

2014

# Discovering the Cost of Living for Chatham-Kent

Using a Living Wage Framework

Prepared on behalf of the Chatham-Kent Living Wage Working Group  
By Chatham-Kent Public Health, 2014  
Authors: Laura Fay, Donna Fraleigh



## Acknowledgements

Living Wage Working Group – Tiffany Attewell, Melaney Austin, TJ Brown, Jane Currie, Lyndsay Davidson, Rhonda Dickson, Laura Fay, Donna Fraleigh, Ryan Griffioen, Karen Kirkwood-White, Karen Loney, Carolyn Martin, Marsha Millar, LEEANNE Pepper, Chad Sauve, Danielle Shaw, Lisa Shaw, Mary Symons, Walter Van de Kleut, Sue Watson and Laura Zettler

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Hugh MacKenzie (Research Associate, Ontario Economist), Kaylie Tiessen (Ontario Economist), Cheryl Athersych (Project Coordinator), Michael McCarthy Flynn (BC Living Wage Campaign) and Iglia Ivanova (BC Economist)

Chatham-Kent Public Health – Dr. D. Colby (Medical Officer of Health), April Rietdyk (Director of Public Health) and Laura Zettler (Epidemiologist, supporting Manager)

Pathway to Potential – Laura Tucker and Jessica MacIntyre

Chatham-Kent Prosperity Roundtable

Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton - Sara Mayo

All local organizations and companies who provided cost of living quotes.

All Canadian Living Wage champions for the resources provided.

Any mistakes in this report are solely due to the authors. This report is to be used by the partners for internal planning purposes and is not for public dissemination.



## 1.0 Introduction

Boards of Health, under the Ontario Public Health Standards, are responsible for public health programs and services that consider the social determinants of health and aim to reduce health inequities. Evidence suggests that purposeful surveillance and reporting of data, promotion of early childhood development, participation in community engagement and engaging in inter-sectoral action, are among best practices for local public health in addressing issues of health equity ( Sudbury & District Health Unit, 2011).

A key role of the recently funded social determinants of health nurse positions within public health was to explore the social and economic factors that impact population health, as well as our programming and services. This exploration revealed overwhelming evidence that the primary factors shaping the health of Canadians are the living conditions they experience. Research has demonstrated that the majority of health outcomes are influenced by social and economic factors and the condition of one's physical environment – these factors are referred to as social determinants of health (SDOH). Of these determinants, level of income has been found to have significant impact on health outcomes. The direct link between income level and burden of disease in our country exists, and, individual health outcomes improve up each step of the economic ladder.

Income is a factor that impacts not only individuals but communities as a whole. The increase in income inequality over the last decade and a half has resulted in growing numbers of working poor and a shrinking middle class. In our society, the depth of poverty is experienced by those receiving social assistance benefits, such as Ontario Works, Ontario Disability, and Employment Insurance, while the breadth of poverty is experienced by working people who are unable to make ends meet. The impact of this growing breadth is causing strain not only on individuals but on communities, in terms of slow economic growth and increasing health care costs. In Chatham-Kent, this strain is evidenced by increasing numbers of working families using food banks, waiting for subsidized housing and accessing *A.L.L For Kids* (a local program that subsidizes the cost of registering children into recreational activities).

Working many hours and holding full-time, year-round employment is no longer a guarantee of escaping poverty. An individual working full-time (37.5 hrs.), 52 weeks of the year, on minimum wage (\$11/hour) earns \$21,450 a year. According to the before-tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), a single person residing in an urban centre the size of Chatham is considered low-income if they make less than \$20,240 (Statistics Canada, 2013). Therefore, a person working for minimum wage just barely surpasses the LICO.

In public health it is acknowledged that one of the most vulnerable populations to be targeted with interventions should indeed be low income individuals and families, and programs/services need to be assessed, planned, and implemented accordingly. In doing so, it must be realized that some strategies may only address the consequences of life inequities and not their root causes. To address root causes, public health must advocate for system improvements and be the voice of low income individuals, in acquiring and reporting local community data.

One strategy identified to address the determinant of low income is to first determine what it really costs to live in Chatham-Kent. Exploration of these costs would, in turn, reveal what individuals and families actually need to earn to live here. A way to achieve this is to calculate a local living wage – a calculation designed to reflect a community's cost of living.

Chatham-Kent's local poverty reduction group, the Prosperity Roundtable (PRT), identified the calculation of a local living wage as an objective within their strategic plan to reduce poverty. The SDOH public health nurses, and members of this local group – with the support of the Medical Officer of

Health – moved forward to champion the process of determining what it costs to live, learn, work and play in Chatham-Kent.

The following report is a summary of this process. This report will provide a local contribution to a growing body of North American literature and advocacy associated with the concept of living wage.

## 2.0 Background

### 2.1 What Is A Living Wage?

According to the *Canadian Living Wage Framework* (Living Wage Canada, 2013):

A living wage is not the same as minimum wage, which is the legal minimum all employers must pay. A living wage sets a higher standard by reflecting what earners in a family need to bring home, based on the actual costs of living in a specific community. A living wage is meant to get families out of severe financial stress by lifting them out of poverty and providing a basic level of economic security. It is based on conservative, reasonable estimates of costs of living.

Living wage is calculated as the hourly rate at which a household can meet its basic needs, once government transfers (such as the Universal Child Care Benefit) have been added to the family's income and relevant deductions have been subtracted (such as income taxes and Employment Insurance premiums).

The living wage calculation is based on the needs of two-parent families with young children, but would also support any family type, or individual, throughout the life cycle so that young adults are not discouraged from having children and older workers have some extra income as they age. Furthermore, other communities have demonstrated that the rate for the model family type is not significantly different for other family types and individuals without dependents or a spouse.

One important dimension of a living wage is its ability to integrate the role of social provision and public policy directly into the calculation. The greater the income support and services provided through public policy (such as public health care, extensive and subsidized public transit, public child care services and so on), the lower the required wage workers must earn in order to attain a minimal threshold of living standards. The same is true regarding the operation of the tax and transfer system – the more generous the fiscal supports provided, the lower the private wage that workers must earn in order to achieve a decent, minimal standard of living. This ability to expose and analyze the interaction between labour market practices and public and social policy levers is a major strength of the living wage concept.

Who Benefits from a Living Wage?

| Workers   | Employers  | Community   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fair compensation</li><li>• Raised out of poverty</li><li>• Better quality of life</li><li>• Improved health</li><li>• Opportunities for education and skills training</li><li>• Improved self esteem</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduced absenteeism</li><li>• Decreased turnover rates</li><li>• Lower recruitment and training costs</li><li>• Increased morale, productivity and loyalty</li><li>• Recognition for being a socially responsible employer</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greater consumer spending power</li><li>• Increased spending in local economy, including arts, entertainment and sports</li><li>• Increased civic participation</li></ul> |

## 2.2 Public Health and Living Wage

There are a number of social and economic factors including income, education, housing, food security and employment that shape population health and an individual's opportunities to be healthy. Of all these factors, income has the greatest impact (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). Level of income influences overall living conditions, psychological functioning, and health-related behaviours such as healthy eating, active living, and tobacco and alcohol use. Furthermore, low-income is directly linked to poor childhood development and chronic stress. It has been shown that with each step up the income ladder, health outcomes are improved. It is incomes' direct link to health outcomes that public health found it important to investigate the cost of living in Chatham-Kent.

Public health interest in and action on health determinants to reduce health inequities are reflected through public health's history. According to the National Collaborating Centre for the Determinants of Health (2013), key roles for public health action to reduce health inequities are as follows:

- Assess and report on the health of the population describing the existence and impact of health inequities and the relationship between health and social inequities;
- Engage in community and multi-sectoral collaboration in addressing health needs; and
- Lead and support other stakeholders in policy advocacy for improvements in health determinants.

Promoting health equity requires improving the living conditions that keep us healthy and the social, economic and health systems that support us when we get sick. Furthermore, tackling the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources is essential for improving health equity.

## 2.3 The Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Chatham-Kent (CK) is located in southwestern Ontario and has 2,494 square kilometers of land that extends from the north shore of Lake Erie to the east shore of Lake St. Clair. In 2011, the population of CK was 103,671, with a population density of 42 people per square kilometre. About half of CK's population resides in the two main urban centres (Chatham and Wallaceburg), with the remaining population scattered across the many surrounding rural and smaller urban communities. CK is a highly agricultural community, with agriculture being the leading economic driver in 2012.

