

# Alternatives Federal Credit Union Living Wage Study 2015

The first Living Wage study was conducted in 1994 in order to determine how much Alternatives should pay its employees as a starting salary. The credit union engaged an intern from the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University to work with then Assistant Manager Leni Hochman to conduct the study. (Alternatives has partnered with student interns from the ILR School for each subsequent Living Wage study.) Initially intended for internal use, the credit union's board of directors decided that the information was valuable and released the study to the community. Alternatives has continued to update the Living Wage study every two years.

This year's intern, Michelle Yinjie Lu, a masters' candidate in Cornell's ILR School worked with Karl Graham, Alternatives' Director of Community Relations and Development to update the study. At its May 28 meeting, Alternatives' Board of Directors voted unanimously to raise the credit union's starting wage to the new Living Wage level.

According to the updated Living Wage Study, the cost in 2015 for a single person working full-time to live in Tompkins County is \$28,637.40 a year or \$13.77 per 40 hour work week. The new Living Wage figure is an increase of 9.13% from \$12.62 per hour two years ago.

The categories in the study include housing, food, transportation, internet and cell phone, healthcare, and other necessities, as well as a modest allowance for recreation and

savings. Two categories increased over 10% from the previous study: Rent increased 12.8% and payroll, federal and state taxes increased 9.1%, 15.37% and 14.02% respectively. Communication (internet and cell phone) increased 8.7%. Health care increased a relatively modest 7.07%.

The rate of \$13.77 per hour represents the Living Wage for an individual whose employer provides health insurance. For employers that don't offer health insurance, a rate of \$14.34 per hour would be needed to allow their employee's to purchase the Excellus Silver Plan on the NYS Health Insurance Exchange/Marketplace.

For more information, contact:

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### Living Wage Study comparison 2012 - 2014

Category	2012 Monthly	2014 Monthly	% Change	2014 Yearly	Source
<b>Rent</b> One bedroom	863.00	943.00	12.80%	11,316.00	HUD Final FY 2014 FMR Documentation System
<b>Food</b> Avg of male and female USDA low cost plan	218.50	225.65	3.27%	2,707.80	Low-cost Official USDA Food Plan: Avg of male and female ages 19-50
<b>Transportation</b> Proportional combination of drive alone, carpool, public transit and biking	189.01	191.95	1.56%	2,303.40	Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council, BLS, US Census
<b>Communication</b> Internet and cell phone	63.24	68.74	8.70%	824.88	Verizon, Time Warner Cable, AT&T, US Census
<b>Healthcare</b> Employee only, full time, more than two years, average of three plans	188.64	201.98	7.07%	2,423.76	Alternatives, BLS
<b>Recreation</b> Increased by inflation	107.00	110.06	2.86%	1,320.72	BLS
<b>Savings</b> Increased by inflation	64.00	65.83	2.86%	789.96	BLS
<b>Misc.</b> Housekeeping supplies, footwear, apparel products/services and personal care/services	113.75	121.50	6.81%	1,458.00	
<b>Net</b>	1780.14	1928.71	8.35%	23,144.52	
<b>Taxes</b>					
Payroll (S.S.)	167.33	182.56	9.10%	2,190.72	NYS and Federal tax tables
Federal	165.91	191.41	15.37%	2,296.92	
State	73.47	83.77	14.02%	1,005.24	
<b>Total</b>	2,186.85	2,386.45	9.13	28,637.40	
<b>Hourly @40 hours/week</b>	12.62	13.77			
<b>Addendum</b> Childcare costs					
Infant	1,061.64	1,130.58	6.49%	13,566.96	Average of rates from Downtown Ithaca Children's Center, Bright Horizons/Cornell Child Care Center, NYS Self-sufficiency Report, NYS Office of Children and Family Services.
Toddler	1,062.32	1,138.00	7.12%	13,656.00	
Pre-school	951.19	1,013.61	6.56%	12,163.32	
Although this data is not included in the determination of a living wage for a single-household individual, it is provided here for reference.					