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Nassau County Comptroller Jack Schnirman Releases Annual Living Wage Report

Bilingual Living Wage Hotline Can Be Contacted at 516-571-WAGE

Comptroller Joins Labor Leaders on the Comptroller's Office Living Wage Advisory Board to Announce Food Drive Effort

MINEOLA, NY – Nassau County Comptroller Jack Schnirman released the County's Living Wage Law Annual Report, which highlights the work done by the Comptroller's Office and the Comptroller's Office Living Wage Advisory Board in 2019 to ensure that County contractors are paying their employees their fair share.

The report highlights among other items, that Living Wage Audits issued in 2019 identified underpaid wages and uncompensated time off worth more than \$56,000 affecting 72 employees. Over the past two years, the Comptroller's Office has identified more than \$270,000 in unpaid wages and uncompensated time off affecting 219 workers.

The Living Wage Advisory Board has continued to meet regularly this year and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Now more than ever, people need a living wage to make ends meet here on Long Island, and that's why during these challenging times, it's even more critical to look out for them and hold contractors accountable," said **Nassau County Comptroller Jack Schnirman**. "Labor Day gives us all an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of America's workers. As we release this report ahead of Labor Day Weekend, I'm excited to highlight how this work makes a difference in working people's lives and is part of the critical work on which the Comptroller's Office will continue to press forward."

The Comptroller's Office also announced that the Living Wage Advisory Board will be joining together in a collaborative effort to hold a virtual food drive to highlight that many essential workers

face the challenge of food insecurity. This initiative will highlight the work of local organizations that support the food insecure, including **Island Harvest** and **Long Island Cares**.

“The Living Wage Advisory Board represents a cross section of the people getting it done across our region, ranging from EMTs and health care workers, to grocery store workers, to postal workers, to those keeping public transportation running, to civil servants, and so much more,” continued Schnirman. “These essential workers kept our region operating day after day when many of us were quarantined at home, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for all they do. To honor their heroic contributions to our region’s struggle with COVID-19, and in recognition that many of these critical workers struggle with food insecurity, this food drive initiative is in support of them.”

“For well over a decade, Nassau County’s Living Wage Advisory Board has worked together to ensure that the Living Wage Law is adhered to and that our County’s working people receive the compensation they’re entitled to,” said **John Durso, Chair of Nassau County Living Wage Advisory Board, President of Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW and the Long Island Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO**. “Now more than ever, it is critical that these workers, many of whom are essential to our communities, are treated fairly and have the resources they need to support their families. As a Board, our commitment to supporting all of Nassau County’s workers extends beyond just what’s written in statute and we will be hosting a food drive to support those who are facing food insecurity. We appreciate the Nassau County Comptroller’s Office, the organizations and unions that comprise our Board and all those who will be donating over the next few weeks.”

The Comptroller’s Office continues to perform audits, respond to employee complaints and inquiries, and monitor providers that were previously reviewed to ensure that they remain in compliance with the Law.

In 2019, the Comptroller’s Office and County Executive signed new Living Wage rules that allow the County to review the parent and subsidiary of a vendor that has a contract with the County when determining waiver eligibility requirements to ensure no contractor can skirt paying the Living Wage. The Comptroller’s Office also follows-up with selected new providers who have received contracts with the County to ensure that they comply with their contract regarding the Living Wage.

The Nassau County Living Wage Law was originally enacted in 2007 to raise the minimum wage of employees of most vendors with County service contracts. It ensures that employees of certain companies that Nassau County does business with are earning the Living Wage.

Since 2007, the Comptroller’s Office, working with the County’s Living Wage Advisory Board, has released 46 Living Wage audit reports encompassing 37 different contractors, identifying a total of more than \$1.4 million in underpaid wages and uncompensated time in 1,863 instances. Since taking office, Schnirman has revitalized the Committee, ensuring it holds regular quarterly meetings and has the information needed to review contractor compliance with the law.

“Our Office has identified \$56,487 in unpaid wages and time off for 72 workers in 2019, fielded a 25% increase in calls to our bilingual living wage hotline that connects our investigators directly with workers, and closed loopholes that allowed companies to skirt the Living Wage Law,” concluded Schnirman.

Schnirman also announced the new living wage rates in Nassau County. As of August 1, 2020, the living wage increased to \$17.06 per hour for employees without health benefits, and for employees with health benefits, the amount increased to \$14.69 per hour. The increases are adjusted annually based on the New York metropolitan-area CPI-U Index and will remain in effect until July 31, 2021.

To read the 2019 Annual Living Wage Report click [here](#).

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