



JOBLESSNESS AMONG DOMESTIC WORKER RESPONDENTS DECREASED TO 16% IN JUNE

Eight in ten respondents reported facing food scarcity in the second quarter of the year

Domestic Workers Economic Situation Report · June 2023

With analysis from the second quarter of 2023

Source: La Alianza surveys, NDWA Labs

Released: July 24, 2023

The most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics Jobs Report shows the general unemployment rate ticked down, and the number of jobs added was slightly below expectations.¹ The unemployment rate for Latina women increased in June.

NDWA Labs' June Report similarly shows that the joblessness rate for domestic worker respondents declined slightly to 16% in June. This remains higher compared to 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, and yet they are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of workers. They work in private homes, and often have multiple employers. This means they may have to schedule several jobs in a given week in order 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.

June Jobs Report - Bureau of Labor Statistics

Each month, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) releases an Economic Situation Summary with employment and other labor market data. This is an important report to keep track of how the economy is doing. However, domestic workers, along with

other vulnerable workers, are often underrepresented in official data.⁴ Here we present an overview of the BLS Jobs report, along with NDWA Labs' data which shows the employment and economic situation of thousands of Spanish-speaking domestic workers.

On July 7, the BLS released new employment data for [June 2023](#).

- The number of jobs added in June was slightly below market expectations.
- The general unemployment rate ticked down.
- **The unemployment rate for Latina and Black women increased.**
- The unemployment rates for Black and Latinx adults continue to be higher compared to the rates for white adults.

NDWA Labs' data shows that joblessness decreased slightly in June for surveyed Spanish-speaking 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.

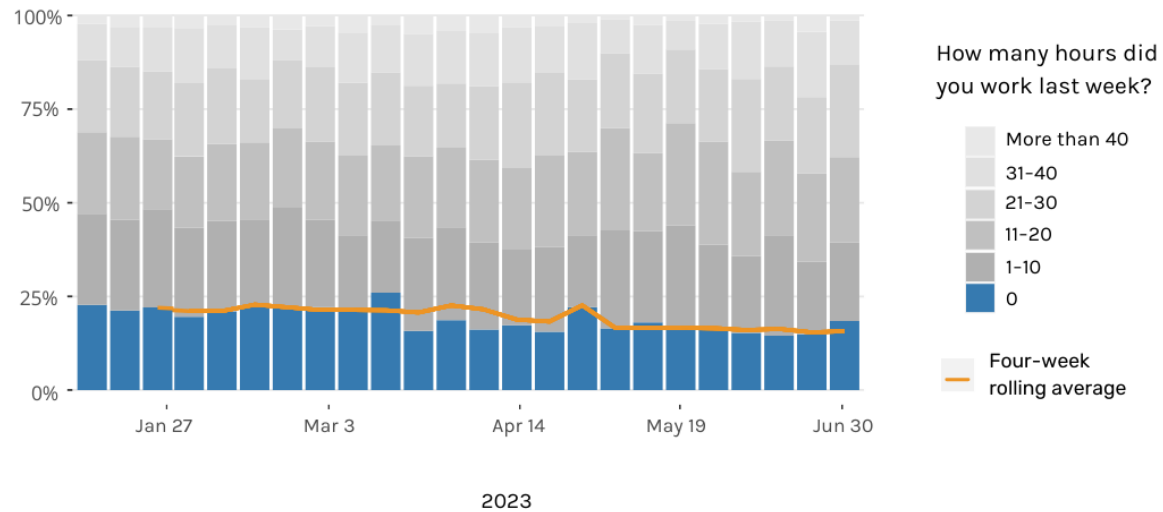
June Domestic Worker Economic Situation

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

Jobs and Wages

- **Joblessness decreased notably during the second quarter.** 16% of domestic worker respondents were jobless on average in the second quarter of 2023, compared with 21% in the first quarter.

Joblessness decreased to 16% during the second quarter of 2023, a notable decline from 21% in the first quarter.



n = 17,206 responses | Source: NDWA Labs' La Alianza Weekly Survey, January 13 - June 30, 2023

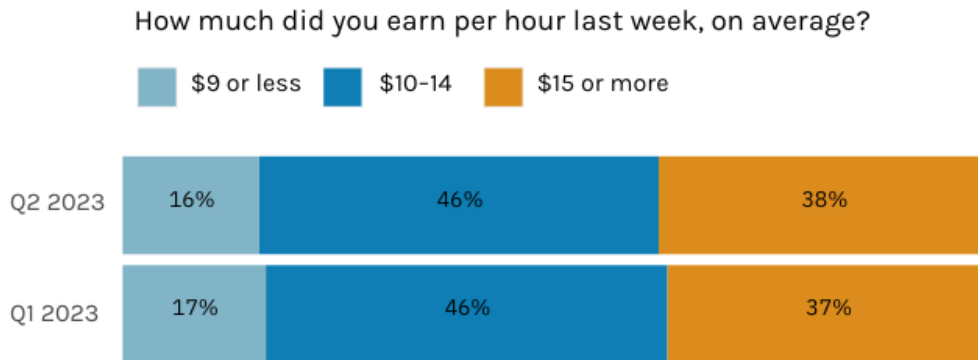
Notes: Due to NDWA Labs' Winter office closure, the first survey this year was sent on January 13, and there was no survey on the week of June 9 due to NDWA's all staff retreat. For weeks where we did not survey and we lacked data for a single calendar week, the rolling average is calculated using a minimum of 3 weeks of data. It is left out otherwise.



