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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **The 2019 Living Wage Calculation for Niagara Region**

With the annual cost of household living expenses for a Niagara region family of four conservatively pegged at over \$73,000, the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN) has calculated the hourly wage necessary to meet these expenses, otherwise known as a living wage, to be \$18.12 for 2019.

As part of National Living Wage Week, the Network has released a new report, 'Calculating the Living Wage for Niagara Region, 2019', which outlines the full methodology used. The report is available on the NPRN website [www.wipeoutpoverty.ca](http://www.wipeoutpoverty.ca)

"A living wage reflects what earners in a family need to be paid based on the actual costs of living and being included in a specific community," says Glen Walker, Chair of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network. "It is an evidence-based hourly rate at which a household can meet its basic cost of living needs, once government transfers have been added to the family's income and deductions have been subtracted. Included in the calculation are food, shelter, clothing, transportation, child care, non-OHIP medical insurance, continuing adult education, and items that allow for fuller participation in society, such as communication, family outings, and local recreation." Four key items – housing, child care, transportation, and food – account for 71% of the total cost of living expenses.

A living wage is not the same as the legislated minimum wage. It is a voluntary commitment that employers can make to compensate directly-employed and contract-employed full-time and part-time workers. A recent study found that precarious, unstable and low paying employment is a significant issue for many workers in Niagara, and this type of employment has a direct impact on employees' health and the health of the community.

"Providing wages that allow a family to meet its basic household needs is one important tool to address cost of living and precarious employment challenges in Niagara region and should be top of mind for all employers," says Walker.

To date, there are 28 certified Living Wage employers across Niagara region employing a total of over 1000 full-time, part-time, and contract employees. Niagara's current certified Living Wage employers include: Beechwood Doughnuts, ClaraDerma+, Damin Starr Commercial Enterprises, Dispatch, Dun' For You Contracting, Gales Gas Bar, Gillian's Place, Iron Will Raw, John Howard Society of Niagara, Kraun Electric, Marmax Machine & Manufacturing, Modern Landfill, Niagara Centre for Independent Living, Niagara Eye Care Centre, Niagara Falls Community Health Centre, Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre, Niagara Pallet, Niagara Sexual Assault Centre, PenFinancial Credit Union, Person Centered Care, Positive Living Niagara, Second Dance Bridal/Feather & Pearl, ServiceMaster Restore of Niagara, Sicard RV, Spirit Athletics, The Enviro-Niagara Group, The Niagara Herbalist, and Women's Place of South Niagara.

Employers who are interested in becoming Living Wage certified can contact the Ontario Living Wage Network for more information at <http://www.ontariolivingwage.ca/>

The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network is a collective of over 30 agencies and individuals working to wipe out poverty in Niagara through education, collaboration, and advocacy to address poverty's root causes.

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