

Temporary Foreign Workers and Minimum Wage

There are 243 employers in Alberta who have been approved to use the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program to hire workers at \$9.75 an hour – the lowest general minimum wage in Canada.

The list of these 243 employers was obtained by the Alberta Federation of Labour through an *Access to Information* request to the federal government.

Of the 243 employers, the majority are in the food service industry (140 employers, or 58 per cent of total).

Industry	Number of Employers	Percentage of Total
Food Service	140	58 per cent
Agriculture (i.e. nurseries)	75	31 per cent
Hotels	24	10 per cent
Unknown	4	2 per cent
Total	243	100 per cent

Alberta’s general minimum wage will go up to \$9.95 an hour as of September 1, 2013. At that rate, it will remain the lowest general minimum wage in the country.

Living Wage

The Alberta Federation of Labour is urging the government to enact a Living Wage policy, one that allows minimum-wage workers to earn enough to remain at the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) based on a 35 hour work week, 52 weeks a year.

For Alberta, this would be \$14.05 without benefits, or \$12.08 with benefits.¹

Even with the increase to Alberta’s general minimum wage, workers will find themselves below the poverty line (LICO). Workers earning \$9.95 an hour would earn \$18,109 a year before taxes. The Low-Income Cut-Off for a single worker is \$23,298. Thus, a minimum-wage earner in Alberta earns \$5,189 less than the so-called poverty line.

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¹ Figures calculated using Statistics Canada’s Low-Income Cut-Off for a single wage earner with no dependents working 35 hours/week, 52 weeks a year.