



Media Release

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Living wage to increase in North Central British Columbia

(Prince George) The cost of raising a family in British Columbia increased slightly from 2017 to 2018. And if it hadn't been for reductions in Medical Service Plan premiums and child care costs, the increase would have been higher, says the Living Wage for Families Campaign.

A \$16.51 hourly wage is needed to cover the costs of raising a family in North Central British Columbia [Prince George, Quesnel, Vanderhoof, Fort St. James], up from is \$16.39 per hour in 2017. This is the hourly wage that two working parents with two young children must earn to meet their basic expenses (including rent, child care, food and transportation), once government taxes, credits, deductions and subsidies have been taken into account. The cost is calculated annually by Integrus Credit Union in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC office and the Living Wage for Families Campaign.

Living wage rates are also increasing across BC: Capital Regional District (\$20.50), Revelstoke (\$19.37), District 69 [Parksville-Qualicum] (\$17.02), Kamloops (\$17.31), Powell River (\$17.15), Metro Vancouver (\$20.91), Comox Valley (\$16.59) and the Fraser Valley (\$17.40). Living wage reports for these areas were also released today.

Child care and transportation are the two biggest costs in the living wage calculation in North Central British Columbia. Over the last year, transportation has increased \$65 per month, a whopping 8.01 per cent increase. This cost increase does not bode well for low income families in North Central BC, especially with the discontinuation of Greyhound services in the north.

Family costs would have been even higher if it wasn't for two substantial policy interventions by the provincial government: a 50 per cent reduction to MSP premiums and the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, implemented April 1 and will result in savings of \$900 this year for parents with children between three and five years if their child care provider opts into the program.

"Integrus pays the Living Wage for the benefit of our people and our local/regional economy," says Alison Hoskins, CEO of Integrus Credit Union. "By paying our staff and contractors the Living Wage, we reduce poverty while promoting financial well-being and economic inclusion. The Living Wage is another path for Integrus to realise our commitment to living our values as a leading financial cooperative."

"Good public policy can positively affect the lives of families," says Cori Ramsay, Communications Officer for Integrus Credit Union. "However, it is clear that employer action and paying living wages, can have an immediate effect on low income families

living in poverty.” She continues: “A recent study by Northern Health showed that people who are food insecure use up to 120% more healthcare dollars than those who are food secure. We all pay for poverty in the long run and paying living wages – giving low income families the ability to live a healthier lifestyle – could have a drastic effect on our tax system.”

Over 110 companies and organizations across BC, employing more than 18,000 workers and covering many thousands more contracted service workers, have been certified as Living Wage Employers. These include Integris Credit Union, HUU-ay-aht First Nations, Vancity, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, the City of Quesnel, the City of Port Coquitlam, Urban Solar and PARC Retirement Living. In 2016, the City of Quesnel certified as a Living Wage Employer, and eight other local governments in BC have living wage policies.

Working poverty is a Canada-wide issue. Over 50 communities across the country, including 20 in BC, have active living wage campaigns and are advocating to improve quality of life for low-wage workers.

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www.livingwageforfamilies.ca

Background:

Living Wages across BC

Community	Living Wage	Year Calculated
Metro Vancouver	\$20.91	2018
Victoria (Capital Regional District)	\$20.50	2018
Revelstoke	\$19.37	2018
Fraser Valley	\$17.40	2018
Kamloops	\$17.31	2018
Powell River	\$17.15	2018
Parksville/Qualicum (District 69)	\$17.02	2018
Comox Valley	\$16.59	2018
North Central BC (Prince George, Quesnel)	\$16.51	2018
Clayoquot Sound	\$20.11	2017
Cowichan Region	\$19.05	2017
North East BC (Dawson Creek, Chetwyn, Tumbler Ridge)	\$18.29	2017

Columbia Valley	\$18.25	2017
Port Alberni/Huu-ay-aht First Nations	\$17.56	2017
Nelson	\$18.42	2016
Lower Columbia Region	\$18.21	2016
100 Mile House	\$17.45	2016