

Living Wage and The City of Calgary

EVERYONE DESERVES A LIVING WAGE!

MARCH 2008

Vibrant
COMMUNITIES Calgary

INFORMATION FOR CALGARIANS

- What is a Living Wage?
- What is a municipal Living Wage policy?
- What is the SEEPP?
- Why should The City pay a Living Wage?
- Do Calgarians support a Living Wage?
- How can I support Calgary's municipal Living Wage policy?

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What is a Municipal Living Wage Policy?

First, a **Living Wage** is the amount of income an individual or family needs to:

- meet **basic needs**,
- maintain a **safe, decent standard of living** in their community, and
- save for **future needs and goals**.

Vibrant Communities Calgary's Living Wage Action Team's 2007 research shows that an individual working full time 35 hours per week, 52 weeks a year, needs to make a minimum of **\$12 per hour** to earn a Living Wage (or \$13.25 an hour in lieu of benefits). This figure is based on the Statistics Canada 2001 before-tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) amount for an individual with no dependants, adjusted for Calgary's inflation.

Second, a municipal Living Wage policy ensures that workers employed or contracted by The City of Calgary will be paid a Living Wage. In other cities, municipal Living Wage policies are typically formalized by legislation and guarantee municipal workers are paid more than a minimum wage. Cities that introduce Living Wage policies support the idea that their administration should not employ workers at poverty-level wages or sub-contract with employers who pay poverty-level wages.

Living Wage policies have been implemented in over 130 American cities. The City of Calgary is leading several Canadian cities currently exploring similar policies.

DID YOU KNOW?

Since 1990, the average annual earnings for Calgary's largest industry, the wholesale and retail industry, representing 87,000 people, has decreased by \$2,500 per year .

During the last six months of 2007:

- 70,300 employed Calgarians over the age of 15 earned less than \$12 per hour;
- Not all low wage earners are teenagers; 34,800 Calgarians over the age of 25 are trying to support themselves on less than \$12.00 per hour; and,
- One in 10 female workers in Calgary over the age of 25 earns less than \$12 per hour.

Source:
City of Calgary, 2007;
Statistics Canada,
2008

Reduce Poverty!

What is the Sustainable Environmental & Ethical Procurement Policy?

The Sustainable Environmental & Ethical Procurement Policy (SEEPP) is a City of Calgary pilot procurement policy, "to ensure that the goods and services purchased by the City are produced according to recognized ethical and environmental standards." One of the purposes of the policy is to "support the purchase of goods and services that will enhance and protect the environment, protect the welfare of workers and represent best value for the corporation."

A City of Calgary project team is conducting research to assess the impact of including a Living Wage in the SEEPP.

Why should The City of Calgary adopt a Living Wage in SEEPP?

- Tax dollars should not be used to subsidize employers who pay wages that leave workers and their families in poverty because the costs are passed on to government and the community in other ways, including homelessness, crime prevention, fee assistance subsidies, income support programs, funding for social service agencies and increased costs to health care and education.
- A Living Wage lowers employee turnover and increases productivity. Without it, returns are lost on taxpayer dollars.
- Research across North America has found no evidence to suggest that the SEEPP or Living Wage policy would cause economic hardship to The City or local businesses.
- The SEEPP and Living Wage policies will provide The City of Calgary with the framework and direction necessary to achieve our goals and obligations under the Green Procurement Policy, the Triple Bottom Line, Fair Calgary and the imagineCalgary initiative.
- The inclusion of a municipal Living Wage policy within SEEPP positions The City of Calgary to be a leader and an example for other governments or agencies to follow.



Everybody Wins!

Who Supports a Living Wage?

Community support for Living Wage can be found in recent stakeholder consultations conducted by the following initiatives:

- **Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness** — Ensuring adequate income to gain and maintain housing is a critical component of many successful 10-Year Plans to end homelessness. Calgary's 10-Year Plan promotes a Living Wage by proposing to develop a homeless management system comprised of a variety of existing and new agencies and collaborations, "**Funding will ensure a Living Wage for contractors and sub-contractors**".
- **Calgary Foundation's Vital Signs** — More than 800 Calgarians from various sectors, including citizens from business, non-profit, civic, academic, artistic and many other organizations, graded 12 key issues in 2007: **71% of graders indicated that supporting a Living Wage is the area in most need of attention.**
- **imagineCALGARY** — Through its imagineCALGARY project, The City of Calgary is working towards the social, economic and environmental sustainability of Calgary. One of the imagineCALGARY's goals is, "All Calgarians have sufficient income and other resources to meet their current and future needs and to provide for healthy lives". To achieve this, The City will "**Urge all public sector institutions and non-profit sector employers, including all subcontractors to adopt livable wage policies**", and "Develop education programs to inform business and consumers of the benefits associated with employers adopting livable wage policies and/or provide incentives encouraging them to do so."
- **Sustainable Calgary's Citizens Agenda** — Over 1,000 Calgarians identified and documented 12 priority actions and policies they believe will significantly improve the lives of all Calgarians. One priority action is to "**Ensure all Calgarians — wage earners, the disabled, seniors — receive the equivalent of a Living Wage**".

