



AFA-CWA Executive Summary of Alaska Flight Attendant Financial Security Survey

AFA recently conducted a survey of Alaska Flight Attendants to gauge their financial security in the face of rising costs and stagnant Flight Attendant pay. Approximately 52% of all Alaska Flight Attendants (n=3,554) completed the survey. The results are sobering.

A significant number of Alaska Flight Attendants experienced notable financial insecurity and stress.

No Financial Safety Net

Highlighting the lack of a financial safety net, 59% of respondents said that they do not regularly have access to \$500 in cash throughout the month and 71% of those responding acknowledged that they do not have ready cash equal to at least 3 months of basic living expenses as an emergency fund. Twenty-five percent of Flight Attendants responded that they overdraw their checking account more than 6 times in a year.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Living Wage Calculator project uses US Department of Health and Human Services' data to calculate a minimum living wage based on costs in individual US cities. Alaska Airlines has 6 Flight Attendant bases - and all of them are among the most expensive cities in the US. When asked if their pay from Alaska was at least equal to the minimum livable wage for their base, a whopping 72% of respondents replied "NO".

The expensive base locations where Flight Attendants must report to work have driven some respondents to experience homelessness and are forced to live out of their cars. Nine percent responded that at some point in the past year, they have experienced homelessness, lived in their car, lived in a shelter, or endured some combination of these circumstances. Over 10% of Flight Attendants reported that they live with their parents/families because they cannot afford rent and 43% replied that they must have multiple roommates to afford housing. Expensive cities drive other Flight Attendants to live far away from their carrier's base city, forcing them to rely on stressful and expensive commuting to work. Over 29% of Flight Attendants indicated that they live over 100 miles from their base airport.

Struggling to Make Ends Meet

Low pay at Alaska has forced many Flight Attendants to rely on government or local assistance to subsidize their inadequate wages. Thirty-seven percent of those responding reported that they currently, or at some point during the past five years and while employed by Alaska, received government assistance such as WIC, SNAP, CAL-FRESH, EBT, visited their local food bank, or relied on family loans or charity assistance.

Since the 70's, being a Flight Attendant has been a career, not just a job. A 20-40 year Flight Attendant is not uncommon in the airline industry. The inadequate pay at Alaska is forcing some Flight Attendants to reconsider their career choice.

Can't Afford to Work at Alaska

An alarming survey take-away: an astounding 79% of those responding report facing financial instability due to Alaska Flight Attendant pay and 30% are thinking about leaving the Inflight department for financial reasons. 19% of Flight Attendants answered that they have already sought new employment, and have pending offers. Whether or not they act on those is unknown.