Those Who Were Considered To Be ‘Dirt Poor’ In 1987 Would Be Considered Very Wealthy In 2026

Americans are facing the longest and most painful affordability crisis in our entire history, and young people are being hit the hardest. For many Americans under the age of 40, homeownership is just a dream that will probably never come true. At this point, only workers that make at least six figures can afford to buy a decent home. If you can believe it, the home that Homer Simpson lived in would cost approximately 450,000 dollars today, and the home that was featured on Married With Children would cost approximately 700,000 dollars today. Those families were considered to be poor by the standards of the 1980s, but in 2026 they would be considered to be very wealthy.

Of course just about everything else has become less affordable as well. Purchasing a new vehicle is totally out of reach for most of us, health insurance rates have become utterly absurd, and many of the items that I commonly purchase at the grocery store have doubled or tripled in price since the beginning of this decade. The cost of living has become the number one political issue in the United States, and it didn’t happen by accident.

Some time around the beginning of the decade, something in our system suddenly snapped.

Home prices started going through the roof, and now they are sitting at absolutely ridiculous levels.

Married With Children was a very popular television show that first aired in 1987. The star of the show was a shoe salesman named Al Bundy that made very little money, and he was constantly complaining about how poor he was.

But in 2026 the home that Al Bundy and his family lived in is valued at approximately 700,000 dollars…

I was quite stunned when I came across that post by Sean Davis.

It just shows how far our economy has fallen.

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Another user on X pointed out that even the house that Homer Simpson and his family lived in would now be valued at approximately 450,000 dollars…

In 2026, you would have to be doing really well to be able to afford a house like that.

So much has changed over the past 40 years.

According to the National Association of Realtors, the median price of existing homes in the United States is now $440,660…

> *The median price of existing homes in June was $440,660, up 1.8% from $432,700 a year ago, according to new data from the National Association of Realtors (NAR). Home prices have risen for 36 straight months.*
>
> *"Housing affordability remains low under slowing wage growth and stronger home price growth," Ershang Liang, an economist with PNC Economics Research, said in a report.*

In order to be able to afford such a home, you need to be earning nearly $110,000 a year…

> *Americans still need to earn nearly $110,000 a year to comfortably afford the typical home for sale in the United States, even as housing affordability has shown modest signs of improvement over the past year.*
>
> *A new Redfin report found that a household would need an annual income of $109,796 to purchase the median-priced U.S. home in June 2026 while spending no more than 30% of said income on housing costs.*

If you don’t earn six figures, or if you don’t already own your own home, you are just out of luck in this economy.

Homelessness has been exploding all around us, millions of Americans are now living in their vehicles, and people are creating elaborate homes out of cardboard boxes on the side of the road…

When I was growing up, I don’t remember ever seeing someone sleeping in a vehicle because they didn’t have a home.

But now major cities have created vast parking lots where those that live in their vehicles can park safely at night.

Of course owning a vehicle is certainly not cheap either.

In fact, the average new vehicle in the U.S. now costs almost $50,000…

> *If you’ve seen the headlines this week, you might think buying a new car just got a lot more expensive. According to the latest data from Kelley Blue Book, the average new vehicle transaction price hit $49,353 in February, a 3.4% jump since last year, and one of the bigger annual gains in recent memory.*

I was curious, and so I asked Google what the average new vehicle cost in 1987.

This is what I was told…

- **Domestic Cars:** Averaged about $12,906.

- **Import Cars:** Averaged about $14,459.

- **Entry-Level/Subcompacts:** Budget options like the Chevrolet Sprint or Toyota Tercel started under $7,000 to $8,000.

But just purchasing a vehicle is not the end of it.

You have also got to pay for insurance, repairs and maintenance.

According to Zero Hedge, the typical household in Louisiana now spends 23.2 percent of its income on vehicle expenses each year…

> *Louisiana is the nation’s least affordable state for car ownership, with the typical household spending 23.2% of its income, or $14,894 annually, on vehicle expenses.*

This is what life in America is like in 2026.

And I haven’t even gotten to one of my big pet peeves yet.

I am shocked by how expensive groceries have become, and a new report that was just released indicates that grocery prices are a major concern for 90 percent of the country…

> *Affordability is the “defining challenge” when it comes to economic mobility, according to a new report by the McKinsey Institute for Economic Mobility and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.*

> *The survey of 30,000 Americans across income levels found that 90% of those polled cited groceries and food prices as a top cost concern, even over other key expenses, such as housing and healthcare.*
>
> *"We face a common challenge, and that is the rising cost of living," said John-Paul Julien, a partner at McKinsey & Co. and co-founder of the McKinsey Institute for Economic Mobility. "Although people are experiencing the economy differently, there is this shared feeling that rising costs are making it difficult to get ahead."*

Of course this is just the beginning.

As I discussed earlier this week, food prices are about to go significantly higher.

But when I was in school in the late 1980s, the cost of groceries wasn't even an issue.

Food was extremely inexpensive, and we ate like kings.

Sometimes we forget how good we once had it.

In the late 1980s, you could have had a three bedroom home, two vehicles in the driveway and all the food that you wanted and still be considered "poor".

Today, if you actually have all of those things you are considered to be "wealthy".

Our standard of living has been going down for a long time, and more Americans are falling out of the middle class with each passing day.

Michael Snyder's *new book entitled "10 Prophetic Events That Are Coming Next" is available in paperback and for the Kindle on , and you can subscribe to his Substack newsletter at .*