

A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped short-sleeved button-down shirt, is leaning her arms on a highly ornate, dark metal balcony railing. The railing features intricate gold-colored scrollwork and a central medallion with a lion's head. Behind her is a large window with a complex, geometric leaded glass pattern. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the railing and the woman's clothing.

HomeTruths: Domestic Workers in California

Research Team

Founded in 2007, the **National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA)** is the nation's leading voice for domestic workers, most of whom are immigrant women and women of color. NDWA works to bring respect, dignity, and protection to this growing workforce, both here in the United States and as part of the global movement for domestic worker rights. Since NDWA was started by a handful of domestic worker groups, it has grown to become a powerful alliance of 35 local, membership-based affiliate organizations of over 10,000 nannies, housecleaners, and caregivers in 18 cities and 12 states around the country. www.domesticworkers.org

IDEPSCA is a non-profit organization whose mission is to create a more humane and democratic society by responding to the needs and problems of disenfranchised people through leadership development and educational programs based on Popular Education methodology. IDEPSCA's specific goal is to organize and educate immigrants concerned with solving problems in their own communities. www.idepsca.org

La Colectiva de Mujeres (Women's Collective) seeks to achieve economic and social justice for Latina immigrant women, regardless of their immigration status. La Colectiva is a San Francisco Bay Area-based membership organization of Latina immigrant women. It was formed in 2001 by a strong and dynamic group of predominantly undocumented immigrant women domestic workers. La Colectiva creates a space where women help each other find jobs, receive training, identify community resources, and learn about legal developments in immigration and labor rights. www.lacolectivasf.org

Founded in 2000, **Domestic Workers United (DWU)** is a membership-based organization of nannies, housecleaners, and elder caregivers in New York who are organizing for power, respect, fair labor standards, and to help build a movement for social change. DWU and its broad coalition of partners brought their power to bear when they successfully organized for six years to pass the nation's first Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in New York State. www.domesticworkersunited.org

Center for Urban Economic Development (CUED) of the University of Illinois at Chicago was established in 1978 to analyze urban economic change and its effects on low- and moderate-income communities. Throughout its history, CUED has consistently sought to move beyond traditional university-community relationships by working in collaboration with community groups, advocacy coalitions, workers' rights organizations, and governments on issues of concern to at-risk communities. Assisted organizations are partners in the initiation, design, and implementation of research projects, and they are central to shaping the Center's research agenda. Recent projects in the area of workers' rights include studies of wage theft in US cities, understanding conditions in informal economic sectors such as street vending and day labor, and providing technical assistance to worker centers and other worker-led interventions in low-wage labor markets. www.urbanecconomy.org

DataCenter is a national research and training organization for social justice movements and grassroots organizing. Rooted in progressive social movements and grounded in values of justice and self-determination for marginalized communities, DataCenter uses research as a tool to centralize community power and transform society. DataCenter believes in advancing the concept and strategy of Research Justice – a theory and practice for social change that validates all forms of knowledge, and puts information in the hands of communities organizing for justice. www.datacenter.org

HomeTruths:

Domestic Workers in California

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Executive Summary

Domestic workers play a significant role in the California economy, yet these workers are vulnerable to substandard employment because their work is both invisible and largely excluded from employment protections. Nannies, caregivers, and housecleaners, hired directly by their employers, are not subject to a range of protections that apply to other workers. They are excluded from the federal right to organize and bargain collectively and health and safety law. Many are also excluded from workers' compensation, rights to overtime pay and meal and rest breaks, and anti-discrimination laws.

The work of nannies, housecleaners, and caregivers is notoriously difficult to document because of the hidden nature of the work, and it is this isolation that renders domestic workers vulnerable to substandard working conditions. In part to address the lack of systematic data on domestic work and workers, the National Domestic Worker Survey was conducted in 14 cities. The sample analyzed in this report includes 631 domestic workers in four metropolitan areas in California: Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose.

Wages and Benefits

Low pay is a systemic problem across the industry, and workers rarely receive employment benefits.

- 25 percent of domestic workers are paid below the California minimum wage, the result of a combination of poorly delineated tasks, long workdays, and low pay.
- Using a conservative measure of income adequacy, 61% of workers are paid an hourly wage at their primary job that is below the level needed to adequately support a family (analysis using the Lower Living Standard Income Level guideline).
- Less than 1 percent receive retirement or pension benefits.
- Only 6 percent work for employers who pay into Social Security.
- Just 1 percent work for employers who pay into workers' compensation.
- Only 2 percent receive employer-provided health insurance coverage.

