

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Winnipeg should adopt a Living Wage Policy: CUPE 500**

**Winnipeg** - The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 500 is launching a multimedia campaign calling on city council and mayoral candidates to commit to supporting a living wage policy for city workers and contractors with the City of Winnipeg.

“Many of the people who deliver the city services we rely on don’t make a living wage,” said Local 500 President Gord Delbridge. “Our next city council should act to make Winnipeg a living wage employer so that all city workers and contractors can earn enough to support their families.”

A living wage is the hourly wage needed for an income that pays for basic needs such as rent, food, transportation and childcare. A living wage is a bare-bones calculation and does not cover many expenses like debt payments or savings for emergencies or retirement. Currently, the City of Winnipeg is not required to pay a living wage to city workers, and does not require city contractors to pay living wages to their employees.

"Making sure all city workers and contractors make a living wage will demonstrate that the City of Winnipeg is committed to helping reduce poverty in our society," said Lynne Fernandez, Errol Black Chair in Labour Issues with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) - Manitoba. "We're hopeful that this election campaign, candidates will make a commitment to help working families get ahead."

CUPE, the labour movement, and organizations like the CCPA have long advocated for fair and living wages across the country in both the public and private sector employers and municipalities.

“We believe that workers that provide important, vital services like garbage collection, deserve to be able to pay their bills and feed their families, just like everyone else,” Delbridge said. “This is a matter of right and wrong and this election, we’re calling on all city council and mayoral candidates to commit to supporting a living wage policy for the City of Winnipeg so that everyone who is paid by our taxes enjoys the dignity of a living wage.”

The City of Winnipeg is a major employer that provides vital services to city residents. A living wage policy for the City of Winnipeg would require that a living wage for city workers is the minimum standard for all City of Winnipeg employees, and requiring living wage standards and reporting to be included in all Requests for Proposals (RFP) issued by the city for contracted services. This policy would be similar to policies found in cities like Vancouver, New Westminster, and Cambridge, Ontario. Toronto has also had a fair-wage policy since 1893.

“CUPE’s living wage campaign aims to help ensure that the people who serve our city, whether they are city employees or contractors, are paid a living wage to provide the basics for their families,” Delbridge said. “This election, we’re asking voters to support living wages.”

More information about the campaign can be found at: [cupe500.mb.ca/campaigns/livingwage/](http://cupe500.mb.ca/campaigns/livingwage/)

CUPE Local 500 represents approximately 4,600 municipal workers at the City of Winnipeg who provide frontline services at 311, recreation, public works, water and wastewater and other service areas.

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