

Minimum Wage in Washington

Background: Originally, Washington’s Minimum Wage Act covered only non-agricultural workers. However, in 1988 voters approved Initiative 518, which changed the Minimum Wage Act to cover all workers employed in Washington state. Consequently, the state minimum wage is the same for both non-agricultural and agricultural workers.

In 1998, voters approved Initiative 688, which raised the minimum wage and required the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries to make a cost-of-living increase to the minimum wage each calendar year based on the federal Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W).

Initiative 1433 passed statewide in 2016 by a vote of 57.42% in favor and 42.58% against. The initiative changed state law to increase the minimum wage and mandate that employers provide employees with a minimum amount of paid sick leave. I-1433 was codified at [RCW 49.46](#).

Minimum Wage Rates: I-1433 set a multi-year increase in the state’s minimum wage rate for workers 18 years of age and older.

- For 2017, the minimum wage was \$11.00 per hour.
- For 2018, the minimum wage is \$11.50 per hour.
- For 2019, the minimum wage will be \$12.00 per hour.
- For 2020, the minimum wage will be \$13.50 per hour.

I-1433 leaves in place the annual minimum wage escalator based on the CPI-W. After 2020, the minimum wage will be increased based on this index. I-1433 mandates that employers pass along all tips and gratuities and certain service charges to employees, and those tips and charges may not count toward the employee’s hourly minimum wage.

In addition, some municipalities such as Seattle, SeaTac, and Tacoma have enacted higher minimum wage rates in their jurisdictions. Employers subject to those laws must pay the highest minimum wage required.

L&I Information and Posters: Minimum wage information from L&I can be found at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/Wages/Minimum/>. The new “Your Rights as a Worker Poster,” which employers must post where employees can read it, can be found at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/IPUB/700-074-909.pdf>.

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