



Denver Citywide Minimum Wage Overview

What Is the Basis for Minimum Wage?

In 2019, the Colorado legislature enacted a new statute permitting local governments to set a jurisdiction-wide minimum wage. In November 2019, the Denver City Council created Denver Revised Municipal Code Chapter §58-16, which sets the local minimum wage for Denver and prescribes the means for setting, enforcing, and complying with the new local minimum wage.

When does Minimum Wage Apply?

The minimum wage applies to all workers performing work after January 1, 2020 within the geographical boundaries of the City and County of Denver.

What is Denver’s Local Minimum Wage?

Denver’s local minimum wage is:

- \$15.87 from January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022;
- \$17.29 from January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023, and
- Thereafter increase by the prior year’s increase in regional consumer price index.

Wage rates timeline <i>In dollars per hour</i>			
	2022	2023	2024
	JAN. 1	JAN. 1	JAN. 1
Denver Citywide Minimum Wage	\$15.87	\$17.29	\$17.29 plus Consumer Price Index
Prevailing Wage	Determined by the Denver Office of Human Resources A series of wages based on job classification		

This chart shows a timeline with wage rates in dollars per hour. Denver Citywide Minimum Wage changed to \$15.87 on January 1, 2022. The wage rate will increase to \$17.29 on January 1, 2023, and to \$17.29, plus the Consumer Price Index on January 1, 2024. Prevailing Wage is determined by the Denver office of Human Resources and consists of a series of wages based on the job classification.

When May Employers Pay an Employee Less Than the Minimum Wage?

An employer in the food and beverage industry can reduce its minimum wage obligation for actual tips received by its employees up to \$3.02 an hour (“tip credit”). During an investigation, an employer may be asked to produce evidence their employees received tips equal to the tip credit taken by the employer.

Employers of unemancipated minors performing work pursuant to a city certified youth employment program may pay those minors 15% less than the required minimum wage.

Are There Any Exclusions?

Denver's local minimum wage does not apply to: 1) work performed outside of Denver; 2) where an employee works less than 4 hours within Denver in a week; or 3) where the employee is only traveling through Denver while working.

What Minimum Wage Rate Applies?

The applicable minimum wage is the greater of the applicable prevailing wage, living wage, Denver contractor minimum wage, the citywide minimum wage or other state or federal wage for the work performed.

How Do Employer's Comply with Denver's Local Minimum Wage Requirements?

Employers must pay their employees the appropriate wage and maintain payroll records for three years. There is no additional reporting requirement.

Who May Make a Complaint?

Complaints may be submitted by any person or entity. Complaints may be submitted anonymously.

How Are Minimum Wage Complaints Made?

Individuals who wish to make a complaint related to Denver's minimum wage may e-mail the Denver Auditor's Office at wagecomplaints@denvergov.org or call 720-913-5039.

How Are Minimum Wage Complaints Investigated and Resolved?

The Denver Auditor's Office will investigate all credible complaints submitted. Complaints may be resolved by referral to another agency or mode of remedy. Where the Auditor's Office finds and investigates a credible complaint, the Auditor's Office will inform the employer of its investigation and request documentation from the employer demonstrating compliance with minimum wage requirements. When the investigation is complete, an assigned investigator will seek restitution for any underpaid employee and possibly levy fines or inform the complainant and employer no evidence of underpayment was found. Employers must provide the Auditor's Office evidence of any restitution payment made. Employers may not take adverse action against an employee for their involvement in an investigation. Such retaliatory conduct is unlawful and subject to a \$5,000 fine.

Are There Penalties for Failing to Comply with Denver's Minimum Wage Requirements?

For an employer's first violation, the Auditor may impose a fine of as much as \$50 a day for each employee paid less than minimum wage unless the Auditor finds the error was made in good faith and corrected within 30 days. For all additional violations, including subsequent failures to pay minimum wage, retaliation against an employee, failing to respond to investigation requests, or submitting false information, Denver imposes mandatory fines.

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