

## LIVING WAGE ORDINANCE AND SERVICE CONTRACTOR WORKER RETENTION ORDINANCE

### **City of Los Angeles LIVING WAGE ORDINANCE (Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 10.37 et seq.)**

#### **1. What is the Living Wage Ordinance?**

The Living Wage Ordinance (LWO) requires employers who have agreements with the City to pay their employees at least a minimum “living wage” and to provide certain benefits. If the agreement is subject to the LWO, the employer must do the following:

- Pay employees working on the subject agreement a wage rate that is at least equal to the “living wage” rate. The “living wage” is adjusted annually and becomes effective July 1 of each year. Employers can obtain information about the living wage rate currently in effect by going to the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Contract Administration, Office of Contract Compliance (OCC) website at [www.bca.lacity.gov/contracting](http://www.bca.lacity.gov/contracting).
- Provide employees with at least 12 paid days off per year for sick leave, vacation, or personal necessity; and at least 10 unpaid sick days off per year.
- Tell employees who make less than \$12.00 per hour that they may qualify for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and provide them with the forms required to apply for the credit.
- Cooperate with the City by providing access to the work site and to payroll and related documents so that the City can determine if the employer is complying with the LWO.
- Pledge to comply with federal laws prohibiting an employer from retaliating against employees for union organizing.
- Not retaliate against any employee who makes claims about non-compliance with the LWO.

#### **2. When was the Ordinance adopted?**

The LWO was adopted in May, 1997 and amended in January, 1999.

#### **3. What types of agreements are subject to the Ordinance?**

Generally, the LWO covers the following types of agreements:

- An agreement in an amount over \$25,000.00 and for at least three months in which an employer will provide services to or for the City.

**ATTACHMENT 2**

- An agreement for the lease or license of City property if the service being performed on the property is something that City employees would otherwise do.
- An agreement for the lease or license of City property that is in a location where a substantial number of the general public might visit.
- An agreement in which the City gives financial assistance for the purpose of promoting economic development or job growth.
- An agreement in which the City determines that applying the LWO would be in the best interest of the City.

**4. Are there any requirements that would apply to an employer who does not have an agreement with the City that is subject to the LWO?**

All employers are required to comply with the LWO's prohibition against retaliation, even if the employer does not have an agreement with the City that is subject to the Ordinance.

**5. Are all employees covered by the Ordinance?**

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**6. Are an employer's subcontractors subject to the requirements of the Ordinance?**

A subcontractor may be covered by the Ordinance if the subcontractor performs work on the subject agreement. If so, the subcontractor must also comply with the requirements of the LWO, including all reporting requirements. The prime contractor is responsible for the making sure that the subcontractor complies with the LWO.

**7. What happens if an employer is found to be in violation of the Ordinance?**

Payments due may be withheld. Also, the employer may be deemed to be in material breach of the agreement. When that happens, the City may take the following steps:

- Terminate the agreement and pursue all available contractual remedies.
- Debar the employer from doing business with the City for three (3) years or until all penalties and restitution have been fully paid, whichever occurs last.
- Bring a lawsuit against the employer for all unpaid wages and health benefit premiums and/or seek a fine of up to one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each day the violation remains uncorrected.

**8. What if a subcontractor is found to be in violation of the Ordinance?**

Because the prime contractor is responsible for making sure that all its subcontractors comply with the LWO, the sanctions listed in answer #8 may be applied to the prime contractor if the subcontractor does not correct the violation(s).

### **9. What can an employee do if an employer is in violation of the Ordinance?**

The Employee Can submit a complaint to the Office of Contract Compliance which will investigate the complaint. Also, the employee can bring his or her own lawsuit against the employer for:

- Back pay for failing to pay the correct wages or correct health benefit premiums.
- Reinstatement and back pay for retaliation.
- Triple the amount of the back pay that is owed if the violation was found by the court to be willful.

