



Fee Structure

Version 1.5.0 – September 9, 2026

Living Wage for Us offers more than a living wage certification. We also provide valuable research, tools, and guidance so that employers have the support they need to move toward a living wage for all U.S. workers in the most cost-effective ways possible. Our goal is to make living wage payment a decision that benefits employers, workers, and communities. To achieve this, we have three categories: Pathway Employers, which is the pre-certification stage, and two tiers of certification, Pledged and Leading. Each is priced according to the depth of assistance and cost savings that can be offered by Living Wage for Us to employers who are committed to a living wage journey.

Living Wage for Us is dedicated to ensuring that certification and services provided are accessible to all types of organizations including nonprofit and government employers, as well as those that are across the spectrum from small companies to large multinational employers.

Pathway Employers Program

Every employer begins as a Pathway Employer and completes the assessment process to establish a baseline living wage status. This category represents the start of an employer's living wage journey. It provides employers with access to living wage data across the U.S. that is more granular than the publicly available living wage rates map, expert recommendations on paths to a living wage, and self-assessment tools that allow a full analysis of the gap to a living wage for all workers across all positions. These tools provide Pathway Employers with a way to analyze how particular benefits adjustments, or combinations of adjustments, could work to close the gap to a living wage. These resources will allow employers to make an informed decision on how they might strategically move toward a living wage before committing to certification. For large companies with multiple independent brands, participating as a Pathway Employer will help the company to assess which brands might be well positioned as first movers for certification. This can provide an opportunity for the company to assess the business returns and social value of living wage payment and certification before making commitments for brands that have a larger gap to a living wage. If an employer qualifies for Pledged or Leading certification during a Pathway Employer Program term, the unused



portion of that term's fee, prorated from the date of the invoice for that term, will be applied to the certification fee.

Pathway Employers are not intended to remain in a static condition, and are encouraged to support the goal of moving to a living wage payment for all workers, using self-assessment tools to inform and enable taking actions towards that goal. This stage does not include specific requirements or measured commitments but also does not offer any benefits of certification such as claims related to compliance with the standard. It is intended as a stage for employers to assess readiness for and to work towards achieving certification.

Living Wage for Us sets the following fee structure for Pathway Employers:

Employer annual revenues	Pathway Employers annual fee
Up to \$1MM	\$350
Between \$1MM and \$5MM	\$500
Between \$5MM and \$10MM	\$1,000
Between \$10MM and \$25MM	\$2,000
Between \$25MM and \$50MM	\$3,500
Between \$50MM and \$100MM	\$7,500
Between \$100MM and \$1Bn	\$10,000
Between \$1Bn and \$5Bn	\$15,000
Above \$5Bn	\$20,000



Pledged Certification

Once an employer has submitted an application for certification and achieved the requirements of the Pledged level of the Living Wage for Us standard, they are required to pay annual certification fees. This tier includes the highest level of support to employers, with required annual updates on progress toward a living wage for all workers, using annually updated assessment tools to support employers each year in their living wage journey. The annual fees for Pledged certification are higher than those applied to Leading certification because they entail support and guidance during their journey toward



paying a full living wage and achieving Leading certification. The certification fees cover a range of activities, inclusive of but not limited to the following:

1. Authorization to use the achieved seal designation, including on websites, in store fronts or on products.
2. Access to all tools and research data developed by Living Wage for Us. This is inclusive of but not limited to: a) annually updated tools to measure actual gaps to a living wage and test potential implications of new or extended benefits on achieving the living wage; b) detailed data on living wage levels in formats beyond those supplied to the general public and non-participating companies; c) cases and examples of cost-effective paths to ensuring a living wage for all workers.
3. Continued support and guidance on how to correctly account for total compensation including benefits provided to employees that may or may not count toward living wage payment as the employer implements changes year over year to close the gap to a living wage.
4. Verification as well as a complaint management system that ensures any errors are remedied quickly and confidentially, without the need for on-site audits.
5. Full access to the larger Living Wage for Us community and its activities, including access and connectivity to participate in cross-learning and collaboration opportunities with other organizations working to implement a living wage as well as living wage initiatives in other countries.

Living Wage for Us sets the following fee structure for Pledged certification:

Employer annual revenues	Pledged certification annual fee
Up to \$1MM	\$400
Between \$1MM and \$5MM	\$750
Between \$5MM and \$10MM	\$2,000
Between \$10MM and \$25MM	\$4,000
Between \$25MM and \$50MM	\$7,000
Between \$50MM and \$100MM	\$12,000
Between \$100MM and \$1Bn	\$17,500
Between \$1Bn and \$5Bn	\$25,000
Above \$5Bn	\$40,000



Leading Certification

Once an employer has submitted an application for certification and achieved the requirements of the Leading level (either directly or after being assessed on progress annually at the Pledged level), they qualify for reduced annual certification fees associated with Leading certification. They retain all benefits of ongoing certification at this tier. The certification fees for Leading certification cover the full range of activities available to employers at the Pledged level, but without the necessity of annual planning and support to close the gap to a living wage. The resulting annual fees once this level of the standard is achieved are as follows:

Employer annual revenues	Leading certification annual fee
Up to \$1MM	\$300
Between \$1MM and \$5MM	\$500
Between \$5MM and \$10MM	\$1,000
Between \$10MM and \$25MM	\$2,000
Between \$25MM and \$50MM	\$3,500
Between \$50MM and \$100MM	\$7,500
Between \$100MM and \$1Bn	\$10,000
Between \$1Bn and \$5Bn	\$15,000
Above \$5Bn	\$20,000

Optional Plus Add-on Designation

An employer that has achieved either Pledged or Leading certification has the option to be considered for the “Plus” add-on designation to their seal. The Plus designation recognizes employers whose benefit offerings go beyond the basic but decent standard that living wage payment establishes, acknowledging best practice in how an employer supports workers through benefits. Additional fees are not required for this designation as questions pertinent to obtaining this designation are included in both the initial application, and annual updates for Pledged and Leading certification.