Employment Contracts

Formal employment contracts are rare in the industry, and where work agreements do exist, employers frequently violate them. Key provisions in standard employment agreements are often absent.

- 91 percent of workers report that overtime provisions were not included in their agreement.
- 25 percent worked long hours without breaks.
- 22 percent of workers who have a contract or agreement reported that their employer disregarded at least one of the provisions in the prior 12 months.

Workplace Health and Safety

Employers think of their homes as being safe spaces, yet domestic work can be hazardous, and workers face the risks of long-term exposure to toxic chemicals as well as a range of workplace injuries.

- 36 percent of domestic workers suffered from work-related wrist, shoulder, elbow, or hip pain in the past 12 months.
- 27 percent suffered from other types of soreness and pain in the past 12 months.
- 54 percent of workers reported working with toxic cleaning supplies.
- 78 percent of workers did not receive unpaid time off to see the doctor, and 59 percent work when they are sick or injured.
- Among workers who were fired from a domestic work job, 22 percent were fired for calling in sick or for missing work to take care of a family member.

Material Hardship

The low pay and substandard conditions faced by domestic workers leads to acute financial hardships for workers and their families.

- 58 percent of domestic workers spend more than half their income on rent.
- 35 percent paid rent late in the prior 12 months.
- 39 percent of workers had to pay essential bills late in the last month.
- 23 percent had no food to eat in the last month because they lacked resources to obtain it—an extreme form of food insecurity.

While not all domestic work employers treat their nannies, caregivers, and housecleaners poorly, the lack of enforceable standards increases the likelihood of mistreatment. Sensible policies that protect domestic workers on the job are needed to redress the substandard conditions that exist in the industry.



Introduction

Domestic workers are a crucial – though unseen and underappreciated – part of the U.S. economy. Though their labors are not typically considered in analyses of national economic performance, domestic workers nevertheless contribute to it. By performing a vast range of tasks associated with caregiving and cleaning, domestic workers relieve their employers of countless responsibilities and help families manage their day-to-day stresses and demands on their time. In a very real sense, domestic labor, paid and unpaid, is the work that makes all other work possible.

Unfortunately for domestic workers, their industry is one in which basic labor standards are often disregarded. While most other workers can seek redress for unfair employer practices through company personnel policies, employment contracts, and federal and state employment regulations, domestic workers have few of these remedies. Domestic workers are excluded from the protections of key federal and California employment and labor laws:

- Live-in domestic workers, who are especially subject to unreasonable and uncompensated demands on their time, are excluded from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Personal attendants – most nannies and caregivers – have no right to state overtime pay or meal and rest breaks.
- Many domestic workers are excluded from state workers' compensation protections.
- Domestic workers routinely use toxic products, yet are excluded from the Occupational Safety and Health Act.
- Federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, generally covers employers with multiple employees, creating a de facto exclusion for the vast majority of domestic workers. Similarly, discrimination claims under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act require five or more employees, effectively excluding most domestic workers.
- The National Labor Relations Act explicitly bars domestic workers from forming unions or bargaining collectively.

Moreover, the fact that domestic work, by definition, takes place in private homes creates a set of conditions that militate against the full exercise of workers' rights. The domestic worker is isolated from other workers who face similar conditions, or who could bear witness to problems on the job. In most cases, domestic workers labor alone, and without the support of co-workers or the protections of the law. As a result of these factors, conditions in the industry are chronically substandard.

This report examining conditions in the industry presents the results of a survey of 631 domestic workers in the Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose metropolitan areas. The survey was administered between June 2011 and February 2012, as part of the larger National Domestic Worker Survey.¹ Nannies, housecleaners, and caregivers who are employed directly by private households were surveyed, providing a unique look into the large, informal labor market of domestic work. (See Appendix A for a detailed description of the survey methodology.)

The survey is the first systematic assessment of domestic workers' wages and working conditions in the United States, and it presents an empirically grounded picture of what it means to be a domestic worker in California. It reveals that domestic workers, who labor without many of the protections afforded most other workers in the U.S., face a range of hardships associated with their work in an industry that is largely invisible and unregulated.



Survey Findings

Low Pay, Lack of Benefits, and Economic Hardship

Survey data were analyzed to determine the hourly wages paid by workers' "primary" employer – the employer for whom the most hours were worked in the previous week. The median hourly wage for the domestic workers surveyed is \$10.00 an hour. (Table 1) Fully one-quarter (25%) of survey respondents are paid less than the California minimum wage (\$8 per hour at the time of the survey),ⁱⁱ the result of a combination of poorly delineated tasks, long workdays, and low pay. Sixteen percent put in more than 40 hours of work per week for their primary employer, but rarely are domestic workers paid time-and-a-half for overtime hours. Many are paid a flat rate that does not change according to the actual number of hours worked. The tendency within private households is for work tasks to expand and for the workday to lengthen, often driving pay below the state minimum wage.

