Nantes Université

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Unités d'enseignement et de recherche de l'UFR de Sociologie

Diplôme : Licence Section : Sociologie Année 3ème Cycle : 1er

Unité SLGSON5U04 : Compétences Transversales 5

Enseignement SLGSON5E09 : Anglais

Nom du Professeur responsable : Mme Sylvie KERVISION

Observations des Professeurs : L'utilisation du dictionnaire est interdite. Documents non autorisés

Date : jeudi 26 juin 2025
Heure : 13h00
Lieu : IAE bâtiment Erdre/Amphi Graslin
Durée : 2 heures

PAS DE SORTIE AUTORISEE avant 1H00 d'épreuve

Répondez **UNIQUEMENT SUR LE SUJET** dans les espaces prévus à cet effet

N'inscrivez **RIEN DANS LES ZONES GRISEES** (prévues pour la correction)

Daily grind for the working poor: One-third of workers earn less than $20 per hour, says report

Low-wage jobs are prevalent in New Brunswick and across the Atlantic region, especially in accommodation and food services

by David Gordon Koch July 24, 2024

About one-third of workers in the Atlantic region are paid less than $20 per hour, leaving them in conditions of severe financial insecurity, according to a new report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

In New Brunswick, 33 per cent of workers earned no more than $20 per hour, and ten per cent earned less than $15 per hour, the report states, citing Statistics Canada. Similar figures were reported in Nova Scotia, P.E.I., and Newfoundland and Labrador.

That means that in New Brunswick alone, more than 114,000 workers take home less than a living wage, generally defined as the amount needed to "enjoy a decent quality of life and avoid severe financial stress."

In the cities of New Brunswick, a living wage ranges from $21.65 in Bathurst to $24.50 in Fredericton, according to 2023 figures from the Saint John-based Human Development Council.

The "living wage gap" is likely to grow wider when those figures are updated, according to the CCPA report released Wednesday.

The report, titled Atlantic Canada Needs a Raise, prompted an immediate response from the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, which called for wage increases and the implementation of more robust labour standards and worker protections.

"The provincial minimum wage should ensure that workers can afford life's necessities," NBFL President Daniel Légère said in a statement. "Many families struggle to meet their basic needs. Financial insecurity impacts workers' health, well-being, and overall quality of life."

The minimum wage in New Brunswick currently stands at $15.30 per hour, compared to $15.20 in Nova Scotia, $15.40 in P.E.I, and $15.60 in Newfoundland and Labrador. Across the country, minimum wages range from a low of $14 per hour in Saskatchewan (slated to reach $15 in October) to a high of $19 in Nunavut, according to industry data.

Low-wage job opportunities are many and varied in New Brunswick, often involving significant responsibility and hard physical labour, according to a brief review of openings online.

New openings listed on *Indeed.com* include one for a *Carpet, Air Duct and Water Technician* in Fredericton at $16-$20 per hour, a *Hotel Receptionist* in Bathurst from $16 an hour, and a *Shipper-Receiver* in Moncton for $18 per hour.

Minimum wages are generally set through political processes driven by industrial lobbyists, resulting in wages that don't keep up with the cost of living, according to the report, co-authored by Christine Saulnier and Kenya Thompson of the CCPA's Nova Scotia office.

"This is a problem," the report states. "Governments need to recognize the wage as a foundational and minimal protection against exploitation, and look more closely at the real household costs faced by working families to make these decisions."

Across the region, the industry with the highest proportion of low-wage workers was accommodation and food services. In New Brunswick, 84 per cent of workers in that sector earned $20 per hour or less. The retail sector is also highly dependent on low-wage workers, with 69 per cent of New Brunswickers in that sector earning $20 per hour or less.

Women were more likely to be found in low-wage jobs in every province — 54 per cent of New Brunswickers in low-wage jobs were women, for example — a fact that won't be lost on groups campaigning against the feminization of poverty.

The vast majority of low-wage workers in every Atlantic province were over the age of 20 and not students. Those stats are significant because industry groups often claim that low-wage workers don't need a raise since they are ostensibly made up largely of students or young people living with their parents, a questionable argument considering high student debt levels. (...)



Provinces and Territories of Canada

I. Living Wage (approx. 100 words) 4 points

"What if we spoke of 'living power' instead of 'purchasing power'?" (French sociologist Nicolas Framont, June 2022). Explain what the document presents in terms of the evolution of living wages and household revenue. How is minimum wage an imperfect indicator?

II. The Social Cost of Poverty (approx. 100 words) 4 points

"Many families struggle to meet their basic needs. Financial insecurity impacts workers' health, well-being, and overall quality of life."

Besides the ethical problem posed by poverty and inequalities, how do they constitute an economic problem for a society? Which tools can a government use to fight them?

III. Invisibilisation and Exploitation (approx. 100 words) 4 points

*Explain what the text presents in terms of who low wage workers are and the jobs they are doing. How do you react to the idea that "*Governments need to recognize the wage as a foundational and minimal protection against exploitation, and look more closely at the real household costs faced by working families to make these decisions."

IV. Women (approx. 100 words) 4 points

"Women were more likely to be found in low-wage jobs in every province — 54 per cent of New Brunswickers in low-wage jobs were women, for example — a fact that won't be lost on groups campaigning against the feminization of poverty." Discuss.

V. Students (approx. 100 words) 4 points

"..industry groups often claim that low-wage workers don't need a raise since they are ostensibly made up largely of students or young people living with their parents"

How do you feel about some students having to work, or choosing to do so? Do you think student jobs should be obligatory and associated to a guaranteed income, or on the contrary banned?

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