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Press Release

New Report- *Newfoundland and Labrador's 2023 Living Wages: Seeking a Better Deal for Low-Wage Workers*

December 12, 2023

Today, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia released the first province-wide calculation for regionally-sensitive living wages in Newfoundland and Labrador. The living wage rates for the four regions are:

- \$23.95 for Central,
- \$24.20 for Eastern,
- \$23.80 for Western and
- \$26.80 for Labrador-Northern Peninsula.

Co-author Russell Williams, Political Science Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland, had this to say, “What we learned here is that a lot of low-wage households are really struggling. Caught between low wages and soaring cost of living, many feel the gap between what they earn and what they need to earn in the form of a living wage that covers basic living costs is just too large. The living wage is a conservative estimate of what it costs to keep your head above water; the fact that a high percentage of people in our province don’t earn a living wage is a problem requiring a response from governments and employers.”

Report co-author Christine Saulnier, CCPA-NS director, said, “Our calculations show that Labrador and the Northern Peninsula living wage region face unique challenges– the required living wage of \$26.80 an hour is the highest in Atlantic Canada and among the highest in the country. Higher costs for transportation and food combine to make Labrador, and other very rural and remote parts of the province, a difficult place to afford the necessities of life. Many communities across the province also face challenges to find housing and access basic services, including health care and child care.”

Saulnier further notes, “As outlined in our recommendations section, federal and provincial governments must do more to expand income support and invest more in housing and transportation while expanding public programs like affordable child care and health care. “

“Terms like “well-being” and “social determinants of health” are moving, as they should, into the centre of the policy conversation here in Newfoundland and Labrador. These living wage calculations are one step in understanding what well-being really looks like,” said Josh Smees, CEO for Food First NL.



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Smee adds, “The living wage calculations are a critical tool for understanding how poverty and food insecurity show up in this province and how to solve it. As a living wage employer ourselves, these numbers are also a big part of our day-to-day, and we hope they will be regularly updated in years to come.”

Yolande Pottie-Sherman, steering committee member of Child Care Now NL, had this to say, “the calculations show that affordable child care is a critical step in reducing the cost of living. But far too many families in Newfoundland and Labrador still live in child care ‘deserts’ with few options for licensed child care. Greater government investments in early learning and child care – including the proper compensation of early childhood educators [ECEs] – are needed to make sure that families in this province are not left behind.”

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The report, *Newfoundland and Labrador’s 2023 Living Wages: Seeking a Better Deal for Low-Wage Workers*, is available for download at: <http://policyalternatives.ca/NLlivingwage2023>

For more information or to arrange an interview with one of the co-authors, contact Lauren Matheson, 902-579-9555 (cell) or lmatheson@policyalternatives.ca

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