Labor and Community

LIVING WAGE, LIVE ACTION

by Robert Pollin

This past summer, security workers at LAX airport in Los Angeles began their first-ever union organizing drive. They were motivated, labor activists say, by the city’s foot-dragging in implementing a living-wage ordinance that had passed the previous year and guaranteed a minimum of $7.25 an hour (rising with inflation every July 1), plus health benefits and twelve paid days off. Workers unaccustomed to challenging income and power inequities suddenly felt emboldened by the experience of that earlier drive, which, like similar efforts taking off elsewhere in the country, began with the simple premise that no one who works for a living should have to struggle in poverty.

As of 1997, 7.3 million American families were officially poor, and in 66 percent of them at least one person had a job. At the current minimum wage of $5.15 an hour, someone who works full time for fifty weeks earns only $10,300 a year — below the national poverty threshold for a family of two. A “traditional” family of four with one wage-earner falls nearly 40 percent below the line. True, this family is eligible to receive an earned-income tax credit, food stamps and Medicaid, but the need for such programs to support a full-time worker’s household only underscores the fact that $5.15 an hour is not close to being a living wage.

In opposition to this state of affairs the living-wage movement was initiated four years ago by unions, community groups and religious organizations. It has succeeded in passing living-wage ordinances — higher minimum-wage standards for workers affected by the measures — in seventeen cities. Now organizing campaigns are pressing forward in twenty-four other municipalities.

There are a number of lessons from these campaigns, not least that even in an expansion, real wages will not rise without strong, creative organizing efforts. The real value of the minimum wage is 30 percent below what it was in 1968, even though the economy is 50 percent more productive than it was thirty years ago, and even after the seven-year “Clinton boom.” Now it looks as if we’re coming to the end of that boom.

Given the September 22 defeat of Senator Kennedy’s bill to raise the minimum wage by a dollar over two years, it’s clear that, in a weakening economy, workers can win higher wages and better conditions only if they fight effectively.

The living-wage movement has been strategically astute since its inception. It has emerged primarily at the level of municipal politics because organizers correctly assessed that their efforts have a greater chance of success.

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by Maryann Leshin

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PN NEWS

PN MEET AT ACSP RAISES FUNDS

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The PN meeting, attended by 8 Steering Committee members, included discussions of PN finances, the newsletter/publication, fundraising and chapter development, and was followed by a reception.

FEBRUARY PN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be a full-day meeting of the PN Steering Committee on February 27, 1999 at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. New York area members are welcome to attend; call the PN office for details.

BACKTALK: PN NY’S NEW READING AND DISCUSSION GROUP

A half-dozen of us met October 11, to read from The Sex of Architecture, by Diana Agrest. We dug into urban planning, architecture, film, text, and sex. The backtalk flew around the room. Come join the heat and help us select more books to inspire planning and play. Under consideration: A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens, and Towards Cosmopolis by Leonie Sandercock. For more information contact PNer Peggy Dye at (212) 864-6438. The next meeting will be in a round-robin format: Wednesday, December 9, 6-7:30 pm Housing Works Cafe/Bookstore 120 Crosby, bet. Houston & Prince, Manhattan (Subways: B, D, F to B’way-Lafayette or B6 to Bleecker) Phone: (212) 334-3324

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN CHAPTER NEWS

A group of students at the University of Illinois were so inspired by the mission of Planners Network and by the example of the New York chapter that they decided to start a local chapter in Illinois. In the Fall of 1997, six students began soliciting the interest of students who were focused on social equity planning and progressive action. The group managed to arouse twenty students to partake in community service projects, recruit speakers, and visit local examples of good practice. Activities over the last year included a speaker series on equity issues, a trip to the Woodlawn neighborhood in Chicago to view revitalization efforts, a Masters student research discussion series, and various local volunteer efforts.

In May of 1998, PN-Illinois lost several key members to graduation. A smaller group was chosen to continue the efforts of PN-IL. The three main objectives of this group are to:
- Influence academics on behalf of planning students interested in issues of equity and social justice;
- Serve as a link with local groups doing progressive planning work; and
- Spread the word about PN National.

To meet its second objective, the group has started a Web page that serves as a communication link between planning students and groups doing progressive planning and community work in the city.

ARE WE PROGRESSIVE PLANNERS?

By Ruth Yabes

W h at should Planners Network and progressive planners be doing? How can I possibly answer that question since I don’t feel I am a true progressive planner. I am an emissary to this truth, but I don’t think I am alone among PN members.

The classes I teach have not been as successful as I wish in drawing the community into the curriculum or bringing the curriculum to the community. And although I know that the connections between labor and the community are important and I want to learn about them, I am not familiar with the issues raised in the upcoming PN Conference, “Working for a Decent Living.”

So what should I do? I clarify and humbly acknowledge that I have much to learn about progressive planning, and ask PN and progressive planners to help me and others who are in the same boat. I need to do my homework. I will read this newsletter and previous issues and make them required reading in my various urban planning classes, as suggested by Keith Pecorali at the recent PN meeting at ACSP, in order to “connect students who do not necessarily think of themselves as progressive with progressive planners,” as Owen Urey suggested in the last PN. As an educator, I appreciate Kathy Klump’s suggestions that we become advocates for progressive planning education, and I will seek ways to implement her three proposed changes: 1) link theory to practice, 2) take seriously students with practical experience, and 3) embrace diverse communities in the planning curriculum.

So, if you are like me and are worried that you aren’t “progressive” enough, let’s agree to stop apologizing or feeling embarrassed or guilty and get down to the business of learning about and embracing progressive planning issues in our classrooms, our practice, and our communities.

Ruth Yabes teaches in the School of Planning and Landscape Architecture, Arizona State University, 602-965-7288, <Ruth.Yabes@asu.edu>.
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PN NY CONTACT INFORMATION:

To find out more about PN NY's activities and learn how you can volunteer with the organizing committee, call or write:
Tina Chiu, Co-chair, (212) 854-9564.
Kevin Huang, Co-chair, (718) 783-0499.

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Support for local organizing is important for the future of PN. While networking with progressives in other contexts is an important source of support and new ideas, most of us work within a local or regional context. Organizing locally is an important means of promoting a progressive local agenda, or at least resisting the onslaught of neo-liberal thinking. It is not enough to have a network of spatially isolated progressives — either within the U.S. or across North America — though this is better than nothing. It is better to have a network of local chapters in which we can exchange ideas and experiences, and provide support and encouragement for planning practices that emphasize social and environmental justice.

