

## Living Wage Certification

1. Must pay \$14.34/hour to all regular full and part-time employees.
2. May pay a wage that is less than the living wage to youth employed during the summer; to part-time employees who are under 18 years old; to employees who are in a probationary status (limited to 3 months); to employees who are hired on a temporary basis (limited to 3 months); to employees and volunteers paid by others.
3. Must endorse the living wage concept.
4. Must match wages with any changes in the Tompkins County Living Wage that might occur periodically within a year of when the figures are updated by Alternatives Federal Credit Union.
5. May use benefits or other beneficial terms and conditions of employment that are provided employees, such as union status, discounts, generous leave policies etc., as an offset to the wage and health insurance criteria (meaning, for example, that a lower wage than \$14.34 may be allowed if the difference were made up in measurable benefits that reduce the cost of living or offset by other factors in the employment situation), at the discretion of the Tompkins County Workers' Center Leadership Team. For more specific information on health insurance see below.
6. Employers providing health insurance for employees may qualify for a lower Living Wage if the amount that employees are required to pay for that coverage is **less than** \$1.17/hour (for a 40-hour workweek or \$2,433.72 for the year). This amount (the difference between \$1.17 and the employee's required payment) may be deducted from the \$14.34 figure resulting in a lower living wage figure for your enterprise. For example, let's say your employees are required to pay \$1,500.00 toward individual coverage or \$0.72/hour. Since this is \$0.45 less than \$1.17 you could then deduct this amount from \$14.34 resulting in a minimum living wage figure for your employees of \$13.89/hour. Note: your employees not eligible for health insurance, **or declining**, would still have to be paid a minimum, living wage figure of \$14.34/hour.
7. May be rejected for certification where there are known health and safety violations, violations of wage/hour or other labor statutes, and/or violations of the right to unionize, at the discretion of the Tompkins County Workers' Center Leadership Team/Board.

Certification is subject to annual review by the Tompkins County Workers' Center Leadership Team.

### **What is a Living Wage?**

We believe that few principles are more basic to our nation than the importance of rewarding work. A job should take you out of poverty, not keep you in it. So a "living wage" is the amount that an individual should be paid to meet their basic needs, without the need for public or private additional assistance. The Tompkins County Living Wage is based on figures calculated every two years by Alternatives Federal Credit Union.

The living wage for a single individual is currently \$29,872 or \$14.34/hour for an individual working a 40-hour week for the full year. This figure is derived using the cost for housing (fair market rent for a single bedroom apartment including utilities), transportation (weighted average), food (based on USDA "low cost" food plan), communications (local plan + 30 minutes long distance/month, plus DSL), health care (subsidized cost of the Excellus Silver Plan + additional out-of-pocket medical expenses) recreation, savings, miscellaneous plus taxes. The living wage for a family is significantly higher but is not calculated by Alternatives. For details on the Tompkins County Living Wage, go to [www.alternatives.org/livable.html](http://www.alternatives.org/livable.html). For more details about the Workers' Center's Business Certification program go to [www.TCWorkersCenter/employer](http://www.TCWorkersCenter/employer).