Table 1. Median Hourly Wage by Occupation

	Nannies	Caregivers	House Cleaners	All Occupations
Hourly Wage	\$8.57	\$8.69	\$10.11	\$10.00

Minimum wage violations are the clearest indication of the systemic problem of low pay in the industry. But even toward the upper end of the pay distribution, wages still tend to be low. Nearly three-fourths (74%) of domestic workers surveyed are paid less than \$13 per hour by their primary employer.

Wage rates vary by occupation. Among nannies, the median wage rate is \$8.57 per hour, and 42 percent of nannies are paid less than the minimum wage. Caregivers have an even more compressed wage distribution; the median hourly wage is \$8.69, 35 percent earn less than the minimum wage, and just 9 percent are paid more than \$18 an hour. Finally, the median hourly wage for housecleaners is \$10.11, and 17 percent earn less than the California minimum wage.

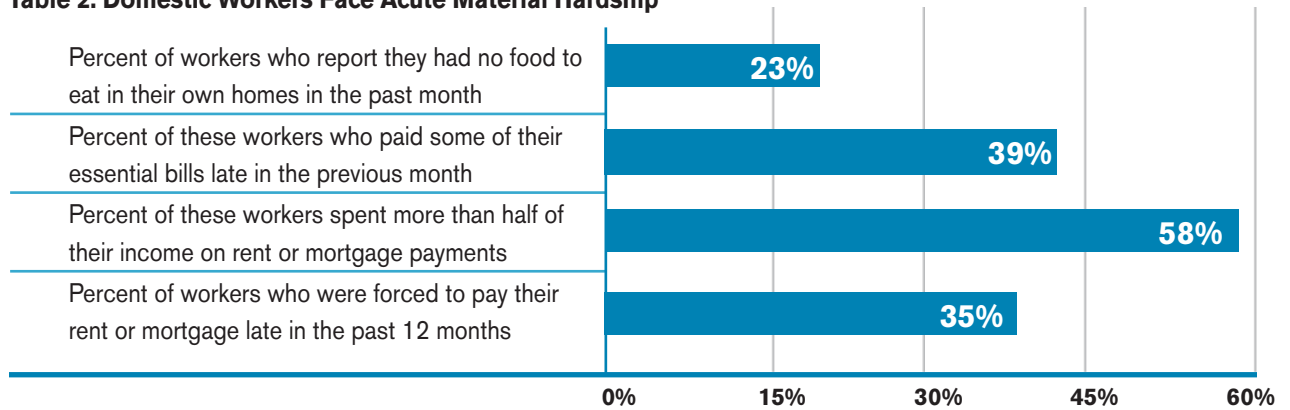
The lack of employment benefits compounds the problem of low pay in California's domestic work industry. Less than 1 percent receive retirement or pension benefits from their primary employer, and less than 6 percent work for employers who pay into Social Security. This lack of benefits undermines the long-term economic security of domestic workers, who rarely are able to save money for the future given their low pay. Short- and long-term financial pressures weigh heavily on domestic workers, and they often regard staying in a low-wage job as preferable to the risks and costs of unemployment, should they attempt switching employers.

Wage theft also affects a significant minority of domestic workers, contributing to the financial hardships facing domestic workers in California. Seven percent of workers surveyed report at least one instance of being paid less than agreed to or not at all for work completed in the previous 12 months, and 18 percent report being paid late during that period.

Indeed, overall wage rates for the vast majority of domestic workers are below the level needed to adequately support a family. The US Department of Labor has established the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL), a measure of economic insecurity that is updated annually and adjusted for regional differences in the cost of living. 70 percent of the LLSIL is the threshold used by the Labor Department for wage adequacy for a full-time, full-year worker. Overall, 61 percent of the domestic workers surveyed are paid an hourly wage by their primary employer that is below 70 percent of the LLSIL for their metropolitan area. In other words, more than 6 in 10 domestic workers surveyed are paid wages that are inadequate to support themselves and their families.ⁱⁱⁱ

Low pay creates acute financial hardships, and many of the workers surveyed indicate that their basic needs go unmet. (Table 2) For example, 35 percent of workers report that in the past 12 months they were forced to pay their rent or mortgage late. Housing costs are the biggest expense for most domestic workers; 58 percent spend more than half of their income on rent or mortgage payments.^{iv} In addition, 39 percent report paying some of their essential bills late in the previous month. Most strikingly, nearly one quarter of California’s domestic workers (23%) report that in the past month there were times when there was no food to eat of any kind in their own home because they had no resources to obtain it.

