

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue and white striped button-down shirt, is smiling and holding a brown paper shopping bag. She is standing in an outdoor market setting with other people and trees in the background. The lighting is warm, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

EXPLORING REGIONAL **MINIMUM WAGE**





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ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

213
Focus Group
Participants



2-Month
Engagement
Window

14
In-Person
Focus Group
Sessions



993
Questionnaire
Responses



1,849
Visitors to the
Project Website

101
Visits to the Spanish
version of the website

4
drop-in visits at the
EFAA food bank

252
conversations with local &
small businesses in Boulder

29
individuals reached
through a tabling
event in Erie

To learn more about what we heard,
including the unique themes from
each community go to
<https://blldr.fyi/minimum-wage>



WHAT WE HEARD

EXPLORING REGIONAL
MINIMUM WAGE



Participants in focus group sessions and questionnaires expressed thoughtful input on the possible impacts of a regional minimum wage. Seven main themes emerged.



Regional Economic Impacts

- Belief that higher wages may lead to increased spending in the region, stimulating economic growth and supporting businesses.
- Concerns that higher wages may drive up inflation and lead to an increase in the cost of goods and services for the whole community, including minimum wage earners.

Attracting Businesses and Workers

- Belief that higher wages may attract employees and result in higher employee satisfaction and reduced turnover.
- Concerns that higher wages may force businesses, especially small businesses, to close or move to other communities as well as terminate or reduce hours and benefits for employees.

Role of Government

- Belief that increasing the minimum wage is not the role of local government.
- Belief that local governments should focus on other policies that address affordability and the cost of living, especially housing.

Read the full report



WHAT WE HEARD

EXPLORING REGIONAL
MINIMUM WAGE



Minimum Wage Earners

- Increased ability to meet basic needs
- Improved quality of life

Community

- Economic growth
- Concern about inflation and rising costs of goods & services

Small Businesses

- Increased labor costs may push local and small business owners to sell, close, or move
- Forced to increase prices
- Reduction in employee hours, benefits and opportunities
- Wage inequity and compression
- Any positive aspects would be short lived

Purpose

- Belief that minimum wage should enable people to afford their basic needs, improving human dignity and a sense of community.
- Belief that the minimum wage is not meant to be a living wage but instead a training wage for inexperienced workers as they gain greater knowledge, education, and skills.

Read the full report

To learn more about what we heard, including the unique themes from each community, go to bldr.fyi/minimum-wage





Exploring an Increase to Minimum Wage

Regional Engagement Summary



Executive Summary

Community engagement for the Exploring Regional Minimum Wage project was a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional process conducted by the cities of Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and Louisville and the Town of Erie. The process included 14 focus group sessions with 213 total participants, an online questionnaire with 993 total respondents, and several additional smaller, city-specific engagement strategies. The project engaged hundreds of community members between all five municipalities over a two-month engagement period.

The regional engagement summary provides a high-level overview of the themes, and varied perspectives within those themes, that engagement staff heard consistently across the region from community members and employers. These four themes included:

- Purpose of Minimum Wage
 - Belief that minimum wage should enable people to afford their basic needs, improving human dignity and a sense of community.
 - Belief that the minimum wage is not meant to be a living wage but instead a training wage for inexperienced workers as they gain greater knowledge, education, and skills.
- Building an Attractive Community for Both Workers and Businesses
 - Belief that higher wages may attract employees and result in higher employee satisfaction and reduced turnover.
 - Concerns that higher wages may force businesses, especially small businesses, to close or move to other communities as well as terminate or reduce hours and benefits for employees.
- Regional Economic Impacts
 - Belief that higher wages may lead to increased spending in the region, stimulating economic growth and supporting businesses.
 - Concerns that higher wages may drive up inflation and lead to an increase in the cost of goods and services for the whole community, including minimum wage earners.
- Role of Government
 - Belief that increasing the minimum wage is not the role of local government.
 - Belief that local governments should economic focus on other policies that address affordability and the cost of living, especially housing.

While this captures broader regional themes, each municipality created its own engagement report which includes greater detail and nuanced information specific to each community.

Regional Engagement Strategy

In the summer of 2023, elected officials from the Cities of Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and Louisville and the Town of Erie directed the Regional Minimum Wage Working Group to conduct a study of our regional economy and community engagement regarding a minimum wage increase. Since August of 2023, regional teams have met to scope and administer these next steps. Teams include one staff member from each of the five participating communities as well as three community representatives: one representative from the Latino Chamber of Commerce (in representation of the business community), a representative from the Self Sufficiency Wage Coalition (in representation of the workers and faith community), and a representative of Emergency Family Assistance Association (in representation of human service nonprofits). The economic analysis, which explores quantitative economic data as well as quantitative engagement data, will be provided in a separate consultant report.

A standard engagement model operating at the ‘Involve’ level of the public participation spectrum was administered across the five participating communities. While the model was consistent, there were some differences in implementation strategies that each community used. Details regarding each municipality’s unique approach can be found in the five municipality-specific engagement reports. Engagement opportunities were available between mid-February until April 15th, and community members were provided options to participate virtually and in-person, with English and Spanish options at one of 14 focus group sessions and through an online questionnaire.

Engagement by Numbers and Quantitative Questionnaire Data

The online questionnaire asked a series of open and close ended questions of respondents, including the places they worked or owned businesses, their current salary, their preferred adjustment to the local minimum wage, their sentiments about changing the minimum wage, and more. The project’s economic analysis consultant, EConorthwest, analyzed the close-ended questions, which are attached as Appendix A to this regional engagement report. The rest of this report summarizes qualitative, sentiment-based feedback from focus group conversations and the open-ended questions on the online questionnaire.

Key Regional Themes

Throughout the project’s engagement window, the regional team received thousands of comments through the online questionnaire and focus group sessions, both of which asked the same series of three questions of participants:

1. *What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage could be for you, (your family / your business), and your community?*
2. *What do you think the negative impact of increasing the minimum wage could be for you, (your family / your business), and your community?*
3. *Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?*

While there was immense variety in the responses that participants provided in the questionnaire and focus group sessions, several key themes emerged across the region. Each partner municipality produced its own engagement report to describe the key and unique themes that emerged in their respective communities. Each report explores the unique strategies and community characteristics that led to variation in engagement implementation and reporting across the region. This section summarizes key regional themes, each of which contains several key points that often conflict with one another due to the incredible complexity of this policy issue. Importantly, the project's engagement reporting directly reflects the feedback that the regional team received and is based on community sentiments and perceptions, which may or may not align with the literature review and economic analysis produced by the project's consultant. Each individual report contains additional details about how these themes took shape in each municipality.

The regional engagement model was not structured to yield scientifically representative results. Rather, the engagement team opened participation in the questionnaire and focus groups to all interested employers and community members and summarized the feedback into key themes and unique themes. **Key themes** were those that were consistently repeated across responses in both the questionnaire and focus groups, while **unique themes** were those that were mentioned less frequently but shared a potential outcome that would be particularly impactful to a specific subgroup of individuals. From there, key themes and unique themes from each municipality were further synthesized into the highest level, key regional themes presented in this regional summary report. Themes are not categorized by the frequency with which participants mentioned them, an approach that acknowledges the persistent barriers to participation and brings visibility to the perspectives shared without a thorough account of their frequency. That said, the consultant analysis of close-ended questionnaire data depicts a quantitative representation of the results of the regional engagement process.

Purpose of Minimum Wage

Across the region, quality of life for minimum wage earners emerged as a top concern and topic of interest. The key points of this theme included A) Improve Human Dignity and Sense of Community and B) Minimum Wage vs. Living or Self Sufficiency Wage.

Key Points	Summary of Regional Sentiment
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A. Improve Human Dignity and Sense of Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum wage should enable people to afford basic needs and a dignified quality of life amid the rapidly increasing cost of living - Higher wages could help minimum wage earners achieve greater work-life balance, spend more time with families and in the community, and improve their physical and mental health outcomes - Minimum wage earners could become less reliant on safety net services provided by public and non-profit partners if their incomes increase - Increasing the minimum wage could help minimum wage earners afford to live and work in the same place, increasing a sense of community for minimum wage earners and keeping their contributions to the local economy within the community they work
B. Minimum Wage vs. Living or Self Sufficiency Wage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The minimum wage is not meant to be a living wage or self-sufficiency wage but instead as a training wage for youth and inexperienced workers as they acquire experience, skills, training, and education - Raising the minimum wage may result in overpaying people who do not rely on the minimum wage to survive (often minors, college students with family support, or individuals using second jobs solely for additional disposable income) and disincentivize acquiring the skills and education needed to move into higher paying jobs

Building an Attractive Community for Both Workers and Businesses

Regional engagement revealed that one of the most immediate concerns relates to each community's business environment. The key points regarding a minimum wage increase and how it impacts the region's ability to build an attractive community for both workers and businesses included A) Factors that Attract and B) Factors that Repel.

Key Points	Summary of Regional Sentiment
A. Factors that Attract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher wages may result in higher employee satisfaction and reduced absenteeism, leading to reduced employee turnover and greater efficiencies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher wages may lead to greater workforce attraction across the region and state, resulting in an influx of available workers
B. Factors that Repel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Businesses might close or move to other communities due to an inability to absorb further labor cost escalations - In addition to a potential minimum wage increase, businesses have experienced additional increases to the cost of doing business, including supply chain issues, raw goods and ingredients, rent and utilities, property taxes, state-mandated benefits, and more, resulting in additional strain - Larger corporations and box chains would likely be able to afford labor increases, while small businesses may be operating on much smaller profit margins - Additional costs to address wage compression from raising the wages of those not currently making minimum wage to ensure a competitive pay structure, which could be devastating for small businesses - Potential impacts to employees, including termination of jobs, greater automation in the workplace, and fewer employee hours and benefits; the jobs that may be most impacted are entry-level opportunities for inexperienced workers

Regional Economic Impacts

Regional economic impacts were frequently mentioned as a longer-term concern and/or opportunity. The two key points in this theme were A) Spending and B) Inflation.

Key Points	Summary of Regional Sentiment
A. Spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher wages may lead to greater disposable income among minimum wage earners, resulting in higher consumer spending - Spending stimulates economic growth and could support businesses
B. Inflation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Businesses may increase the cost of goods and services to offset higher wages, including price increases for both basic needs as well as tourism and leisure activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Price increases could hurt minimum wage earners more than increased wages will help them - Consumers may respond to price increases by shopping in other communities where higher wages and other operating costs have not driven up the cost of goods and services
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Appropriateness of a Change to the Local Minimum Wage

Government's role in minimum wage policymaking was a common regional theme, with the key points A) Role of Local Government and B) Other Policy Strategies to Address Affordability.

Key Points	Summary of Regional Sentiment
A. Role of Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The federal and state governments already set a wage floor - Market forces, and how businesses respond to them, should determine wages, not local governments - Higher levels of government set public benefit eligibility criteria, and if local governments increase the minimum wage, people who rely on these services could be subject to the "benefits cliff" phenomenon
B. Other Policy Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local governments should focus their efforts on other policies that will effectively address the larger affordability challenges in the region, especially related to housing - Local governments should prioritize additional resources for small businesses, especially if they implement a higher local minimum wage

Sector-specific Impacts

In addition to the above key regional themes, each of which displayed a spectrum of opinion, several industries throughout the region shared sector-specific impacts that would uniquely affect each of them. These included:

1. **Restaurants/Tip-Based Industries:** The hospitality industry, and specifically restaurants and those that use tip-based wages, shared concerns over a minimum wage increase due to both incredibly thin profit margins and wage equity concerns. Tipped wage earners (referred to as 'front of house') already earn significantly more than non-tipped minimum wage earners (referred to as back of house') despite a lower base wage due to the state's tip credit. Because the state legislation that enables local government to set a higher minimum wage does not allow for any

variation in the state tip credit, these wage inequities could deepen as front of house staff receive the same gross wage increases as back of house employees.

2. Childcare: An increase to the minimum wage may impact childcare providers' ability to provide essential childcare services to individuals and families at current prices, which are already cost prohibitive for many families.
3. Agriculture: Employers in agriculture, in particular, expressed concerns over their business viability should the minimum wage increase.

Data from Additional Communities

The regional online questionnaire that was used to collect community feedback allowed individuals from Unincorporated Boulder County, additional Boulder County communities, and outside Boulder County to submit responses. Because the form allowed respondents to select multiple municipalities in which they owned a business or were employed to capture accurate feedback from individuals with multiple business locations or jobs, several responses across municipalities were repeated.

In addition to the five municipalities participating in the regional study (Boulder, Erie, Lafayette, Longmont, and Louisville), this section reports on feedback received from respondents in other places.

Unincorporated Boulder County

Particular attention was paid to engagement data from respondents who identified themselves as being employed or owning a business in unincorporated Boulder County due to their firsthand experience with the County's 2024 increase. In general, the feedback that was received from individuals in unincorporated Boulder County largely mirrored the regional themes above, with the only unique note being that the overall sentiment toward a local increase was more negative for both employers and employees than in other parts of the county.

Most respondents from Unincorporated Boulder County described the impacts of a higher minimum wage in hypothetical terms, likely due to the increased minimum wage in unincorporated Boulder County only having been in effect for two-four months during the engagement period. A few comments did speak to the impacts of the 2024 increase, which are included below. Importantly, these comments are not scientifically representative of the sentiment in unincorporated Boulder County at large, but they do provide an interesting data point as decision makers consider an increase to the local minimum wage.

- "I am based in unincorporated Boulder County. I have already taken steps to purchase new equipment that will automate part of our process. This equipment will replace what I previously relied on three entry level workers to do."

- “The higher minimum wage has already impacted my business in that previously I had competition for my jobs that paid better than fast food, taught a marketable skill, had greater variety, and was brainy-er work. Now I have trouble finding people who are disciplined enough to learn the work when they can be on their phones, and talking to their friends all day at fast food jobs for the same pay.”

Additional Boulder County Municipalities

These municipalities include the towns of Jamestown, Lyons, Nederland, Superior, and Ward. The number of respondents across these municipalities ranged between two and 18. After reviewing respondent feedback in these five towns, regional engagement staff did not identify any additional or unique themes. As such, the key regional themes above reflect feedback from not only the five municipalities who participated in the regional study, but also the feedback received from additional Boulder County municipalities.

Outside Boulder County

Through the online questionnaire, feedback was received from other municipalities outside Boulder County, including Denver Metro cities like Denver, Golden, Englewood, Aurora, and more, as well as a small number of out-of-state municipalities. As with the additional Boulder County municipalities, the regional themes identified above largely capture the feedback provided by respondents outside Boulder County.

One interesting point to note is that there was a particular emphasis in many of these responses on other policy strategies, Key Point B in the regional theme titled “Appropriateness of a Change to the Local Minimum Wage” above. Specifically, many respondents emphasized rent control and price increase caps on essential goods. While these policy tools are not within local governments’ authority to implement, they speak to a wider interest in policies that address the impacts of high housing costs and inflation.

Engagement Data Collected Outside Formal Engagement Window

At the end of 2023, through the beginning of 2024, several community organizations and partners shared feedback on a minimum wage increase in anticipation of action by elected officials in the region. Much of this feedback was received when unincorporated Boulder County decided last fall to accelerate their local increase and moved forward with a January 2024 implementation timeline, rather than the 2025 timeline regional partners had been discussing. Community members and organizations advocated in favor of or in opposition to an expedited timeline for other communities in the region. Recognizing the value of this feedback and the effort community partners spent collecting and reporting it, this feedback is summarized below.

Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA)

EFAA provided substantial feedback on a proposed minimum wage increase prior to the official project engagement window from February-April of this year through an official policy position, their annual wellbeing dashboards, and their own questionnaires. This section summarizes the information they have previously shared through engagement outside the project's formal engagement window.

EFAA has advocated for an accelerated minimum wage increase to meet the needs of the lowest paid workers in Boulder County and strongly advocated for a January 2024 increase in line with unincorporated Boulder County. They shared that their number of program participants has increased dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing impact of inflation continues to increase the number of individuals and families requiring EFAA support. Even as EFAA supports more individuals with their rent, utilities, and food assistance, evictions in Boulder County continue to increase.

The gap between the minimum wage and a self-sufficiency wage in Boulder County puts strain on their ability to adequately serve the community, and an increase to the minimum wage would benefit the community's lowest paid workers, decrease their reliance on the local safety net, and enable individuals and families to make ends meet. These positive impacts would address known wage equity issues, as a greater proportion of their Spanish-speaking program participants report earning less than \$20 per hour compared to all program participants, and Latino and Black Boulder County residents are more likely to live in poverty than other residents.

EFAA's program participant survey in 2023 largely revealed that most all the individuals and families that EFAA serves support a minimum wage increase to:

- Better meet basic needs
- Ensure human dignity for minimum wage earners
- Enable people to work less and spend more time with family and in the community
- Address the rapidly increasing cost of living in Boulder County

Human Services Alliance of Boulder County

The Human Services Alliance of Boulder County also conducted a survey regarding a minimum wage increase, and they received 33 responses from human service nonprofit organizations in October of 2023.

- 78% of respondents favored a 15% minimum wage increase
- 13% of respondents opposed a 15% minimum wage increase
- 9% of respondents were unsure

When asked about the potential negative impacts of a higher minimum wage on their organization, respondents often noted the following:

- Many nonprofits operate on tight budgets, and an increase may result in the need to freeze hiring, terminate jobs, rely more heavily on volunteers, and prioritize additional fundraising efforts to absorb the cost of higher wages

- Concerns about the benefit cliff effect for nonprofit program participants
- Potential negative impacts to nonprofits' abilities to provide free or low-cost services
- Negative impacts of wage compression, as many nonprofits currently pay above the minimum wage for employees with specific credentials and certifications and will need to increase their wages commensurate with employees making the minimum wage

When asked about the potential positive impacts of a higher minimum wage on their organization, respondents often noted the following:

- No impact due to already paying staff above the minimum wage
- Potential for less strain on the local safety net due to a higher regional wage
- Increased attraction and retention of employees
- Dignity for the individuals that nonprofits serve

Northwest Chamber Alliance

The Northwest Chamber Alliance, a coalition of chambers of commerce across Boulder and Broomfield counties, conducted a survey of business owners and employers in the region last fall in response to conversations about accelerating a minimum wage increase to a 2024 implementation timeline. In their summarized survey results, they shared that 254 respondents were concerned about increasing the minimum wage in 2024, while 107 were not concerned. Most respondents operated businesses in Boulder (190) or Longmont (143), and smaller numbers of respondents participated from Broomfield, Lafayette, Louisville, Superior, and unincorporated Boulder County.

In the qualitative feedback from the Northwest Chamber Alliance, several respondents indicated that minimum wage increases, in combination with existing pressures on small businesses such as rent and raw material increases, would almost certainly result in price increases for consumers. Business viability was an additional concern for many respondents. One respondent indicated that they already pay above the minimum wage and that increases would not impact their business negatively.

Attachments

Appendix A – EConorthwest Questionnaire Analysis

Appendix B – Municipality-Specific Engagement Reports

- Appendix B1 – City of Boulder Engagement Report
- Appendix B2 – City of Longmont Engagement Report
- Appendix B3 – City of Lafayette Engagement Report
- Appendix B4 – Town of Erie Engagement Report
- Appendix B5 – City of Louisville Engagement Report

Primary Results

The minimum wage questionnaire garnered 993 responses. Across both English (94 percent of the total) and Spanish (6 percent of the total), 84 percent of respondents answered all of the questions. The analysis below includes responses across both languages. A majority of the partial responses were mostly complete. The analysis includes responses from incomplete questionnaires to provide as much information as possible regarding respondent's opinions. As a result, respondent totals will not match across all exhibits. Most charts include response counts in parentheses.

In addition, some respondents did not answer all questions consistently. For example, one question asked respondents what kind of employment best describes their own, to which 246 responded “business owner.” However, a later question directly asked “Are you a business owner?” to which 275 responded affirmatively. Therefore, depending on the exhibit, the total number of business owners may vary.

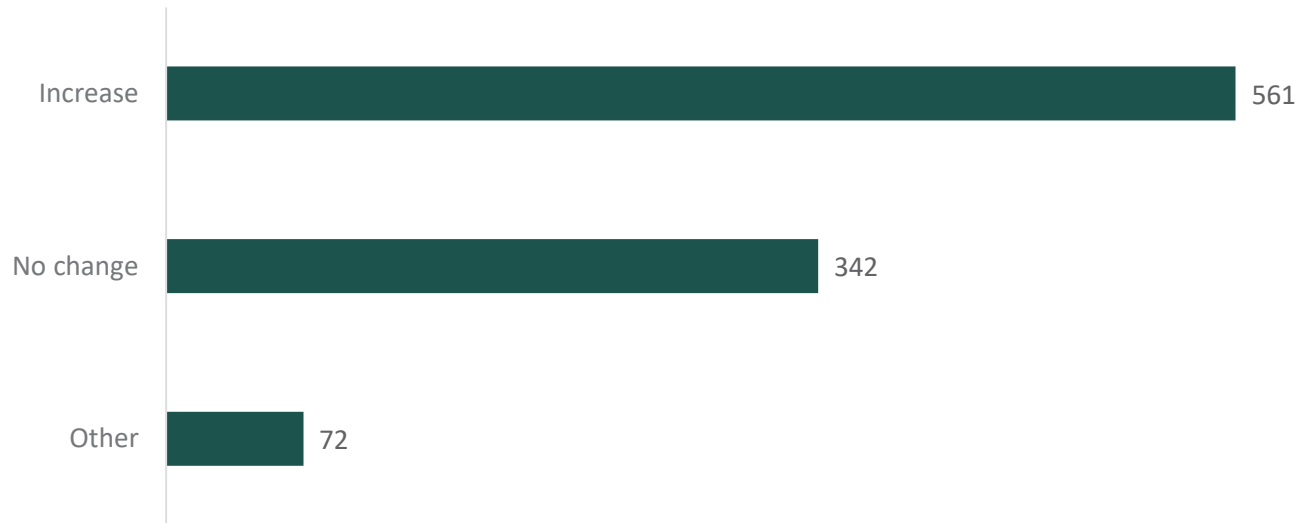
The minimum wage questionnaire asked respondents to indicate their preference regarding increasing the local minimum wage. Respondents were given three specific scenarios for an increase as well as an open-ended option to provide a different preferred increase. Respondents were also able to indicate a preference for no increase, and to express no opinion regarding an increase. The minimum wage increase scenarios were as follows:

1. Match unincorporated Boulder County (\$15.69 in 2024, increasing every year to reach a minimum wage of \$25 by 2030 and increasing based on inflation after that)
2. Match the City/County of Denver's minimum wage (\$18.29 in 2024, increasing each year based on inflation)
3. Match the current Boulder County staff hourly wage (\$23.23 in 2024)
4. Some other increase provided as a write-in response



Combining all responses that indicated support for an increase indicates that those who support some kind of increase (561 respondents, or 58 percent) significantly outnumber those who support keeping the minimum wage as is (36 percent), as shown in Exhibit A1. A minority of respondents (7 percent) favored some other action, such as abolishing the minimum wage entirely. In general, however, these latter responses could not easily be categorized as in favor of or opposed to an increase.¹³⁰

Exhibit A1. Do questionnaire respondents favor increasing the minimum wage, or keeping it the same?



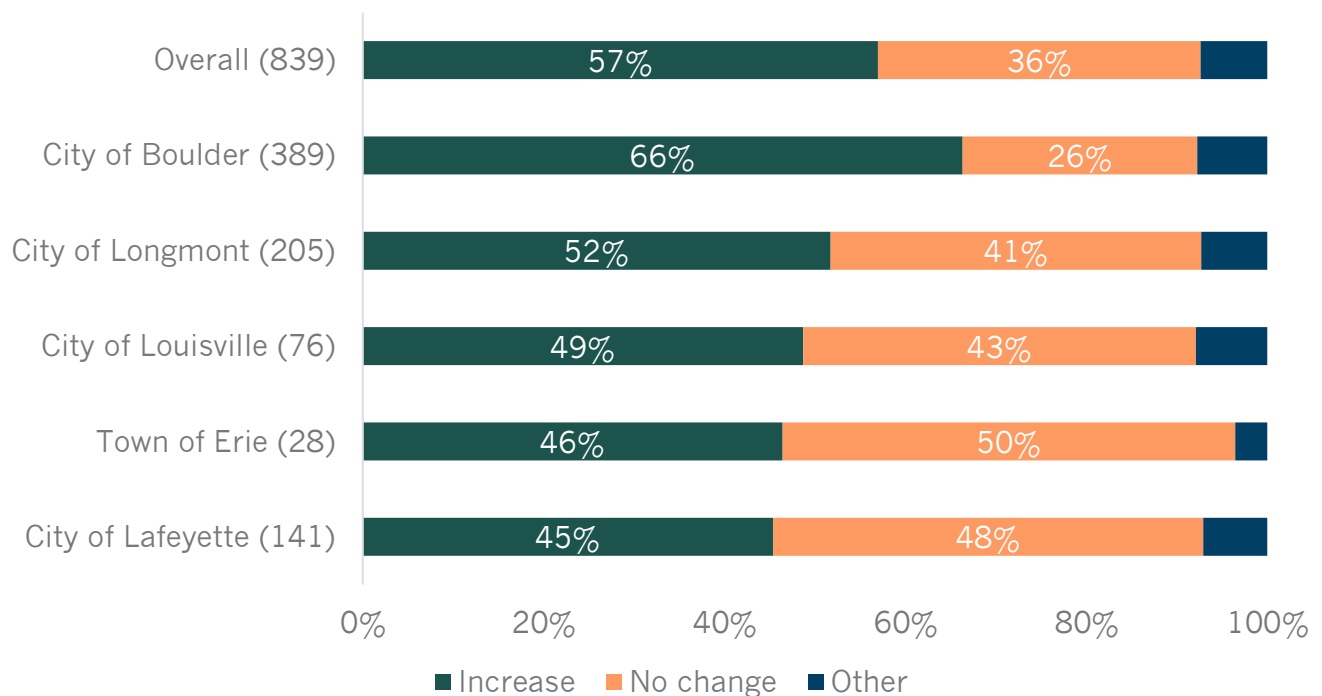
¹³⁰ About half of those who responded "other" could be recategorized as in favor or opposed to a minimum wage increase. The remaining half (72) expressed unclear or altogether different views, such as support for eliminating the minimum wage



Exhibit A2 shows the level of support by reported location of work. This exhibit includes individuals who reported “business owner” as their employment type and who identified a location of work. It excludes self-identified business owners who did not report an employment type or location, as well as respondents who reported work only in other areas, such as unincorporated Boulder County. In addition, as individuals were allowed to identify multiple work locations an individual’s response may appear in multiple locations.

Overall, 57 percent of respondents included in this exhibit supported increasing the minimum wage, similar to the share identified in Exhibit 1. The strongest support came from respondents who reported a work location in the cities of Boulder and Longmont, with 66 percent and 52 percent in favor, respectively. Less the half of respondents from Louisville, Erie, and Lafayette supported an increase.

Exhibit A2. How does support for increasing the minimum wage vary by work location?



Note: Exhibit excludes responses from individuals who reported working in a location other than one of the five municipalities.



For simplicity, we combined reported employment type into the following categories:

1. Student = Full-time students + part-time students
2. Self-employed = Self-employed + consultants
3. Wage worker = Full-time + part-time employees
4. Retired = Retired + fixed-income respondents

Exhibit A3 displays support for a minimum wage increase by category of employment. The chart excludes individuals who did not report an employment type, such as some self-identified business owners. As respondents were allowed to identify multiple employment types, an individual's response may appear in multiple categories, leading to the higher overall response count.

The questionnaire revealed broad support for increasing the minimum wage across many employment types, with the significant exception of business owners. This latter group strongly favored no change to the minimum.

Exhibit A3. How does support for a minimum wage vary by type of employment?

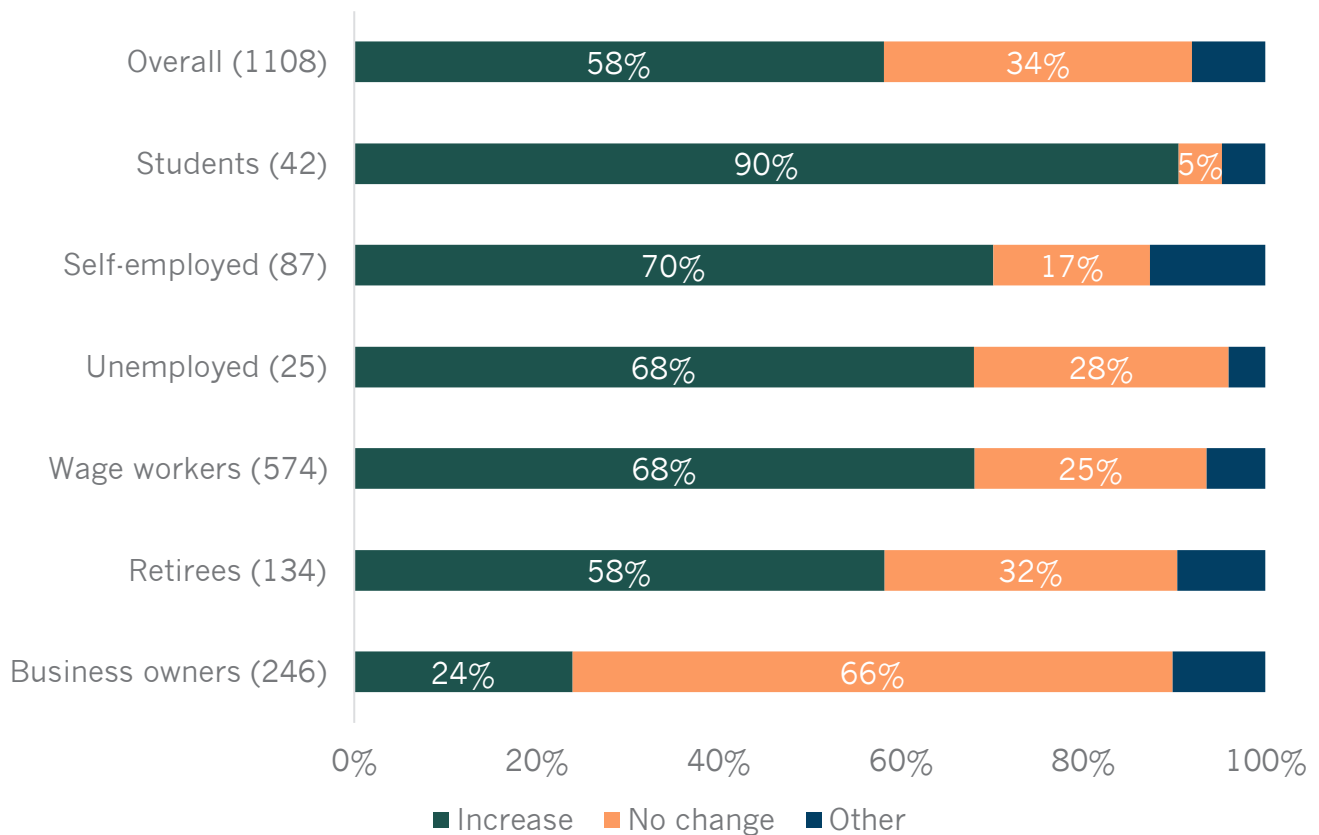


Exhibit A4 shows the number of employees that business owners in the questionnaire reported having, and their support for increasing the minimum wage. The results show no discernible pattern between business size and support for increasing the minimum wage, although it is notable that the owners of the largest businesses (over 250 employees) are nearly evenly split on the question.

Exhibit A4. How does business size affect business owners’ support for increasing the minimum wage?

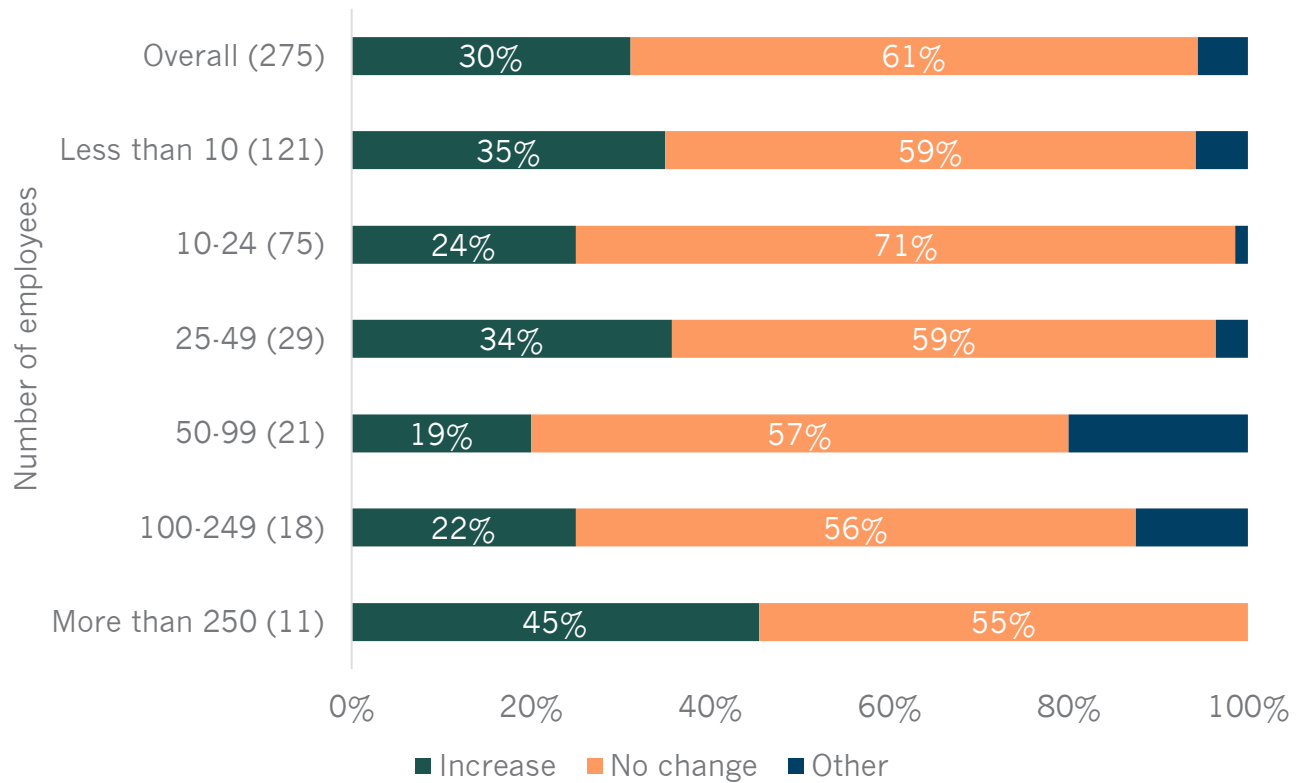


Exhibit A5 shows the percent of questionnaire respondents who are business owners in each of the study areas, including both self-identified business owners and individuals who reported “business owner” as their type of employment (two different questions) (parentheses show the number of business owners in each area). An individual’s responses may appear in multiple categories.

Exhibit A5 provides additional context for differences across municipality reported in Exhibit A3. Although Longmont appears an exception, a higher prevalence of business owners in a municipality generally correlates with lower support for a minimum wage increase.

Exhibit A5. What percent of respondents from the study area are business owners?

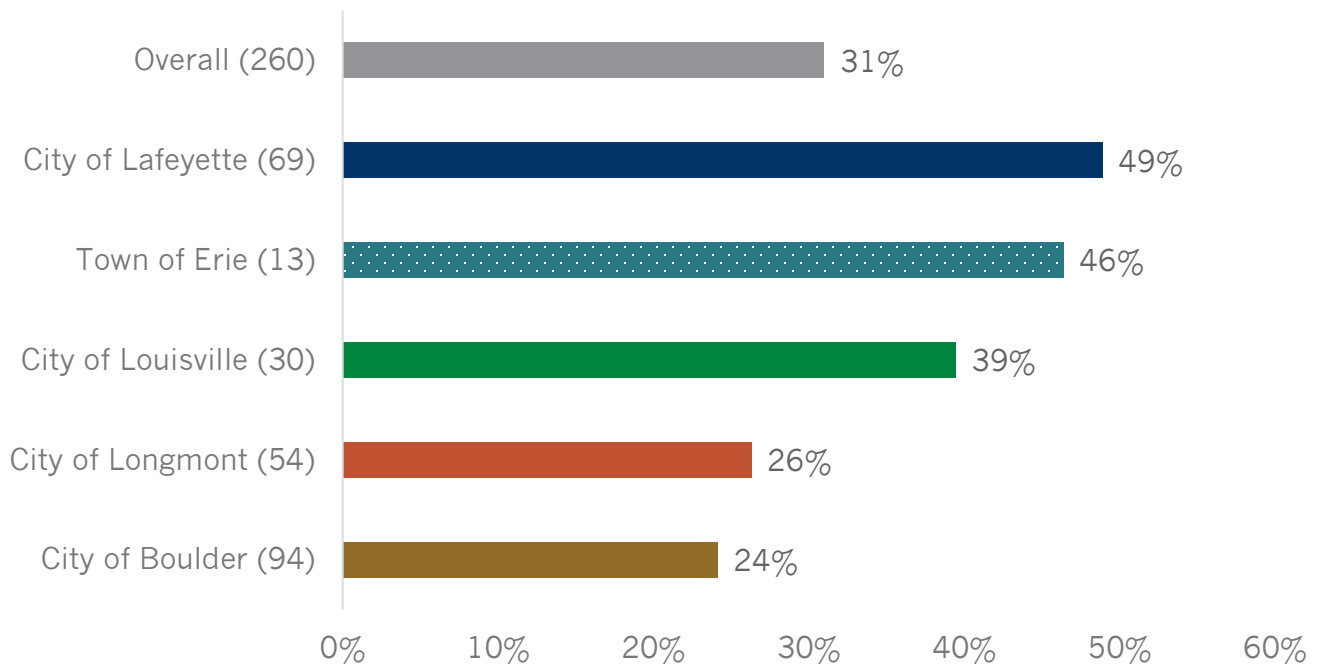


Exhibit A6 shows support for increasing the minimum wage by reported industry of employment. An individual’s responses may appear in multiple categories. Workers in some relatively low-wage industries, such as retail, indicated relatively low support for an increase.



