



# 2025 Living Wage

For Squamish



Living Wage BC



**BC Policy**  
SOLUTIONS

# What is the Living Wage?

The living wage is a calculation of the hourly amount that a worker must earn to meet their basic expenses and avoid working poverty. A living wage is the gateway from surviving to thriving. It is a modest budget that allows workers to overcome severe financial stress, move beyond working poverty and participate in community life. It supports a basic, decent standard of living - without the comforts, or extras many take for granted.


Starting in 2024, the Squamish Community Foundation partnered with Living Wage BC and BC Policy Solutions to calculate the annual living wage for our community. This year, we are sharing three different living wages - one for a single adult, one for a single parent, and one for a family of four. These three living wages are combined to come up with an average living wage for Squamish.

2025 Living Wage in  
Squamish:

\$28.00


This represents a 4.60% change since 2024.

2025 Squamish Living Wages




Single Adult

\$25.87



Single Parent

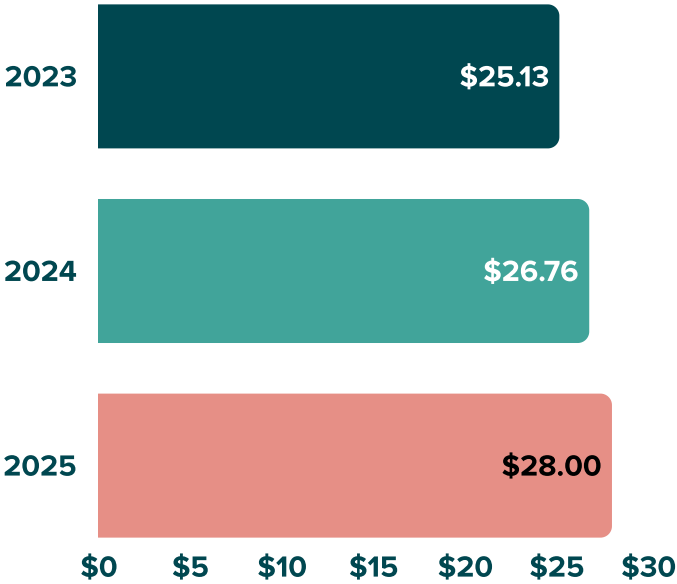
\$29.49



Family of 4

\$29.43

Squamish Living Wage  
2023 - 2025



Over the past few years, the living wage in Squamish has increased dramatically.

**Housing, food, and child care are the largest contributing factors.**

Although there are public initiatives that have provided some small financial support for low-wage workers, any savings are offset by the rising cost of living.



# How the Living Wage is Calculated

To calculate the living wage, we start by determining the cost of essential goods and services that reflect a decent, but modest, standard of living. These include food, rent and utilities, clothing and footwear, phone and internet, transportation, childcare, health, and education.

The living wage also takes into account the various government benefits available to British Columbians to make life more affordable. It also includes the taxes and deductions workers pay, such as income tax and Employment Insurance premiums.

## The living wage seeks dignity, not luxury.

### 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.

### Costs are calculated for:

- A single adult aged 35 to 44
- A single parent with a 4 year old child in full time child care and owning a car
- A two parent, two children, two income family. The children are ages 4 and 7 with one child in full time day care and 1 child in before and after school care and summer care. The family has one car and one bus pass for one of the parents.

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

### 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.

# HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO LIVE IN **SQUAMISH**?

## Monthly Household Expenses, 2025



Family of Four



Single Parent



Single Person

Shelter	\$3,120	\$2,439	\$1,871
Food	\$1,409	\$730	\$563
Child Care	\$1,228	\$376	-
Transportation	\$513	\$487	\$26
Health Care	\$167	\$59	\$54
Phone and Internet	\$150	\$103	\$103
Clothing & Footwear	\$170	\$85	\$42
Adult Education	\$134	\$134	\$134
Contingency Fund	\$343	\$172	\$151
Other Expenses	\$1,040	\$512	\$354



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# Living Wage vs. Minimum Wage

The **minimum wage** is the lowest amount an employer can pay, and is established by the provincial government. In British Columbia, the minimum wage increases each year based on the same percentage change as the **BC All Items Consumer Price Index (CPI)**. It rose from \$16.75 to \$17.40 in 2024 - an increase of 65 cents per hour. The minimum wage increased to \$17.85 per hour on June 1, 2025.

