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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Calculating a Living Wage for Niagara Region**

With the annual cost of household living expenses for a Niagara region family of four conservatively pegged at over \$65,000.00, the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network has calculated the hourly wage necessary for families to meet these expenses, otherwise known as a living wage, to be \$17.47.

The Network has released a new report, 'Calculating the Living Wage for Niagara Region, 2016', which outlines the full methodology used. The report is available on its 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 leisure outings, and local recreation."

"Providing wages that allow a family to meet its basic household needs is one important tool to address cost of living challenges in Niagara region and should be top of mind of all employers," says Walker. "However, the reality is that many Niagara businesses are struggling themselves to stay afloat, so other solutions must also be considered to help make life more affordable."

"If an employer, whether from the public, not-for-profit, or private sector, is not paying a living wage, but could afford to, then we encourage them to act," says Walker. "However, if paying a living wage is not immediately possible, then it is imperative that local employers strongly support and advocate for ways to ensure workers can meet their basic needs, such as through increased affordable housing, child care, and public transportation options. We look forward to seeing this conversation turn into action."

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