

# A Living Wage

## for the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve Region

The living wage is the hourly pay that each parent must earn to cover the basic expenses of an average family of four. It considers housing, food, transportation, child care, health care, and is the “bare-bones” a family needs for an adequate quality of life.

### Why do we need a living wage?

Work should lift a person out of poverty, not keep them there. Working families that do not earn a living wage may face difficult choices, such as deciding between paying rent and purchasing healthy food. Earning a living wage provides security for families to avoid severe financial stress and is associated with better health for children, families, and their communities.

A living wage is not only influenced by employers, but by economic and social policies that increase affordability for families (such as child care subsidies and public transit).

The [Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve Region's](#) Living Wage uses the best data available for the communities of Hot Springs Cove, Ahousaht, Opitsaht, Tofino, Esowista/Ty-Histanis, Hitacu, Ucluelet, Macoah, and Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, Area C.



### The Living Wage Family

The living wage is calculated based on an average family of four:

- 2 parents each working 35 hours per week, year-round
- 4 year old child
- 7 year old child

What is the living wage in the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve Region?

**\$19.27**

*A living wage is not the same as the minimum wage, which is the legal minimum all employers must pay. The living wage sets a higher test — a living wage reflects what earners in a family need to bring home, based on the actual costs of living in a specific community. The living wage is a call to private and public sector employers to pay wages to both direct and contract employees sufficient to provide the basics to families with children.*

Housing	\$1464.17
Food	\$820.24
Transportation	\$450.29
Child care	\$1154.81
Health Care - MSP	\$144.00
Health Care - extended	\$139.00
Clothing & footwear	\$190.57
Parent education	\$75.58
Other household costs & social participation	\$762.15
Contingency	\$224.82
<b>Total Monthly Expenses:</b>	<b>\$5425.62</b>

## How is the living wage calculated?

Using a standard methodology from The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, in partnership with First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. Learn more at [www.livingwagecanada.ca](http://www.livingwagecanada.ca) and compare our region's living wage to other BC communities.

### Housing

Median monthly rent of a 3 bedroom unit plus utilities, a land-line phone, and insurance. (Source: community survey, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust)



Some communities in our region lack 3 \ bedroom rental units or have subsidized units, and this is not captured in the living wage. The rental figure used applies to 71% of our population.



### Transportation

Monthly cost of owning, operating, and maintaining one used vehicle in a rural community. (Source: \* Market Basket Measure, Statistics Canada)

In our region, families rely on a variety of transportation, such as water taxi or personal boat, for everyday activities like grocery shopping, commuting, or visiting the doctor. The living wage does not capture those costs.

### Clothing & footwear

The estimated monthly cost for a family of four.

(Source: \* Market Basket Measure, Statistics Canada)



### Parents' education

The cost of two courses at North Island College including tuition, books, and student fees.



### Food



Monthly cost of healthy eating for a family of four on Vancouver Island.

(Source: Cost of Eating Report, Provincial Health Services Authority)

The living wage does not capture additional costs of food in our region. Food costs are up to 21% higher than nearby

**UP TO  
21%  
HIGHER**

Port Alberni and only two of our eight communities have adequate grocery stores, so they must pay to travel to buy healthy food. (Source: Vital Signs, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust)

### Childcare

Median monthly cost of full-time care for a 4 year old, and out-of-school care for a 7 year old.

(Source: phone interviews with licensed providers in the region, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust)



### Social participation & other expenses

A typical range of family recreation and entertainment activities calculated at 75% of the combined cost of food, clothing, and footwear.



### Contingency fund

Coverage for unexpected events, based on two weeks of pay for two parents earning the living wage.



### The living wage does not include:

- X credit card or debt payments
- X savings for retirement
- X children's post-secondary education
- X the cost of owning a home
- X care for elderly parents
- X relatives in need

## Together we can create smart and caring communities

### Discuss

Share the living wage information with your friends, family, local elected officials and employers.

### Act

Get your organization motivated to take positive action or get involved with the many community-minded organizations that could use your help.

### Talk to the CBT

The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust knows the issues and organizations in our region and can help you take that first step in making a difference.

### Return trip to the grocery store

Some people in our region must travel outside their communities to buy groceries or see a doctor. Sample return trip costs are:



Ahousaht \$40



Opitsaht \$10



Macoah \$33



Hot Springs Cove \$164

### Health Care - MSP

The monthly mandatory provincial cost for a family of three or more. (Source: Medical Services Plan of BC)



### Health Care - extended

Health costs not covered by MSP such as prescriptions and dental. (Source: Pacific Blue Cross)



  
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