



How to calculate a Living wage
How to promote a Living Wage Campaign
More sources, resources and general help
 In closing
Products or Services.....
Registration Form



Northern Health in partnership

Please note the material presented here is summarize the excellent presentations provided on the first of the Citizenship Webinars. Please visit the BC Healthy Communities website at: www.bchealthycommunities to view the material in full.

BC Living Wage Project – Seth Klein, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

*Role of Citizens in a Living Wage – Michael McCarthy
First Call, A Living Wage for Families*

*New Westminister Living Wage Campaign – Jaimie McCallum
New Westminister City Council*

The Northern Context: Dawn Hemingway – University of Northern British Columbia School of Social Work

Citizens Series on Health webinars to provide affordable and accessible learning opportunities. The series brings together knowledgeable speakers on topics of interest to northern residents. This unique blend of technology, passionate interest and desire to learn will, we hope, help further the work of building healthy, resilient northern communities. We invite you to join us on this exciting journey of mutual discovery.

Webinar #1: The Living Wage

"Work should provide a way out of the prison of poverty, not condemn you to it."

The living wage is an idea whose time has come. Abolishment of slavery, marketing of green products and fair trade were scoffed at in the past as impossible and profit destroying, but are now commonly accepted as important markers of what we care about as a society. In the same way, the living wage actually has the capacity to

further meet both economic and social objectives. A living wage employer can be branded as attractive in the face of an increasingly competitive market for workers. Communities with living wage policies can position themselves as attractive and engaging to current and potential residents. Recipients of a living wage can inject healthy consumerism into the local economy. The result of the living wage ensures families can afford to buy the things they need to sustain themselves and



determinant of health

Poverty reduces life expectancy, increases susceptibility to disease in later life and impedes the normal development of children. In turn, other key determinants of health are affected by income levels. Access to educational or recreation opportunities that might help improve life circumstances, for example, can be helped or hindered by how much income is available to spend on them.

The living wage lessens the effects of these determinants. Providing working families with a living wage:

- ⊗ promotes social inclusion
- ⊗ supports healthy child development
- ⊗ promotes gender equality
- ⊗ reduces family stress
- ⊗ provides a conservative, reasonable estimate of the costs to live in a given area
- ⊗ engenders significant and wide ranging community support
- ⊗ is a vehicle for promoting the benefits of social policy such as childcare



$$\text{Annual Family Expenses} = \text{Income from Employment (Living Wage)} + \text{Income from Government Transfers: CCTB, UCCB, GST, Child Care Subsidy} - \text{EI Premiums, CPP Premiums, Federal Taxes, Provincial Taxes}$$

The result is expressed as an hourly wage rate that is required to meet the living wage need in a given.

Some work is required – you will need to know the local costs for the things that make up the widely accepted annual family expenses:

- Food
- Clothing & Footwear
- Shelter (*Shelter = Rent + Utilities + Telephone + Content Insurance*)
- Childcare (*2 children, 1 for before and after school care and 1 for full-time daycare*)
- Transportation
- Other (*personal care, household needs, furniture, school supplies and very modest levels of reading materials, recreation, entertainment, internet, cable, and family vacation*)
- Medical Expenses (*MSP and Non MSP Covered Health Care Expenses*)
- Parent Education (*tuition, textbooks and student fees for two 3 credit courses*).
- Contingency Amount (*unexpected expenses such as being away from work to care for a family member.*

The Living Wage in Northern B

We know there are specific issues for northern BC that affect living wage calculations. We have a relatively small population covering a vast geographic area, a rugged terrain, harsh weather and long distances between communities. While hourly wages may be quite low in some areas, there are increased costs in northern living created by the cost of travel and fuel (due to limited public transportation the private vehicle is a necessity), reduced access to necessities such as food, clothing, health and social services. The harsh climate also increases costs for heating, car and house maintenance costs, winter clothing. There is a “Digital Divide,” with northerners having less access to internet, cable, telephone in very remote areas. The importance of the living wage takes such factors into account. A simple justice of wages that recognize northern realities and diversity of our communities, instead of imposing low standards, will appeal to many northerners. This is especially true since many northerners view their region as the generator of much of BC’s wealth without seeing much return of that wealth that they helped build.

A living wage could positively impact the north by:

1. Alleviating effects of the boom/bust economy
 - ⊗ Evening out the spikes of feast or famine by providing reasonably paid jobs for those in resource and other sectors
 - ⊗ Spouse getting living wage can cushion individual loss to other spouse
 - ⊗ Living wage could ensure that wages of employees and job programs are adequate to cushion

"A living wage could go a long way in redressing the determinants of health in Northern BC"

How to promote a Living

Wage Campaign in your community

The primary target of the Living Wage Campaign is employers, to encourage them to pledge to be living wage employers and to require that any contracts awarded by their businesses should also be awarded to living wage employers.

What can you do?

1. **Trust yourself**
 - a. If you are reading this, then you are a leader and thinker. Be prepared to speak up on behalf of the living wage.
2. **Prepare yourself**
 - a. Be sure you understand the concept and can speak to the issues.
3. **Include others**
 - a. Be sure other local leaders and organizations are informed and educated on the issue.
4. **Work with others**

7. **Presentation to local council**
 - a. Make sure the council understands the benefits for local government and other implications.
8. **General Public**
 - a. Put the idea forward in local venues: editor, workplace discussions, union elected officials.

More resources on the Living

There are some good resources, including a calculation spreadsheet on the Centre for Policy Alternatives web <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/livingwage2010>

Also visit www.livingwageforfamilies.ca

More webinars to come

Watch for our next webinars!!

Jan 13, 2011. (1:30pm-3:30pm PST.) *Healthier Workplaces: Employers As Partners In Health*

Feb 17, 2011. (1:30pm-3:30pm PST.) *Have A Healthier Neighbourhood: Neighbours Contribute To Better Health*

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

For more information or to register, please contact bchc@bchealthycommunities.ca or (250)356-0876.



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