



## Media Release

### BC families face increasing child care and housing costs

**(Vancouver)** A report released today finds that the wage needed to cover the costs of raising a family in Metro Vancouver is \$20.62 per hour. This is the 2017 Metro Vancouver living wage, the hourly wage that two working parents with two young children must earn to meet their basic expenses (including rent, child care, food and transportation), once government taxes, credits, deductions and subsidies have been taken into account.

This is a decrease of only two cents from the 2016 figure of \$20.64/hour. This is according to *Working for a Living Wage 2017: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Metro Vancouver*, a report published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC office, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition and the Living Wage for Families Campaign.

This year, for the first time we have added an internet connection as well as two cell phones instead of a landline, reflecting the fact that more families have internet connections at home and more Canadians now have mobile phones than landlines.

Child care and housing continue to be the two biggest costs in the living wage calculation. Over the last year, child care rose by \$44 per month, while rent went up by \$50. The overall increase in expenses was 2.6%, slightly higher than the general inflation rate of 2.2% for Metro Vancouver. The Canada Child Benefit, a policy introduced by the federal government in July 2016, was substantial enough to offset significant cost increases for families. The Canada Child Benefit is a tax-free, targeted, monthly payment that is intended to help families with the cost of raising children.

For the second year in a row there continues to be decreases to living wage rates in the Capital Regional District (\$20.01), Revelstoke (\$18.77), North East BC (Dawson Creek, Chetwyn, Tumbler Ridge) (\$18.29) District 69 (Parksville-Qualicum) (\$16.44), Kamloops (\$16.90), Powell River (\$16.75), North Central BC (Prince George and Quesnel) (\$16.39), Comox Valley (\$15.96) and the Fraser Valley (\$15.90), where reports were also released today. The living wage only increased in the Clayoquot Sound Region (\$20.11).

"The decrease in the living wage rates demonstrates that good public policy can have a positive impact on the lives of families," says Deanna Ogle, the campaign organizer with the Living Wage for Families Campaign. "However, without a provincial poverty reduction plan that includes increasing units of affordable housing and affordable child care, families will continue to struggle to make ends meet. Families are counting on whomever forms the next provincial government to do better on these important affordability issues."

"A \$20.62 hourly living wage may seem high to some but it is based on a bare-bones budget for a family of four in our region," says Iglia Ivanova, CCPA senior economist and co-author of the report. "There's a

big gap between the wages many of our neighbours earn and the real costs of raising a family. About 34% of Metro Vancouver’s two-parent families with two children had incomes less than the living wage in 2014, according to Statistics Canada data from tax files.”

Over 80 companies and organizations across BC, employing more than 8,000 workers and covering many thousands more contracted service workers, have been certified as Living Wage Employers. These include Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Vancity, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, the City of Quesnel, the City of Port Coquitlam and ProActive Hazmat & Environmental. In 2015, the City of Vancouver committed to begin working towards implementing a living wage policy; six other local governments across BC have living wage policies.

Working poverty is a Canada-wide issue. Over 50 communities across the country, including 20 in BC, have active living wage campaigns and are advocating to improve quality of life for low-wage workers.

For interviews, contact

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[www.livingwageforfamilies.ca](http://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca)

#### **Background: Living Wages across BC**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Living Wage</b>	<b>Year Calculated</b>
Metro Vancouver	\$20.62	2017
Clayoquot Sound	\$20.11	2017
Victoria (Capital Regional District)	\$20.01	2017
Revelstoke	\$18.77	2017
North East BC (Dawson Creek, Chetwyn, Tumbler Ridge)	\$18.29	2017
Kamloops	\$16.90	2017
Powell River	\$16.75	2017
Parksville/Qualicum (District 69)	\$16.44	2017
North Central BC (Prince George, Quesnel)	\$16.39	2017
Comox Valley	\$15.96	2017
Fraser Valley	\$15.90	2017
Nelson	\$18.42	2016
Lower Columbia Region	\$18.21	2016
100 Mile House	\$17.45	2016
Nanaimo	\$17.99	2015
Cowichan Region	\$17.55	2015
Port Alberni/Huu-ay-aht First Nation	\$17.22	2014