

Contact: Rob Busweiler | Director of Public Information and Policy  
Office: 516-571-0896 | Cell: 516-329-5167 | Email – [rbusweiler@nassaucountyny.gov](mailto:rbusweiler@nassaucountyny.gov)  
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**Office of the Nassau County Comptroller**  
**Jack Schnirman – Comptroller**

*240 Old Country Road  
Mineola, NY 11501  
Tel: (516) 571-2386 / Fax: (516) 571-5900*

**Nassau Comptroller Jack Schnirman Announces New Multilingual Living Wage Hotline: 516-571-WAGE**

*Comptroller's Office also announces new living wage rates for Nassau County service vendors*

**MINEOLA, NY** – Nassau County Comptroller Jack Schnirman today unveiled a dedicated, multilingual living wage hotline that will expand access for those wishing to report county vendors underpaying their employees. In conjunction with that announcement, Schnirman released the new increased living wage rates that most Nassau County vendors working on service contracts are required to pay their employees.

“Working closely with our Living Wage Committee, our office routinely investigates complaints of county vendors not paying their employees the living wage,” Schnirman said. “With this hotline and updated informational materials, we are telling contractors that if you want to work for Nassau County, you must play by the rules. This new hotline will provide a much-needed resource for employees who want to speak out against those who are skirting the law.”

As of August 1, 2018, the living wage in Nassau County increased to \$16.41 per hour for employees without health benefits, raising it 34 cents compared to last year’s wage of \$16.07. For employees with health benefits, the amount increased to \$14.27 from \$13.98. The increases are adjusted annually based on the New York metropolitan-area CPI-U Index and will remain in effect until July 31, 2019.

“Both of today’s announcements are incredibly important for the men and women who are employed by Nassau County’s vendors. All too often workers who are being taken advantage of are too afraid to speak up out of fear of retaliation. The Living Wage Hotline will give our County’s working people the opportunity to ensure that they are receiving the pay they have earned,” said John R. Durso, President of the Long Island Federation of Labor AFL-CIO and Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW. “By also increasing the living wage for service vendors, we are reinforcing our commitment that those who work in Nassau County, even for vendors, should be able to afford to also live here.”

The hotline, which can be reached by calling 516-571-WAGE, will connect callers directly with staff in the Comptroller’s Office during business hours so complaints can be submitted. Callers will also be able to make inquiries about the living wage law, such as how to find out if their job is covered.

Outside of business hours, an automated menu with instructions provided in English and Spanish will be available that provides information about the living wage law and allows callers to leave a message. People submitting tips to the living wage tip line can remain anonymous.

“We support this initiative to improve language access to workers across the County,” said Helen Dorado Alessi, Executive Director of the Long Beach Latino Civic Association. “This is an important resource for working people to protect their rights and ensure the Living Wage is honored.”

Future updates to the hotline will increase immediate language accessibility and the development of a written protocol for handling foreign-language complaints to ensure a translator is reached in a timely manner. Tips can also be submitted to [ReportItReformIt@nassaucountyny.gov](mailto:ReportItReformIt@nassaucountyny.gov).

The Comptroller’s Office has made strengthening living wage protections a priority in the first seven months of the administration, with the Living Wage Committee meeting regularly to review compliance with the law. To date, multiple audits have been initiated due to added oversight, outreach, and enforcement.

The Nassau County Living Wage Law was enacted by the Nassau County Legislature in 2006 to raise the minimum wage of employees of most vendors with County service contracts.

“Providing this resource in multiple languages is crucial, as many workers across the County can encounter difficulty when reaching out to government for assistance due to a language barrier,” Schnirman said. “Our office will push for more accessibility because every worker, regardless of the language they speak, deserves to have this information to protect their rights.”