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PRESS RELEASE

2026 living wage rates rise across Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, highlighting the need to move beyond affordability to economic security

November 9, 2026

KJIPUKTUK/HALIFAX – New living wage rates released today by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives–Atlantic for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island show increases across every region, with provincial average increases of just under four per cent in Nova Scotia, to just over seven per cent in Newfoundland and Labrador and just under six per cent for P.E.I.

One notable change is in the Labrador–Northern Peninsula region, where the living wage has reached $30.50 per hour, surpassing Halifax's $30 rate for the first time. In Nova Scotia, Northern Nova Scotia recorded the largest regional increase.

The report, *2026 Living Wages for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island: Beyond Affordability*, provides updated living wage calculations for regions across the three provinces, along with provincial averages weighted by regional population. The report also contains a detailed set of policy recommendations that will help close the gap between what people need to earn to cover real world essential expenses and what they actually earn.

This report marks the first publication under the new CCPA Atlantic banner, reflecting the organization's expanded regional presence and ongoing commitment to research and policy analysis that advances economic, social and environmental justice across Atlantic Canada. The living wage research builds on years of collaboration and regional analysis, providing an important benchmark for understanding what workers need to earn to live with dignity in their communities.

Across Atlantic Canada, transportation costs are a major contributor to this year's increases. The updated calculations more accurately reflect the costs workers face, along with inflationary increases in transportation expenses. The cost of housing continues to put pressure on households, as does the cost of food.

Report co-author and professor at Memorial University, Dr. Russell Alan Williams says, "These numbers should give us pause. We need to look beyond the narrow framing of an 'affordability crisis' and ask why so many people are struggling to earn enough to live a decent life. The problem isn't simply that prices are going up. It is that too many workers don't earn enough, and too many people lack access to the public programs and services that support economic security."

CCPA Atlantic director and report co-author, Dr. Christine Saulnier, says, "Living wages help make visible what it takes to live with dignity in our communities. But employers paying a living wage is only one part of the solution. Governments also have a responsibility to strengthen public services, improve income security and address the structural inequalities that leave so many people struggling to make ends meet."

Lead data analyst on this report and CCPA-Atlantic researcher Dr. Daniel Cerdas Sandí says, "Many of the labour market challenges facing Atlantic Canada, including persistent worker shortages in key sectors, cannot be separated from the issue of wages. When people cannot afford to live in the communities where they work, employers will continue to struggle to attract and retain workers."

He continues, "Decent wages are essential to building stronger local economies and communities. Contrary to what we often hear, low wages are not simply the result of market forces, they are also shaped by political decisions. Without action on both wages and the public policies that shape people's economic security, thousands of workers across Atlantic Canada will continue to struggle to make ends meet."

The report, *2026 Living Wages for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island: Beyond Affordability* along with appendices for each province, can be found on the CCPA website:
www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/2026-living-wages-nl-ns-pei/

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For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact: Ruby Harrington at ccpans@policyalternatives.ca or (902) 956-3866 (cell).

CCPA Atlantic | Atlantique is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social and economic justice, as well as environmental sustainability.

***Note:** The Human Development Council publishes New Brunswick's living wage rates.*

About the authors:

Dr. Daniel Cerdas Sandí is a staff member at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in Nova Scotia. He holds a Ph.D. in Social Science Research and works on labour rights, economic inequality, and public policy.

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