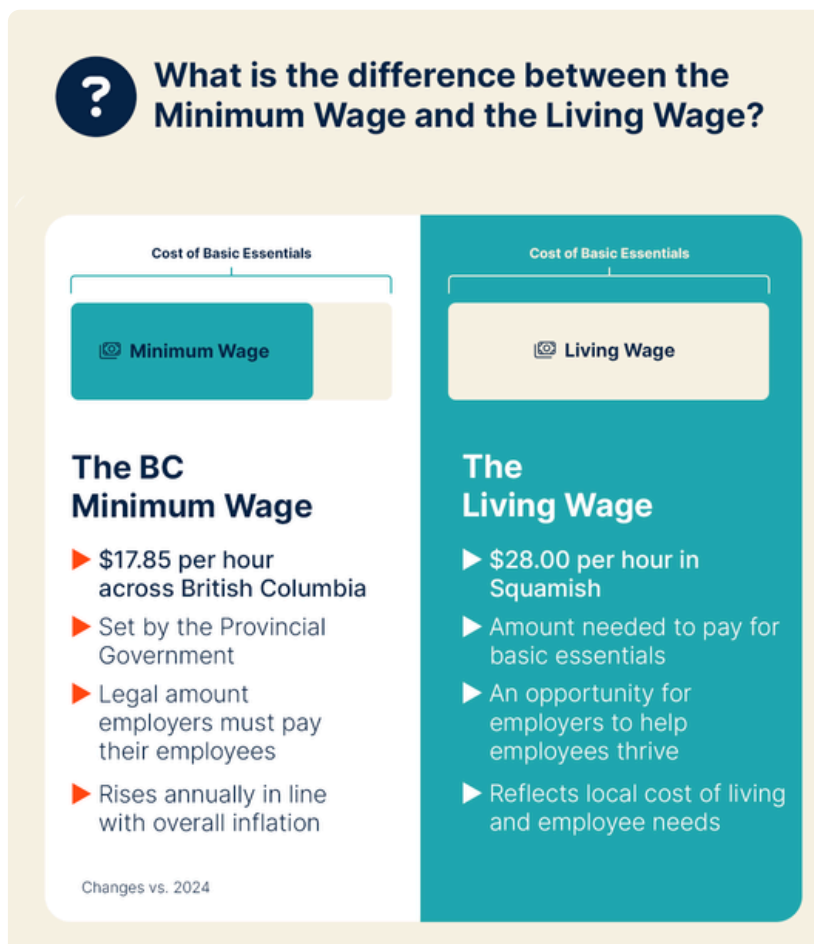
The **living wage** is a calculation of the wage needed to afford essentials like rent, food, transportation, and childcare.

## The minimum wage isn't enough to meet the cost of living anywhere in BC.

In Squamish this year, the gap between the minimum wage and the living wage is: **\$10.15**.

A worker earning a living wage in Squamish needs to work 35 hours a week. In contrast, a minimum wage worker needs to work 55 hours a week to live with dignity - **20 extra hours of work each week to live with dignity**.

Many of those doing important work in our community - cleaners, cashiers, office assistants, restaurant workers - are paid the least. More than half of BC workers earning less than \$20 per hour are over 25 and many are supporting families. Women and racialized workers are disproportionately affected.



## Record level of inequality in BC

BC is one of the wealthiest economies in Canada with the third highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in Canada.

Despite this, BC faces the highest level of inequality in Canada.

According to BC Policy Solutions, the richest 20% of households hold 53% of disposable income in BC as of March 31, 2025. The Canadian average is 43%. The poorest 20% of households hold just 3% of disposable income in BC.



# What's Driving the Rising Cost of Living?

## Cost of Housing

A wide array of factors have led to the rapid escalation in the cost of home ownership and rental accommodation - mostly due to government policy over the past 40 to 50 years. In Squamish, the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment rose from \$1,335 per month in 2021 to \$1,659 per month in 2025 - reflecting a 24% increase over three years. There are some signs rents may be stabilizing, or decreasing in Squamish - but it's difficult to say for sure at the time of this report.

## Cost of Food

Food is the second biggest item in the family budget. As of January 2025, food prices increased 2.7% from the previous year. This continues a long-term trend, with consumer grocery prices in BC rising by 21.4% between April 2021 and April 2024. Like housing, there are a variety of contributing factors to food inflation including climate change, supply chain issues from the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war on Ukraine, US tariffs, and control of profits by major grocery chains. Living Wage BC's Food for Thought Report involved kitchen table conversations with Squamish residents and non-profit organizations.