Exhibit A6. How does support for increasing the minimum wage vary by job industry?

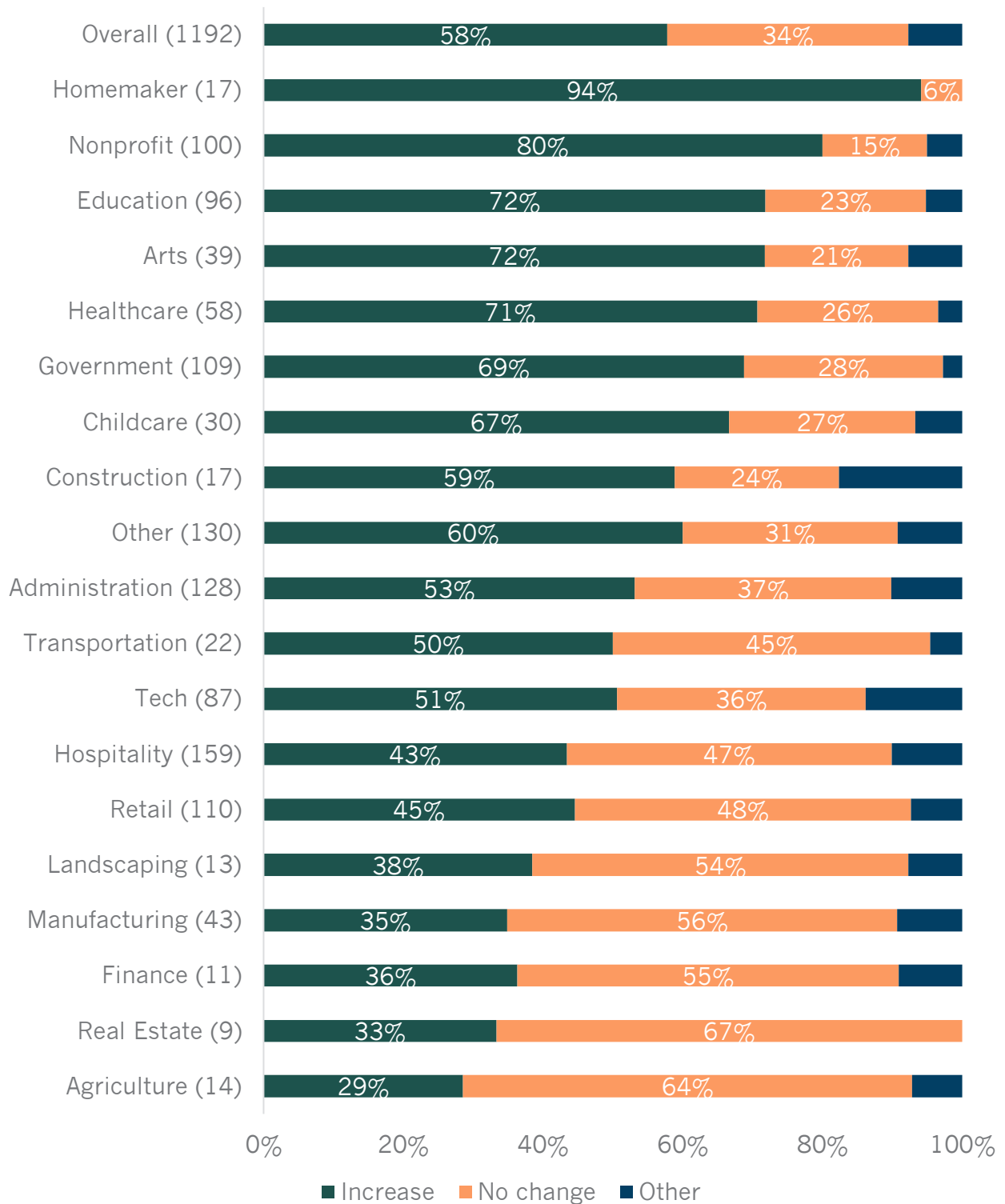


Exhibit A7 provides context for the patterns exhibited in the prior exhibit. Perhaps surprisingly, questionnaire responses indicate the strongest support for increasing the minimum wage is among higher wage earners. Narrow majorities of lower wage workers (making up to \$16 per hour) support increasing the minimum wage, while roughly two-thirds of higher wage workers (making between \$16 and \$40 per hour) support an increased minimum wage. Among lower



wage workers who do not support increasing the minimum wage, approximately 30 percent work in the restaurant industry and are likely earning tips on top of their reported wage.

Exhibit A7. How does support for increasing the minimum wage vary by worker's hourly wage?

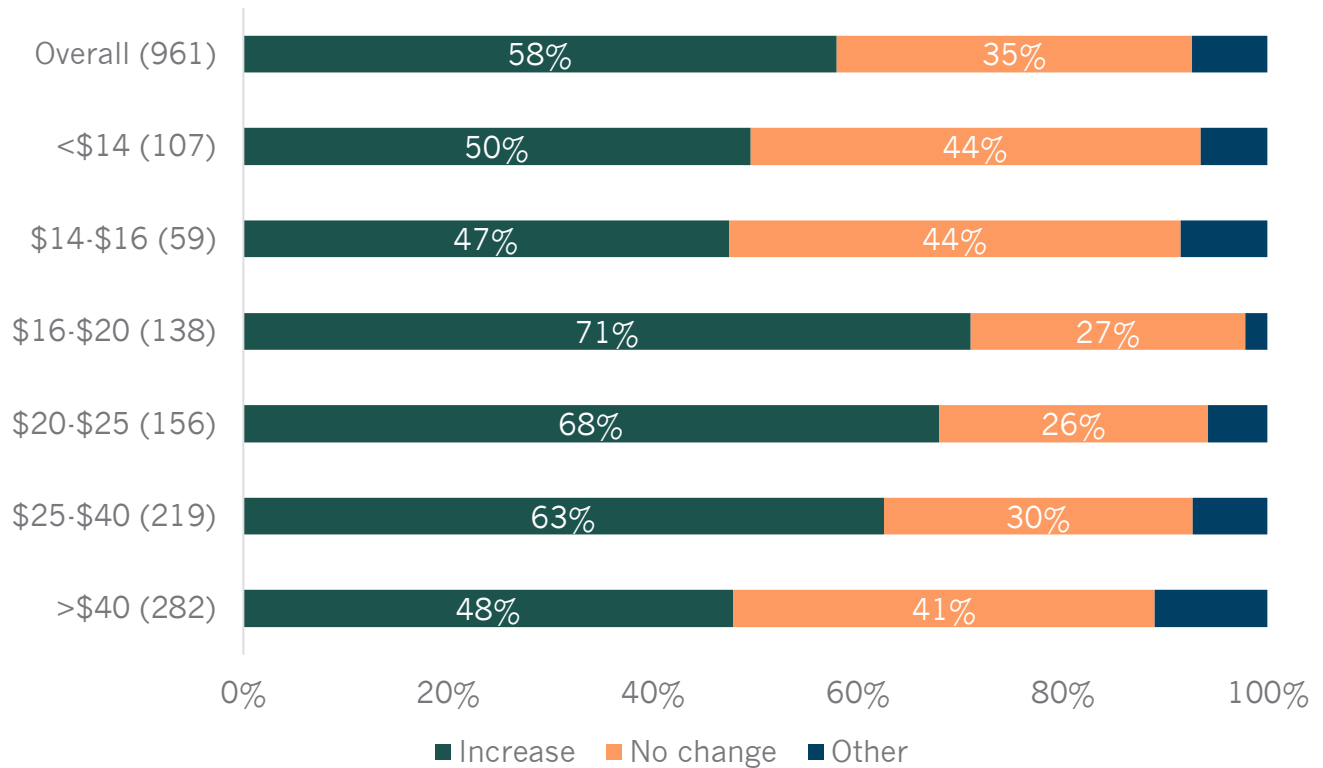
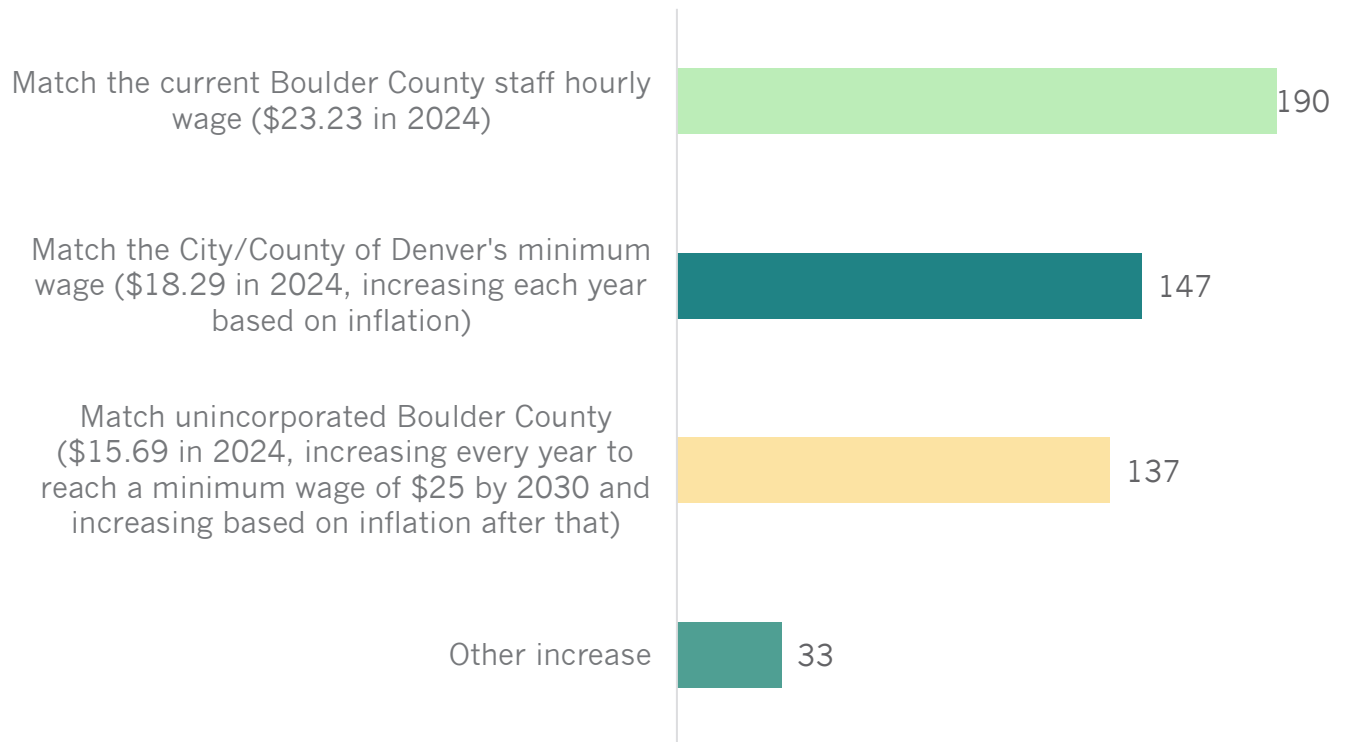


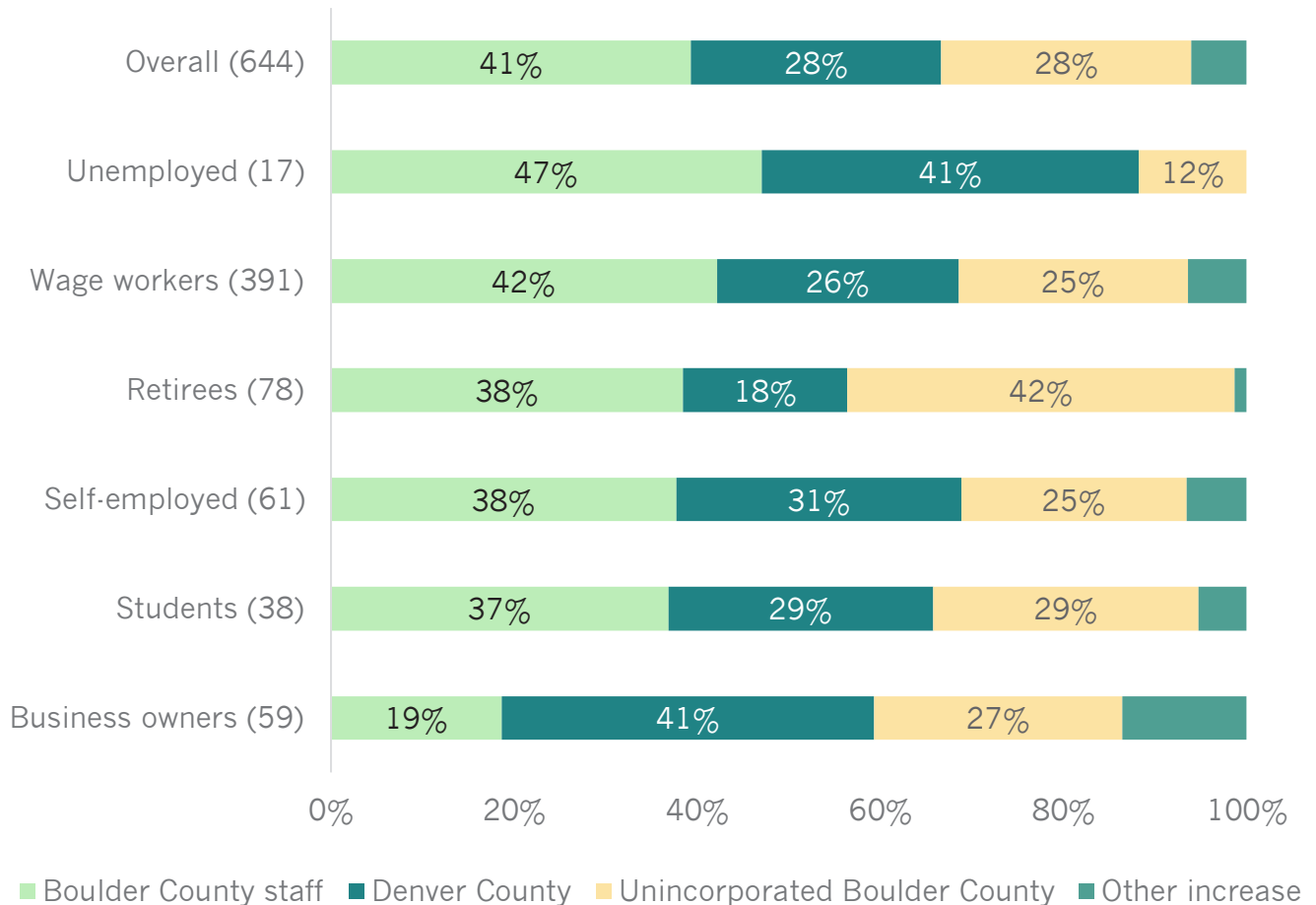
Exhibit A8 shows the most favored wage increase scenario was to match Boulder County staff wages of \$23.23 per hour (37 percent support). However, there does not appear to be a clear consensus as which scenario is best, as the City/County of Denver (29 percent support) and unincorporated Boulder County's (27 percent support) scenarios also received significant support. A small minority of respondents (7 percent) wrote in support for other wage increases.

Exhibit A8. Among supporters of an increased minimum wage, what is the preferred new wage?



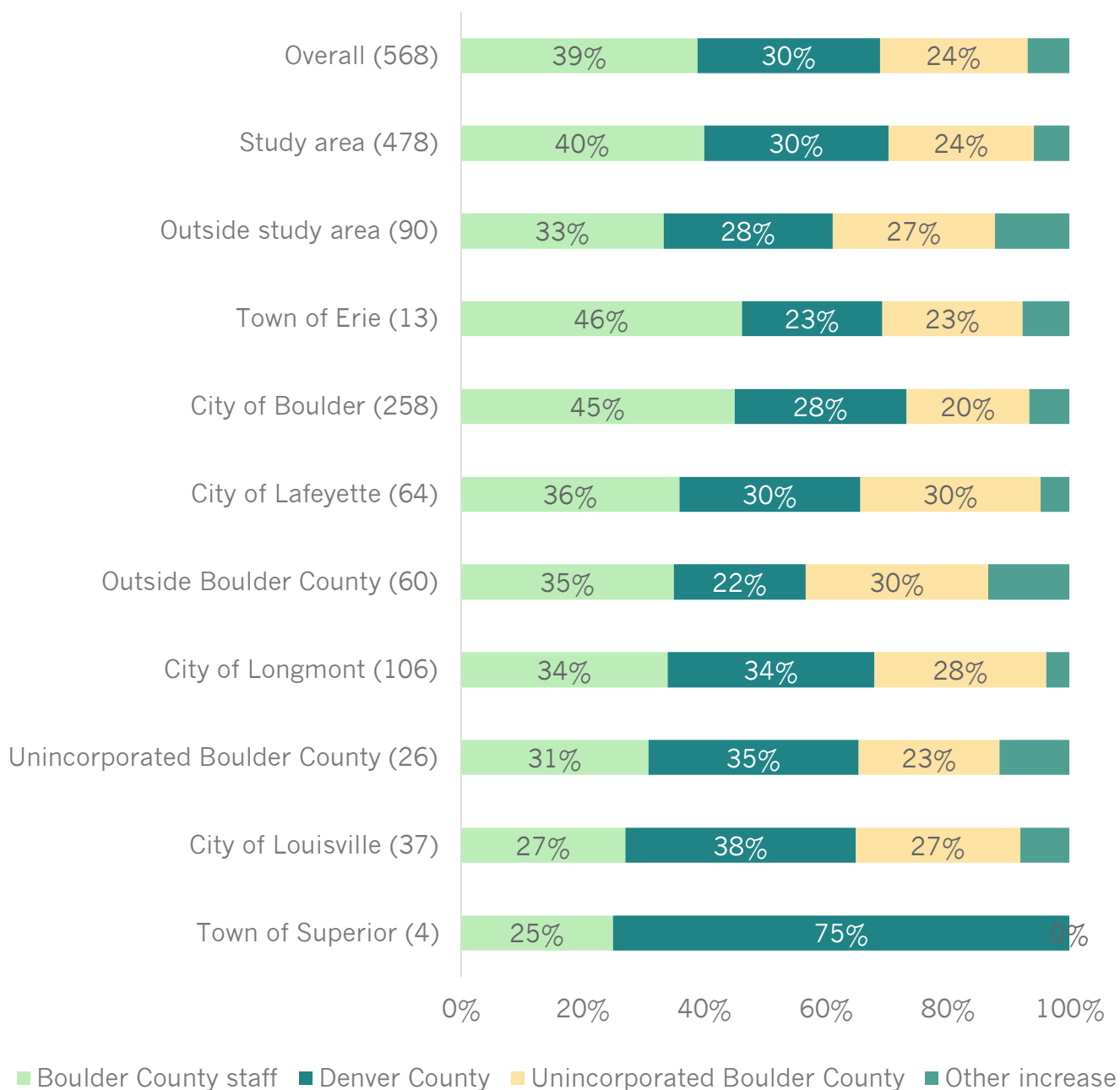
Separating supporters of each minimum wage increase level by their employment type shows some interesting variation (see Exhibit A9). For example, among business owners who support increasing the minimum wage, the most favored scenario was to match Denver’s wage of \$18.29 per hour in 2024 (and increasing based on inflation thereafter). An individual’s responses may appear in multiple categories.

Exhibit A9. Among supporters of an increased minimum wage, what is the preferred new wage according to employment type?



Finally, Exhibit A10 displays respondents' preferences over minimum wage increase scenarios by reported location of work ("Study area" refers to the five municipalities party to the minimum wage economic analysis).

Exhibit A10. Among supporters of an increased minimum wage, what is the preferred new wage according to work location?



Additional Detail

Exhibit A11. Which statement best describes your feeling about a possible change in the minimum wage?

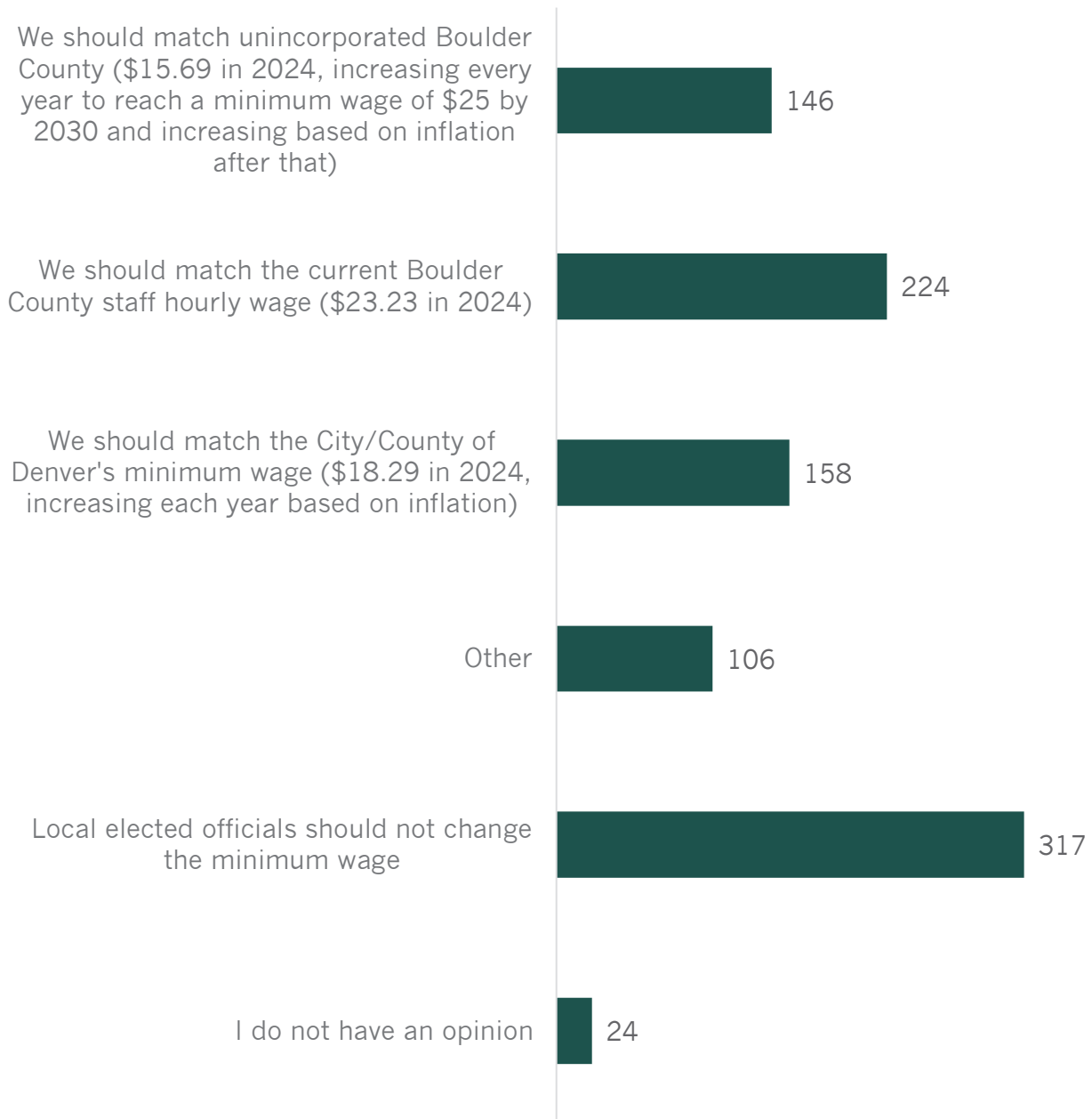


Exhibit A12. If you are employed, where do you work?

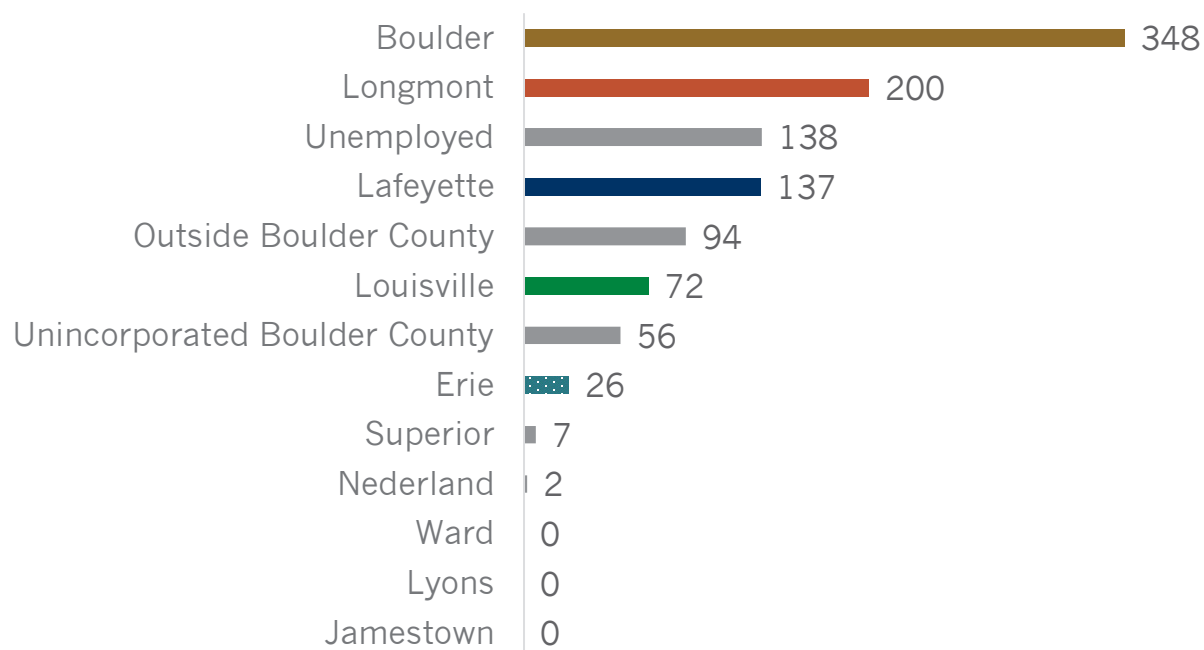


Exhibit A13. Which of the following describe you?

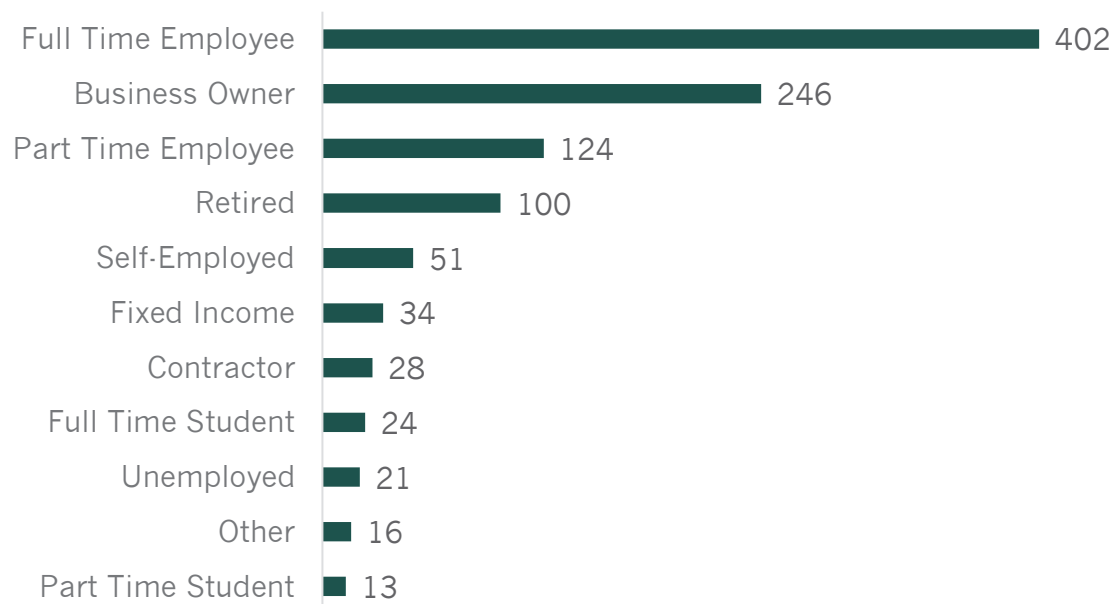


Exhibit A14. Which of these best describes your job?

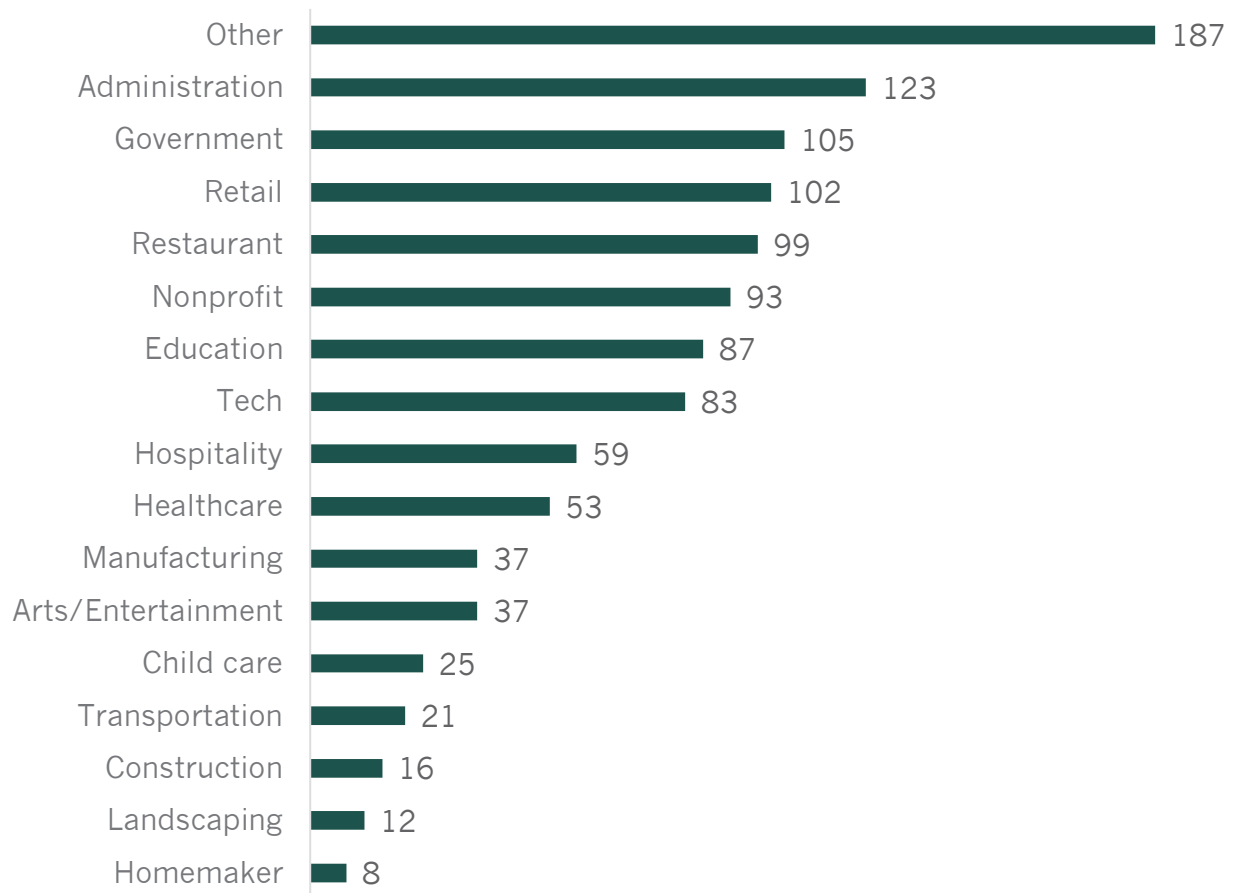


Exhibit A15. Which category includes your hourly wage before taxes, deductions and tips?

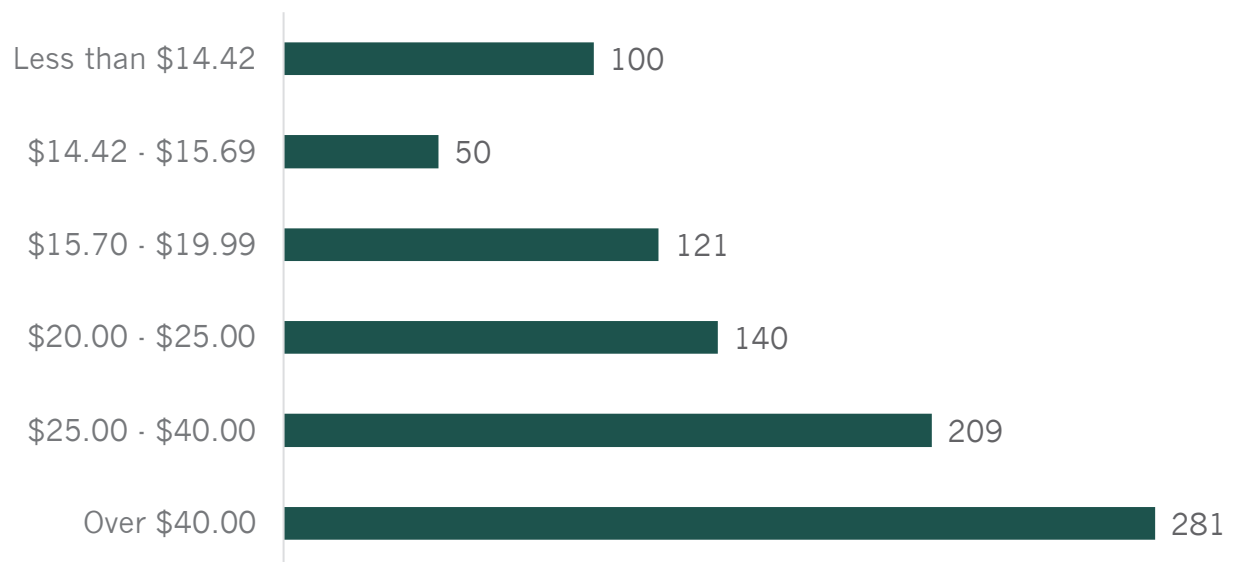
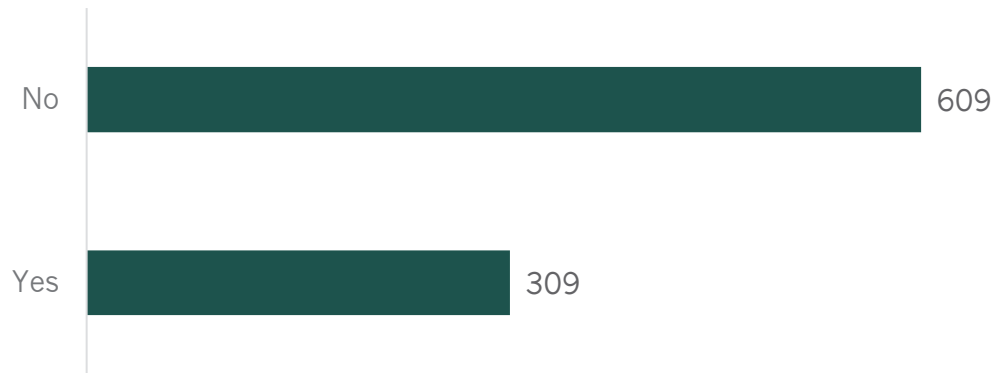


Exhibit A16. Are you a business owner?



BUSINESS OWNER RESPONSES

Exhibit A17. In which Boulder County cities/towns is your business or organization located? (respondents could select multiple cities/towns)

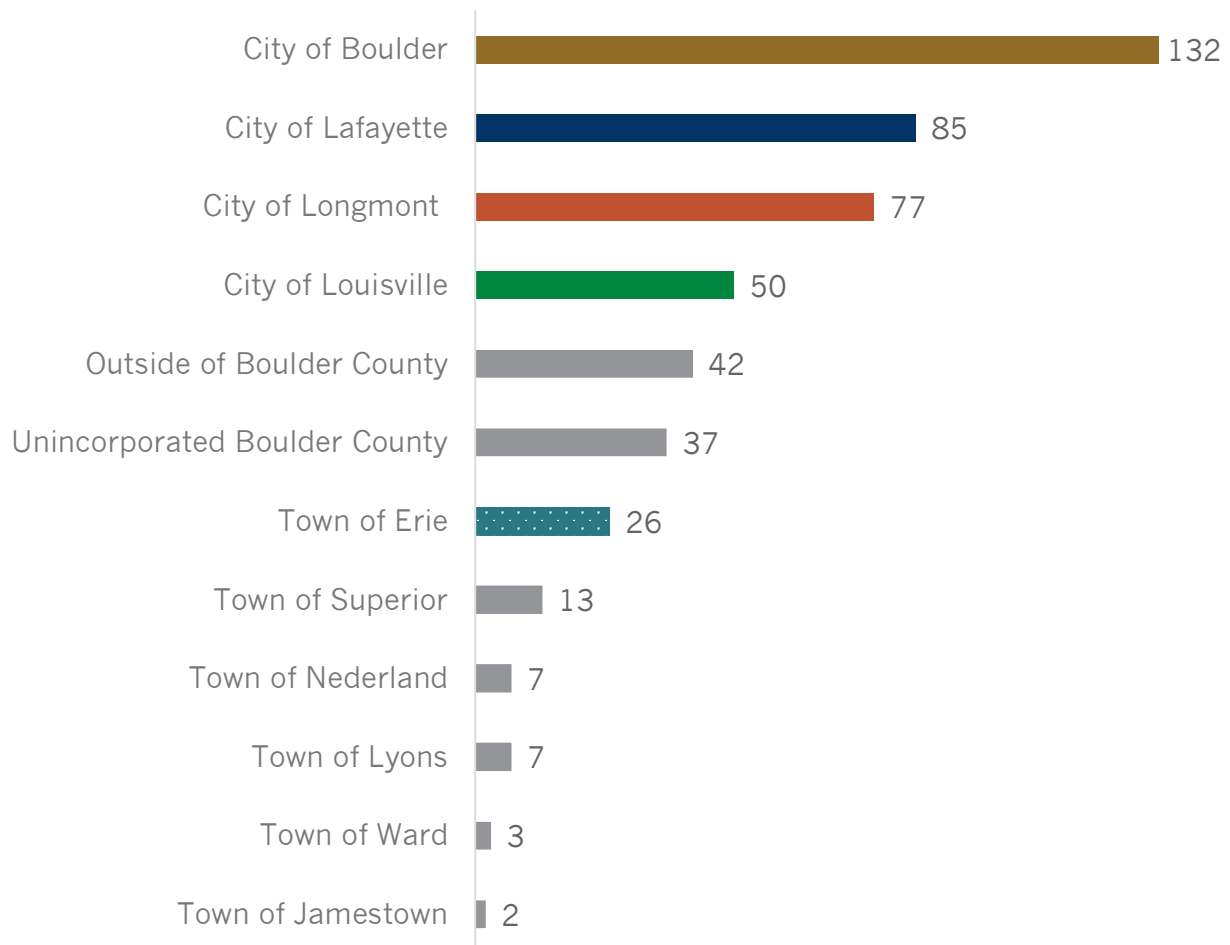


Exhibit A18. Please indicate the type of business you own

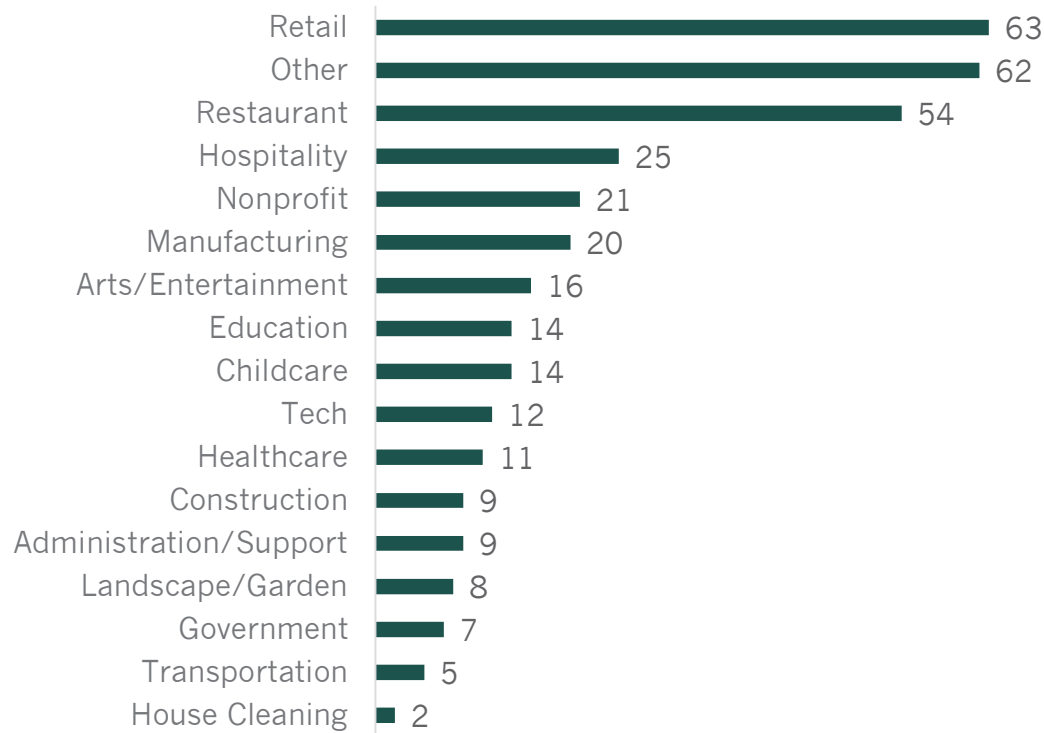


Exhibit A19. What category includes the hourly wage for your lowest paid employees before taxes, deductions and tips?

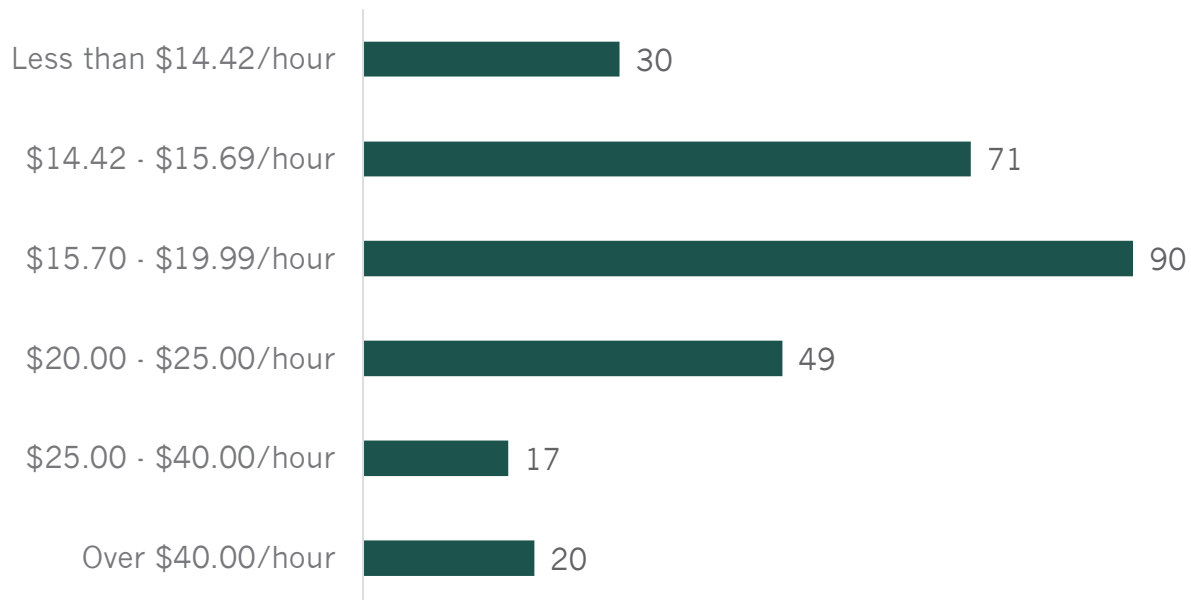


Exhibit A20. How long has your business been in operation?

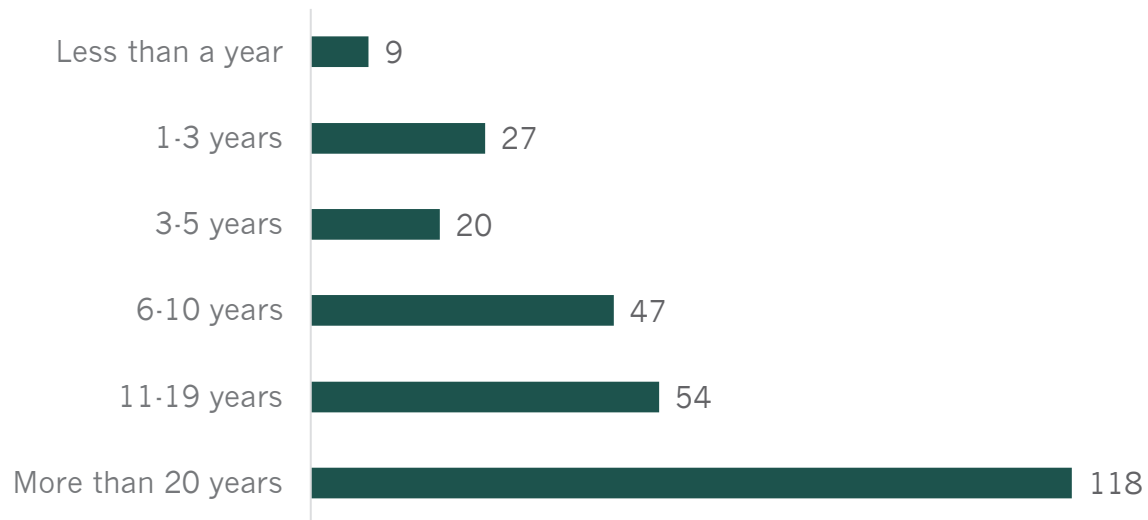
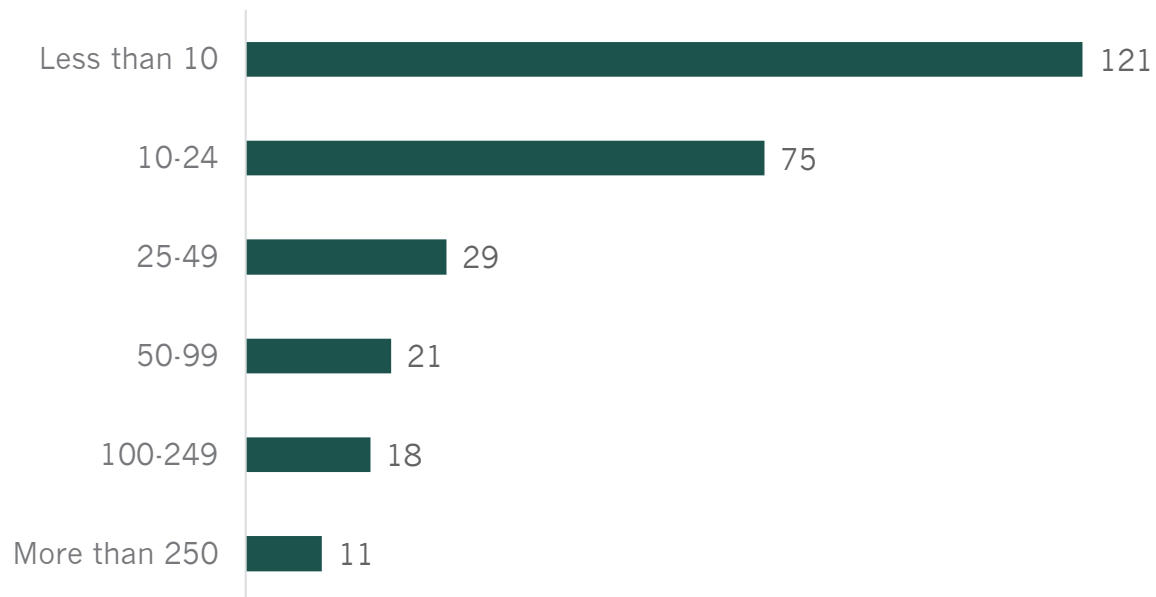


Exhibit A21. How many workers do you employ?





City of Boulder Engagement Report

Executive Summary

An increase to local minimum wage in Boulder would have far reaching impacts, with the greatest impact being felt by minimum wage earners and business owners.

Over the course of three months, community members were invited to provide their thoughts virtually and in-person, with English and Spanish options at one of 14 focus group sessions and through an online questionnaire.

Among the 200 individuals that engaged in focus groups throughout the region, 98 were Boulder community members. Among the approximately 1,000 questionnaire responses, 390 respondents self-identified as Boulder community members and/or employers.

Feedback themes fell into two broad categories - key themes were those that were consistently repeated across responses in both the questionnaire and focus groups, while unique themes were those that were mentioned less frequently but shared a potential outcome that would be particularly impactful to a specific subgroup of individuals.

This report contains many positive and negative impacts for Council to consider as they prepare to make a decision whether and how to move forward with ordinances regarding local minimum wage.

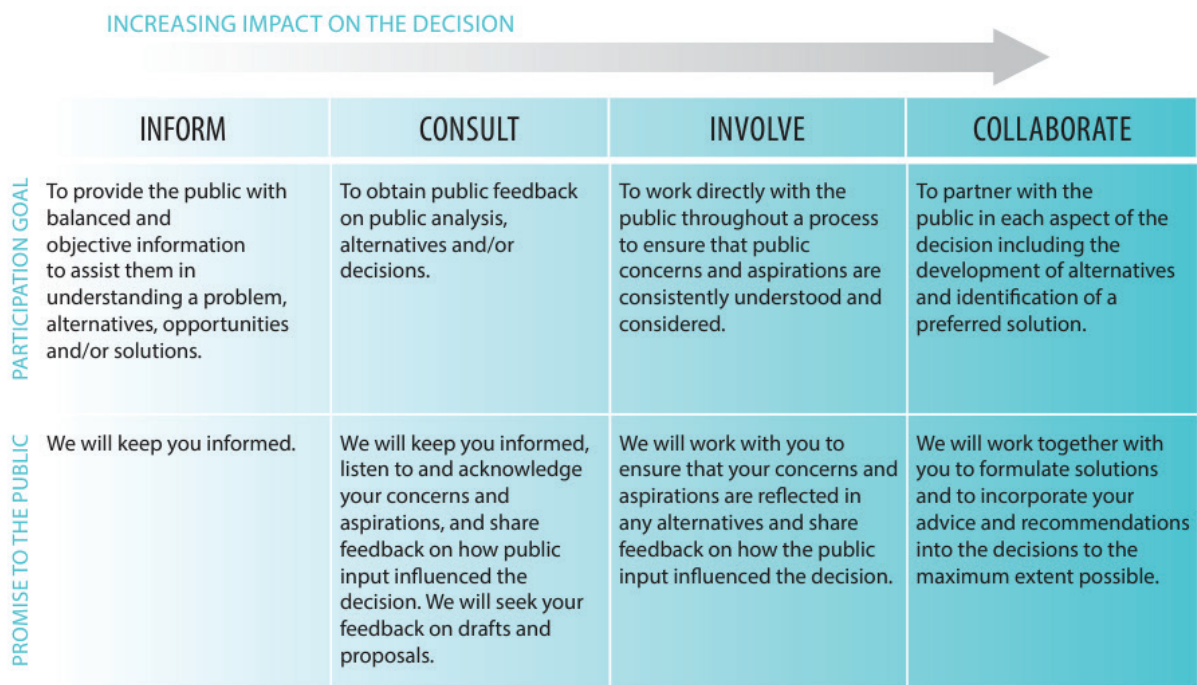
Regional Model for Engagement Strategy

In the summer of 2023, elected officials from the Cities of Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and Louisville and the Town of Erie directed the Regional Minimum Wage Working Group to conduct a study of our regional economy and community engagement regarding a minimum wage increase. Since August of 2023, regional teams have met to scope and administer these next steps. Teams include one staff member from each of the five participating communities as well as three community representatives: one representative from the Chamber of Commerce (in representation of the business community), a representative from the Self Sufficiency Wage Coalition (in representation of the workers and faith community), and a representative of Emergency Family Assistance Association (in representation of human service nonprofits).



City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

A standard engagement model operating at the 'Involve' level of the public participation spectrum was administered across the five participating communities. Engagement opportunities were available between mid-February until April 15th, and community members were provided options to participate virtually and in-person, with English and Spanish options at one of 14 focus group sessions and through an online questionnaire. The economic analysis, alongside the close-ended feedback from the engagement questionnaire, will be provided in a separate consultant report.



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How the City of Boulder Implemented the Model

The City of Boulder’s engagement strategy focused on meaningful, inclusive, and equitable engagement opportunities for both business owners and community members. Boulder’s specific strategies and implementation included:

Hosting six focus group sessions: four centering community members and two centering employers and business owners, 5 in English with Spanish translation and one in Spanish with English translation for community. One session was offered online via Zoom (see Attachment A – Engagement Opportunities Flyer).

Promoting the project’s online questionnaire through its dedicated Regional Minimum Wage project website and social media channels. The questionnaire was available in both English and Spanish for both community members and business owners.

To address some geographic and socioeconomic challenges to participation, City of Boulder staff implemented two additional proactive outreach strategies:

A focused canvassing effort to spread awareness about engagement opportunities to businesses outside of the downtown area.

Drop-in engagement hours at the Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA) food bank to encourage questionnaire and focus group participation, recognizing the immense barriers to engagement for many of the community members who would be most impacted by an increase to the local minimum wage. Staff spent eight hours at the EFAA Food Bank during four drop-in visits doing direct outreach with program participants. Staff outreach included administering questionnaires, answering questions, advertising focus group opportunities, and providing information about the minimum wage project.

Importantly, the regional team received valuable feedback from community partners at the end of 2023, prior to the project’s formal engagement window. This feedback is summarized in the regional engagement report.

Both the focus group sessions and the questionnaire asked the same three questions of employers and community members. This engagement report focuses on themes that emerged from the qualitative feedback data of these three questions from people that self-identified their participation in Boulder’s economy:

What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage could be for you, (your family / your business), and your community?

What do you think the negative impact of increasing the minimum wage could be for you, (your family / your business), and your community?

Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

Analysis

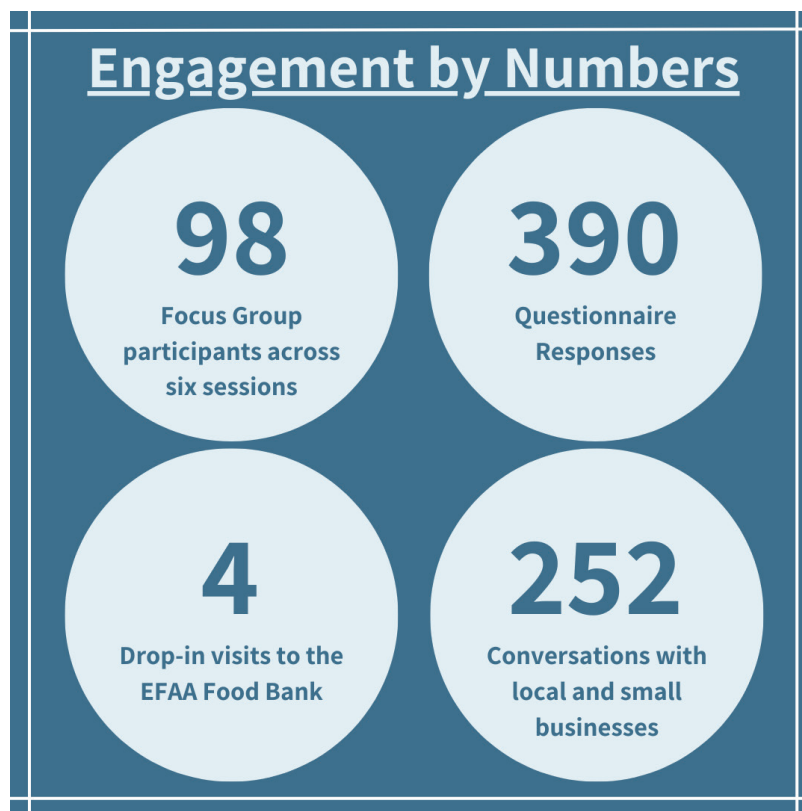
In addition to the open-ended questions above, the online questionnaire asked a series of close-ended questions gathering economic data about respondents’ current wages, industries, and more. These data were analyzed by the project’s economic analysis consultant, ECONorthwest, and will be reported separately. The themes reported below resulted from city staff analysis of open-ended and freeform feedback related to the perceived positive and negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage.



Methods

Among the 200 individuals that engaged in focus groups throughout the region, 98 were Boulder community members. Among the approximately 1,000 questionnaire responses, 390 respondents self-identified as Boulder community members and/or employers.

Even though the engagement model was not structured to yield scientifically representative results, staff analysis used a hybrid method to organize the high volume of comments into a descriptive storytelling report. An initial scan of response data identified 25 unique topic areas, and from there comments were categorized and coded into themes. Feedback themes fell into two broad categories - key themes were those that were consistently repeated across responses in both the questionnaire and focus groups, while unique themes were those that were mentioned less frequently but shared a potential outcome that would be particularly impactful to a specific subgroup of individuals. This approach acknowledges the persistent barriers to participation, and brings visibility to the perspectives shared without a thorough account of their frequency.





City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

Engagement Strategy	Outcome
Focus Group Sessions	98 participants across six sessions
Online Questionnaire	216 community members responded in English 37 community members responded in Spanish 131 employers responded in English 6 employers responded in Spanish
Business Canvassing	252 documented outreach conversations with local and small businesses, speaking with both business owners and employees
EFAA Food Bank Hours	Eight hours between four drop-in visits to the EFAA food bank

Key Themes

While the analysis revealed immense variation in participants' feelings across both employers and community members, many common themes emerged according to whether a participant identified themselves as an employer or community member. While the focus group session feedback was more balanced, the questionnaire responses revealed more distinct feedback between community members and employers, respectively.

This report separates community member and employer feedback, but this organizational structure is not meant to suggest binary opposition between employers and community members given the complexity of responses and the immense variety of perspectives within each group. Employers, too, are community members, and separating their feedback from the rest of the community's responses enables staff and decision makers to understand their unique perspective on this issue. This engagement process revealed that both workers and employers participate in the economy in multiple ways, individuals often hold multiple perspectives, and every single person and organization possesses unique lived and learned experience related to the minimum wage.

The key engagement themes are listed here and explained in greater detail below.

Key Themes – Community Member Feedback

Theme A – Increased Ability to Meet Basic Need

Higher wages may enable more people to afford housing, food, utilities, health insurance, transportation, childcare, education, retirement savings, and other necessities. With additional income, minimum wage earners may not live paycheck to paycheck or rely on their savings to pay their bills, and people may be able to take on less debt.

Fewer individuals and families that rely on the minimum wage would live in poverty.

Minors in minimum wage jobs could make significant contributions to their families' abilities to meet basic needs.



City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

Theme B – Improved Quality of Life for Minimum Wage Earners

With higher wages, minimum wage earners could have fewer jobs or work fewer hours, enabling them to spend more time with their families, in their communities, and taking care of themselves.

Children could spend more time with their parents/guardians and less time alone if higher wages result in the ability to work fewer hours, especially in single-parent households.

People will experience improved mental and physical health outcomes if higher wages result in less financial stress.

Increased wages may enable people to invest in recreation, vacations, and leisure activities that they currently cannot afford.

"More disposable income means more money spent in the community. And if people are better able to make ends meet it will mean a better quality of life. It will also help promote diversity if more people can afford to live in Boulder County communities."

Theme C – Economic Growth

Additional disposable income would allow individuals and families to spend more money at Boulder businesses and restaurants, increasing their participation in the local economy.

Increased consumer spending in Boulder would result in higher city sales tax revenue.

Higher wages and the resulting pressure on businesses and nonprofits might spur greater innovation.

Fair compensation would result in higher productivity, better employee retention, increased business profits, and ultimately job growth.

Minimum wage earners could rely less on public assistance programs offered through public and nonprofit organizations, alleviating pressure on these service providers.

Theme D – Higher Wages make Boulder an Attractive Place to Live, Work, and Play

Higher wages may enable current Boulder workers to live in Boulder rather than commute from neighboring cities.

Additional workers may begin commuting from nearby communities due to attractive, competitive wages.

A higher minimum wage could strengthen a sense of community and make the city more diverse, resilient, welcoming and vibrant.

Theme E – Concerns about Inflation and Rising Cost of Goods & Services

Increased wages could result in inflationary increases to the costs of rent, food, utilities, childcare, and other



goods and services.

Some community members remarked that this is a price they are willing to pay for fair wages, while others, especially those on fixed incomes from retirement, disability benefits, or other sources, are concerned about higher costs without a simultaneous increase to their incomes.

Community Member Feedback on Negative Impacts

While community members most often cited the positive impacts from a minimum wage increase (Key Themes A, B, C, and D), many also acknowledged the possibility for negative or unintended consequences. In addition to the widespread concern about inflation and the rising cost of goods and services (Key Theme E), community members often noted fears surrounding negative impacts to small businesses, reduced employee hours and benefits, and an increased minimum wage not being the appropriate solution to address the cost-of-living crisis (explored in more detail below).

Key Themes* – Employer Feedback

*Importantly, increased labor cost was a prominent theme in employer responses. It is not included as a key theme below since it is offered as the main driver of more specific impacts and thus woven throughout Themes F, G, H, I, and J.

Theme F – Increased Pressure on Local and Small Businesses

The most common theme among business owners was that increased labor costs may push local and small business owners to sell, close, or move their business outside of the City of Boulder/Boulder County into a community where the cost of doing business is lower.





City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

Many business owners emphasized that while their business may be able to survive, profit margins would be tighter, they would have to drastically increase their own working hours to make ends meet, and it may not be worth the additional stress to continue operating.

Theme G – Businesses Forced to Increase Prices

Speaking to the same challenge as Theme E (Concerns about Inflation and Rising Cost of Goods & Services), a large share of business owners warned that an increased minimum wage would force them to raise their prices to maintain business viability.

Increased prices could result in lower sales due to individuals shopping online or in other communities.

Theme H – Reduction in Employee Hours, Benefits, and Opportunities

Many employers expressed the possibility of terminating jobs, reducing employee hours, or eliminating employee raises and benefits programs.

Employers emphasized that they do not want to implement these strategies to absorb higher labor costs, as both employees and customer service could suffer.

Employers may automate employee functions where possible, potentially resulting in fewer job opportunities.

Several employers that intentionally hire individuals with little or no work experience, youth, or individuals in recovery from mental health challenges or justice-system involvement may not be willing to provide these opportunities.

Entry-level positions, internships, and training jobs for inexperienced workers could be eliminated due to lower return on investment.

Theme I – Wage Inequity and Compression

An increased minimum wage would result in wage compression, meaning that the pay gap between minimum wage earners and higher earners would decrease, in many cases pressuring employers to raise all employees' wages to remain competitive.

If employers cannot raise all employee wages, they may only be able to afford to hire inexperienced workers at the floor set by the local minimum wage.

In addition to wage equity between employees, business owners shared fears that they would have to lower their own pay checks to an unsustainable amount or even skip paychecks to absorb the cost of a higher minimum wage.

Many employers who currently make a conscious effort to pay above the minimum wage may lose their competitive advantage if the wage floor is raised for the whole community.

Theme J – Changing Character of Boulder

Business owners feared that Boulder may become a city with primarily large chain stores and restaurants that can more easily afford increased labor costs, resulting in the loss of unique character and quality of service that small, local businesses bring.



This may negatively impact tourism.

It could result in excess commercial space vacancies downtown and thus reduced economic vitality.

Employer Feedback on Positive Impacts

While the positive impacts of a minimum wage increase were most often shared by community members rather than employers, some employers agreed with several of the positive impacts described in Key Themes A, B, C, and D. When asked about the positive impacts of a minimum wage increase, employers most often mentioned the possibility for increased buying power among consumers, attracting and retaining employees, and helping employees meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life. Many employers included the caveat that any positive impacts of an increased wage would be short-lived.

"I don't see positive effects, because when the minimum salary increases, goods and rents also increase, and the purchasing power of families decreases." (translated from Spanish)

Unique Themes

The themes detailed in this section represent items that were not frequently mentioned but that represent additional perspectives and could have a large impact on a specific group, community, or industry.

Unique Themes – Community Member Feedback

Reduce Wealth Gap: Increasing the local minimum wage could reduce the wealth gap between several groups, including employers and employees; white workers and people of color; and working class and middle/high income individuals.

Benefit Cliff: For individuals who qualify for and use public benefits, an increased minimum wage could increase their income past eligibility caps without providing enough additional income to backfill or exceed the value of these public benefits. For these individuals, a higher wage could result in the loss of benefits.

Importantly, some community members shared the perspective that many individuals who qualify for public assistance programs may not currently use them. For these individuals, a higher wage could result in additional income without loss of benefits.

Relatedly, several community members shared that their current wage is just high enough to disqualify them from public assistance, but not enough to thrive. For these individuals, a higher wage could result in additional income without loss of benefits.



City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

Better Environmental Outcomes: If more individuals can live closer to where they work because of an increased minimum wage, the city would be reducing vehicle miles travelled and thus lower the community's carbon footprint.

Greater Societal Benefits: Since raising the minimum wage could help more people meet their basic needs, this policy change could alleviate larger societal issues linked to poverty such as theft, crime, violence, homelessness, and financial stress linked to changes in household structure, such as divorce.

Union Leverage: Unions could use a higher minimum wage as leverage for better bargaining.

Enable Students to Stay in Boulder: Higher wages may enable students to stay in Boulder after graduating from CU or Naropa.

Childcare Expenses: For some parents, the cost of childcare exceeds their hourly wage, making it more expensive to work than to stay home. A higher wage may enable these individuals to better afford childcare and participate in the workforce if desired.

"The effects would be positive, because here, in Boulder County, the cost of everything has increased, everything is very expensive, but our salaries remain the same, and now we don't have enough money to afford many things. Everything goes up, except our salaries." (translated from Spanish)

Unique Themes – Business Owner Feedback

Commercial Leasing Costs: Several employers commented that, should they need to close or move their organization because of higher labor costs, their commercial lease may not match up with their closure/moving timeline, resulting in additional sunk costs.

Exploitation of the Vulnerable: A less common but recurring theme was the potential connection between higher wages and exploitation of the most vulnerable community members. For example, while large corporations often pay more, they also share less profits with employees. Undocumented individuals without paperwork may be paid less to compensate for higher wages for documented employees. Finally, some minimum wage earners may need to work additional hours to keep up with inflationary increases to the cost of goods and services.

Unique Themes – Industry-Specific Feedback

Restaurants/Tip-based Industries: Restaurant owners shared near universal concern over increasing the tipped minimum wage alongside the non-tipped minimum wage. Redirecting resources to increase pay for front of house employees who are already making far more than back of house employees results in greater inequity between restaurant workers.

Nonprofit Service Providers: Both EFSA and the Human Services Alliance shared detailed feedback.



City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

EFAA shared that many of their program participants will spend up to 70% of their wages on housing, which could be alleviated by a higher wage. They shared that people who receive rental assistance from EFAA receive about \$2,000 per household on average and that even a \$1 per hour increase for a full-time minimum wage worker would exceed the amount they currently receive in rental assistance.

In 2023, before the project's formal engagement window, the Human Services Alliance (HSA) of Boulder County circulated a questionnaire among human service nonprofit organizations. Many organizations shared that a minimum wage increase may help the individuals their programs serve and lessen the strain on the local safety net as well as help their organizations attract and retain employees. They also shared concerns about the benefit cliff phenomenon for their program participants. Moreover, many human services nonprofit organizations shared that increased labor costs may result in less hiring, greater reliance on volunteers and fundraising efforts, wage compression issues, and an inability to provide free or low-cost services to program participants.

Agriculture: Leaders in the agriculture industry shared that local farmers will have an incredibly difficult time keeping up with labor needs and costs if the minimum wage increases, potentially resulting in the closure of several farms in the county. Additionally, it may be more difficult for farmers to employ seasonal workers via the national H-2A visa program for temporary agricultural workers.

Childcare Providers: Childcare industry professionals stated that they currently employ many high school and college youth to provide childcare and summer youth programs, and increasing the minimum wage may result in fewer of these positions, less childcare availability, or increased prices for childcare.



Additional Feedback and Considerations

The third question that engagement staff asked in both the focus group sessions and online questionnaire (Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?) yielded a high quantity of suggestions, perspectives, and questions. While these comments often reflected the key and unique feedback themes above, hundreds of comments resulted in additional feedback and considerations outside the binaries of positive and negative impacts, summarized below. Finally, several participants included questions for city council, city staff, and fellow community members in their responses. These questions are included in Attachment B - Complete List of Questions from Community Members in Focus Groups and through the Online Questionnaire.



City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

Cost of Living and Operating: Related to minimum wage conversations, community members emphasized the incredibly high cost of living, especially for housing and groceries, in both Boulder and Colorado. Employers also emphasized rapidly increasing operating costs, including high property taxes; state-mandated paid family and medical leave and sick time; statewide minimum wage increases for the past several years; and increasing costs associated with credit card fees, insurance, rent, utilities, and goods and supplies.

Sharing Cost Burdens with the Business Community: Due to the increasing cost of doing business, many employers suggested implementing programs that share the burden of increased operating costs, especially if council decides to raise the minimum wage. These could include:

- Lower, cap, or provide rebates on property taxes, sales taxes, rent, utility bills, etc.

- Local government-sponsored "buy local" campaigns.

- Use any increased sales tax revenue that results from workers' additional disposable income to support businesses.

- Investment in apprenticeship and upskilling programs for workers.

- Move to an incentive-based policy that rewards businesses and organizations that pay higher than the minimum wage.

Differing Perspectives on the Purpose of Minimum Wage: People shared varying perspectives on the purpose and function of minimum wage jobs, including:

- Minimum wage work is not meant to support a family.

- Unemancipated minors do not need increased wages as they are often supported by other means and do not count on wages to live, and they should be exempted from a higher minimum wage.

- Relatedly, some participants and respondents indicated a desire for local minimum wage exemptions for businesses by size and industry.

- "Unskilled" labor differs from "skilled" labor, and individuals who have experience and receive training and education should be paid more for their work. Accordingly, higher wages for all may disincentivize businesses from hiring youth and "unskilled" workers.

- Some individuals with few skills and little work experience may not display a work ethic deserving of a higher minimum wage.

Local Government's Role in Minimum Wage Policymaking: While some participants believed that Boulder elected officials should be active leaders on this issue and advocate for workers, others believed that local governments should not involve themselves in minimum wage policymaking and should let the market regulate hourly wages.

Regionalism: There were differing perspectives on a regional approach to increasing the minimum wage, with some participants preferring that Boulder act alone to increase competitiveness in the labor market and with other participants preferring a regional increase to provide predictability and consistency in local economic impacts.



City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

Policy Timing: While some individuals emphasized the urgency of increasing the minimum wage, others called for slow implementation that enables businesses to better prepare.

Complexity of the Issue: People commonly remarked upon the complexity of this policy issue and implored council to learn more about the tipped wage credit/tipping system; consumers' willingness to pay inflated prices; policy evaluation/success metrics; additional policy tools to address affordability in the areas of healthcare, childcare, and housing; the interplay between the micro and macro economies; and case study data from other communities.

Spanish-Speaking Community Feedback

City staff made an intentional effort to engage Spanish-speaking community members to better understand how an increased minimum wage may specifically impact the Spanish-speaking Hispanic/Latine employers and community members. Through the online questionnaire, staff received 37 Spanish-speaking community member responses and 6 Spanish-speaking employer responses. At the online focus group session hosted on Zoom, there were 5 Spanish-speaking participants. Additionally, 9 people attended the in-person focus group hosted in Spanish, though not all these individuals identified as members of the Hispanic/Latine community. Of note, many Hispanic/Latine employers and community members preferred to share their feedback in English at focus group sessions and in the online questionnaire, and this section of the report specifically summarizes responses from the Hispanic/Latine community that were provided in Spanish.

While Spanish speakers' feedback aligned closely with the key themes described above, engagement staff noted the following in the analysis of their feedback:

Many Spanish-speaking employers noted potential positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage.

Spanish-speaking community members overwhelmingly cited Key Themes A and B (Increased Ability to Meet Basic Needs and Improved Quality of Life for Minimum Wage Earners) as positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage. The potential negative impact shared most often was Key Theme E (Concerns about Inflation and Rising Cost of Goods & Services).

Quotes

Staff pulled quotes from focus group sessions and questionnaire responses to demonstrate the many perspectives of community members and business owners. While these are only a sampling of the hundreds of comments that staff received, they are representative of many of the perspectives shared.

"The effects would be positive, because here, in Boulder County, the cost of everything has increased, everything is very expensive, but our salaries remain the same, and now we don't have enough money to afford many things. Everything goes up, except our salaries." (translated from Spanish)

"I could finally pay my rent AND afford groceries and my family would finally be able to put a sustainable amount of food in [our] fridge. We have been living on soup, boxes of pasta and cereal for months."

"Minimum wage workers deserve to live a quality life. They deserve to not have to stress about whether they can afford rent and food each month. They deserve to be able to have a little extra income to do fun things



City of Boulder Regional Minimum Wage Engagement Report

and enjoy their lives instead of wasting away working several jobs. They deserve to be able to save some money."

"More disposable income means more money spent in the community. And if people are better able to make ends meet it will mean a better quality of life. It will also help promote diversity if more people can afford to live in Boulder County communities."

"Hopefully, it would make it easier for low wage workers (ie: minimum wage workers) to afford to live closer to where they work in higher cost of living areas such as Boulder. With employees being able to live closer to where they work, they & their families could enjoy, participate and contribute in the community where they work and spend the majority of their time. Cutting back on commutes by car would have a positive financial impact for employees, the community and the environment."

"I don't see positive effects, because when the minimum salary increases, goods and rents also increase, and the purchasing power of families decreases." (translated from Spanish)

"Small businesses like my own are having a hard enough time making ends meet this will only put more strain on us. Rent and cost of goods are increasing, sales are decreasing and now you want us to pay even more for labor."

"Wages increase, so therefore supplier costs increase - and then so do retail prices. The worker then pays the new, much higher retail price for goods and services, and is therefore in the same or worse place than before."

"Our business will reduce headcount and reduce benefits. We cannot raise prices or we will lose customers."

"As a professional in a field that is already underpaid (masters degree in Early Childhood Education), I am curious to see how cities can ensure that all employees making a thriving wage, but also to give value to teachers, nurses, caregivers, and others in fields that are not currently even at what the new minimum wage would be."

"In a traditional sit-down restaurant, tipped employees are making the most. Keeping tips on top of their minimum wage, they average \$37/hr, including a base rate of \$15/hr plus tips. Other folks, the lowest paid, including line cooks and dishwashers, typically make minimum wage. If the business has to redirect resources to the front-of-house people, that means there will be less money left for back of house staff."

"Do we want a city of big box stores? Or do we want a city full of small businesses. Mom and pop shops make the city unique, and we don't want to lose the character of the city."

