



Clayoquot Sound and Powell River release living wages for 2019 — BC's child care investments still have major impact —

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(Clayoquot Sound and Powell River) Living wage rates for Clayoquot Sound and Powell River were released today and are both lower this year than when they were previously calculated. This aligns with the living wages for communities across BC that were released earlier this year and show that the provincial government's investments into child care are continuing to have an impact.

The living wage calculations for these two communities decreased significantly this year according to the Living Wage for Families Campaign and their local partners, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and PREP Community Programs. Even though costs continue to increase steeply for rent and other basic necessities, the cost of living for families with children is lower in 2019 thanks to the provincial government's child care policies.

The living wage is the hourly amount that each of 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 are taken into account.

The 2019 living wage for Clayoquot Sound is \$19.63 per hour, down from \$20.11 when it was last calculated in 2017. This is now the highest living wage in the province this year. The 2019 living wage for Powell River is \$16.31 per hour, down from \$17.16 in 2018.

The Province's investments in child care are reducing out-of-pocket costs for BC families by thousands of dollars this year. In Clayoquot Sound, the living wage family saves a total of \$11,736 on their child care expenses, a 66% reduction compared to 2017. In Powell River, the family saves \$8,241 on child care, which is a 47% reduction compared to 2018. These savings come from two programs: the income-tested Affordable Child Care Benefit and the universal Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.

"We're pleased to see a positive impact for families in the Powell River area, thanks to the BC government's investments in child care," says Stuart Clark, Executive Director of PREP Community Programs. "At the same time, we continue to see living expenses increase across the board, particularly in housing, and we call on the province to continue their focus on making life more affordable for families and individuals in B.C."

Without BC's new child care investments, both of these living wages would have increased considerably. The living wage in Clayoquot Sound would have been \$22.44 this year without these child care investments – a nearly 12% increase from 2017 – and the living wage in Powell River would have been \$19.34, an increase of over 13% from 2018. Both of these increases would have been proportionally much higher than even that of Metro Vancouver, in which the living wage this year would have been 7.4% higher if not for the Province's child care investments.

Availability also remains an issue in many BC communities. Low vacancy rates – especially for family housing – and long wait lists for licensed child care spaces prevent many BC families from fully benefiting from the Province’s investments.

"The provincial government's investments in child care have greatly improved affordability and quality of life for families in Clayoquot Sound, however many local families cannot access licensed child care services, including after-school care, due to lack of spaces," states Rebecca Hurwitz, Executive Director of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT), "as a community foundation and UNESCO Biosphere Region working towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the CBT is committed to calculating the living wage as a means of supporting a regional conversation about affordability and quality of life."

The Living Wage for Families Campaign previously released living wages for twelve more communities across BC on May 1, 2019. These range from \$14.03 in the North Central Region to \$19.50 in Metro Vancouver.

"These two new living wage rates are in line with the reductions we’ve seen in the rest of our calculations this year," says Halena Seiferling, Living Wage for Families Campaign Organizer. "This shows again that the BC government’s child care investments are a major win for families with children, as working parents will have an easier time meeting their basic needs. We continue to call on the provincial government to make similar investments into public services that all families can benefit from."

The living wage for Metro Vancouver and the living wage methodology for BC are calculated annually in *Working for a Living Wage: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Metro Vancouver*, a report published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives BC office, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition and the Living Wage for Families Campaign. Over 150 companies and organizations in 18 BC communities—employing nearly 22,000 workers and covering many thousands more contracted service workers—have been certified as Living Wage Employers over the past ten years.

Working poverty is a Canada-wide issue. Over 50 communities across the country, including the 18 in BC, have living wage campaigns and are advocating to improve quality of life for low-wage workers.

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For interviews, contact:

- Faye Missar, Program Coordinator, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Clayoquot Sound, 250-725-2219
- Stuart Clark, Executive Director, PREP Community Programs, Powell River, 604-485-2004
- Halena Seiferling, Campaign Organizer, Living Wage for Families Campaign, 604-975-3347

Background:

Living Wages across BC

Community	Living Wage	Year Calculated
Clayoquot Sound	\$19.63	2019
Metro Vancouver	\$19.50	2019
Greater Victoria	\$19.39	2019

Revelstoke	\$18.90	2019
Greater Trail	\$18.83	2019
Nelson	\$18.46	2019
Powell River	\$16.31	2019
Columbia Valley	\$15.92	2019
Parksville-Qualicum	\$15.81	2019
Fraser Valley	\$15.54	2019
Comox Valley	\$15.28	2019
Cranbrook	\$14.38	2019
Kamloops	\$14.38	2019
North Central Region	\$14.03	2019

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