

# The Little House of Hope: Math Problems

Families moving to the United States as immigrants or refugees have to find a way to pay for a home, utilities for that home, transportation to work, food, clothing, and other things.

Math is not hard for them, but sometimes it is “hard to get it to all add up.” This phrase means that a family’s **income** (what family members make at their jobs) is often less than their **expenses** (all the things they have to pay for).



## Expense: Rent

Esperanza’s family emigrated from Cuba and “looked and looked for a place where they could live that didn’t cost too much money.” Paying rent for a house or apartment was their first and biggest expense.

If Esperanza’s family was settling in Florida today and wanted to rent una casita, they could rent a three-bedroom house for \$2,500 a month. Before the family can move in, the landlord would ask them to pay the first month’s rent, the last month’s rent, and a security deposit of \$2500. **How much money would Mami and Papi need to give the landlord to move in?**

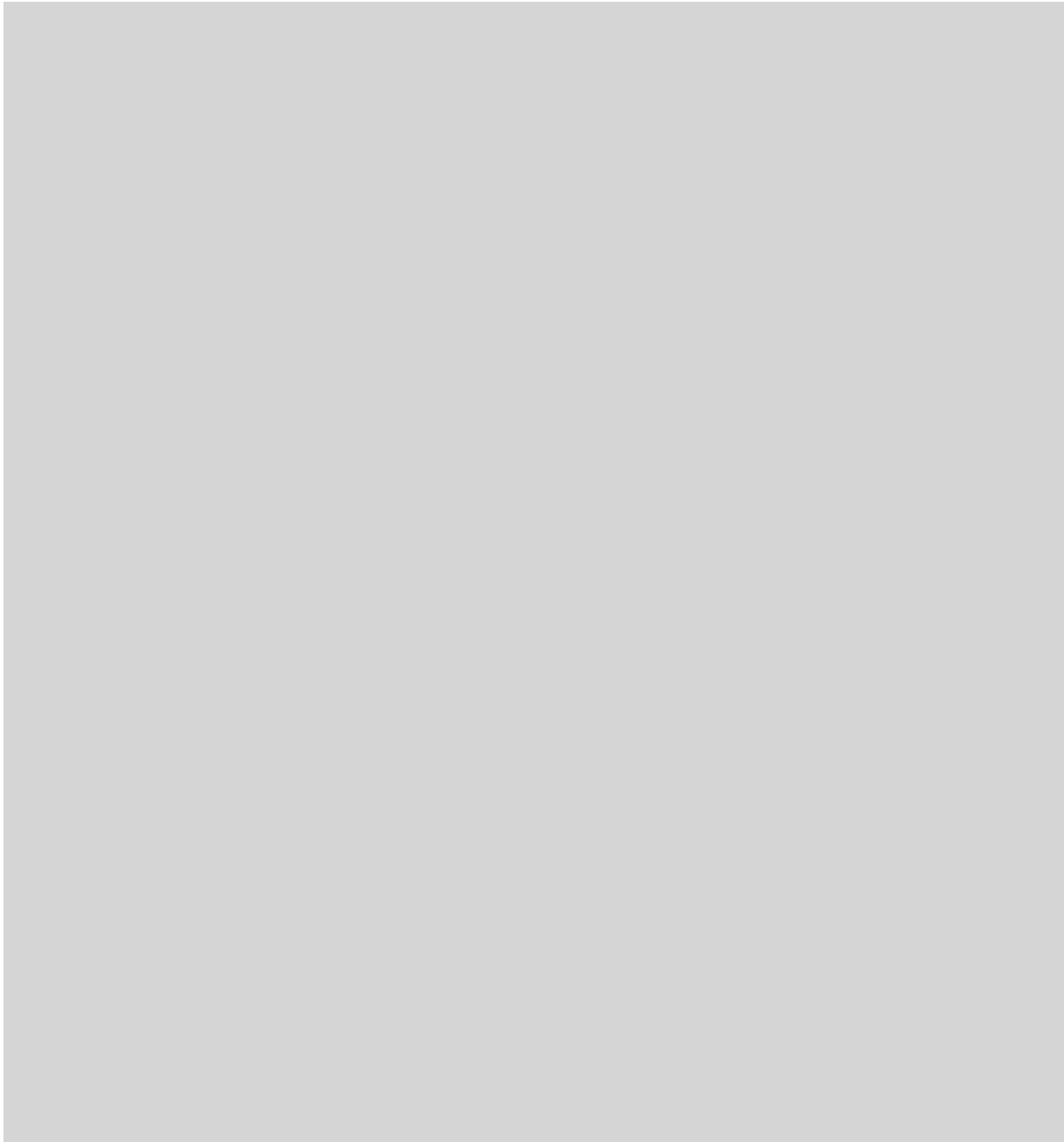
## Income

Mami and Papi took on two jobs to help pay for their little house of hope. If Esperanza’s family was settling in Florida today, their minimum wage (or the lowest amount someone can get paid) to work as a painter, grocery store clerk, or laundromat clerk would be \$11.00 per hour. At the restaurant, Mami may only make \$6.98 an hour. After Mami and Papi’s employers paid taxes, they would make \$4,000 a month (estimated). **After Mami and Papi pay rent, how much money do they have left over?**

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## Expenses: Homework

Ask your family how much they spend each month on expenses after they pay the rent or mortgage. **If Mami and Papi had the same expenses as your family, are they making enough money with their four jobs? Would sharing the house expenses with other people help them pay more of their bills?**



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## Refugees

**Refugee:** A person who is unable to return his or her country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

Some people believe that the US government gives lots of money to resettled refugees and that they receive this money for a long time. In actuality, the longest they get benefits is 8 months.

How much money do refugees receive? You can do the math!

If Esperanza's family had been officially resettled as refugees instead of emigrating on their own, this is the help they would have received from the federal government. **What is the total amount?**

Assistance	Amount Given	How Many Times	Total
Resettlement Funds	\$900.00	1	
Match Funds	\$1050.00	3	
Refugee Cash Assistance	\$611.00	8	
		Total	

Think about all you have learned about a family's expenses and minimum-wage jobs. **Do you think refugee families—who often arrive with nothing but their clothes—should get help from this country for the first 8 months? Tell us why or why not.**