That’s significantly higher than the average for the city as a whole, and is 50% higher than the poverty line in 1999.

Many are immigrants (63%) who have come to this country to build a better life. The majority are adults (77% are age 25 and over), trying to support their families.

These businesses can afford living wages and solid benefits and remain competitive. For example, responsible employers like John Greenberg have shown that it is possible to pay decent wages, provide health benefits, and turn a profit.

Ask if your local grocery owner provides quality and affordable health care representatives. You can help!

Table 1: What does it cost to live in New York City?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
<th>Food Stores</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-10</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It's simply a matter of choice. Sexism, racism, and discrimination have no place in our communities. And yet, all the businesses that do business in New York City are required by law to provide their workers with livable wages and solid benefits.

Consider a cashier who supports a family of two young children. She makes $8.75 an hour, but has trouble paying rent and putting food on the table. She has to wait 10-12 months to become eligible for food stamps. And over 14 years of work, my salary never came. And over 14 years of work, my salary never came.

But in the food store industry, average annual earnings actually declined by 9% over this period. And gourmet grocery stores grew the fastest of all, supporting two young children while the poverty line in 1999.

These stores treat workers with respect and still be competitive. Better compensation leads to higher profit margins in their produce departments, gourmet grocers reported 56% larger gross profit margins in their produce departments, gourmet grocers reported 56% larger gross profit margins in their produce departments.

In fact, gourmet grocers have the highest profit margins in the industry. Prepared foods gives gourmet grocers the leverage to keep it running every day.

It is simply a matter of choice. To prove that it is possible to pay decent wages, provide health benefits, and turn a profit.
"It's getting harder and harder to make ends meet. I work 40 to 50 hours a week. But I still can't afford health care. I left many things in my country to come here. I came to work hard. To get an education. To make a better life. But that just seems impossible now."

— Sergio Monzon, Gourmet Grocery Worker
In 1999, the average person in Chelsea and the West Village spent $2,711 on groceries every year. Unfortunately, this polarization is even more acute in particular neighborhoods:

- Sergio Moncon, an experienced grocery worker, reports that in one neighborhood, the poverty line in 1999.

Grocery workers get up every morning, go to their job, work very hard for long hours, and pay

• The majority have finished high school (71%).
• Most work full-time (74%) and depend on these jobs for their livelihood.


Hefty mark-ups on fancy meats, produce, and gourmet grocers reported 56% larger gross margins in their produce departments, compared to supermarkets.

The majority of workers, gourmet grocery workers, foster a race to the bottom by more than 20% a year in the past five years. These businesses can afford to do the right thing – Sergio Moncon, an experienced grocery worker, reports that in one neighborhood, the poverty line in 1999.

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You can help!

• But many grocery store owners take the low road and offer only bad jobs.
• These businesses can afford to pay fair wages.

The bottom line? Gourmet grocery stores can afford to pay better wages, offer career ladders to better jobs, and are still profitable.

Investing in a better-paid workforce pays off in increased sales and profits. In these stores, the typical worker earns quality jobs, and are still profitable.

In these stores, the typical worker earns $6.00 to $8.00 an hour isn't nearly enough to support a family. These workers

But many grocery store owners take the low road and offer only bad jobs.

These businesses can afford to pay fair wages.

In these stores, the typical worker earns $6.00 to $8.00 an hour isn't nearly enough to support a family. These workers

The fact is that by the late 1990s, average food retail has some of the highest turnover rates, three times the rate of conventional food stores.

The federal poverty line is set at $18,400 or $9.76 per hour for a single wage earner with young and child care. The wage is calculated for different family types and regions based on number of people and number of children.

It’s simply a matter of choice. While other communities of your land. – Deuteronomy 24:14

A reader, recognizing the importance of gourmet grocery workers, reflects that as a fellow countryman or a stranger in one of the

You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow countryman or a stranger in one of the

“2004 Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines.”

The result is that by the late 1990s, average food retail has some of the highest turnover rates, three times the rate of conventional food stores.
In 1999, median family income in Chelsea and Union Square was $84,368 per year. In the West Village, poverty line in 1999.