I support Cathy Klump’s call (in the previous issue of PN) for PN to become a more vocal advocate for progressive planning education. In my experience, planning students are among those most interested in organizing and getting involved in Planners Network locally. They are eager, energetic, and interested in developing knowledge and skills that will allow them to promote a more sustainable and socially equitable environment. PN could play an important role in advocating on their behalf and ensuring that planning education keeps pace with their changing needs.

Barbara Rahder is a PN Steering Committee member and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University in Toronto.
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Growing over the past few years. The series of recent articles and editorials has encouraged us to think about organizing a local Toronto chapter. I'd like to see PN explore similar links in Mexico and other countries, and support local organizing efforts as part of this strategy.

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LABOR AND COMMUNITY

Not an Easy Marriage

By Maryann Leshin

The prospect of bringing together labor and community at the PN 1999 Conference brings to mind several critical discrepancies between the agendas of these two groups. I see labor and community from the perspective of someone who has worked for affordable housing and community development for the past two decades, a one-time union organizer, and the wife of a union organizer and activist. While I wholly support such a collaboration, and in fact view it as an ideal to strive toward, I’m pretty skeptical about it because of what I have seen in the San Francisco Bay Area. The issues that divide labor and community in practice are: prevailing wages, local hiring practices, NIMBY, and the unionization of nonprofits.

Prevailing Wages

Should nonprofit housing developers pay prevailing union wages, or should they be able to pay lower wages to help make housing affordable? This issue has lead to razor sharp conflict between unions and nonprofits. For affordable housing developers, their projects mean much needed housing, with the added bonus of creating construction jobs. However, if they pay the prevailing wage in the Bay Area, that adds 20-30% to the cost of building affordable housing.

Prevailing wage can mean the difference between a project moving forward or going bust. The prevailing wage can be avoided if non-federal sources are used — this is more likely as federal funding declines. These new funding sources include tax credits, tax exempt bond financing, and local grants and loans for predevelopment and front end financing. And many local governments are more than happy to skirt state prevailing wage requirements.

Local Hiring Practices

Requirements that nonprofit builders hire local workers, low-income and homeless people may not be consonant with the union agenda for hiring, particularly in the Bay Area (though there may be efforts underway or success stories that I personally haven’t heard about). This seems like a ripe area for joining labor and community with a win-win result. However, without a deliberate meeting of the minds of leadership from both sectors, efforts to move forward in this arena will likely get bogged down in petty feuds and bickering.

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NIMBY

When it comes to affordable housing, I don’t think we can assume that the rank and file union agenda is necessarily opposed to NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) exclusionary sentiments. I worked for a city where the president of the fire fighters union advocated against making a loan to a nonprofit developer in his home town because of their work in converting a disipated, abandoned hotel into housing for people with disabilities (including AIDS and substance abusers). I believe the key issue for him was the prospect of declining property values. For union members with moderate incomes — a valid accomplishment — low-income housing can run counter to their interests as new property owners and the concomitant middle class values. Education on the subject of nonprofit low-income housing and its impact on property values would be a place to start. There are lots of opportunity for coalescing here. There are plenty of union members among the ranks of folks seeking affordable housing built by nonprofits, especially among health care workers, janitors, farm workers, teachers, and many public sector workers. It was a personal joy for me to know that a member of my husband’s union was purchasing a below market rate condo for first time home buyers built through the city program I developed! We need to articulate this commonality.

Unionization of Nonprofits

Few nonprofits support the notion of seeking out union labor or insist on using a union barge. Some do, but I have seen more that do not, and many that just provide lip service. This can create a wall between labor and community. In the Bay Area there have been a few battles over the unionization of nonprofits.

Unionization seems to be a dirty word in my world of nonprofit housing and community development. As my husband puts it, if management is treating folks right, they’re not going to want a union. And as I think of it, if management is treating folks right, a union presents itself as no threat to continuing in that mode.

While the union movement’s electoral agenda is generally in sync with progressive planners, there are many defining “lines in the sand” which need to be confronted in an open way before just assuming that we’re all on the same page. I can’t say I have any easy answers, but until the two groups start talking to each other about these issues, understand why each takes specific positions, and find common ground, the notion of being part of one big happy labor family is only an academic one.

Maryann Leshin lives in San Leandro, California, where she works for a nonprofit community development financial institution.

7TH GENERATION

Continued from page 5

What about Fascism?

The Honorable Mayor is quick to denounce those who sling the epithet of fascism his way, citing prejudice against Italian-Americans. He may be right about some of the criticism. Not everything that’s underdemocratic is fascist, and most fascists aren’t Italian.

But fascism is not an Italian thing, nor is it popular among Italian-Americans. Consider the recently discussed anti-fascist and progressive traditions in Italy and among Italian-Americans. The first Italian-American mayor of New York, Fiorello LaGuardia, who had a brush with uncivil style like Giuliani, was an early and consistent opponent of fascism and a strong supporter of civil liberties, the New Deal and social reform. For every right-winger like Al D’Amato and Rudy Giuliani there’s a liberal like Mario Cuomo and Geraldine Ferraro.

Also, fascism is institutional, national and systemic, and cannot be installed in one city or by one person. The victims of apartheid and Nazism understand the horrors of living in a fully militarized state based on terror and the repression of working class people.

Having said all this, Rudolph Giuliani and his Republican comrades across the country have taken us a big step towards fascist rule. More even alarming than Giuliani’s support for the reactionary elements in the police and government, his breaches of constitutional freedoms of speech and assembly, and his plays to racist sentiments, is the absence of any serious challenge to him from the financial establishment that can make or break a politician. Wall Street elites appear to be perfectly content to be represented by this nasty fellow. The press is gentle and intimidated. Historically, fascism has overcome democracy when the ruling class loses its ability to rule through democratic means, and government violatons of human rights and freedom are condoned.