"Teenagers & those with no work experience do not deserve \$16-\$25 per hour."

"The people we are talking about also are dependent on certain public benefits (housing, food, etc.) If the city does go ahead with this: hey, you'll get an extra \$3 dollars here, but you'll lose \$1000 in childcare or section 8 housing."

Attachment A – Engagement Opportunities Flyer

Attachment B – Complete List of Questions from Community Members in Focus Groups and through the Online Questionnaire





ESTUDIO DEL SALARIO MÍNIMO REGIONAL






Comparta sus opiniones sobre los impactos positivos y negativos de un posible aumento del salario mínimo en nuestra región. No es necesario inscribirse para participar.


Conversaciones - Sector Comercial




**Martes
27 de
febrero** Boulder Chamber
2440 Pearl St
5:30 - 7 p.m.  




**Miércoles
27 de
marzo** Restaurant Association
Velvet Elk Lounge
2037 13th St
2:30 - 4 p.m.  




 Refrigerio ligero
 Cuidado infantil
 Interpretación (inglés/español)

Conversaciones - Comunidad

**Martes
12 de
marzo** Sesión virtual (Zoom)
<https://blldr.fyi/MWes>
5:30 - 7 p.m. 

**Miércoles
13 de
marzo** Tate Building, Room N101
1777 Broadway
5:30 - 7 p.m.   

**Jueves
4 de
abril** Recreation and Senior Center
900 Via Appia Way,
Louisville, CO. 80027
5:30 - 7 p.m.   

**Sábado
13 de
abril** North Boulder Recreation Center
Salón Bison
3170 North Broadway
Evento en español   



Responda a este cuestionario para compartir su opinión:
blldr.fyi/salario-minimo

No es necesario confirmar asistencia.

Para más información contacte a Angela Maria Ortiz Roa
OrtizRoaA@bouldercolorado.gov o (720) 512-1597

**¡Asista al evento que le
sea más conveniente!**





EXPLORING REGIONAL MINIMUM WAGE






Share your thoughts on the positive and negative impacts of a potential minimum wage increase in our region, no registration required to participate.

Business-Focused Conversations

Tues. Feb. 27 Boulder Chamber
2440 Pearl St
5:30 - 7 p.m.  


Wed. Mar. 27 Restaurant Association
Velvet Elk Lounge
2037 13th St
2:30 - 4 p.m.  




-  Light refreshments
-  Supervised care for children
-  Interpretation (ENG/SPA)









Share your thoughts by completing this questionnaire.
bldr.fyi/wage-questionnaire

Community-Focused Conversations

Tues. Mar. 12 Virtual Meeting (Zoom)
<https://bldr.fyi/MW>
5:30 - 7 p.m. 

Wed. Mar. 13 Tate Building, Room N101
1777 Broadway
5:30 - 7 p.m.   

Thurs. Apr. 4 Recreation and Senior Center
900 Via Appia Way,
Louisville, CO. 80027
5:30 - 7 p.m.   

Sat. Apr. 13 North Boulder Recreation Center
Bison Room
3170 North Broadway
10 - 11:30 a.m.   

Evento en español

No RSVP required

For more information, contact Angela Maria Ortiz Roa at OrtizRoaA@bouldercolorado.gov or (720) 512-1597

Events are open to all, join the session that works for you!



Attachment B – Complete List of Questions from Community Members in Focus Groups and through the Online Questionnaire

1. Did Boulder County increase based on their understanding of the future cost of living in the county?
2. Is the City of Boulder looking at trends happening in other cities, like Denver, after increases were implemented?
3. How can the government absorb some of the negative impacts of this increase?
4. How does this decision impact the future culture of Boulder?
5. What are we trying to accomplish here?
6. Are businesses still experiencing COVID-related difficulties?
7. Do you want the County to look at the Walmarts of the county differently from how we look at small businesses?
8. With an aging community, do we have more workers entering the workforce?
9. Do we need to look at different sectors?
10. If there was a MW that adjusted yearly, is there a metrics that we should look at to activate the breaks?
11. Does Council have the accurate data they need to make an informed decision?
12. How many people are actually even making the minimum wage? What is their demographic? Are they parents? Do they live in a single person household?
13. What issue are we trying to solve? If it's cost of living, is this the correct tool to address that? What is going to be solved/achieved by increasing minimum wage to compare it to our outcomes.
14. Can we pay unemancipated minors less?
15. What will a local minimum wage increase look like to investors? Will they choose Boulder vs. another community?
16. Is the proposed idea to get to where Denver is now or is it to get to \$25?
17. Align with Denver?
18. Is there a 3rd better option?
19. How does MW treat part-time, seasonal and full-time employees?
20. Unincorporated BC did establish \$25 by 2030, what is the schedule for Denver? When are they going to get to \$25?
21. Is the city considering to actual implement the minimum salary for business to meet the threshold of having 30+ employees to actually have this minimum salary? Especially for large companies such as Target that could potentially manage the fiscal costs.
22. We just got done with a five year, year over year increase, where is a sweet spot to build up?
23. When does minimum wage apply? For example if a company is registered in Erie, but does work in Boulder, is there a way to request or have those businesses also meet the minimum wage require-



ments.

24. Is there a reluctance to a carve-out model?
25. Is there a way to have the city be the compliance on whether businesses are actually meeting already the minimum wage without having to actually implement minimum wage?
26. Should a minimum wage go up, how could the rental leases for businesses be lowered so that there is an incentive and not add more burden?
27. Impacts on small business workers- who is actually still paying only the current minimum wage \$14.42?
28. People who serve Boulder are here because they love it, and they should be able to afford living in Boulder. Do elected officials have the power to cap the rent?
29. What is exactly the plan? What are the short- and long-term goals?
30. What is the Chamber of Commerce's position?
31. Will people without papers obtain any benefit from this?
32. Which minimum wage is the city trying to reach? It should be higher than what is being proposed.
33. What will reporting out of engagement data look like?
34. Is there any correlation between living costs and minimum wage?
35. What happened when the state raised minimum wage and how did it effect Boulder?
36. Are there incentives the government can do to fix the affordability problem?
37. Can we get lower sales taxes?
38. Is the city paying MW already? How many city employees can even afford to live in Boulder?
39. What are the indicators to tell us to engage the brakes?
40. Consider what is the positive? Would like to see something on paper to tell the community why this would be a positive?
41. How would we know this is going to benefit individuals, community, business owners, etc.
42. Need to look holistically with other increases. Raw ingredients are going up. Arbitrarily, property taxes are going up. Ask city and county to be a partner by freezing property taxes for next five years. Look at profit and loss statements, what are the lines that you and I are sharing – rent, NNN, utilities – can we create some offset for small businesses from the city and county to help with utility bills, to help with labor costs? If there's a 25% labor cost increase, can we reduce in other areas to help a business stay whole? If I'm losing money, you're losing money, too, so if we work together maybe we can help the community.
43. Minimum wage employees are entry level, lower skilled. If we invest in apprenticeship programs, the training could mean they earn more. Could the government help workers upskill by helping offset training costs?
44. Is the change big enough to change the local economy?
45. Is there any data of what people are currently making?
46. Has a tip-base increase been considered?
47. Would a \$3 increase per worker per hour, what are the effects?



48. If Council is really going to go through this, what is going to be the compromise? What will we as the city give back to business owners in order to ensure businesses could still thrive and could offset the costs for paying min wage?
49. Is it workforce entry wage or living wage?
50. Is there an opportunity to charge a fee for businesses delivering/shipping goods and services into our communities (to relieve the burden on our small businesses)?
51. Is it possible for cities to set different minimum wage for different industries? There are some jobs that we can't live without as a society.
52. business that has vulnerable workers (ex. sectors like landscaping and restaurants), how would this increase affect these types of businesses?
53. How much it would affect the business overall instead of letting the market weight out?
54. Is there data on how many people (businesses, groups) would it affect?
55. Whether if we are raising the minimum wage, would it have a negative affect?
56. What happens with compression?
57. What are other choke points for these companies that are worried about being affected by the increase? Can we change these if they aren't related to wage? (i.e rent prices, materials)
58. What damage will this do for small businesses?
59. What can we learn from Denver's change? Is it successful?
60. Can some counties titrate with CCAP? Can we up the maximum income allowable so people can keep their benefits?
61. Are there any studies on places i.e. Denmark on McDonalds where the minimum wage is higher, but the food prices are lower... how does that work?
62. Which companies actually have the means to pay their employees more and just keep the profits?
63. What is the percentage of boulder county that are small businesses? Who are ACTUALLY small businesses?
64. What will happen to rent or the usage of health care?
65. How does this effect Weld County? Broomfield? Superior?
66. When companies are asking for tips, how do we know they are getting paid a fair wage, or are we paying on top of the livable wage?
67. What are current minimum wages in the regional partnership cities?
68. What is the increase target/escalation target? Are we trying to match Boulder County?
69. Where are we in the process?
70. What are local businesses saying? Especially minority owned businesses?
71. How are we engaging and protecting people who have benefits?
72. If increasing the wage will put someone in danger, who is going to advocate for adjusting benefits eligibility?



73. How does the minimum wage relate to living wage and what employee groups are eligible for each - ie, Regular, Temporary, Seasonal, Intern, etc
74. I'm wondering why there are more sessions for businesses rather than the community when there are many more community members.
75. Again, I have not seen any businesses only offering to pay minimum wage. They are all offering higher wages than minimum wage, that I have seen, and they still are having trouble finding workers. So, if no business in Boulder County is currently paying minimum wage, and they are all already paying higher than minimum wage, what will be the point in raising the minimum wage?
76. What taxes are collected by local government that can be reduced to be able to offset the increase in minimum wage?
77. Have you ever tried to support a family on minimum wage?
78. This has to have buy in to work, how do we get enough buy in to make it work.
79. It's not just about more money. It's about small business support. We need to transform this whole system. Even the government has prevailing wage contracts – who does those agreements? It's all siloed.

Considering an Increase in Local Minimum Wage

Community Engagement Executive Summary

In the summer of 2023, elected officials from the cities of Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and Louisville and the Town of Erie directed the Regional Minimum Wage Working Group to conduct a study of our regional economy and community engagement regarding a minimum wage increase. This work consisted of:

- An economic analysis provided by an independent contractor
- Community engagement designed and implemented by City staff
 - Questions focused on what participants felt would be the positive and negative impacts of an increase in local minimum wage
 - Participants also were given an opportunity to share what they thought was important for elected officials to know while considering this increase

The community engagement design consisted of two parts:

- Focus groups from members of the business community and employees/public
 - 45 business owners participated in the focus groups and 31 employees/members of the public, during 8 focus groups
- A questionnaire designed to quickly get feedback from the business community and employees/public
 - 79 business owners participated in the focus groups and 136 employees/members of the public, results of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix

Longmont Business Owner Feedback Key Themes

Business owners shared some benefits from the raise in a local minimum wage (more staff retention, happier staff, better debt ratio), but overall felt that any positive aspects would be short-lived, as any increase in labor would just increase the cost of everything. Approximately 30% of the business owners did employ staff at the minimum wage level, but generally these were seasonal or entry level positions, generally staffed by unemancipated minors, retirees or people just entering the workforce. Once staff were trained, they are given raises, generally 30-60 days after hire. Most felt that the changes in State requirements around providing sick leave and health care, along with the increases in rent, insurance and goods have made it even more difficult for particularly small businesses to thrive and some stated they would go out of business if the minimum wage was increased to the higher levels (\$25/hour proposed by Boulder County in 2030 for example). There was also a general belief that the market has dictated wages, particularly since 2020 when you could not hire people if you did not pay them the market wage. Many business owners acknowledged the high cost of living but thought raising the minimum wage was not the solution and thought either local or higher forms of government should address housing affordability and other drivers of high costs.

Longmont Employee/Public Feedback Key Themes

Employees and the Public Open Focus Group participants discussed the importance of making enough money to live where you work, stimulating the economy through increased wages, and the dignity and reduction in stress that would be afforded people when they could work only one job to make ends meet. It was acknowledged that the cost of living will also go up as businesses charge more for goods and services, but this was considered by some a necessary market adjustment with others expressing concerns about increased costs negating benefits of increased wages. There was also concern for the local small business who may have significant challenges to a change and an encouragement for Shop Local campaigns and other forms of support to be created by local governments.

City of Longmont Engagement Report

Regional Model for Engagement Strategy

In the summer of 2023, elected officials from the Cities of Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and Louisville and the Town of Erie directed the Regional Minimum Wage Working Group to conduct a study of our regional economy and community engagement regarding a minimum wage increase. Since August of 2023, regional teams have met to scope and administer these next steps. Teams include one staff member from each of the five participating communities, members of Chambers of Commerce groups, members of the Self Sufficiency Wage Coalition, and members of nonprofits. The economic analysis will be provided in a separate consultant report.

A standard engagement model operating at the 'Involve' level of the public participation spectrum was administered across the five participating communities. Engagement opportunities were available between mid-February until May 9, 2024, and community members were provided options to participate virtually and in-person, with English and Spanish options, at one of 14 focus group sessions and through an online questionnaire, which closed on April 15, 2024.

How City of Longmont Implemented the Model

After analysis of the various questionnaires that had been issued by other entities, the Boulder County Consortium engagement team found that employees and businesses that would be most affected by a raise in minimum wage were not a focus of their data collection. The team determined two paths for community engagement would allow councils/boards from the various local government entities to better understand the potential pros and cons:

1. Wider spread questionnaire to reach more people in the region, based on the Boulder County questionnaire in order to compare results. Longmont is also focusing on these results to represent the employee point of view.
2. Focus groups, particularly targeting businesses in the industries that would be impacted the most. The targeted industry list was created by looking at information from the Longmont Economic Development Partnership about how much various jobs pay in all of the industries in Longmont. Industries targeted included restaurants/bars, other service industries and retail.

Longmont Focus Groups Methodology

In partnership with the Longmont Chamber of Commerce and City Sustainable Business Program, staff held eight focus groups. English-speaking business owners made up five of the groups. The other focus groups were made up of Spanish-speaking business owners, Spanish-speaking employees and a general public meeting.

During the English-speaking focus groups, 38 business owners participated, mostly from the following industries:

- Restaurants/bars/breweries
- Service Industries (pet services, personal services, auto)
- Manufacturing
- Retail

During the Spanish-speaking business focus group, seven people participated from the following industries:

- Restaurants/grocery stores
- Service industries (salon)
- Consulting

Business Owner Focus Groups

Business owners were generally from local, small companies, or local franchises. Staff shared the history of this project to date and asked the following questions:

1. What do you think the positive impact of increasing the minimum wage could be for you, your business, and your community? i.e. decrease employee turnover, increase employee productivity
2. What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage could be for you, your business, and your community? i.e. reconsider staffing/benefits offered, increase prices
3. Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

Employee/Public Open Focus Group

Engagement staff worked with the Sustainable Business Program staff to bring Spanish-speaking employees to the focus group, particularly focused on the industries that pay closest to minimum wage. The challenge is that people who are working at minimum wage-paying jobs are often not able to attend focus groups, often due to family commitments or working more than one job. Staff determined that the questionnaire option would be the best way to get engagement from this group and it was sent to our health and human service agencies to help disseminate, in addition to the public notices.

At the request of participants in the first employee focus group, staff set up a second public meeting and advertised it more widely.

Staff shared the history of this project to date and asked the following questions:

1. What do you think the positive impact of increasing the minimum wage could be for you and your community? i.e. decrease employee turnover, increase employee productivity
2. What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage could be for you and your community? i.e. reconsider staffing/benefits offered, increase prices
3. Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

Longmont Questionnaire respondent methodology

Engagement staff supported the distribution of the regional questionnaire through sharing the questionnaire with local internal and external partners that engaged the target audience, including the Longmont Multicultural Action Committee, our social service organizations, Longmont Economic Development Partnership, Longmont Chamber of Commerce, Latino Chamber of Commerce and advertised on social media, City Talk column and featured in "This week in Longmont". Total participation numbers from Longmont are listed below.

Econorthwest, the economic analysis consultant, analyzed the multiple choice questions. Longmont City staff analyzed the following free response questions for the analysis below. Staff only analyzed responses from business owners and employees who either hired or worked for less than \$19.99/hour to prioritize those who may be most impacted by the decision. Staff also excluded those who stated that they attended a focus group in Longmont to avoid any duplication of comments.

Longmont business owners' free response questions analyzed:

- What do you think the positive impact of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community? Please explain
- What do you think the negative impact of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community? Please explain
- Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

Longmont employees/public' free response questions analyzed:

- What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your family, and your community? Please explain.
- What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your family, and your community? Please explain.
- Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

Engagement by the Numbers

Focus Group Participants

- Longmont business owners:
 - Total: 45
 - English 38
 - Spanish 7
- Employees/public
 - Total: 31
 - Spanish 4
 - English 27

Questionnaire Respondents

- Longmont business owners:
 - Total: 79
 - English: 76
 - Spanish: 3
 - Total lowest wage workers make less than \$14.42/hour, \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour and \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour and who did not attend a Longmont Focus group (the total that was analyzed for the section below): 41
 - English: 40
 - Spanish: 1
 - Types of businesses:
 - Primary responders: Restaurants and Retail
 - Other industries: Childcare, Manufacturing, Hospitality, Transportation, Healthcare, Agriculture, Nonprofits, Landscape/Garden, Arts and Entertainment, Government, Education
- Longmont employees:
 - Total: 136
 - English: 132
 - Spanish: 4
 - Total making less than \$14.42/hour, \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour and \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour AND did not attend a Longmont focus group (the total that was analyzed for the section below): 28
 - English: 27
 - Spanish: 1
 - Job sectors:
 - Primary responders: Education, Retail, Administration/Support, and Manufacturing
 - Other sectors: Recreation, Hospitality, Engineering, Government, Restaurant, Transportation, Childcare, Nonprofit

Key Themes

Businesses

Business Focus Groups

Business owners shared some benefits from the raise in a local minimum wage (more staff retention, happier staff, better debt ratio), but overall felt that any positive aspects would be short-lived, as any increase in labor would just increase the cost of everything. Some of the focus groups could not think of a positive aspect. Approximately 30% of the business owners did employ staff at the minimum wage level, but generally these were seasonal or entry level positions, generally staffed by unemancipated minors, retirees or people just entering the workforce. Once staff were trained, they are given raises, generally 30-60 days after hire.

Key themes heard in the business focus groups included:

- If there is an increased labor cost, it will lead to an increase sales cost. Profit margin too small to absorb that, especially for a small, local business owner.
- If the minimum wage is increased, it may create a lack of incentive to become a skilled worker. There will no longer be a “training wage.”
- If minimum wage increases, all wages must increase. It also removes the ability to provide higher wages and other benefits (e.g. employee discounts, bonuses) for employees.
- The competition with Weld County will be difficult, since people can buy things cheaper there.
- There seems to be a misconception that business owners don’t take care of their workers, hence the increase in minimum wage. Small businesses care about their employees and care about providing good customer service (if not they wouldn’t survive). Wish businesses didn’t get such a bad rap.
- The market will adjust the wages and has since COVID, as very few people will apply for a job at minimum wage when everyone is paying more. Businesses felt that the government did not need the government to make the adjustment and if the government does, it will create an expectation that people want to be paid even more (staff do not want to be paid min wage).
- All costs have gone up recently, some based on government action:
 - the State minimum wage went up to \$14.42 in January of 2024,
 - property taxes increased significantly (which affects property owners and renters),
 - healthcare increase,
 - insurance coverage increase,
 - the addition of the State FAMLI program,
 - State requirement for paid sick leave,
 - supply chain increases,
 - State plastic bag/Styrofoam ban,
 - Universal Recycling Ordinance, etc.
- The service industries will move more under-the-table work (landscaping, dog walking, cleaning, etc.)
- Automation may help offset labor costs, but expensive to invest in and is not as customer-service oriented, plus would result in less jobs.
- If minimum wage went to \$25/hour (the proposed Boulder County wage in 2030), businesses are going to have to leave or close.
- If labor costs increase, they will likely cut the entry-level jobs. Entry-level jobs for unskilled workers will not be available which will mean in the future we will not have people skilled in the trade.

- If changing the minimum wage, also provide resources for businesses to help them grow so they can pay a higher minimum wage (lower property taxes, buy local campaign, regulate delivery apps that charge high commissions, compensate businesses impacted by City construction, landlords charge for rent, support with FMLI, etc.)
- Supply chain impacts are continuing from COVID. Impossible to predict costs right now. For example, salt just rose from \$12 to \$18 for a 50 lb bag.
- Businesses chose to open in Longmont, trust them. Let them set their brand, the levels they pay workers and the benefits they provide. Multiple attending had employees who have stayed with them from 5 to 20 years.
- City Council should support businesses in thriving (campaigns, incentives, etc.). Strong local, small business leads to a strong community.

Questionnaire Respondent Themes

Longmont Business Owners (Total lowest wage workers make less than \$14.42/hour, \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour and \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour and who did not attend a Longmont focus group)

- Most did not see positive impacts.
 - A few spoke to positive impacts of benefits to employees, with some highlighting that they would only be short term. Some spoke to how it could support a better work life balance for their employees.
- Many spoke to concerns about the impacts to small businesses and restaurants and that it would lead to them closing,
- Many spoke to how they would have to increase costs and pass those on to the consumers.
 - Some mentioned they've already had to increase costs and have gotten negative feedback by customers or are concerned about losing customers.
- Respondents mentioned increases in recent additional increases in fees and expenses.
- Concerns about tipped wages and how restaurant staff already make significantly above minimum wage.
- Concerns about the intent of minimum wage and how it could lead to overpaying high school students, second earners and nonskilled workers.
 - There were a couple (but in the minority) that spoke to minimum wage should be a living wage.
- Job impacts from businesses closing, having to cut jobs, loss of opportunities for unskilled workers.
- Remove incentives for workers to get higher education, worker harder in their job or move to fields that require skills.
- Multiple respondents spoke to how the market instead of government should set minimum wage and that the government should instead focus on:
 - Regulating rents and housing (and other items that impact cost of living).
 - Addressing property tax increases.

Employee/Public

Employee/Public Open Focus Group

Employees and the Public Open Focus Group participants discussed the importance of making enough money to live where you work, stimulating the economy through increased wages, and the dignity that would be afforded

Certifications and Unemancipated Minors

When asked about increased minimum wage based on particular certifications during the focus groups, business owners generally felt that the market takes care of this. They can only hire unskilled workers at minimum wage, and as they add value to the company or obtain education/certification, the businesses pay more for those skills. They also mentioned it would be difficult to regulate what certifications are required in each industry.

There were differing opinions about unemancipated minors having a different wage, because each employee situation is different (some may be working for spending money, and some may be supporting their family).

Income Inequality

Participants asked about why the minimum wage increase is being considered, and groups discussed income inequality. When asked what else may help with income inequality, participants felt:

- The work with affordable housing is critical as those increases create pressure on families
- Tax reform is an important aspect
- Programs that deal with the root cause of poverty can help (mental health, addiction)
- Worker training programs and life skills workshops can reduce the gap
- It was also noted that raising just the minimum wage will not solve wide-spread social issues

Unique themes from Questionnaire Respondents:

Longmont Business Owners (Total lowest wage workers make less than \$14.42/hour, \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour and \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour and who did not attend a Longmont Focus group)

- A childcare facility spoke to being twice impacted by raising minimum wage and “UPK and CCCAP”, state funded childcare.
- One local organic farmer spoke to the difficulty of small family farmers, highlighted that farmers are often sacrificing paychecks or receive supplemental food benefits or need an additional full-time job.
- One non-profit was worried about the benefits cliff and low-income households losing government benefits while at the same time the non-profit may have to cut free services and close buildings.

Longmont Employees/Public (making less than \$14.42/hour, \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour and \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour AND did not attend a Longmont focus group (the total that was analyzed for the section below)

- One respondent highlighted how it will increase their access to advanced education for their family while another mentioned how it will allow them to be able to earn more without needing further education or taking on more work.
- Concern about increased travel if their job moved to a different community.
- One respondent mentioned that the impact will depend on whether private equity raises rents and stated that private equity should not have been allowed to buy homes and hospitals.

Quotes of Interest

Businesses

Focus Group Participants

Participants in the focus groups were passionate about their businesses and about the Longmont community. They were extremely thankful for the City Council and Consortium for taking the time to truly listen to their feedback when making this decision. Overall the feeling was that a strong community is a partnership, built on strong business, amazing people and supportive local government. A few quotes from the process:

- The Strongmont grant during COVID saved my business.
- If you study how employees feel appreciated, it's not always monetary. A good boss takes care of people in different ways: provide a culture if you can't monetary. There are a lot of little things of showing value to a person, more than just paying bills.
- We want to purchase local, but it's much cheaper to buy from neighboring states. Are we going to start being environmentally friendly? We cannot afford a dishwasher so we use plastic silverware. We are making poor sustainably decisions because wages are still high.
- Working at min wage made me realize it wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life and was an incentive for more training and education.
- Cost of doing business has gone a lot in the past three years: COVID, fees, taxes, products, deliveries. Every category, costs increased.
- A strong business community is a strong community.
- People in our community should have the ability to earn a wage that allows them to live and work in Longmont.
- The economy will adjust and businesses will be able to adjust to this change. They may need to look at different business models, but they will be able to sharpen their tools and adapt.
- Boulder County/Boulder is tough to live in and when I moved there, I realized what it meant to not live in your community where you live. We are more community, we live here and this is our home and we are at a tipping point where we may be able to strengthen or weaken our sense of community.
- Change is hard but inevitable.

Questionnaire Respondents

Longmont Business Owners (Total lowest wage workers make less than \$14.42/hour, \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour and \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour and who did not attend a Longmont Focus group)

- "Because we share tips with the kitchen, per federal mandate, we must pay the full minimum wage in our local community and are not allowed to offset any of that with tip income. Our restaurant workers are making more money than so many professionals in our community - is that the career path you want to incentivize? Should some of the best paying jobs in the community be at restaurants??? It used to be that we were the training ground for our young workforce - we provide the foundation that helps every employer after. But now they don't want to leave because they are making \$30-\$40/hr after a few years. I love our employees. But is their work more valuable than nurses and teachers and EMTs and electricians and plumbers and and and?"
- "Do not raise the tipped minimum wage. Most of those staff members already earn \$30-\$40 per hour including tips. \$20-\$25/ hour for high school kids with no experience is not appropriate. And I have been forced to give them about a \$.90 raise every year for the past seven years. The tipped employees do not need more money. What we need is a fair enough way for me to legally share tips with the kitchen staff, without having to pay everyone the full minimum wage (which cost way

too much). The multiple state mandated tipped minimum wage increases are ruining full service restaurants, and benefitting the counter service restaurants. It's just become too difficult with high wages and product cost to run a full service restaurant. This is ruining my business model and why I opened restaurants in the first place."

- "While I feel like everyone deserves a living wage and that will have positive impacts on my employees, I feel that the unintended consequences outweigh the positive effects."
- "There are so many businesses already closed, this will lead to more. We are all struggling because of the policies that are being made. This will have only a negative impact."
- "Let business decide what a fair wage is."
- "Please consider that lower-income people will lose access to benefits. Access to health care will go away, access to subsidized childcare will go away, many other income based benefits will not longer be available potentially plunging these folks further into poverty because they cannot afford their medical care, childcare, food and other benefits. For my business, we will likely have to make a radical change in our business model and reduce the amount of childcare slots we are able to offer to the community, we may need to start charging for care where we are currently free, and we may close buildings. I am also concerned about flattening of wages where employees may be making the same amount of money as those with lesser qualifications, experience and job requirements. " and "How are elected officials going to offset losses in services that are offered by non-profits? Will you grant us more money so that we can pay our employees the new wage and not close our services down? How will you help us address issues related to flattening wages among those with varying education and experience?"
- "Consider what an actual living wage in this area is. People should haven't to work more than 40 hours per week or multiple jobs to just barely make ends meet."

Employees/General Public

Questionnaire Respondents

Longmont Employees (making less than \$14.42/hour, \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour and \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour AND did not attend a Longmont focus group (the total that was analyzed for the section below)

- "It's pointless to give us a raise if you increase everything else we NEED to SURVIVE, if you give us a raise, please don't increase everything else"
- "Will provide needed income for my family."
- "The cost of living is so expensive I can barely afford anything other then rent"
- "Para mi como madre soltera sería una gran ayuda ya que la vivienda, comida, luz y demás son más caros para nuestro salario."
- For me as a single mother it would be a great help since housing, food, electricity and so on are more expensive than our salaries.
- "Que cuando suben los salarios también suben los precios"
When wages rise, prices also rise.
- "I would worry my company will move out of this community to a place where the government is not doing this and I would have to drive far to get to it then."
- "Everyone suffers when those employed in "low wage" jobs cannot afford to live in the communities where they work. To maintain a diverse community, everyone needs a living wage."
- "Many of my bills will increase because of the inflation that will be caused by the increase in wage cost for the local businesses."

- “The positive impacts are increased job satisfaction and self worth. When the minimum wage varies between jurisdictions it makes the lower wages entities much less desirable to work at and may lead to significant employee turnover as employees look for better wages.”



Appendix

Graphs from Longmont's Questionnaire Results

Comments for Council Consideration – Employee/Public Open Focus Group

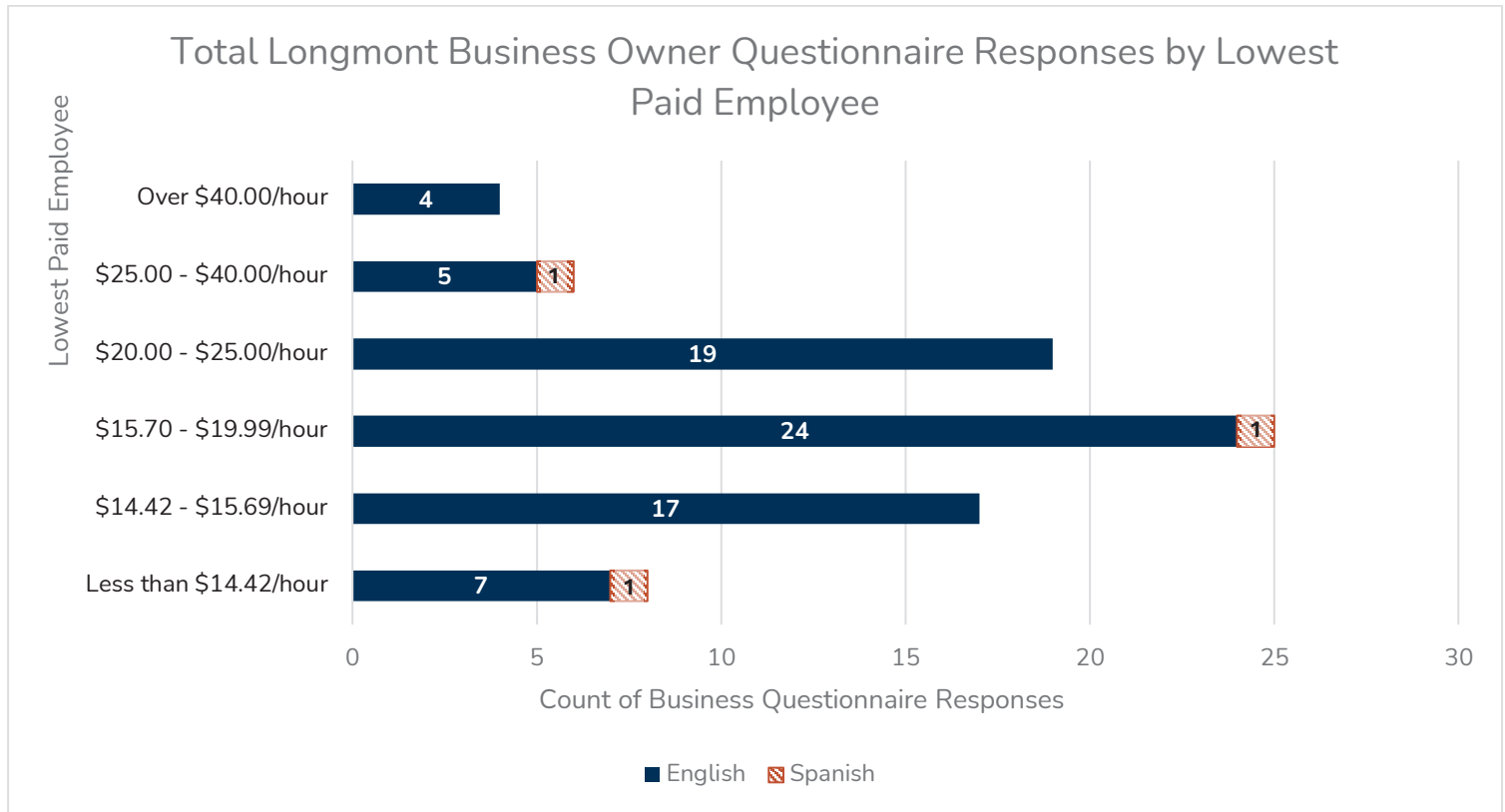
E-mail for Council Consideration from Abigail and Joshua Miller, owners of Bloom Montessori, a licensed child care facility in Longmont on the subject of minimum wage

Questionnaire Responses

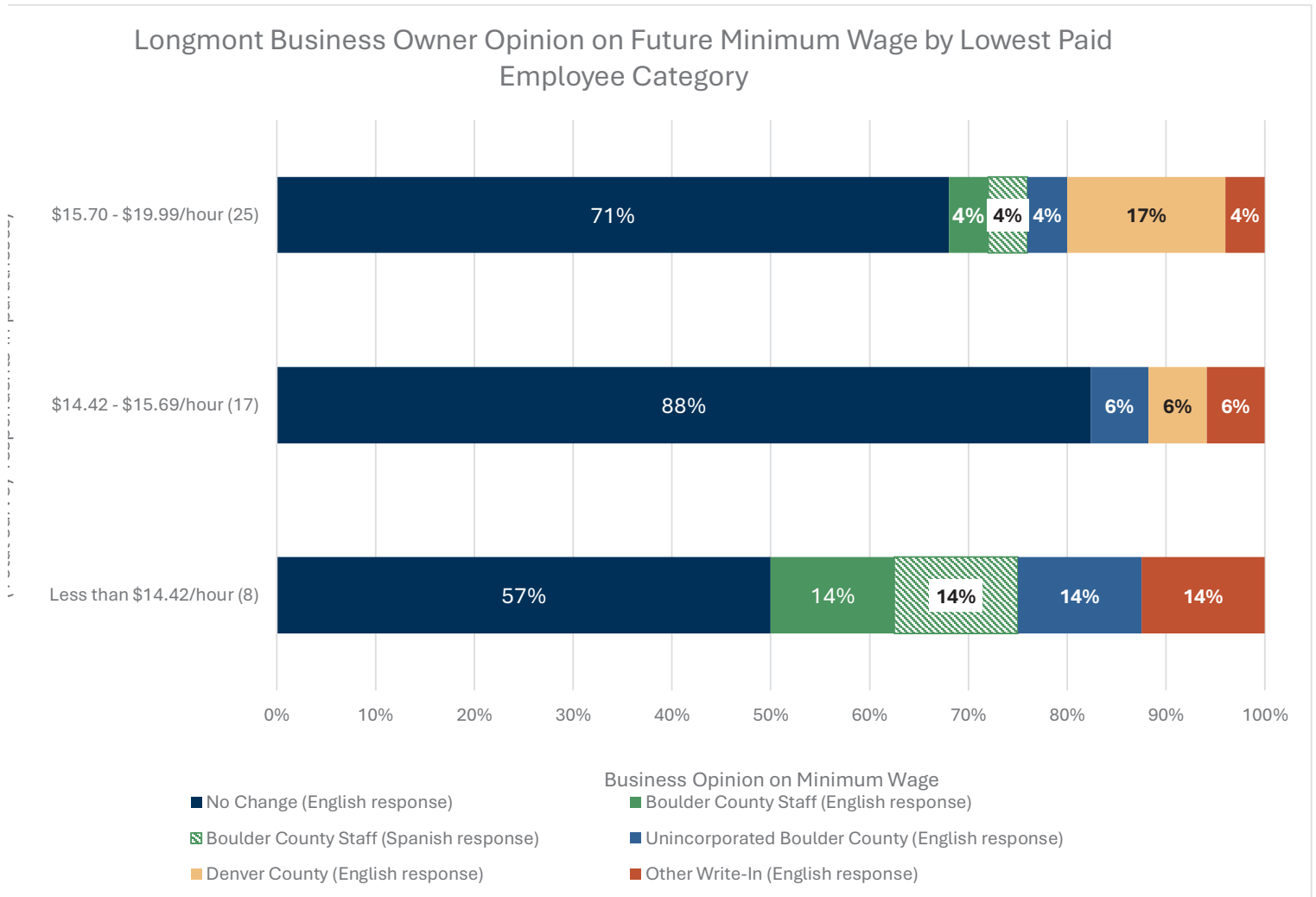
Respondents that completed the questionnaire in Spanish are listed under the “Ciudad de Longmont” section for all graphs.

