

Please ask your state and local representatives to support a minimum wage that is a living wage

What is the present minimum wage? A minimum wage job now pays \$7.25 per hour. Most of these positions provide less than a 40-hour week, but even if you could get 40 hours, your pre-tax pay of \$1,160 only provides \$870 in take-home pay. So, you've worked a full-time job to find yourself \$209 in the hole each month. Now, add a health issue that you can't afford. Consider the extra food costs of an older child or day care for one too young to stay at home alone. Which of these bills would you choose not to pay so that you can take care of an unexpected expense or pay off school loans? This is the daily life of 391,000 Kentuckians making minimum wage and trying to make ends meet.

Why is this too little to live on? Imagine your most frugal self living through a single month. The average two-bedroom rent in Louisville is \$726, your utilities are unavoidable and will probably add another \$125 for the month even if you use blankets to keep warm. We all have to eat, and even with Ramen noodles and peanut butter sandwiches, you'll need at least \$300 per month. If you've decided to forgo a car, you still need \$54 to buy a TARC pass to get to work. That all adds up to \$1,205 for a no-frills life of going to work and eating the same sandwich each day.

What are the benefits of a livable minimum wage? Workers who make minimum include the people who take care of many of our seniors and who care for our children when we are at work. Don't all of these people deserve a little better than a peanut butter sandwich and headache about how to pay the bills after 40 hours of work? Plus, we deserve a community where the people caring for our most precious resources (our children and elderly) are treated with respect so that we know we can count on them. And, increasing income for those with the least helps the economy because each dollar gets spent right away in our community. It doesn't require a new tax or program but gives people the freedom to live their lives with dignity.

How much is needed to make the minimum wage livable? For a single parent with a child, the minimum pay to afford a two-bedroom apartment and expenses is \$14 per hour. Even a single person willing to live in an affordable single room apartment would need a wage of \$11.40 per hour to afford an apartment and basic needs. While many recent minimum wage proposals fall short of that at \$10.10 per hour, any increase in the minimum wage at the local, state or federal level would be supported by The Coalition for the Homeless.