



Santa Fe County Minimum Wage Talking Points

*Hard work deserves fair pay – un salario justo para todos.
No one should work full-time and still live in poverty.*

What the proposal will do. We want the County Commissioners to adopt the Santa Fe City Living Wage law, passed in 2003, to cover workers outside city limits in Santa Fe County. The proposal would ensure that all workers receive \$10.51 an hour now, with an annual cost of living increase to keep up with inflation. All workers and employers will be covered, including part-time, contract and temporary employees. Exemptions to the wage requirement would include an employer's family members, and interns working in a bona fide apprenticeship or training program.

Raising the wage will reward hard work with fair pay. Currently, minimum wage workers in Santa Fe County make \$7.50 an hour.¹ This wage, at 40 hours a week, is barely above the poverty line for a single person, and well below the poverty line for a family.² No one should work full-time and still live in poverty.

Raising the wage is necessary to keep up with inflation. Santa Fe County's minimum wage workers have not seen an increase in their wages in four years, even as the cost of gas, milk, and everything else has gone up. Raising the wage is a necessary step in ensuring that a worker's dollar is worth the same as it was the year before.

Raising the wage will support families. 92% of minimum wage workers are adults, many of whom are trying to raise families on poverty-level incomes.³ The hourly wage required to bring the income of a Santa Fe County family of four up to the federal poverty level is \$10.60.⁴ Raising the wage and adjusting it each year to keep up with inflation would help close the income inequality gap in our community, as well as reducing the poverty of numerous working families.

Raising the wage will boost the economy from the bottom up. Consumer spending drives 70% of our economy⁵, and thousands of workers⁶ in Santa Fe County would benefit from this increase. Raising the minimum wage puts dollars in the pockets of workers, who will spend their earnings at a grocery store, a restaurant, an auto-repair shop, and other local businesses.

Santa Fe is proof the Living Wage works. Santa Fe's economy has done very well since implementing the Living Wage, even through the recession. Santa Fe has consistently had the lowest unemployment rate of any metropolitan area in the state, and one of the lowest in the country. In May 2013, Santa Fe had an unemployment rate of 5.3%; Albuquerque, 7.2%; Farmington, 6.6%; Las Cruces, 7.0%, and statewide 6.7%.⁷ In 2012, when the rest of the state lost over 4,800 jobs⁸, Santa Fe created over 1,100 jobs⁹.

¹ New Mexico Workforce Solutions: <http://www.dws.state.nm.us/LaborRelations/Resources/MinimumWageInformation>

² MIT Living Wage Calculator: <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/35049>

³ New Mexico's Wage Race to the Bottom: Raising and Indexing the State Minimum Wage to Break the Free Fall, Gerry Bradley – NM Voices for Children, January 2013

⁴ MIT Living Wage Calculator: <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/35049>

⁵ Bureau of Economic Analysis; quarterly data through 2011:Q3

⁶ This figure was calculated by workers in the City of Santa Fe from all workers in Santa Fe County. Total number of City workers: <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost> Total number of County workers: http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_42140.htm#00-0000

⁷ <http://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/pr-pdf-0613.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.bizjournals.com/albuquerque/news/2012/12/21/New-Mexico-reports-more-job-losses.html>

⁹ <http://capitolreportnm.blogspot.com/2013/01/santa-fe-adds-jobs-during-2012-other.html>