Another warning is the support given Giuliani by large sections of organized labor. The main municipal union, District Council 37, backed Giuliani in exchange for a pledge that there would be no lay-offs. The price we paid the municipal workforce has declined by several hunred thousand due to attrition and buy-out schemes. And the union will not organize workfare employees who are replacing city workers. Many fascist regimes have historically assumed a corporatist form, gaining support from both business and unions. Something to keep in mind in our discussions about labor and community at the Planners Network ‘99 Conference. Yes, it can happen here. African-Americans understand fascism after living for 200 years in slavery and another 100 years under Jim Crow. Racism, all is, at the core of the U.S. experience with fascism. Rudolph Giuliani is now a front-runner for the New York Senate seat soon to be vacated by Daniel Moynihan, and is testing the national waters for a possible run for higher office. If he comes to your town, I hope you’ll greet him with the same iced tea he shows us here at home.

—Tom Angotti

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DECEMBER 4, 1999
The Privatization of Municipal Services Differing Strategies, Differing Goals.

JANUARY 8, 1999
The Privatization of City Planning The Role of Public, Private and Not-For-Profit Sectors.
(see Events listings on page 12 for further details.)
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PLANNERS NETWORK #132
cess when they attempt to change municipal laws rather than those of states or the federal government, where business has a great capacity to use its money and lobbying clout. Various local campaigns are gaining strength through building national connections. This past May, the first National Living Wage Campaign Training Conference, sponsored by labor groups and a coalition of thirty-four cities to discuss strategy and consider ways to coordinate their work, but a local focus is still central to building grassroots support.

Organizing at the municipal level is as the most effective tactic for fighting the trend toward outsourcing — contracting out government services to private firms. Because private contractors pay lower wages and offer fewer benefits, outsourcing saves cities money by driving down the living standards of workers. In Chicago, the city has outsourced public sector jobs from 1989 to 1995 meant income losses of between 25 and 49 percent for watchmen, elevator operators, cashiers, parking attendants, security guards and custodians whose jobs were privatized. Forcing private firms with city contracts to pay living wages at least weaker the incentive for cities to achieve budget cuts on the backs of their workers.

The first living-wage victory was in Baltimore in 1994. The ordinance there stipulated that firms holding service contracts with the city pay a minimum of $6.10 an hour, rising to $7.20 as of July 1998 and after that moving in step with inflation. A single mother working full time at $7.20 an hour would thus be able to live with her child above the poverty line. However, a family of four, a homeowner and two children would still be in poverty. The Baltimore “living wage,” in other words, is not much of a living, though in light of the precipitous fall in the real value of the national minimum wage, it was a major breakthrough.

Within four years of the Baltimore ordinance, living-wage laws passed in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Milwaukee, Essex City, Durham, Portland, Oregon, and eight other cities. Municipalities with ongoing campaigns include Philadelphia, New Orleans, Albuquerque, Knoxville and Santa Cruz. Proposals vary, but the basic idea is the same almost everywhere: If private firms want city contracts, they must pay their workers substantially better than the subsistence wage of the national minimum.

Living-wage laws targeting city contractors will, however, affect only a small proportion of low-wage workers. Some have discovered that a more effective approach, pushing for laws that would apply to all workers in a municipality, regardless of who’s employing them, is just as national or statewide minimum-wage laws apply to virtually all workers within a geographic area. Recently, organizers in Milwaukee, Houston and a few other places passed these more ambitious proposals but were soundly defeated at the polls. At least in part, they lost because of their ambitious scope, which invited an even more determined opposition. So how are living-wage organizers in Baltimore to win the next round of possibilities before them? And how are they to answer their critics?

Will Living-Wage Laws Backfire? Opponents of minimum-wage laws — of which the municipal living-wage ordinance in Baltimore are one variant — have for long argued that such laws actually harm their intended beneficiaries, pricing unskilled workers out of the job market and so causing unemployment among the poor [see Polin, “Barely Minimum,” April 6]. Against municipal living-wage laws, in particular, opponents put forward the arguments that these will place severe strains on the already over-budgeted budgets of cities, perhaps forcing painful cuts in other benefits to low-income families; and that they will discourage firms from locating in municipalities, thus increasing unemployment and poverty in these areas. Blustering politicians are usually the most visible moosepoopers for such views. In Los Angeles, then-deputy mayor for economic development Gary Mendoza said a living-wage law there would mean “entire industries could be wiped out or move overseas.” Such fulminations can be easily dismissed. But can we be confident that the critics are completely wrong?

The answer depends, first, on the specifics of any given ordinance. The LA law, for example, affects employees of three types of private businesses: those holding city service contracts of more than $25,000, such as accounting or retail unions; contractors on city property, such as LAx; and firms receiving city subsidies of more than $1 million. This law, as applying only to city contractors and subsidy recipients, resembles those passed in Baltimore, Boston, Portland and Chicago.

My colleague Stephanie Luce and I have estimated that, at the outside, this ordinance will raise the pay of 7,600 full- and part-time workers. In Los Angeles. Over a year, the income of a full-time living-wage worker will rise to $31,600. Those increases will be spread among the roughly 1,000 firms that are obligated to comply with the law, making the cost per firm about $24,000. But since these 1,000 firms produce about $4.4 billion in goods and services in a year, the extra $24 million in their combined wage bill amounts to only about 0.5 percent of their annual budgets.

The health benefits to workers and the paid days off provided under the ordinance will together amount to another $28 million. A final likely, though not mandated, effect of the law is that it will force businesses to increase for workers in the affected firms who now earn more than the $7.25 minimum. This ripple effect of wage increases

is likely to pertain to workers earning perhaps as much as $9.25 once their lower-paid co-workers get a raise.

When we add these additional costs to the basic mandated wage increases, the sum comes to only about 1.5 percent of the total annual budget of the average affected firm. Indeed, for about 85 percent of the firms involved, the total annual increase in costs will be less than 1 percent of their budgets.

City Budgets Won’t Go Bust Most companies faced with a cost increase of 1 percent or less would be willing to absorb the cost if the firm were the only condition on which they could keep winning city contracts. Some may refuse to absorb these increases, but competitors seeking the same contracts would likely step into the breach. This means that, through intelligent bargaining, a city government can purchase essentially the same quality of services from more private firms after the passage of a living-wage ordinance with virtually no impact on its budget.

