

NEWS RELEASE

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COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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Living wage rises again in 2015; federal policies leave families struggling to cover basics

(Victoria) A report released today finds that the wage needed to cover the costs of raising a family in Greater Victoria is \$20.05 per hour. This is the 2015 Greater Victoria living wage rate, 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 2015 Greater Victoria living wage rose by \$1.12 from the 2014 figure of \$18.93/hour, according to [Working for a Living Wage in Greater Victoria: 2015 Update](#), a report published by the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. This represents an increase of 5.9%, much higher than the general inflation rate of 1% for Victoria.

Living wage rates have also risen faster than inflation for the Fraser Valley and for Metro Vancouver, to \$17.27 and \$20.68 respectively, where reports were also released today.

“The Greater Victoria living wage rate demonstrates what many families already know: costs are increasing at a rate much faster than any increases in wages,” says Deanna Ogle, the campaign organizer with the Living Wage for Families Campaign. “Thanks to the combination of a low-wage economy and lack of government supports, many families are struggling to make ends meet.”

Child care and shelter costs are the two biggest drivers of the living wage increase. Child care costs rose by \$83 per month, while rent costs were up by \$90 per month.

“A \$20.05 hourly living wage rate may seem high to some, but it is important to remember that this wage rate reflects the real cost of living for families. And it also reflects a failure of public policy to ensure affordability and a decent quality of life for all families,” says Marika Albert, Research Manager for the Community Social Planning Council and author of the report.

“Investing in universal affordable child care would significantly reduce the costs of raising a family and lower the living wage. For example, the proposed \$10/Day Child Care Plan would reduce the Greater Victoria living wage by \$3.61 per hour, bringing it to \$16.44. And a cross-

Canada affordable child care system would cost about the same as what the federal government is planning to spend on income splitting and the Universal Child Care Benefit, policies which offer little benefit to low- and middle-income families and create no new child care spaces.”

One in five children in BC is poor, and BC is the last province in Canada without a poverty reduction strategy. The story of child poverty is very much a story of low wages. In 2011 (the last year for which we have data), one out of every three poor children (32%) lived in families where at least one adult had a full-time, full-year job and a majority lived in families with some paid work (part-year or part-time).

Thirty-seven organizations in Metro Vancouver, employing over 6,000 workers and covering many thousand more contracted service workers, have been certified as Living Wage Employers. These include SAP-Vancouver, Vancity, the Canadian Cancer Society – BC and Yukon Division, the City of New Westminster and Café Etico.

Working poverty is a Canada-wide issue. Thirty-seven communities across the country, including 18 in BC, have calculated their local living wages and are campaigning to improve quality of life for low-wage workers.

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Resources:

- Living Wage Report: [Working for a Living Wage Report – 2015 Update](#)
- Living Wage for Families Campaign website: www.livingwageforfamilies.ca
- Living Wage Calculator: <http://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca/employers/living-wage-calculator/>

For interviews contact:

Mary Katharine Ross, Communications Officer
250-383-6166 ext 100 | MK@CommunityCouncil.ca

The Community Social Planning Council is the leading independent, non-partisan, and knowledgeable voice on socio-economic issues in BC's Capital region; it fosters social innovation and integrated action aimed at social, economic and environmental conditions and to help create sustainable communities.
