



\$16.37

Living Wage Fraser Valley: 2013 Update

What is a Living Wage?

Living Wage is the basic hourly wage required for a family of four with both parents working full-time year-round to meet basic needs and maintain a decent standard of living. Based on the actual costs of living in a given community, Living Wage provides a basic level of economic security, but still represents a conservative, bare bones budget. The Fraser Valley's Living Wage was calculated based on the premise of social and economic inclusion for all.

The Living Wage allows Fraser Valley residents to:

- Meet basic needs
- Create safe home environments for themselves and their children
- Maintain decent standards of living
- Participate as equal members of society



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is the minimum hourly wage required for a 2 parent, 2 child household in which both parents are working 35 hours/week and 52 weeks/year

“Wages are the measure of dignity that society puts on a job.”

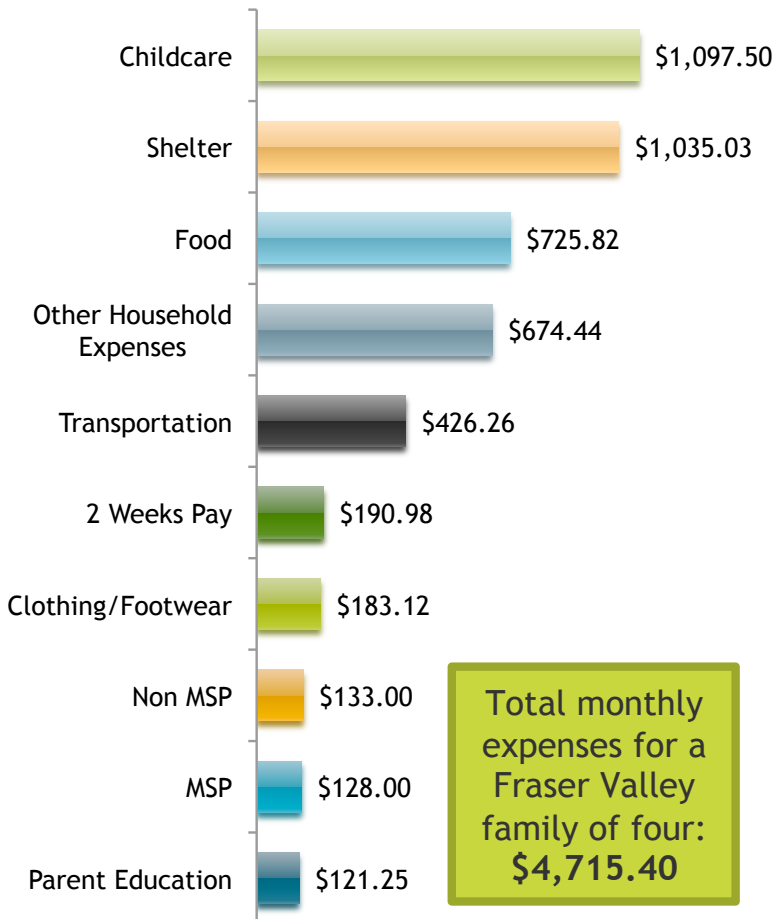
- Johnnie Tillmon (British Economist)

The Calculation

Living Wage is calculated based on a bare bones budget for a healthy family of four with two children aged 4 and 7 and each parent working 35hrs/week and 52wks/year. At a Living Wage, this family can meet its basic expenses once government transfers have been added and government deductions and taxes have been subtracted.



Monthly Fraser Valley Expenses (Family of 4)



Notes and Data Sources

Childcare: One child in full-time daycare, 1 in kindergarten and before & afterschool care, both in full-time care over school breaks (Abbotsford Early Childhood Committee)

Shelter: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Food: Dietitians of Canada estimate for a healthy diet

Other Household Expenses: Personal care, furniture, school supplies & minimal recreation

Transportation: One used car and one bus pass (Local cost & Market Basket Measure)

2 Weeks Pay: Emergency sickness/illness contingency

Clothing: Market Basket

Non MSP: Private Medical Insurance Premiums

MSP: BC Ministry of Health

Parent Education: Two local college courses per year to improve employment capacity

Expenses not included: Amongst other extras, the calculation does not account for costs associated with owning a home, repaying credit card or loan debt, saving for retirement or a child's education, or caring for a disabled, ill or elderly family member.

The Fraser Valley Context

- In 2005, 14% of the Fraser Valley population was considered low income before tax
- The Fraser Valley houses over 12,000 lone parent families of which 9,475 are female-headed
- 22% of Fraser Valley renter- and 9% of owner-households spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs
- The median income before tax in 2005 was \$57,829 for Fraser Valley census families (\$40,581 for male lone parent families, \$30,280 for female lone parent families)
- Even for the 68,000 Fraser Valley residents over 15 who worked full-year, full-time in 2005, median earnings were still only \$44,858 for men and \$33,165 for women

(Source: Statistics Canada)

The Living Wage and...

...Other Family Types

While the living wage calculation is based on the needs of two-parent families with young children, it would also support a family throughout the life cycle so that young adults are not discouraged from having children and older workers have some extra income as they age.

...Public Policy

Public policy directly impacts the Living Wage figure. With improved income support, public policy (e.g. public health care, transit & child care) and tax/transfer systems (e.g. child tax credits), the Living Wage figure is reduced.

Employees can then earn less privately while still maintaining a decent standard of living.



Benefits of a Living Wage

Employers Win

- Greater corporate social responsibility
- Higher employee loyalty and productivity
- Lower absenteeism
- Decreased employee turnover
- Cost savings for staff hiring and training

Employees Win

- Increased wages and economic well-being
- Access to benefits and workplace support
- Reduced stress
- Improved mental and physical health
- Greater self-sufficiency
- Reduced reliance on social programs

Community Wins

- More social participation
- Larger taxpayer base
- Increased consumer purchasing power
- Reduced costs of health care and social services
- Increased local investment

Details on the Living Wage Calculation Methodology

Download the 2013 Update: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/livingwage2013>

Read more about Living Wage

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Living wage Employers
Living Wage for Families

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca>
<http://www.lwemployers.ca>
<http://livingwageforfamilies.ca>

The Living Wage Fraser Valley Initiative

Living Wage Fraser Valley (LWFFV) is a voluntary multi-sectoral group that works to reduce poverty by raising community awareness, influencing local policy and recognizing local employers who pay their employees a living wage. We believe that people who work full time should not live in poverty and that working individuals should maintain a decent standard of living where they can participate fully in society. Living Wage Fraser Valley is hosted by Vibrant Abbotsford and partnered with Living Wage for Families via the Living Wage Employer Program.

Get Involved!

- Volunteer your time and expertise as a member of Living Wage Fraser Valley
- Become a certified Living Wage employer: Adopt a workplace Living Wage policy
- Be a champion for the Living Wage movement: Raise community awareness!
- Support policy changes that improve government benefits and social programs

For more information or to get involved contact:

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