



The **living wage** is the hourly amount someone needs to earn to meet their basic expenses in a specific place.

The living wage accounts for local costs of housing, food, transportation, child care, and health care, providing the "bare bones" necessary to lift someone out of poverty and into an adequate quality of life.

Employer-paid benefits also contribute to the living wage (i.e., higher benefits mean an employee can earn less per hour and still earn a living wage).



Our living wage has increased by **\$0.89** since 2023.

It's the **second highest** living wage in BC after Whistler.

Is the living wage in the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region.

Our rate of increase is the **sixth lowest** in BC over 2024, due to regional investments in **affordable housing**.

This documents shows the **monthly costs and changes** since last year for a family. All numbers are compiled from local and provincial data.

Housing | \$2706/mo (↓\$84)

Weighted average monthly rental cost for a 3-bedroom dwelling, utilities, and insurance. (Source: community survey, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and Statistics Canada Census data).



Food | \$1323/mo (↑\$43)

Monthly cost of healthy eating in each household type in central Vancouver Island (Source: BC Centre for Disease Control, Island Health). The living wage does not capture additional food cost in our region. Food costs are up to 21% higher than in Port Alberni and only 2 regional communities have grocery stores, meaning many residents must pay to travel to buy healthy food. (Source: 2023 Vital Signs, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust).



Transportation | \$967/mo (↑\$14)
Monthly cost of owning, operating, and maintaining two used vehicles in a rural community. In the region, families rely on a variety of transportation, such as water taxis or personal boats for everyday activities. The living wage does not capture these costs.



The case for public transit
While a regional bus was established last year, it's not yet functional enough to logistically **replace** a car. If improvements continue, and the living wage could be calculated with only one car, it could be reduced by over **\$2** to **\$25.29**.



Return trip to the grocery store

Some residents must travel outside their communities to buy groceries. Sample return trips (Source: 2023 Vital Signs) are:

Esowista	\$18.50	Macoah	\$40.00
Opitsaht	\$14.00	Hot Springs Cove	\$150.00
Ahousaht	\$60.00		



Living wage demographics

The living wage is based on expenses faced by **two parents** (working 35 hours/week) with **two children** ages 4 and 7. This year we piloted calculations for other household types as well.



It does not include:

- * credit card and debt payments
- * retirement savings
- * post-secondary education
- * the cost of owning a home
- * care for relatives

Clothing & Footwear | \$168/mo (↓\$8)

The estimated monthly costs for essential items. (Source: Market Basket Measure, Statistics Canada)



Adult Education | \$93/mo (↑\$9)

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



Phone & Internet | \$194/mo (=)

Monthly cost of two cell phones and home internet (Source: Telus, PC Mobile)



Non-MSP health costs | \$231/mo (↓\$48)
Extended costs not covered by MSP. Employer benefits can reduce these costs and decrease the hourly wage payable to still be a living wage.



Childcare | \$566/mo (↑\$113)

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



Contingency Fund | \$320/mo (↑\$11)

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



The case for \$10/day daycare
In 2018, the BC government began piloting a **\$10/day** child care program in which families pay no more than **\$200/month** per child in full-time care. If \$10/day child care were implemented universally, our living wage would be reduced to **\$25.84**.



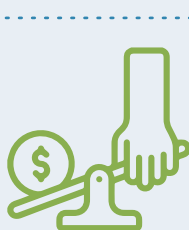
Other expenses | \$1124/mo (↑\$26)

a typical range of family social participation costs (such as birthday presents, modest sport and recreation fees).



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. It helps them avoid severe financial stress, and is associated with better health outcomes for children, families, and their communities.

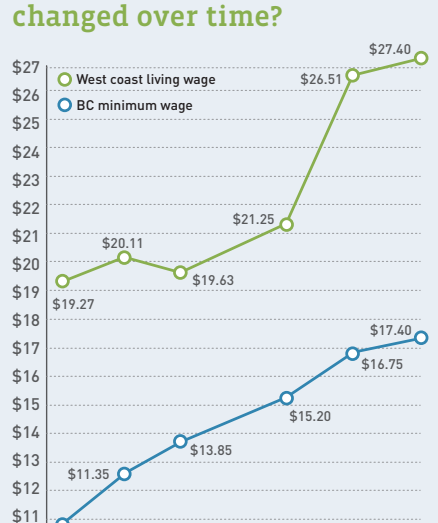
A living wage is not only influenced by employers, but by economic and social policies that increase affordability for families (such as housing policies, child care subsidies, and public transit).



How is the living wage calculated?

Using a standard methodology from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. This allows us to compare between communities and factor in provincial and federal in provincials, such as childcare benefits. Learn more at livingwageforfamilies.ca and compare our region's living wage to other BC communities.

How has the living wage changed over time?



Pilot living wages for different households

Single parent with one child: **\$28.48** (2 bedroom rental + 1 car)



Single individual with no children: **\$29.09** (1 bedroom rental + 1 car)

The single parent can earn less than a single individual because of the child-related subsidies they are eligible to receive. However, these calculations should still be considered "pilot" numbers and we will continue refining the calculations in future years.