### **10. Are there any exemptions available under the Ordinance?**

An employer may apply for an exemption based on the following categories:

- Service agreements that are less than 3 months or \$25,000 or less.
- Agreements for the purchase of goods, property, or the leasing of property (with City as the lessee).
- Construction contracts that do not meet the definition of a service agreement.
- Employees who are required to have an occupational license in order to provide services to or for the City are exempt.
- Employers who are party to a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that has language stating that the CBA shall supersede the LWO.
- Financial assistance recipients who meet the requirements stated in Section 10.37.1(c) of the LWO.
- Employers (contractors, subcontractors, financial assistance recipients) organized under IRS code, Section 501(c)(3) whose chief executive officer's hourly wage rate is less than eight times the hourly wage rate of the lowest paid worker are to be exempt. However, this exemption does not apply to child care workers.
- Lessees or licensees who have no more than a total of seven employees.
- One-person contractors, lessees, licensees or financial assistance recipients who employ no workers.
- Agreements that involve other governmental entities.

### **11. Who is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Ordinance?**

The Department of Public Works, Bureau of Contract Administration, Office of Contract Compliance, located at 1149 S. Broadway, Suite 300, Los Angeles, CA 90015. For additional information, please call (213) 847-1922, send an e-mail inquiry to [bca.eeoe@lacity.org](mailto:bca.eeoe@lacity.org), or go to the Office of Contract Compliance website at <http://bca.lacity.org>.

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**Service Contractor Worker Retention Ordinance**  
**(Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 10.36 et seq.)**

**1. What is the Service Contractor Worker Retention Ordinance?**

The Service Contractor Worker Retention Ordinance (SCWRO), effective May, 1996, requires a successor contractor and its subcontractors to retain for a 90-day period certain employees who worked for the terminated contractor or its subcontractors for at least 12 months. (See also Question #7 regarding which employees are covered.)

**2. What is a successor contractor?**

A successor contractor is one who has been awarded an agreement to provide services to or for the City that are similar to those that were provided under a recently terminated agreement.

**3. What types of agreements are covered by the ordinance?**

The SCWRO covers the following types of agreements:

- For services in an amount over \$25,000.00 and for at least three months.
- In which the primary purpose is to provide services to or for the City (including leases and licenses).
- In which the City provides financial assistance for the purpose of promoting economic development or job growth.

**4. What does the Ordinance require a terminated contractor to do?**

The SCWRO requires the terminated contractor to provide the awarding authority with the names, addresses, dates of hire, hourly wage, and job classes of each employee who worked on the City agreement for that terminated contractor or its subcontractor. The awarding authority will provide the information to the successor contractor.

**5. What does the Ordinance require a successor contractor to do?**

The Ordinance requires the successor contractor to:

- Offer employment and retain for a 90-day period the employees who worked for at least 12 months for the terminated contractor or its subcontractors.
- Not discharge the employees retained under the SCWRO without cause during the 90-day period.
- Perform a written performance evaluation of each employee retained under the SCWRO at the end of the 90-day period.

**6. Do the employees retained under the Ordinance receive any additional protection?**

Employees retained under the SCWRO are employed under the terms and conditions of the successor contractor or as required by law. However, if the agreement the employees are working under is subject to the Living Wage Ordinance (LWO), the employees must be paid the wage rate and be provided the benefits required by the LWO.

**7. Does the successor contractor have to retain all the prior contractor's employees?**

The SCWRO covers only employees who meet all the following requirements:

- Earn less than \$15.00 per hour.
- Primary job is in the City working on or under the City agreement.
- Worked for the terminated contractor or its subcontractor for the preceding 12 months or longer.
- Not a managerial, supervisory, or confidential employee; or an employee required to possess and occupational license.

**8. What if the successor contractor determines that fewer employees are required to provide the services than were required by the prior contractor?**

The names of the affected employees will be placed in order by seniority within each job classification. The successor contractor is required to retain employees based on seniority. The names of employees not retained will be placed on a preferential hiring list from which the successor contractor must use for subsequent hires.

**9. What happens if an employee is discharged in violation of the Ordinance?**

The employee may bring a lawsuit against the successor contractor. The employee can also submit a complaint to the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Contract Administration, Office of Contract Compliance which will investigate the complaint.

**10. What if a contractor is found to be in violation of the Ordinance?**

The City may terminate the agreement or pursue other legal remedies.

**11. Who is responsible for administering and enforcing the Ordinance?**

The Department of Public Works, Bureau of Contract Administration, Office of Contract Compliance, located at 1149 S. Broadway, Suite 300, Los Angeles, CA 90015. For additional information, please call (213) 847-2625, send an e-mail inquiry to [bca.eeoe@lacity.org](mailto:bca.eeoe@lacity.org), or go to the Office of Contract Compliance website at <http://bca.lacity.org>.