Longmont Business Owners

Graph 1: Total Longmont business owner questionnaire responses by lowest paid employee

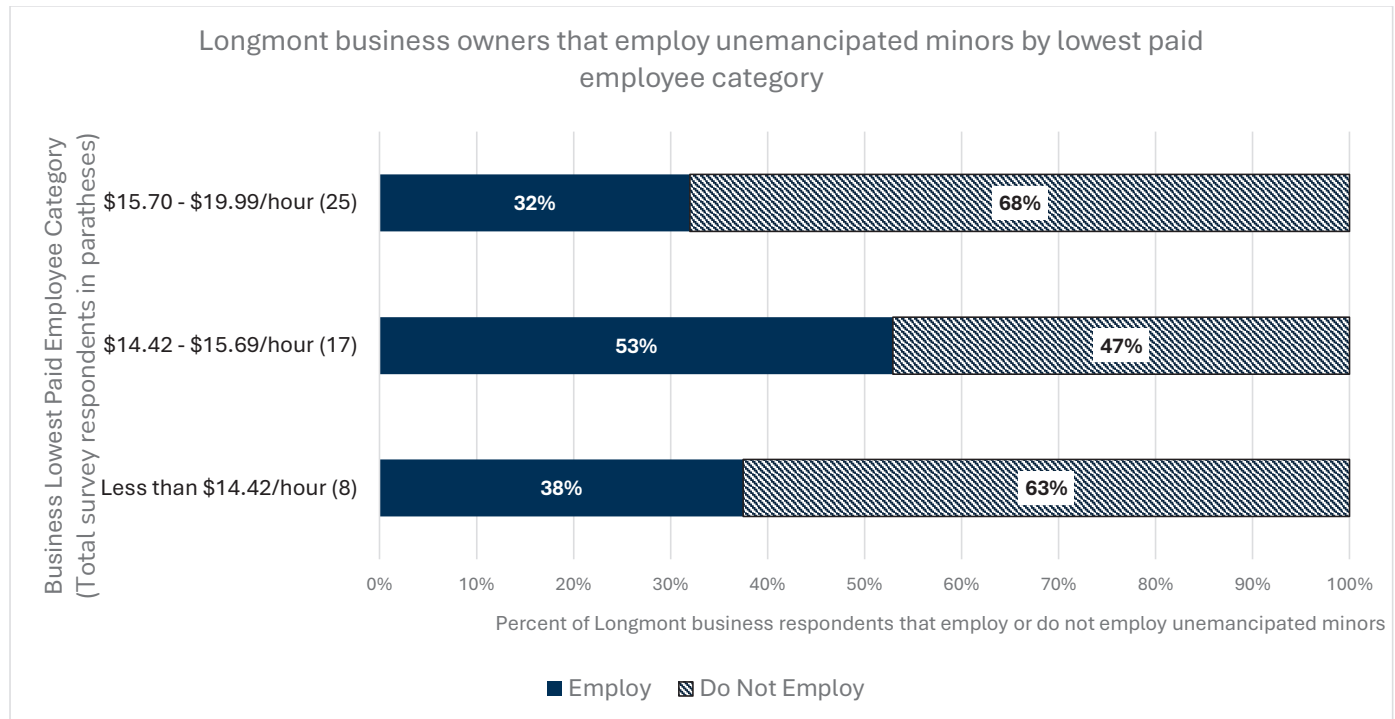


:: Longmont Business Owner Opinion on Future Minimum Wage by Lowest Paid Employee Category



Graph 3: Count of Longmont Business Owners that employ unemancipated minors by lowest paid employee category

Out of the eight respondents that paid less than \$14.42 per hour, only one respondent filled out the survey in Spanish and did not employ unemancipated minors. Out of the 25 respondents that paid employs between \$15.70 - \$19.99 per hour, only one respondent filled out the survey in Spanish and they did employ unemancipated minors.



Graph 4: Count of number of respondents with a specific business size by lowest paid employee

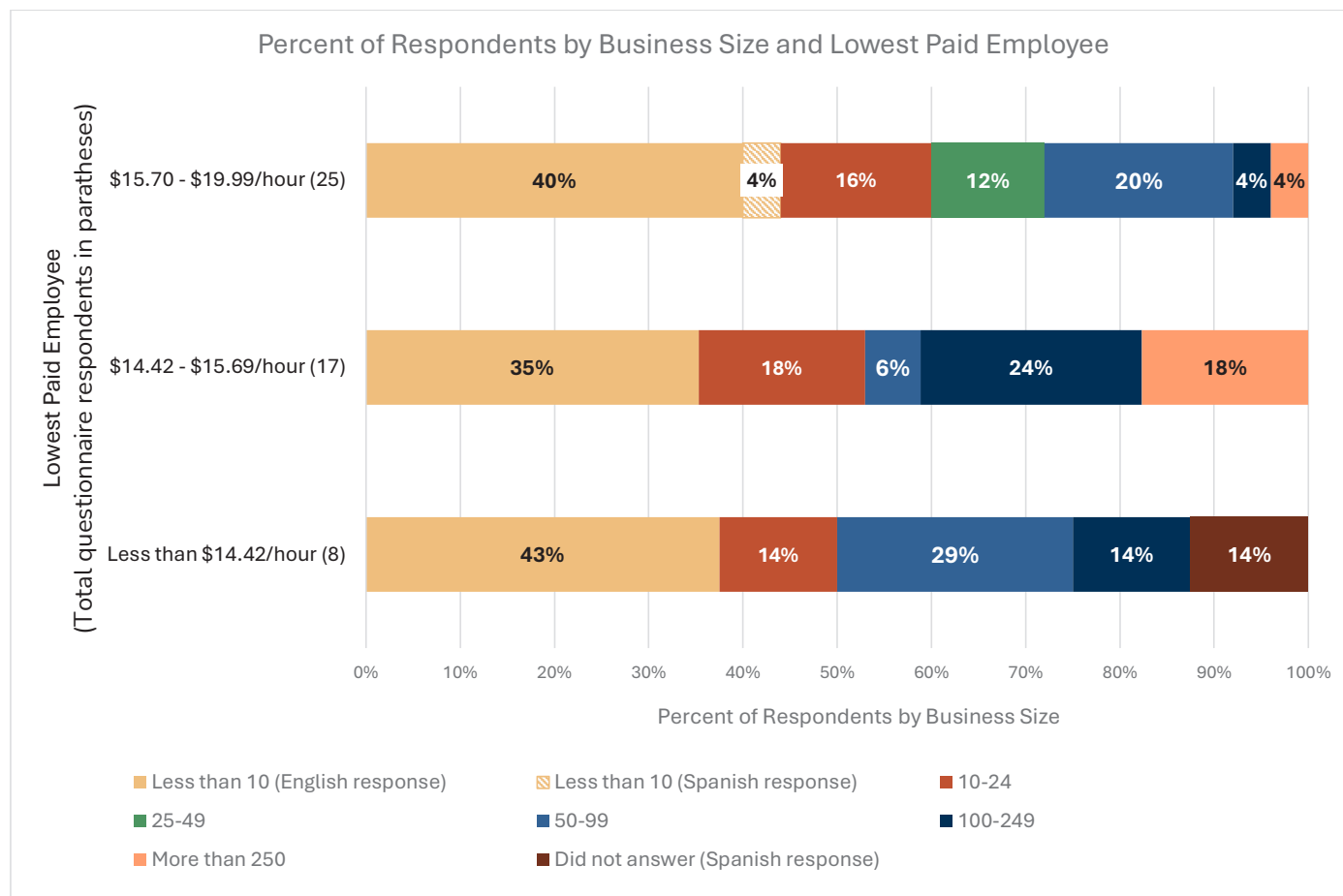


Table 1: Longmont employee job categories by income

This table details the type of business whose lowest employee makes less than \$19.99 per hour (it includes those who also attended focus group meetings). Respondents who completed the questionnaire in Spanish are listed under columns that state “/hora” instead of “/hour.”

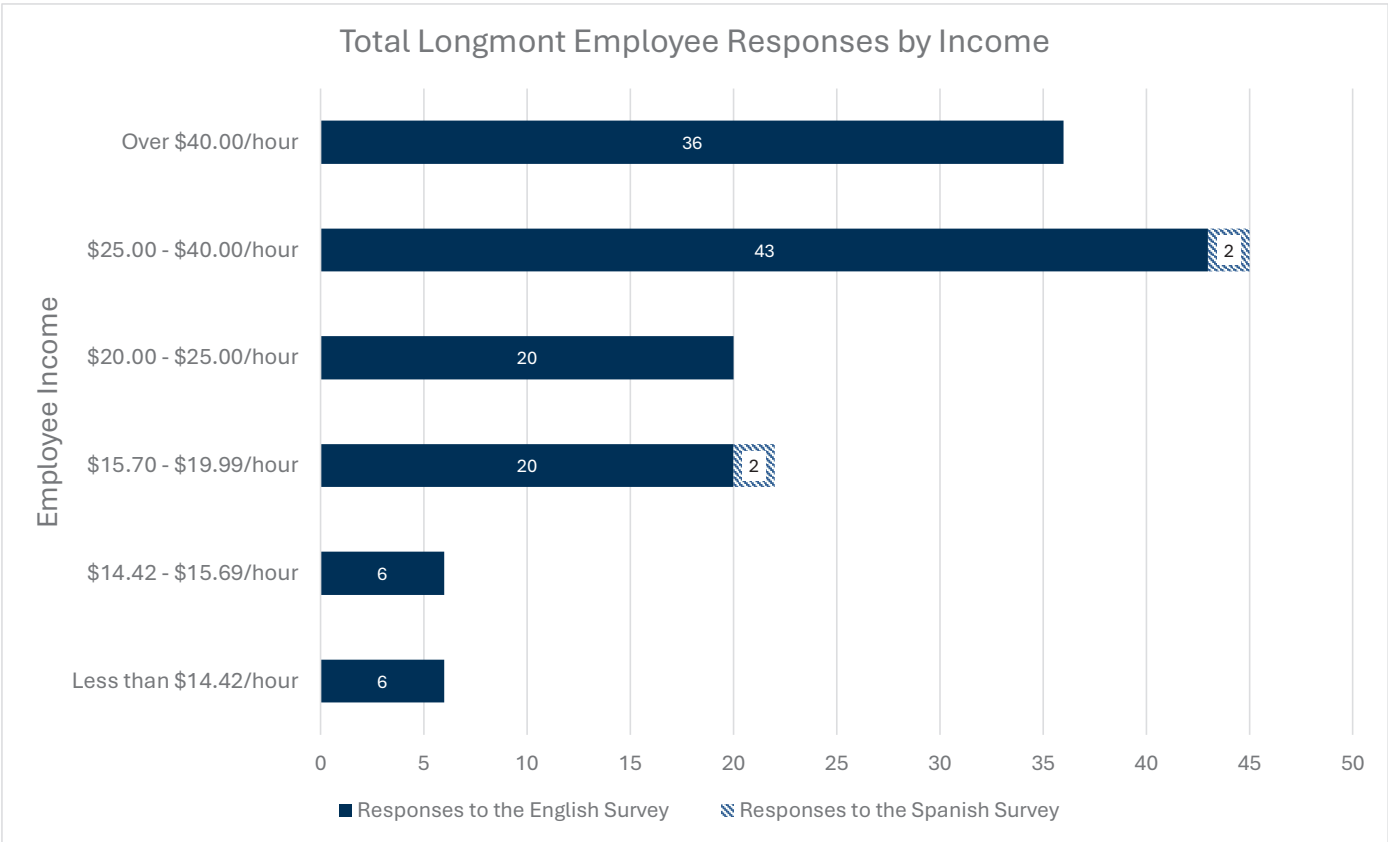
Type of Business	Less than \$14.42/hour	Menos de \$14.42/hora	\$14.42 - \$15.69/hour	\$15.70 - \$19.99/hora	\$15.70 - \$19.99/hour	Grand Total
Administration/Support, Arts/Entertainment, Recreation, Government					1	1
Agriculture					1	1
Arts/Entertainment, Recreation			1			1
Arts/Entertainment, Recreation, Childcare, Nonprofit			1			1
aviation					1	1
Childcare			1		1	2
Childcare, Education, Nonprofit					1	1
Education, Tech, Animal Care	1					1
Financial					1	1
Government			1			1
Government, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Retail, Tech			1			1
Healthcare					1	1
Hospitality, Manufacturing, Retail			1			1
Hospitality, Real Estate					1	1
Hospitality, Restaurant, Coffee Shop/Bakery			1			1
Hospitality, Restaurant, Retail					1	1
House Cleaning		1				1
Landscape/Garden					1	1
Manufacturing					2	2
Manufacturing, Restaurant	1					1
Nonprofit					2	2
packaged foods					1	1
Real Estate & Property Management			1			1
Rental property	1					1



Type of Business	Less than \$14.42/hour	Menos de \$14.42/hora	\$14.42 - \$15.69/hour	\$15.70 - \$19.99/hora	\$15.70 - \$19.99/hour	Grand Total
Restaurant	3		5		3	11
Retail	1		3		4	8
Retail, Organic farming/agriculture			1			1
Translation Services				1		1
Transportation					2	2
Grand Total	7	1	17	1	24	50

Longmont Employees/Public

Graph 5: Total Longmont employee questionnaire responses by income



Graph 6: Longmont employee questionnaire opinions on future minimum wage by income

This table details the employees making less than \$19.99 per hour (it includes those who also attended focus group meetings).

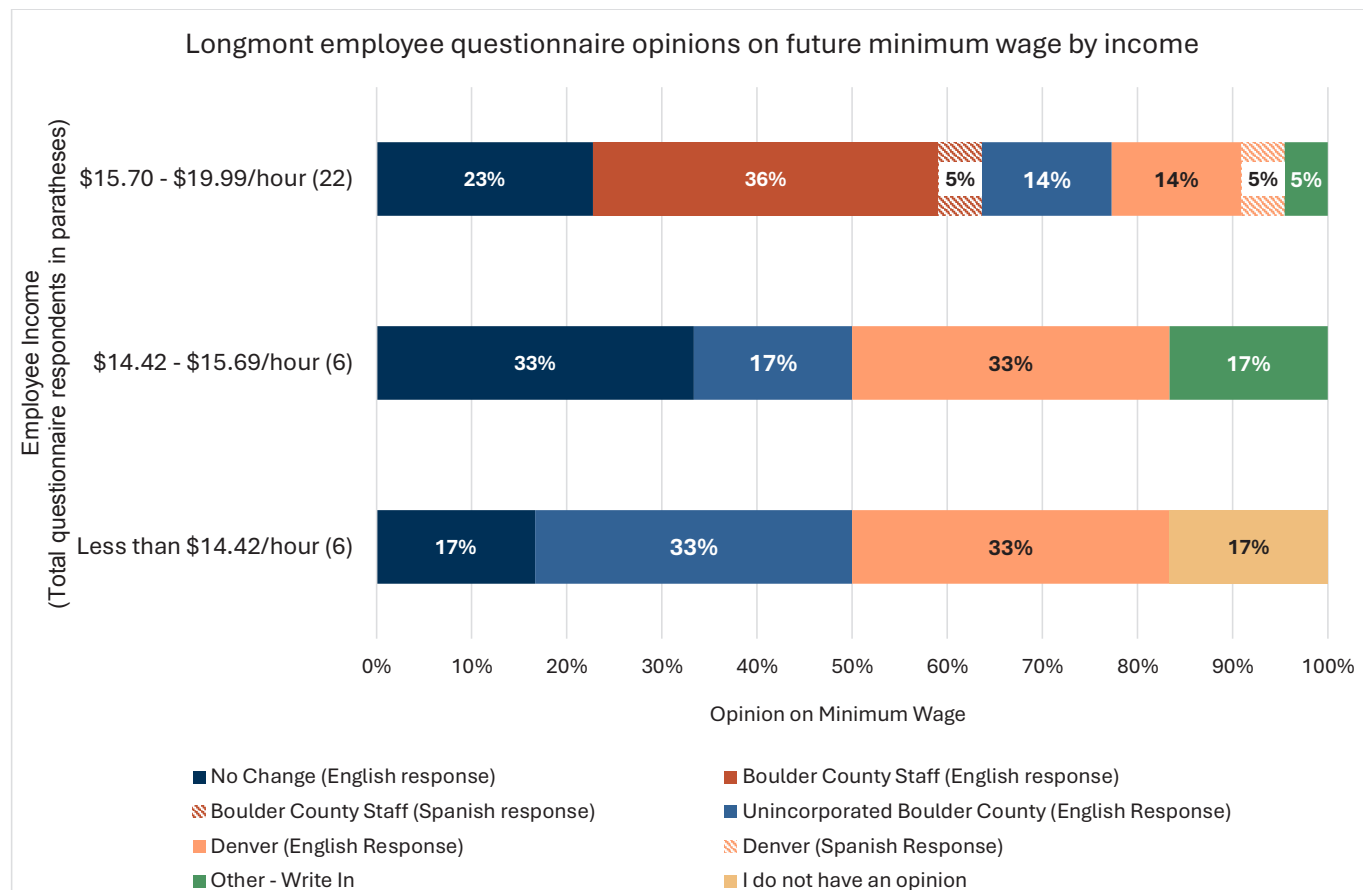


Table 2: Longmont employee work situation by income

Longmont employees work situation for those making less than \$19.99 per hour (it includes those who also attended focus group meetings). Respondents who completed the questionnaire in Spanish are listed under the column that states “/hora” instead of “/hour.”

What best describes your work situation?	Less than \$14.42/hour	\$14.42 - \$15.69/hour	\$15.70 - \$19.99/hour	\$15.70 - \$19.99/hora	Grand Total
Business Owner	1				1
Business Owner, Full Time Employee			1		1
Business Owner, Self-Employed/freelancer/gig worker			1		1
Contractor	1				1
Contractor, Part Time Employee			1		1
Full Time Employee	2	2	2	2	8
Part Time Employee	1	3	14		18
Retired	1				1
Retired, Part Time Employee, substitute teacher			1		1
Unemployed		1			1
Grand Total	6	6	20	2	34

Table 3: Longmont employee job categories by income

Longmont employees job type for those making less than \$19.99 per hour (it includes those who also attended focus group meetings). Respondents who completed the questionnaire in Spanish are listed under the column that states “/hora” instead of “/hour.”

What Best Describes Your Job?	Less than \$14.42/hour	\$14.42 - \$15.69/hour	\$15.70 - \$19.99/hour	\$15.70 - \$19.99/hora	Grand Total
Administration/Support		2	1		3
Administration/Support, Education, Tech			1		1
Administrative/Support, Hospitality			1		1
Administrative/Support, Tech			1		1
Arts/Entertainment, Recreation			1		1
Arts/Entertainment, Recreation, Childcare, Healthcare, Homemaker, Landscape/Garden			1		1
Childcare		1			1
Education		1	3		4
Engineering		1			1
Government			1		1
Healthcare	1				1
Library staff			1		1
Manufacturing	1		2		3
Manufacturing, Retail			1		1
Nonprofit, Yoga Instructor			1		1
Property Manager			1		1
Restaurant			1	1	2
Restaurant, Retail			1		1
Retail	1	1	2		4
Retired- volunteer work	1				1
Tech	1				1
Transportation	1				1
Hospitality, Restaurant				1	1
Grand Total	6	6	20	2	34

Comments for Council Consideration – Employee/Public Open Focus Group

These are written comments from the last employee/public open focus group on the last question to the group. These are submitted to this report as the focus group ran out of time to have a verbal discussion on this specific question.

For increase -

- Raising the minimum wage to a livable wage will ensure that some of the most marginalized people in our community can live and stay here in Longmont with dignity. Without this, we will continue to push low wage workers out of Longmont.
- I think our municipalities should help subsidize the small businesses, and not subsidize big businesses like Walmart or Costco. I favor raising the minimum wage to \$25 by 2030, but I don't want to hose our small businesses. Buy local campaign.
- Don't let fear of small businesses going out of business keep you from raising the minimum wage.
- We need a living wage for all adult residents, but we also need annual increases to be staggered so small businesses and nonprofits can adjust. There needs to be government and foundational support for small nonprofits to raise wages proportionally!
- Please raise the minimum wage according to the proposal.
- Sustainable wage dignity is a justice issue, as a society/city we must pay living wages to our lowest paid neighbors, who are hurting deeply.
- Raise the minimum wage but not for unemancipated minors.
- Tell state legislators to change tip laws so all tips can be pooled for all employees.
- I support increasing minimum wage but think there need to be some exceptions.
- It is important to raise the minimum wage in order to have people who work in Longmont be able to live and be able to afford transportation from where they now live.
- This is an important lever that City Council has to improve our economy and help the most impacted workers in our community.

Against increase -

- Do not raise the tipped minimum wage. They are already making WAY more than their skill + work level.
- No barrier programs don't qualify for most large government grants/funding due to reporting requirements. Proof of residency, red tape, paperwork, barriers.
- I feel that tip minimum wage shouldn't go up. I feel it is unconscionable to not pay people a living wage.
- Please reach out to your small business owners, questionnaire them, you will lose so many small businesses who are the heart of the community.
- Minimum wage increase is a real impact to small businesses, some will not survive. Please don't support.

The following e-mail was sent to the Minimum Wage Coordinating Group for inclusion in the feedback.

From: admissions@bloommontessori.com <admissions@bloommontessori.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 10:16 AM

To: commissioners@bouldercounty.gov; Christina Pacheco <Christina.Pacheco@longmontcolorado.gov>

Subject: Effects of Increasing Minimum Wage on Boulder County Child Care Facilities and Families

I am an owner of Bloom Montessori, a licensed child care facility that has operated in Longmont since 2009.

My small business has survived in an incredibly challenging environment- a 100 year flood, a global pandemic, the resulting labor shortages and supply shocks (the child care industry is suffering from a workforce crisis), the 42% increase in property taxes that resulted from the repeal of the Gallagher Amendment, and widespread inflation but it would not likely survive the proposed increase in minimum wage.

Parents whose children attend our facility are largely residents of the County, 2 parent working households, and their children are in care 8-5:30, or 57 ½ hours a week. The parents pay \$7/hour for this care, which is an incredibly low hourly rate, but likely one of the largest household expenses for the family.

More than ½ our business expenses, 65%, are labor. Labor is our biggest expense (teaching young children is labor intensive) and these costs are passed on directly to working families. Child care facilities operate on extremely small margins (an industry average is 3%), margins that have gotten even smaller due to increased property taxes and inflation.

Under the proposal, over the next 6 years, wages would have to increase by a minimum of 62.75%. This means that we would have to raise the amount of tuition that we charge families by a similar amount (and more if inflation continues and there is no property tax relief). And, of course 62% is the basal number—if someone can make \$25 an hour at Starbucks, an employee whose job (under current CDHS Regulations) requires three background checks, an occupational physical, qualifications like 2 early childhood college courses or equivalent and 1 year of experience, 20 hours of first aid and emergency training, stressful emotional labor, and job duties which include changing diapers and assisting with toileting, careful supervision and instruction of children, working with children with disabilities and children with minor illnesses, to serve as a “floater” (changing diapers), an assistant, or a staff aide would expect to make more... and the teacher would expect to make a lot more. It would exacerbate the workforce shortage that already exists in the industry and has been closing classrooms and programs. The State estimates that 10% of child care workers left the industry in the last 2 years.

This change, and in particular, the fact that this minimum wage increase would only affect businesses located in Boulder County, would lead to many unintended effects:

- Closure of many child care facilities. There have already been numerous closures in the County this year (Bright Horizons in Longmont is closing at the end of the year- that’s 119 fewer child care slots for next year- because the corporation determined it was not profitable, Countryside Montessori, Sunshine House, Smiling Faces).

- Child care is not a free market. State mandated ratios and group sizes would not take into account the County's change in minimum wage:
In my facility, I charge \$7/child/hour for care:
A preschool aged classroom has a maximum group size of 20 students; meaning, the most revenue my classroom can generate at my current rates is \$140/hour and State regulations require 2 teachers (a 1:10 ratio- and this is considered poor quality and a high ratio). Under these changes, at least (assuming I paid the lowest minimum wage) \$50/hour would go to fixed labor expenses.
A toddler classroom has a maximum group size of 14 students; meaning, the most revenue my classroom can generate at my current rates is \$98/hour and State regulations still require 2 teachers (a 1:7 ratio- and this is still considered poor quality). Under these changes, the most this classroom would make is \$98/hour and \$50/hour would be fixed labor costs.
An infant classroom has a maximum group size of 10 students; meaning, the most revenue my classroom can generate at the current rates is \$70/hour and State regulations still require 2 teachers (a 1:5 ratio- which is considered very poor quality). Under these changes, the most this classroom would make is \$70/hour and \$50/hour would be fixed labor costs.
It is self apparent that infant/toddler programs would be the hardest hit by these regulations, and the County would likely experience a reduction in infant toddler providers and slots (there already exists a shortage in the State and the County and several providers, like Guidepost Montessori, were forced to close infant toddler classrooms this year). This would result in fewer mothers being able to enter the workforce and an increase in unlicensed/unregulated child care.
- High quality child care (places with lower class sizes and lower ratios- meaning less tuition dollars per teacher salary), infant/toddler care (there are already shortages of this), because of their low ratios (1 teacher to 3-4 infants), and programs for children with disabilities (because of the low ratios required) will be the hardest hit. Already, Imagine and many organizations for the disabled have had to suspend services because of labor shortages and the labor expenses required to operate programming.
- Increasing minimum wage will cause child care facilities to increase ratios and class sizes, decreasing structural quality, because they will need more students, and more tuition dollars, to pay each teacher.
- Increased cost of child care for working families. While they might be earning more in wages, facilities will have to raise rates to offset the increased labor expenses (especially since classroom sizes are capped by the State).
- Movement of businesses (especially labor intensive businesses, like child care and construction) out of the County into nearby Broomfield and Weld County.
- It will result in reduced CCAP, Colorado Child Care Assistance placements, in the County for the poorest families for two reasons: 1) Because the State's payments will not keep pace with these minimum wage increases which are unique to Boulder County and do not apply to the rest of the state; and 2) CCAP rates are based on a "tiered reimbursement system," in which facilities get paid a slightly higher rate for increasing quality by reducing group sizes and ratios. Boulder County providers will need to maximize group sizes to remain solvent, so their CCAP

reimbursement rates will decline because they will be considered to be of “lower quality,” in a lower quality tier. There already exists such a shortage of providers that the State is offering \$2,000 incentives. Boulder County providers would be uniquely disadvantaged in this system.

- Similarly, it will result in reduced UPK, Universal Preschool, placements in the County for the same reasons- because the State’s payments will not keep pace with the minimum wage increases which are unique to Boulder County and do not apply to the rest of the state; and because they employ the same tiered reimbursement system. Boulder County providers would be uniquely disadvantaged in this system.
- Public schools would have more expensive labor costs. They would have to increase wages for the people that staff before and after school programs (Community Schools) and support services (custodians, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers). If these individuals wages increase 62%, teachers will also expect similar wage increases. This will ultimately have to lead to increased property taxes, especially since the wage increases will be unique to Boulder County.
- Inflation has been rampant since 2020; already, we have not felt like we could raise our tuition as parents are already stressed over costs. If we were to add standard 3% increases we will have to raise our tuition almost 60% over the next 6 years in order to stay in business.
- It will result in general inflation in the County.

What you are contemplating is a perfect storm of fatal challenges for small businesses (increased property taxes, increased supply costs/inflation, and now increased labor costs)- and it will only apply to businesses in the County (parents can drive to Erie, Broomfield or Frederick and pay less). This will harm the competitiveness of Boulder County businesses, reduce access to child care in the county, dramatically increase rates for working families, increase the number of children in unlicensed/unregulated care, and reduce maternal workforce participation.

Boulder county will become like Telluride or Vail; no one who provides services to the residents will be able to afford to live here and they will have to commute to provide services for the rich. You will be making this a County where people will want to work, but where families cannot afford to shop, live, or operate a business due to the added costs (which will be significantly lower one county away).

I encourage you to employ an agency (Augenblick) to perform cost modelling on the effects this would have for the child care sector so that you can have an informed understanding before voting, to reject this proposal, and to support reduced property taxes for child care facilities.

Abigail & Joshua Miller



In the summer of 2023, elected officials from the Cities of Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and Louisville and the Town of Erie directed the Regional Minimum Wage Working Group to conduct a study of our regional economy and community engagement regarding a minimum wage increase. Since August of 2023, regional teams have met to scope and administer these next steps. Teams include one staff member from each of the five participating communities as well as community representatives from Chambers of Commerce, members of the Self Sufficiency Wage Coalition, and members of human services nonprofit organizations.

A standard engagement model operating at the ‘Involve’ level of the [public participation spectrum](#) was administered across the five participating communities. Engagement opportunities were available between mid-February until April 15 of 2024, and community members were provided options to participate virtually and in-person, with English and Spanish options, at one of 14 focus group sessions and through an online questionnaire.

City of Lafayette Engagement Strategy

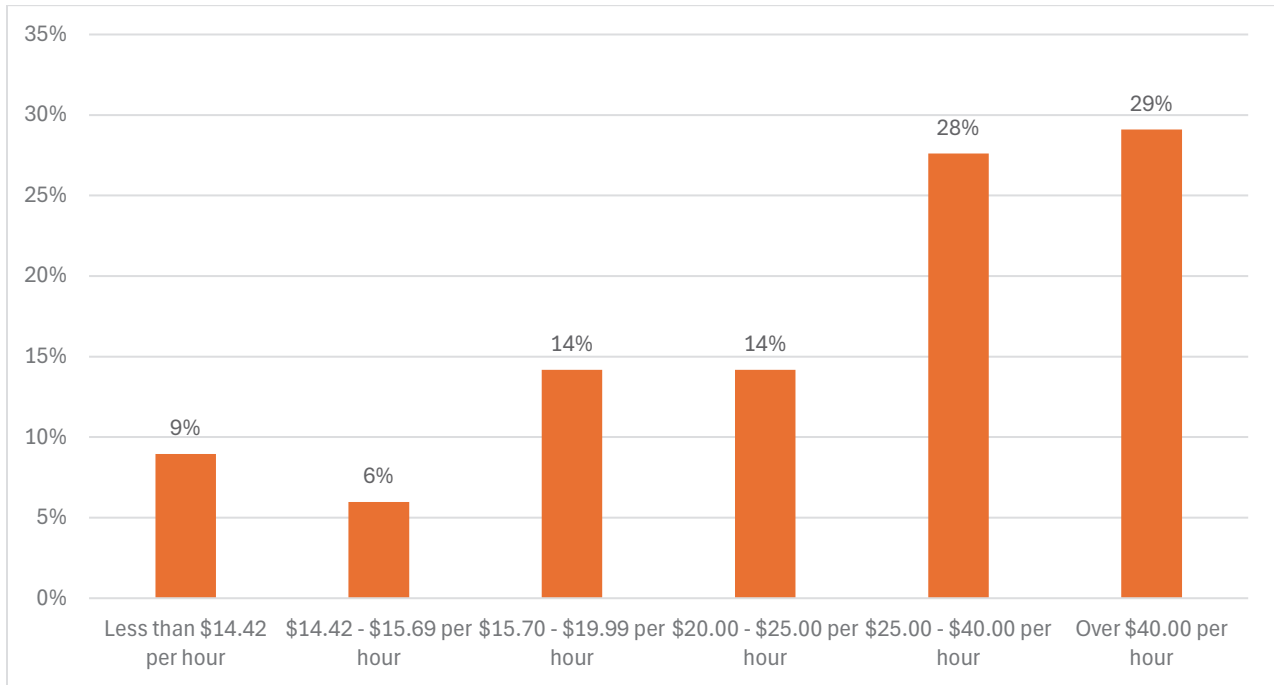
The City promoted the engagement opportunities through a variety of means but primarily focused on businesses, including:

- Direct emails to businesses registered with the City’s business license database (629 emails), businesses who have participated in the Small Business Capital Grant program (19 emails), and businesses located in Old Town (60 emails)
- Promoting the effort as the lead article in the April “Lafayette Connection” newsletter (which was mailed to all utility customers)
- An email from the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce to all Chamber members
- Communication to Lafayette businesses from the Small Business Development Center
- Promotion on the [project webpage](#)
- A [newsflash](#) on the City’s website and emails to news subscribers
- Digital banner on the screen at Highway 287/Baseline
- Flyers posted at various City facilities and Sister Carmen Community Center
- Posts on social media throughout the engagement period

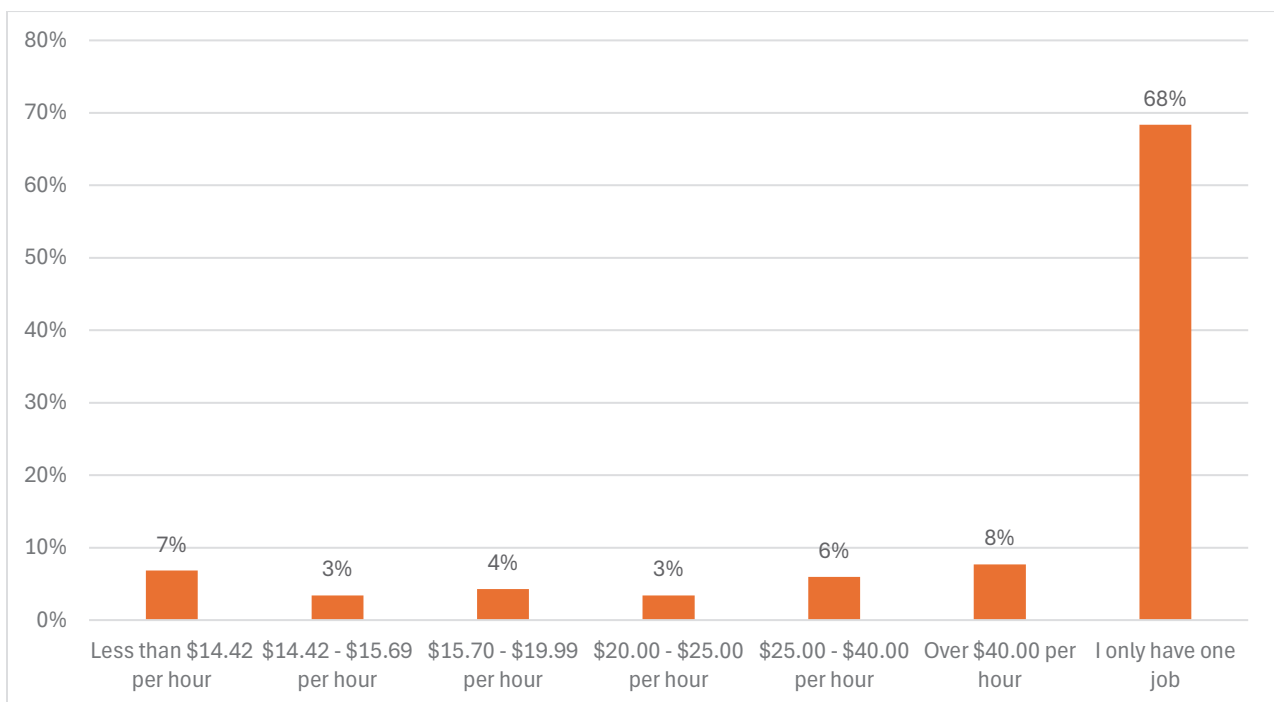
Engagement by the Numbers

The City of Lafayette hosted two of the 14 sessions in partnership with Louisville. In total, the 14 sessions engaged 213 participants, but the two sessions co-hosted by Lafayette/Louisville engaged nearly 40 people. Further, 142 (137 in English and 5 in Spanish) of the questionnaire respondents identified as being either a Lafayette community member or Lafayette business owner. The survey asked close-ended (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) questions. Responses to the close-ended questions from Lafayette respondents are summarized below.

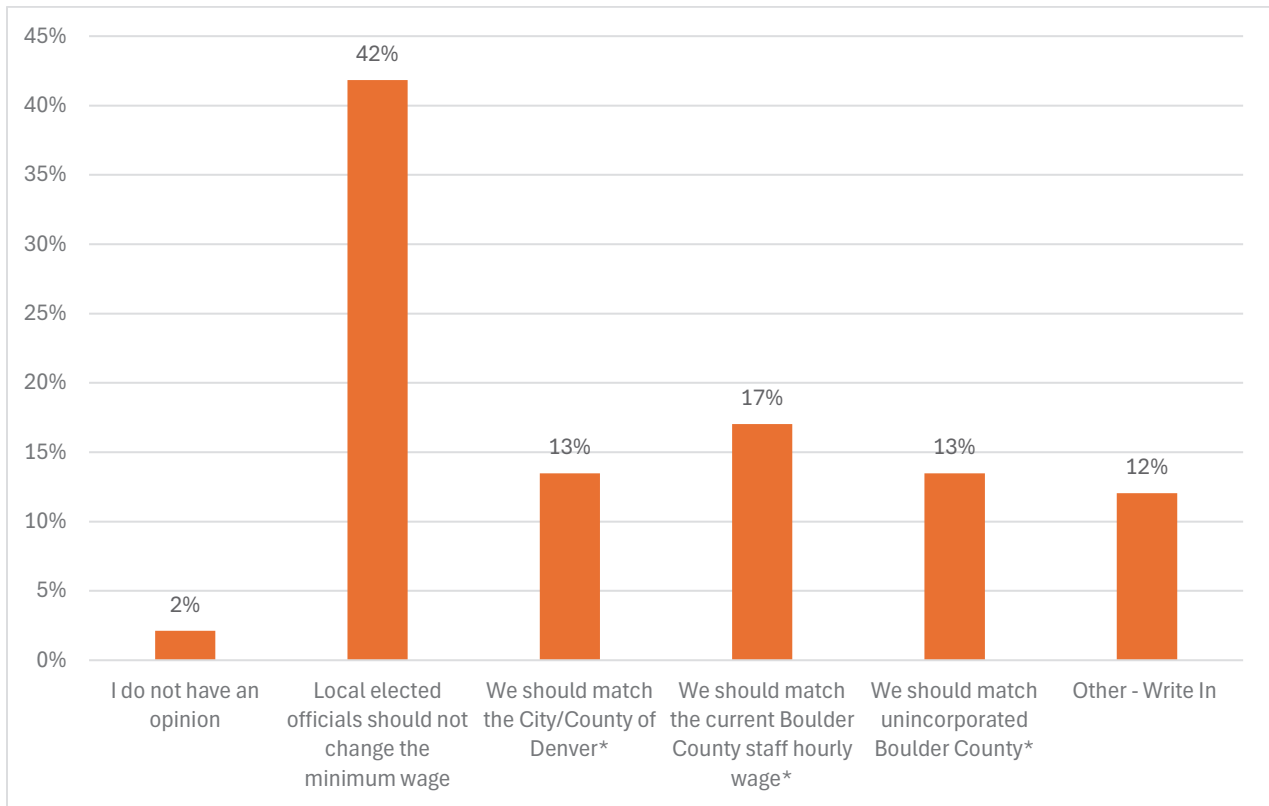
#1 – What is your hourly wage before taxes, deductions, and tips? (n=139)



#2 – If you have more than one job, what is your hourly wage before taxes, deductions, and tips at your second job? (n=119)



#3 – Which statement best describes your opinion about a possible change in the minimum wage? (n=141)



*The varying minimum wages referenced in the survey are:

- City and County of Denver – \$18.29 in 2024, increasing annually with inflation
- Boulder County staff hourly wage – \$23.23 in 2024
- Unincorporated Boulder County - \$15.69 in 2024, increasing to \$25 by 2030

Other – Write In

leave the wage where it is. let the market decide.