For the roughly 15 percent of firms that will experience cost increases over 1 percent, a city should expect to absorb some of these increased costs if it wants to maintain a stable level of services. Here too the impact should be negligible. If, for example, LA’s city government allowed companies to pass on all increases above 3 percent of their total budgets, the new costs to the city would amount to less than 0.5 percent of its $3.4 billion operation.

Will firms simply exit the city rather than face the higher costs? In fact, there is nothing in the Los Angeles ordinance or its equivalents elsewhere that encourages relocation. That’s because these ordinances apply to all firms with city contracts, regardless of where they are located. The same rules for city contracting, including adherence to the living-wage ordinance, apply to companies whether they are in LA, an adjacent city like Santa Monica, or anywhere inside or outside the United States.

Moreover, consider that many companies already pay their workers higher minimums and still compete successfully. They do so because they have much lower labor force and absenteeism and higher morale. A living-wage ordinance encourages more companies to operate along this high efficiency/high morale path, thereby diminishing the cost increases they face. Considering all these factors, it is not hard to understand the striking result that emerged in both Baltimore and LA after their initial year of experience with living-wage ordinances. In both cities, the law on the books had no significant impact on contracts. To understand this, Mark Weisbrot and Michelle Sforza of the Preamble Center for Public Policy interviewed business owners in Baltimore affected by the ordinance.

These owners were actually positive about how the living-wage law affected bidding. Several owners noted that affected contractors of course, 1 was a counterweight, a counterweight to the ordinance. One bus company manager said, “We feel more able to compete against businesses who were drastically reducing wages in order to put in a low bid.” All these estimates of the impact of living-wage laws do, however, indicate that the live effect; that the affected city contractors will abide by the law. This will not happen automatically. In LA the mayor’s office vehemently opposed the ordinance, and has sought to exempt as many contractors as possible. This and experiences elsewhere, where it’s clear that living-wage supporters cannot assume their job is done once a law has been passed.

Would a Citywide Living-Wage Law Work? The very features that make the LA proposal and its equivalents so manageable are also their limitations. Getting raises for 7,000 low-wage workers in a city is a major accomplishment. But 2.4 million other low-wage workers in the LA area are still not covered by the ordinance. What would be the impact of a more sweeping municipality-wide law, such as those that were proposed but defeated in Denver and Houston and the one that is now getting off the ground in New York? Peter Phillips, an organizer in Sonoma County, California, told me at a recent conference that this sort of proposal was the only one that made sense for his area. With either proposal, he argued, the organi- zers would have to launch an ambitious educational campaign. But only a few hundred workers would get raises through a contractors-only proposal, while several thousand would benefit through the municipality-wide approach.

In LA a countywide minimum wage of $7.25 would bring raises to some 2.4 million workers. At the same time, the impact per firm, on average, would not be significantly different from that of the contractors-only law now in place in the city. In terms of creating incentives for firms to compete, a countywide ordinance would be substantially different. This is because, under such a proposal, affected firms could afford paying higher wages by moving outside the municipal boundaries.

In conclusion, therefore, is How many firms would actually leave rather than pay a living wage, and what would be the effect of their departure? In fact, even here, if a mass exodus are unfounded. Most companies facing significant cost increases under a countywide ordin- ance would not relocate. A high proportion of these are restaurants, hotels or retail outlets, and are tied to their existing locations. Indeed, only one type of firm would have a strong incentive to relocate. These manufacturers that are not tied to their locations and that employ a high percentage of low-wage workers. Some of these may choose simply to raise wages rather than incur the costs of relocation. But even if we assume that all such manu-
cess when they attempt to change municipal laws rather than those of states or the federal government, where business has a great capacity to use its money and lobbying clout. Various local campaigns are gaining strength through building national connections. This past May, the first National Living Wage Campaign, sponsored by labor groups and unions, emerged from thirty-four cities to discuss strategy and consider ways to coordinate their work. But a local focus is still central to building grassroots support.

Organizing at the municipal level is in some cases the most effective tactic for fighting the trend toward outsourcing — contracting out government services to private firms. Because private contractors pay lower wages and offer fewer benefits, outsourcing saves cities money by driving down the living standards of workers. In Chicago, the outsourcing of public sector jobs from 1989 to 1995 meant income losses of between 25 and 49 percent for watchmen, elevator operators, cashiers, parking attendants, security guards and custodians whose jobs were privatized. Forcing private firms with city contracts to pay living wages at least weakens the incentive for cities to achieve budget cuts on the backs of their workers.

The first living wage victory was in Baltimore in 1994. The ordinance there stipulated that firms holding service contracts with the city pay a minimum of $6.10 an hour, rising to $7.20 as of July 1998 and after that moving in step with inflation. A single mother working full time at $7.20 an hour would thus be able to live with her child above the poverty line. However, a family of one jobholder, one homeowner and two children would still be in poverty. The Baltimore "living wage," in other words, is not much of a living, though in light of the precipitous fall in the real value of the national minimum wage, it was a major breakthrough.

Within four years of the Baltimore ordinance, living-wage laws passed in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Milwaukee, Jersey City, Durham, Portland, Oregon, and eight other cities. Municipalities with ongoing campaigns include Philadelphia, New Orleans, Albuquerque, Knoxville and Santa Cruz. Proposals vary, but the basic idea is the same almost everywhere: If private firms want city contracts, they must pay their workers substantially better than the sub-poverty wage of the national minimum.

Living-wage laws targeting city contractors will, however, affect only a small proportion of low-wage workers. Some organizers have taken a more oblique approach, pushing for laws that would apply to all workers in a municipality, regardless of who their employer is, just as national or statewide minimum-wage laws apply to virtually all workers within a geographic area. Recently, organizers in Chicago, Houston and Boston have joined these more ambitious proposals but were soundly defeated at the polls. At least in part, they lost because of their ambitious scope, which invoked an even more determined opposition. So how are living-wage organizers aiming to win in the range of possibilities before them? And how are they to answer their critics?

Will Living-Wage Laws Backfire?