Table 2. Domestic Workers Face Acute Material Hardship



Large numbers of domestic workers in California are falling through the gaps in employment law that should be providing them with basic workplace protections. But instead of enjoying the protections that most workers in the US take for granted, domestic workers endure long hours and substandard pay, working in an industry with little economic mobility or financial security. These conditions create severe economic hardships for many domestic workers and their families, hardships that are rooted in domestic workers’ historic exclusion from key employment laws and standards.^v

Working without Enforceable Contracts

When the private home is also a workplace, formal, written employment contracts are crucial. Domestic work is, after all, fundamentally an employment relationship. Contracts benefit both employers and employees, since they provide guidelines for each party to the employment relationship.

However, the vast majority of domestic workers in California have no formal contracts that establish the basic parameters of their job. Just 4 percent of workers surveyed have written contracts with their primary employer. It is far more common for employers to establish some sort of verbal agreement with the domestic workers they hire. Nearly three-quarters of workers surveyed (74%) indicate they had an informal conversation with their employer about job expectations, a conversation that typically occurs on their first working day. However, the verbal agreements, and even some of the written contracts that are in place, more often resemble a set of instructions to the worker than an actual contract that binds both parties in their responsibilities to each other. Employers often regard contracts and agreements as non-binding, and they rarely are revisited over the term of employment, leading to employers’ escalating expectations over time.

Where employment contracts and verbal agreements are in place, they typically are of limited scope. Agreements most often include provisions governing wages (96%), job responsibilities (95%), time of payment (88%), schedule (84%), and the number of hours to be worked (76%). Other issues are addressed infrequently. Just 9 percent of workers indicate that they are guaranteed overtime pay in their employment agreement. In addition, only 10 percent of contracts include a requirement that employers pay workers when the worker is not needed during scheduled hours; only 6 percent cover job-related medical expenses; and few include provisions for vacation time (9%), paid sick leave (10%), or holidays (11%).

Of course, a contract or agreement is no guarantee against workplace violations. Many of the domestic workers surveyed in California report the number of hours worked and their schedules are the most likely contract items to be violated by the employer, with each component violated at a rate of 17 percent. In addition, 13 percent of workers report that the agreed upon scope of their job responsibilities are breached. Overall, 22 percent of workers who have a contract or agreement reported that in the past 12 months alone their employers disregarded at least one of the provisions specified in their employment agreements.

Domestic workers report that when agreements exist concerning schedule, pay, and job responsibilities, they tend to break down over time.^{vi} Workers are routinely expected to do more for the same pay, stretching both the hours worked and the tasks performed. More than one in five (21%) of workers report they have been assigned work beyond their job description; of these, 87 percent report they cannot refuse the additional work; and 65 percent were not paid for their extra time.

Table 3. More Work, Same Pay

Percent of workers who were assigned work beyond their job description in the past week	21%
Percent of these workers who believed they could not refuse the additional work	87%
Percent of these workers not paid for their extra time	65%
Percent of workers not guaranteed overtime pay	91%

For many domestic workers, long days are the norm. One in four workers (25%) surveyed report working long hours without breaks. Nannies and caregivers most often endure extended time on the job because of the numerous and varying demands of personal care. In our survey, 35 percent of nannies and caregivers in California worked more than 40 hours for their primary employer in the previous week. One-on-one interviews with domestic workers reveal that employers rarely maintain accurate records of work schedules or overtime hours, which allows them to disregard previous agreements regarding schedule, hours, and pay.

When there are violations of a contract, agreement, or job description, workers have little recourse against employer abuses, and the lack of enforceable contracts allows employers to discharge them arbitrarily. We found that, of workers who have contracts or work agreements, only 6 percent have provisions requiring notice of termination, and only 1 percent have stipulations requiring severance pay if they are laid off. 23 percent of workers report having been fired from a domestic work job. Of these, 20 percent were fired for refusing to complete additional tasks; 15 percent were fired for complaining about working conditions; and 18 percent were fired for protesting violations of their contract or agreement.

Domestic workers' accounts confirm the costs of contesting substandard working conditions. When they speak to the conditions they endure on the job they often face employer reprisals. Employment contracts and agreements, where present, are partial and largely unenforceable. Instead of limiting the demands employers can make upon employees, agreements tend to quietly encompass new areas of work, without requiring renegotiation or additional pay. Still, formal contracts are a crucial tool for protecting workers' rights since they provide a written record of the scope of work, as well as standing arrangements regarding pay, benefits, and work schedule. These documents are an important step towards increasing the transparency of the employment relationship. When workplace disputes do arise, they can be helpful in resolving them. However, more robust enforcement mechanisms for monitoring the employer-employee relationship are needed to ensure that employment agreements serve both parties equally, and that those agreements are upheld.