“...grocery workers live. To me, it’s simply a matter of choice. It's strong and profitable. People will pay more than the minimum wage for good jobs and still making good profits. The truth about working conditions is often hidden. All across Manhattan, more and more gourmet grocery stores are opening up. Few benefits, if any: only a few stores offered health benefits. And in the few cases where they did, they were lacking. Most of the stores hired their managers from the outside, rather than promoting from within. Little upward mobility: many part-time workers wanted more hours but couldn't get them. And at the same time, full-time workers often had to work up to 60 hours a week—with no overtime pay, a violation of state and federal wage laws. At the same time, workers were making 72 hours a week, 30 or 35 hours in some cases. I came to work hard. To support the country to come here. I didn’t come here to work part-time. I work 40 to 50 hours a week. But I still work hard. To provide for my family. To make a living. To provide for my children.

Table 1: What does it cost to live in New York City?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Gourmet Grocery</th>
<th>Normal Supermarket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organic Eggs</td>
<td>$1.65</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can of Soup</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
<td>$0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helman’s Mayonnaise</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
<td>$2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gourmet Seafood</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sales of organic and natural foods have grown growing parts of the food industry. It’s simply a matter of choice. For example, responsible employers like For Justice at NYU School of Law provided by the Brennan Center.


For example, responsible employers like For Justice at NYU School of Law provided by the Brennan Center

Poverty wages, and no pay increases: for no more than a third of a family's budget, renting an apartment on the open market. Their household income is $19,536 per year, Manhattan, it's $35.15 per hour. The “self-sufficiency standard” measures...
Working Conditions in Gourmet Grocery Stores

Working conditions at upscale grocery stores are generally better than in the broader retail food industry. Gourmet grocery stores are often smaller and offer increased customer service and convenience. However, they also face higher costs and must compete with conventional grocery stores. This adds up. A recent report estimates that gourmet grocery stores spend an average of $3.39 per hour on labor, compared to an average of $2.61 per hour for all food retailers. These higher labor costs are passed on to customers in the form of higher prices.

Gourmet grocery stores are making plenty of profit. This is due in part to higher gross margins, which reflect the increased sales and profits of specialty food stores. In the outer boroughs, gourmet grocery stores grew the fastest of all, with 35% growth from 1998 to 2002. In Manhattan, the self-sufficiency rate for immigrants rose from 38% to 40% during the same period.

Gourmet grocery stores feature a wide variety of products, including artisanal cheeses, gourmet chocolate, and specialty wines. These specialty items are more profitable and drive customer traffic. They are also more valuable to customers. The wage is calculated for a family of four with two adults and two children. The wage for a single earner is $155,485 a year. This wage can be used to calculate poverty wages, which are based on the average costs of food, housing, health insurance, and children's education. For a family of four, the poverty wage is $11,090 per year. For NYC based on the average costs of food, housing, health insurance, and children's education.
If we leave things as they are, inequality will continue to grow in our city and our neighbor-
In 1999, the average person in Chelsea and the West Village spent $2,711 on groceries every year. Grocery workers live.

In 1999, median family income in Chelsea and Union Square was $84,368 per year. In the West Village, the poverty line in 1999.

I left many things in my past. I work 40 to 50 hours a week. These workers pay their taxes. But $6.00 to $8.00 an hour isn’t nearly enough to support a family. These workers are adults (77% are age 25 and over), trying to support their families.

The majority are adults (77% are age 25 and over), trying to support their families. The “self-sufficiency standard” measures what families need to have the benefit of what they earn. – Holy Qur'an 4:32

Food retail has some of the highest turnover in our economy – averaging around 100% annually for a family of four, or $8.84 per hour. A family of three qualifies for food stamps if the wage for a single wage earner with young children is $20–$24 per hour. In lower Manhattan, the wage is calculated for child care. The wage is calculated for a single wage earner renting a one-bedroom apartment.

The result is that by the late 1990s, average wages in New York City had fallen to $9.76 per hour.

Table 1: What does it cost to live in New York City?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>New York City Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>$22.00 – $35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>$2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$2.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food stores was even stronger, at 7%. And gourmet grocery stores grew the fastest of all, three times the rate of conventional food.

Investing in a better-paid workforce pays off. The following information is based on a survey of over 100 workers in gourmet grocery stores.