Read the report here: <https://bit.ly/47Dcxmd>

## Cost of Childcare

Surprisingly, child care in Squamish was discovered to be more expensive than Vancouver. As a result, childcare is a major factor that is driving the Squamish living wage above Metro Vancouver's.



# The Benefits of a Living Wage

Embracing a living wage means investing in community health and well-being. It's a proactive step toward building a stronger, more resilient Squamish where everyone can thrive.

Some of the benefits of the living wage include:

- **Lower stress on individuals and families**
- **Improved health outcomes for individuals and families**
- **Less demand on emergency health services**
- **Reduced strain on the education system and better learning outcomes for children**
- **Less strain on local social services such as food banks**
- **Families and individuals are more engaged in social, civic and cultural activities**
- **Reduced absenteeism from work and lower staff turnover rates**

Workers receiving low wages often face difficult choices, like choosing between buying groceries or heating their homes. This can lead to debt, anxiety, health issues, and reduced family time.

*It's important to us to be a living wage employer because if our employees are committing to invest their time with us, the bare minimum commitment we should be making is paying them a living wage. By paying our employees a fair living wage, the whole community benefits. We wanted to obtain the certification to raise awareness around this but also set an example for others in our community and industry."*

— **Mike Van Capelle, Owner/Team Lead, Blue Water Concepts, Squamish, BC**

## 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 3 in Squamish 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 Squamish include:

- Squamish Nation
- Blue Water Concepts
- Watson Design Inc.

You can view the full list of Living Wage Employers in Squamish and across BC at [livingwagebc.ca](http://livingwagebc.ca).

# Steps to Make Squamish More Liveable

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Government investment in community-owned affordable housing so workers spend less money on rent
- Define affordability relative to local incomes and not market measures
- Invest in protecting existing rental properties in Squamish

## FOOD SECURITY

- Support more resilient local food systems
- Support community gardens
- Support universal school meal programs
- Create opportunities for local agriculture
- Government supports for local independent farmers
- Create opportunities for more businesses to enter the grocery sector

**Expand \$10 a day  
childcare spaces  
locally**

**Encourage businesses  
to become certified  
living wage employers.**





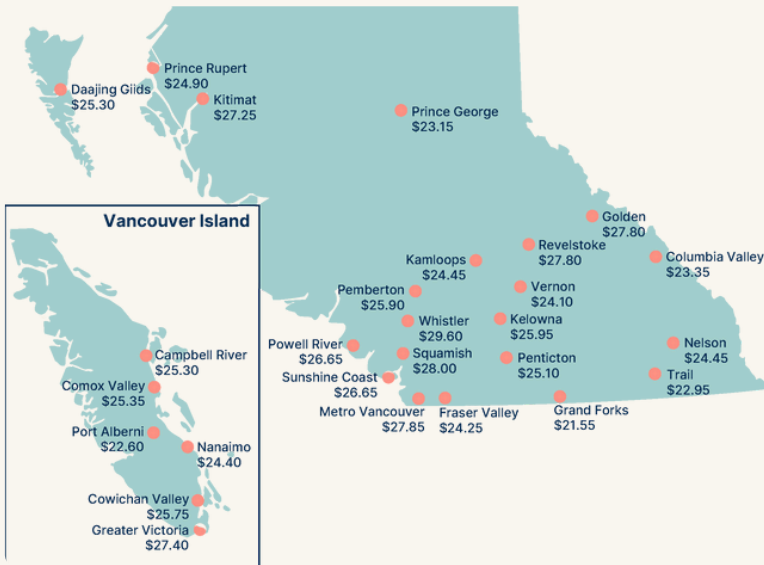
# Acknowledgments



***Squamish Community Foundation humbly and respectfully acknowledges this report was produced on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw.***



The Squamish Community Foundation sincerely thanks Living Wage BC and BC Policy Solutions for their assistance and support with calculating the living wage for Squamish.



## 2025 BC Living Wage Report

Want to see how Squamish compares to other communities in BC?

See the BC Policy Solutions website to find out: [bcpolicy.ca/living-wage/](https://bcpolicy.ca/living-wage/)

## About Squamish Community Foundation

Established in 2003, the Squamish Community Foundation is an independent, charitable organization dedicated to enriching the quality of life for community members in Squamish. We facilitate philanthropy by partnering with donors and connecting them with the community causes they value. Our focus is on building permanent endowments that address long-term community challenges as well as immediate needs. From the income earned on our endowment funds, we invest in people, groups, and community impact. With projects like Vital Signs and Living Wage Reports, we are working to build community knowledge, engagement and leadership.

## Contact

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