

\$15 Per Hour Minimum Wage Creeps Closer to National Reality



Saskatchewan is dragging its feet while New Brunswick remains the lone holdout.

After the latest round of increases, all but 6 provinces have minimum wages of \$15.00 per hour or more. Of the remaining 6, only New Brunswick hasn't made the commitment to go to the magic \$15 level. Here's a quick briefing.

Who Has the Highest & Lowest Minimum Wage

Yukon (\$16.77) and the federal jurisdiction (\$16.65) have leap frogged Nunavut for the highest minimum wage rates in Canada. Nunavut fell back to third place at \$16.00. It's a pretty good bet that Northwest Territories, which now stands in seventh place at \$15.20, will go to at least \$16.00 to remain competitive for desperately needed labour. After a long holdout, Québec ripped off the band-aid, increasing its minimum wage a full dollar to \$15.25 on May 1.

The Low End of the Minimum Wage Spectrum

After the next round of increases takes effect on October 1, 2023, all but 2 provinces will hit the magic \$15.00 mark: New Brunswick and Saskatchewan. At \$13.00, Saskatchewan continues to have the lowest minimum wage in the country. However, Saskatchewan will reach \$14.00 per hour on October 1, 2023, followed by another \$1.00 increase a year later.

That leaves New Brunswick, where the minimum wage now stands at a current Maritimes high of \$14.75, as the only province that hasn't made the commitment to \$15.00. Whether the province will be able to continue its stubborn resistance remains to be seen. At just 25 cents away from the threshold, New Brunswick will probably be forced to go to \$15.00 simply to avoid the embarrassment of having the lowest minimum wage in Canada.

The other key thing to note is that the latest unprecedented waves of increases is coming to an end. After rushing to \$15.00, most provinces now intend to sit back and go back to the old ways of once a year increases pegged to the Consumer Price Index rate of inflation.

Ranking Jurisdiction		General Minimum Wage (per hour)
1	Yukon	\$16.77
2	Federal	\$16.65 or minimum wage of the province of employment, whichever is higher
3	Nunavut	\$16.00
4	British Columbia	\$15.65
5	Ontario	\$15.50
6	Quebec	\$15.25
7	Northwest Territories	\$15.20
8	Alberta	\$15.00
9	New Brunswick	\$14.75
10	Newfoundland*/Prince Edward Island*/Nova Scotia*	\$14.50
11	Manitoba*	\$14.15
12	Saskatchewan*	\$13.00

* Provinces that have committed to increasing their minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour.