



THE HIGH COST OF LIVING: POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS FOR A MORE AFFORDABLE NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISCAL POLICY INSTITUTE

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CHALLENGES AND COST DRIVERS FROM THE EXPERT PANELS

RURILITY

- Accessing education for all ages, and disconnection from education and workforce for young people
- Housing availability, costs, and suitability
- Challenges to business entrepreneurship, workforce growth, and the “chicken-and-egg” problem
- Higher poverty rates
- Ecological impacts of certain economic activity, with costs to both people and the environment

HEALTH

- High health care costs have reduced access, increased medical debt, and driven up emergency care usage
- Better, but more expensive, health innovation
- Health care consolidation and reorganization is present
- Lack of system transparency and oversight
- Higher costs for prescriptions, particularly specialty drugs
- Underinvestment and workforce shortages have diminished access to primary and preventative care

CAREGIVING

- Need for caregiving impacts the labor force
- Sandwich generation: 1 in 3 caregivers nationally are raising children under 18 while also caring for an adult loved one
- Annual price for two children under 5 in center-based care: About \$30,000
- Annual price for adult care in a nursing facility can cost over \$141,000 for private pay individuals
- Caregiver wages are not competitive
- Costs of caregiving extend beyond monetary

HOUSING

- Housing prices continue to reach record highs, with prices increasing faster in rural communities
- Demographics have impacted availability, with fewer people per household
- Housing construction and permitting has remained behind need
- Regulatory barriers continue to exist
- Financial investment plays a role in affordability

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES AND HIGH COSTS FROM THE EXPERT PANELS

RURALITY

- Strengthen “anchor” institutions and build on what already exists in rural areas
- Coordinate efforts to increase access to goods and services, including external resources for housing
- Reduce risk for businesses and other endeavors, and rethink traditional entrepreneurship
- Focus on cross-cutting, upstream solutions that reduce the cost of housing and child care, support economic inclusion and upward mobility, invest in education, and prevent lead poisoning

HEALTH

- Collaboration and accountability across the system
- Address social determinants of health
- Increase transparency to inform data-driven policy discussions
- Expand consumer assistance and patient navigator services
- Increase investment in primary and preventative care
- Short-term and intermediate solutions to work towards long-term goals

CAREGIVING

- Freedom to use the best arrangement that fits individual and family needs
- Recognizing caregiving roles as professional career options, including professional-level pay
- Steady revenue streams needed to support caregiving
 - Caregiving professionals as well as family caregivers, including respite care
 - Limited capacity and workforce availability sometimes limited ability to draw down available state and federal-level funds

HOUSING

- Various regulatory changes made during 2025 legislative session
- Declines in funding for housing initiatives in State Budget
- Support for those experiencing homelessness remains important
- Addressing lot size requirements and increasing duplexes continue to come up in housing discussions
- Housing initiatives in other states are informative

QUESTIONS AND CONVERSATION

CLOSING REMARKS



**GENE MARTIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Closing Remarks
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