

A CASE FOR A LIVING WAGE

COMMUNITY LENS

INTRODUCTIONS

There are multiple intersecting factors that come together to bring forth a good and sustainable standard of living. Among these include public services such as affordable housing, childcare subsidies, public transportation, and access to education. Additionally, the social and cultural expectations of a given community help define what is considered a good standard of living. With those factors in mind, a more immediate determinant is income. As such, conversations around living wage is crucial when exploring what is considered a meaningful way of living.

Considerations

The information on the info sheet was obtained from literature reviews and community conversations. It is important to note that implementing a living wage will have varying impacts depending on the makeup of the local economy and the target industries. It is important for stakeholders to work together when implementing a living wage so it acknowledges the unique restrictions and opportunities each community and business face.

KEY POINTS

STIMULATES THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH CONSUMER SPENDING

- Increases the purchasing power of low-income community members, which in turn generates local spending as they tend to spend their wage on immediate needs

HELPS BUILD SUSTAINABLE AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

- Workplaces that offer a living wage attract and retain employees, who in return stay in the community for a longer term and this is especially pronounced in regional communities
- The Mood Disorders Society of Canada (2019) indicated that individuals in the lowest income bracket were 3 to 4 times more likely to have poor to fair mental health compared to the general population.

ALLEVIATES THE FINANCIAL COST OF POVERTY IN THE PROVINCE

- Poverty costs Alberta approximately \$7.1 to \$9.5 billion per year due to the demand it puts on the health care and justice system, and foregone tax revenue.

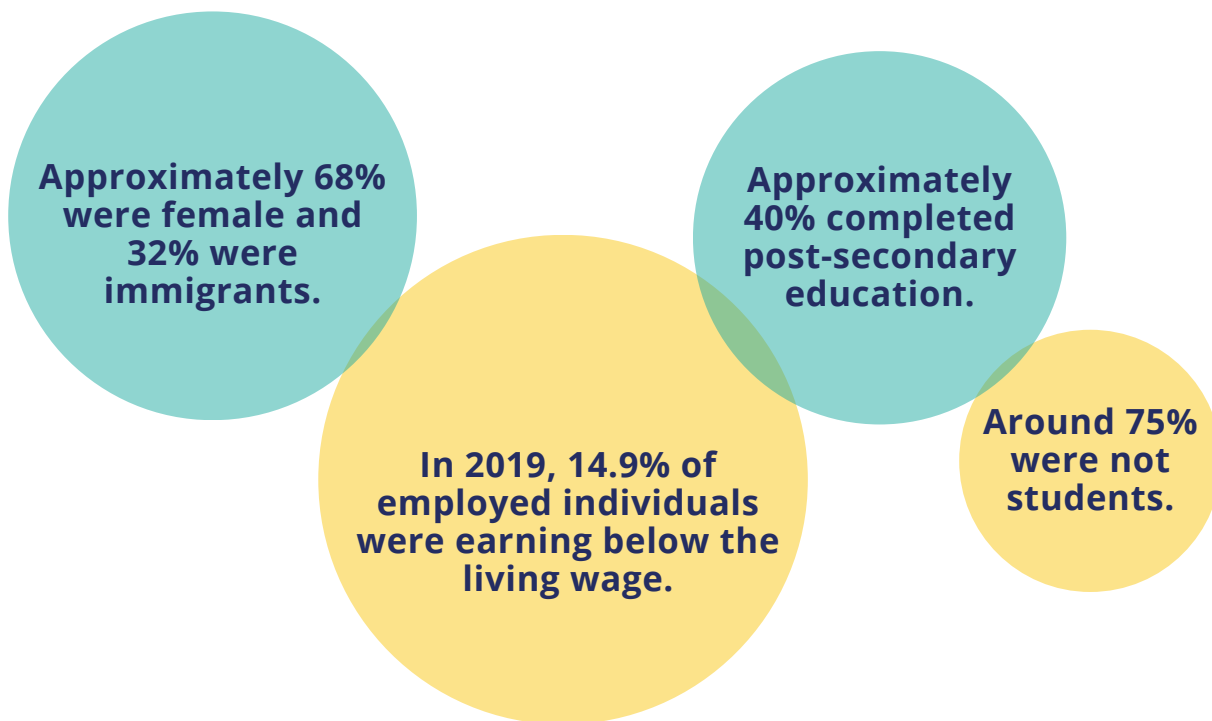
HELPS ADVANCE SOCIETAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY

- Raising wages at the right time, in conjunction with education or skills training, can help reduce inequality.
- A big portion of the population in low wage work are workers of color, and minorities and immigrants from non-European countries. They are more likely to experience underemployment, juggle multiple jobs and longer hours, and earn less than non-racialized groups.
- Women are more likely to do low wage work than men, and they are also more likely to be underemployed.
- Underemployment also disproportionately affects Indigenous groups, who are more likely to fall into poverty.

CASE STUDIES

EDMONTON'S LIVING WAGE

EndPovertyEdmonton broke down the composition of community members in Edmonton earning below the living wage in 2019 and 2020:



Based on the demographic breakdowns, a living wage would have a positive impact on women, racialized communities, and families.

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The Alberta Living Wage Network is made up of community organizations and municipalities with the goal of advancing a coordinated living wage movement in Alberta. The network assists communities in their annual living wage calculation and provides certification to qualifying living wage employers.

<https://livingwagealberta.ca>

