

Summary of Saint Paul Living Wage Ordinance

January 2026

The Saint Paul City Council has adopted a new Living Wage Ordinance (File 06-1071). This Ordinance replaces the Living Wage Resolution passed by the Council in 1997 for contracts executed and subsidies given after February 14, 2007.

Application

- The Ordinance applies to the “City” which includes both the City of Saint Paul and the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota.
- The Ordinance applies to a (a) City Contract which means a contract and any amendments for services not covered by Administrative Code Section 82.07 valued in the aggregate at \$100,000 or more. A City Contract does not include certain contracts of the Parks Department and Office of Financial Services or contract health care benefits.
(b) City Business Subsidy which means financial assistance with a value of \$100,000 or more in any of the following forms: grant; contribution of personal or real property; reduction in interest rates on a loan which is the present value of the difference in the interest rate given by the City and that rate commercially available to the recipient; reduction or deferral of any tax, assessment or fee; guaranty of any loan, lease or other obligation; tax increment financing; revenue bonds; tax credits; or other City participation. Conduit bonds and infrastructure are not a City Business Subsidy.
(c) City Subcontract which means a contract for services valued at \$100,000 or more to perform a portion of the services described in a City Contract.
(d) Tenant which means the initial for-profit or not-for-profit entity or person that leases from a City Business Subsidy recipient space in the specific location for which the subsidy was given, and if there is more than one such initial entity or person, it means the entity or person that leases the greatest amount of space and any entity or person that leases space of 15,000 or more square feet.

Requirements-Payment of Living Wage

- Any City Contract or City Subcontract must require payment of a living wage for the duration of a contract to each employee who is working pursuant to the contract or subcontract or who is employed in the specific location for which the contract or subcontract is intended to benefit.
- Any recipient of a City Business Subsidy and Tenant must pay a living wage to each employee (and in the case of a Tenant to an independent contractor as well) who is employed in the location for which the subsidy was provided for the longer of the duration of a City Business Subsidy or 3 years.
- A living wage is 130 percent of the federal poverty level for a family of four (**\$20.63 for 2026**) or 110 percent (**\$17.45 for 2026**) if the employer provides basic health insurance as that term is defined in the Ordinance.

Exemptions:

- Entities- The following entities are exempt from paying a living wage: for-profit entity that qualifies as a small business under Minn Stat 645.445; 501(c) entity that qualifies under Minn Stat 645.445, subd. 2; a recipient of a job readiness and training services contract; a recipient bound by a collective bargaining agreement; an intermediary such as a community development corporation, community investment group or community bank, who serve as a pass-through agency for the assistance; and 501(c) entities that are sole source providers of product or service.
- Employees- A recipient of a City Contract, City Subcontract or City Business Subsidy and a Tenant may request and obtain from the City Council exemptions from paying a living wage to the following types of employees: (a) temporary internships

Summary of Saint Paul Living Wage Ordinance

January 2026

intended to provide career exposure to new entrants to the workforce lasting no more than 12 consecutive months; (b) individuals placed as a result of a job readiness or job training program or those persons with serious mental and physical barriers to employment; and (c) seasonal, part-time or temporary employees whose employment does not reduce or offset the work of permanent employees provided that no more than 10 percent of such employees can be exempted and use of such employees is not intended to avoid the requirements of the Ordinance.

Waiver

- The requirements of the Ordinance may be waived by the City Council or HRA Board prior to the execution of a City Contract or City Business Subsidy after a public hearing and a finding of a compelling public purpose.
- After the execution of a City Business Subsidy a recipient who can demonstrate it will suffer an economic hardship due to the occurrence of significant unforeseen circumstances beyond its control may request a waiver.

Reporting

- A yearly report on compliance will be required by all recipients for the duration of its obligation to pay living wages.

Enforcement/Penalties

- PED will enforce the Ordinance with respect to a City Business Subsidy and will propose regulations to the City Council to administer compliance.
- Office of Financial Services will enforce the Ordinance with respect to a City Contract and will propose regulations to the City Council to administer compliance.
- Any recipient of a City Contract, City Business Subsidy, City Subcontract or Tenant must provide written notice to its employees of the Ordinance and a copy of the Ordinance.
- Any recipient that fails to meet the living wage requirements of the Ordinance is not eligible for a City Contract or City Business Subsidy in the next contract cycle or calendar year; and must repay a portion of the contract or subsidy depending on the level of non compliance.

645.445 Small business; definitions

Subd. 2. Small business. "Small business" means a business entity organized for profit, including but not limited to any individual, partnership, corporation, joint venture, association or cooperative, which entity:

- (a) Is not an affiliate or subsidiary of a business dominant in its field of operation; and
- (b) Has 20 or fewer full-time employees; or
- (c) In the preceding fiscal year has not had more than the equivalent of \$ 1,000,000 in annual gross revenues; or
- (d) If the business is a technical or professional service, shall not have had more than the equivalent of \$ 2,500,000 in annual gross revenues in the preceding fiscal year.

Subd. 3. Dominant in field of operation. "Dominant in its field of operation" means having more than 20 full-time employees and more than \$ 1,000,000 in annual gross revenues or \$ 2,500,000 in annual gross revenues if a technical or professional service.

Subd. 4. Affiliate or subsidiary of business dominant in field of operation. "Affiliate or subsidiary of a business dominant in its field of operation" means a business which is at least 20 percent owned by a business dominant in its field of operation, or by partners, officers, directors, majority stockholders, or their equivalent, of a business dominant in that field of operation.