Opponents of minimum-wage laws — of which the municipal living-wage ordi-
nances are one variant — have long argued that such laws actually hurt their intended beneficiaries, pricing unskilled workers out of the job market and so causing unemployment among the poor [see Polin, "Barley Minimum," April 6]. Against municipal living-wage laws in particular, opponents put forward two arguments: that these will place severe strains on the already over-stretched budgets of cities, perhaps forcing painful cuts in other benefits to low-income families; and that they will discourage firms from locating in municipalities, thus increasing unemployment and poverty in these areas. Blustering politicians are usually the most vocal opponents of such views. In Los Angeles, then-deputy mayor for economic development Gary Mendoza said a living-wage law there would mean "entire industries could be wiped out or move overseas." Such fulminations can be easily dismissed. But can we be confident that the critics are completely wrong?

The answer depends, first, on the specifics of any given ordinance. The LA law, for example, affects employees of three types of private businesses: those holding city service contracts of more than $25,000, such as accounting or janitorial companies; concessionaires on city property, such as LAX; and firms receiving city subsides of more than $1 million. This law, as it applies only to city contractors and subsidy recipients, resembles those passed in Baltimore, Boston, Portland and Chicago.

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Most companies faced with a cost increase of 1 percent or less would not be willing to absorb the cost if it were the only condition on which they could keep winning city contracts. Some may refuse to absorb these increases, and competitors seeking the same contracts would likely step into the breach. This means that, through intelligent bargaining, a city government can purchase essentially the same quality of services from most private firms after the passage of a living-wage ordinance with virtually no impact on its budget.

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In other locations, therefore, is how many firms would actually leave rather than pay a living wage, and what would be the effect of their departure? In fact, even here, if fears of a mass exodus are unfound-
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PLANNERS NETWORK #132 9
facturers did relocate just outside the county limits, the main loss for the Los Angeles County government would be the loss of tax revenues. Stephanie Luce and I estimate that the number of firms likely to leave would generate a loss in county tax revenue of between $50 million and $60 million. This is no small amount, but it is still less than 1 percent of the total wage increases that workers would enjoy with a $7.25 minimum wage. The county would likely experience some additional losses, such as a decline in the proportion of sales due to firms leaving their existing locations. But all those costs would also total less than an additional 1 percent of the wage increases received by workers. Meanwhile, the workers would have more money to spend, would pay more in taxes and would rely less on government subsi- dies. The negative effects would be more severe if firms moved completely outside the region, since workers would also have to move to keep their jobs.

But here again, nothing in a municipali- ty-wide living wage would encourage firms to leave the region altogether, as opposed to getting themselves just beyond the county line.

**Why Not a National Living Wage?**

The viability of the living-wage pro- posals, whether applied to government contractors alone or to all companies in a region, invites consideration of an even more ambitious proposal: a national living wage of $7.25. If that sounds outlandish, it is only because the perceptions of greed have so dominated U.S. economic policy discussions for a generation. After all, in today’s dollars, the minimum wage was $7.37 thirty years ago when the econ- omy was 50 percent less productive. If the minimum wage had just kept pace with productivity over the intervening years, it would today be $11.07. If nothing else were to change in the economy, bringing all workers up to at least $7.25 would

PN '99: June 17-20, Lowell, Massachusetts

**WORKING FOR A DECENT LIVING**

**Bridging the Gap between Labor and Community**

We are planning an exciting PN conference to be held at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell June 17-20, 1999. We ask you to do the following:

- Propose a paper, workshop, or activity! Our themes are labor and community, papers/worksheets/activities on other themes are welcome as well. Activities can include tours, charettes, meetings with local groups, participation in ongoing events, etc.
- Spread the word! Email or photocopy this announcement to other interested folks. If you would like a formatted attachment file (quickly Windows or Mac), let us know.
- If you are in the Lowell/Boston area, join the local planning committee! The local planning committee will work on planning the content, lining up co-

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Chris Tilly, Department of Regional Economic and Social Development University of Massachusetts, Lowell, MA 01854 <christ_tilly@uml.edu> (978) 934-2796; (617) 983-3202 [home] etc.

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omy was 50 percent less productive. If the minimum wage had just kept pace with productivity over the intervening years, it would today be $11.07. If nothing else were to change in the economy, bringing all workers up to at least $7.25 would require only small adjustments in income distribution. Just to illustrate the degree of redistribution necessary, the wage increases needed to bring all minimum-wage workers up to $7.25 would be equal to a reduction of only 6.6 percent in the incomes of the richest 20 percent of households, from roughly $106,600 to $100,000.

However, even this small sacrifice by the well-off could be avoided if the econ-
omy's rate of growth increased. But to think seriously about accelerating growth means confronting the commitment of Wall Street and the Federal Reserve to an economy whose real growth is slow, even while financial markets are allowed to expand at dizzying — and ultimately destabilizing — rates.

As the nineties boom economy appears to be ending, it is important to be clear on just how weak — from the stand-
point of real productive growth as opposed to speculative financial excess — this expansion has been. On average, national income grew only 2 percent between 1990 and 1997. This is in con-
trast to an average income growth rate of 4.4 percent in the sixties and an average of 3 percent in the seventies and eighties, widely considered to be decades of poor economic performance. What if the growth rate rose to an average of only 3 percent over the next ten years? In that situation, all workers earning less than $7.25 could be raised to this new mini-
mum and there would still be an additional 1,900 people per year to distribute equally to all other workers, on top of what they would otherwise receive were the econo-
my growing at 2 percent.

This growth solution is obviously much more complicated than this simple illustration can convey. For one thing, a new financial regulatory structure is clearly needed to channel funds away from stock run-ups and into productive activity. But even if new regulations could dampen speculative excesses, rapid growth still presents problems from the standpoint of business. Workers gain confidence because of the better wages and greater job security that result from a faster-grow-
ing economy, and this can lead to further demands for full employment, higher wages and improved working conditions. Businesses want to prevent workers from gaining this bargaining strength, and the job of national policymakers is to articu-
late the self-interested position of business for slow growth, as if it were the only sen-
sible policy for everyone.

Such thinking was cogently expressed before Congress in July 1997 by Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan. Testifying that the economy's perfor-
manace in 1997 was "extraordinarily" and "exceptional," he noted that a major factor contributing to this outstanding perfor-
mance was "a heightened sense of job insecurity and, as a consequence, subdued wage gains."