### i) CK Counts – A Community Checkup

In 2013, the Chatham-Kent Community Leaders' Cabinet produced a report entitled *CK Counts – A Community Checkup*, which highlights various indicators relevant to quality of life in CK (Chatham-Kent Community Leaders' Cabinet, 2013). The chart below illustrates CK's ranking compared to Ontario in some of the identified indicators. As shown, CK has room for improvement in key health indicators such as smoking, fruit and vegetable consumption, activity level and healthy weights. Other quality of life indicators identified for improvement within the report include early childhood education (with one in four children unprepared to enter school), post-secondary education and unemployment rates.

| Indicator  | CK       | Ontario         |
|--|----------|-----------------|
| Current smoker   | 22.3%    | 19.4%           |
| Fruit and Vegetable Consumption (five or more times/day) | 26%      | 38.4%           |
| At least moderately active in leisure time               | 48.2%    | 53.6%           |
| Overweight or obese                                      | 62.9%    | 52.3%           |
| Less than high school education                          | 21%      | 14%             |
| Unemployment rate  | 9.5%     | 7.8%            |
| Annual Average Wage                                      | \$39,668 | Canada \$44,968 |

The report also highlights that CK had a higher proportion of individuals on social assistance in comparison to the province (10.3% versus 6.9%), while recognizing that about 12% of adults and more than 15% of children were living in low income households. The report further identifies that in 2009/10, 9% of CK households were food insecure and local food bank usage increased by over 55% from 2011 to 2012. The report goes on to acknowledge the fact that someone working full-time on minimum wage would not be capable of earning enough money to afford basic life necessities.

## ii) CK's Biggest Occupation Groups

Chatham-Kent's biggest occupation groups as of 2011 are highlighted below (Chatham-Kent Workforce Planning Board, 2011). Examining the number of workers attached to the lower income occupation groups listed indicates how many workers could potentially be affected by a living wage.

| Biggest Occupations                                  | Number of Workers (2011) | Median Income |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| Motor Vehicle Assemblers, Inspectors and Testers     | 2,008                    | \$51,100      |
| Retail Salesperson and Sales Clerk                   | 1,894                    | \$30,592      |
| Farmers and Farm Managers                            | 1,595                    | \$20,440      |
| Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers and Related | 1,122                    | \$18,171      |
| Truck Drivers  | 1,036                    | \$55,076      |
| Retail Trade Managers                                | 1,004                    | \$47,390      |
| Cashiers   | 877                      | \$19,122      |
| Customer Service, Information and Related Clerks     | 850                      | \$28,890      |
| General Farm Workers                                 | 850                      | \$32,098      |
| Registered Nurses                                    | 781                      | \$81,510      |
| Elementary Schools and Kindergarten Teachers         | 763                      | \$76,602      |
| Nurse Aides, Orderlies, & Patient Service Associates | 700                      | \$38,831      |

## 3.0 Methodology

The process to calculate the cost of living in Chatham-Kent involved:

- Community consultation through the establishment of a Living Wage Working Group;
- Use of the *Canadian Living Wage Framework* to establish the assumptions and principles that would guide the exploration of CK expenses; and
- The *Working for a Living Wage: Calculation Guide* (Ivanova, 2013) to provide a guide for sourcing expenses.

Each component of the calculation process is explained below.

### *3.1 Community Consultation*

An essential aspect of this process was community participation to allow individuals to contribute in determining what it costs to live in Chatham-Kent as it relates to a living wage process. The group would add value in terms of being resources of local data, building on existing work of the Prosperity Roundtable, as well as being the voices of lived experience. A working group was formed in order to discuss expenses and expense categories; discuss what reasonable costs are for Chatham-Kent; and to establish a group of community members to champion the concept of living wage.

The working group was sourced by open invitation to the fifty-four member Prosperity Roundtable as well as CK Public Health's internal Equity Action Team. The Prosperity Roundtable is comprised of business leaders, engaged citizens, community leaders, and government and non-government organizations. The health unit's Equity Action Team consists of health unit staff representing all program areas (Environmental Health, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, Dental and Sexual Health, Infectious Disease and Emergency Preparedness, and Infant and Child Health).

#### *i) Profile of Working Group Members*

The working group was comprised of eighteen members, the majority of whom were female (77%), between the ages of 35 and 54 (62%), and employed (92%). Most members lived in Chatham (77%) and all members had post-secondary education. Over half the members had a household income of greater than \$60,000, while 15% earned less than \$20,000, 8% earned between \$20,000 and \$39,000, and 23% earned between \$40,000 and \$59,000. The majority of participants lived in a household with two adults and the number of children in the families ranged from 0 to 3.

When asked why the members chose to participate in the Living Wage Working Group, responses included:

- "Interested in the issue of living wage becoming reality to the whole community."
- "Feel that establishing a living wage would greatly improve our understanding of true cost of living."
- "Interested in improving the lives of CK residents who work so hard to scrape through life."
- "To have my life experiences benefit the study."
- "Interested in LW as a STRATEGY to improve social and health outcomes in CK."
- "This is just another way for me to love my neighbour. Each person is deserving of treatment that is fair."

#### *ii) Terms of Participation & Process*

The consultation occurred over five, three-hour long meetings that were facilitated by the two SDOH public health nurses. All resources and supporting documents were forwarded to participants prior to each meeting for their review. In the initial meeting, the working group received a presentation on living wage, as well as the national framework. Ground rules and terms of participation were discussed, which included the purpose and objectives of the working group. The expenses, and their components, as suggested by the calculation guide, were introduced, and the work began.



In subsequent meetings, the group progressed through the process of community consultation by discovering facts regarding relevant costs of living, sharing professional opinion and disclosing lived experience. To accomplish this, facilitators presented information, data and expenses as outlined by the national framework and the calculation guide. From the information presented, discussion amongst the group was encouraged and each expense was discussed at great length. Based on the discussion, one of two actions occurred:

1. Consensus votes were held for the specific expense (either the dollar amount or the source) being discussed; or
2. The need for further information, data or clarification was identified and the consensus vote was tabled until the next meeting.

Consensus votes involved members voting, by show of thumbs, based on the categories of “Agree” (thumb up), “Can live with it” (thumb sideways), or “Cannot live with it” (thumb down). If there were no votes for “Cannot live with it”, consensus was reached and the expense/decision was finalized. If there was a vote for “Cannot live with it”, further options were presented if available, if not, the participants discussed possible “what next” steps based on what would be needed to move those “Cannot live with it” vote(s) to the “Can live with it” option.

This method of group decision making was believed to produce an authentic, realistic and non-biased calculation. This process was dependent on the “candor and courtesy of participants – courtesy ensures that all participants are treated with respect; candor is equally important to ensure that participants feel comfortable and safe to express his or her thoughts, honestly, for the benefit the group” (Scheffer, Scheffer, & Braun, 2009). An atmosphere of frank and open discussion was necessary and encouraged which, at times, created conflicting viewpoints, but was essential in order to reveal unexamined assumptions and shed light on new options and opinions.

Facilitation of the process aimed to be (Goldman, 2005):

- Neutral and objective
- Geared to engage equal participation of all members
- Held in an safe, trusting environment for participants
- Organized and structured
- Empowering of the participants and participant driven (facilitators only intervening when task progression or productivity swayed or became counterproductive)
- Embraced – acknowledging that participants naturally become “stormy” in reaching consensus

### *3.2 Canadian Living Wage Framework*

The national framework was an important tool in the establishment of CK expenses. The framework was developed in 2013 by a group of national partners from the public and private sectors. It was a document that guided the facilitation of the working group by providing principles and assumptions in which decisions were to be based around. In addition, the use of the framework was important for consistency and replication. The working group voted by consensus to use the national framework principles and assumptions, as described below.

