

**A Living Wage Proposal  
Presented to the Asheville City Council by  
The Asheville/Buncombe Living Wage Campaign**

*Whereas the City of Asheville has a vested interest in the health, safety, self-sufficiency and general welfare of all those who live and work in Asheville; and*

*Whereas the City of Asheville wishes to promote the dignity of work and believes that people who work hard should be able to meet their basic needs for housing, food, transportation, healthcare and childcare with as little governmental subsidy as possible; and*

*Whereas the City of Asheville is a model of the importance of paying its own employees fair and adequate wages; and*

*Whereas the City of Asheville desires to work cooperatively with others in the community to reward hard work, increase self-sufficiency and reduce poverty; and*

*Whereas the City of Asheville believes that there is a direct correlation between a community's well-being and the well-being of its citizens; now therefore*

BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Asheville officially adopts as one of its major goals and priorities the reduction of poverty and the promotion of self-sufficiency throughout Asheville in the following ways:

1. By passing a Living Wage Ordinance which establishes a Living Wage of \$10.86 per hour without health insurance and \$9.50 per hour with health insurance. This is based on the guideline that when an individual or family pays more than 30% on housing, they become economically compromised.\* These wage levels would be adjusted annually to reflect cost-of-living increases.\*\* Since full and regular part-time City of Asheville employees are already getting paid this wage level, the budget will not be affected. However, this will set a standard for others in community to emulate and prevent the future erosion of wage value.
2. By making the payment of a Living Wage one of the criteria for consideration in the City's contract bidding process.
3. By promoting the Living Wage and its benefits throughout the city; establishing a Living Wage Business Certification Program that would include various incentives for Living Wage Businesses; and working with state legislators to change state laws in such a way that provide Asheville and other local governments with more Living Wage policy options (such as offering tax incentives for Living Wage businesses).
4. By authorizing the Asheville/Buncombe Living Wage Campaign to prepare and present an annual Living Wage report, including any additional recommendations, to this council and subsequent City Councils.

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*The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development states that the Fair Market Rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area for 2007 is \$543 a month. Dividing \$543 by 0.30, an individual would have to earn at least \$1,810 a month, or \$21,720 a year, to afford a one-bedroom apartment in the City of Asheville. Dividing \$21,720 by 2000 hours of work in a year, an individual working full time would need to make at least \$10.86 an hour to be able to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Asheville. The \$9.50 health care wage level simply acknowledges the high cost for employers choosing to provide this valuable and increasingly unavailable benefit for employees.*

*After reviewing a total of 53 property rent prices from the Affordable Housing Coalition's Rental Guide, the IWANNA, Mountain Express and www.socialserve.com, The Asheville Buncombe Living Wage Campaign determined that a net income of \$21,720/year (\$10.86/hour) would allow an employee to rent about 20% of these 53 listed one bedroom apartments in Asheville.*

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*We recommend that the Asheville Living Wage be adjusted annually using the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for the Southern region. This would be a minimum increase for all employees. The CPI-W is published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. (From 1996-2005, the annual average was 2.9%)*

Last Revised on 1-9-07