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Press Release

New Report - 2024 Living Wages for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

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For the first time since 2020, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia has released the living wage for Prince Edward Island. The report—which, for the first time, provides a broad regional assessment that also includes living wages for Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia—highlights the rising costs of living, and offers recommendations for supporting low-wage workers across the region.

In Prince Edward Island, the new living wages for the entire province are:

- \$23.30 for Charlottetown Region
- \$22.20 for Summerside and rural regions
- The provincial weighted average for PEI is \$22.76.

PEI living wages are the lowest among these three provinces, but still far higher than the minimum wage. Living wage rates across Atlantic Canada vary, given differences in regional living costs. Food costs are highest in NL and second highest in PEI. Child care costs are broadly comparable across the region, though they are highest in NS and lowest in PEI. PEI has the lowest transportation costs. As with the other provinces, the most significant budget item for families is housing costs in PEI—rental costs in Charlottetown have increased by 17 per cent since CCPA-NS last calculated the PEI living wage in 2020.

CCPA-NS Director Christine Saulnier, co-author of the report, explains, “Without more effective government policies and higher wages supporting workers to at least keep pace with the cost of living, they are faced with very difficult choices about their monthly budgets, often sacrificing their health.”

Saulnier continues, “Governments could help address the gap in living wages if they chose to act more decisively in support of broad-ranging policies. As outlined in our recommendations section, federal and provincial governments must provide more generous income support to more people, and invest in housing, transportation, food security and public services like child care and health care to make life more affordable for all low-wage workers. While the PEI government announced a new provincial child benefit in 2025, at \$30 a month, this will hardly be enough to support families with children, while those households without children also deserve support.”



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Mary Boyd, of the MacKillop Centre for Social Justice and the PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy, had this to say, “This report signals that we can’t continue to disregard the evidence that the gap between wages and affordability weighs heavily on low wage working families. The answers do not depend solely on increases in the minimum wage but on a combination of wage increases, more generous government income benefits, expanding public services, more public housing and a changed attitude on the part of many businesses.”

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The report, *2024 Living Wages for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island: Closing the Gap between the Cost of Living and Low-Waged Employment*, is available for download at www.policyalternatives.ca

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Cherise Carlaw at ccpans@policyalternatives.ca or (902) 943-1513 (cell).

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