Thus, for Greenspan, the "economy is doing well when workers can't get raises. Could it be more clear that the real barri-
ers to achieving a national minimum wage of $7.25 are not economic but political? But how can political power be mobilized in support of economic justice? Here we return to the central importance of the liv-
ing-wage movement. Organizers are clear that their agenda includes more than pass-
ing local ordinances, even while the ordi-
nances themselves represent major victo-
ries. Tammy Johnson, until recently with Progressive Milwaukee, an affiliate of the New Party, says that because of living-
 wage campaigns, "the phrase 'living-wage job' is in the vocabulary in a way it wasn't two or three years ago. When jobs are being created, people will ask, 'Is this a liv-
able wage job?'" The director of the LA Living Wage Coalition, Madeline Janis-
Aparicio, says the goal of the campaign has been, first, "to directly affect the lives of workers who are getting a raise." But she also sees the campaign as "a tool for union organizing, for confronting the problem of wage inequality and for expressing a certain level of dignified treatment of workers." That such a campa-
ign can spark further demands on the part of workers is illustrated by the LAX union organizing drive.

The living-wage proposals gaining ground will directly contribute only mod-
estly toward eliminating poverty. But their importance far exceeds their immediate measurable impact. As more cities gain experience with these laws over the next few years, their limitations as well as strengths will become evident. The process of political and economic education will then provide a platform from which to launch more ambitious egalitari-
an wage and employment programs and to deepen the movement for economic justice in this country.

This article is reprinted with permission from the November 23, 1998 issue of The Nation.

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- Mark your calendars now! The dates will be June 17-20, 1999.

Conference Committee
Marie Kennedy, Center for Community Planning, College of Public and Community Service, University of Massachusetts, 100 Morrissey Blvd, Boston MA 02125-3393 <marie.kennedy@umass.edu> (617) 287-7262; (617) 983-3202 [home]
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PLANNERS NETWORK #132
December 4, 1994 | Families Network Forum — The Privatization of City Planning: The Role of Public, Private, and Nonprofit Sectors. | Department of City Planning and Development. | Cites the role in major land use decisions and the capital bud

April 5-6, 1995 | Urban Planning and Housing Management is hosting its third International Conference on Housing and Community Planning. Conference theme is "A Better Environment for Future Generations." The work seeks to bring together planners, developers, and others interested in meeting housing needs and enhancing environmental quality. Program includes paper presentations, roundtable discussions, exhibits, competitions, technical tours and more. Details and online registration available at: <http://www.urbanplan.org>.

April 7-8, 1995 | The Development Society of Southern Africa (DSA) is pleased to announce a call for papers for the forthcoming Biennial Conference from 7-8 April 2009 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The theme is "The Southern African Development Scenarios for the New Millennium". Conference program and papers presentation will be held at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Deadline for submission of abstracts is 30 June 2009.

June 23-24, 1999 | rails-to-trails conservancy's National Trails and Greenways Conference in Indianapolis. Over 1,000 trail and greenway advocates and experts will come together to share ideas, strategies, and success stories and to draw up a vision for the future. The conference is also an ideal place to submit a proposal for presentation. Conference Director, Dottie B. 974-551, <doug@rails-to-trails.org>


MISSOURI: St. Louis - A new report released by the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC) shows that the state's housing market is improving, with more homes being built and sold. However, the report also notes that housing affordability remains a concern for many Missouri residents.

NEBRASKA: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has announced a new program to help attract and retain more women in STEM fields. The program, called the Women in STEM Initiative, will provide mentorship, networking opportunities, and financial support to female students and researchers.

OAHU: A new study has found that Hawaii's tourism industry is facing significant challenges due to the ongoing pandemic. The study, conducted by the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), found that while visitors are returning, they are not spending as much as they did before the pandemic.

OKLAHOMA: A new report from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission has found that state officials are not always following ethical guidelines. The report recommends that the commission increase its enforcement of ethical standards and加强对 state agencies' compliance with ethical guidelines.

OREGON: A new report from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has found that the state's roads and bridges are in good condition, but that maintenance and repair are needed to keep them in top condition.

RHODE ISLAND: The Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has announced a new initiative to support small businesses in the state. The initiative, called the Rhode Island Business Accelerator, aims to provide resources and support to help small businesses grow and succeed.

SOUTH DAKOTA: A new report from the South Dakota Economic Development Authority (EDA) has found that the state's economy is growing, but that there are still challenges to be overcome, including a shortage of skilled workers and a lack of affordable housing.

TENNESSEE: A new report from the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Economic Development (TDCED) has found that the state's economy is on the rebound, with job growth and increased business activity.

VERMONT: A new report from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VAT) has found that the state's roads and bridges are in good condition, but that maintenance and repair are needed to keep them in top condition.

WISCONSIN: A new report from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce (DCC) has found that the state's economy is growing, but that there are still challenges to be overcome, including a shortage of skilled workers and a lack of affordable housing.

WYOMING: A new report from the Wyoming Economic Development Authority (EDA) has found that the state's economy is growing, but that there are still challenges to be overcome, including a shortage of skilled workers and a lack of affordable housing.
I I L I N O I S S
Chicago Mutual Housing Network is seeking an Executive Director. CMHN is a federation of housing for older adults and disabled persons, providing technical and training assistance, sponsors neighborhood development projects, and advocates on behalf of mutual housing. Qualified candidates must have experience with co-op or mutual housing development, resident training, fundraising, and non-profits. Management salary mid-$40s. For full job description write: Search, CMHN, 3143 N. Halsted St., Chicago. Bloomington/Moline Avenue, Chicago, IL 60607. (773) 278-9709, <cmhn@con.org>

The Organization of the Northside (OSN), a 25-year-old community organization on Chicago’s northside lakefront, is seeking a new one person minority Internship in Community Organization. The position is open to students of color who are interested in exploring a career in community organizing. Full-time is preferred but part-time applicants will be considered. Monthly stipend is $500. Contact: Sarah Jo, Executive Director, OSN, 312 S. Clark St, Chicago, IL 60607 (773) 769-2332, (773) 769-0729.

AORIN Housing Coordinators seeks a Project Coordinator for its Little Rock and Chicago offices to develop affordable housing for low-income people. Duties include coordination of property development, fundraising, hiring, credit counseling and staff supervision. Qualifications: housing development, strong communication skills with persons of diverse economic and racial backgrounds, highly motivated, and management experience, Renter and salary expectations to: Personnel Director, AORIN, 14737 Chicago Housing Corporation, 9202 W. Harrison Street, 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL 60620. 