Minimum wage should be \$0.00. Let the employer determine the value of the output of each worker. Government has no need to set a minimum wage.

As a small business owner, it is incredibly hard to hire multiple people at \$17-18/hour minimum wage. I do not agree with such a large increase. Especially, my employees make commission so it is even more difficult if the minimum wage is that high. Plus, since Covid, as small business owner's, we have to pay so much more in unemployment and there is lots of unemployment fraud.

We should NOT increase the Minimum Wage for a while.

Minimum wage should be increased AND there needs to be a limit on price inflation for housing and necessities

Other – Write In

I'm not sure what to think. Minimum wage's effect on cost of living and ability for people to meet their needs is complicated. It's a component, but businesses pass on costs, so I'm not sure continuing to raise the minimum wage is a viable, sustainable, long-term strategy to help people. Not that it shouldn't be done, but...

Increase to \$18 and evaluate the result before coming to further increases

Local officials should not change the minimum wage. Small businesses are struggling. Raising minimum wage will reduce the number of people employed by a business as is happening in CA.

We are a small family owned business that employs youth and this would devastate our business. We pay our employees at tipped employees and they make great tips from our awesome community. We pay 11.60 plus tips currently. Most of our employees are under 18. We believe this would hurt many of our small businesses.

Make it affordable to live where you work.

Keep it at \$14.42. You will bankrupt local restaurants.

While I pay much more than minimum wage; minimum wage jobs are not meant to be a "living wage" or a sole source of income

Inflation will eat away any increase in minimum wages. Then the small business, employees will leave and finally so will the tax revenues.

Minimum wage should not be raised for tipped employees. It's putting small business out of work

Lower the minimum wage.

living wage (at this moment about \$25/hr)

Note that the ECONorthwest survey summary coded some of the “Other” responses if they clearly aligned with the sentiment of another question option, so there are minor discrepancies between the survey summary figures in Exhibit 2 compared to the graph above.

Key Themes

Survey respondents were asked to respond to three open-ended questions related to potential positive impacts of an increased minimum wage, potential negative impacts of an increased wage, and any other feedback they would like to share with City Council. Respondents could self-select as either a Lafayette community member or Lafayette business owner. The responses below are organized by seven key themes from the survey responses and in-person engagement sessions. The themes are listed in no particular order and include both community member and business owner perspectives; however, the verbatim questionnaire responses are included in Appendix A and delineated by community member or business owner.

Theme #1 – Minimum wage earners could likely expect increased income and an improved quality of life.

- If hours worked remained the same or similar, employees could expect increased income. Increased income will allow people to afford basic services and an ever-increasing cost of living more easily (housing, food, childcare, etc.).
- People could be more likely to afford to live where they work, which would have social, economic, and environmental benefits through an increased sense of community, keeping money spent within a single economy, and reducing emissions from fewer miles traveled to work.
- There may be more disposable income within the community and therefore increase the consumption of goods and services.
- If employees are more able to meet basic needs, there would be less of a strain on the region's safety net services.
- Employees earning minimum wage may need to work less and could therefore experience better work-life balance.
- There are potential "spillover" benefits, including reduced crime, reduced poverty, improved health, and a greater sense of community if people could afford to live where they work.

Theme #2 – Businesses may experience improved employee retention and satisfaction.

- Businesses may experience improved employee retention with higher wages.
- Employees earning a higher wage may experience increased pride in their work.

Theme #3 – An increased minimum wage could exacerbate inflation.

- If income increases, prices of goods, services, and experiences could increase due to higher personnel and product costs.
- The general cost of living, including housing, may continue to increase if people have more income.

Theme #4 – Employers would have to grapple with wage compression if the minimum wage increased.

- High-performing employees who have been provided a raise may be at or near a new minimum wage and could therefore either (1) feel less motivated or (2) expect a proportionate wage increase, thus increasing the wage pressures from more than just employees earning a minimum wage.
- Many businesses state that they are already paying a living wage but increasing the "floor" will reduce the impact of that business's conscious effort to provide a higher wage to employees.

Theme #5 – Businesses (especially small businesses) could be forced to close, lay off staff, or invest in another community to afford the costs of an increased minimum wage.

- Increased wages, and thus an increase in the cost of doing business, may give businesses a reason to construct and invest in neighboring communities that do not have a higher minimum wage.
- Many small businesses are already on the brink of closure and an increased minimum wage may force them to close.
- Businesses may have to reduce the number of positions they can offer and therefore the number of jobs available in the city.
- Businesses may have to lay off staff to afford increased payroll costs.
- Small businesses in particular would feel the burden more than larger corporations who could absorb the costs in ways that small businesses cannot.
- Small businesses are continuing to struggle after COVID-19. This would put an extreme and unnecessary burden on these businesses, many of which are restaurants that allow their employees to receive tips on top of the minimum wage.
- Increasing the minimum wage will make it even more difficult for someone to start a small business by increasing the barrier to entry.
- Costs of doing business in Boulder County are already high with significantly increasing property taxes. An additional burden such as increased minimum wage would push many businesses to close or reduce their workforce.
- Businesses who are voluntarily offering competitive benefits (i.e., paid healthcare) may no longer be able to provide such benefits.

Theme #6 – There are disagreements on the purpose of minimum wage.

- A minimum wage is not the same as a self-sufficiency wage.
- Minimum wage is designed for entry-level workers to develop skills, not jobs serving as a lifetime career.
- Businesses should have the freedom to determine the value their employees bring to an organization within the confines of what the business can afford.

Theme #7 – It is not local governments' responsibility to increase minimum wages.

- This is not the role of local governments or local elected officials, especially those who do not own a business. It should be managed on a statewide basis to reduce localized impacts.
- Political capital is better spent on programs or initiatives more directly addressing the affordability crisis.
- If a higher minimum wage is approved, governments should provide incentive programs to offset the increased burden for small businesses.
- Focus on other areas, such as affordable housing. Local governments should be focused instead on how to lower rents and/or increase supply of housing to improve affordability.

Sector-Specific Themes

In addition to the general themes above, there was feedback related to specific sectors as outlined below.

Childcare

- Childcare is already tremendously expensive (typically a “second mortgage” for many families) and increasing wages will make childcare more expensive than housing in many cases.
- If childcare is less accessible, there could be a labor shortage for employees with children for whom it makes more financial sense to not work than work and spend most of their income on childcare costs. This tends to have a disproportionate impact on women.

Restaurants

- Tipped wage earners are already earning an average wage significantly higher than minimum wage. They should be excluded from any minimum wage increase.

Marijuana Dispensaries

- Lafayette’s specific marijuana excise tax ensures that prices are already higher than most other communities.
- Most of the product comes from a small number of growers, so there is very little price competition across the state. Thus, any additional price burden that is specific to a city or region will have a significant impact on local dispensaries.

Agriculture

- Increased wages will result in exported labor for produce growing and processing. Boulder County has one of the best open space and agricultural land preservation programs in the world but that cannot be capitalized on if farmers cannot afford labor to grow produce on the land.

April 11 Engagement Session



Appendices

Appendix A – Questionnaire Responses

Appendix B – Other Written Feedback

The following responses are organized by each open-ended question from the questionnaire. Questions 1, 2, and 5 were asked of people who identified as Lafayette community members, and Question 3, 4, and 5 were asked of people who identified as Lafayette business owners. Responses demarcated with an asterisk (*) were submitted using the Spanish questionnaire and translated to English using a third-party translator.

#1 (Community) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your family, and your community?

C1	The cost of living is so expensive I can barely afford anything other then rent
C2	Less food insecurity, less dependence on social welfare programs. Ability for work life balance
C3	Additional income provides greater opportunities. However, my position could be eliminated if the cost of wages is more than the city of Lafayette can afford.
C4	More people able to pay their bills with their take home pay. People willing to get out there and work for a "decent" pay.
C5	I don't think you can increase wages enough to match all of the increases in all the other expenses a person has to incur.
C6	The wages have not kept up with cost of living. People are struggling and having to move out of Boulder County. It is a crisis. We need an economy to work for all.
C7	I could get paid more money.
C8	quality of life
C9	None
C10	By increasing the minimum wage there will be a lower gap between wages and expenses. Low income families have a lower chance of qualifying for government benefits and would allow them to buy/obtain food, house, resources solely on their wages. It will not only benefit them but the government as well. By increasing the minimum wage everyone else would get an increase in their wage as well which it would benefit a lot of us to be able to afford a good living.
C11	Less unhoused individuals creating stability in families, the ability to not be living paycheck to paycheck,.
C12	As someone who works at a local nonprofit helping people experiencing poverty I think it would be extremely beneficial. Most times we are people needing help who are working but still can't make ends meet working multiple jobs. The county, local organizations, and taxpayers ultimately end up picking up the tab when families can't afford to eat or pay for other basic needs. It would benefit our community to make sure people are paid closer to a living wage.
C13	Better meet high cost of leaving in Boulder County: rent, food, medication.
C14	With the high rise in costs of food, housing, and everything it's tough for people to stay afloat with the low wages given that are not proportionate to the cost of living

#1 (Community) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your family, and your community?

	in Colorado. It takes a community approach to fix this and a piece of that is raising the minimum wage.
C15	More people will earn a living wage.
C16	If the minimum wage doesn't keep up with inflating prices, there will be more people needing assistance from the county to survive and feed their families. This gives them the chance to provide a living for themselves.
C17	none. The market pays what is demanded or else companies are unable to hire and/or keep workers
C18	Having a living wage will allow citizens to simply live and to live simply. The cost of items to live, eat and enjoy our community have gone up to the point it causes depression, anger, and the need to move away. Living to work has become the norm.
C19	It's not clear. There aren't any direct, since no one in my family is a minimum wage hourly employee. I think the theory is that this has spillover effects in the community (reduced crime, reduced poverty, reduced bad health care outcomes, etc etc) but I'm not sure to what extent that really happens. The gap between minimum wage and cost of living here is huge.
C20	Positive- help low wage workers. Negative- it could be hard for small business owners.
C21	Being able to keep pace with inflation especially with increasing food, transportation and property tax costs.
C22	Positive impacts: Workers may be able to afford to live closer to where they work. Especially relevant for service workers. Negative impacts: may cause housing costs and other living costs in Boulder County to raise even higher
C23	It's incentivizing for all and gives people a reason to work in their own communities.
C24	N/A
C25	Being able to afford the expenses of living without having to obtain more than one job. As someone who works for the city of Lafayette, I've had many coworkers who have to work more than one job regardless of being a full time employee. I've unfortunately had to see a huge turnover rate in our employment. Most people truly enjoy their job, unfortunately we lose great people to neighboring towns because they offer more at a starting rate, than we do.
C26	Greater living conditions for everyone. Life is very expensive in our areas. The minimum wage HAS to be a living wage. Otherwise we're just encouraging poverty. NOT OK!
C27	None.
C28	more income for those being priced out of Boulder County. Minimum wage workers will have better options. Multiple job holders can scale back. Workers may stay at jobs longer.

#1 (Community) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your family, and your community?

C29	Raising the minimum wage just raises the prices of everything. Not all jobs are meant to support you. It ruins the economy to over pay people.
C30	Living In a community that values workers and living eages
C31	It would help people afford to live in this community. However, the cost of goods will continue to rise to accomodate paying employees more.
C32	None. Please leave at \$15. This is an entry level position.
C33	good morale and economic impact!
C34	It will create longevity within those who want to live here and pay wages to keep families above the poverty line.
C35	Nothing...none
C36	Entry level workers can improve their economic conditions to allow for even greater improvements
C37	More financial stability. Buying a house could possibly be a reality here for working class households.
C38	The ability to participate in my local community would increase dramatically if my community has the means to pay for more than rent and groceries. Creative works, live experiences, dining and entertainment depend on disposable income. That income will not come from business owners willingly, because it is a prisoner's dilemma- whoever keeps wages lowest outcompetes others. This is avoided by mandating a minimum wage for all business owners.
C39	The ability to participate in my local community would increase dramatically if my community has the means to pay for more than rent and groceries. Creative works, live experiences, dining and entertainment depend on disposable income. That income will not come from business owners willingly, because it is a prisoner's dilemma- whoever keeps wages lowest outcompetes others. This is avoided by mandating a minimum wage for all business owners.
C40	People being able to live where they work. Being able to pay all bills every month without having to go into debt. Being able to afford healthcare instead of barely being able to for medical insurance and then not being able to afford to actually use it.
C41	No positive impacts
C42*	More financial resources to meet the current increase in prices for basic services (rent, power, food).
C43*	We would have a bit more money to cover all the expenses that a family and a home have, such as food, rent, electricity, water, and more things that a family needs to survive.

#2 (Community) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your family, and your community?

C1	Na
C2	Increased cost of living
C3	Higher cost of going to fast food restaurants and places like Target or WalMart.
C4	As prices increase in every sector of our lives we will have to cut back our expenses. If businesses have to keep raising prices to meet all the increases in the expenses that affect their business I feel we will see more businesses close. The minimum wage increase won't matter much if there are less businesses to employ people.
C5	It could be harder to find a job, and the cost of basic goods and services could rise. It could become even more unaffordable to eat at a restaurant or shop at a grocery store.
C6	poverty
C7	The only negative impact that I can think of is that since the minimum wage is increasing, businesses would try to increase their prices as well.
C8	Higher prices for everything. A minimum wage does not reflect a worker's true value. Let the employer decide how much they can afford to pay. If they aren't able to keep workers, then the market will determine what an appropriate wage is. Government should stay out of this transaction. It is also proven that when the minimum wage is increased that jobs disappear (please see California). We need these jobs for teens and those starting out in the working world. Minimum wage jobs are not meant to be lifetime careers and shouldn't be treated as such.
C9	The only negative impact that I can think of is that since the minimum wage is increasing, businesses would try to increase their prices as well.
C10	Everything else might become more expensive
C11	I think it will be difficult for nonprofit organizations or small businesses to be able to cover the increased expense but ultimately if a business can't afford to hire a person a decent wage then they can't afford to hire someone. It's just the cost of doing business.
C12	There are no negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage.
C13	The negative side is that employers have to cover the costs of those wage increases. Therefore, there should be some tax benefits to employers or programs that help subsidize some of those costs.
C14	Some prices will be increased
C15	Things will not improve if there's not a limit or ceiling imposed on how much prices can increase on housing and necessities. Every time the minimum wage goes up, prices go up; it defeats the purpose, and keeps people just barely managing to get

#2 (Community) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your family, and your community?

	by. We need livable wages for our community AND we need to make sure that everyone can afford the things they need to survive (notice I said survive, not thrive. There needs to be bigger changes for this to be a possibility for many)
C16	Discouraging companies, particularly small business and/or restaurants from locating in our town.
C17	Wage compression. Increased prices.
C18	Some businesses will not be able to pay more as it will take from their own pockets. Causing change in living standards for a business owner brings resentment as they may not be managing their finances well.
C19	Also unclear. I think there's a risk that this only serves to continue to drive up the cost of living. It's a bit of a treadmill, isn't it? Sort of like house prices: if I want to live in the area, if house prices go up, then sure, I can sell my house for more, but I have to live somewhere, and the house I buy will also be more expensive. What I really need is for my own income to increase faster than housing prices increase. Raising the minimum wage locally is only really helpful in the long run if prices and hiring stay the same, but that's not how it works - businesses will fire people and raise prices to compensate, so what's the net effect? I think it's sort of hard to know. I'm not really taking a stand one way or the other, but assuming that the goal is helping people, I sort of feel like political capital is probably better spent on programs with a more clear impact. Maybe I'm wrong. The minimum wage needs to exist to help avoid exploitation, but marginal increases to it I'm not sure really move the needle all that much on the things we want to make better for people. But what do I know.
C20	Only if it could affect small business owners
C21	Businesses will likely raise prices to cover their increased payroll.
C22	Negatives: goods, services, and restaurant foods may increase in price.
C23	I'm assuming it means higher taxes?
C24	Payroll expenses for businesses, may have inverse effect then intended
C25	None
C26	Increased prices. I think state government should set minimum wage, not counties and cities.
C27	Businesses will lay off to offset increase in minimum wages. Workers will become overworked in understaffed workplaces. Decrease in benefits, small businesses will not be able to survive. Minimum wage will increase but customer base and sales will remain the same, therefore a loss for small businesses.

#2 (Community) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your family, and your community?

C28	The cost of me trying to make it!
C29	None
C30	This could force small businesses out of our community. It would be difficult to maintain that kind of overhead. As stated above, the cost of items will continue to rise to accomodate paying employees more, creating a cycle that isn't solution oriented.
C31	Continued higher costs for everyone.
C32	affordability!
C33	None.
C34	This is only done to increase tax revenue...and will hurt everyone. THIS IS WHAT CAUSES INFLATION! This will close businesses! This will reduce jobs! This will only INCREASE PRICES! This is not to help people! THIS IS ONLY TO INCREASE TAX REVENUE (the more you pay the more tax is paid) Look at CA...it is a horrible idea! Business are laying off people, raising prices, and closing left and right! City council should stay out of determining wages! IT IS NOT YOUR JOB!!!!!!!!!!!!
C35	Possible raise in prices when CEOs raise the wages but don't lower their salaries
C36	I'm sure some businesses may go out of business. But really not many I can think of.
C37	I believe that business owners will react poorly, possibly moving their business to an area of lower wages or paying for regressive political candidates.
C38	Depending on how this is set up, businesses could move out of the area if they are forced to pay their employees more.
C39	More businesses closing, more inflation, more unemployment. Let the market decide.
C40*	None.
C41*	That the cost of everything will increase: food, housing, and many other things one needs to survive.
C42*	I think more than \$30.

#3 (Business) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B1	no positive effect. any increase will be offset by negative community ripples.
B2	There are none
B3	The individuals may feel a short-term boost in their take home pay (but once pricing adjusts, their spending power is ultimately no better).
B4	Mke it possible for people to live here. Make families not have to choose between child care and medicine.
B5	I pay anyone that works for me a contracted rate. Minimum wage increase will cause those rates to increase.
B6	It could possibly lead to a wider potential customer base as consumers in our area have more spending money, however, I think this effect will be quickly outpaced by our need to raise prices so after a few years, those consumers will have the same spending power that they have now as localized inflation catches up to wages.
B7	People deserve to make enough money to provide for themselves without having to work multiple jobs or more than 40 hours per week. This could provide that opportunity.
B8	huge uplift in fundraising burden
B9	I believe that there will be a negative impact on the economy. Higher wages required mean higher expenses which translate into a higher cost of goods to operate for business owners. Prices will need to be raised to match the required increase in wages which means those same employees will be paying more for their goods across the board. This will be a cycle that could not end ever.
B10	None, it takes away the choice of a business owner to pay what they feel they can for a job.
B11	There is no positive impact. Business owners in a free market economy should be allowed to set wages based on market conditions. Government employees should not dictate a minimum wage for hourly employees.
B12	It would be a living wage
B13	We are a safety net agency, so we would see lower income households more able to meet their basic needs through employment.
B14	Overall, I don't think a mandatory minimum wage is a useful pursuit. Costs incurred by a business are simply passed on to consumers thereby increasing upward pressure on prices contributing to an inflationary environment across the economy.
B15	None
B16	A better wage typically brings pride in the job. When a person feels compensated for what they do, we hope they function to their fullest ability to produce positive results. We are very specialized and it costs my business \$8k to train EACH one doing the work we do...then we have to recertify QYR...not cheap.

#3 (Business) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B17	Employees.
B18	It will be a negative for business owners, employees and the general public. Just look at Seattle or San Francisco to see how it has destroyed businesses and jobs. The first to go are the restaurants. These are the jobs where many entry level workers start their work experience.
B19	Literally None.
B20	dumb idea
B21	It will not be positive. It will mean we will higher fewer employees, increase unemployment, price our cost of produce out of competitive levels with sources of products from out of Boulder, and shut down small businesses. You increase our property tax, take our tools away, increase our labor cost² take a hint from the European nations experiencing farmer protests. There is a breaking point and we are at it. Leave the labor market alone.
B22	None. Although minimum wage will potentially increase the amount of money people have to spend in the short term it will be offset by the increase in prices needed to pay for the increase in labor costs. This creates a dog chasing its tail scenario.
B23	None
B24	If you keep raising minimum wage, we will have to increase prices to cover those wages and people just go to another city to save money. It'll drive business down and drive prices up. No restaurant or business will want to come and set up Schoup where their prices have to be extremely high to cover wages, when they can go to another city and set up shop for much cheaper
B25	None
B26	Without a proper study, this is not a fair question to ask of individuals.
B27	Will help with those that do not work in a field where experience and annual pay increases are not common if not mandatory.
B28	None
B29	Our employees are like family and they will feel safer in their ability to rent where they work.
B30	We already pay a living wage at our company but we would like our town to function. In order for this to happen, all people employed need to make enough to live. I don't want the Taco Bell closed because no one can afford to work there. Instead of investing in affordable housing (which we should do) we need to first ensure that all aspects of life can be affordable for residents.

#3 (Business) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B31	I have yet to see any positive impact.
B32	None.
B33	I do not think it is is possitivie. I believe unemployment will rise...it will drive inflation
B34	None
B35	The cost of childcare will increase drastically with the cost of payroll cost, payroll insurance, human resource services, accounting services, employee insurance, and umbrella insurance. Childcare is already a mortgage payment, and an increase would require another 1/2 of a mortgage payment. I feel that you could destroy the families and developments of the community with this large impact. I would look at reducing the property tax so we could pay more for teachers helping all business and families.
B36	Employees would make more money, which would be good.
B37	I do not believe there are positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage. We give our workers their tips so they make more than the minimum wage would be but we'd have to stop doing this if we are mandated to pay more per hour
B38	There will be NO positive impact in raising the minimum wage. All this will result in is increased costs for businesses and residents. Minimum wage is not meant to be a living wage. At some point these increasing costs will result in companies being unable to hire staff and opting for automation. This is a losing proposition for all concerned.
B39	Decreased employee turnover, increased living standards for workers
B40	There is no positive impact. Study after study has shown this. California and Washington state are examples of this. Our incredibly fast rising fast food joints are examples of this. The cost of goods at the businesses forces to raise minimum wage will increase, workers will be fired and those left behind will receive a temporary raise that will mean nothing once the cost of goods catch up in less than a year. Rinse and repeat the cycle of stupidity.
B41	I can not think of a positive impact. We have always paid at least \$3/hr over minimum wage. Is minimum wage a law that is meant to prevent employers from abusing their power and paying people too little? Is minimum wage supposed to be a living wage? I have seen it as a protection for the lowest paid workers but not something that automatically pays workers regardless of how little productivity they produce.
B42	Colorado is an expensive state to live in and our wages need to support a living wage.

#3 (Business) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B43	Our staff will be able to afford to live in Boulder County while working for our organization. It will increase the financial burden on the organization but will result in less staff turnover, which ultimately will benefit the organization.
B44	N/A
B45	There would not be aa positive for our business. We would not be able to afford payroll if this happens as we are a seasonal business but open year round.
B46	None
B47	There is not any positive impact. It appears to offer sustainable wage...but it will drive businessess out and it will decrease the number of entry or first timejobs availble in the market.
B48	There is no positive impact. The wage should be a contract between the employee and the employer and the government should not get involved in this process.
B49	None
B50	I think this applies to management and full time workers who do not live at home..
B51	Please do not do this. Our bartenders make between \$25-\$65/hr at \$12/hr+ tips as their take home pay after taxes.
B52	None. If minimum wage is raised, the HS kids I employ will have a little more cash, but my food prices will go up. The parents will suffer, because the cost of everything will go up.
B53	None
B54	No positive impact. Higher Food prices to pay for it. Harder to find workers and lots of local businesses will go out of business.
B55	I see no positive impact of increasing minimum wage. Please note that minimum wage and living wage are two different things. Minimum wage is designed for entry-level workers to begin their careers and develop skills to promote themselves into living wage jobs. Our expectation should not be that an entry-level worker with little to no skills should be making a livable wage.
B56	I respect increasing minimum wages for some industries. All of our employees are tipped and make more than the proposed new minimum wage.
B57	None
B58	None
B59	Better wages mean happier employees
B60	We already pay above the minimum wage and we have no turnover. We are a team and that is what has helped us in being successful.

#3 (Business) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B61	I think it's important that people making minimum wage be able to support themselves without having to work 2 full jobs.
B62	Employees more able to cover the costs of living. Less strain on the local safety net.
B63	Increasing the minimum wage would create opportunity for those already living and working in the community, and would allow more people to attain quality housing and have a higher quality of life. Minimum wage needs to increase in proportion to housing and food costs in order to be a livable wage.
B64	No positive impact only negative. Small businesses can't navigate this and stay in business. This should not be decided by the city council
B65	There is nothing positive about politicians who don't own or understand how a business operates dictating to a business owner how they pay their staff if they have staff at all
B66	Short-term gain. Longterm pain.
B67	none
B68	I don't think there is a positive impact.
B69	Do not raise the tipped minimum wage. Most of those staff members already earn \$30-\$40 per hour including tips. & \$20-\$25/ hour For high school kids with no experience. And I have been forced to give them about a \$.90 raise every year for the past seven years. The tipped employees do not need more money. What we need is a fair enough way for me to legally share tips with the kitchen staff, without having to pay everyone the full minimum wage (which cost way too much). The multiple state mandated tipped minimum wage increases are ruining full service restaurants, and benefitting the counter service restaurants. It's just become too difficult with high wages and product cost to run a full service restaurant. This is ruining my business model and why I opened restaurants in the first place.
B70	There will be no positive impact on my business if the minimum wage is increased. My business will fail if the minimum wage increases to \$25/hr which is more than I make as a business owner. Lafayette and Boulder County are ensuring that small business will fail with this initiative. They should look toward rental costs in the county and living expenses rather than passing the buck to small business owners.
B71	Can't think of any positive aspect for me personally.
B72	There will be no positive impact, we are struggling to keep our doors open. If anything, we will need to work more hours and lay off employees.
B73*	If the economic situation of the working class improves, the local economy gets stronger. Workers would have better incomes without having to do double shifts or exhausting, long hours. If there's more free time, that time can be spent with family, on recreational activities, on quality leisure opportunities, etc. Countries with better salaries and quality of life have societies with less crime, less domestic

#3 (Business) – What do you think the positive impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

	violence, and fewer social problems like substance abuse. It is important to include reforms that allow an increase in the minimum salary and also attend to other aspects of our wellbeing, such as a regulation of the housing costs and mortgages, and not only for residential purposes, but also for commercial ones, so that both workers and employers could actively participate in the local economy and thrive regionally, above all in Boulder, where housing and commercial spaces are not affordable for families or small businesses.
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#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B1	I will need to raise my prices and the community can't afford it. Higher wages will possibly translate in my closing especially since taxes and doing business in Lafayette is so expensive.
B2	Increased prices for food - just look at Denver. Overpays high school workers. Min wage should not equal livable wage. It should allow for flexibility in compensation for folks just entering the workforce and recognize the life skills restaurants teach young workers. Additionally, our Boulder County workers earn an average of \$12 per hour in tips on top of the minimum wage. This makes dining out unreasonably expensive for our guests.
B3	I think it will be a struggle at first, but it was a struggle when slavery was abolished. Businesses need to find a way to make it, paying a liveable wage.
B4	The cost of goods and services of my vendors will increase, thusly I will be required to raise my rates. If the market cannot absorb my rate increase, I will lose income.
B5	<p>1. We will need to raise prices in order to keep up with the cost of labor which could lead to decreased revenues as consumers pursue cheaper options outside of the county or through large retail chains that are better equipped to absorb those costs.</p> <p>2. Our competition in Weld, Larimer, and Broomfield Counties and those large national retailers will have a competitive advantage as we have to contend with higher relative wage costs. Those companies still serve the Longmont area and our customers will find cheaper options with those companies outside of our county. If this effect begins to hurt our business too much we will be forced to consider a move to a location east of County Line Road.</p> <p>3. We will be forced to reduce hours and not hire our "non-essential" employees. We have always had high school-aged students, employees with intellectual disabilities, and part-time retirees on our staff. Their productivity often does not match their wage but we like to give those folks opportunities and our whole staff benefits through the diversity. If the minimum wage moved to \$25 per hour, we could not continue to employ these inexperienced workers and would instead pass that work to the rest of our highly productive staff.</p>

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

	4. Our current employees who are making \$20-30 per hour will rightly expect a raise forcing us to raise prices across the board.
B6	None.
B7	Continued injustice, poverty, food insecurity, homelessness
B8	Raising the minimum wage would mean that expenses will go up in a business and therefore the cost of goods sold will need to rise. Those same employees will then be spending more of their raise for the same amount of goods if not more as a percentage. Inflation will go up locally and surpass the national average. Businesses will suffer many small businesses will most likely go out of business and close their doors. Businesses will have to operate on a smaller staff and therefore employees may lose their jobs. I don't think this move will create more financial well-being for the majority.
B9	Likely none. We start workers above the current minimum wage because of current economic conditions.
B10	Inflation. If you raise minimum wages, business will adjust their cost of goods. The consumer ultimately determines prices and all you will do is drive up the cost of goods and services. It looks good on paper but it simply leads to cost inflation.
B11	I think it forces small businesses to overpay for entry-level people.
B12	It will be a challenge for small businesses to balance a higher minimum wage while still making a profit.
B13	Since our lowest wage is over \$20/hour, we would not be noticeably affected.
	See previous response. I believe there is a direct correlation between supply and demand and the effect on prices. When outside forces just put more money in people's hands, it effectively drives up demand without changing supply which then drives prices higher.
B14	Any substantial increase in minimum wage will put our organic vegetable farm out of business. Both our wages as well as the prices we charge our customers have gone up substantially in the last few years. Vegetable farming is extremely labor-intensive. In 2023 we had 38 employees and our payroll was 62% of our total business expenses. We currently start employees at \$17/hr and our most senior managers are paid \$28/hr. Our prices have gotten so high that we have lost many customers—even those who have disposable income and who are the most dedicated supporters of local food. There is not room for us to increase our prices any more. The past 2 years our farm has had a shortfall of about \$60,000. We are trying some new things this year so improve efficiencies but it is questionable that these will work given our already high wages. Even if these improvements succeed there is no way that they could possibly cover the cost of increase in wages. And finally, neither my husband nor I make even \$20/hour from our vegetable farm. This is our only source of income. My goal is to pay each of us \$40,000/year. If you

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

	assume that we only work 40 hours per week (which is completely realistic that we would work this little), we get paid \$19.23/hour. There is no room for us to increase our wages. We will go out of business and Boulder County will lose the jobs that we are able to provide for 38 residents.
B15	Will force some businesses to pay more than federally required
B16	To employ "helpers" with no training is challenging but to know if they will stay and work with the people skills we need is why we hire at 'minimum' wage. If they work out they get a raise. Take that away and our business will be out of business.
B17	Absolutely, Small business are already struggling to stay open and with higher and higher expenses, small businesses will go out of business and in return, will not be able to hire people in the community.
B18	It will increase costs for all employers, regardless if they pay above minimum wage, as it will increase costs for all businesses.
B19	Having to shut down. The increase of minimum wage has already pushed small restaurants and businesses to the brink and cause them to have to raise prices. If the minimum wage goes up to \$25-\$30 all that will be left are LARGE corporations like Wal Mart. That is the opposite of what we want as a community. This will cause restaurants and other small businesses to try to survive by HAVING to raise prices. Can you imagine having to pay \$30+ for a quick lunch at a fast casual place...? Labor is our number one expense as a small business and especially restaurant. Increasing this hurts us to a point of almost no return. And it is just going to lead to an increase in prices like we have already been seeing. Minimum Wage Workers account for less than 2% of the population. Of that almost 50% of them are under the age of 25 and 75% of them are in the restaurant, service and hospitality industry. We do not need to tank our economy, price out small businesses and teach people they dont need to work hard to be paid well. Just to support less than 2% of the population, most of who are Kids!
B20	dumb idea
B21	Increased unemployment, less service due to fewer employees, higher prices for goods and services made or sold in Boulder, lower prices for goods from outside of Boulder creating a competitive disadvantage, lower income for Boulder businesses. Raising wage rates may be intended to pay more money to some workers, but overall it just increases unemployment, which means more people have alot less. Please consider cause and effect from the big picture.
B22	Increased costs to already struggling small business'. More small business' unable to compete and closing. Increase in cost of living for residents in the community due to inflation caused by the increase in wages.
B23	As a small business owner, the negative impact would be us having to increase prices to cover wages because as it is now, we are barely skating by. There were also be no new restaurants that will be able to afford to move into Lafayette, and there will be a huge exit of businesses that can set up shop easier and cheaper in another city

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B24	Localized inflation, drive out small businesses, make it harder to start businesses,
B25	I can only answer for my own business; our labor is already at 52% of sales. We cannot afford a mandatory increase to the tipped minimum wage. Please adjust your questions to ask what the average wage is AFTER gratuity to get a more realistic view.
B26	Cost of goods will go up which may/will decrease my profits, thusly loosing money over time.
B27	Small business would be negatively harmed. If you only want chain stores and big businesses then it is the right decision.
B28	It will increase pricing for customers cut margins and hurt overall small business owners
B29	We might need to reduce our staff
B30	I'm sure there are some small business who cannot afford to pay higher wages but as a small business that employs 20+ people, it's hard to imagine that it is truly impossible.
B31	I will elevate prices in an attempt to off set higher wages and taxes. High wages do not provide more qualified employees to choose from.
B32	Will hurt small business the most and increase the cost in most service related industries.
B33	It will negatively impact unemployment regionally, it will drive inflation up.
B34	Everyone thinks it is a good idea to increase minimum wage. I believe it is not. It is hard to justify increasing a wage that is not accurately represented or defined to the individuals that it is going to affect. For instance, you raise the minimum wage an extra \$1.00. In theory, this sounds wonderful for all involved. What people are not seeing is the ripple effect that this is going to have on small business. Remember that this \$1.00 increase is being taxed. Right there is is not a "dollar" raise. Also remember that bigger corporations like Walmart and McDonalds are not that willing to lose profits on a yearly basis so...in turn, every staff gets an extra dollar so these companies increase their products in order to cover these extra costs. Now the "dollar" that you gave everyone is even LESS than what is was after being taxed making it even more drastic of a deception. Now the "dollar" that you gave everyone is depleted and even going into the "negative" meaning that instead of everyone gaining a dollar an hour they are losing more money than they were before. Higher taxes, bigger businesses, increased cost of goods sold, increased living expenses and increased operational costs are what we should be looking at versus continuing to raise something that is not going to help in the long run. There is only so much that a small business can raise their cost of items to and most of them are not surviving as it is right now any way. Why would you kick a business when they are down? Look at all the small businesses closing right now because of

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

	operating costs and high taxes. This would not help and mark my words, more businesses would shut down instantly.
B35	I would focus on how to reduce the property taxes of childcare so we can then take the difference to pay staff more. The cost of childcare will increase drastically with the cost of payroll cost, payroll insurance, human resource services, accounting services, employee insurance, and umbrella insurance. Childcare is already a mortgage payment, and an increase would require another 1/2 of a mortgage payment. I feel that you could destroy the families and developments of the community with this large impact. I would look at reducing the property tax so we could pay more for teachers helping all business and families. Also, when you increase the minimum wage you run into an issue that now you are paying degreed people and non-degreed people the same therefore it will actually become two mortgage payments or more. Realistically we need to get inflation down, but we are constantly looking in more ways to increase it. Which effects everything. Let people run their business and not tell them how to. Small business owners do have the best interest in mind and truly want the best for all and the community. If they didn't they wouldn't be able to stay in business. Childcare has no profits and we do it because we love and want to help the future generations just like nurses and doctors. We don't do it for the money if we did, we would all work for google or amazon.
B36	It would make it impossible for small businesses like ours to compete with larger businesses. We operate at very slim margins currently, we would have to raise our prices. Larger companies have many skus and stores and can spread out the burden. Small businesses are stuck and have to raise prices significantly. For every \$1 minimum wage goes up, that's a \$2000 annual cost to the business, per employee. Another problem is that employees that are not making minimum wage will need significant raises as well, to stay ahead of new employees coming in. So this is not just for new employees, it effects the business at every level. While making a living wage is necessary, communities should also think about the livelihood of small businesses. Grants to support us so that we are not raising prices and losing to competitors could help.
B37	We'd most likely have to shut down and the community would lose another local business
B38	Please see my response to question 15. Increased labor costs, increased costs passed on to consumers, loss of jobs, etc.
B39	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Higher Costs for Businesses: This could force them to cut jobs, reduce worker hours, or increase product prices. 2. Fewer Jobs: Employers might hire less or replace workers with automation to manage higher wage costs. 3. Inflation: Increased wages could cause prices to rise, potentially nullifying the benefit of higher earnings. 4. Regional Imbalances: A uniform wage increase may hurt businesses in regions with lower living costs.