The principles of a living wage outlined in the framework are as follows:

- Enables working families to have sufficient income to cover reasonable costs;
- Promotes social inclusion;
- Supports healthy child development principles;



- Ensures that families are not under severe financial stress
- Is a conservative, reasonable estimate;
- Engenders significant and wide ranging community support; and
- Is a vehicle for promoting the benefits of social programs (such as childcare)

Assumptions for calculating a living wage outlined in the framework are as follows:

- A healthy family of 4 with 2 children
- 1 child in full-time daycare, 1 in before-and after-school care
- 75 hours of employment between two parents
- One parent taking evening courses at a local college to improve employment capacity
- Costs of living including transportation, food, rental housing, clothing, childcare, medical expenses and other
- Inclusion of tax credits, returns and government benefits

The benefits described by the framework are as follows:

- A national living wage method which standardizes the calculation allows living wage estimates to be meaningfully compared between different communities (since they will reflect real differences in costs or standards between communities, rather than methodological differences)
- It increases the credibility and consistency in approaches to policy-makers and employers (and eliminates the possibility that those resistant to the living wage would “play off” competing living wage estimates against each other.)
- It allows employers who operate in multiple jurisdictions more certainty that, were they to ascribe to a living wage benchmark in their compensation practices, that benchmark would be meaningfully and consistently applied in each location. Without that consistency, a multi-jurisdiction employer will be more reluctant to commit to a living wage policy, not knowing exactly what criteria and methodology would be utilized in the calculation for any specific jurisdiction.

### *3.3 Working for a Living Wage: Calculation Guide*

Along with the use of the national framework assumptions and principles, the calculation guide developed by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) helped the working group to source the various cost of living expenses. This guide directed the working group to source some expenses from the Statistics Canada’s database that feeds into the Market Basket Measure (MBM) (a measure of low income based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living), and others from local sources to better reflect local context.

## **4.0 Results**

### *4.1 What is included in Chatham-Kent’s cost of living?*

| Expense                                     | Monthly    | Annually (rounded) | Source   |
|---|------------|--------------------|--|
| Food (see Appendix III)                     | \$748.76   | \$8,985.00         | Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) (2013), Chatham-Kent Public Health  |
| Clothing & Footwear (see Appendix I)        | \$151.32   | \$1,816.00         | Market Basket Measure (MBM) (2011), Clothing & Footwear value, adjusted for inflation  |
| Shelter                                     |            |                    |  |
| Rent  | \$670      | \$8,040.00         | Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) (2013), Average Market Rent value, 3+ bedrooms, Chatham-Kent (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Spring 2013)   |
| Energy                                      | \$114.92   | \$1,379.00         | Local quote (2013) – CK Entegrus, average monthly bill   |
| Water                                       | \$54.71    | \$657.00           | Local quote (2013) – CK Public Utilities, average monthly bill + average of water account deposit (\$125/year or \$10.42/month, CK Public Utilities) + water tank rental (\$420/year or \$35/month, Reliance)              |
| Gas & Fuel                                  | \$62.18    | \$746.00           | Local quote (2012) – Union Gas, average monthly bill, adjusted for inflation   |
| Discretionary Communication Fund            | \$40.00    | \$480.00           | Cellular carrier quote (2013) – Fido, one cellular phone plan, with data *Assumption that landline cost is covered in 'Other' category   |
| Content Insurance                           | \$24.00    | \$288.00           | Kanetix.ca lowest quote (2013), lowest content amount (\$25-\$30,000)  |
| Total Shelter                               | \$965.81   | \$11,590.00        |  |
| Transportation                              |            |                    |  |
| Private Vehicle                             | \$435.66   | \$5,228.00         | MBM (2011), Rural Transportation value (Private vehicle), adjusted for inflation (Statistics Canada, 2013)   |
| Discretionary Secondary Transportation Fund | \$215.30   | \$2,584.00         | MBM (2011), Urban Transportation value (Public Transit), adjusted for inflation (Statistics Canada, 2013)  |
| Total Transportation                        | \$650.96   | \$7,812.00         |  |
| Other (see Appendix II)                     | \$678.66   | \$8,144.00         | MBM multiplier (2011), 75.4% of total food, clothing & footwear expense  |
| Child Care                                  | \$1,242.74 | \$14,913.00        | CK Municipality values (2013), 1 child <4, 260 days of full-day care +1 child >4, 190 days of before-/after- school care + 70 days of full-day care (PA days, school holidays)*Children camps included in 'Other' category |
| Non-OHIP Health Insurance                   | \$141.00   | \$1,692.00         | kanetix.ca quote (2013), Greenshield plan for basic health, dental & drug coverage (family coverage, no previous medical history)  |
| Adult Education                             | \$74.49    | \$894.00           | St. Clair College, Thames Campus (2013), estimate for two online continuing education courses including tuition, textbooks, and administration fees.   |
| Contingency Fund                            | \$186.15   | \$2,234.00         | Based on 4% of total living expenses (which should approximate 2 weeks pay)  |
| Total Cost of Living                        | \$4,839.89 | \$58,079.00        |  |

#### 4.2 What is not included in Chatham-Kent's cost of living?

The expenses not included in CK's cost of living follow the national framework and the calculation guide expenses for exclusion and are as follows:

- Credit card, loan or other debt/interest payments;
- Savings for retirement;
- Owning a home;
- Savings for children's future education;
- Anything beyond minimal recreation, entertainment and holidays,
- Costs of caring for a disabled, seriously ill, or elderly family member; or
- Anything other than the smallest cushion for emergencies or hard times

It is important to note that childcare and adult education costs are not perpetual expenses over the lifetime of the family. Once these expenses are no longer required, the allocated funds for these expenses could be put towards any of the above mentioned categories.

## 5.0 Discussion

### 5.1 Working Group Discussion

The cost of living expenses triggered much discussion and debate within the working group. All initial expenses presented were based on the sources suggested by the calculation guide. The following highlights the deliberation and conversation that occurred around each expense.

#### i) Food

The food expense is based on Chatham-Kent's Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) value which is sourced annually by Chatham-Kent Public Health. Questions surrounding this expense included:

- What food is included in the NFB?
- How does CK's number compare with neighbouring communities?
- Should the food value include the consideration of local food insecurity and health statistics?
- Should the food value include the consideration of CK food deserts (communities without grocery stores, such as Thamesville)?

These questions were addressed by the facilitators by providing the items of food included in the NFB and the comparative NFB values for surrounding areas. After the group reviewed the list, there was agreement that the list provided the opportunity for a family to eat healthy. The discussion around the value reflecting food insecurity and food deserts highlighted the potential for a living wage to create awareness for these issues locally and the use of a living wage to advocate for healthy social policy.

#### ii) Clothing and Footwear

This expense is sourced from Statistics Canada's Market Basket Measure (MBM). The list of items included in the MBM was provided to the group (see Appendix 1). Initial comments regarding this expense included:

- Replacement timeline for children's items was too long.
- The need to be mindful of social inclusion – children need "certain brand names to feel included by others – even if that means just one name brand shirt or pair of shoes". Overall, the group felt the replacement and social inclusion costs would be balanced out by adult items that did not need replacing as often.

#### iii) Shelter

Shelter consists of rent, utilities, a discretionary communication fund and content insurance. Each component was discussed separately.

#### Rent:

Rent was the most debated expense and it took all four meeting for consensus to be reached. The initial value presented was from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for a 3 bedroom rental unit. The value was based on the Maximum Rent Level, Level 3 (50% percentile), for a 3+ bedroom unit which was \$625 per month. The initial reaction to this value was that it was too low, and members wanted more information about how the CMHC obtained their data (types of units included in the survey, urban/rural representativeness of sample, etc.). It was also discussed how it is important not only to consider the cost of rent but the quality of the rental units, believing that the condition of the premises is important for quality of life. Members with lived experience disclosed how they have lived in housing in alignment with the CMHC values and highlighted how the term “quality” can mean different things to different people. The impact of housekeeping abilities on the “quality” of the housing unit was brought forward – emphasizing quality is reliant on both landlord and tenant.

In an attempt to address all questions and concerns brought forward, local rental advertisements were presented to compare the CMHC values to what is currently on the market and CMHC’s methodology was clarified further by contacting the CMHC directly as well as living wage sources that were familiar with this particular expense.

Themes of advocacy and idealism were strong throughout this discussion. Many people took a stand to provide a number that was not the minimum (such as the Level 3 initially presented). Advocates stated very clearly that “if people cannot keep their shelter, they cannot keep their job”. Many were willing to cut in other places in order to provide “a little more” for rental costs. Members stated that this is the time to be passionate and bold and to use a number that reflects CK.

