



Let's make
**A BETTER
 UNBC – FOR
 EVERYONE**

CUPE3799

A MESSAGE FROM UNBC SUPPORT STAFF

WHAT IS A LIVING WAGE?

A living wage is the wage needed to provide the minimum income necessary to pay for basic needs based on the cost of living in a specific community.

These basic expenses include:

- Food
- Clothing
- Rental housing
- Child care
- Transportation
- Small savings to cover illness or emergencies

A living wage is commonly calculated based on a two-parent family with two children – the most common family unit in B.C. – and each parent working full-time.

It varies from region to region, based on actual costs in different communities.

A living wage calculation does not cover additional expenses such as:

- Debt repayment from credit cards or loans

- Future savings for home ownership, retirement or university education
- Anything beyond minimal recreation costs
- Costs of caring for a disabled, seriously ill or elderly family member

When families don't make a living wage, they face impossible choices: buy food or heat the house, fill a prescription or pay the rent.

We all pay a price for poverty in BC. It weakens local economics and increases costs for public services:

- Increased health care costs
- Increased demand and pressures on social services

- Increased pressure on public funding and reduce economic activity.

A living wage is different than a minimum wage. The minimum wage is the legislated minimum set by the provincial government.

A living wage is an opportunity for an employer to do better.

By committing to a living wage, at a minimum, employers can ensure the wages they pay reflect the true costs of living in a community. This lifts workers and families out of poverty and benefits everyone in our communities.