Today's Bureau of Labor Statistics Jobs Report shows the number of jobs added in March was slightly below market expectations.¹ Unemployment rates for Latina and Black women decreased in March 2022. Similarly, NDWA Labs' March Report shows that the percentage of jobless domestic worker respondents in March decreased compared to February. However, joblessness is at 20%, still more than twice the rate compared to the 9% who reported having no jobs before COVID-19.²

In this report, we compare indicators for domestic workers' joblessness, wages, housing security and food security in the first quarter of 2022 (January, February, March) versus the fourth quarter of 2021. Joblessness for domestic workers remained largely unchanged compared to the previous quarter, and domestic workers remain in a precarious economic situation.

- 23% of respondents were out of work on average in the first quarter of 2022, compared to 22% of respondents during the fourth quarter of 2021.
- In the first quarter of 2022, 47% of respondents faced housing insecurity, compared to 44% of respondents in the previous quarter.
- 78% of respondents faced some level of food insecurity in the first quarter of 2022, compared to 74% in the previous quarter.
- An average of 72% of domestic worker respondents earned less than $15 per hour this quarter.
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.³

La Alianza survey data from Spanish-speaking domestic workers shows how the pandemic has amplified the vulnerability of this workforce. Domestic workers continue to face low wages and high levels of unemployment and underemployment. A contextual note regarding our findings: domestic workers, and particularly house cleaners, often have multiple employers. This means they may have to schedule several jobs in a given week in order to make ends meet.

**March 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. 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 April 1, the BLS released new employment data for March 2022.
- The number of jobs added in March was slightly below market expectations.
- **The unemployment rate for Latina and Black women decreased in March.**
- The unemployment rates for Black and Latinx adults continue to be higher compared to the rates for White and Asian adults.
- People who have been unemployed long-term (27 weeks or more) represented 23.9% of the total unemployed in March.

The economic crisis that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly harsh for Latina and Black women. In April 2020, the unemployment rate for Latina women reached 20%, the highest compared to other demographic groups.⁴ However, the recovery has been slower for Black women.

The unemployment rate for Latina women decreased in March 2022 with respect to February. **Similarly, NDWA Labs’ March Report shows the percentage of jobless domestic worker respondents decreased with respect to the previous month.**
March Domestic Worker Jobs and Wages

March joblessness decreased with respect to February 2022. An average of 20% of respondents reported having zero hours of work in a weekly survey, compared to 22% in February.

- This is back to the level of joblessness we saw at the end of 2021, after a notable increase in joblessness earlier this year.
- Before COVID, 9% of respondents reported having zero hours of work.

Joblessness in the first quarter of 2022 ticked up compared to the previous quarter. 23% of respondents were jobless on average during this quarter, compared to 22% of respondents during the fourth quarter of 2021.

- This may reflect the rise in joblessness early in the year, likely due to rising COVID cases with the Omicron variant.

20% of surveyed domestic workers were jobless in March, down from 22% in the fourth quarter of 2021.

How many hours did you work last week?

![Bar chart showing hours worked in Q4 2021, Jan 2022, Feb 2022, and Mar 2022]

n = 24,289 responses | Source: NDWA Labs' La Alianza Weekly Survey.
October 8, 2021 - March 25, 2022
• 3 in 4 respondents who had work in March were underemployed. 75% of domestic worker respondents who had at least one hour of work per week said they wanted to work more hours.

• More than 7 in 10 domestic worker respondents earned less than $15 per hour* during the first quarter of 2022. An average of 72% of respondents this quarter reported earning less than $15 per hour.
  ○ This is significantly higher than the share of respondents who earned less than $15 before COVID-19, which was at most 55%**.

72% of surveyed domestic workers made less than $15 an hour in the first quarter of 2022.

How much did you earn per hour last week, on average?

- $9 or less  
- $10-14  
- $15 or more

18%  
54%  
28%

n = 11,946 total responses | Source: NDWA Labs’ La Alianza Weekly Survey, January 15 - March 25, 2022

Job search

Most domestic worker respondents, whether or not they had current work, looked for additional work in March.

• 8 in 10 (80%) of domestic worker respondents, whether or not they had current work, told us they had looked for new work in the past 30 days.
• 3 in 4 (74%) respondents, whether or not they had current work, told us they had asked at least one of their regular employers to go back to work in the past 30 days.
Housing and Food Security

Close to half of domestic worker respondents faced housing insecurity, and nearly 8 in 10 experienced food insecurity this quarter. Food and housing insecurity were both higher than in the previous quarter, reflecting the ongoing economic precarity that domestic workers experience.

- In the first quarter of 2022, 47% of domestic worker respondents, on average, said they were unable to pay their monthly rent or mortgage.
  - This is a higher rate of housing insecurity compared to the 44% who were in that situation during the previous quarter.

47% of surveyed domestic workers were housing insecure in the first quarter of 2022, an increase from 44% in the fourth quarter of 2021

Were you able to pay your rent or mortgage this month?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I could not</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 2022</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4,872 total responses | Source: NDWA Labs' La Alianza Weekly Survey, October 8, 2021 - March 25, 2022 | Due to rounding some percentages may not add to 100.

- In the first quarter of 2022, 17% of respondents on average said they would not be able to afford food in the following two weeks and 61% were unsure if they would be able to.
  - In comparison, during the previous quarter, 12% of respondents said they would not be able to afford food in the following two weeks and 62% were unsure if they would be able to.
78% of surveyed domestic workers were food insecure in the first quarter of 2022, an increase from 74% in the fourth quarter of 2021

Will you be able to pay for food in the next two weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 2022</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 5,754 total responses | Source: NDWA Labs' La Alianza Weekly Survey, October 8, 2021 - March 25, 2022

About the surveys

NDWA Labs surveys Spanish-speaking domestic workers each week, via La Alianza, a Messenger chatbot. The employment numbers presented in this report include data from all of our weekly surveys from the fourth quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022. March averages reflect data from four weekly surveys in March 2022, and first quarter averages reflect data from eleven weekly surveys in January, February, and March 2022. Questions about hours worked and hourly wages are asked weekly, questions regarding underemployment and job search are asked bi-weekly, and questions around food and housing security are asked monthly.

The total number of fully completed surveys for our four March weekly surveys, which includes both new and repeated respondents, was 3,223; for February, we had 3,441 completed surveys; and for January, we had 2,696 completed surveys. 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.

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, please contact us here.

Notes

1 White House Council of Economic Advisers (2022), 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 (2019), Domestic Workers Chartbook
4 Economic Policy Institute (2021), Jobs and Unemployment, “A more comprehensive look at unemployment rates”
*In January 2022 we modified the ranges for answer options in the hourly wage questions. The previous ranges were: $10 or less, $11-15, $16-20, $21-25, and $26 or more. As of January 2022, the ranges are: $9 or less, $10-14, $15-19, $20-24, and $25 or more.
**The share of respondents earning less than $15 in January cannot be directly compared to baseline numbers before COVID-19, due to a change in answer option ranges in 2022 (see above footnote). However, since 55% of respondents reported earning $15 or less before COVID-19³, 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%.