

The 2019 Living Wage

for the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere 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.



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

\$19.63

Our living wage fell 48 cents from 2017.

Why is the living wage lower this year?

Since 2017, monthly family expenses have increased approximately \$300 in our region. The living wage has decreased due to the BC government’s new child care investments (Fee Reduction Initiative and Affordable Child Care Benefit) that are saving BC families thousands of dollars in child care costs. This is a win for BC families with children, however we know that costs continue to be high for all family types, including those without children, single people, and seniors. For these and other family types, the cost of living did not decrease this year and therefore more needs to be done to ensure these groups can also enjoy an attainable cost of living in their community.

The child care investments decreased our living wage by **\$2.84**

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 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:

- Two parents each working 35 hours per week, year-round
- Four-year-old child
- Seven-year-old child



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

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. It is a call to private and public sector employers to pay wages to provide the basics for families with children. It is also a call to decision-makers to enact policies that reduce expenses for families and individuals, such as affordable child care, housing, and public transportation policies.

Monthly expenses		Change since 2017
Housing	\$2,167.76	▲ \$674
Phone & Internet	\$167.60	▼ \$43
Food	\$891.80	▲ \$42
Transportation	\$473.18	▲ \$57
Child care	\$1,092.81	▼ \$386
Health care -MSP	\$75	▼ \$75
Health care -extended	\$151	▲ \$21
Clothing & footwear	\$155.54	▼ \$7
Parent education	\$74.86	▼ 50¢
Other household costs & social participation	\$789.69	▲ \$27
Contingency	\$229.02	▼ \$6
Total Monthly Expenses:	\$6,268.26	▲ \$303.50

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 and compare our region's living wage to other BC communities.



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Housing

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



Some communities in our region lack three-bedroom rental units or have subsidized units, and this is not captured in the living wage.

Phone & Internet



Monthly cost of two cellphones with Rogers and Internet with Shaw.



Food



Monthly cost of healthy eating for a family of four living in the central region of Vancouver

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

The living wage does not capture additional cost of food in our region. Food costs are up to 12% higher than nearby 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)

12%

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 these costs.

Clothing & footwear



The estimated monthly cost for a family of four. (Source: * Market Basket Measure, Statistics Canada)

* Market Basket Measure, Statistics Canada)

Child care

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

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



In 2018, the BC government began piloting a \$10-a-day child care program in over 50 prototype sites across the province. In this program, families pay no more than \$200/month per child in full-time care. If \$10-a-day child care was implemented universally, our living wage family would save \$532 per month and our living wage would decrease by

91 cents.



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)

Parents' education



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

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 expenses, based on two weeks of pay for two parents earning the living wage.

*Market Basket Measures adjusted to 2018 figures using the Consumer Price Index

How can the Living Wage help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals?

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals designed to shift communities, both locally and globally, to a sustainable and resilient pathway known as Agenda 2030.⁵ The goals are interconnected and aim to address critical global issues such as climate change, poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, sustainable development, peace, and justice.



Continue to raise the minimum wage with regular, predictable increases until it meets the living wage.¹



Improve affordability for post-secondary students.³



Implement a living wage policy for all direct and contracted staff.⁴



Expand the provincial health plan to include dental care, optometry, paramedical care, and enhanced pharmacare.²



Implement \$10-a-day childcare across BC to provide equal opportunity for parents to return to work after parental leave.



Provide access to safe and affordable housing and public transportation.

The living wage is a valuable tool for understanding what contributes to poverty and the high cost of living in our region. By understanding these factors better, we are able to take action to address income inequality and **leave no one behind**.⁶

Share and discuss this report with friends, family, employers, and local elected officials, and use the information to advocate for policy change.

¹Living Wage for Families Campaign (2019). Recommendations and Key Messages for the 2019 Fair Wages Commission Consultation

²United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

³United Nations Committee for Development Policy. (2018). Leaving no one behind. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2754713_July_PM_2_Leaving_no_one_behind_Summary_from_UN_Committee_for_Development_Policy.pdf