



Social Planning Council Oxford
www.spcoxford.ca

LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

A Plan for Oxford County

LIVING WAGE IS NOT MINIMUM WAGE

A **living wage** is not the same as the minimum wage, which is the legal minimum all employers must pay. The living wage reflects what earners need to have a basic but acceptable standard of living, based on the actual costs of living in a specific community. The living wage is calculated as the hourly rate at which a household can meet its basic needs, once government transfers have been added to the family's income and deductions have been subtracted.

A living wage:

- Enables working families to have sufficient income to cover reasonable costs
- Promotes social inclusion
- Supports healthy child development principles
- Ensures that families are not under severe financial stress
- Is a conservative, reasonable estimate
- Engenders significant and wide ranging community support
- Is a vehicle for promoting the benefits of social programs such as childcare
- Supports the economy

COMMUNITY	EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYEES
• Fosters a dedicated, skilled, and healthy workforce	• Reduced absenteeism	• Paid fair compensation for their work
• Builds a community that works, lives, and plays together	• Decreased turnover rates	• Raised out of poverty
• Strengthens community cohesion	• Lower recruitment and training costs	• Better quality of life
• Increases support for the local economy	• Increased morale, productivity and loyalty	• Improved health
	• Recognized as a responsible employer	• Increased opportunities for education/skills training

PROJECT GOALS

To increase the community's understanding of living wage, social wage, and minimum wage.
To shift how the community thinks about wages.

To connect the social and economic implications of low wage work in Oxford County.

To decrease the number of "working poor" families and individuals in Oxford County

Stage One: Needs assessment and data collection

- Define "working poor" in Oxford County
- Estimate impact of living wage in Oxford County

Stage Two: Communication and community education

- Website development
- Logo design
- Connect with employers, employees, government, wider community
- What is a living wage? How does it differ from minimum wage?
- Impact of social wage on a living wage (e.g. how do government programs increase or decrease the living wage in a community)
- Benefits to a living wage – how would it impact Oxford County?
- Project description

Stage Three: Calculation of a living wage

- Form a working group for dialogue about what to include in calculation
- Develop a feedback loop with community members to review calculation decision
- Calculation using the [Canadian Living Wage Framework](#)
- Report and Infographic with calculation results developed

Cont'd...overleaf

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Stage Four: Development of a staged employer recognition program

- Determine employer levels of participation and how each is recognized
- Develop window sticker/certificate/logo for employer recognition
- Develop a 'Guide to Living Wage' for employers (See example [here](#))
- Develop employer recognition forms
- Develop employer brochure

Stage Five: Launch of program

- Kick-off event where minimum of 5 employers are recognized, guest speaker
- Release the Oxford County living wage number – report, infographic, media
- Communication targets: employers, employees, community, government
- E.g. Government communication: How policies/social wage impact the living wage number in Oxford County
- Seeking out additional living wage employers

Living wage campaigns are taking place in the UK, USA, and across Canada. Two local examples include [Hamilton](#) and [Waterloo Region](#).



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