Consensus for rent was reached in the last meeting, with final consensus around using the CMHC average market rent value for a 3+ bedroom of \$670 per month.

#### Utilities:

Local utility quotes were presented for water, electricity and gas. Provincial data was presented to the group revealing that local quotes were in-line with, or slightly higher than, provincial numbers. The group decided that the gas category should be renamed “gas/fuel” to account for those who may use propane for fuel. Inquiries for local propane quotes were unable to be obtained. Amounts for a water tank rental and water account deposit was included in the water expense.

#### Discretionary Communication Fund:

This expense category was modified from the suggested category of “Telephone” as suggested by the calculation guide. The working group decided to rename this category in order to provide the family the option of their preferred communication method. “Telephone services” is already included in the total value of the ‘Other’ category, therefore the facilitators assumed, after being unable to obtain clarification around this, that this category covered landline telephone services. The discretionary fund is based on the cost of a cellular phone plan, but the family could choose to use it in different ways – perhaps they would prefer a second phone line, a cellular phone, or to add features to their basic landline service (long distance, voice mail, etc.).

## Content Insurance:

A local quote for content insurance sourced from an online comparative site was presented to the group. The quote was based on the lowest content amount (\$25,000-\$30,000) and it was the lowest quote provided. This expense was found to be realistic and reasonable.

Consensus was reached in the second meeting.

## iv) Transportation

Like rent, transportation generated a lot of debate. This category, based on the calculation guide, includes the owning and operation of one private vehicle and the inclusion of an adult bus pass.

For the private vehicle, the MBM rural value was presented, including what it represents (Statistics Canada, 2013):

A five year old, four door compact car (Ford Focus), replaced once every five years. The value also includes: 2 annual driver's license fees, 2 driver insurance, annual vehicle registration fee, cost of vehicle including interest charges, cost of 1,500 L of gasoline, cost of two oil changes, one tune up, as well as expenditures on tires, batteries, and other automotive parts.

For the adult bus pass, local costs were presented.

The following were comments/questions that the group had:

- Acknowledgement of CK's large geography and unique municipal composition which makes it difficult to classify our rural/urban designation. This in turn makes it challenging to source a transportation cost.
- The importance of having a vehicle for social inclusion – both for adults and children
- Regarding public transportation:
  - 1 adult pass (for 10 rides) would not be enough if one adult relied on a bus to get to and from work each day.
  - The current bus schedule is limited in hours of operation and communities serviced, making it socially exclusive and limiting for varying work schedules (i.e. shifts and weekends, holidays and intra-urban commutes).
  - There is not the emphasis on public transit due to CK's geography.
  - Regular reliance on taxis is not feasible due to CK's geography and the associated high cost.
- Regarding a private vehicle:
  - The family would require car seats (one infant, one booster) considering the ages of the children.
  - Consider families that live in food deserts – how would this affect car usage, mileage and gas?
  - For families in rural CK, do they need two vehicles if both parents are working?

It was apparent that one vehicle was necessary in CK and consensus for that was reached in the third meeting. It was also apparent that local families would need an additional mode of transportation which would be called a "secondary transportation fund". The group decided it was necessary to do so in order to provide the family options for spending the money – whether it was for bus passes, taxi fares, extra gas, a second car, carpooling fees, etc. What remained unclear was how to source this fund.

To help address this, the group was presented with data regarding where people in CK work, what commute times were like in CK and the option of using the cost of local public transit to base the secondary transportation fund.

Further discussion emphasizing the difficulty around using CK public transit occurred and ideas around a living wage being used to advocate for transportation accessibility and multi-use passes were brought forward. Members discussed that people can be quite creative about their transportation when they are lacking options (e.g. driving spouses to work, carpooling, etc.). Some felt that people should not have to rely on creativity while others felt that everyone needs to be creative to make their lives work and that having more money does not eliminate the need for problem-solving.

Consensus regarding the secondary transportation fund was reached after the fourth meeting via email when the facilitators presented the option to use the MBM urban value. The rationale provided was that the use of both the MBM rural and urban transportation values would reflect the rural/urban mix of CK.

#### v) Other

The value of the 'other' category was based on the MBM, which is determined by taking a percentage (%) of the total MBM value for food, clothing, and footwear). This category was presented to the group as a discretionary fund (as opposed to a prescribed budget) in order to provide the family the opportunity for self-determined spending. The group was in agreement that this was a respectful approach to establish this expense. The MBM list (see Appendix 2) for this category was provided to the group and the general opinion was that overall it was inclusive of a family's necessities, although expenses related to caring for a pet were noticeably missing. The group was informed of the methodology behind the list, specifically that items on the list must be used by 70% of Canadian families and that the total expense of the list is based on a three year average of spending on food and clothing/footwear.

Consensus for this expense was reached in the fourth meeting.

#### vi) Childcare

The child care expense is sourced from local values provided by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Health and Family Services, Children Services Division. The discussion that ensued recognized that children age 4 in Ontario are entitled to full day kindergarten, therefore the children of the model family should include one child under the age of 4 and one child over that age, in a primary grade.

The child care value was explained by the child care expert in the working group. Municipal child care costs were used (as opposed to private child care costs) in order to apply the child care subsidy (as not all private care qualifies for subsidy) and to ensure replication and consistency in values for future living wage calculations. The child care expert reviewed the number of days of care required. Children summer camp expenses are covered in the 'Other' category.

The expert also addressed the topic of child care subsidies. The facilitators explained that this value would not be able to be calculated until the final family income was determined, at which time the subsidy would be applied. Questions that were debated included: should the child care subsidy be applied at all? Should families have to depend on subsidy or should they be able to afford care without aid? Supplemented child care outside of offered day care hours does not qualify for subsidy, impacting parents working shift-work (evenings, nights, weekends).

It was also highlighted in this discussion that this is a temporary expense for a family and the amount allotted to this category could be reallocated once child care expenses are done. Families could choose how to spend this amount (eg. debt repayment, retirement/children's education savings, or savings for a down payment on a home).

Consensus for this expense was reached at the second meeting.

#### vii) Non-OHIP Health Insurance

This expense is sourced from the lowest quote provided by a comparative site. The plan is for dental, health and drug coverage for a healthy family of four. Discussion regarding this expense included:

- The availability of dental coverage for children 17 and under, if eligible, through programs provided through public health.
- The gap in dental coverage for adults who do not have insurance and do not fall into a specific income bracket.
- The decrease in the living wage number if benefits are offered by employers.
- The consideration and impact of co-pays on a family budget.
- The pros and cons of using the lowest quote and using an average quote for this expense – the lowest quote may be more accepted, however it may not be enough especially when cheaper plans usually involve higher co-pays.
- The vast differences in plans depending on the differing needs of families and the ability to 'customize' plans.
- The fact that the more comprehensive the plan is, the more expensive it is (i.e. lower co-pays, higher chiropractic/physiotherapy amounts, etc.)

For this expense, members wanted to ensure adequate coverage, however the need to represent a conservative cost was required. Difference in opinion within the group was evident in the voting results. Votes were split between "Agree" and "Can live with" and although consensus was reached on using the lowest value, other options (such as using an average) were discussed and led to further voting. This led the group away from the consensus process initially established and the expense was revisited at the next meeting.

Consensus was reached on using a local quote for this expense in the second meeting and clarification of using of the lowest quote was obtained in the third meeting.

#### viii) Adult Education

The expense for adult education is sourced from a local quote by St. Clair College, Thames Campus, Continuing Education Department. Two quotes were presented – one for in-class education and one for on-line education. The group was reminded that internet and computer costs are included in the 'Other' category.

Discussion for this category covered the pros and cons of in-class and on-line delivery methods (i.e. transportation, flexibility, quality of life, work-life balance, family responsibilities, child care, etc.) and recognized the importance of adult education and the need to include the *option* for people to further their education.

Like childcare, this expense is also not life-long thereby presenting another opportunity for the family to allocate funds after parental education is completed.



Consensus was reached for this expense in the third meeting.

