

Geo Index Listing for Canadian Congregations

Compiled by the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances

using information from the Economic Research Institute (ERI) as of October 2021

Explanation

In order to help leaders in Canadian congregations make good decisions about compensation for their staff, the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances has provided information about the cost of wages and cost of living for congregational locations in Canada, based on information from the Economic Research Institute (ERI). This Geo Index Listing has been updated in March 2022 for the first time since 2016.

For each location, we have provided a **cost of wages** figure (the Geo Index) and the **cost of living**, both relative to Canadian averages. In the compensation world, the generally accepted practice is to base salaries in a given location on the cost of wages in that area. The cost of living is also important, especially to people considering a move to a new location, as it gives prospective employees an idea of how much it will cost to live there. While these numbers tend to be directionally similar (i.e., higher cost of wages usually tracks with higher cost of living), there is a lot more variability in cost of living than in cost of wages.

A Note about UUA Salary Tables

The salary tables found on the [UUA Salary Recommendations for Congregational Staff](#) page are based on US wage norms and are posted in US dollars. As ERI explains, Canadian provinces and industries value jobs differently from their US counterparts, and expenditure patterns and costs also vary from US patterns. In addition, UUA salary tables do not account for the exchange rate. Thus, while the cost of wages and cost of living information provided here can aid your decision-making, we urge caution in directly applying the current UUA salary tables to Canadian locations.

Cross-Border Philosophy

Our intent is to help Canadian congregations compensate for staff positions based on Canadian norms and expectations. Employees relocating from the US should not expect dollar-for-dollar equivalence to US recommendations.

Information

Cost of Wages

Wage data for congregational locations in Canada has been gathered in Canadian dollars and compared to the Canadian national average.

Geo Indices range from Geo Index 1 to Geo Index 7, with Geo Index 3 representing congregations in communities where the average wage paid falls close to the national average.

The Geo Index reflects the relative **cost of wages** in a given community:

Geo Index 1: Average wages below 91 percent of the national average

Geo Index 2: Average wages between 91 and 96.9 percent of national average

Geo Index 3: Average wages between 97 and 102.9 percent of national average

Geo Index 4: Average wages between 103 and 108.9 percent of national average

Geo Index 5: Average wages between 109 and 114.9 percent of national average

Geo Index 6: Average wages between 115 and 120.9 percent of national average

Geo Index 7: Average wages equal to 121 percent or more of national average

Wage disparity across Canadian locations is not as great as that in the US. There are no Canadian congregations in communities that exceed 114.9% of the national average so Geo Indices 6 and 7 are not utilized.

Cost of Living

The **cost of living** shows how expensive it is to live in a certain location, based on the prices of goods (including housing) and services relative to the Canadian national average. Congregations in high cost of living areas should be prepared to increase salaries and/or moving expenses to ensure the competitiveness of their position openings and affordability for their staff, especially for those relocating from lower-cost areas.

Professionals seeking to relocate should be aware of the cost of living and housing in their potential new location. In this Geo Index Listing, we have included each location's cost of living as a percent above or below the Canadian average, as reported by the Economic Research Institute. There is no mathematical adjustment to be made; it is simply additional information for congregations and employees.

Congregation	Province	Meeting City	2021 Geo Index	Cost of Living vs CAN average
Calgary Unitarians	Alberta	Calgary	5	+25
Unitarian Church of Edmonton	Alberta	Edmonton	4	+18
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Lethbridge	Alberta	Lethbridge	3	+7
Westwood Unitarian Congregation	Alberta	Edmonton	4	+9
Beacon Unitarian Church	British Columbia	New Westminster	4	+25
Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation	British Columbia	Victoria	4	+26

Congregation	Province	Meeting City	2021 Geo Index	Cost of Living vs CAN average
Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship	British Columbia	Comox	3	+11
First Unitarian Church of Victoria	British Columbia	Victoria	4	+16
First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo	British Columbia	Nanaimo	3	+3
Kelowna Unitarians	British Columbia	Kelowna	3	+16
Nelson Unitarian Spiritual Centre	British Columbia	Nelson	3	0
North Shore Unitarian Church	British Columbia	West Vancouver	4	+58
South Fraser Unitarian	British Columbia	Surrey	4	+29
Unitarian Fellowship of Salt Spring Island	British Columbia	Salt Spring Island	3	-3
Vancouver Unitarians	British Columbia	Vancouver	4	+53
First UU Church of Winnipeg Inc.	Manitoba	Winnipeg	3	+11
Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton	New Brunswick	Fredericton	2	+5
Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax	Nova Scotia	Halifax	2	+12
Don Heights Unitarian Congregation	Ontario	Toronto	4	+38
First Unitarian Church of Hamilton Inc.	Ontario	Hamilton	3	+11
First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa	Ontario	Ottawa	3	+4
First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto	Ontario	Toronto	4	+30
Grand River Unitarian Congregation	Ontario	Kitchener	3	+16
Huronian Unitarian Fellowship	Ontario	Orillia	3	+11
Kingston Unitarian Fellowship	Ontario	Kingston	3	+13
Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship	Ontario	Thunder Bay	3	+6

Congregation	Province	Meeting City	2021 Geo Index	Cost of Living vs CAN average
Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation	Ontario	Toronto	4	+37
Stratford* (emerging)	Ontario	Sarnia	4	+8
Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga	Ontario	Mississauga	3	+26
Unitarian Congregation of Guelph	Ontario	Guelph	3	+11
Unitarian Congregation of Niagara	Ontario	St. Catharines	3	+7
Unitarian Fellowship of London	Ontario	London	3	+9
Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto	Ontario	Etobicoke	4	+30
Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough	Ontario	Peterborough	3	+8
Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia-Port Huron	Ontario	Sarnia	4	+8
Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda	Ontario	Ruthven	3	+2
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Durham	Ontario	Whitby (Brooklin)	4	+14
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa	Ontario	Ottawa	4	+8
Lakeshore UU Congregation	Québec	Lachine	3	+15
Unitarian Church of Montreal	Québec	Montreal	3	+37
Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hatley	Québec	North Hatley	1	0
Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon	3	+11
Unitarian Fellowship of Regina	Saskatchewan	Regina	3	+13