



JOBLESSNESS AMONG DOMESTIC WORKER RESPONDENTS REMAINED STEADY AT 15% IN APRIL RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCED SLIGHTLY IMPROVED ECONOMIC SECURITY

Domestic Workers Economic Situation Report · April 2024

Source: La Alianza surveys, NDWA

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The most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Employment Situation Report shows nonfarm payroll job growth was below market expectations, while the unemployment rate ticked up.¹

NDWA's April data shows that joblessness remained steady in April for surveyed domestic workers. However, joblessness remains higher than the rate of 9% who reported having no jobs before COVID-19.²

Domestic workers are the nannies, homecare workers, and house cleaners whose work is essential to our economy, yet they are some of the most vulnerable and marginalized workers. They work in private homes and often have multiple employers, meaning they may have to schedule several jobs to make ends meet. Domestic workers earn less than the average US worker and are three times as likely to be living in poverty.³

La Alianza survey data from **Spanish-speaking domestic workers** shows how respondents continue to face low wages and high levels of unemployment and underemployment.

April Jobs Report - Bureau of Labor Statistics

The BLS releases an Employment Situation Summary with employment and other labor market data each month. It's an important report to keep track of how the economy is doing. However, domestic workers and other vulnerable workers are underrepresented in official data.⁴ Here, we present an overview of the BLS Jobs report

along with NDWA's data, which shows the employment and economic situation of thousands of Spanish-speaking domestic workers.

On May 3, the BLS released new employment data for [April 2024](#).

- The 175,000 jobs added in April were below market expectations.
- The general unemployment rate ticked up.
- **The unemployment rate for Latina women ticked up.**
 - However, the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Latina women, which is more closely comparable to NDWA's data, decreased.
- The unemployment rate for Black women decreased.
- The unemployment rates for Black and Latinx adults continue to be higher compared to the rates for white adults.
- Average hourly earnings for employees in private nonfarm payrolls increased.

NDWA's April data shows minimal movement in joblessness for Spanish-speaking domestic workers, similar to the BLS-reported unemployment for Latina domestic workers. While the share of joblessness for domestic workers is not directly comparable to the unemployment rate nationwide,* looking at trends in the data for Spanish-speaking domestic workers in the context of national trends can support our understanding of the sector as it relates to the broader economy.

April Domestic Worker Economic Situation

Below are the main findings on the economic situation of surveyed Spanish-speaking domestic workers in April. Note that monthly numbers may be volatile, which is why we look at the findings as they relate to prior trends in the data and the economic situation of the overall economy. At the end of each quarter, we calculate quarterly averages for key economic indicators.

Jobs and Wages

- **Joblessness remained the same from the prior month, at 15%.**
 - This is a decrease from the average joblessness reported in the first quarter of 2024, 19%.
- **Underemployment improved in April, decreasing from 65% to 62%.**
 - The main reason for underemployment reported was that workers could not find clients (68%), followed by taking care of a family member (14%), having a health problem (10%), and "other" (8%).

- Underemployment decreased from the average in the first quarter of 2024, 67%.
- **The wage distribution worsened slightly in April.**
 - 53% of working respondents earned less than \$15 per hour, compared to 52% the prior month.
 - However, it is a slight decrease from the average reported in the first quarter, 54%.

Economic Security

- **Food scarcity increased slightly in April to 85% from 84%.**
 - Domestic worker respondents said their households faced food scarcity either often (14%) or sometimes (71%).
 - This is a slight increase from the previous quarter's average of 84%.
- **Housing insecurity improved in April, decreasing to 51% from 53%.**
 - Housing insecurity was 48% on average in the first quarter of 2024.
 - In April, 7% of respondents reported that the question regarding the ability to afford rent or mortgage does not apply to them. This does not necessarily mean they are housing secure. While some of these respondents may be debt-free homeowners, others may be temporarily staying with friends or family, staying in shelters, or facing homelessness.
- **A lower share of respondents reported difficulty affording regular household expenses in April, with 55% of respondents finding it very or somewhat difficult.**
 - Domestic worker respondents experienced varying levels of difficulty affording regular household expenses, such as food, housing, car payments, and medical expenses: 5% reported no difficulty, 40% reported little difficulty, 29% reported some difficulty, and 26% reported large difficulty.
 - Difficulty affording regular household expenses was 55% on average in the first quarter of 2024, the same level we saw for the month of April.

About the surveys

NDWA surveys Spanish-speaking domestic workers via La Alianza, a Messenger chatbot. Starting in 2024, the survey has been sent every other week excluding office closures. At the end of each survey, La Alianza provides respondents with relevant news articles and resources in Spanish. To learn more about NDWA's La Alianza

survey of Spanish-speaking domestic workers, see the methodology section of this [report](#).

In September 2023, the survey sample was expanded to increase the volume of responses and address survey fatigue. We learned that respondents newly added to the survey schedule reported lower joblessness on average compared to prior respondents. We updated the rotation groups in 2024 to reduce monthly volatility.

The numbers presented in this report include data from two biweekly surveys in April. The total number of fully completed surveys, which includes both new and repeated respondents, was 2,238.

Questions about hours worked and hourly wages are asked biweekly, and questions regarding underemployment, job search, and economic security are asked monthly.

For questions or feedback, please contact us [here](#).

Notes

¹ Taylor Giorno (2024), [US economy adds 175K jobs in April, falling short of expectations](#)

² NDWA Labs (2020), [6 Months in Crisis: The Impact of COVID-19 on Domestic Workers](#)

³ Economic Policy Institute (2022), [Domestic Workers Chartbook](#)

⁴ Kopparam (2022), [What federal statistical agencies can do to improve survey response rates among Hispanic communities in the United States](#)

* Unlike unemployment rates, joblessness for domestic workers may include people who are not working but are currently unavailable to work, or not actively looking for jobs. Additionally, the NDWA's joblessness rate for surveyed domestic workers is not seasonally adjusted, while BLS unemployment rates are adjusted.