#### ix) Contingency Fund

This fund is based on: living wage per hour X 35 hours per week X 2 weeks. Discussion surrounding this expense involved:

- Comments regarding how 2 weeks is not much “but it is a start” while others felt it was much too low – this was highly reflective of life experience and current socioeconomic standings.
- The need to keep this expense conservative and how child care and adult education expenses are not life-long, therefore allowing the family the option to reallocate funds to this category if they so desire.
- The importance that savings is savings and should not be taken from other necessary expenses such as food or shelter.

With initial uncertainty around whether the two weeks of savings was per adult or not, clarification was sought (two weeks of savings per each adult) and consensus was reached for this expense in the fourth meeting. In order to make this expense more readily calculable, this expense was re-visited at a later date and it was decided that instead of basing this expense on an unknown living wage, it would be based on 4% of the family’s total living expenses (which should approximate two week so of pay per adult).

### *5.2 General Discussion Themes*

#### i) Reality versus Idealism

This theme was present in all five meetings. Members of the working group worked very hard to advocate for realistic expenses while maintaining their desire to fight for a better life for those who work so hard to make ends meet.

The mix of lived experience and field experts present within the group created an interesting dynamic. At times discussion became avid when lived experience was voicing their reality and field experts were voicing their experience. The group worked very hard to ensure all voices were heard and all opinions were considered.

At the end of the day, the expenses decided upon came from a place of hard work, advocacy, realism and the hope that one day all who work hard will be able to achieve a standard of living that promotes health, safety and stability for all.

#### ii) Subjectivity of Expenses

Throughout the process it became apparent that the expenses being discussed are intimate in nature, heavily value-laden, meaning different things to different people. The broad range of our working group’s composition became ever more important as it highlighted the subjectivity of the expenses included in a living wage.

The subjectivity of the expenses is evident in the following observations:

- What is ‘too little’ for some, may be ‘just right’ for others.
- The definition of good-quality housing ranged significantly depending on life experiences, individual standards of living and housekeeping abilities.

- Expectations around transportation ranged significantly depending on life experiences around employment history, what defines a “good, reliable” vehicle and transportation history (whether people have used public transit in the past, have car pooled, have bike/walked to work, etc.).

### iii) Conservative, Reasonable Estimates

These terms of what a living wage should represent were continually reiterated throughout the discussion and were a constant course of contention within the group. Individuals brought their own beliefs, values and experiences to the discussion and due to the diversity of the working group, a wide range of beliefs, values and experiences were represented. This resulted in the working group struggling to define what “conservative” and “reasonable” meant.

Some members felt very strongly about expenses not representing the “low of the low”, feeling that calculating a living wage is a time to be bold and include true expenses – the numbers are what they are. Others stated concern for being too bold which may result in “the door being shut on living wage before the discussion even begins”.

The group was surveyed following the experience and there was a lot of positive feedback around all aspects of the process. The group worked and debated very hard and at times struggled to find common ground in order to present expenses that all believed were realistic and achievable in today’s CK.

## 6.0 Conclusion

At the outset the working group intended to arrive at an hourly living wage rate based on the total annual cost of living for a family of four. However, after obtaining the cost of living calculation for 2014 it was determined that the availability of child care spaces and child care subsidy had a significant impact on the hourly living wage rate. Moreover, it was recognized that the living wage calculation would change from year to year depending on the cost of living index as well as governmental taxation policies and non-refundable credits.

Accordingly, the Chatham-Kent Living Wage Working Group has determined that it will produce a separate document that outlines relevant updates to arrive at an annual hourly living wage rate. The first such Chatham-Kent Living Wage Rate Update will be produced in 2016.

## Works Cited

Sudbury & District Health Unit. (2011). *10 Promising Practice to Guide Local Public Health Practice to Reduce Social Inequities in Health*. Sudbury: Sudbury & District Health Unit.

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (Spring 2013). *Rental Market Statistics*. CMHC.

- Chatham-Kent Community Leaders' Cabinet. (2013). *CK Counts – A CommunityCheck-up*. Retrieved December 13, 2013, from [http://www.chatham-kent.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/CK%20Counts/CKCounts\\_Community%20Checkup%20Final%20April%2015\\_2013.pdf](http://www.chatham-kent.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/CK%20Counts/CKCounts_Community%20Checkup%20Final%20April%2015_2013.pdf)
- Chatham-Kent Workforce Planning Board. (2011). *Chatham-Kent Labour Market Analysis*. Chatham: The Centre for Spatial Economics & Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness.
- Goldman, M. (2005). Process to the people: Distinguishing chairing vs. facilitating a meeting. *Canadian Manager*.
- Ivanova, I. (2013). *Working for a Living Wage Calculation Guide*. Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, BC Office.
- Living Wage Canada. (2013). *Canadian Living Wage Framework*. Retrieved December 5, 2013, from Living Wage Canada: [http://livingwagecanada.ca/files/3913/8382/4524/Living\\_Wage\\_Full\\_Document\\_Nov.pdf](http://livingwagecanada.ca/files/3913/8382/4524/Living_Wage_Full_Document_Nov.pdf)
- Mikkonen, J., & Raphael, D. (2010). *Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts*. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management.
- National Collaborating Centre for the Determinants of Health. (2013). *Let's Talk: Public Health Roles for Improving Health Equity*. Antigonish: National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, St. Francis Xavier University.
- Scheffer, M., Scheffer, A., & Braun, N. (2009). Collaborative consultation: A principled foundation for collective excellence. *Supervision*, 3.
- Statistics Canada. (2013, June 27). *Table 202-0809 - Market Basket Measure Thresholds (2011 base) for reference family, by Market Basket Measure region and component, 2011 constant dollars, annual (dollars)*. Retrieved October 1, 2013, from CANSIM (database)
- Statistics Canada. (2013, June 27). *Table 2: Low Income Cut Offs (1992 base) before tax*. Retrieved July 14, 2014, from Statistics Canada: [http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2013002/tbl/tbl02-eng.htm#tbl2n\\_1](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2013002/tbl/tbl02-eng.htm#tbl2n_1)

Appendix I: Items included in Clothing and Footwear category

**Table A.5**  
**Revised Clothing and Footwear component (2005) based on January 2001 Social Planning**  
**Council of Winnipeg and Winnipeg Harvest Acceptable Level of Living (A.L.L)**

| Item                              | Quantity | Replacement Schedule |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Boy's athletic shoes              | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's athletic shoes             | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's athletic shoes              | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's athletic shoes            | 1        | Annually             |
| Boy's shoes                       | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's shoes                      | 2        | Annually             |
| Men's casual shoes                | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's dress shoes-medium grade    | 2        | Every 3 Years        |
| Women's casual shoes              | 2        | Annually             |
| Women's dress shoes, medium grade | 1        | Annually             |
| Boy's summer sandals              | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Girl's summer sandals             | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Men's summer sandals              | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Women's summer sandals            | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Boy's winter boots                | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's Winter Boots               | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's workboots                   | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Women's boots                     | 2        | Every 3 Years        |
| Boy's rubber boots                | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's rubber boots               | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's rubber boots                | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's rubber boots              | 1        | Annually             |
| Boy's socks                       | 6        | Annually             |
| Girl's socks                      | 6        | Annually             |
| Men's dress socks                 | 2        | Annually             |
| Men's sport socks                 | 4        | Annually             |
| Boy's briefs                      | 7        | Annually             |
| Girl's briefs                     | 7        | Annually             |
| Men's briefs                      | 7        | Annually             |
| Women's briefs                    | 7        | Annually             |
| Women's brassiere                 | 7        | Annually             |
| Women's camisole                  | 7        | Annually             |
| Women's panty hose                | 3        | Annually             |
| Men's long underwear              | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Women's long underwear            | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Boy's jeans                       | 3        | Annually             |
| Boy's casual slacks               | 3        | Annually             |
| Boy's winter casual pants         | 3        | Annually             |
| Boy's dress pants                 | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's jeans                      | 3        | Annually             |
| Girl's summer slacks              | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's winter slacks              | 2        | Annually             |
| Men's jeans                       | 2        | Annually             |
| Men's dress/casual slacks         | 2        | Annually             |
| Women's summer slacks             | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's winter slacks             | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's sport jacket/blazer         | 1        | Every 5 Years        |
| Women's summer blazer             | 1        | Every 2 Years        |

