



# Domestic Workers and Family Caregiving

FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF SPANISH-SPEAKING HOUSE CLEANERS, NANNIES, AND HOMECARE WORKERS  
MARCH 2022



**NATIONAL  
DOMESTIC  
WORKERS  
ALLIANCE**

**NDWA  
LABS**





# MOST DOMESTIC WORKER RESPONDENTS ARE STRUGGLING TO BALANCE FAMILY AND WORK RESPONSIBILITIES

**8 in 10 respondents** had to reduce their hours or leave a job due to the need to balance work and caregiving responsibilities.

Domestic workers are the nannies, homecare workers, and house cleaners whose work is essential to our economy, and yet they are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of workers. Even before COVID-19, domestic workers earned less than the average US worker and were three times as likely to be living in poverty.<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic brought on additional challenges. [La Alianza survey data](#) of **Spanish-speaking domestic workers** has documented how the pandemic amplified the vulnerability of this workforce. Domestic workers continue to face low wages and high levels of joblessness and underemployment.

**Domestic workers were not only affected by the pandemic through unemployment and loss of income: many of them are family caregivers, and face challenges related to their family caregiving responsibilities.**

## La Alianza Surveys

In 2020, NDWA Labs developed our La Alianza news chatbot into a groundbreaking research tool that surveys thousands of Spanish-speaking domestic workers every week, producing first-of-its-kind data for a workforce that is essential, but overlooked, in mainstream economic analysis. As part of this ongoing research, we produce regular reports on Spanish-speaking domestic workers' economic situation and working conditions.

**On February 18, 2022, we asked workers about their responsibilities and experiences as family caregivers and how that may have impacted their work. This report provides our main findings.**

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1. Economic Policy Institute (2019), [Domestic Workers Chartbook](#)

## THE VAST MAJORITY OF SURVEYED DOMESTIC WORKERS HAVE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES.

“My daughter is little and having her in online classes she needed all my help, so I couldn't do any other activities” – Cleaner



**7 in 10** respondents are parents or guardians to at least one child under the age of 18.  
**71%** of those respondents have had to assist their children with online schooling.

“It's very hard because without work, there is no money, and without money I can't pay for someone to care for my kids, and if I don't have someone to care for my children, I can't work” – Cleaner

## MANY SURVEYED DOMESTIC WORKERS CARE FOR ADULT MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES.



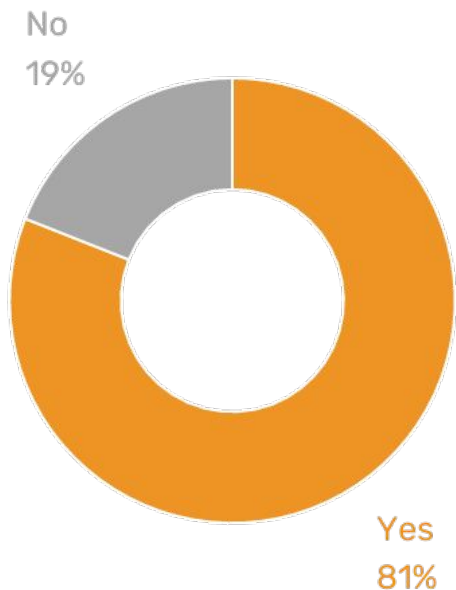
**3 in 10** respondents care for family members or other loved ones who are aging, have a disability, or have a physical or mental illness.

“I don't have someone to take care of my mother and I need to work” – Cleaner

## MOST DOMESTIC WORKER RESPONDENTS TOLD US THEIR FAMILY CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES HAD IMPACTED THEIR WORK.

**8 in 10 surveyed workers** reported having to reduce their work hours or leave a job because they had to balance work and caregiving responsibilities.

Have you reduced your work hours or left a job to balance work and family caregiving responsibilities during COVID?



“I haven't been able to keep a stable job, because sometimes they close one of my kids' classes for a whole week because someone tested positive for COVID. It's very hard for me, I'm a single mom and don't have enough resources.”

- Cleaner

“My 2 kids got sick with COVID and I had to stay home to care for them without pay” - Nanny



**Fear of exposing their household to COVID (62%)** and a **lack of sick days (52%)** were the most common reasons that workers cited which prevented them from keeping their regular work hours.

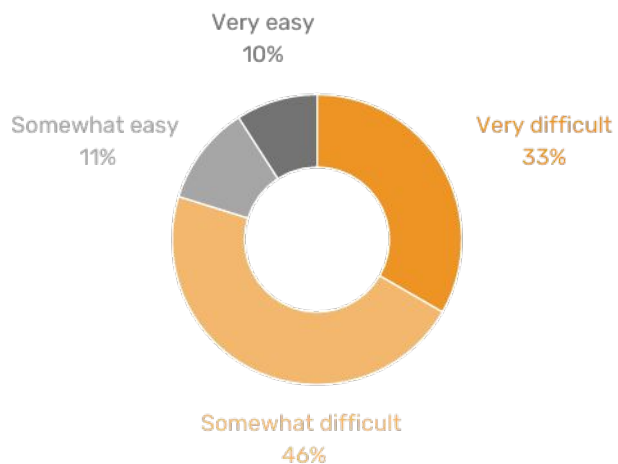


# MOST DOMESTIC WORKER RESPONDENTS TOLD US IT WAS DIFFICULT TO FIND CARE.

79% of respondents told us it had been very (33%) /somewhat (46%) difficult to find care for their children or elderly family members or family members with disabilities.

“I had a baby and they charge more than what I earn for his care”  
- Cleaner

How easy or difficult has it been to find care for your family members during COVID?



85% of respondents cited **not being able to afford care** as the reason for the difficulty finding care



46% of respondents mentioned a **lack of predictable schedules** as the source of the difficulty

81% of respondents said it had been very (31%) or somewhat (50%) **difficult to balance the responsibilities of their job with those of their family** since the pandemic started.

## ABOUT THE SURVEYS

NDWA Labs surveys Spanish-speaking domestic workers each week, via La Alianza, a Messenger chatbot. The numbers and figures presented in this report include data from one weekly survey which was sent on February 18, 2022.

There were 934 workers who completed multiple choice questions within Messenger, and 515 who opted in to answer additional questions via a webform. Workers resided in at least 41 states, DC, and Puerto Rico, and worked as cleaners, nannies and homecare workers.

At the end of each survey, La Alianza provides respondents with relevant news articles and resources in Spanish. To learn more about NDWA Labs' La Alianza survey of Spanish-speaking domestic workers, see our [report](#), *6 Months in Crisis: The Impact of Covid-19 on Domestic Workers*.

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*La Alianza is a product of [NDWA Labs](#), the innovation partner of the [National Domestic Workers Alliance](#). NDWA Labs experiments with the ways technology can organize domestic workers and transform domestic work jobs into good jobs by bringing respect, living wages, and benefits to an undervalued and vulnerable part of the economy.*