

# Final approval for living-wage ordinance anticipated this week

*Living wage*  
**By JEANENE HARLICK**  
 SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Supervisors are set to give final approval Tuesday to an ordinance that will raise the wages of the county's lowest-paid workers.

The ordinance will implement the first phase of the county's living-wage program by requiring higher wages for employees of the private, for-profit vendors the county contracts with, home-care workers, and county employees.

The ordinance will be amended in coming months to extend to employees of nonprofit groups the county contracts with and for-profit health and human service employees. The ordinance calls for a minimum wage of \$11 per hour with benefits, and \$12 per hour without. The pay raises will be phased in during the next few years.

The ordinance will go in effect 30 days after its second reading Dec. 11.

Supervisors approved the program in concept in November, when they also agreed to set aside \$700,000 for a \$2 an hour raise for home-care workers.

*12-2-01*  
 The workers now earn an average of \$7.25 an hour. The raises will begin after collective bargaining with workers' unions concludes; bargaining is scheduled to begin in spring 2002.

The ordinance going before the board Tuesday contains some final tweaks that Living Wage Coalition members asked for in November. The changes include:

- Simplifying administrative procedures.
- Extending the ordinance to Redevelopment Agency contracts.
- Establishing a complaint procedure for employees.
- Requiring the county to review a potential contractor's history of paying living wages and benefits.
- Forbidding contractors from hindering the collective bargaining efforts of employees.

*Supervisors meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday in Room 525 of the Governmental Center Building, 701 Ocean St.*

Contact Jeanene Harlick at [jharlic@santa-cruz.com](mailto:jharlic@santa-cruz.com).