

Local Briefing: Cowichan Valley

2025 Living Wage in the Cowichan Valley:
\$25.75

This represents a **0.20%** change since 2024.

What is the living wage?

The living wage is the hourly amount that a worker must earn to cover essentials, avoid chronic financial stress and participate in their community. It supports a basic, decent standard of living, but without many of the comforts or extras that many take for granted.

What makes up the living wage?



Housing



Food



Clothing



Phone & Internet



Transport



Child Care



Non-MSP Health Costs



Contingency Fund



Adult Education



Other Expenses

Benefits

Living expenses can decrease when benefits are paid by the employer.



Health and Dental



Professional Development



Paid Sick Leave and Vacation

Not included in the living wage:

Retirement savings, student loan or credit card payments, cost of caring for an older or disabled family member.

How do we calculate the Living Wage?



Working with our community partners at Social Planning Cowichan, we calculate the wage needed by different household types to afford basic costs.

The family types used are a single adult, a single parent with one child, and a family of four with two adults and two children.

These are then weighted by their prevalence in the population to produce a single living wage for the Cowichan Valley.

Who's not earning a Living Wage?

- Nearly 1 in 3 workers in BC earn less than the living wage - the minimum needed to cover basic expenses.
- Women and racialized workers are disproportionately affected.
- Jobs in food service, retail, and agriculture are among the lowest paid.

Key Findings from the 2025 Living Wage Report

- There is now a **\$7.90** gap between the BC minimum wage and the living wage for Cowichan Valley. The provincial government needs to close the gap between the minimum wage and the living wage.
- Housing, food, and child care remain the largest and fastest-growing expenses, with rent increases outpacing general inflation and food insecurity worsening across BC.
- Government support helps, but it's not enough - especially for single people. Even when people are working hard, the minimum wage is not enough to cover rising costs like rent, food and child care.



Who's paying a living wage?

A Living Wage Employer commits to pay their direct and contracted workers a living wage.

Over 450 BC employers, including 4 in the Cowichan Valley have adopted living wage policies.

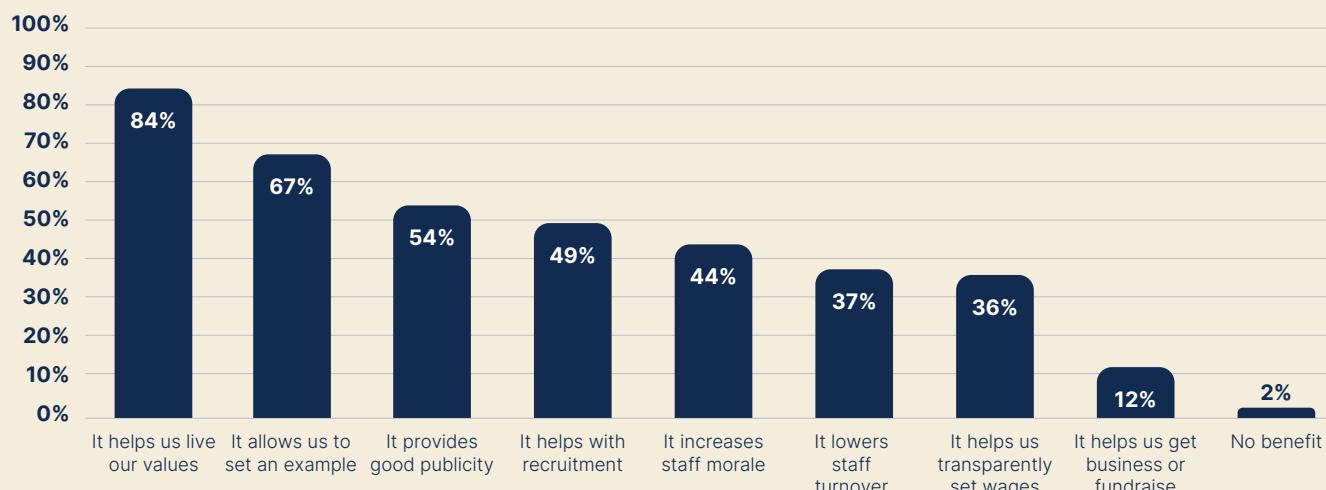
Over 98% of Living Wage Employers in BC have found a benefit from being part of the program, such as lowering staff turnover and increasing productivity.

Living Wage Employers in the Cowichan Valley include:

- David Coulson Design Ltd.
- Canadian Bavarian Millwork & Lumber Ltd.
- Together In Stride

You can view the full list of Living Wage Employers in Cowichan Valley and across BC at livingwagebc.ca.

Reported benefits of being a certified Living Wage Employer



Source: 2025 BC Living Wage Employers survey conducted by Living Wage BC. "Other" (1%) and "Don't Know" (1%) not shown.

What can your municipality do to ensure all workers earn a living wage?

- Join the cities of Victoria, Burnaby and others in becoming a Living Wage Employer.
- Support the development of more affordable housing.
- Advocate for better transit so that workers don't have to take on the cost of a car.

What can the BC government do to ensure all workers earn a living wage?

- Become a Living Wage Employer, guaranteeing that all provincial staff and contractors earn a living wage, and embed living wage standards into procurement policy
- Develop and implement a road map to close the gap between the minimum and living wage. Introduce policies to lift wages and lower costs for British Columbians.
- Strengthen and extend financial supports for low-income individuals. Many government benefits shrink or disappear just as people start earning close to a living wage, making it harder to stay afloat as costs rise. More consistent and inclusive supports would help ensure that all low-wage earners can meet their basic needs.

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