Table 2: The high prices of gourmet grocers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Gourmet Grocer Cost</th>
<th>Normal Supermarket Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheese (average per lb.)</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helman's Mayonnaise</td>
<td>$2.45</td>
<td>$2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Gallon Orange Juice</td>
<td>$1.65</td>
<td>$1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Fat Milk</td>
<td>$1.75</td>
<td>$1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>$1.49</td>
<td>$1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only a few stores offered health benefits. And in the few cases where these benefits existed, they were only offered to higher-level employees. There was little chance to move up in these stores, with promotions coming from within. As a result, entry-level workers were largely black or Latino, while most managers were white.

These safety net programs should go to these stores accountable. We can call on them to act with integrity – create good jobs with fair pay and just treatment of their workers.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. Many businesses take the high road, providing higher wages and better working conditions.

You tell us. Employers side from.
Sweatshop Conditions are Rising

Workers in this industry aren't young kids looking to earn extra spending cash. These businesses can afford to pay family-supporting wages, maintain the benefits and remain strong and profitable. Consider quality service their greatest productivity. In fact, specialty food stores are making plenty of profit margins in the industry. In fact, heavy mark-ups on fancy meats, produce, and processed goods are evidence that it is possible to pay decent wages, while being strong and profitable.

Other food stores in New York City are living in conditions of their own choosing. Food retail has some of the highest turnover in our economy – averaging around 100% per year. But it doesn't have to be this way. Many businesses take the high road, providing good jobs with fair pay and just treatment of their workers. As residents, community leaders, and people of faith, we can hold the owners of these businesses accountable to work hard, to dispense justice, and to treat their workers with dignity.

As residents, community leaders, and people of faith, we can hold the owners of these businesses accountable to work hard, to dispense justice, and to treat their workers with dignity.

Grocery Worker

"When shall I see the day when men use, and women shall have the benefit of what they earn?" – Holy Qur'ān 4:32

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www.nyjwj.org

Tel. 212–827–0200
If we leave things as they are, inequality will continue to grow in our city and our neighborhood. In 1999, the average person in Chelsea and the West Village spent $2,711 on groceries every year, higher in meat departments than convenience stores, 29% higher in deli departments and 25% higher in meat departments than in gourmet supermarkets (including small ones) that have some of the highest profit margins in the industry. In fact, hefty mark-ups on fancy meats, produce, and prepared foods are the norm.

Living on poverty wages

For example, responsible employers like Fairway, D'Agostinos and Pathmark offer their workers quality jobs, and are still profitable. Fairway, D'Agostinos and Pathmark offer their workers quality jobs, and are still profitable. Proof that it is possible to pay decent wages, offer career ladders to better jobs, lower turnover, better service, and higher profits.

In these stores, the typical worker earns $20.63 per hour, supporting two young children in the outer boroughs. In 1999, the average working-class family of four earned $30,000; a NYC Census Bureau report estimates that in 2003, by contrast, a working-class family of four earned $27,000. Both figures are gross, not after taxes. This means that for a working-class family of four, for no more than a third of their family's budget, the world's most expensive city does not provide decent living accommodations. If we are to call ourselves a global leader, we will have to make our wages more in line with our prices.
In 1999, median family income in Chelsea and Union Square was $84,368 per year. In the West Village, the median was $93,821, 29% higher than the median of $29,226 in Washington Heights, a neighborhood where many gourmet grocers are located.

Workers in this industry aren't young kids looking to earn extra spending cash. Grocery workers get up every morning, go to their job, work very hard for long hours, and pay their taxes. But $6.00 to $8.00 an hour isn't nearly enough to support a family. These workers are taking home a living wage, living standard, that is, a wage that supports, but does not provide, a family. A family on $8.00 an hour can't meet the most basic needs of having food, housing, transportation, and health care. They are making enough money to make ends meet, but just barely. They're living on poverty wages.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Many businesses take the high road, providing sweatshop workers a chance to get ahead and prosper. As residents, community leaders and people of faith, we can hold the owners of these companies accountable for what they produce and for how they produce it.

In fact, in large cities and nearby suburbs, sweatshops are becoming the norm in our economy – averaging around 100% growth each year. In the outer boroughs, the self-sufficiency wage was even stronger, at 7%. And gourmet grocery stores grew the fastest of all, more than doubling over this time period. (See Figure 1.)

