



Working in a Living Wage Municipality

“We value our employees, and want to pay what is fair to workers and families in the region. The Living Wage is studied and calculated which was central to our decision to participate”.

- Mattress Recycling, Hope



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 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.

Municipal living wage policies

What does it mean when your local government becomes a Living Wage Employer?

Municipal living wage policies in British Columbia are **not** ordinances. When a local government passes a living wage policy, it applies only to their own staff and contractors, not to all employers who operate within their district.

However, Living Wage Employers must also ensure that any sub-contractors or service providers on major contracts pay their staff the living wage in turn. This means that in the bidding process for contracts that fall under the government’s living wage policy, only bids from employers who pay a living wage on that project will be considered. If you do contract work or have a partnership with your local government, you may be impacted.

Each local government’s policy will differ slightly, so check with your own government. In general, the following conditions may apply in your jurisdiction:

- The living wage policy usually applies to work done on any local government property, including buildings, streets, and sidewalks.
- Contracts of at least 120 hours of work per year, and/or contracts totalling above a specific annual spend threshold, will be included in the living wage policy. See your local government’s policy for more details.
- Your government’s policy will state the date at which it becomes effective. Contracts entered into from that point on will be affected.
- For contracts and collective agreements already in place, a living wage clause will only be included when the contract is next due for renegotiation or renewal - no immediate changes are necessary.
- Non-profits, social enterprises, and other community organizations who rent or lease space from the local government will likely be exempt from the policy.

Living Wage Employers pay 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.

Opportunities in a living wage municipality

If your local government has become a Living Wage Employer, consider what opportunities that may open up for you.

Perhaps you can secure contracts with the government if you also pay a living wage - see above for more information. Or, perhaps you can capitalize on your community's support for fair wages by implementing your own living wage policy and communicating it to your customers. There is growing consumer demand for ethical consumption, and people like to support local businesses they feel good about.

"We feel it is important to employ and retain quality staff in order to grow our business and our community."

-Graydon Security, Quesnel

Do I need to certify as a Living Wage Employer?

If you are a contractor or service provider looking to secure work with your local government, you do not need to certify as a Living Wage Employer. If you pay a living wage to your staff and can meet the requirements of your government's living wage policy, you will still be considered in the tenders for which you apply.

However, certifying as a Living Wage Employer provides an extra level of credibility to your bid. Certification is an independent, third-party verification from the Living Wage for Families Campaign. Becoming certified means you have applied to the Living Wage for Families Campaign and been approved as meeting the Living Wage program requirements.

To be a Living Wage Employer, you must pay your staff and contractors at least your regional living wage per hour. Workers must receive the living wage through a combination of their base wage and/or the value of non-mandatory benefits you may offer. The Living Wage for Families Campaign has an online benefits calculator to help you determine how the living wage can work for you.

Applying to be a Living Wage Employer involves preparing either a short application form or an implementation plan, depending on the size of your company. Contact the Living Wage for Families Campaign for more information.

"The living wage has had such an incredible impact on our organization. Over the past year alone we have seen drastic decreases in absenteeism, turnover, and recruitment costs and, at the same time, tangible increases in morale, productivity, and the overall strength of our team."

-Goodbye Graffiti, Vancouver



"I believe that people should be paid a good wage for good work. Our guys all work extremely hard for us. Their work is so dangerous, and I want them to be thinking about the work they're doing, not stressing about whether they'll make the rent this month."

-Precision Tree Services Ltd, Comox

Contact us to learn more.
www.livingwageforfamilies.ca