



About the Thrive! Employer Recognition Program (TERP)

Program Goals

Thrive! Employer Recognition Program aims to:

- Reward employers currently providing the living wage rate
- Provide employers with tools and incentives to increase workers' pay to the living wage rate
- Connect consumers to employers providing the living wage rate
- Promote a just and sustainable economy

Participating in the Thrive! Employer Recognition Program is a great way for local employers to set themselves apart in our community, to promote the fact that they acknowledge the value of their employees, and to be rewarded by local consumers who understand the value of a living wage.

Benefits of Recognition

- "Living Wage Employer" certificate and window decals to display at your place of business
- Your events, promotions, and sales highlighted on the La Plata County Thrive! Living Wage Coalition Facebook and Twitter Pages
- Publicity through advertisements in local media
- Free promotion of your business through the Thrive! email list, Facebook, Twitter, and printed lists
- Special profile of your business on the Thrive! website
- Participation in press conferences and Thrive! events promoting the Employer Recognition Program and recognized employers
- Membership in a growing network of local employers dedicated to building a more sustainable economy

Eligibility Criteria for Recognition

1. Employer's business is located in La Plata County, Colorado and must employ at least one person.
2. Endorse the Thrive! Living Wage Principle: "All workers should be paid a living wage."
3. Pay all full and part-time, non-exempt employees (see definitions below for TERP exempt and TERP non-exempt employees) the living wage rate as calculated by Thrive! Living Wage Coalition (currently \$12.79/hour) or equivalent with basic needs benefits or tips. An employer may offset the living wage rate by providing benefits that address basic needs (health insurance, food, and transportation). The wage rate and value of these benefits must total at least \$12.79/hour. If you offer these benefits, please contact Thrive!'s Employer Recognition Program Coordinator at terp.thrive@gmail.com for the specific program requirements.

4. Employers not yet paying the living wage rate may apply for recognition as an “Aspiring Living Wage Employer” by developing a plan for, and working toward, paying the living wage rate.

5. Employers may be denied recognition if health/safety violations, violation of labor statutes or violation of other rights are brought to our attention.

6. The following employee categories are exempted: apprentices, government funded youth programs, internships, employees in probationary status (limited to 6 months), temporary employees (limited to 6 months), new hires (limited to 90 days) and employees younger than 18 and working fewer than 35 hours per week.

How to Apply for Recognition

Complete the appropriate form:

1. If above criterion #3 applies to you, complete “Online Application for Employers Paying a Living Wage,” or
2. If criterion #4 applies to you, complete “Online Application for Employers Aspiring to Pay a Living Wage.”

Both forms can be found at <http://www.thrivelaplata.org/get-recognized.html>.

Initial Application

An employer may submit an initial application at any time. **The Thrive! Recognition Committee reviews applications for initial recognition three times per year, in March, July and November.** Thrive! Living Wage Employer Recognition is valid for up to two years at the living wage rate at which an employer is recognized (see next paragraph).

Recognition Renewal

To continue participation in Thrive! Employer Recognition Program, Thrive! Living Wage Employers must complete a recognition renewal form every two years. Renewal reviews are held annually in July. Living Wage Employer Recognition is valid for two years, except for the initial recognition period. Depending on when an employer is initially recognized, the initial recognition period is not necessarily two years, but no less than 20 months. See the Renewal Table below.

Initial Month of Recognition Approval	Living Wage Recalculation (annually)	# Months to come into compliance with updated living wage rate before renewal	# Of months of initial recognition	Recognition Renewal Deadline	All following Recognition Renewals
November 2016	June	12	20 months	July 1, 2018	2 years
March 2017	June	12	28 months	July 1, 2019	2 years
July 2017	June	12	24 months	July 1, 2019	2 years
November 2017	June	12	20 months	July 1, 2019	2 years
March 2018	June	12	28 months	July 1, 2020	2 years
July 2018	June	12	24 months	July 1, 2020	2 years

The living wage rate is calculated annually in June by Thrive! Living Wage Coalition. Thrive! will notify recognized employers of any updated rates annually after recalculation is complete and employers will be given at least one year to comply with the updated rate before their Recognition Renewal. Thrive! will send Recognition Renewal forms prior to expiration of employer’s recognition period.

Example:

November 2017: Business A is recognized as a Living Wage Employer.

June 2018: The **living wage is recalculated** and all recognized business are **informed**.

July 2019 (12 months later): Business A is required to **pay the June 2018 updated living wage rate**.

July 2019: Business A applies for **Recognition Renewal** at the June 2018 rate.

The initial recognition period (November 2017-July 2019) was 20 months. After this initial recognition period, Business A will always Renew in July every two years with notification 12 months prior in order to raise wages, if necessary, to meet the updated living wage rate.

Other Important Info

Each Recognized Employer shall post a “Living Wage Recognition Information” poster provided by Thrive! in an area highly visible to employees and near required Colorado labor law poster.

An employer no longer able to pay a living wage must immediately notify Thrive! Living Wage Coalition.

It is important that employers understand that employees may have questions or concerns about the program. Further, it is important that employers agree not to take retaliatory action against employees raising questions or concerns. If questions or concerns about the program are raised, Thrive! will follow a set of protocols to obtain the information necessary to determine the appropriate response. If an employer is found not to be paying a living wage and is unable to adjust their wages, Thrive! will remove them from our recognition list in a non-public manner.

Definitions

Living Wage: Amount that a single individual must earn hourly to pay for basic necessities (housing, food, childcare and transportation) without public or private assistance.

Living Wage Principle: “All workers should be paid a living wage.”

Apprentice: Individual learning a trade, art or skill by practical experience under skilled workers in exchange for work.

Intern: Student or graduate in a professional field gaining supervised practical experience in exchange for work.

Temporary/Project-based Employee: An “as needed” employee working intermittently and no more than 45 days in a calendar year.

Minor: Individual under the age of 18.

New Hire: An employee within their first 90 days of employment during which time the employee and employer are evaluating each other.

TERP Exempt Employee: An apprentice, an intern, a temporary or project-based employee working no more than 45 days per year, a minor working fewer than 35 hours per week, or a new hire whose probationary period does not exceed 90 days.

TERP Non-exempt Employee: Full or part-time employee who does not fall into the exempt category as defined above.

Independent Contractor: Contractor working as and when required, not regularly, and paid on a freelance basis. Must receive a 1099 form. **Independent Contractors paid an hourly rate and consistently working over 8 hours a week must make \$1.22/hour more than the current living wage rate to qualify for inclusion in the program.** The additional wage requirements are meant to cover individual tax requirements.

Tipped Employee: An employee consistently relying on tips for a percentage of their income.

Thank you,

Kaitlin Fischer

Kaitlin Fischer
Program Coordinator
(970) 880-0669
terp.thrive@gmail.com