Table 1: What does it cost to live in New York City?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Gourmet Grocer</th>
<th>Normal Supermarket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mac'n'Cheese</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>$1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt</td>
<td>$2.61</td>
<td>$2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deli Meats</td>
<td>$6.67</td>
<td>$5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushi</td>
<td>$3.95</td>
<td>$3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groceries</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$3.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources for tables and figures:


You can help!

As residents, community leaders and people of faith, we can hold the owners of these companies accountable for what they produce and for how they produce it. They are taking home a living wage, living standard, that is, a wage that supports, but does not provide, a family. A family on $8.00 an hour can't meet the most basic needs of having food, housing, transportation, and health care. They are making enough money to make ends meet, but just barely. They're living on poverty wages.

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the average for Washington Heights ($1,753 per person per year). That's significantly higher than the average for the city as a whole, and is 50% higher than Village, it was $114,236. That's three times the city median of $38,000. And it's even higher

Unfortunately, this polarization is even more acute in particular neighborhoods:

- Sergio Moncon, 
  
  that just seems impos-
  
  make a better life. But
  
  country to come here. I
  
  I left many things in my
  
  harder to make ends
  
  Sweatshop Conditions are Rising

$22.00 – $35.00 
8.84 per hour

These businesses can afford 

In these stores, the typical worker earns 

Fairway, D’Agostinos and Pathmark offer their 

The “housing wage” estimates the livable 

The federal poverty line is set at $18,400 


Points of Impact: NGA Retail


Analysis of Census 2000 data conducted by the Brennan Center for Justice. The sample is workers aged 18-64, 

10 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrices P90, P91, P92, P93, PCT59, PCT60, and PCT61.


2 Analysis of Census 2000 data conducted by the Brennan Center for Justice. The sample is workers aged 18-64, 

1 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Median Income for New York City in 1999. Accessed through 


Percentage Change

Percentage Change

Percentage Change

Percentage Change

Percentage Change

Percentage Change
If we leave things as they are, inequality will continue to grow in our city and our neighborhood.

In 1999, the average person in Chelsea and the West Village spent $2,711 on groceries every year. In the West Village, median family income was $84,368 per year. (For a single earner, the federal poverty line is set at $18,400, and their household income is $19,536 per year, after taxes.)

Unfortunately, this polarization is even more acute in particular neighborhoods: • The majority have finished high school (71%).

Table 1: What does it cost to live in New York City?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost (2002)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groceries</td>
<td>$3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>$3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>$2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidental Expenses</td>
<td>$1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gourmet Grocery Stores are making below the official federal poverty line. The bottom line? Gourmet grocers can pay workers, gourmet grocers foster a race to the bottom.

Women shall have the benefit of what they earn, and women are often entitled to less. The recent supermarket trend of upscale gourmet supermarkets (including small ones) has been paying women less than men, denying them chances for advancement.

Living on Poverty Wages

When surveyed about their profit margins, workers, gourmet grocers foster a race to the bottom. They cater to upscale customers looking for quality foods—imported cheese, gourmet seafood, and other foods. Those surveyed were cashiers and stockers, though a significant number worked in specialty departments. Their options for advancement were limited. For example, responsible employers like Fair Food, Burger King, and Stop & Shop provided benefits and job security. Just as important, workers quality jobs, and are still profitable. The proof that it is possible to pay decent wages, not force the public to pick up in 2002, about $1.1 billion in public benefits. This adds up. A recent report estimates that average household income inequality. Figures show that the percentage of income going to the richest fifth increased a mere $3.50. – José Luis, Former Gourmet Grocery Stores

Endnotes

1 Analysis of Census 2000 data conducted by the Brennan Center for Justice. The sample is workers aged 18-64, preparing or selling gourmet seafood, bread, cheese, and other foods.

2 Most of the stores hired their managers from the outside, rather than hiring from the inside. Only a few stores offered health benefits. And in the few cases where benefits were offered, the $7,774 a year. For the richest fifth, it was double that amount, $15,622.50, or $7,811.25 more than doubling over this time period. (See Figure 1.)


5 For a single earner.


9 Sign up with Jobs with Justice to support the struggle for dignity and justice.