Living Wage Action Team Partners

Bob McInnis (Co-chair), *Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids*
Yvonne Schmitz (Co-chair), *Community Representative*
Diane Altwasser, *Community Representative*
Terry Bullick, *Bullick Writing and Communications*
Gordon Christie, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
Wendy Fehr, *Immigrant Services Calgary*
Christy Fischer, *Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids*
Brian Hoffart, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
Walter Hossli, *Momentum*

Bonny Johansson, *Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre*
Rudy Raduloff, *Community Representative*
Fred Robertson, *Community Representative*
Gurbir Sandhu, *Calgary Workers' Resource Centre*
Bev Sheckter, *Jewish Family Service*
David Wilson, *Momentum*
Lori Willocks, *Immigrant Services Calgary*
Marilyn Wilson, *Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre*
Joy Zerke, *City of Calgary*

LIVING WAGE STORIES

"In a city like Calgary, where business and economy is changing everyday, paying a Living Wage is just one way we are able to support our employees... Happy, healthy employees, lead to vibrant workplaces and strong communities. For us, a Living Wage isn't a luxury; it's a necessity."

*Dave Gregory,
President and CEO,
First Calgary Savings*

"Becoming a Living Wage employer hasn't solved all my staffing challenges but it has improved them. And I feel better knowing that I am paying my employees fairly."

*Brian Murphy, Manager
of CottageCare Calgary*

After being asked by a building tenant if custodial staff were being paid a Living Wage, Westcorp Properties Inc. convinced their cleaning contractor to pay a Living Wage.

*Patricia Saks, Senior
Property Manager,
Commercial, Westcorp
Property Inc.*



Vibrant
COMMUNITIES Calgary

**Living Wage is an initiative of
Vibrant Communities Calgary**

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Vibrant Communities Calgary believes:

- People who work full time should not live in poverty;
- Hard work should be rewarded with adequate pay and benefits;
- Employers educated about the link between low wages, poverty and issues that impact their business or organization, will begin to see themselves as part of the solution;
- Paying a Living Wage is one important way to reduce poverty and combat related issues like homelessness; and,
- **Now is the time for Living Wage in Calgary!**

Show Your Support!

Email, phone, write a letter, fax or speak with the Mayor and your Alderman and show your support for a City of Calgary Living Wage policy.

Contact the Mayor: Mayor Dave Bronconnier — themayor@calgary.com — (403) 268-5622

- Address: Office of the Mayor, The City of Calgary, P.O. Box 2100, Station M, Calgary AB T2P 2M5
- Fax: (403) 268-8130

To find out who your Alderman is, please visit The City of Calgary's City Hall website: <http://www.calgary.ca>

Contact your Alderman:

- Ward 1 — Dale Hodges — dale.hodges@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2445
- Ward 2 — Gord Lowe — gord.lowe@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2430
- Ward 3 — Jim Stevenson — alaaw3@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2430
- Ward 4 — Bob Hawkesworth — bob.hawkesworth@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2430
- Ward 5 — Ray Jones — ward05@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2430
- Ward 6 — Joe Connelly — joe.connelly@calgary.ca — (403) 268-1646
- Ward 7 — Druh Farrell — druh.farrell@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2475
- Ward 8 — John Mar — alaaw8@calgary.ca — (403) 268-1627
- Ward 9 — Joe Ceci — joe.ceci@calgary.ca — (403) 875-7409
- Ward 10 — Andre Chabot — alalw10@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2430
- Ward 11 — Brian Pincott — brian.pincott@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2430
- Ward 12 — Ric McIver — ric.mciver@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2478
- Ward 13 — Diane Colley-Urquhart — dcolley@calgary.ca — (403) 268-1624
- Ward 14 — Linda Fox-Mellway — linda.fox-melway@calgary.ca — (403) 268-2430
- Address: Office of the Aldermen, The City of Calgary, P.O. Box 2100, Station M, Calgary, AB T2P 2M5
- Fax: (403) 268-8091 or 268-3823



Also, attend the Standing Policy Committee (SPC) for Finance and Corporate Services at 9:30 a.m. on April 9th, 2008 in the Engineering Traditions Room, City Hall. All members of the public are welcome to make a 5 minute presentation to the SPC. For more information, please contact Vibrant Communities Calgary: (403) 283-2197.