Hazards on the Job

When the home is also a workplace, workers face a variety of hazards on the job. Housecleaners are especially at risk through long-term exposure to the toxic chemicals that are found in everyday household cleaning products, a risk that largely goes unacknowledged. More than half (54%) of the California domestic workers surveyed report they work with toxic cleaning supplies, including more than two-thirds (70%) of housecleaners. These workers rarely are provided the protective wear they need, and employers often belittle requests for protective wear and nontoxic cleaning products, regarding them as unreasonable or silly.^{vii} Yet, the effects of exposure to cleaning products are evident: 29 percent of housecleaners report suffering from skin irritation, and 24 percent have trouble breathing. Moreover, workers are well aware of the price that is often paid for insisting on improvements in health and safety conditions: 24 percent of the workers in our survey who have been fired from a domestic job indicate that they were discharged for complaining about unsafe working conditions.

The physical demands placed on many domestic workers also expose them to significant health and safety risks. Housecleaners, in particular, report completing a number of physically demanding tasks that can result in injury. They are susceptible to a range of ergonomic problems, and many suffer from chronic pain. 57 percent of housecleaners climbed to clean hard-to-reach places in the prior 12 months, while 46 percent had to work on their knees, and 34 percent report completing tasks involving heavy lifting or other strenuous activities during the same period.

One-third (33%) of all California domestic workers surveyed did heavy lifting or other strenuous activities on the job in the previous 12 months. In addition to housecleaners, who are required to move heavy objects, a large share of caregivers are at risk for injury, because they assist with everyday activities such as bathing and dressing. Lifting and other strenuous activities take a physical toll on workers. 23 percent of workers we surveyed report suffering from wrist, shoulder, elbow, or hip pain, and 16 percent report suffering from other soreness and pain because of their job. Notably, 23 percent of caregivers suffered a back injury in the previous 12 months.

Caregivers also report high rates of exposure to contagious illness, and 14 percent contracted a contagious illness at work in the prior 12 months. Nannies are also at risk for catching contagious diseases; 24 percent report contracting an illness while working in the previous 12 months.

Without explicit safety regulations in place, workers' risk of injury and illness are heightened. The survey results confirm that domestic work takes a great physical toll on the labor force. Some effects may be immediate – such as a back injury or illness – but others occur over the long run through repetitive motion or steady exposure to cleaning products.

When workers suffer injuries on the job that require medical attention, they often bear the costs of treatment alone. More than two-thirds (68%) of domestic workers do not have health insurance, and just 2 percent receive employer-provided insurance. As a result, of the domestic workers who have experienced an on-the-job injury requiring medical attention in the last three years, 10 percent did not receive the medical care they needed.

Additionally, most California domestic workers (88%) surveyed are not granted paid sick leave, nor are they even given unpaid time off to see a doctor (78%). In fact, many report that they risk losing their job if they ask for or take time off. Of the workers who were fired from a domestic-work job, 22 percent were fired for missing work to take care of themselves or a family member.

The pressure on domestic workers to report to work, regardless of their personal circumstances, place them in an unenviable position. Their low wages mean that a day without work – if their employer will even grant them that – results in a tangible loss of earnings. At the same time, their insecure employment is a constant reminder of the cost to be paid for missing work, regardless of how legitimate the cause. When taking a needed day off to care for oneself or a family member means risking a reduction in weekly earnings, or jeopardizing the tenuous security of a job, most workers make the choice to go to work, even when they are barely able. 59 percent of workers report for work despite being sick, in pain, or injured.

Most domestic work jobs are physically demanding, and workers do not benefit from formal regulatory protections that could provide a framework for ensuring health and safety on the job. As a result, chronic exposure to chemicals, contagious illnesses, and other health risks is the uncompensated cost of working in the domestic work industry. Exclusion from the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the absence of regulatory protections more generally, reflects a lack of regard for domestic workers' health, safety, and well-being. When workers who are unnecessarily exposed to hazards on the job do suffer an injury or illness, their limited access to sick days and health insurance means they often do not receive the care they need.

Workers' compensation, if available to all domestic workers, would provide medical care as well as temporary and/or permanent disability benefits, ensuring that workers could get necessary treatment and take time off work when they have a job-related illness or injury. Many domestic workers are excluded from California's workers' compensation protections. Other domestic workers, who are legally entitled to workers' compensation benefits, do not receive them.

