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Press Release

Unprecedented increases to Nova Scotia living wages—New Report

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Halifax/Kjipuktuk—The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia has released its annual living wage update for Nova Scotia. The new wages for two adults working full-time (35 hours a week) to support two children are:

- \$25.40 for Annapolis Valley,
- \$22.85 for Cape Breton,
- \$26.50 for Halifax,
- \$24.30 for Northern, and
- \$25.05 for Southern.

The wage increases averaged 14% this year.

As author and living wage calculations lead, Christine Saulnier says of these living wage rates, “These year-over-year increases are the most significant we have seen since we began calculating the living wage for Halifax in Nova Scotia in 2015. Such unprecedented increases are due to overall increases to the costs of living, for shelter and food, in particular.”

Saulnier further notes, “While employers must step up and pay fair wages and provide decent working conditions, governments can do much more to support low-wage workers on both the costs and the income side. While these households qualify for a portion of the Canada Child Benefit, for the first time in many years, one living-wage household qualifies for a minimal GST credit because its income eligibility was expanded. A step in the right direction. These government benefits, as well as the NS Child Benefit and the Affordable Living Tax Credit, must be made more generous and phased out at a higher income level to not penalize workers for earning a living wage. As it stands, except for the CCB, low-wage workers get these benefits clawed back even before they reach the poverty line.”

“Workers in Nova Scotia are experiencing this crisis of affordability with no relief in sight. The minimum wage will reach \$15/hour this fall, but the CCPA Nova Scotia living wage calculations still show that workers keep falling behind. Depending on the region, we’ll have a gap of anywhere between \$7.85 and \$11.59 between the minimum wage and the wage that workers actually need to secure a basic dignified living.” said Suzanne MacNeil, spokesperson for [Justice for Workers Nova Scotia](#).



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MacNeil adds, "We can't stop at \$15. The wage floor needs to come up much higher. Meanwhile, workers need to think about organizing to demand more from their employers. Earlier this year, we saw how the Halifax Regional Centre for Education's education support staff went on strike to demand a living wage. We need to see more of this action in order to make a difference."

In response to the report, a spokesperson for [Nova Scotia ACORN](#) (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) said, "Wages must reflect the realities tenants are facing during the housing crisis. While the extension of the temporary rent cap was welcomed and has helped stop excessive rent increases, increasing the cap to 5% will put a strain on tenants who are already struggling to pay rent. The lack of provincial vacancy control, which ties rent to the unit, means that without reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act, such as closing no-fault eviction loopholes, more and more tenants are going to be displaced through renoeviction or landlord-use evictions."

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The report, *Living Wages in Nova Scotia 2023, Working for a Living, Not Living to Work*, is available for download at <https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/living-wages-nova-scotia-2023>

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The CCPA-NS is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with social, economic, and environmental justice.