- In June, the joblessness rate decreased slightly compared to May, at 16%.
- **The share of respondents with a relatively higher volume of work remained steady during the second quarter of the year.** More than a third (36%) of respondents reported working more than twenty hours per week on average during the second quarter of 2023.
- **Six in ten (61%) domestic worker respondents were underemployed in June 2023.** The main reason for underemployment that workers reported was that they could not find more clients (67%), followed by having a health problem (13%) and taking care of a family member (13%), while 7% chose some “other” reason.
- **The wage distribution improved slightly during the second quarter of 2023 relative to the previous quarter.** 62% of domestic worker respondents reported earning less than \$15 per hour on average, compared to 63% during the first quarter.
 - On average in the second quarter of 2023, 16% of workers earned \$9 or less per hour, 46% earned \$10-14 per hour, and 38% earned \$15 or more per hour on average.

- This share is still higher than the share of respondents who earned less than \$15 per hour before COVID-19, which was at most 55%.***

62% of domestic worker respondents reported earning less than \$15 per hour on average, compared to 63% during the first quarter.



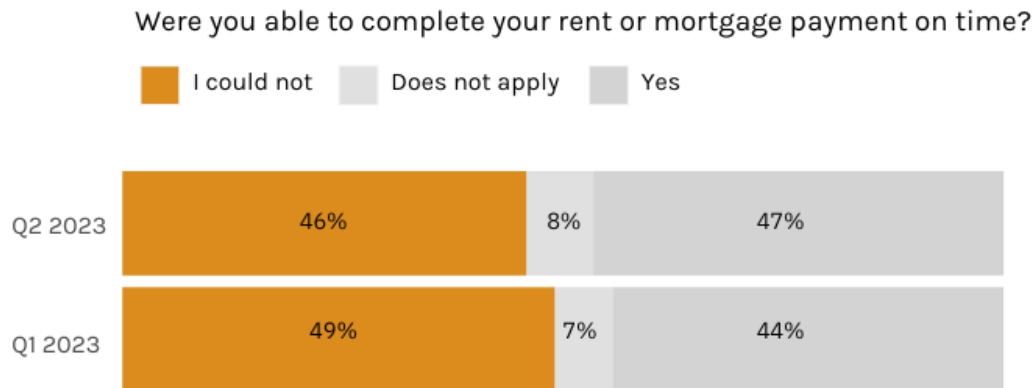
n = 12,447 total responses | Source: NDWA Labs' La Alianza Weekly Survey, January 13 - June 30, 2023
 |Note: Due to NDWA Labs' Winter office closure, the first survey this year was sent on January 13, and there was no survey on the week of June 9 due to NDWA's all staff retreat.



Economic Security

- **In the second quarter of 2023, eight in ten domestic worker respondents said their households faced food scarcity** either often (13%) or sometimes (67%) in the week prior to being surveyed.
- **Domestic workers' housing insecurity decreased in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the previous quarter.** 46% of respondents on average said at the beginning of the month that they were unable to pay their monthly rent or mortgage. This is a decline from 49% in the first quarter.

Domestic workers' housing insecurity decreased in the second quarter of 2023 compared to the previous quarter



n = 4,439 total respondents | Source: NDWA Labs' La Alianza Weekly Survey, January 13 - June 30, 2023 | Note: Due to NDWA Labs' Winter office closure, the first survey this year was sent on January 13, and there was no survey on the week of June 9 due to NDWA's all staff retreat.



- **There was a decline in the share of domestic worker respondents who struggled to afford regular household expenses in the second quarter of 2023.** 47% of respondents reported it was very or somewhat difficult to afford household expenses, compared to 51% during the first quarter of the year.
 - Respondents told us that it was either very (20%) or somewhat difficult (27%) to afford regular household expenses, such as food, housing, car payments, and medical expenses, in the week prior to being surveyed.
 - 46% of workers told us that it was a little difficult to afford household expenses and only 7% told us that it was not difficult.

About the surveys

NDWA Labs surveys Spanish-speaking domestic workers each week, via La Alianza, a Messenger chatbot. 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 this [report](#).

The employment numbers presented in this report include data from twelve weekly surveys in the second quarter of 2023 and twelve weekly surveys in the first quarter. The total number of fully completed surveys in the second quarter of 2023, which includes both new and repeated respondents, was 6,769. For the first quarter, the total number of completed surveys was 7,264. For greater detail on completions broken down by month, please see the table below. Surveys were paused on June 9 due to NDWA’s all staff retreat.

Month	Number of weekly surveys	Total completed surveys
June 2023	4	1,625
May 2023	4	2,568
April 2023	4	2,756
March 2023	5	3,053
February 2023	4	2,230
January 2023	3	1,981

Questions about hours worked and hourly wages are asked weekly, questions regarding underemployment and job search are asked bi-weekly, and questions around economic security are asked monthly.

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.

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

Notes

¹ White House Council of Economic Advisers (2023), [The Employment Situation in March](#)

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 Labs' joblessness rate for surveyed domestic workers is NOT seasonally adjusted, while BLS unemployment rates are adjusted.

**We modified the wording of some questions to ensure specificity and consistency in period reference formatting. The goal was to reduce cognitive burden and potential measurement error. For example, where we previously asked: "How many hours did you work on the week of January 9?", we changed the question to: "During the last 7 days, how many hours did you work?"

*** The share of respondents earning less than \$15 in 2022 cannot be directly compared to baseline numbers before COVID-19, due to a change in answer option ranges. However, since 55% of respondents reported earning \$15 or less before COVID-19,² a share which is inclusive of those who earned \$15 per hour, we know that the share of respondents earning less than \$15 is at most 55%.