The long-term impacts of workplace hazards on workers' health largely remain unacknowledged and unaddressed. Domestic workers fully understand that their duties as housecleaners and caregivers are physically demanding. At the same time, many of the workplace injuries and illness suffered by domestic workers are preventable or at least can be better managed by proper training, the greater use of nontoxic cleaning supplies, improved access to healthcare, strengthened health and safety regulations, and the exercise of common sense by more employers. Domestic work may remain physically demanding, but it does not have to be hazardous to workers' health.

Conclusion

Domestic workers' low wages, limited employment options, and reliance on employer goodwill, together with the historic exclusions from workplace laws that have plagued the industry and continue to this day, combine to relegate domestic work and the women who do it to second-class status in the workplace. Workers are in a bind. On the one hand, the survey clearly shows that conditions in the industry are substandard. Domestic workers are without basic workplace protections, effectively allowing the maltreatment they endure to be seen as acceptable. On the other hand, these workers have caring responsibilities within their own families, and their loved ones depend on them for financial support. Faced with the impossible choice of contesting harmful working conditions or providing for one's family through substandard employment, most domestic workers choose the latter. Without recourse through employment laws and policies, workers must weigh the costs associated with low pay and substandard conditions against the economic toll that unemployment will take on themselves and their families.

Not all employers of domestic workers are involved in the mistreatment of the nannies, housecleaners, and caregivers who work for them. Many abide by common standards of decency, and they treat their workers with dignity and respect. At the same time there is a fundamental problem in the industry. Without adequate regulations and worker protections, including enforceable standards regarding wages, terms of employment, and conditions in the workplace, the substandard conditions documented in this report will continue. There is, therefore, an urgent need for sensible public policies that protect the rights of all domestic workers, in California and across the nation.



Appendix A: Methodology

This report presents findings for the California subsample of the National Domestic Worker Survey of 2,086 domestic workers in 14 metropolitan areas.^{viii} The national study was designed to cover four aspects of the domestic work industry:

- Pay rates, benefits, and their impact on the lives of workers and their families.
- Employment arrangements and employers' compliance with employment agreements.
- Workplace conditions, on-the-job injuries, and access to health care.
- Abuse at work and the ability to remedy substandard conditions.

The national survey builds on a growing body of research, primarily qualitative studies, by scholars in a range of disciplines. Their work has examined the evolving character of domestic work, as well as a nuanced analysis of contemporary conditions faced by domestic workers in the US and abroad.^{ix} The survey also builds on several smaller-scale local studies conducted by domestic worker organizations.^x

Documenting conditions in the domestic work industry presents numerous challenges. The dispersed nature of the work means that workplace surveys are impossible to implement. The secluded character of the work, especially for live-ins, is an additional barrier to contacting workers. Most domestic work is paid for “off the books,” and as such is rarely disclosed by employers or workers. Finally, domestic workers are fully aware of their vulnerabilities, including the possibility of employer reprisals and, for some, exposure of their irregular immigration status. This makes it particularly challenging to gain their confidence to participate in a survey process. As a result, empirical data on the domestic work industry is scattered and incomplete. Information about wages, family hardship, expansion of job responsibilities, and workplace hazards has been especially difficult to systematically document.

The national survey was designed to address these critical research needs. It employed a participatory methodology in which domestic workers and organizers from community organizations collaborated in survey design, the fielding of the survey, and the preliminary analysis of the data. Surveyors were extensively trained in their native languages to recruit and survey participants. Participants were recruited primarily through “snowball sampling,” a technique that asks each interviewee to identify future participants from among their acquaintances. Surveyors went to parks, transportation hubs, churches, and shopping centers to ask nannies, housecleaners, and caregivers about working conditions in private households.

Between June 2011 and February 2012, 631 domestic workers were surveyed in the Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose metropolitan areas. To ensure that the survey represented the domestic worker labor force in each metropolitan area, we derived targets for each city in the survey from the ACS’s 2005-2009 five-year sample. Interviewers were given demographic and occupational targets, specifying the race and occupation (nanny, housecleaner, or caregiver) of workers to be surveyed. Although the domestic workers in our sample were extremely diverse racially and ethnically, for the purpose of this survey, we elected to use four racial/ethnic categories: white, Latino, black, and Asian-Other. Respondents self-identified and were given the option of choosing more than one category.^{xi} The final sample was weighted to be representative of the demographic and occupational characteristics of the workforce in each of the metropolitan areas.

Interviews in the California subsample took 45 to 60 minutes to complete and were conducted face-to-face in five languages: English, Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Respondents received a \$20 incentive for their participation. Surveyors were also compensated for each survey completed.