L O U I S I A N A
Louisiana Public Health Institute is seeking an Executive Director. Requirements: graduate degree in public health or business administration, minimum of five years experience in public health, at least five of which are in management; educational demonstrated in interpersonal, oral and written communications, entrepreneurial skills, successful experience in fundraising, including grant development and collaboration with various public/private entities, and willingness to travel inside and outside the state. (504) 568-8740 orHdr@lpin.org, to the Assistant Secretary's Office, PO Box 60650, New Orleans, LA 70110.

N E W J E R S E Y
The Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) at Rutgers University is seeking a Post-Doctoral Fellow for a one-year non-tenure appointment beginning in the fall of 2019. Applicants must have a strong interest in research, 3 letters of recommendation and at least five years of experience in community development, or a related field. For more information on the position, go to: http://www.cupr.rutgers.edu/positions. 

I D A H O
Boise Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., a 10-year-old housing and community development financial institution, is seeking an Executive Director. Requirements: B.A. or equivalent, minimum five years management of nonprofit or for-profit organization, responsible to Board of Directors for implementation of policies by forming partnerships, marketing to key external audiences, raising and operating capital. Position includes a $30,000 living expense plus staff of 40. Major duties and responsibilities include strategic planning, development, administration, and human resources. The candidate will have demonstrated

NEW JERSEY
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N.Y.C. Community Housing and Development Corporation seeks experienced Housing Director. Responsibilities include oversight of existing and planned physical and financial programs and property management staff, construction of affordable housing; program administration; and compliance with federal, state and local regulations; rental accounting and collections, financial analysis and budgeting, and affordable housing loan underwriting.

McGovern-Codd Fellows, 3rd Annual New York Child Welfare Leadership Conference, Center for Children's Advocacy. For more info (514) 942-6399, <cgmp@cgmp.org>. Rutgers University. For more info, visit <www.rutgers.edu>

The Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF) is a nationally-recognized association of municipalities that promote an equitable and sustainable future for their communities. CLF is seeking an experienced full-time funded adult training initiative and assist with the development of resources to increase service capacity. Salary $30,000-$40,000. Contact: <cclf@ccf.org>, P.O. Box 270-1701.

Hope Community Inc. is seeking a Communications & Fundraising Officer. Must have demonstrated experience in implementing effective internal and/or external communications strategies, and database design and/or management, preferably to relate to grant management/ tracking, Accessible for work effectively in a collaborative and team-based environment; implementing internal and external communications strategies that result in improved stakeholder relations and that effectively communicate the mission, policies and programmatic initiatives of one of New York City’s largest community-based organizations. Salary: $40,000-$50,000. Respond to: CFRO Mark Alexander, Hope Community Inc., 174 East 104th Street, New York, NY 10029.

Levitan Alternative Fund is looking for an Executive Director with an undergraduate or graduate degree, three to five years managerial experience in community development, fund raising, and lending. Contact: <CEFunds.com>, (914) 237-2788, or fax (914) 219-3668.

Rural Opportunities, Inc., a 29-year-old housing and community development organization, is looking for a Housing Director. Required experience: B.A/S degree or equivalent education, five years management experience including supervision, ability to develop affordable housing assistance programs and/or training and employment assistance programs, and demonstrated success in all aspects of a multi-county community development director’s role. Salary range: $30,000-$40,000. Respond to: <rg@roinc.org>, (718) 740-3577, or fax (718) 740-7552. ruralopportunities.org.

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The Vermont Community Development Corporation (VCDC) is seeking for four Coordinators for the New York City Community Reinvestment Task Force, a citywide network that advocates for fair banking practices in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, trade regulatory agencies and legislative developments, and promotes regulatory accountability. Qualifications: BA, excellent communication skills, demonstrated commitment to social and economic justice. Advanced degree and professional experience preferred. Resume and cover letter to NFBAD 120 Harris Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10006.

The Weirton Partnership nonprofit serving Weirton, West Virginia, is seeking a part-time full-time position. Responsibilities include conducting evaluations, coordinating the community’s existing programs, and developing new community programs in a variety of areas. Contact: Maria F. Galluzzo, 14 West Main Street, Weirton, WV 26062. Weirton Partnership.

Virginia Community Development Corporation (VCDC) seeks a Community and Economic Development Specialist. This position is responsible for developing and implementing new programs that focus on expanding economic opportunities. Full-time, salary range $25,000-$35,000. Contact: <vcdc@vcdc.org>, (540) 614-2506. VCDC works to create sustainable and diverse communities. VCDC provides technical assistance to local governments and communities, and provides training for community leaders. Contact: <vcdc@vcdc.org>, (540) 614-2506.

Vermont Community Department Corporation (VCDC) is seeking a Community and Economic Development Specialist. This position is responsible for developing and implementing new programs that focus on expanding economic opportunities. Full-time, salary range $25,000-$35,000. Contact: <vcdc@vcdc.org>, (540) 614-2506. VCDC works to create sustainable and diverse communities. VCDC provides technical assistance to local governments and communities, and provides training for community leaders. Contact: <vcdc@vcdc.org>, (540) 614-2506.
N.Y.C. Community Housing and Development Department seeks experienced Housing Director. Responsibilities include oversight of existing programs, and development and implementation of creative housing management and income management programs. Must have 5 years experience in affordable housing finance, ability to coordinate multi-family housing projects, negotiate with contractors and lenders, analyze financial and economic budgets; excellent verbal (bilingual preferred) and written skills. Salary commensurate with experience. Send resume to Ms. Stemler, 500 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019, Fax: (212) 740-5077.

New York City: Community-based organizations seek a Field Organizer. Responsibilities include cultivating relationships and property management with existing tenants/property management, construction of new multi-site N project. Strong background in leadership development, fundraising, real estate finance and community revitalization. Ability to work with different community groups, foundations, corporations, and government agencies. Competitive salary. Must have a valid New York City residency required. Cover letter and resume to Richard Huynh, Program Coordinator, LISC, 735 3rd Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

Pennsylvania: Philadelphia Jobs Initiative, a nationally recognized community development financial institution, seeks a Director of Jobs Initiative Program. The initiative is part of a city-wide multi-institutional initiative working to address the needs of under-income communities with jobs. Candidate should have excellent written and verbal communication and analytical skills and at least three years experience in workforce development, including program development, grant writing, community resource management or evaluation. Apply to: Jeremy Novak, CEO, Delaware Valley Community Redevelopment Fund, 718 Arch Street, Suite 300, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

New York:

The Museum of Modern Art, the world’s largest museum focusing on modern and contemporary art, seeks a Curator for its Department of Photographs. The successful candidate will develop and implement a comprehensive program of exhibitions, publications, and educational programs. The Curator will have at least five years of experience in the field of photography and a strong record of curatorial achievement. Salary commensurate. Send resume, resume and letter of interest, three letters of recommendation, and portfolio to: The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019.