**Table A.5 (cont'd)**

| Item                           | Quantity | Replacement Schedule |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Women's winter blazer          | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Women's summer skirt           | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's winter skirt           | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's dress                  | 2        | Annually             |
| Boy's shorts                   | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's shorts                  | 2        | Annually             |
| Men's shorts                   | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Women's shorts                 | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Boy's knit shirt               | 2        | Annually             |
| Boy's dress shirt              | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's T-shirts                | 4        | Annually             |
| Men's dress shirt              | 2        | Annually             |
| Men's knit shirt               | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's sweatshirt               | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's shirt                  | 3        | Annually             |
| Women's sweatshirt             | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's summer dress            | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's winter skirt            | 1        | Annually             |
| Boy's sweatshirt               | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's sweatshirt              | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's sweater                 | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's sweater                  | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Women's sweater                | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Boy's summer pyjamas           | 2        | Annually             |
| Boy's winter sleepwear         | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's summer nightgown        | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's winter sleepwear        | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's summer nightgown       | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's winter nightgown       | 1        | Annually             |
| Boy's swim trunks              | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's bathing suit            | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's swim trunks, boxer style | 2        | Every 3 Years        |
| Women's bathing suit           | 1        | Annually             |
| Boy's ski jacket               | 1        | Annually             |
| Boy's spring jacket            | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's snowsuit                | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's winter coat              | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Men's golf jacket              | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Men's raincoat                 | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Men's ski jacket               | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Women's winter coat            | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Women's raincoat               | 1        | Every 3 Years        |
| Boy's Raincoat                 | 1        | Annually             |
| Girl's Raincoat                | 1        | Annually             |
| Men's/women's umbrella         | 1        | Every 2 Years        |
| Boy's winter gloves            | 2        | Annually             |
| Girl's winter gloves           | 3        | Annually             |
| Men's gloves                   | 1        | Annually             |
| Women's gloves                 | 1        | Annually             |
| Boy's belt                     | 1        | Annually             |

| <b>Table A.5 (cont'd)</b>       |                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Item</b>                     | <b>Quantity</b> | <b>Replacement Schedule</b> |
| Boy's wrist watch               | 1               | Every 2 Years               |
| Girl's wrist watch              | 1               | Every 2 Years               |
| Men's wallet                    | 1               | Every 3 Years               |
| Men's wrist watch               | 1               | Every 3 Years               |
| Men's belt                      | 1               | Every 2 Years               |
| Women's wrist watch             | 1               | Every 3 Years               |
| Women's handbag                 | 1               | Every 2 Years               |
| Boy's summer/sport casual shirt | 3               | Annually                    |
| Boy's spring jacket             | 1               | Annually                    |

Source: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS28-178-2010-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS28-178-2010-eng.pdf)

Appendix II: Items included in Other category

| <b>Table A.8</b><br><b>Items used in the calculation of the multiplier</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Numerator:</b>  |  |
| <b>Telephones and telephone services</b>                                   |  |
| Purchase of telephones and equipment                                       |  |
| Telephone services   |  |
| Internet access services <sup>1</sup>                                      |  |
| <b>Household supplies</b>  |  |
| Household cleaning supplies  |  |
| Paper, plastic and foil household supplies                                 |  |
| Other household supplies   |  |
| <b>Furniture, furnishings, electric appliances</b>                         |  |
| Furniture  |  |
| Rugs, mats and underpadding  |  |
| Window coverings and household textiles                                    |  |
| Room air conditioners, portable humidifiers and dehumidifiers              |  |
| Microwave and convection ovens   |  |
| Small electric food preparation appliances                                 |  |
| Sewing machines, vacuum cleaners and other rug cleaning equipment          |  |
| Other electric equipment and appliances                                    |  |
| Attachments and parts for major appliances                                 |  |
| Lamps and lampshades   |  |
| Non-electric kitchen and cooking equipment                                 |  |
| Cutlery, flatware and silverware   |  |
| Non-electric cleaning equipment  |  |
| Other household equipment, parts and accessories                           |  |
| Maintenance and repairs of furniture and equipment                         |  |
| Services related to furnishings and equipment                              |  |
| <b>Personal care</b>   |  |
| Other medicines and pharmaceutical products                                |  |
| Personal care  |  |
| <b>Home entertainment, sports and recreation</b>                           |  |
| Sports and athletic equipment  |  |
| Toys and children's vehicles   |  |
| Electronic games and parts   |  |
| Computer equipment and supplies <sup>2</sup>                               |  |
| Home entertainment equipment and services                                  |  |
| Movie theatres   |  |
| Live sports events   |  |
| Live performing arts   |  |
| Admission to museums and other activities                                  |  |
| Rental of cablevision and satellite services                               |  |
| Bicycles, parts and accessories  |  |
| Bicycle maintenance and repairs  |  |
| Membership and single usage fees for sports and recreation facilities      |  |
| Children's camps   |  |
| <b>Reading materials and supplies</b>                                      |  |
| Reading materials and other printed matter                                 |  |
| Education Supplies   |  |
| Textbooks  |  |



**Table A.8 (cont'd)**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Numerator (continued):</b>  |
| <b>Other</b>   |
| Service charges from banks   |
| Contributions to charity   |
| Postal and other communication services                                      |
| Luggage  |
| Home security equipment  |
| Photographic goods and services  |
| <b>Denominator:</b>  |
| Food purchased from stores   |
| Women's and Girls' wear - Clothing   |
| Women's and Girls' wear - Footwear   |
| Women's and Girls' wear - Accessories  |
| Men's and Boys' wear - Clothing  |
| Men's and Boys' wear - Footwear  |
| Men's and Boys' wear - Accessories   |
| Children's wear - Clothing and cloth diapers                                 |
| Children's wear - Footwear   |
| Laundry and dry-cleaning service   |
| Laundromats and self-service dry cleaning                                    |
| Other clothing services  |
| 50% of Board paid to private households                                      |
| 50% of Food purchased from restaurants                                       |
| <sup>1</sup> Internet access services was included beginning in 2005.        |
| <sup>2</sup> Computer equipment and supplies was included beginning in 2005. |

Source: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS28-178-2010-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS28-178-2010-eng.pdf)

## Appendix III: Items included in the Nutritious Food Basket

### In-store Food Costing Form

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| City/Town:       | Store Code: |
| Surveyor's Name: | Date:       |

Note: Unless indicated otherwise, for all items listed below, choose the **lowest price** for the food product **in the preferred purchase unit** (marked in **bold and larger type**). If an item is not available in the preferred purchase unit:

1. Choose the lowest price for the first **alternative size** listed (listed below the preferred purchase unit and not in bold).
2. If that size is not available, price the item in the next alternative size listed. **Only record the price for alternative sizes when the preferred purchase unit is not available.**
3. If an item is available in a size not specified, surveyors can choose to price an alternative size closest to the preferred purchase unit.
4. If the food product is not available in any of the given sizes, choose the **alternative food product** listed (in brackets) and record the lowest price in the **preferred** size, or alternative sizes if not available.
5. If an item or appropriate substitute is not available, indicate this with "N/A" (not available) or a "—" so that it is clear that the item was simply not forgotten.