Potential respondents were screened and required to meet four conditions for inclusion in the survey:

- They had worked in a private home(s) during the previous week for a minimum of six hours as a nanny, housecleaner, or caregiver.
- They received pay for their domestic work job(s) directly from a member of the employing family, rather than, for example, from an employment agency, government entity, or cleaning service.
- They were at least 18 years of age.
- They lived in one of the metropolitan areas included in the survey.

The survey instrument guided the interviewers to ask about work schedules, job tasks, wages and earnings, health and safety in the workplace, training, and demographics. The survey did not presume any knowledge of employment and labor laws on the part of workers. To reduce bias in relation to knowledge about and exercise of employment rights, workers were disqualified from the survey if they were members of organizations that advocate for the rights of workers.

The survey process resulted in a final sample that is reflective of the segment of the domestic work industry that operates as an informal labor market in which households directly engage domestic workers’ services. The final sample includes live-in and live-out workers, and a representative number of nannies, caregivers, and housecleaners. The final sample also includes US- and foreign-born workers of all races, including a large share of undocumented immigrants. (For characteristics of sample, see Appendix B)

Appendix B: Characteristics of the Sample

	Housecleaners	63%
	Nannies	19%
Occupation	Caregivers	18%
	Female	95%
Gender	Male	4%
	18-24	6%
	25-44	43%
	45-64	48%
Age Group	65 and older	4%
	US Born	19%
Nativity	Foreign Born	82%
	Citizen	31%
Citizenship Status	Not a Citizen	69%
	Documented Immigrant	49%
Documentation Status of Foreign Born	Undocumented Immigrant	51%
	Less than 12 years	50%
	High School Degree	28%
	Some College	11%
Education Level	Associates Degree or Higher	12%
	Married	32%
	Living with Partner	15%
	Widowed	5%
	Divorced or Separated	18%
Marital Status	Never Married	29%
	Live-in	8%
Living-in Status	Live-out	92%

Acknowledgements

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The research project was a close collaboration between the National Domestic Workers Alliance, University of Illinois at Chicago, and DataCenter. The research team that directed the project also included representatives of three domestic worker organizations: Domestic Workers United (New York), Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (Los Angeles), and La Colectiva de Mujeres of La Raza Centro Legal (San Francisco), which is now La Colectiva of Dolores Street Community Services (San Francisco). The research team included Angela Alvarez, Linda Burnham, Guillermina Castellanos, Christina Fletes, Beth Gutelius, Sandra Morales-Mirque, Meches Rosales, Renee Saucedo, Nik Theodore, and Saba Waheed.

The project was guided by an academic advisory board that reviewed our methods and provided critical feedback at key stages of survey design, fielding, data analysis, and drafting. Thanks to Eileen Appelbaum, Annette Bernhardt, Françoise Carré, Grace Chang, Héctor Cordero-Guzman, Laura Dresser, Harmony Goldberg, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Mary Romero, Leah Vosko, and Michael Wishnie. Annette Bernhardt, in particular, provided extensive assistance in developing the sample quotas, reviewing the details of our methodology, weighting the final data, and ensuring data integrity at every stage of the project. Thanks to the National Employment Law Project and Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute for past research that deeply informed this project.

The survey was designed by the research team, with the able assistance of Narbada Chhetri, Megan Gaydos, Shaw San Liu, Adeli López, Renato Pérez, Luna Ranjit, and Jill Shenker. The survey was piloted by Chevy Evangelista, Patricia François, Sandhya Gurung Pradhan, Anna Jakubek, Jing Liu, Huguens Mercier, Meches Rosales, and Nadja Silva.

In the four California metropolitan areas in which the survey was conducted the work was advanced by organizations that partnered with the research team to ensure the project's success; by local coordinators who oversaw the fielding of the survey; and by teams of surveyors who conducted the interviews.

Los Angeles

Partners: Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA), Pilipino Workers Center **Coordinator:** Angela Alvarez **Surveyors:** Lidia Aguilar, Elba Alonzo, Sonia Andino, Maribel Campos, Jaime Cosio, Boots de Chávez, Rosanna del Rio, Eva Eucapiña, Victoria Francisco, Carmen Goley, Jazmine Leon-Francisco, Lolita Lledo, María Mejía, Celeste Tema, Lelis Urias, Ofelia Yañez

San Diego

Partner: San Diego Day Labor and Household Workers Association **Coordinator:** Nidya Ramirez **Surveyors:** Gricelda Alva, María Higareda, Enedina Ledesma, Nidya Ramirez, Irma Ramirez, Katia Rodríguez, Pilar Solache, Valentina Torres

