

# NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

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For release: Immediately  
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## Comptroller Recommends County Legislative Review of the 2021 Ulster County Living Wage Act

*Kingston, NY (September 16, 2024)* – Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher issued a Memorandum to Ulster County Legislative Chair Peter Criswell regarding the Ulster County Living Wage Act.

In 2021, Ulster County Adopted Local Law No. 6 Requiring the Payment of a Living Wage to Employees of Contractors and Subcontractors that Provide Services to the County. The local law set the living wage at \$15.00 per hour and called for the Ulster County Legislature to review annually and update the living wage by resolution as needed. Since 2021 Ulster County has not made changes to our living wage rate which remains at \$15 per hour.

Under New York State Law, the minimum wage in Ulster County will go to \$15.50 per hour on January 1, 2025. Accordingly, as of 2025, the County's living wage policy will be below minimum wage.

The nation has experienced significant inflation since 2021, and Ulster County has seen an increase in area median income and housing prices. According to [MIT's living wage calculator](#) Ulster County's living wage should currently be \$24.97.

The County Comptroller recommends that the Legislature undertake a review of the Living Wage Act to determine whether the Act should be sunset or adjusted considering that Ulster County staff wages for certain grades and titles fall below the MIT living wage rate for the County.

"Actions like the Living Wage Act are only useful if they are updated and enforced," said Comptroller March Gallagher. "I am concerned that without adjustment the Living Wage Act may confuse vendors with respect to the upcoming changes to the legally mandated minimum wage. Furthermore, as this MIT calculator shows, the cost of living in Ulster County has jumped significantly. Given changes to minimum wage, and current collective bargaining efforts, it may make sense to sunset the Act while reviewing other ways to address inequity and cost of living issues that will not create an undue burden on property taxpayers."

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