

Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs

\$15 Minimum Wage and Equal Pay for Part-Time and Full-Time Workers Part of Plan to Help People Get Ahead in a Changing Economy

NEWS

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Ontario is taking historic action to create more opportunity and security for workers with a plan for Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs. This includes hiking the minimum wage, ensuring part-time workers are paid the same hourly wage as full-time workers, introducing paid sick days for every worker and stepping up enforcement of employment laws.

Over the past three years, Ontario's economy has outperformed all G7 countries in terms of real GDP growth. While exports and business investments are increasing and the unemployment rate is at a 16-year low, the nature of work has changed. Many workers are struggling to support their families on part-time, contract or minimum-wage work. Government has a responsibility to address precarious employment and ensure Ontario workers are protected by updating the province's labour and employment laws.

To help safeguard employees and create fairer and better workplaces, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced today that the government is moving forward with a landmark package of measures, including:

- Raising Ontario's general minimum wage to \$14 per hour on January 1, 2018, and then to \$15 on January 1, 2019, followed by annual increases at the rate of inflation
- Mandating equal pay for part-time, temporary, casual and seasonal employees doing the same job as full-time employees; and equal pay for temporary help agency employees doing the same job as permanent employees at the agencies' client companies
- Expanding personal emergency leave to include an across-the-board minimum of at least two paid days per year for all workers
- Bringing Ontario's vacation time into line with the national average by ensuring at least three weeks' vacation after five years with a company
- Making employee scheduling fairer, including requiring employees to be paid for three hours of work if their shift is cancelled within 48 hours of its scheduled start time.

The government will also propose measures to expand family leaves and make certain that employees are not misclassified as independent contractors, ensuring they get the benefits they deserve. To enforce these changes, the province will hire up to 175 more employment standards officers and launch a program to educate both employees and small and medium-sized businesses about their rights and obligations under the Employment Standards Act.

QUOTES

“The economy has changed. Work has changed. It’s time our laws and protections for workers changed too. Too many families are struggling to get by on part-time or contract work and unstable employment. And no one working full time in Ontario should live in poverty. With these changes, every worker in Ontario will be treated fairly, paid a living wage and have the opportunities they deserve.”

— Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario

“These changes will ensure every hard-working Ontarian has the chance to reach their full potential and share in Ontario’s prosperity. Fairness and decency must be the defining values of our workplaces.”

— Kevin Flynn, Minister of Labour

QUICK FACTS

- Today’s announcement responds to the final report of the Changing Workplaces Review, conducted by Special Advisors C. Michael Mitchell and John C. Murray, over the course of two years. It is the first-ever independent review of the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and Labour Relations Act, 1995.
- The report estimates that more than 30 per cent of Ontario workers were in precarious work in 2014. This type of employment makes it hard to earn a decent income and interferes with opportunities to enjoy decent working conditions and/or puts workers at risk.
- In 2016, the median hourly wage was \$13.00 for part-time workers and \$24.73 for full-time workers. Over the past 30 years, part-time work has grown to represent nearly 20 per cent of total employment.
- Currently, half of the workers in Ontario earning less than \$15 per hour are between the ages of 25 and 64, and the majority are women.
- More than a quarter of Ontario workers would receive a pay hike through the proposed increase to the minimum wage.
- Studies show that a higher minimum wage results in less employee turnover, which increases business productivity.
- Ontario is proposing a broad consultation process to gain feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders on the draft legislation it intends to introduce. To facilitate this consultation, it is proposing to send the legislation to committee after First Reading.

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[Ontario’s proposal to increase minimum wages](#)

[Ontario’s proposed changes to labour laws](#)

[The Changing Workplaces Review — Final Report](#)