San Francisco

Partners: Chinese for Affirmative Action, Filipino Advocates for Justice, La Colectiva de Mujeres of La Raza Centro Legal (now La Colectiva de Mujeres of Dolores Street Community Services), Mujeres Unidas y Activas, People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER) **Coordinators:** Guillermina Castellanos, María Lucia Cruz, María Fernandez, Renee Saucedo

Surveyors: Emiliana Acopio, Nancy Arroyo, Raquel Botello, Araceli Carbajal, María Lucia Cruz, Gloria Estevan, María Fernandez, María Dolores Lugo, Fanny Luo, Karina Martínez, Helen Ochoa, Lourdes Pérez, Claudia Reyes, María Valladares, Matilde Vasquez

San Jose

Partner: Working Partnerships **Coordinator:** Jamie Chen **Surveyors:** Yonara Acevedo, Nelly Blas, Son Chau, María Luisa Chavarin, Teresa Gamez, Ami Gomez, Luz María Mendoza, Erika Molina López, Guadalupe Pérez, Eric Peterson, Edong Pichay, María Urquiza

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Françoise Carré, PhD is the Research Director at the Center for Social Policy at the McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She coordinates research for Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). She received her PhD in Urban and Regional Studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Grace Chang, PhD is currently an Associate Professor in the Feminist Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is also the author of *Disposable Domestic* (South End Press, 2000) and completing her new book, *Trafficking by Any Other Name* (The New Press). Her areas of expertise include women of color, immigrant women, grassroots and transnational feminist movements, political economy of globalization, human trafficking, and sex worker rights. She received her PhD in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.

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Sources

- i Linda Burnham and Nik Theodore, *Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work* (New York: National Domestic Workers Alliance, 2012).
- ii The San Francisco minimum wage was \$9.92 per hour in 2011 and \$10.24 per hour in 2012. <http://sfgsa.org/index.aspx?page=411>, accessed 04/19/13.
- iii Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) Guidelines includes income charts that are used by state and local workforce investment areas to determine income eligibility for WIA programs for youth and certain adult services, in addition to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, <http://www.doleta.gov/lilsil/2012/>.
- iv The generally accepted definition of affordability is that a household pays no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Families that pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered “cost burdened,” and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. An estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing, and a family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the US. The lack of affordable housing is a significant hardship for low-income households, preventing them from meeting their other basic needs, such as nutrition and healthcare, or saving for their future. US Department of Housing and Urban Development, <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/>, accessed 04/14/13.
- v Burnham and Theodore, *Home Economics*.
- vi See also Bridget Anderson, *Doing the Dirty Work: The Global Politics of Domestic Labour*, (London: Zed Books, 2000); Laura Dresser, “Cleaning and Caring in the Home: Shared Problems? Shared Possibilities?” in *The Gloves Off Economy: Workplace Standards at the Bottom of America’s Labor Market*, eds. Annette Bernhardt, Heather Boushey, Laura Dresser, and Chris Tilly, (Champaign: University of Illinois, Champaign- Urbana, 2008); Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).
- vii Mary Romero, *Maid in the U.S.A.*, (London: Taylor and Francis Ltd, 2002), 157. viii Burnham and Theodore, *Home Economics*. The metropolitan areas are Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.
- viii Burnham and Theodore, *Home Economics*. The metropolitan areas are Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.
- ix Anderson, *Doing the Dirty Work*; Dresser, “Cleaning and Caring in the Home”; Grace Chang, *Disposable Domesticity: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2000); Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, (New York: Henry Holt, 2003); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Forced Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Doméstica*; Helma Lutz, *The New Maids: Transnational Women and the Care Economy* (London: Zed Books, 2011); Romero, *Maid in the USA*; Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *28 Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).
- x *Behind Closed Doors: Working Conditions of California’s Household Workers*, (San Francisco: Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Day Labor Program La Colectiva de Mujeres of La Raza Centro Legal, and DataCenter, 2007); *Home Is Where the Work Is: Inside New York’s Domestic Work Industry*, (New York: Domestic Workers United and DataCenter, 2006); *Doing the Work that Makes All Work Possible: A Research Narrative of Filipino Domestic Workers in the Tri-State Area*, (New York: DAMAYAN Migrant Workers Association and The Urban Justice Center, 2010).
- xi The size of the domestic worker sample in the ACS is not large enough to allow all racial/ethnic categories to be used for analysis. To resolve this problem, we created the “Asian or Other” category that combines all of the Asian and Pacific Islander groups specified in the ACS as well as those who identify as “some other race.”

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