### Refrigerated Food Section

| FOOD ITEM   | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS          | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET |
|---|---------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Milk, partly skimmed, 2% M.F.   | <b>4L</b>     |       |                                    |                               |
| Cheese, processed food, cheddar, slices   | <b>500 g</b>  |       |                                    | Enter price/500 g             |
|   | 250 g         |       | price / 250 x 500 =<br>price/500 g |                               |
|   | 1 kg          |       | price /1000 x 500<br>= price/500 g |                               |
| Cheese, mozzarella, partially skim, block, not slices   | <b>200 g</b>  |       |                                    | Enter price/200 g             |
|   | 300 g         |       | price / 300 x 200 =<br>price/200 g |                               |
|   | 520 g         |       | price / 520 x 200 =<br>price/200 g |                               |
| Cheese, cheddar, block, not slices, medium<br>(If <i>medium</i> cheddar cheese is unavailable, price the cheapest alternative cheddar cheese) | <b>200 g</b>  |       |                                    | Enter price/200 g             |
|   | 300 g         |       | price / 300 x 200 =<br>price/200 g |                               |
|   | 520 g         |       | price / 520 x 200 =<br>price/200 g |                               |

| FOOD ITEM                             | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS          | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Yogurt,<br>Fruit flavoured, 1-2% M.F. | 750 g         |       |                                    | Enter price/750 g             |
|                                       | 650 g         |       | price / 650 x 750 =<br>price/750 g |                               |
|                                       | 175 g         |       | price / 175 x 750 =<br>price/750 g |                               |
| Eggs, chicken, Grade A large          | 1 dozen       |       |                                    |                               |
| Margarine, tub<br>(non hydrogenated)  | 907 g         |       |                                    | Enter price/907 ml            |
|                                       | 454 g         |       | price / 454 x 907 =<br>price/907 g |                               |

### Meat Department

**Note:** For the next section, unless specified otherwise, write down the **price per kilogram**. The package sizes will vary and do not have to be any particular size. Surveyors are, however, encouraged to limit pricing to meat packages that are less than 3 kg. Meat is assumed to be fresh, not frozen.

| FOOD ITEM  | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE            | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS          | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET                |
|--|---------------|------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Chicken legs, no back<br>(thigh + leg)<br><br>(If chicken legs, <i>no back</i> are unavailable, price chicken legs, <i>with back</i> )<br>(If chicken legs, <i>with back</i> are unavailable, price <i>whole chicken</i> ) | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg |  |
|  | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg | Enter if no data for chicken legs, no back   |
|  | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg | Enter if no data for chicken legs, with back |
| Inside round roast<br><br>(If <i>inside</i> round roast is unavailable, price <i>outside</i> round)<br>(If <i>outside</i> round roast is unavailable, price <i>full round</i> roast)                                       | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg |  |
|  | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg | Enter if no data for inside round roast      |
|  | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg | Enter if no data for outside round roast     |
| Inside round steak<br><br>(If <i>inside</i> round steak is unavailable, price <i>outside</i> round steak)<br>(If <i>outside</i> round steak is unavailable, price <i>full round</i> steak)                                 | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg |  |
|  | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg | Enter if no data for inside round steak      |
|  | 1 kg          | ___/kg<br>___/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg | Enter if no data for outside round steak     |

| FOOD ITEM   | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE   | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS          | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET           |
|---|---------------|---------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Ground beef, lean</b>  | <b>1 kg</b>   | ____/kg | price/lb x 2.2026                  |   |
|   |               | ____/lb | lb = price/kg                      |   |
| (If <i>lean</i> ground beef is unavailable, price <i>medium</i> ground beef)                        | 1 kg          | ____/kg | price/lb x 2.2026                  | Enter if no data for lean ground beef   |
|   |               | ____/lb | lb = price/kg                      |   |
| (If <i>medium</i> ground beef is unavailable, price <i>regular</i> ground beef)                     | 1 kg          | ____/kg | price/lb x 2.2026                  | Enter if no data for medium ground beef |
|   |               | ____/lb | lb = price/kg                      |   |
| <b>Pork loin centre-cut chops, bone in</b>  | <b>1 kg</b>   | ____/kg | price/lb x 2.2026                  |   |
|   |               | ____/lb | lb = price/kg                      |   |
| (If <i>centre-cut</i> chops are unavailable, price pork loin <i>rib-end</i> chops)                  | 1 kg          | ____/kg | price/lb x 2.2026                  | Enter if no data for centre-cut chops   |
|   |               | ____/lb | lb = price/kg                      |   |
| (If pork loin <i>rib-end</i> chops are unavailable, price pork <i>shoulder butt</i> chops, bone-in) | 1 kg          | ____/kg | price/lb x 2.2026                  | Enter if no data for rib-end chops      |
|   |               | ____/lb | lb = price/kg                      |   |
| <b>Pre-packaged sliced cooked ham, not lower fat</b>  | <b>175 g</b>  |         |                                    | Enter price/175 g                       |
|   | 500 g         |         | price / 500 x 175 =<br>price/175 g |   |
|   | 375 g         |         | price / 375 x 175 =<br>price/175 g |   |

### Produce Department

**Note:** For carrots, apples, oranges, potatoes and onions, note the price of each version displayed, i.e., price per kilo or per pound if loose, price per 3 lb bag, 4 lb bag and 5 lb bag. For other items, choose the **lowest price** for the food product in the **preferred purchase unit** (marked in **bold and larger print**).

If any of the following vegetables are priced by the unit, for instance \$1.99 for a bunch of broccoli, note the price and **weigh** up to three average sized bunches of broccoli.

| FOOD ITEM                | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE              | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS                        | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Cantaloupe, whole, raw   | <b>1 kg</b>   | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Sweet potato, whole, raw | <b>1 kg</b>   | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Carrot, whole, raw       | loose         | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
|                          | 2 lb bag      |                    | price / 2 x 2.2026<br>= price/kg                 |                               |
|                          | 3 lb bag      |                    | price / 3 x 2.2026<br>= price/kg                 |                               |
|                          | 5 lb bag      |                    | price / 5 x 2.2026<br>= price/kg                 |                               |
|                          | <b>1 kg</b>   |                    | Choose lowest price/kg from above for data entry | Enter lowest price/kg         |
| Romaine lettuce, head    | <b>1 kg</b>   | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Broccoli, raw            | <b>1 kg</b>   | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Green pepper, sweet, raw | <b>1 kg</b>   | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |

| FOOD ITEM   | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE              | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS                        | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET        |
|---|---------------|--------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Apples, any variety   | loose         | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                                      |
|   | 3 lb bag      |                    | price / 3 x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg              |                                      |
|   | 4 lb bag      |                    | price / 4 x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg              |                                      |
|   | 5 lb bag      |                    | price / 5 x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg              |                                      |
|   | 1 kg          |                    | Choose lowest price/kg from above for data entry | Enter lowest price/kg                |
| Bananas   | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                                      |
| Red or green grapes, seedless<br><br>(If seedless grapes are unavailable, price red or green seeded grapes) | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                                      |
|   | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               | Enter if no data for seedless grapes |
| Oranges (not mandarin, clementine, tangerine etc.)  | loose         | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                                      |
|   | 3 lb bag      |                    | price / 3 x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg              |                                      |
|   | 4 lb bag      |                    | price / 4 x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg              |                                      |
|   | 1 kg          |                    | Choose lowest price/kg from above for data entry | Enter lowest price/kg                |
| Pears, any variety  | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                                      |

| FOOD ITEM                            | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE              | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS                        | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Potatoes, whole, raw                 | loose         | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
|                                      | 4.54 kg       |                    |  | Enter price/4.54 kg           |
|                                      | 5 lb bag      |                    | Price/5 x 2.2026 x 4.54 = price /4.54 kg         |                               |
| Rutabagas, yellow turnip, whole, raw | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Cabbage, whole, raw                  | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Cucumber, any variety                | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Celery                               | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Lettuce, iceberg (head)              | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
| Mushroom, any variety                | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               | Enter price/kg                |
|                                      | 227 g         |                    | price/227 x 1000 = price/1 kg                    |                               |
| Onions, cooking                      | Loose         | ____/kg<br>____/lb | price/lb x 2.2026<br>lb = price/kg               |                               |
|                                      | 2 lb bag      |                    | price/ 2 x 2.2026 = price/kg                     |                               |
|                                      | 3 lb bag      |                    | price/ 3 x 2.2026 = price/kg                     |                               |
|                                      | 5 lb bag      |                    | price/ 5 x 2.2026 = price/kg                     |                               |
|                                      | 1 kg          |                    | Choose lowest price/kg from above for data entry | Enter lowest price/kg         |
| Tomatoes, raw                        | 1 kg          | ____/kg<br>____/lb | Choose lowest price/kg from above for data entry | Enter lowest price/kg         |



### Bakery or Bread Aisle

**Note:** Unless indicated otherwise, for all items listed below, choose the **lowest price** for the food product in the preferred purchase unit (marked in **bold and larger print**). For bread, price the brand that is cheapest, excluding in-store bakery bread.

