



The Living Wage for Local Governments



“A living wage will ensure that families of all backgrounds can afford to live and work in Vancouver, making our neighbourhoods healthier and stronger.”

-Gregor Robertson,
former Mayor of Vancouver

Why a living wage?

Tens of thousands of working families live in poverty in BC

One in four employed British Columbians have jobs that don't pay enough to live on, and one in five BC children are growing up in poverty. The majority of these children live in families with working parents, including many with at least one parent who works full-time all year.

Local governments pay the price for the low-wage sector

When children live in poverty, or when parents must work multiple jobs to stay afloat and end up with little time with their families, all of society pays the price. It is the local governments - including municipalities, unincorporated communities and band councils - and their school boards that must consequently pay for additional social services and educational resources. Working poverty has enormous fiscal implications for social programs, health care costs, education, employment, and criminality.

Local governments can make a difference

As a local government, you are a significant employer in your community. In addition to employing many direct staff, local governments often utilize contractors for work such as food services, outdoor work and cleaning services - vulnerable sectors that usually come with lower wages. By making a commitment to ensure your staff and contractors are paid a living wage, local governments can become community champions and cause a positive ripple effect through the local economy.

What is a living wage?

A living wage is the hourly amount that each of two parents, both working full time, would need in order to afford basic expenses in their community. The living wage calculation is modest and includes costs like food, clothing, rent, and child care. Living wages for communities across BC are re-calculated annually by the Living Wage for Families Campaign and our local partners.

Paying a living wage is a voluntary action that employers, including local governments, can take to invest in the long-term health and prosperity of your community.

59 percent of British Columbians say that governments should do more to support the poor and those in economic trouble.

Angus Reid Institute poll,
August 2018

To find your local living wage, visit www.livingwageforfamilies.ca.

What is a Living Wage Employer?

Living Wage Employers commit to paying their staff and contractors their local living wage each year. They also mandate that service providers on major contracts pay their staff a living wage in turn.

While your living wage policy should apply to as many workers as possible, there are cases in which paying a living wage is not feasible. Local governments may include some exemptions in their living wage policy, such as:

- Casual employment contracts of fewer than 120 hours of work per year.
- Emergency or non-recurring repairs.
- Multiple small contracts that fall below a specified spend threshold, dependent on the size of your budget.
- Services performed by organizations that lease or rent your property.
- Contracts and collective agreements already in place: when the contract/collective agreement is next due for renegotiation, include a living wage clause at that point.

For more information on specific criteria for local governments, contact us.

The certification process for local governments

- 1.** Learn about the living wage. Visit www.livingwageforfamilies.ca for more information, and contact us to discuss your specific community.
- 2.** Pass a motion for your staff to prepare a full report on the costs and implications of implementing a living wage policy. Before making any decisions, it's important for staff, elected officials, and your constituents to understand what a living wage policy would mean for your community.
- 3.** When your staff submit their report, vote on moving forward with becoming a Living Wage Employer.
- 4.** Once you've decided to become a Living Wage Employer, have your staff prepare your living wage policy and implementation plan, and apply to the Living Wage for Families Campaign for certification.

Throughout the process, the Living Wage for Families Campaign can answer questions, provide data and information for your staff, and offer examples from other local governments that have already become Living Wage Employers.

**Ready to become a Living Wage Employer?
Contact us.**

604.975.3347

info@livingwageforfamilies.ca

www.livingwageforfamilies.ca

"We want to ensure that our employees, as well as those employees working for our contractors, are receiving a wage that reflects the real costs associated with living in the region."

*-Mayor Ryan Windsor,
District of Central Saanich*

