

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, ENRIQUE PEPÉN, BRIAN WORRELL, BREADON, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, SANTANA, AND WEBER



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

LIVING WAGE ORDINANCE FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

WHEREAS, Boston has long been a leader in promoting fair pay and economic justice, including through its Boston Jobs and Living Wage Ordinance, which requires that people working on City contracts earn enough to live and raise a family in our city; and

WHEREAS, The same values that guide how Boston treats contracted workers should also guide how the City treats its own employees, many of whom are the first point of contact for residents and the face of city government in neighborhoods across Boston; and

WHEREAS, A small but meaningful number of Boston's municipal employees earn less than the City's current Living Wage, often in entry-level positions in departments such as Parks, Public Works, and Facilities; and

WHEREAS, Ensuring that every City employee earns at least the Living Wage would improve recruitment and retention, reduce turnover, and strengthen the quality of public services residents rely on every day; and

WHEREAS, Low-wage City employees often struggle to afford housing, transportation, and childcare in the very city they serve, which undermines Boston's commitment to being an equitable and inclusive employer; and

WHEREAS, Raising the pay of Boston's lowest-wage employees would have a modest fiscal impact but a significant human impact, helping families achieve greater stability and reinforcing the principle that public service should not come at the cost of financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, This ordinance respects the City's collective bargaining process and Mayor's executive authority ensuring a responsible and thoughtful phased approach that can be implemented through the Mayor's Office of Human Resources; and

WHEREAS, By aligning the City's own pay practices with the Living Wage standard it already expects of its vendors, Boston can lead by example and demonstrate that a just wage is both achievable and essential; **NOW, THEREFORE**

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:

Section 1: General

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, *Chapter XXIV: Boston Jobs, Living Wage and Prevailing Wage Ordinance*, is hereby amended by the following sections:

Section 2: Title and Purpose

In § 24-1, after the last sentence, insert:

“It is further the purpose of this Chapter to ensure that employees of the City of Boston are compensated at no less than the Living Wage established herein, in order to promote fair and equitable compensation for municipal service consistent with fiscal prudence and applicable collective bargaining and budgetary requirements.”

Section 3: Definitions

In § 24-2, insert the following new definition in alphabetical order:

‘*CITY EMPLOYEE.*’ A person employed by the City of Boston whose compensation is paid directly by the City and subject to federal or state tax withholding by the City of Boston.

Section 4: Exemptions

Insert new paragraph (E) to § 24-3.2 as follows:

- (E) The Living Wage requirement, as applied to City Employees, shall not apply to:
- (1) Positions compensated solely by stipends, including board and commission stipends;
 - (2) Youth employment programs, including those funded or administered as “Youth Programs;”
 - (4) Internships, volunteer or unpaid positions.

Section 5: Applicability

Insert new sub-section(B) through (E) in § 24-6.1 as follows:

§ 24-6.1 Applicability.

(A) Covered vendors shall pay no less than the Living Wage to covered employees.

(B) The City of Boston shall pay no less than the Living Wage to all City Employees,

except as provided in § 24-3.2(E).

(C) The Office of Human Resources shall ensure that any City pay schedule, step, or rate of compensation falling below the Living Wage is adjusted to comply with this Chapter on the effective date of each annual Living Wage revision established pursuant to § 24-6.2.

(D) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude the negotiation of wages above the Living Wage through collective bargaining or to diminish any rights afforded under M.G.L. c. 150E.

(E) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, the Living Wage shall apply to City Employees who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement. For City Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement, the Living Wage shall apply only as and when compliance with its terms is incorporated into a successor agreement negotiated after the effective date of this ordinance.

Section 6: Implementation

(A) The Office of Human Resources, in consultation with the Office of Workforce Development and the City Auditor, shall prepare and transmit to the City Council a written implementation plan detailing administrative procedures, fiscal implications, and timelines necessary to effectuate this ordinance.

(B) Said plan shall be submitted to the City Council within sixty (60) days prior to the effective date of this ordinance.

(C) Nothing contained herein shall be deemed or construed to authorize any expenditure, payroll adjustment, or obligation in excess of appropriations duly made, or in contravention of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44 or other applicable provisions of law.

(D) The Mayor, through the Office of Human Resources, shall retain executive authority for administration and execution of this ordinance consistent with the City Charter and budgetary appropriations.

Section 7: Severability

The provisions of this ordinance are severable and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which remain in full force and effect.

Section 8: Effective Date

This ordinance shall take effect on July 1, 2026, and shall apply to wages paid on and after said date.