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

	5. Risk of Unemployment: Significant wage hikes could lead to higher unemployment if businesses can't afford the new wages.
B40	Inflation and lose of jobs.
B41	<p>Our farm is essentially an outdoor factory. If minimum wage increases our prices have to increase. We will lose customers and then have to raise prices further to make up for the lost customers or reduce staff and only serving the customers who can afford what we sell. Farms already face tremendous competition on a global level. In Mexico workers are paid about 200 pesos a day which is about \$17 a DAY!!! We pay more than this per hour. It is cheaper to grow the food in Mexico and pay the relatively low shipping cost to get it to Boulder. On a container of Philips Crab the crabs are caught on the Chesapeake and shipped all the way to India where labor is unbelievably cheap, the crab is picked, packed and shipped all the way back to the US. This is the kind of completion we have. By mandating higher wages the jobs will be exported out of Boulder. Between Boulder County and the City of Boulder - Open Space Programs we have one of the most incredible Open Space programs in the world and have preserved 35,000 acres of farm land. Someone needs to fam this land. When tomatoes can be grown in Weld County with workers making \$16/hr and we have to pay \$25/hr we will end up employing no one and go out of business. The amount of education we do and good quality food that we produce is significant. The community will have fewer opportunities to experience a farm and learn about where food comes from. There are restaurant owners saying they will not open a new restaurant in Denver due to the unaffordable minimum wage. Farmers looking to be Open Space tenants are going to see the cost of labor and decide not to farm here. The public would like to have reduced herbicide production on the Open Space lands. For the most part labor is used as instead of herbicide. People will often pay a little more for Organic food but generally won't pay twice as much as a comparable food grown with herbicide and pesticide. The current tenants on Open Space have an average age around 65. There is no next group of farmers to lease this land. There are not potential future tenants with the capital and experience to take on farming here. If this was not a big enough challenge the increased minimum wage will be an insurmountable obstacle to farming here. Around 2010 Boulder County leased land to almost anyone who wanted to try farming and the result was 19 farms started and quit within 3 years. If the minimum wage covered the entire US we would be somewhat even with the rest of the country and jobs would be exported to other countries. The minimum wage being higher in such a small area of Boulder/Denver makes it too easy for residents to shop elsewhere or get deliveries to avoid paying more for locally produced goods. In short our farm will not survive the minimum wage that is scheduled for unincorporated Boulder County.</p>
B42	Too high of a minimum wage can be detrimental to the small businesses and those are the businesses that make up much of Boulder's businesses.
B43	see above

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B44	There are so many business's already closed, this will lead to more. We are all struggling because of the policies that are being made. This will have only a negative impact.
B45	This would devastate our business. We pay our employees mostly under the age of 18 \$11.60/hour plus their tips. They make great tips as our communities are awesome and they support small businesses as the employees in them. We believe this would harm many small
B46	Increasing minimum wage for all of our employees working within Boulder County, will force us to hire fewer employees and expand our business efforts outside of Boulder County, in areas that we can afford to pay more employees for a larger sales venue. We may also have to increase prices on our produce offerings, within Boulder County, in order to offset increasing costs of business.
B47	Increase in pricing for the consumer- As our overhead goes up that gets passed along to the consumer. Reduced number of employees- To maintain our overhead to practical numbers we would have to cut our staffing. Raising Minimum wage increases all wages. An employee in management making \$25 an hour will also need to be increased as they will not be happy being on par or just above minimum wage. This will increase the overhead costs of all associates not just the ones that are at minimum wage. Reevaluation of health care coverage. We currently offer a free healthcare option to all our associates and and partially pay for opt in health coverage. These may be options that we no longer would be able to provide should minimum wage go up. Increase in wages also increased our payroll tax liability adding further to the increased overhead. Loss in tax revenue for the city. As employers are not able to keep up with the increase in overhead they will close or relocate to areas they can afford to operate in. This leads to a decrease in tax revenue for the City and County.
B48	As said above....the data from the federal department of labor show the following: minimum wage increase drives up unemployment. This is not sometimes true but it is always true. There very people you say this will help are hurt the most. let the market determine the value placed on a job. I have increased some of my roles hourly pay by over 50% in the past 3.5 years. The market determined that the skills I needed in those roles demanded that I pay more to obtain and retain those staff. Those roles were paying \$32 per hour in 2021. Today those same roles pay \$50 per hour. In contrast I have a role that was paying \$15 per hour in 2021. Today that same role is paid \$15 per hour in 2025. The first role has skills that create value that are not readily available in the market. The second role is very low skill and the number of people in the market that can fill is very high. Let the market determine the value. Finally, driving minimum wage will increase the cost of all goods to all people. As much as you might think the "wealthy" business owner is going to absorb this cost, the reality is that the cost will be past on to the consumer in the increased cost of the product. My cost of labor has increased 50% in the past three years. By cost of materials has increased 40% in that same time period. Do you think the product that I am selling to my customers has had a price in crease? guess by how much? about 45%. Hope this is helpful....

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

B49	We would have to reduce our staff to cover the increased costs of wages or we will have to increase our prices which would impact all our customers.
B50	While we pay living wage plus benefits to all our full time employees and an hourly equivalent of living wage to regular part time employees, we do have some seasonal and paid internship jobs that pay lower. A mandated increase in minimum wage will reduce our ability to include as many paid interns in our programs and also impact our ability to offer as much scholarship to our licensed childcare programs which rely on high school and college youth for employment and which currently earn lower than the rates being considered by your consortium of local governments. Minimum wage as a locally decided issue is a bad idea that will have unintended consequences. Market economics combined with state and federal minimums is a better way to proceed.
B51	Possibility of not being able to stay in business.
B52	Wages will be too high for PT workers and school age workers for me to employ. I will not be able to give raises to employees who earn them without raising prices. My sales force will be smaller. My personal work day will be longer and I may have to change hours of operation or business model to downsize.
B53	Margins are very thin for business's that utilize minimum wage employees. The only way to recover that is to staff less people and/or raise prices. The only net gain in my, fast food, industry, is more pocket money for HS kids.
B54	There will be a ripple effect eventually raising the wages of all my employees regardless of how high their wages currently are. For every dollar wages increase the rates that I charge will need to increase approximately \$3. That will put us at a disadvantage compared with companies that we compete with that aren't headquartered in one of the effected areas. I will consider moving my office.
B55	Disastrous. We will need to raise Food prices and service will go down.
B56	There is only a negative impact of raising minimum wage. We are already seeing this in Denver not to mention what is happening in CA. Businesses are raising prices, cutting jobs and moving to other more business friendly locations. Roughly a third of retail space on South Public Rd is currently vacant. I cannot see how this initiative will bring more retail businesses and jobs to our community. As for the restaurant industry, this will simply create a larger disparity between front of house and back of house employees. Additionally, we will all soon be paying \$30 for a hamburger if this initiative continues.
B57	Increased costs in a razor thin and depleted market. We're already at the brink.
B58	Increasing minimum wage will put my small business at risk of closing. When small businesses like us struggle to survive, the community will have less option for their healthcare, and will overall experience longer wait time, more expensive care, and lower quality of care.
B59	Since we are on the border of another county, it will be difficult to compete with competition. If we increase the min. wage, we will get wage compression. Everyone

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

	from employees getting more than min. wage will want increases, which includes assistant managers to GM's. The city will also lose new business opportunities. Business operators will look to open in other communities that are following state minimum wage guidelines.
B60	Higher payroll costs, lay offs, prices of all purchases and services will need to be increased.
B61	I can't raise my rates on my Clients at this time. I'm already making less than I was in 2019. In fact many of my clients are cutting budgets back by 30-45% and asking for discounts for the 2024/2025 calendar year and depending on how the economy goes over the next 12 months that might continue into 2026.
B62	None
B63	Places like restaurants will have to raise their prices, but I'm okay with that.
B64	None.
B65	There wouldn't be a negative impact to me, my business, or the community. I believe that businesses need to account for the true costs of doing business in order to be sustainable and successful.
B66	I'm a solo person business. It will affect the people I do business with. My friends in business can not navigate this and stay afloat
B67	This is Economics 101, if wages rise so will the cost of goods sold as customers will now have more \$ to spend, so this will be a never ending cycle of wage increases. cost/rent increases, then wage increases again. Minimum Wage isn't meant to be a livable wage to raise a family on, it's meant as a stepping stone to learn skills for those entering the workforce. This isn't an issue that can be legislated away. This will drive some business out of business and force innovation where people will be replaced by machines and actually cut down workable hours for employees as employers will not be willing to keep them on overtime to pay that wage. It will also result in those costs being passed onto the consumer, which will make everything more expensive and cool demand for products and services, reducing business volume and the taxes they generate for their municipalities, which introduces another vicious cycle of potential tax increases which increases costs and demand again. Government needs to let businesses run themselves, the more they insert themselves with regulations the more harm and inefficiencies they cause.
B68	Loss of small business. Increase of food costs. Automation at the larger businesses. Less sales tax revenues causing a downward spiral.
B69	put small businesses out of business
B70	As an independently run summer camp, our largest expense is staff wages. We pride ourselves on paying well above the industry standard, however we face competition from other child care programs, nonprofits, etc. and are not able to raise our prices beyond a certain point. Raising the minimum wage puts pressure

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

	on companies such as ours that employ young people on a seasonal basis. We want to be able to provide a great first job experience for our primarily young staff just starting in the professional world. This minimum wage increase makes it increasingly difficult to run great programming at an affordable price for local families.
B71	Everything.
B72	Businesses also need to keep up with inflation costs. If the minimum wage keeps increasing, we will not be able to provide incentive for our employees to continue growing in our company because we won't be able to offer them more pay. With how expensive it is to run a small business, we will have to continue increasing our prices and the general public won't be able to afford to go out and spend money.
B73	I must keep raising prices, but I have only done it lightly for fear of losing customers. These increases are negatively affecting small local businesses. When is too much that I just close? We are getting close.
B74	My business will close. 6 people will lose their jobs. The City of Lafayette and Boulder county will lose sales tax revenue. By raising the minimum wage you ensure that the City of Lafayette and Boulder County are big box stores only.
B75	We already pay above minimum wage. Market dictates what you have to pay in order to attract an employee. Setting higher minimum wage creates many issues with other employees that have more experience, training and degrees. You have to pay them more. All these costs are then passed off to the customer with higher tuition fees in our case of running a daycare. This only makes daycare more unaffordable for some people. The positive affects of raising minimum are short lived as inflation will eat up any additional purchasing power the lower wage earner realized with the raise.
B76	Those of us that are here are lucky to still be in business after COVID. We are the mom and pop shops that survived. Wage increases directly affect small businesses, that are struggling to get back to pre-COVID levels. We work alongside our employees and no longer take a wage and the business is still not back to pre-COVID revenue. If someone can make \$20 an hour working at McDonald's what does the small business owner need to pay someone to make, serve a meal and provide customer service? Who pays for additional minimum wage? It is a silent tax on the public. The public pays for the unemployment of the people that are let go. The public pays for the increased prices for the goods. The lower and middle class are being shut out. People can't afford to go to McDonald's, let alone a sit-down restaurant. We're doing everything we can to increase revenue, but the economy is working against us. Closing small businesses makes way for corporations and big conglomerates to expand. I'm sure many of us have already eaten at fast food restaurants where no one takes your order, you use a kiosk. Eventually the franchise owners will no longer be able to stay in business and the corporations will have IA cooking the food, as they already do in many other places. In California many small businesses are no longer able to make their SBA loan payments. So those defaults are falling on the taxpayer. Another silent tax. One

#4 (Business) – What do you think the negative impacts of increasing the minimum wage will be for you, your business, and your community?

	<p>of the most critical levers we can use as business owners is to increase our prices, but I can't charge \$22 for a cocktail in Lafayette. So, I need to find ways to drive down costs. How are cities, especially those with low-income areas, going to attract new business when rents are rapidly increasing due to property tax increases? Those increases don't fall to the owner of the property, those increases are passed along to the business that rents the spaces. How many vacant spaces are available in Lafayette, let alone nearby cities? You only need to read about the current situation in California to see the effects of such policies and how detrimental they are to small businesses. According to Robert Irvine, he was quoted as saying, "we're going to lose about 20-plus percent of our small, mom-and-pop business because what California has actually done is going to enable other states to do the same thing." As I'm sure you've read, 95A closed. How many employees are now out of a job? The obvious choice seems to be to cut labor or reduce staff size. But in our business, that's the last thing we want to do, as our employees are our greatest asset. What we want to do is grow our business so that we have more jobs to offer those living in our community. But in order to grow and employee more people, the rising costs of everything must stop. That time will come, but it's not in this economy.</p>
B77*	<p>Some people think that there is a direct correlation between an increase in the minimum salary and an increase in the price of goods and services. But that can be solved by means of local initiatives that aim at diversifying the economy, strengthening local businesses, promoting economic incentives for small and micro businesses, etc.</p>

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

C1	Everyone deserves dignity and that includes through their work
C2	Cost of living is high,the minimum wage is currently too low.
C3	I think they should consider most strongly the impact on housing costs or ability to attain housing in Boulder County. I cannot afford housing in Boulder County, even as a hardworking student, working two jobs. I think housing is a serious crisis in Boulder County and there needs to be a regional approach and effort to bring costs down.
C4	understand needs of poor citizens
C5	The pool of employment possibilities for younger workers and college students will dry up. We need more opportunities for young people to get employed and learn new skills and what it takes to maintain a job.
C6	Boulder County is expensive but our children have made their life here, they have friends, school and activities that make it hard for a parent to move out of Boulder County. We end up staying and living check to check, just so that our children have

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

	the opportunity to be with the community they grow up with. A raise in the minimum wage would allow us parents to keep our children where they are and afford a decent living.
C7	N/a
C8	I think it's a great initiative and while I know there will be pushback from local companies I think this will do way more help in the long term. People can't afford to work and live in our county and that needs to change.
C9	Everyone working a full-time job should be able to earn a fair wage that allows them to live where they work without long commutes and barely surviving.
C10	no
C11	There are opportunities for people to make a hire wage, if they are willing to switch companies. Don't force a company to pay more
C12	The happiness and growth of a community depends on the personal and financial security of the family. When the family can only stand back and watch the secure live and enjoy each day, it causes a depression that is felt by everyone. A resentment that their children are less than. We can lift our community.
C13	It's always worth asking these two questions: what is the core problem we're trying to address? Do we have any better tools for addressing it? Also, thank you very much for your hard work on behalf of the community.
C14	That "a rising tide lifts all boats" and we have an unhealthy and unconscionable wealth gap in this country
C15	During the pandemic and supply chain shortages forced prices up on many essential commodities but now that those shortage issues have been resolved the prices have remained high. This Smacks of price gouging.
C16	Consider how many people now live below the minimum needed to live in Boulder County, especially families with children.
C17	Please consider impacts to the school district in terms of hourly employees. We don't want minimum wage increases to attract people away from working for the district. A plan to help BVSD match minimum wage
C18	N/A
C19	Thank you
C20	Please don't.
C21	Don't do it
C22	Minimum wage is not the solution to the problem our area is encountering. Affordable housing, groceries and transportation need to be made the focus and how to keep average families in the community.

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

C23	ability to make right decision based on real data.
C24	Yes, all people in our community deserve to live a comfortable life working one job instead of 2 or 3. They can spend more time with their kids helping them through life's journey.
C25	GET THE DATA FIRST on what the affects will be! This will help no one!
C26*	Rents in this county are very high. I work and live here.
C27*	The cost of living in these cities, the ones that are considering an increase in the minimum salary, is very high, above all, rents, electricity, and water. We barely earn the necessary to survive day by day. There's no money left for anything else, because we, and we are many, work on jobs where we are paid the minimum, without medical or vacation benefits. It should be taken into account that the Latino community has increased in these cities, and we are the ones who work on all the poorly paid and physically demanding jobs. Thank you for taking a look at our situation of survival. I hope an increase in the minimum salary is achieved. It is very important to increase it because we are starving.
C28*	It is very important to increase salaries, because we are starving.
B1	get government out of wage discussions. not the purview of government. it is an issue between employed and employer.
B2	Please consider the negative impact to the smaller business that are barely making it because we are trying to keep our services at a price that are affordable in a day where it is very costly (especially property and sales taxes) are high in Lafayette! Thank you!
B3	Because we share tips with the kitchen, per federal mandate, we must pay the full minimum wage in our local community and are not allowed to offset any of that with tip income. Our restaurant workers are making more money than so many professionals in our community - is that the career path you want to incentivize? Should some of the best paying jobs in the community be at restaurants??? It used to be that we were the training ground for our young workforce - we provide the foundation that helps every employer after. But now they don't want to leave because they are making \$30-\$40/hr after a few years. I love our employees. But is their work more valuable than nurses and teachers and EMTs and electricians and plumbers and and and?
B4	Our housing problem and our workforce shortages will improve if we pay people more.
B5	A minimum wage should be standard for those that are starting out with out skill or experience. Employers should paying employees at that skill level, only using min wage as a starting point. No reason for a person to leave a job, then to make less at the next because a min wage standard that employers use to profit heavily off of. Fix Reagan-omics! Bring back corporate taxes and the incentives to invest in the company and its employees to decrease tax burden.

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

B6	These policies end up hurting small local business far more than the large companies who are well equipped to deal with policies like this. I ask that you consider an exception for smaller employers and for part time and inexperienced workers (ie. high school students, those with intellectual disabilities and others). I would be heart broken if our business could not continue to provide those folks with opportunities to work for us but if the most radical of these proposals is implemented we will be forced to do this.
B7	Consider what an actual living wage in this area is. People should haven't to work more than 40 hours per week or multiple jobs to just barely make ends meet.
B8	Please be very careful and mindful about how this will affect inflation, local job loss, local business having to close due to expense wage pressures in an already extremely oversaturated available job market. The cost of training and in return the turnover for new employees would be highly detrimental too any businesses success in my opinion.
B9	Don't do it, let the market and businesses determine the wage.
B10	Be smart. \$20+ minimum wages will drive small businesses out of business. It simply will become too expensive to operate and be profitable. Business owners will move to different counties out of necessity. I am a register democrat, but if this goes through, I will change my affiliation as democrats in Boulder county continue to move in a socialist direction. It's getting out of control.
B11	As a non-profit, we are fully supportive of raising the minimum wage. Our hardworking community members need this. they have been so hard hit by the rising cost of housing and food.
B12	Don't bother
B13	Does Boulder County still value locally-produced food? If so, please consider that increasing minimum wage will put many local farms out of business.
B14	As an elderly full time worker, my entire adult life, I feel there are perks to working your way up the ladder of wages. Cost of living tho makes it difficult to work a non skilled job and live...I get it. Get rid of the damn destructive politicians driving costs up!!
B15	PLEASE Consider the voices from the Small Business in your communities. I understand this concept is for the "Workers" but if Small Business cannot afford to be in business due to high taxes, expenses, and very high minimum wage, then there will be no businesses in the area to employ people in the community.
B16	Stay out of it. Let the free market determine wages.
B17	Increasing minimum wage doesnt make business owners just have to pay their lower wage employees more, it makes it so we have to pay everyone more. And just makes prices go up to be able to afford it. I understand large corporations are full of greed and can afford to pay their employees more and still be profitable. But Small Businesses CANNOT absorb that. This will cripple our economy and lead to a very dark future.

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

B18	dumb idea, really stupid, feel good policy
B19	Stop getting involved in private business or we leave Boulder. You raise our property taxes beyond reach, the governor takes away our farming tools, you make us pay benefits to employees and raise their wages, but don't subsidize the price of the hundreds of thousands of pounds of certified organic farm produce we offer to off set the lack of an increase in price of commodities that would be needed to pay for all these items. An increase means we rely less on people, rely more on machines and increase unemployment.
B20	There are too many things I would like them to consider to list in this questionnaire. I would recommend they attend a small business seminar on this topic to fully get a feel for how distressing this is to the local small business owner.
B21	Just think about the small businesses that will be negatively affected. Our community is built on small business and the business is there will only be hurt negatively either when it comes to food, quality or food service because we will have to drastically cut staff. Small businesses will suffer immensely.
B22	You are only fueling more inflation. Please let the market control the wage levels and not force small business out of business.
B23	I don't want to sound pessimistic, but this situation might lead to our business relocating from the region. We're already struggling with consistent annual increases in various expenses like labor and cost of goods across all our locations. Specifically, our Boulder County branch has higher sales but isn't profitable on its own. It survives solely due to the profits generated by our other locations. I suggest you consider a 2-3 year moratorium on discussing this issue to give our business costs a chance to stabilize and balance out.
B24	Minimum wage should be a starting wage for those entering the job market. Companies that hire employees if not require those they hire to have experience and years in the field should be regulated to pay those at a rate in accordance with their experience.
B25	Please leave this to the local economy and not mandate changes. It will only hurt small businesses
B26	increasing minimum wage does nothing if you don't regulate rents. as we have seen when wages go up prices of food, gas and rents also go up so nothing actually changes, you just push small businesses to close, which have been the staple in Lafayette for more than 25 years and you allow more national brands/restaurant chains to come in and give them tax incentives and tax breaks!!!!
B27	Considering how deliveries of retail items from outside Lafayette (& outside Bldr County, outside Colorado, outside the US) affect local brick & mortar shops, please consider a sort of delivery fee (esp. for Amazon deliveries!) This might offset the so-called "affordability" of products and let local shops be able to compete with the megastores?
B28	There are so many issues that come together to make our county unaffordable but

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

B29	Greatly concerning when local government tells the business community what is best for their business and employees. Is its society's responsibility for choices people make or lack of desire to build skills? If local officials feel compelled. Why not provide more programs to help people gain more skills that make them more valuable in the workplace? A proverb does apply. Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.
B30	Lower taxes, lower tax fees on "late" tax returns, regulations on big businesses
B31	Maybe elected officials could look at the property taxes and pay out the difference they would like to take and give it to employees they wish.
B32	What are other avenues that you can take to solve this problem? If you're going to raise minimum wage, how are you going to save small businesses? Can you create effective affordable housing, or create a local "food stamp" style program for people making minimum wage.
B33	Not all local businesses have huge margins. We'd most likely have to close our doors with a rise to the minimum wage. Also, we are finding people who love working for us at their current pay rates,
B34	Local officials should understand cause and effect, raising minimum wages only increase costs overall for all players. No one wins. A person making a hirer minimum wage will experience high costs overall (as a result of increasing the minimum wage) and end the end will be no better off than before. The result is inflation for all.
B35	Increasing the minimum wage makes sense for a lot of reasons, but doing it too quickly could greatly hurt small businesses
B36	This is bad economics. It does not work. There is also no reason for any teenager to earn \$18+ dollars an hour. This is never necessary. General economics say that if someone wants to dig themselves out of their current conditions, they put in the work to get themselves there. Have people take responsibility for themselves. Stop pandering and trying to coddle and parent other adults. These businesses operate in a capitalistic society where demand education and skills drive asking price for workers. They don't need you artificially inflating their costs to steal from them.
B37	By the time the unintended negative impacts of a \$25/hr minimum wage become apparent it will be too late to repair the damage. We often keep workers who are not very productive employed with hopes they will improve or that we can find a place on the farm where they are more successful. At \$17 an hour they can be much less productive and still be valuable at \$25 they better be an incredibly good worker for us to be able to keep them Right now we struggle to pay managers enough more than a worker with less responsibility. If a new worker with no experience is paid \$25 how much do we need to pay the managers? If we want to continue farming it would probably mean scale back to just what we can do ourselves and not have any workers. There is a need for low skilled work to be performed. Someone has to load a dishwasher and someone has to pick tomatoes. The minimum wage does not make it so we value these jobs more but

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

	effectively means that anyone who can not do \$25 per hour worth of work is not welcome in Boulder.
B38	I believe a moderate wage increase is due but we don't need to be the highest in the state either. It's a tricky question and I wish you the best!
B39	N/A
B40	Please consider all sizes of businesses. Many family owned, small business cannot compete with the bigger city's minimum wage, but all of us are very fair in paying the necessary wages for our employees. Thank you for letting us share our thoughts. We appreciate your service.
B41	Farming continues to become more and more expensive and increasingly more challenging with restrictions placed on hand/manual tools we can use, the elimination of small motorized tools that save on manual labor, a shrinking pool of local and migrant farm laborers, exponentially increasing property taxes, rising costs of supplies and commercial regulations that are applied as a one-size-fits-all to small farming operations. Small family farms make up a large portion of our local food system and generate revenue for local communities within our state. Increasing minimum wage for farm employees, some of whom are just entering the workforce for the first time with their first job, will become too large a burden for farms to bear. Many small farmers already forfeit a paycheck for themselves in order to pay their staff wages. In fact, there are Colorado farmers who feed their communities but also receive supplemental food benefits (SNAP/WIC etc.) to feed their own families. Others have to keep a full-time job to cover their bills and supplement the rising costs of running a farm. As costs increase, the price of food will have to increase and then the boost in minimum wage will prove ineffectual.
B42	We are looking into paying people a "livable wage" while at the same time raising the cost of living across the board in Lafayette and UBC. Water rates are going up, property taxes are going up, inflation is going up. Lets stop the problem, not try to fix a problem that was self inflicted and is only going to get worse. Raising the minimum wage in Lafayette will se most that money go outside of the city as even with an increase to wages most my associates and even many local business owners cannot afford to live here. The increase in wages will go home with them to their local community/ county.
B43	I know it sounds kind and compassionate to say everyone deserves an liveable wage. But what is kinder still is to help people get skills that give them advantage in the market. Expensive college degrees that provide no benefit in the market should not be pursued with the expectation that the market is just going to compensate them anyway. It would be far more compassionate to offer training programs in skills that the market is looking for....and offer that to the community.
B44	All businesses are not the same and the wage should be paid on experience and skills, not a mandatory requirement. You raise the minimum and then all employees must be increased which will impact all small businesses.

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

B45	There are many instances in our community like paid internships and seasonal employment for high school and college youth that will be negatively impacted by a regional minimum wage. These opportunities allow for career development and often serve important community needs like summer camp licensed childcare, etc.
B46	With taxes and rents through the roof for business's it would be more difficult to remain in business if minimum wages get too high.
B47	Small businesses will be very much impacted by too high of an increase in minimum wage. It will Limit our buying power, our ability to grow and expand, and to invest in our communities with sponsorships and scholarships. I think you will find that we will hire fewer workers.
B48	Fix housing and sales tax- this just penalizes small businesses.
B49	Minimum wage was never intended to be a "living wage". It was intended to be a starter job for employees to learn some basic skills and work ethic and move on to better objectives. Let the market determine wages.
B50	Minimum wage is not a local issue. It should be controlled at the state or national level. When it is increased, it should be gradual. To go 10 + years with out an increase and then raise it \$5 is counter productive. Everyone just raises their prices to compensate and the community expects it. The people that the effort is trying to help the most end up getting little or no benefit or at best a short lived, temporary benefit.
B51	Dont do it to Lafayette. Boulder maybe could support but Lafayette wont. Business will move to areas with lower rates. This would be disastrous.
B52	It has been proven that raising minimum wage simply increases the cost of everything. This ripple effect compounds inflation and will have no positive impact of quality of life. It is inconceivable that increasing labor costs will have no impact on general inflation and in fact, we have seen this in areas that have increased minimum wage.
B53	Industry specific with rules/guidelines.
B54	Increasing minimum wage is not an answer to current high living cost of the Front Range area.
B55	Leave it up to the state. If an employee comes on board and shows good work ethics, then they will be rewarded. Move quickly past minimum wage and make more money. This should be up to the business owner.
B56	Please keep it reasonable. Things need to change, however as a small business owner there is only so much I can do before I start to operate in the red.
B57	Being a small business is no excuse to not pay your team a living wage, we all should be doing that.
B58	There is a high cost of doing nothing.

#5 – Is there anything else you would like for local elected officials to consider as they make a decision on a local minimum wage?

B59	Are you qualified to make this decision? Have you been a small business owner? Do you see all the small business closing in our area? This should no be decided by a few people. Bring it to a vote.
B60	Stop over-regulating business and let market forces drive pricing and minimum wage. Less government interference is better when it comes to business, there are numerous other concerns that government should be spending its time on, not social engineering wage fixing.
B61	Watch California. Downward spiral of tax revenues and closing small business. 95A Bistro is just the beginning.
B62	this is not your job.
B63	Cost of living going up, inflation, insane labor costs for business owners, employees not taking job seriously for the amount of pay they are getting.
B64	Not on tipped minimum wage. Please.
B65	I would like you to please consider the little person. The county and town is doing a disservice to all small business owners and it is disappointing to be a part of this community. So much so that business are leaving to move east of I-25 because Boulder county is so unhabitable for small businesses.
B66	Get rid of minimum wage requirements all you're doing is driving costs and contributing to the inflation problem. There are certain jobs that pay less for a reason. They weren't meant to be career positions. Why should someone with only a high school degree or less be paid as much as someone who put in the time to train and or go to college?
B67	How many businesses are just hanging on and how many might close or reduce staff.
B77*	It is important to have an integral approach to economic wellbeing and health. It should be guaranteed that the really essential workers (as proved by the pandemic) receive a fair remuneration. Currently, workers who perform essential tasks keep being the ones that are poorly paid. It is important to have balance and redistribution with a focus on equity and environmental "sustentabilidad" and "sostenibilidad" (two words that usually translate into English as "sustainability", but that in Spanish mean two different things.)

In addition to the online questionnaire and in-person engagement sessions, the City has received various forms of written feedback for City Council's consideration. They are attached and include emails directly to staff, Contact Us form submittals, and written letters.

From: noreply@civicplus.com <noreply@civicplus.com>

Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2024 11:27 AM

Subject: Online Form Submission #45411 for Contact City Council or Individual Council Members

Contact City Council or Individual Council Members

Complete the form below to email your questions or comments.

Correspondence shared with City Council or staff may be subject to open records requests.

First Name	Helene
Last Name	Snyder
Zip Code	80026
Email Address	helene@dekispirits.com
Phone Number	13033453200
Whom would you like to contact?	All City Councilors

Please leave your comments or questions below.

This is in response to the minimum wage increase questionnaire. Those of us that are here are lucky to still be in business after COVID. We are the mom and pop shops that survived. Wage increases directly affect small businesses, that are struggling to get back to pre-COVID levels. We work alongside our employees and no longer take a wage and we're still not back to pre-COVID revenue.

If someone can make \$20 an hour working at McDonald's what does the small business owner need to pay someone to make, serve a meal and provide customer service?

Who pays for additional minimum wage? It is a silent tax on the public. The public pays for the unemployment of the people that are let go. The public pays for the increased prices for the goods. The lower and middles class are being shut out. People can't afford to go to McDonald's, let alone a sit-down restaurant. We're doing everything we can to increase revenue, but the economy is working against us. Closing small businesses makes way for corporations and big conglomerates to expand. I'm sure many of us have already been to fast food restaurants where no one takes your order, you use a kiosk. Eventually the franchise owners will no longer be able to stay in business and the corporations will have IA cooking the food, as they already do in many other places. In California many small businesses are no longer able to make their

SBA loan payments. So those defaults are falling on the taxpayer. Another silent tax.

One of the most critical levers we can use as business owners is to increase our prices, but I can't charge \$22 for a cocktail in Lafayette. So, I need to find ways to drive down costs.

How are cities, especially those with low-income areas, going to attract new business when rents are rapidly increasing due to property tax increases? Those increases don't fall to the owner of the property, those increases are passed along to the business that rents the spaces. How many vacant spaces are available in Lafayette, let alone nearby cities?

You only need to read about the current situation in California to see the effects of such policies and how detrimental they are to small businesses. According to Robert Irvine, he was quoted as saying, "we're going to lose about 20-plus percent of our small, mom-and-pop business because what California has actually done is going to enable other states to do the same thing." As I'm sure you know, 95A closed.

The obvious choice seems to be to cut labor or reduce staff size. But in our business, that's the last thing we want to do, as our employees are our greatest asset. What we want to do is grow our business so that we have more jobs to offer those living in our community. But in order to grow and employ more people, the rising costs of everything must stop. That time will come, but not in this economy. Thank you

File upload

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Use the "SUBMIT" button below to send your email. Thank you!

From: admissions@bloommontessori.com <admissions@bloommontessori.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 9:44 AM

Subject: Effects of Increasing Minimum Wage on Boulder County Child Care Facilities and Families

I am an owner of Bloom Montessori, a licensed child care facility that has operated in Longmont since 2009. My small business has survived in an incredibly challenging environment- a 100 year flood, a global pandemic, the resulting labor shortages and supply shocks (the child care industry is suffering from a workforce crisis), the 42% increase in property taxes that resulted from the repeal of the Gallagher Amendment, and widespread inflation but it would not likely survive the proposed increase in minimum wage.

Parents whose children attend our facility are largely residents of the County, 2 parent working households, and their children are in care 8-5:30, or 57 ½ hours a week. The parents pay \$7/hour for this care, which is an incredibly low hourly rate, but likely one of the largest household expenses for the family.

More than ½ our business expenses, 65%, are labor. Labor is our business expense (teaching young children is labor intensive) and these costs are passed on directly to working families. Child care facilities operate on extremely small margins (an industry average is 3%), margins that have gotten even smaller due to increased property taxes and inflation.

Under the proposal, over the next 6 years, wages would have to increase by a minimum of 62.75% (and more if inflation continues and there is no property tax relief). This means that we would have to raise the amount of tuition that we charge families by a similar amount. And, of course 62% is the basal number—if someone can make \$25 an hour at Starbucks, an employee whose job (under current CDHS Regulations) requires three background checks, an occupational physical, qualifications like 2 early childhood college courses or equivalent and 1 year of experience, 20 hours of first aid and emergency training, stressful emotional labor, and job duties which include changing diapers and assisting with toileting, careful supervision and instruction of children, working with children with disabilities and children with minor illnesses, to serve as a “floater” (changing diapers), an assistant, or a staff aide would expect to make more... and the teacher would expect to make a lot more. It would exacerbate the workforce shortage that already exists in the industry and has been closing classrooms and programs. The State estimates that 10% of child care workers left the industry in the last 2 years.

This change, and in particular, the fact that this minimum wage increase would only affect businesses located in Boulder County, would lead to many unintended effects:

- Closure of many child care facilities. There have already been numerous closures in the County this year (Bright Horizons in Longmont is closing at the end of the year- that’s 119 fewer child care slots for next year- because the corporation determined it was not profitable, Countryside Montessori, Sunshine House, Smiling Faces).
- Child care is not a free market. State mandated ratios and group sizes would not take into account the County’s change in minimum wage:

In my facility, I charge \$7/child/hour for care:

A preschool aged classroom has a maximum group size of 20 students; meaning, the most revenue my classroom can generate at my current rates is \$140/hour and State regulations require 2 teachers (a 1:10 ratio- and this is considered poor quality and a high ratio). Under these changes, at least (assuming I paid the lowest minimum wage) \$50/hour would go to fixed labor expenses.

A toddler classroom has a maximum group size of 14 students; meaning, the most revenue my classroom can generate at my current rates is \$98/hour and State regulations still require 2 teachers (a 1:7 ratio- and this is still considered poor quality). Under these changes, the most this classroom would make is \$98/hour and \$50/hour would be fixed labor costs.

An infant classroom has a maximum group size of 10 students; meaning, the most revenue my classroom can generate at the current rates is \$70/hour and State regulations still require 2 teachers (a 1:5 ratio- which is considered very poor quality). Under these changes, the most this classroom would make is \$70/hour and \$50/hour would be fixed labor costs.

It is self apparent that infant/toddler programs would be the hardest hit by these regulations, and the County would likely experience a reduction in infant toddler providers and slots (there already exists a shortage in the State and the County and several providers, like Guidepost Montessori, were forced to close infant toddler classrooms this year). This would result in fewer mothers being able to enter the workforce and an increase in unlicensed/unregulated child care.

- High quality child care (places with lower class sizes and lower ratios- meaning less tuition dollars per teacher salary), infant/toddler care (there are already shortages of this), because of their low ratios (1 teacher to 3-4 infants), and programs for children with disabilities (because of the low ratios required) will be the hardest hit. Already, Imagine and many organizations for the disabled have had to suspend services because of labor shortages and the labor expenses required to operate programming.

- Increasing minimum wage will cause child care facilities to increase ratios and class sizes, decreasing structural quality, because they will need more students, and more tuition dollars, to pay each teacher.
- Increased cost of child care for working families. While they might be earning more in wages, facilities will have to raise rates to offset the increased labor expenses (especially since classroom sizes are capped by the State).
- Movement of businesses (especially labor intensive businesses, like child care and construction) out of the County into nearby Broomfield and Weld County.
- It will result in reduced CCAP, Colorado Child Care Assistance placements in the County, for the poorest families for two reasons: 1) Because the State's payments will not keep pace with these minimum wage increases which are unique to Boulder County and do not apply to the rest of the state; and 2) CCAP rates are based on a "tiered reimbursement system," in which facilities get paid a slightly higher rate for increasing quality by reducing group sizes and ratios. Boulder County providers will need to maximize group sizes to remain solvent, so their CCAP reimbursement rates will decline because they will be considered to be of "lower quality," in a lower quality tier. There already exists such a shortage of providers that the State is offering \$2,000 incentives. Boulder County providers would be uniquely disadvantaged in this system.
- Similarly, it will result in reduced UPK, Universal Preschool, placements in the County for the same reasons- because the State's payments will not keep pace with the minimum wage increases which are unique to Boulder County and do not apply to the rest of the state; and because they employ the same tiered reimbursement system. Boulder County providers would be uniquely disadvantaged in this system.
- Public schools would have more expensive labor costs. They would have to increase wages for the people that staff before and after school programs (Community Schools) and support services (custodians, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers). If these individuals wages increase 62%, teachers will also expect similar wage increases. This will ultimately have to lead to increased property taxes, especially since the wage increases will be unique to Boulder County.
- Despite the inflation that has been rampant since 2020, we have not felt like we could raise our tuition as parents are already stressed over costs. If we were to add standard 3% increases we will have to raise our tuition almost 60% over the next 6 years in order to stay in business
- General inflation in the County.

