



News Release

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3rd Annual Central Okanagan Living Wage Report

For the third time in as many years, there's been a rise in the Living Wage required by each pair of working members of a four person Central Okanagan family.

The 2013 Living Wage calculation for the Regional District of Central Okanagan is up an average 4.9% over the previous year's figure (\$17.17). To keep the two parent, two child household out of extreme poverty, each adult must be employed full-time and earn at least \$18.01 per hour in order to meet their family's most basic needs.

The Regional District's [Social Development Program Coordinator](#) says, "While most categories used for the Living Wage calculation increased slightly, there was a notable jump in the costs associated with Child Care. This expense rose approximately 8.5% or \$89 per month over 2012." Christene Walsh adds, "Also adding to the increased challenge facing Central Okanagan families is a 4.5% rise in the cost of transportation to just over \$492 a month in 2013.

The calculation is based on an established format from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and is endorsed provincially by First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition (which maintains the [Living Wage for Families website](#)). It reflects the actual costs of living in a community and is different from the Minimum Wage, which is a minimum rate of pay legislated by the Provincial Government. The Central Okanagan Living Wage calculation includes expenses such as food, rent, transportation, child care and education expenses; all considered the basic needs of any family. Government taxes, credits, deductions and subsidies are also included in the calculations. Other real life costs such as debt repayment, entertainment (cable, internet), special care of a relative, cigarette smoking and saving for or acquiring home ownership are not part of the Living Wage calculation.

Walsh adds, "Considering a recent announcement that BC is tied with Manitoba regarding the highest child poverty rates in Canada, the Living Wage calculation is important because it encourages all Central Okanagan communities to explore additional innovative ways to help families meet their most basic needs while offering opportunities to get ahead."

"Talking about the idea of the Living Wage" she says, "also gives us the opportunity to highlight some of our valuable local resources that assist day in and day out, throughout the community. It's important for us to support those agencies, organizations and individuals that come together to help as many people as possible enjoy the best quality of life."

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Contact:

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Social Development Coordinator
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Living Wage Rates for some BC Communities

Community	2011	2012	2013
Vancouver	\$18.81	\$19.14	\$19.62
Victoria	\$18.03	\$18.07	\$18.73
Esquimalt	\$17.31		
Kamloops	\$17.27	\$17.95	pending
Regional District of Central Okanagan	\$16.98	\$17.17	\$18.01
New Westminster	\$16.74	\$19.14	\$19.62
Abbotsford/Fraser Valley	\$16.42		\$16.37
Williams Lake	\$15.77		
Cranbrook	\$14.16		
Parksville/Qualicum	\$16.27	\$16.94	
Prince George			\$16.90
Sunshine Coast	\$16.27	\$16.94	\$18.80
Terrace			\$17.65