: _____

Please explain all deductions shown on pay-stubs:

Deductions	Amount	Reason
401K:	_____	_____
Retirement:	_____	_____
Union Dues:	_____	_____
Medical:	_____	_____
Credit Union:	_____	_____
Other:	_____	_____

Monthly Expenses

Shelter (SEND COPY OF MORTGAGE OR LEASE)

Rent/Mortgage: \$ _____ Paid to whom: _____

2nd home mortgage: \$ _____ Paid to whom: _____

Home/Renter insurance: \$ _____

Other: \$ _____ Describe: _____

Food and Household

Expenses: \$ _____

Clothing: \$ _____

Utilities (SEND COPIES OF BILLS)

Electric: \$ _____

Gas: \$ _____

Water/Sewer: \$ _____

Garbage pickup: \$ _____

Basic telephone: \$ _____

Other: \$ _____ Describe: _____

Medical (SEND COPIES OF BILLS)

Insurance \$ _____ /per month

(Only list payments not deducted from paycheck)

Bill payments \$ _____ /per month

(Only list payments not covered by insurance)

Other: \$ _____ /per month

Describe: _____

Transportation (SEND COPIES OF CAR PAYMENT AGREEMENT OR BILLS)

Of cars _____

1st Car payment: \$ _____ /per month
2nd Car payment: \$ _____ /per month
Gas and oil: \$ _____ /per month
Public transportation: \$ _____ /per month
Car insurance: \$ _____ /per month
Other: \$ _____ Describe: _____

Child Care (SEND COPIES OF BILLS)

Child care: \$ _____ /per month Number of children: _____
Child support: \$ _____ /per month Number of children: _____
Other: \$ _____ /per month Describe: _____

Other Insurance: \$ _____ Describe: _____

Other Expenses (Attach a list describing expense, monthly payment and enclose bills)

Based on this Statement, I think I can afford to pay \$ _____ per month

I declare under penalty of law that the answers and statements contained herein are true and correct.

Signature _____ Date _____

Warning: 18 U.S.C. 1001 provides that “whoever...knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact, or makes any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation...shall be fined up to \$10,000.00 or imprisoned up to five years, or both”

Complete, sign, and return the requested information and documentation to:

US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO BOX 5227
GREENVILLE TX 75403-5227

Privacy Act Notice

This request is authorized under 31 U.S.C. 3711, 20 U.S.C. 1078-6, and 31 U.S.C. 3720D. You are not required to provide this information. If you do not, we cannot determine your financial ability to repay your student aid debt. The information you provide will be used to evaluate your ability to pay. It may be disclosed to government agencies and their contractors, to employees, lenders, and others to enforce this debt; to third parties in audit, research, or dispute about the management of this debt; and to parties with a right to this information under the Freedom of Information Act or other Federal law, or with your consent. These uses are explained in Notice for System of Records 18-11-07, 64 FR 30166 (June 4, 1999), 64 FR 72407 (Dec. 27, 1999). We will send a copy at your request.

STEP 3: Write a Letter Explaining Your Financial Hardship

To increase the chances that your claim will be granted, you should write a letter to explain why the offset will cause financial hardship and highlight any exceptional circumstances. A sample letter is attached. Here are some points you should cover in your letter:

- 1) Tell the Department What You are Requesting: Explain that you are writing to request a review of the offset and that you are asking for either a complete suspension of the offset or a reduction to some specific lower amount.
- 2) Explain Why You Want the Offset Reduced or Suspended: Tell your story and highlight any exceptional circumstances. Here are some topics you should cover, if they apply to you:
 - What are your sources of income?
 - Have you or anyone in your household recently become unemployed?
 - Have you recently lost a source of income through divorce or a death in the family?
 - Are you over 65 or disabled and living solely on Social Security benefits?
 - If you are disabled, when and how did you become disabled?
 - Do you have a recent medical injury or condition that has reduced your income or increased your expenses?
 - Do you have to pay for expensive medications or other medical related expenses?
 - Are you supporting a child or other adult who is disabled, recently injured, or has some other condition or special needs?
 - Have you been threatened with foreclosure or have you recently lost your home to foreclosure?
 - Are you having trouble paying your rent or are you facing eviction for non-payment of rent?
 - Are you struggling to meet your living expenses? What do you have to go without to pay your essential expenses?
 - Are you behind on paying any of your essential living expenses – such as utilities?
- 3) Explain Your Overall Financial Situation: Add up your total monthly income and your total monthly expenses from the Financial Disclosure Statement. If your expenses equal or exceed your income, point that out in the letter. If your total income exceeds your total expenses, you must explain whether you need the extra income due to some exceptional circumstance. If you do not need the income for some exceptional circumstance, you should propose some reduced amount you think you could afford to pay through offset.
- 4) List Every Document You Are Sending: Include a complete list of all the documents that you are enclosing with the letter, including a copy of the offset notification letter from the Department of Treasury, the completed Financial Disclosure Statement, and a copy of each of the documents that show your income and expenses (checked off the list in Step 2).
- 5) Optional Step – Compare Your Expenses to the IRS Standards: This is an optional step that you may skip. If your essential living expenses are less than the IRS standards, you should also point this out in your letter to the Department. If any of your essential living expenses

exceed the IRS standards, you should explain the reasons your expenses are so high (for example, you may need above-average expenses for your car, utilities, or telephone costs for medical reasons).

For help comparing your expenses to the IRS standards, please follow the instructions in the “Optional Extra Step” section at the end of this packet.

SAMPLE FINANCIAL HARDSHIP CLAIM COVER LETTER FOR FINANCIAL BENEFITS OFFSET

Date

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

U.S. Department of Education
Attn.: Federal Offset Unit
P.O. Box 6227
Greenville, TX 75403-5227

Dear Offset Review Unit:

I am writing to request that you suspend offsets from my Social Security payments because I am experiencing economic hardship.

I am 75 years old. My sole source of income is Social Security. Until recently, I was able to supplement my Social Security income with a small amount of money that my husband earned from a part-time job. However, my husband passed away last year. I never worked outside my home and my sole source of income is Social Security survivor's benefits of \$900 per month. This income is not enough to pay my expenses, which are at least \$1,100 per month.

The main reason that I am writing to you now is because my situation has become very severe since my husband died. Because I no longer receive his part-time income, I could not afford my mortgage payments. I therefore lost my home to foreclosure just a few months ago. I am now renting an apartment. It is very important to me to live near my old house because I have lived in this neighborhood for almost 50 years. I tried to find the least expensive rental situation, but it is still \$550 per month.

I also had some medical problems recently. I discovered that I have an acid reflex disorder and have to take medication that costs me \$125 per month because it is not covered by Medicare. Without this medication, I cannot keep down anything that I eat and experience extreme pain and have difficulty breathing.

This leaves me only \$225 each month to pay all of my other expenses, including utilities, transportation, and food. As you will see on the Financial Disclosure Statement, I have to pay over \$150 per month for gas, water, electricity and telephone. That leaves me only \$75 per month for transportation and for my food. I have a very difficult time meeting this budget. I haven't been able to pay my utilities for two months, and recently received a shut-off warning for my electricity. Also, gas and insurance payments for my car are very expensive, but I need the car to visit my doctor and go to the supermarket. I am worried I will have to give up my car because I don't think I will be able to make my insurance payments, and will not be able to afford any type of maintenance if my car has problems.

My monthly expenses are all lower than the IRS monthly allowed expenses. My rent and utilities expenses add up to \$700 per month, which is less than the IRS household and utility standard for my region of \$857 per month. My food is \$150 per month, which is less than the IRS standard of \$300 per month. I spend \$125 per month on medication, which is less than the IRS out-of-pocket health care standard of \$144 per month. And I spend about \$125 per month on gas and car insurance, which is less than the IRS transportation standard of \$295 per month in my city.