What you are contemplating is a perfect storm of fatal challenges for small businesses (increased property taxes, increased supply costs/inflation, and now increased labor costs)- and it will only apply to businesses in the County (parents can drive to Erie, Broomfield or Frederick and pay less). This will harm the competitiveness of Boulder County businesses, reduce access to child care in the county, dramatically increase rates for working families, increase the number of children in unlicensed/unregulated care, and reduce maternal workforce participation. Boulder county will become like Telluride or Vail, no one who provides services to the residents will be able to afford to live here and they will have to commute to provide services for the rich. You will be making this a County where people will want to work, but where families cannot afford to shop, live, or operate a business due to the added costs (which will be significantly lower one county away).

I encourage you to employ an agency (Augenblick) to perform cost modelling on the effects this would have for the child care sector so that you can have an informed understanding before voting, to reject this proposal, and to support reduced property taxes for child care facilities.

Abigail & Joshua Miller

From: Dawn Alexander <dawn@coloradoecea.org>

Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 1:10 PM

Subject: Re: Effects of Increasing Minimum Wage on Boulder County Child Care Facilities and Families

Hi Abigail,

ECEA provided in person public comment today to oppose the minimum wage increases (that will apply pressure to the remainder of the workforces wages). We encourage you to do some letters to the editor over the next couple of months. We will be pushing out details about those opportunities as the time approaches!

Thank you,

Dawn Alexander
Executive Director

From: admissions@bloommontessori.com <admissions@bloommontessori.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 1:52 PM

To: 'Dawn Alexander' <dawn@coloradoecea.org>

Cc: aulabaughs@bouldercolorado.gov; Debbie Wilmot <Debbie.Wilmot@lafayetteco.gov>; Sandra.Seader@longmontcolorado.gov; sfox@louisvilleco.gov; grae@erieco.gov; 'Crawford, Annette' <acrawford@bouldercounty.org>; 'Jennifer Philbrook' <jphilbrook@eccbouldercounty.org>; staff@longmontchamber.org; jsouthmiller@gmail.com; sandra.seader@longmontcolorado.gov; jennifer.diaz-leon@longmontcolorado.gov

Subject: RE: Effects of Increasing Minimum Wage on Boulder County Child Care Facilities and Families

Thank you Dawn,

Two economists, Jessica H. Brown at the University of South Carolina and Chris M. Herbst at Arizona State University, recently composed a working paper studying how child care providers responded to increases in the minimum wage.

Their empirical findings were that :

- Higher labor costs resulted in providers raising rates (as expected in an industry where labor costs are a significant expense): Each 10% increase in the minimum wage resulted in a 4-8% increase in childcare rates (reduced affordability).
- Center's increased group sizes and ratios (lowered their structural quality). This would disproportionately effect infants, students with disabilities, and students most at risk for poor outcomes.
- Center's accepted 12.2% fewer subsidized children (CCAP), because they could not afford to accept as many students at sub-market rates.
- It resulted in layoffs, decreased slots, and program closures (reduced access to care).
- Parent satisfaction (measured by Yelp ratings) decreased .3 points (on a 5 point scale) for every 10% increase in wages (suggesting reduced satisfaction with the change in pricing).
- The study did not measure whether access/affordability to care for specific age groups (infants, toddler) was disproportionately affected (but it seems obvious, due to lower ratios) that this would be the case.

It reduced access, affordability, closed programs, and disproportionately decreased access for low income families, but it did improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover in the facilities that remained solvent.

Brown, Jessica and Herbst, Chris M., Minimum Wage, Worker Quality, and Consumer Well-Being: Evidence from the Child Care Market. IZA Discussion Paper No. 16257

[ECEA Of Colorado \(coloradoecea.org\)](https://coloradoecea.org)

303-860-7174

From: Helene Snyder <helene@dekispirits.com>

Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 6:09 PM

Subject: Re: Minimum Wage Survey Question

Hi Debbie,

I have a couple questions regarding the minimum wage survey.

On the first page of the survey there's a question regarding our wages. We don't collect any wages or tips from our business. How do we answer the question without skewing the results?

4. What is your hourly wage before taxes, deductions and tips? (Select the category that best reflects your current wage, if you have more than one job select the wage for one job, identify the wage for your second job in question 5.) *

- ☐ Less than \$14.42/hour
- ☐ \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour
- ☐ \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour
- ☐ \$20.00 - \$25.00/hour
- ☐ \$25.00 - \$40.00/hour
- ☐ Over \$40.00/hour

On the second page the question below is asked. But yet when reading through the questionnaire, the question as to what employee make per hour when including tips is never asked. Shouldn't that be included when compiling the data?

11. What is the hourly wage for your lowest paid employees before taxes, deductions and tips? (Select the category that best reflects their current wage.) *

- ☐ Less than \$14.42/hour
- ☐ \$14.42 - \$15.69/hour
- ☐ \$15.70 - \$19.99/hour
- ☐ \$20.00 - \$25.00/hour
- ☐ \$25.00 - \$40.00/hour
- ☐ Over \$40.00/hour

It appears the survey is designed to produce a result which underreports the actual wages received by service industry employees.

Thanks
Hélène Snyder
DEKĪ Ltd.
Lafayette, CO 80026

From: Steve Nikkel <wsnikkel@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 4:25 PM

Subject: Minimum Wages

This craziness needs to stop! It is not the county/city's job to raise wages! Let the market drive wages up, it is already happening!
Steve Nikkel



April 11, 2024

To whom it concerns:

Jax is a family and employee owned company that operates two retail stores in the Lafayette Colorado market. We employ seventy people in the local community with a total payroll of nearly 2MM. Mandated increases in the minimum wage far beyond the federal minimum wage will force the failure of these local retail stores. We cannot just pass on the costs by raising prices as it is too easy for people to just go online and order from a company with a distribution center located where only the federal minimum wage applies.

- Minimum wage increases have a compounding impact on a business. It is just not the entry rate that goes up, but it really dominoes across a workforce. Rising entry pay levels will lead to dissatisfaction and employee turnover if wages of more experienced staff aren't adjusted as well.
- Additionally, as the wage compression between entry and senior level employees narrows it disrupts our ability to recognize top performers with pay. It can stifle a businesses ability to provide incentives and a career path.
- Many people think retailers can just raise prices and pass along the costs to consumers. "Brick and mortar" retailers, we call them, face a highly competitive retail market especially from internet competition. That limits how easily we can offset wage expenses by raising prices without driving customers away and to the on-line competition. It is very risky calculation doing so and made tougher with rising costs.
- Retailers operate on narrow profit margins. Typically, most broad product retailers run in the less than 3% range overall. While that is not as narrow as grocery stores, typically at 1%, that narrow of a margin leaves very little room for additional cost pressures and still keep the doors open.
- The options then, for retailers to make ends meet, are to reduce staffing, shorten work hours, cut overtime opportunities, scale back other things benefits, etc.. That directly affects the lower wage worker quality of employment. But it also means they may not have a job. It will directly impact how many entry level employees we can afford to hire. Many of our employees are just beginning their work life and career so that's the employees who will be hit the most.
- Wage hikes don't necessarily improve productivity. Artificial pay hikes actually are shown in studies to disincentivize productivity and take away employers' options for incentivizing the workforce and rewarding productivity.
- One-size-fits-all mandates simply limit business flexibility and hinder business growth.
- Excessive mandates create diminishing economic opportunities for workers.
- Mandated approaches are not equitable and harm customers, communities, and businesses.

Jim Quinlan
President
Jax Mercantile Company

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Increasing the Minimum Wage in Boulder: Policy Brief



To address the urgent community need we are seeing, EFAA requests that our local authorities implement, at a minimum, a 15% increase in the local minimum wage effective January 1, 2024 as well as develop a plan to meet or exceed Denver's minimum wage by 2026.

A growing number of Boulder households are not able to make ends meet

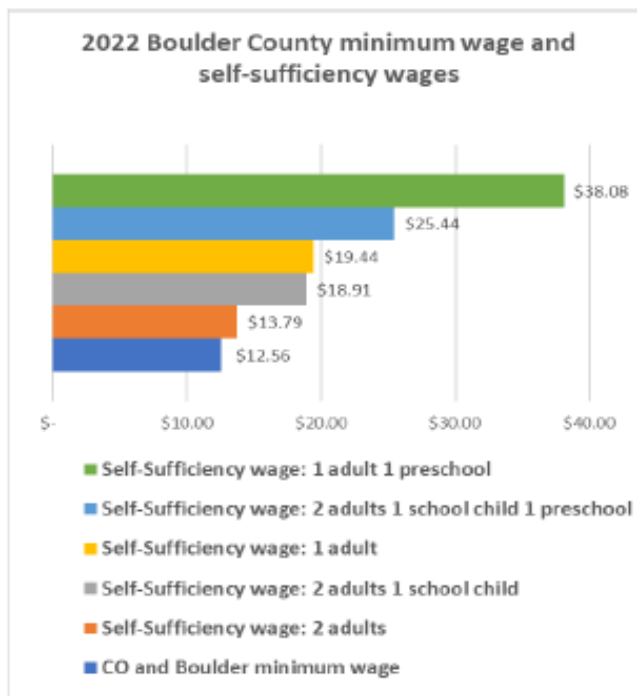
The effects of COVID and inflation are hitting low-income households in Boulder particularly hard. COVID impacts have left many in our community in economic distress emerging from the pandemic. A recent survey of EFAA participants found that over half report current household income lower than pre-COVID levels and almost two-thirds report still dealing with the economic effects of COVID. Inflation across all basic needs, including housing, food, fuel, utilities, and childcare, has made it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. In addition, the recent reduction in Federal support for food, rental assistance and healthcare provided during COVID have further strained lower-income households.

The effects of inflation and the growing gap in affording the basics of life are apparent in the current strains on the safety net. In the last year, we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of households coming to EFAA for support. Last month, 1 in 3 of those households had never needed EFAA's assistance in the past. Weekly EFAA food bank visits are twice the level pre-COVID. The rising costs of rent and utilities have increased housing insecurity, leading to pressures on EFAA for financial assistance to keep people housed and with the lights on. Even with this support, evictions have increased dramatically across Boulder County. The number of school children experiencing homelessness in the Boulder Valley School District has increased to over 800 this school year, from pre-COVID levels in the low 300s. EFAA is having to step in more frequently with emergency hotel stays to provide short-term shelter for families with children who have lost their housing.

The current minimum wage is wholly insufficient to meet basic needs in Boulder. A job is no longer a protection against housing insecurity or a guarantee that basic needs will be met. Income and wages are at the heart of the issue. Wages have not kept pace with inflation, particularly for lower-income workers. A Colorado Center on Law and Policy's report provides estimates of the 'self-sufficiency standard', a measure of how much income families of various sizes and compositions need to make ends meet without public or private assistance. Their 2022 report finds that hourly wages for Boulder County would need to be between \$13.79 and \$38.08 depending on household structure (see graph). The 2022 minimum wage in Boulder County is insufficient for *any* type of household to make ends meet on their own. It is particularly challenging for families with children due to the added cost of childcare.

A significant share of jobs in Boulder County do not provide enough income to make ends meet. In 2022, there were 191,840 jobs in Boulder County. More than 10 percent, or over 20,000 jobs paid less than \$15 per hour. Over one quarter, or more than 48,000 jobs, paid under \$19.05 per hour which is insufficient for single parent households or households with young children.

At EFAA the impacts of this wage structure are clear. A recent income survey of EFAA participants found that 24 percent make less than \$15 per hour and 69 percent under \$20 per hour. Specifically for participants that chose to answer in Spanish, 43 percent reported making less than \$15 and 80 percent less than \$20 per hour, revealing clear racial inequities.

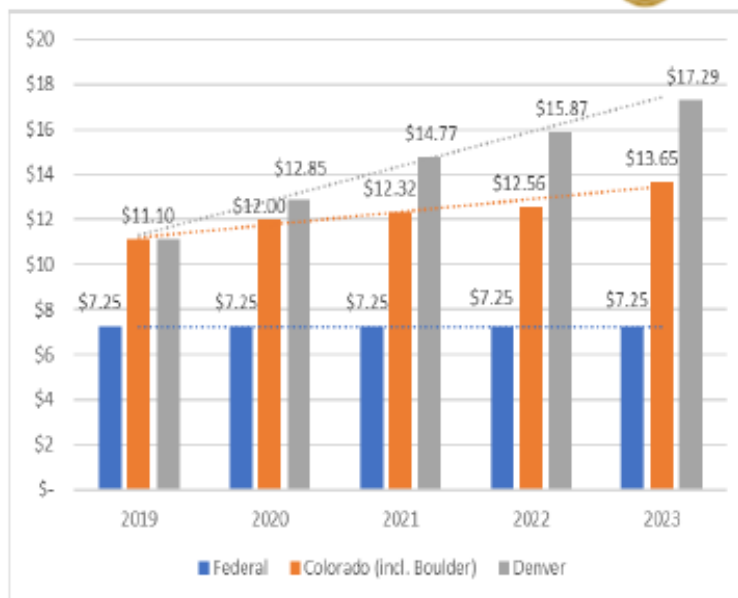


Addressing economic insecurity by raising the minimum wage

Since 2019, Colorado allows local governments to set their own minimum wage higher than the State's, with annual increases limited to up to +\$1.75 per hour or 15 percent, whichever is higher. Since then, the City of Denver has raised its minimum wage, currently at \$17.29 or 27 percent higher than Boulder's current minimum wage (which is still equal to the State minimum wage at \$13.65). Both the Colorado and the Denver minimum wages are automatically adjusted for inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index every first of the year.

A significant segment of the local workforce would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage.

Given the wage levels of jobs in Boulder County in 2022, an initial maximum increase of 15% to \$15.70 per hour would give well over 10,000 workers in Boulder County a raise.¹ The effect for a full-time worker who was at minimum wage would be \$2.05 per hour, or \$4.264 per year, equivalent to almost two months of rent for an average two-bedroom market rate apartment. If Boulder had moved as early as Denver did to raise minimum wage and had a rate equal to Denver's current \$17.29, well over 25,000 local workers would be making a better income. Workers in these lower wage jobs span many types of employment. Food services account for the largest number of lower wage jobs, but over a quarter of all jobs in health care, personal care, maintenance, transportation, and sales.



Increasing the local minimum wage concentrates benefits on lowest paid employees, helping address economic equity. Increasing wages for our most underpaid workers will provide additional income to afford housing, food, transportation, childcare and other basic needs, helping them move towards self-sufficiency. This equity impact would be even high for our Spanish speaking community given that EFAA's survey found that this group is twice as likely to report hourly wages below \$15 than their English-speaking counterparts.

A further misconception about minimum wage workers is they are primarily teenagers working summer or high school jobs. Nationally, only about 10 percent of workers making minimum wage are teenagers. Women are 2/3 of minimum wage workers, 70 percent work in the service industry, the majority do not have a high school degree and are less likely to receive employer-paid benefits.

Broader effects of raising the minimum wage

The common belief that raising minimum wage automatically increases unemployment is unfounded. Potential effects on employment depend on the magnitude and pace of minimum wage increases as well as the industry, the share of labor costs in overall costs, and other factors. Studies' findings have varied over time, across geographies and depending on methodology. Looking locally, a 2021 Colorado Department of Labor and Employment report² indicates that after Denver adopted its higher minimum wage, unemployment did not increase compared to other localities. Although no long-term data is available yet, both Denver and the recent statewide minimum wage increase since 2019 are relevant and comparable and show no significant negative effects on aggregate employment or economic activity after implementation.

In fact, there is evidence of broader positive effects on local economies. Households that rely on low hourly wages typically spend a larger fraction of their income on essentials, such as housing, food, and transportation. When their pay goes up, they tend to spend most of these additional funds locally, putting money back into the local economy.

¹ Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics most recent data for Boulder Metropolitan Statistical Area (defined as Boulder County).

² Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. "Local Minimum Wage Report" 2021.

EFAA's position on increasing the minimum wage

EFAA supports raising the minimum wage. The increasing levels of working households not able to make ends meet are causing negative impacts on local families that have lasting effects, including increasing food insecurity and family homelessness, as well as putting an unsustainable strain on the safety net. An increase in wages must be part of the solution. This is echoed in the recent survey when EFAA participants were asked what they would share with local elected officials considering raising the minimum wage (box right)

In view of a range of potential options, EFAA encourages elected officials to consider as a minimum:

- Given the current crisis, prioritizing a commitment to an initial minimum wage increase of 15% effective January 2024. Delaying beyond 2024 will worsen the challenges of the current moment. See scenario 1 in chart. However, Boulder should not stop there.

While this will help thousands of workers in our community, this should be considered a minimum level of increase. EFAA support a longer-term approach:

- A fast track (i.e. the maximum 15% per year) until Boulder County reaches the City/County of Denver and thereafter annual CPI-based increases, creating a unified minimum wage in the Denver-Boulder area. Per the chart, this would require 15% increases in 2024 and 2025 then a smaller (7.7%) increase in 2026 assuming an annual CPI increase of 4%. See scenario 2 in chart.

Further options include:

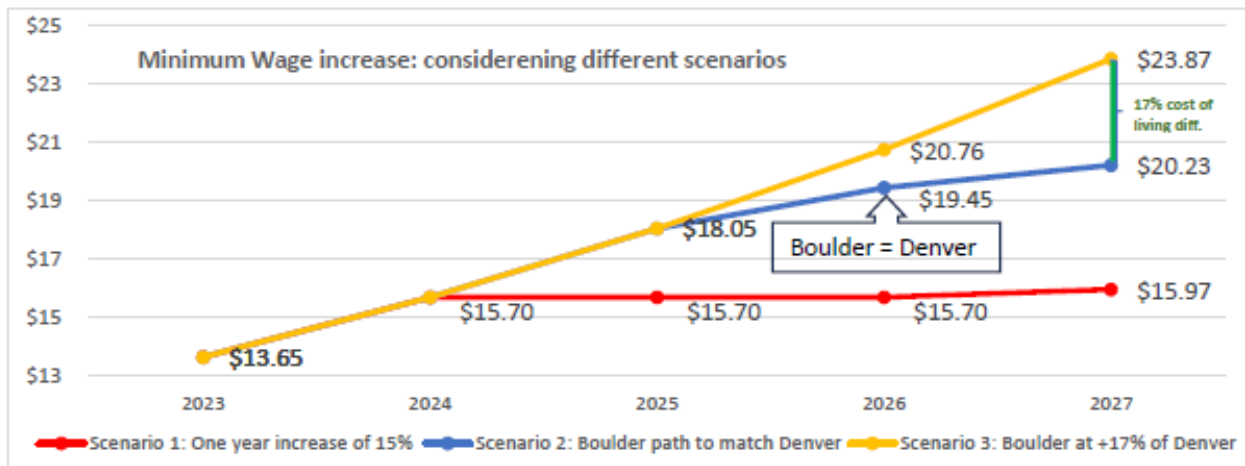
- The Self-Sufficiency Standard finds that Boulder's self-sufficiency wage is on average 17 percent higher than that of Denver. If officials want to aim for a similar protective factor, Boulder could reach this by 2027 at the earliest. This would still leave a large share of families under the full self-sufficiency wage but better-off. See scenario 3 in chart.
- Moreover, CCLP estimates that for the average household in Boulder County to reach the self-sufficiency standard hourly wage, minimum wage would need to reach \$25 by 2028. This aspirational level would allow most, but not all, working households to fully support their basic needs.

Examples of EFAA participant's messages to local officials:

- The minimum wage is supposed to give people the ability to support themselves at full time hours. The current minimum wage makes that impossible.*
- As a 20-year resident, a BVSD parent, a renter, and an essential worker with 2 jobs, I would love to see the local minimum wage increased and pressure put on employers to pay a living wage.*

From Spanish responses:

- Me gustaría que los representantes vean la importancia de que haiga un aumento salariado, para así cubrir nuestras necesidades básicas.*
- La renta es demasiado cara para una familia. Con el salario mínimo y un trabajo no se puede pagar*





Town of Erie Engagement Report

Regional Model for Engagement Strategy

In the summer of 2023, elected officials from the Cities of Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and Louisville and the Town of Erie directed the Regional Minimum Wage Working Group to conduct a study of our regional economy and community engagement regarding a minimum wage increase. Since August of 2023, regional teams have met to scope and administer these next steps. Teams include one staff member from each of the five participating communities, members of Chambers of Commerce, members of the Self Sufficiency Wage Coalition, and members of nonprofits. The economic analysis will be provided in a separate consultant report.

A standard engagement model operating at the 'Involve' level of the public participation spectrum was administered across the five participating communities. Engagement opportunities were available between mid-February until April 15th, and community members were provided options to participate virtually and in-person, with English and Spanish options, at one of 13 focus group sessions and through an online questionnaire.

How Town of Erie Implemented the Model

The Town of Erie is home to approximately 37,500 residents across two counties; Erie straddles the divide between Boulder and Weld counties. According to the American Community Survey 5-year (2018-2022), Erie's median income is \$154,509, higher than the other major municipalities in Boulder County. Erie also has the largest share of homeownership among its population, with 85% of residents owning their own homes (ACS 5-year, 2018-2022).

Regarding Erie's businesses, the majority are businesses that serve the local community; Erie is home to very few primary businesses. Erie's largest employers are the St. Vrain Valley School District, the Town of Erie, King Sooper's, Safeway, and Lowe's. These major employers are relatively transparent about their starting wages, all of which are above the state minimum wage. Our goal in our surveying efforts was to find out which Erie employers were actually paying minimum wage to their employees.

The Economic Development Department has a close relationship with many local business owners, and we have a highly engaged group who reads our monthly newsletters. We began by reaching out to this group, and followed it up by engaging with residents at a table at the Erie Community Center.

Engagement by Numbers

The survey that was sent out to business owners was sent out on Sept. 12, 2023 and was open for responses through Sept. 22, 2023. Erie sent it out to our business list of nearly 1,800 contacts, and it was shared by our partner organizations, the Erie Chamber of Commerce and the Erie Economic Development Council. One follow-up, reminder email was sent out. The Town received 44 responses from this engagement. Public engagement Tabling took place on April 10, 2024 in the



form of tabling at the Erie Community Center during peak visitor hours. Staff engaged with 29 individuals about the topic of minimum wage and employment in Erie in general.

Key Themes

Outside the Scope of Municipal Government

Seven respondents, even those in favor of raising the minimum wage, questioned whether enforcing a higher minimum wage was an appropriate task for municipalities. The most vociferous voices against a higher minimum wage often pointed out that, in their opinion, this was not something Erie should get involved with. We also heard that market forces should be the ones to dictate minimum wage, not governments. Further, several business respondents noted that they are already paying above minimum wage because of the market and competition for quality employees.

Inflation

This theme cut both ways—respondents noted that increased inflation was an argument both for and against raising the minimum wage. Some saw inflation as an outcome of raising the minimum wage, while others saw raising the minimum wage as a remedy for the impacts of inflation. In total, 12 respondents out of 31 who provided additional information with their responses, included something about inflation. For those who were against raising the minimum wage, inflation was often cited as an existing condition putting increased pressure on their businesses and saw an increase in the minimum wage as worsening that condition.

Anti-Small Business

Several respondents saw this move as specifically against the best interests of small businesses. Larger corporations are able to keep up with increasing costs, while smaller organizations with single locations and fewer employees cannot. Four respondents even mentioned that an increase to the minimum wage would likely cause them to close. In total, 10 respondents pointed out that this would either hurt small businesses generally or would specifically cause their businesses to close.

High Cost of Living

Most of those who mentioned the high cost of living were for an increased minimum wage, but there were also those who were not in favor, but recognized the difficult position both employees and small businesses are in given the economic climate. Four respondents talked about the high cost of living in their response.



Purpose of Minimum Wage

Many respondents reinforced what they believe is the purpose of minimum wage: entry-level wages for unskilled workers. For example, teenagers, and those with no education performing jobs requiring few skills. Another, similar theme was the need for a starting wage so employers could reward good work and loyal service with raises and bonuses. An inflated minimum wage removes the ability for employers, especially small employers, to provide such pay increases. Seven respondents talked about the intended purpose of minimum wage—not to pay rent and provide for a family, but to provide entry-level workers with some opportunity to get into the workforce.

Unique Themes

Undocumented Labor in the Construction Industry

Multiple respondents were in the construction industry. All of them supported an increase in the minimum wage, stating that construction workers, specifically, were underpaid for the work they do. Two respondents in this field noted that the prevalence of undocumented labor in the construction field specifically caused major issues for securing workers in the industry a living wage.

Regional Competitiveness

Unlike other municipalities participating in this partnership, most of Erie's current business districts are located in Weld County. A couple respondents mentioned that they were concerned about Erie's ability to stay competitive with closely located Weld County towns such as Frederick, Firestone, and Dacono, which are some of our main competitors for businesses looking to locate in Weld County.

Tip Share Businesses

Eight respondents were from the restaurant industry.

Quotes and Photos

"While it is ideal to raise minimum wage, it also causes a corresponding increase in the cost of goods sold and the cost of doing business. That combined with recent increases in inflation are going to make it harder for families to afford to continue to live in the area and patronize local businesses. While it is ideal to raise minimum wage, it also causes a corresponding increase in the cost of goods sold and the cost of doing business. That combined with recent increases in inflation are going to make it harder for families to afford to continue to live in the area and patronize local businesses. The increase in the minimum wage is usually insufficient to cover the increase in the cost of goods sold."

"As a small business, most would not be able to afford this increase. We pay our staff above the current wage, so this would not impact us. But I worry about ... discourag[ing] new small



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City of Louisville Engagement Report

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City of Louisville Engagement Model

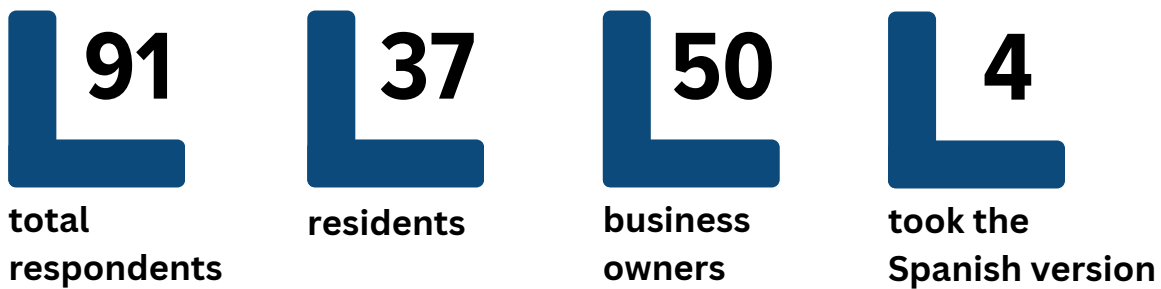
The City of Louisville partnered with neighboring Lafayette to jointly promote and host local opportunities for stakeholders to engage.

Staff determined that minimum wage earners and business owners in our community would be the two groups most directly impacted by a regional minimum wage increase. These two groups share a barrier to in-person participation; they tend to be busy working or running their business. With this barrier in mind, promotional efforts were focused on driving these groups to the online questionnaire. Information about the opportunities to engage was included in the Spring Community Update, which is mailed to every household in Louisville, as well as the March & April monthly e-newsletters, social media channels, and our City website.

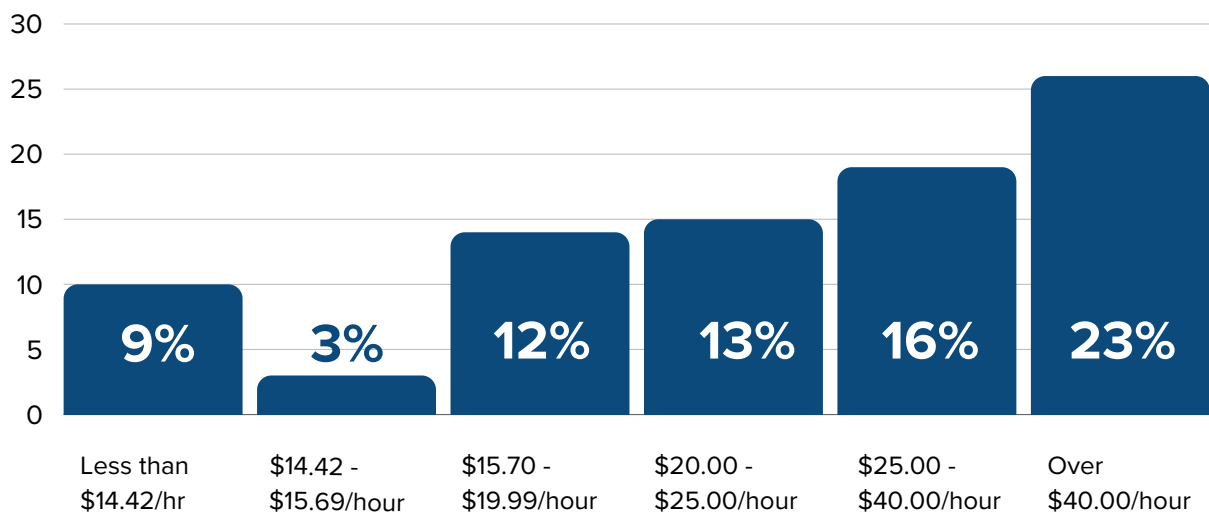
Engagement by the Numbers

Questionnaire Responses

Of the total questionnaire responses, 91 were from Louisville residents or business owners. Of these respondents, 37 residents and 50 business owners took the English version of the questionnaire; four residents and zero businesses took the Spanish version of the questionnaire.

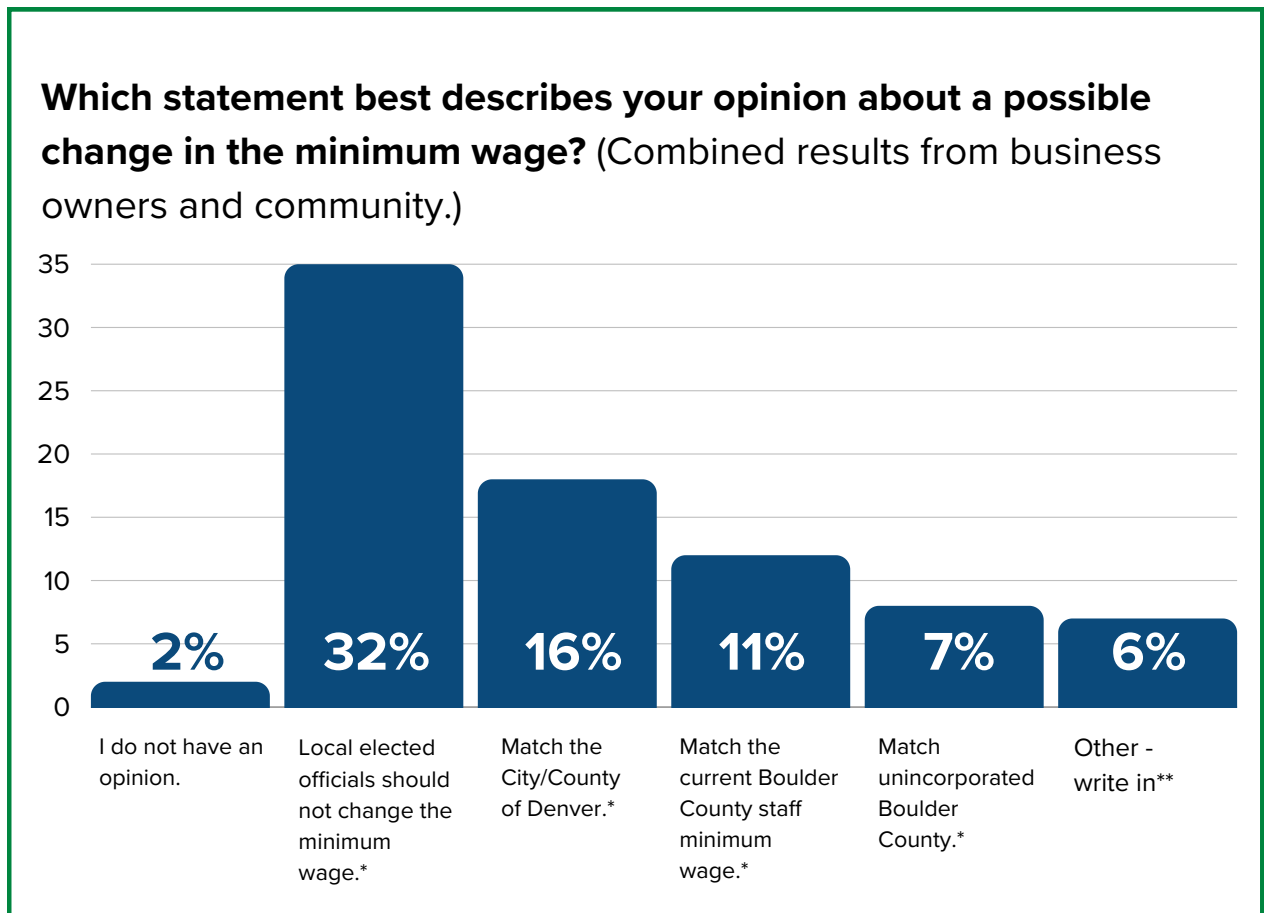


What is your hourly wage before taxes, deductions and tips? (Combined results from business owners and community.)



Engagement by the Numbers

Questionnaire Responses



*The varying minimum wages referenced in the survey are:

- City and County of Denver – \$18.29 in 2024, increasing annually with inflation
- Boulder County staff hourly wage – \$23.23 in 2024
- Unincorporated Boulder County - \$15.69 in 2024, increasing to \$25 by 2030

***Other - write in* responses can be viewed in the full survey results at the end of this document.

Engagement by the Numbers

In-person Focus Groups

The cities of Louisville and Lafayette hosted two in-person focus group sessions targeted toward both the Louisville and Lafayette communities*. The first, hosted on April 4 at the Louisville Recreation and Senior Center, was open to all community members. The second, hosted on April 11 at the Lafayette Public Library, was targeted toward the business community. Between the two in-person events, there were 39 total participants.

2

**Louisville
hosted-
events**

39

participants

Promotion

To reach a variety of audiences, Louisville employed a cross-platform approach to promotion. The questionnaire and engagement opportunities were promoted in the following ways*:

- City website news item on home page
- Spring Community Update (mailed to every household)
- March and April e-newsletters
- City social media channels, including but not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Nextdoor
- Physical flyers posted at City facilities
- Promotion on the project webpage

*This is not an all-inclusive list

Key Themes

A number of key themes emerged from staff analysis of in-person engagement session notes and open-ended questionnaire responses. The primary concerns and considerations were grouped into the following seven themes*:

#1 - Quality of Life & Community Sustainability

- Addressing the rising cost of living by increasing wages may help employees afford housing and other necessities, improving their overall quality of life.
- Increased wages may allow more residents, especially non-homeowners, to live and work in Louisville, reducing commuting and lowering emissions.
- Higher wages may reduce the need for community assistance programs.
- Improved wages may reduce the need to work multiple jobs or excessive hours.
- Increased living costs as a result of increased minimum wage could exacerbate issues like poverty, food insecurity, and homelessness, particularly affecting low-income families.

#2 - Employee Attraction & Retention

- Increasing the minimum wage could create wage compression, where the wage gap between lower and higher-paid employees narrows, potentially causing dissatisfaction and morale issues among higher-paid workers or exacerbating cost increases to businesses who may raise all wages to avoid said compression.
- Higher wages may boost morale and reduce employee turnover, leading to a more stable and productive workforce.
- Higher wages can make businesses more attractive to potential employees, improving recruitment efforts and retaining current employees.
- Businesses could choose to invest in automation to reduce dependency on human labor, potentially reducing job opportunities.
- Increases could lead to low-skilled workers being pushed out of the job market by higher-skilled workers willing to work for the new wage, potentially increasing unemployment among vulnerable populations.

*Note: Themes are not numbered in order of importance or relevance.

#3 - Local Economy & Inflation

- Increased disposable income for workers may result in higher consumer spending in the community, potentially boosting sales and keeping more dollars within city limits.
- Higher wages can lead to increased prices for goods and services.
- Businesses could choose to relocate out of the city limits to jurisdictions where the minimum wage requirement is lower.
- There is concern about fairness and balance between wages for skilled versus non-skilled workers.
- Increased childcare costs could make childcare unaffordable for many families.
- Higher prices may drive customers away, further impacting sales and profit margins.

#4 - Disproportionate Impacts to Small Businesses

- Higher wages can lead to increased prices for goods and services, particularly for small businesses already operating with small profit margins.
- Small businesses, in particular, could struggle to absorb the increased labor costs, leading to potential closures, reduction of staff size, reduced hours, and impacts to service levels.
- Small businesses may face a disadvantage compared to larger corporations/big box stores that can better absorb wage increases.
- Businesses already paying above minimum wage may not be impacted as greatly as those currently paying the minimum.

#5 - Purpose of Minimum Wage

- Some believe that a minimum wage is not the same as a self-sufficiency wage.
- Some believe that minimum wage jobs are designed for entry-level workers to develop skills, not grow a career.
- Some believe that businesses should have the freedom to determine the value their employees bring to an organization within the confines of what the business can afford.

#6 - Local Government's Role & Policy Development

- Some believe that wage setting should be determined by market conditions, not government mandates, and that business owners should have the freedom to set their own wages.
- Some believe that, instead of increasing the minimum wage, government should focus on other ways to positively impact minimum-wage earners, such as housing affordability initiatives.
- Some believe that governments should consider a gradual implementation with phased wage increases over time to minimize disruption and allow businesses time to adjust.
- Some believe that local officials should actively engage with business owners and business representatives before making decisions.

#7 - Sector-Specific Impacts

- Some believe that local government should take into account the specific needs of different industries and worker groups.
- Hospitality and restaurant sectors may be particularly vulnerable to wage increases due to already slim profit margins.
- Higher wages could increase childcare costs, affecting affordability for families and sustainability for providers.