

# The 2021 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?

**\$21.15**

Our living wage rose \$1.52 since 2019.

### How has the living wage changed over time?



### 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, 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 2019
Housing	\$2,489.54 ↑ \$321.78
Phone & Internet	\$171.30 ↑ \$3.70
Food	\$963.72 ↑ \$71.92
Transportation	\$416.76 ↓ \$56.42
Child care	\$1,164.40 ↑ \$71.59
Health care -extended	\$188.00 ↑ \$37
Clothing & footwear	\$172.66 ↑ \$17.12
Parent education	\$82.66 ↑ \$7.80
Other household costs & social participation	\$856.83 ↑ \$67.14
Contingency	\$246.75 ↑ \$17.73
<b>Total Monthly Expenses:</b>	<b>\$6,752.62 ↑ \$559.36</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.



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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.



### 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 the ten communities have grocery stores, so they must pay to travel to buy healthy food.

(Source: 2018 Vital Signs, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust)



### Phone & Internet



Monthly cost of two cell phones (basic talk & text) and home internet.



### 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)



### Child care



Median monthly cost of full-time care for a 4-year-old, and after-school care and full-time 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 \$827 per month and our living wage would be

**\$20.33**

### Contingency fund

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



### 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.



### Return trip to the grocery store

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



Macoah **\$39**



Ahousaht **\$40**

Opitsaht **\$12**

There are only chartered boat and plane trips in and out of Hot Springs Cove for residents.

### Health care - extended

Extended health care costs such as prescriptions and dental.

(Source: Pacific Blue Cross)



\*Market Basket Measures adjusted to 2021 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>



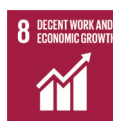
Improve affordability for post-secondary students.<sup>3</sup>



Implement a living wage policy for all direct and contracted staff.<sup>4</sup>



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



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**.<sup>6</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>3</sup>United 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](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2754713_July_PM_2_Leaving_no_one_behind_Summary_from_UN_Committee_for_Development_Policy.pdf)