

Myth: Companies will go elsewhere if the city has a living wage policy.

Fact: The quality of life and the ability to attract a knowledgeable workforce are the main considerations for companies when they decide where to locate. Strong communities and good health, education and public services attract good employers.

Also many companies that can relocate pay far in excess of the living wage.

Many low-wage businesses are actually "support" businesses like restaurants, cleaning companies and retail outlets with little ability and wish to relocate.

It is possible to behave ethically, and pay the Living Wage, while working to earn a profit. It makes sense as a business strategy since it creates goodwill among customers, employees and the community. Trying to increase profits by being unethical or ignoring such concerns will eventually result in increased cost and zero short-term benefit.

Ian Tew, Head of Workplace at KPMG
(London, UK)

What you can do

- Start a living wage campaign in your community/workplace
- Arrange for us to give a talk or workshop on the living wage
- Consider becoming a living wage employer
- Publically endorse our campaign
- Urge your municipal government to pass a living wage by-law
- Advocate to government for policy changes to increase supports to low-income earners and enhance public services that improve our quality of life. (e.g. more affordable housing)

Who we are

The Living Wage for Families Campaign is guided by an Advisory Committee of representatives from community organizations and other partners and supporters in Metro Vancouver including: BC ACORN, BC Government & Service Employees Union, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Hospital Employees Union, MOSAIC- Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities, SHARE - Shareholder Association for Research & Education, Single Parents on Campus-UBC, United Food and Commercial Workers 1518, Vancity and Citizens Bank of Canada, Vancouver and District Labour Council, Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council.

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- BC has the highest child poverty rate in Canada
- The majority of BC's poor children live in families where at least one person has a full-time job

Something can be done!

In communities across Metro Vancouver individuals and organizations are getting together to expose the injustice of so many people working for poverty pay.

They are demanding governments and businesses pay a **Living Wage** – a just wage that provides dignity and a decent standard of living for families.

Families have a right to raise their children in dignity.

Work should lift you out of poverty,
not keep you there

What is a Living Wage?

Families who work for low wages face impossible choices — buy food or heat the house, feed the children or pay the rent. The result can be spiralling debt, constant anxiety and long-term health problems. In many cases it means that the adults in the family are working long hours, often at two or three jobs, just to pay for basic necessities. They have little time to spend with their family, much less to help their children with school work or participate in community activities.

Earning a living wage = Escape from poverty

A living wage is the hourly rate of pay that enables wage earners living in a household to:

- Feed, clothe & provide shelter for their family
- Promote healthy child development
- Participate in activities that are an ordinary part of life in the community
- Avoid the chronic stress of living in poverty

The living wage is high enough that families can weather a temporary crisis without falling into poverty, but very modest compared to community standards. So it does not include:

- Saving for retirement
- Owning a home
- Debt servicing
- Saving for children's future education

The Living wage is different from the minimum wage, which is the legislated minimum set by the provincial government. The living wage calls on employers to meet a higher standard for both their direct staff and major contractors— it reflects what people need to support their families based on the actual costs of living in a specific community.

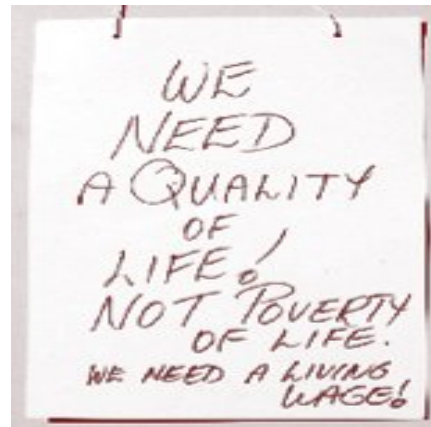
Benefits of a Living Wage

For Families

Reduced stress
Improved Health
Greater Economic Self-Sufficiency
Fewer trips to food banks
More independence
Less reliance on pay day loan companies

For Community

More time for parents to participate in their community
Increased tax base to expand & improve public services
Reduced health & social services costs



For Employers

Less employee turnover, and lower recruitment/training costs
More local buying power for local businesses
Increased productivity
Recognition as a socially responsible employer

Living Wage Truths

Myth: Increasing wages will hurt business.

Fact: Paying a living wage expands economic activity. Higher pay results in increased productivity by making jobs more desirable to both get and to keep, thereby reducing recruitment, and training costs associated with high turnover.

Myth: Passing a living wage policy is bad for the local economy; small employers will close.

Fact: A living wage policy is good for the local economy. Small businesses draw their customers from the local community. Higher incomes allow families to purchase more goods and services in their neighbourhoods.

Myth: Tax credits and better educational opportunities are better ways to help the low-wage workers.

Fact: Income supplements, accessible education and other supports for families are important parts of creating healthy communities. But employers must do their part and pay a decent wage for hard-earned work; otherwise the taxpayer is left to subsidize their wage bill.

Myth: If wages increase, the cost of everything else will go up.

Fact: Costs rise all the time without workers receiving a pay increase. Wages are just one of many factors that make up the cost of an item. Even in labour intensive sectors such as restaurants, increases in the minimum wage had a tiny impact on prices with no loss in business.