



living wage
for families campaign



COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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Media Release

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BC families face increasing child care and housing costs

(Victoria) A report released today finds that the wage needed to cover the costs of raising a family in Greater Victoria is \$20.01 per hour. This is the 2017 Greater Victoria living wage, 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. This is a decrease of only one cent from the 2016 figure of \$20.02/hour.

Cost of living continues to increase in the Greater Victoria region, while social policy demonstrates its ability to offset increasing expenses and assist families who are struggling to make ends meet.

Child care and housing continue to be the two biggest costs in the living wage calculation. Child care rose by \$17.83 per month, while median rent was up by \$75 leading to an increased annual expense of \$214 and \$900 for childcare and rent respectively. The overall increase in expenses was 2.6%.

Consistent with the Living Wage for Families Campaign throughout the province, this year, for the first time, the calculation has included two cell phones as well as an internet connection, reflecting the fact that more Canadians now have mobile phones than land lines and more families have internet connections at home.

The Canada Child Benefit, a policy introduced by the federal government in July of 2016, was substantial enough to offset significant cost increases for families.

For the second year in a row there continues to be decreases to living wage rates in the Capital Regional District (\$20.01), Revelstoke (\$18.77), North East (Dawson Creek, Chetwyn, Tumbler Ridge) (\$18.29) District 69 (Parksville-Qualicum) (\$16.44), Kamloops (\$16.90), Central Interior (Prince George and Quesnel) (\$16.39), Comox Valley(\$16.37) and the Fraser Valley (\$15.90), where reports were also released today. The living wage only increased in Clayoquot Sound Region (\$20.11).

“The decrease in the living wage rates demonstrates that good public policy can have a positive impact on the lives of families,” says Deanna Ogle, the campaign organizer with the Living Wage for Families Campaign. “However, without a provincial poverty reduction plan that includes increasing units of

affordable housing and affordable child care, families will continue to struggle to make ends meet. Families are counting on whomever forms the next provincial government to do better.”

“A \$20.01 hourly living wage may seem high to some but it is based on a bare-bones budget for a family of four in our region,” says Stefanie Hardman, CSPC Researcher and author of the report. “There’s a big gap between the wages many of our neighbours earn and the real costs of raising a family. About 22% of Greater Victoria’s two-parent families with two children had incomes less than the living wage in 2014, according to Statistics Canada data from tax files.”

Over 80 companies and organizations across BC, employing more than 8,000 workers and covering many thousands more contracted service workers, have been certified as Living Wage Employers. These include Pacifica Housing, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Vancity, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, Quesnel, Port Coquitlam and ProActive Hazmat & Environmental. In 2015, the City of Vancouver committed to begin working towards implementing a living wage policy; seven local governments across BC have living wage polices.

Working poverty is a Canada-wide issue. Over 50 communities across the country, including 21 in BC, have active living wage campaigns and are advocating to improve quality of life for low-wage workers.

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For interviews, contact

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www.livingwageforfamilies.ca

Background:

Living Wages across BC

Community	Living Wage	Year Calculated
Vancouver	\$20.62	2017
Clayoquot Sound	\$20.11	2017
Victoria	\$20.01	2017
Revelstoke	\$18.77	2017
North-East (Dawson Creek, Chetwyn, Tumbler Ridge)	\$18.29	
Kamloops	\$16.90	2017
Parksville/Qualicum (District 69)	\$16.44	2017
Central Interior (Prince George,	\$16.39	2017

Quesnel)		
Comox Valley	\$16.37	2017
Fraser Valley	\$15.90	2017
Nelson	\$ 18.42	2016
Lower Columbia Region	\$18.21	2016
100 Mile House	\$17.45	2016
Nanaimo	\$17.99	2015
Cowichan Region	\$17.55	2015
Port Alberni/Huu-ay-aht First Nation	\$17.22	2014