| FOOD ITEM   | PURCHASE UNIT        | PRICE | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS  | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET                        |
|---|----------------------|-------|--|--|
| Bread, pita, whole wheat  | <b>284 g</b>         |       |  |  |
|   | 400 g                |       | Price/400 x 284 =<br>price/284 g   |  |
|   | 450 g                |       | Price/450 x 284 =<br>price/284 g   |  |
| Bread, whole wheat, sliced, (100% whole wheat)<br><br>(If 100% whole wheat bread is unavailable, price 60% whole wheat bread, sliced) | <b>675 g</b>         |       |  | Enter price/675 g                                    |
|   | 570 g                |       | price / 570 x 675 =<br>price/675 g   |  |
|   | 450 g                |       | price / 450 x 675 =<br>price/675 g   |  |
|   | <b>675 g</b>         |       |  | Enter price if 100% whole wheat bread is unavailable |
|   | 570 g                |       | price / 570 x 675 =<br>price/675 g   |  |
|   | 450 g                |       | price / 450 x 675 =<br>price/675 g   |  |
| Bread, white, sliced  | <b>675 g</b>         |       |  |  |
| Rolls, hamburger  | <b>350g (8 pack)</b> |       | Read the Nutrition Facts Table to find out how many grams 1 bun weighs. Multiply the weight of the bun by the number of buns in the package. This gives you the total number of grams in the entire package.<br><br>Cost of package x 350 weight of entire package = price/350 g | Enter price/350 g                                    |

### Frozen Food Department

**Note:** Unless indicated otherwise, for all items listed below, choose the **lowest price** for the food product in the preferred purchase unit (marked in **bold and larger print**).

| FOOD ITEM   | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS        | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET                           |
|---|---------------|-------|----------------------------------|---|
| Frozen fish fillets, (the cheapest of haddock, sole, pollock, or halibut)   | <b>400 g</b>  |       |                                  | Enter price/400 g                                       |
|   | 680 g         |       | price / 680 x 400 = price/400 g  |   |
| Cut beans, frozen, green or yellow  | <b>1 kg</b>   |       |                                  |   |
| Frozen mixed vegetables, standard mix (carrots and peas)<br><br>(If standard mix is unavailable, choose a mix with carrots, peas, plus other vegetables)<br><br>(If standard mix plus other vegetables is unavailable, choose a mix with broccoli, cauliflower, etc.) | <b>1 kg</b>   |       |                                  | Enter price/kg  |
|   | 1 kg          |       |                                  | Enter if no data for standard mix                       |
|   | 1 kg          |       |                                  | Enter if no data for standard mix plus other vegetables |
| Peas, green, frozen   | <b>1 kg</b>   |       |                                  |   |
| Frozen orange juice concentrate   | <b>355 mL</b> |       |                                  | Enter price/355 mL                                      |
|   | 341 mL        |       | price / 341 x 355 = price/355 mL |   |
| Strawberries, frozen, unsweetened   | <b>600 g</b>  |       |                                  |   |

| FOOD ITEM   | PURCHASE UNIT | PRICE | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS           | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET                       |
|---|---------------|-------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Lentils, dry  | 454 g         |       |                                     | Enter price/454 g                                   |
|   | 450 g         |       | price / 450 x 454 = price/454 g     |   |
|   | 907g          |       | price / 907 x 454=price/454g        |   |
| Cookie, plain (arrowroot or social tea)   | 350 g         |       |                                     | Enter price/350 g                                   |
|   | 400 g         |       | price / 400 x 350 = price/350 g     |   |
|   | 500 g         |       | price / 500 x 350 = price/350 g     |   |
|   | 570 g         |       | price / 570 x 350 = price/350 g     |   |
| Cracker, saltine, unsalted  | 450 g         |       |                                     | Enter price/450 g                                   |
|   | 454 g         |       | price / 454 x 450 g = price/450 g   |   |
| Peanut butter, smooth type, sugar and salt added  | 500 g         |       |                                     |   |
| Vegetable oil, canola or canola blend (not olive oil)   | 1.89 L        |       |                                     | Enter price /1.89 L                                 |
|   | 946 mL        |       | price / 0.946 x 1.89 = price/1.89 L |   |
|   | 2 L           |       | price / 2 x 1.89 = price/1.89 L     |   |
|   | 3 L           |       | price / 3 x 1.89 = price/1.89 L     |   |
| Salad dressing, mayonnaise-type, for instance, Miracle Whip®. Do not price mayonnaise!<br><br>(If mayonnaise-type salad dressing is unavailable, price 50% less fat mayonnaise-type salad dressing) | 475 mL        |       |                                     | Enter price/475 mL                                  |
|   | 1 L           |       | price / 1000 x 475 = price/475 mL   |   |
|   | 475 mL        |       |                                     | Enter if no data for mayonnaise-type salad dressing |
|   | 1 L           |       | price / 1000 x 475 = price/475 mL   |   |
| Salad dressing, Italian, regular  | 950 mL        |       |                                     | Enter price/950 mL                                  |
|   | 475 mL        |       | price / 475 x 950 = price/950 mL    |   |
| Pasta, spaghetti, enriched  | 900 g         |       |                                     | Enter price/900 g                                   |
|   | 800 g         |       | price / 800 x 900 = price/900 g     |   |
| Rice, white, long grain, parboiled or converted   | 900 g         |       |                                     | Enter price/900 g                                   |
|   | 750 g         |       | price / 750 x 900 = price/900 g     |   |
| Peanuts, dry roasted  | 700 g         |       |                                     |   |
|   | 600 g         |       | price / 600 x 700 = price/700 g     |   |

### Canned, Packaged and Dry Foods

**Note:** Unless indicated otherwise, for all items listed below, choose the **lowest price** for the food product in the preferred purchase unit (marked in **bold and larger print**).

| FOOD ITEM  | PURCHASE UNIT  | PRICE | COMMENTS AND CALCULATIONS         | ✓ DATA ENTERED TO SPREADSHEET          |
|--|----------------|-------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Beans, baked, canned in tomato sauce   | <b>398 ml</b>  |       |                                   |  |
| Canned flaked light tuna, water packed<br><br>(If water packed tuna is unavailable in either size specified, price canned flaked light tuna packed in vegetable broth) | <b>170 g</b>   |       |                                   | Enter price/170 g                      |
|  | 184 g          |       | price / 184 x 170 = price/170 g   |  |
|  | 170 g          |       |                                   | Enter if no data for water packed tuna |
|  | 184 g          |       | price / 184 x 170 = price/170 g   |  |
| Salmon, pink, canned   | <b>213 g</b>   |       |                                   |  |
| Peaches, canned halves or slices, water, juice, or light syrup packed  | <b>398 ml</b>  |       |                                   | Enter price/398 mL                     |
|  | 796 ml         |       | price / 796 x 398 = price/398 ml  |  |
| Corn, canned, whole kernel   | <b>341 mL</b>  |       |                                   |  |
| Tomatoes, canned whole, (not stewed)   | <b>796 mL</b>  |       |                                   | Enter price /796 ml                    |
|  | 540 ml         |       | price / 540 x 796 = price/796 ml  |  |
| Apple juice, unsweetened, pure or from concentrate   | <b>1.36 L</b>  |       |                                   | Enter price /1.36 L                    |
|  | 1 L tetra pack |       | price/L x 1.36 = price/1.36 L     |  |
|  | 1.2 L          |       | price/1.2 L X 1.36 = price/1.36 L |  |
| Tomato juice cocktail, regular or vegetable cocktail, regular  | <b>1.89 L</b>  |       |                                   |  |
| Cereal, bran flakes with raisins   | <b>775 g</b>   |       |                                   |  |
| Cereal, toasted oat, Os  | <b>525 g</b>   |       |                                   |  |
| Regular quick cooking oatmeal, not instant   | <b>1 kg</b>    |       |                                   | Enter price/kg                         |
|  | 1.35 kg        |       | price / 1.35 x 1 = price/1 k g    |  |
| Flour, whole wheat   | <b>2.5 kg</b>  |       |                                   |  |
| Flour, white, enriched, all purpose  | <b>2.5 kg</b>  |       |                                   |  |
| Raisins, any variety   | <b>750 g</b>   |       |                                   |  |
|  | 375 g          |       | price / 375 x 750 = price/750 g   |  |

Source: <http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/healthy-communities/public-health/guidance-docs/NutritiousFoodBasket.pdf>