I have enclosed a completed Financial Disclosure Statement and copies of all of the following documents to support my request:

1. The Treasury's offset notification letter;
2. A letter that shows how much I receive in Social Security payments;
3. My most recent tax return;
4. The final notice when my house was foreclosed;
5. My rental agreement;
6. My most recent electricity bill and shut-off notice;
7. My most recent bill for water, gas and sewer;
8. My most recent telephone bill;
9. A recent bill for my auto insurance; and
10. A receipt for my monthly medication.

I already cannot make ends meet on my limited income of \$900 per month. If the Department takes any portion of my Social Security, I don't know how I will afford my most basic living expenses including food, utilities, and medication. For this reason I ask that you suspend offsets to my Social Security.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

STEP 4: Copy Documents and Mail Completed Hardship Claim

- 1) Organize your documents: Put together your documents in the following order.
 - Letter;
 - Financial Disclosure Statement; and
 - The supporting documentation of household income, expenses, and exceptional circumstances.
- 2) Copy your documents: Now, make a complete copy of all the documents in the order you arranged them.
- 3) Mail the original hardship claim:
 - Send your letter, the Financial Disclosure Statement with your original signature, and a copy of the supporting documentation to the following address (make sure you keep the originals of the supporting documentation for your own files).
 - Keep a copy of the entire packet that you send, including the letter and Financial Disclosure Statement, for your own records.
 - You should consider sending them by certified mail return receipt requested. In the event the Department misplaces your financial hardship claim, you will then have proof of the dates on which it was sent to and received by the Department.

Send your documents to the address for the Department of Education's Federal Offset Unit provided in your offset notice. As of January 2013, the address is as follows (but is subject to change):

U.S. Department of Education
Federal Offset Unit
P.O. Box 5227
Greenville, TX 75403-5227

OPTIONAL EXTRA STEP: Comparing Your Expenses to the IRS Standards

Although this is not necessary, you may compare your essential living expenses to the IRS standards by filling out the attached Monthly Expenses Comparison Chart as follows:

- (1) Your Expenses: Using the information from your completed Financial Disclosure Statement, enter all your expenses in the middle column.
 - For Row 1, add all your housing and utilities expenses together.
 - For Row 2, add your food and household expenses and clothing expenses together.
 - For Row 3, enter your medical expenses, if any.
 - For Row 4, add all your transportation expenses.

- (2) IRS Living Expense Standards: In the last column, enter the IRS standards applicable to your family and region as follows. The IRS standards are periodically updated, so make sure you check for the most recent numbers on the IRS website.
 - Row 1: Look up the IRS Housing and Utilities standard for your county and state, and for your family size, at <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Local-Standards:-Housing-and-Utilities>. Enter this amount in the right hand column.
 - Row 2: Look up the IRS Food, Clothing and Other Items standard for your family size at <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/National-Standards:-Food,-Clothing-and-Other-Items>. Enter this amount in the right hand column.
 - Row 3: Look up the IRS Out-of-Pocket Health Care Expenses standard for your family size at <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/National-Standards:-Out-of-Pocket-Health-Care>. Enter this amount in the right hand column.
 - Row 4: Look up the IRS Transportation standards at <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Local-Standards:-Transportation>.
 - If you own a car, find the Ownership Costs and Operating Costs for your region. Add these two numbers together and enter into the right hand column.
 - If you take public transportation, enter the Public Transportation standard in the right hand column.

Monthly Expenses Comparison Chart

		YOUR EXPENSES	IRS LIVING EXPENSE STANDARDS
1	Monthly Housing and Utilities		
2	Monthly Food, Household and Clothing Expenses		
3	Monthly Medical Expenses		
4	Monthly Transportation Expenses		