The New York University School of Professional Studies seeks an Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban Policy and Planning. Teaching responsibilities include a graduate seminar, graduate and undergraduate courses in urban policy and planning, and a graduate seminar in urban analysis and planning. Salary commensurate with experience. Send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, description of teaching and research interests, and three letters of recommendation to: Dean of Faculty, School of Professional Studies, New York University, 222 South 7th Street, New York, NY 10003.

The New York University School of Professional Studies seeks a Lecturer in the Department of Urban Policy and Planning. Teaching responsibilities include a graduate seminar, graduate and undergraduate courses in urban policy and planning, and a graduate seminar in urban analysis and planning. Salary commensurate with experience. Send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, description of teaching and research interests, and three letters of recommendation to: Dean of Faculty, School of Professional Studies, New York University, 222 South 7th Street, New York, NY 10003.

The New School for Social Research seeks an Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban Policy and Planning. Teaching responsibilities include a graduate seminar, graduate and undergraduate courses in urban policy and planning, and a graduate seminar in urban analysis and planning. Salary commensurate with experience. Send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, description of teaching and research interests, and three letters of recommendation to: Dean of Faculty, School of Professional Studies, New York University, 222 South 7th Street, New York, NY 10003.

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PLANNERS NETWORK

SUSTAINER CAMPAIGN

Over the last ten months, a good number of NPers have stepped forward to help Planners Network as Sustaining Members with contributions of $100. The Sustainer Campaign has raised $4,000 of the $5,000 we need to cover our annual deficit — a budget shortage that results partly from not holding an annual conference this year.

1998 has been an extraordinary year of strength and growth for PN. With our new by-laws, our new, member-elected Steering Committee, new local “chapters” of PN forming in Illinois and elsewhere, a dynamic conference on Labor and Community planned for next June, and an expanded staff of volunteers working on this newsletter, PN is set to make 1999 even better.

Recent issues of the newsletter have featured a wide array of “Whiter PNP” commentaries in which members have initiatied new projects and articulated new objectives that are invigorating PN.

This check, you send today makes it possible for PN to support these new activities and to sustain and continue PN’s growth as a strong voice for progressive, community-based planning. Member contributions are PN’s only source of income, and the average contribution is $25.

Our Goal is 50 Contributions of at least $100 each.

With $1,000 left to reach our goal, we need just ten more Sustaining Members. Won’t you consider becoming one of them? Your contribution to PN is tax-deductible. Send a check to:

PLANNERS NETWORK
Attn: Dalila Hall
379 DeKalb Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11205

FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS, Planners Network has been a voice for progressive professionals and activists concerned with urban planning and social justice. PN’s 1,000 members receive this bimonthly magazine, network online with PN-Net, and take part in the annual conference. PN also gives progressive ideas a voice in the mainstream planning profession by organizing seminars at annual conferences of the American Planning Association and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning.

The PN Conference has been held annually each spring since 1994. These gatherings combine speakers and workshops with exchanges involving local communities. PN conferences engage in discussions that help inform political strategies at the local, national, and international levels. The 1999 conference will be held June 17-20 in Lowell, MA (see pages 11 and 17). Recent conferences have been held in Washington, D.C., East St. Louis, Ill., Brooklyn, NY, and Pomona, CA.

Whether face-to-face, in print, or over the internet, NPers are part of a network that shares progressive ideas and experiences. Join Planners Network and make a difference while sharing your ideas and enthusiasm with others!

Annual financial contributions are voluntary, but we need funds for operating expenses. The Steering Committee recommends the following amounts as minimums for Network members:

$15 for those with incomes under $25,000, students, and unemployed
$25 for those earning between $25,000 and $50,000
$45 for those earning over $50,000
$30 for organizations and libraries
$100 for Sustaining Members — if you earn over $50,000, won’t you consider helping at this level?

Your Participation Wanted!

Future issues will cover energy policies, planning and race, and other topics.

Please submit articles, notes, updates, and resources typed and double-spaced. Feature articles of 500 to 1,000 words are always welcome. Submissions on disk or by email are greatly appreciated. All electronic submissions should be sent as ASCII text. Send your submissions, resources or job listings to the editors at <pnp@pratt.edu> or the address given at left. All updates should be directed to Dalila Hall, <dhalila@pratt.edu>.

Mail This Form To:

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Brooklyn, NY 11205

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I’m a renewing member — Keep the faith!

Enclose my check payable to PLANNERS NETWORK for $__________

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Organization: _________________________

Street: _______________________________

City________________ State____ Zip Code____

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NOTES: Your contribution is tax-deductible.

International members, please send a check in U.S. funds as we are unable to accept payment by credit cards or in other currency at this time.

Thanks!
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YOUR LAST ISSUE?
The date on your mailing label indicates when your current membership expires — make sure to renew if this date is coming up soon! If it is already expired, we need to hear from you before May 1st or you won't receive PN anymore. See the inside back page for contribution suggestions. Thanks for your continued support!
The living wage is not the same as the minimum wage. The living wage is based on the amount an individual needs to earn to cover the basic costs of living. Because living costs vary in different parts of the country, there is a different rate for London and the rest of the UK. It is promoted by the Living Wage Foundation. It has received widespread political support, but limited endorsement by employers. Prime Minister David Cameron has said he supports the idea in principle. The living wage model is a step up from poverty as measured by the poverty thresholds but it is a small step up, one that accounts for only the basic needs of a family. The living wage model does not allow for what many consider the basic necessities enjoyed by many Americans. It does not budget funds for pre-prepared meals or those eaten in restaurants. It does not include money for entertainment nor does it allocate leisure time for unpaid vacations or holidays.