Rideshare Driver COVID-19 Survey Data Brief  
May 6, 2020

Mobile Workers Alliance and We Drive Progress, members of a coalition of over 24,000 Uber and Lyft drivers in California, conducted a statewide online survey of 1,087 rideshare drivers in English and Spanish between April 24 and April 30. This memo highlights the key survey findings.

**SUMMARY**

Drivers who work for Uber and Lyft have been hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic with more than half reporting they are out of work and a growing reliance on publicly-funded programs to make ends meet.

Drivers who continue working for Uber and Lyft, report high levels of fear for their own and their passengers’ safety and say that the companies have not done enough to protect drivers from contracting or spreading the virus. They also report financial insecurity seeking unemployment and food assistance with many concerned about eviction.

While nearly all survey respondents who continue to drive are taking precautions to stop the spread of the virus, 40% of respondents report that the platform companies are doing **nothing** to adequately protect them from exposure to COVID-19. This has forced drivers to make the impossible choice between continuing to work and face the associated risk of COVID-19 exposure or staying at home without pay. Uber and Lyft deny drivers basic employee protections, including paid sick leave and access to healthcare benefits.

Amidst the global pandemic, Uber and Lyft are shifting their costs of doing business to taxpayers. The survey underscores the long-term negative impact to workers and taxpayers of misclassifying drivers as independent contractors:

- 67% of respondents report that it is unlikely that they will be able to pay their mortgage or rent in May
- 26% of respondents have no health insurance
- 68% of respondents report that the company they work for does not provide gloves, sanitizing products for their hands or vehicle, or other protective equipment

The COVID-19 pandemic also points to Uber and Lyft’s secret ingredient: publicly-funded programs. By shifting costs and risk entirely to drivers and taxpayers, Uber and Lyft essentially play by their own set of rules where they reap all the benefit and bear none of the costs. In this time of a pandemic, their business model has pushed thousands of drivers to the precipice of financial disaster.

**HOUSING AND FOOD SECURITY:**

Survey respondents report significant concerns over their financial, nutritional and housing security.

- Five-of-six (83%) of respondents say they need emergency funds to cover bills, food, and other necessities right now
• More than one-third (36%) report being worried very often about being evicted from their homes
• When asked about how they would pay for an emergency expense of $400, 71% indicated that they would not be able to pay for that expense right now

Drivers report a high level of food insecurity with more than one-in-five (21%) receiving nutritional assistance from either CalFresh (also known as SNAP or food stamps), food banks, and other food donations in the last 30 days.

• Nearly half of all drivers (48%) anticipate applying for food assistance in the next month

Respondents also report an increased need for state safety net programs, including unemployment benefits. However, a vast majority of those who have already applied to California’s unemployment insurance program report roadblocks to accessing that much-needed financial aid, despite a law passed last year clarifying that companies like Uber and Lyft must report driver’s income to the state and pay into the state unemployment insurance fund.

• Nearly half (49%) of respondents have applied for unemployment insurance through the state of California and another 14% are planning to apply

**DRIVER SAFETY AND HEALTH:**
Drivers report concern for their physical wellbeing but a financial need to continue working despite these risks. Half (51%) of the survey’s respondents report working less out of fear of contracting or sharing the virus with customers they come in contact with. Nearly another third (32%) report accepting jobs despite their fears of sharing and contracting the virus because they need income.

• 26% of respondents report they have no health insurance at all

**COMPANIES LEAVE DRIVERS UNPROTECTED:**
Despite the fact that rideshare drivers must share a small, confined space with customers, most respondents report that companies are not taking necessary steps to protect them or their customers, or support workers who are impacted by COVID-19.

• 68% of respondents report that their company does not provide gloves, sanitizing products for hands or their vehicle, or other protective equipment
• 82% report that their company does not offer training to protect drivers from the virus through contact with customers
• 80% report that their company does not offer financial assistance if drivers have been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19

Uber and Lyft have left drivers exposed and abandoned at a time when these protections are urgently needed.

• 48% of drivers who are currently working report needing protections from exposure to people who are sick with COVID-19
• 39% report needing paid sick leave
• 32% report needing access to healthcare benefits
**RESPONDENT DETAILS**
The 1,087 drivers who completed the survey are from all corners of the state of California and report working for a variety of applications at once, including rideshare and delivery applications.

**Respondents by Applications they Report Working for the Most**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uber</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyft</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmates</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instacart</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doordash</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other apps</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Of those who identify as working during the pandemic:**

- 46% continue to work primarily on rideshare apps
- 34% shifted from primarily rideshare to mostly food and/or grocery apps
- 14% continue to work primarily on food and/or grocery delivery apps
- 4% shifted from food and/or grocery delivery to rideshare apps
- 3% Other