



Living Wage
Yellowknife

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Adopting Yellowknife living wage will ensure people
working full-time aren't trapped in poverty

Yellowknife, 10 September 2015: Social justice coalition Alternatives North unveils the living wage calculation for Yellowknife today. The public is invited to a lunch-and-learn event at noon at the Baker Centre.

The living wage for Yellowknife, for family of four, with two full-time wage earners and two children, is calculated at \$20.68 an hour for each full-time worker. The living wage is based on a 40-hour work week. It doesn't include paying debts, saving money, helping other family members financially or owning a pet, among other things.

"Earning a living wage would make a huge difference for 1,700 people who live in Yellowknife – about 10 per cent of the whole population. That's the number of people who earn less than \$20 an hour, and most are making less than \$16 an hour. They don't have enough money to cover their basic expenses including shelter, food and clothing without taking second, even third jobs," says Julie Green, lead organizer for Living Wage Yellowknife .

Michel Haener, an Alberta-based economist calculated the living wage. She has calculated living wages for other communities including Grande Prairie, Red Deer and Canmore. She uses the nationally-recognized Canadian Living Wage Framework to provide a calculation that can be compared to other communities.

"We chose the family of four because it's the most common family type in Yellowknife. We allocated money for shelter, child care and food, but also for other essentials such as a phone, and a small budget for recreation and gifts. The budget is very modest," Haener says.

A broad coalition of community groups representing thousands of northerners have stated their formal support for the principle that full-time workers should not live in poverty. A full list of supporters is attached. This coalition is set to become bigger in the coming weeks and months as organizations with a social justice focus sign on.

While the minimum wage is mandatory, employers choose to pay a living wage to reap a number of benefits. The advantages of a living wage include improved staff retention and productivity, fewer recruitment and training costs, more money for workers to spend locally, a

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larger income tax base and a positive demonstration that the business cares for the community. Living Wage Yellowknife plans a public recognition program for living wage employers.

For more information about Living Wage Yellowknife or to arrange for an interview, please contact Julie Green at (867) 446-1665 or at juliegreen@theedge.ca Michel Haener can be contacted at the same number..

The full report on the living wage calculation is available online at www.alternativesnorth.ca

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Living Wage Yellowknife Coalition members

Alternatives North

Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada

Canadian Media Guild – Yellowknife

Council of Canadians – NWT Chapter

Dene Nation

Ecology North

Northern Territories Federation of Labour

NWT Disabilities Council

NWT Seniors' Society

NWT Teachers Association

Public Service Alliance of Canada – Regional Women's Committee

Roman Catholic Diocese Mackenzie-Fort Smith

Union of Northern Workers

Yellowknife Farmers Market

Yellowknife United Church

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