



Living Wage for Families Campaign Submission: the BC Fair Wages Commission

By Deanna Ogle, Campaign Organizer

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The Living Wage for Families Campaign advocates for employers to sign on to pay a living wage to all direct and indirect employees full and part-time, seasonal, temporary, contract, and casual workers and their families. Since 2008, we have partnered with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives to calculate 20 communities across BC in calculating a local living wage.

The living wage is a bare bones calculation that, through a methodology established in consultation with academic employers and low-wage workers, determines how much a family needs to earn to meet their expenses in a particular region. Living wages across BC vary from \$10.62/hour in the lowest municipality to \$19.77 in Powellton to \$15.99 in the Fraser Valley. There is no municipality in BC that has a living wage above the minimum of \$11.50/hour.

Impact of low-

Low wages impact all of us. This ranges from the well documented health impacts of poverty to the community loss that occurs when workers are working multiple jobs to make ends meet. Importantly for the Living Wage Commission, many low-wage workers are not able to participate in consultations

Delia Tanza works at Capilano University. She is employed by the cleaning company contracted by the university. Her work schedule is as follows:

3 jobs. I work in the mornings, I work here Capilano University at night, and I work Saturday

There is no time in Delia’s schedule to stay up-to-date on community consultations and without working on an hour minimum wage proposal that would address food bank demand for the Fair Wage Commission Consultations. Delia’s schedule is not uncommon for low-wage workers.

We know that increasing wages changes the story for families. The Health Officer of Canada indicates that of the development, 80% improve as family income increase work can be better health insurance to the living wage. Gary is a Shelver at the Vancouver Public Library a part-time job. As a result of the Vancouver Public Library part-time job, Gary identified that he is “no longer in the ‘hunger for food’.”² has purchased new shoes and a winter coat with his increased wages. Shoes and winter coats are not luxury items but when earning low wages there is no ability to save for larger seasonal purchases.

Individuals working full-time full-time wage. This is compounded for lone-parents and two-parent families. Of course, depth of poverty also matters: a family is not significantly better off if they are barely above the poverty line or slightly over the minimum wage.

Measure³ We need to ensure that families who are earning low wages are at the very least, not living in poverty. We support the Fair Wage Commission to continue to address the issue of working parents.

Recommendation:

September 2019 with the following timeline:
 September 2018: \$14/hour minimum wage (Increase of \$2.65/hour)
 January 2019: \$15/hour minimum wage (Increase of \$1/hour)

Living Wage Certification

over 100 Living Wage employers. No employer is certified as a Living Wage Employer by the Living Wage for Families Campaign when wage and establish a process to ensure that contracted workers will also earn a living wage as the contracts are tendered and awarded. The Fair Wage Commission, through the Living Wage for Families Campaign, helps in developing employer policies. This ensures that the Living Wage for Families Campaign is able to balance the aspirational poverty reduction goals with the practical realities of implementation.

² Laurie G. (2017, December 2). Twitter. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/laurieg/status/937407016730465920>

³ First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. (2017). 2017 BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. Vancouver, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition.

Although there are a few Living Wage Employers with over 1,000 staff, 60% of employers certified by the Living Wage for Families Campaign have less than 50 staff. These employers see paying living wage as only part of what makes them a successful business. Employers who do with living wage and efficiency. It is much easier to get a full day work out of staff when they are't still learning the tasks you require them do. This is true of all work. No matter the level

A common wage floor allows employers to address the wage remaining competitive within an industry.

Recommendation:

Remove all exemptions to the minimum wage.

A Path Forward

One of the goals of the Fair Wages Commission is to engage in when we are invited to present to

what individuals face in their communities. Wages many people in our communities, students and professionals there has never been a connection between the two lists. Wages have become detached from the cost of living in a community in practice and in our thinking.

There is a need to de-politicize increases to the minimum wage and provide an evidence-transparent process for moving forward. Attaching increases to the minimum wage to real costs that individuals face in their communities can begin to reattach the conversation of how employers with their employees in their communities. This is a conversation that we need to have.

We would recommend that the fair wages commission remain as an independent method to setting minimum wages. This would be similar to the commission in the UK, Australia and Germany. The commission in the UK also has the ability to investigate particular sectors to ensure that minimum wage regulations are being applied. This would be particularly valuable in sectors that are vulnerable to low pay abuses.

Recommendations:

- 1. Establish a permanent Fair Wages Commission
- 2. Attach future increases to the minimum wage to the cost of living.