

Together, we can...

Raise the Minimum Wage

Everyone in our communities who works a full-time job should bring home enough to feed their family and keep a roof overhead.

But for too many families, that isn't the case – not because they're not trying hard, but because their job doesn't pay enough to make ends meet. Even after our progress in raising Virginia's minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$12 an hour, 1 in every 10 Virginia workers was still paid less than \$15 an hour in late 2023 and early 2024. Virginia's current minimum wage of \$12 an hour is far below a living wage for even a single adult in Virginia, creating a low floor that limits the bargaining power of working Virginians.

The federal minimum wage hasn't increased in 15 years because some politicians listen to big corporations more than working people. Virginia's minimum wage has increased to \$12 an hour, with legislation passed in 2020 outlining a pathway to \$15 in 2026. Yet Governor Youngkin vetoed bills that the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate passed in 2024 to keep Virginia on that pathway to a \$15 minimum wage. And when Virginia legislators set the \$12 level back in 2020, they did not anticipate the sustained period of higher inflation resulting from supply-chain bottlenecks and the war in Ukraine. Until we see real change, the Virginia minimum wage will never recover from that unexpectedly high inflation, and is only being adjusted using cost-of-living data starting in 2023 (never capturing the unexpectedly high inflation of 2020-2022). Because the starting point is so low, these wage increases will never be enough for families to actually afford the costs of the essentials.

What can we do?

The minimum wage is a crucial labor standard that bolsters the bargaining power of people who are paid low wages and particularly improves the wages and lives of working women of color. Raising the wage will boost take-home pay, lower poverty, and help stabilize families. Most workers who will benefit work at least 20 hours a week, 8 out of every 10 are over age 20, more than half are workers of color, and 6 out of every 10 are women.

Advance commonsense policies

- Raise the minimum wage to at least \$15 an hour.
- Include farmworkers in labor protections, undoing a legacy of exclusion that's left over from the 1930s.

Learn more & engage

- Talk to your neighbors and friends about what raising Virginia's minimum wage might mean for them.
- Follow organizations like New Virginia Majority, Legal Aid Justice Center, and The Commonwealth Institute to learn more about the fight to raise Virginia's minimum wage and remove the exclusion of farmworkers.

Who would benefit from raising the minimum wage?

- most work 20+ hrs/wk
- 8/10 are >20 yrs old
- more than half are working people of color
- 6/10 are women