



## FACT SHEET: MEASURING DOMESTIC WORKERS' SAY IN WORKPLACE ISSUES.

Domestic workers are the nannies who nurture and raise our children, the house cleaners who bring order to our homes, and the direct care workers who ensure that our loved ones who are aging or living with disabilities receive the assistance they need to live with dignity and independence in their homes. There are around 2.2 million domestic workers in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

New research<sup>2</sup> adapted an existing survey instrument<sup>3</sup> to measure domestic workers' voice gap: the difference between how much voice domestic workers believe they ought to have and how much voice they actually have. The study inquired about the voice gap in a single question, asking workers to compare how much say or influence they have in different workplace issues, compared to the say they ought to have. The research also looked at the association between worker voice and workers' self-reported psychological well-being.

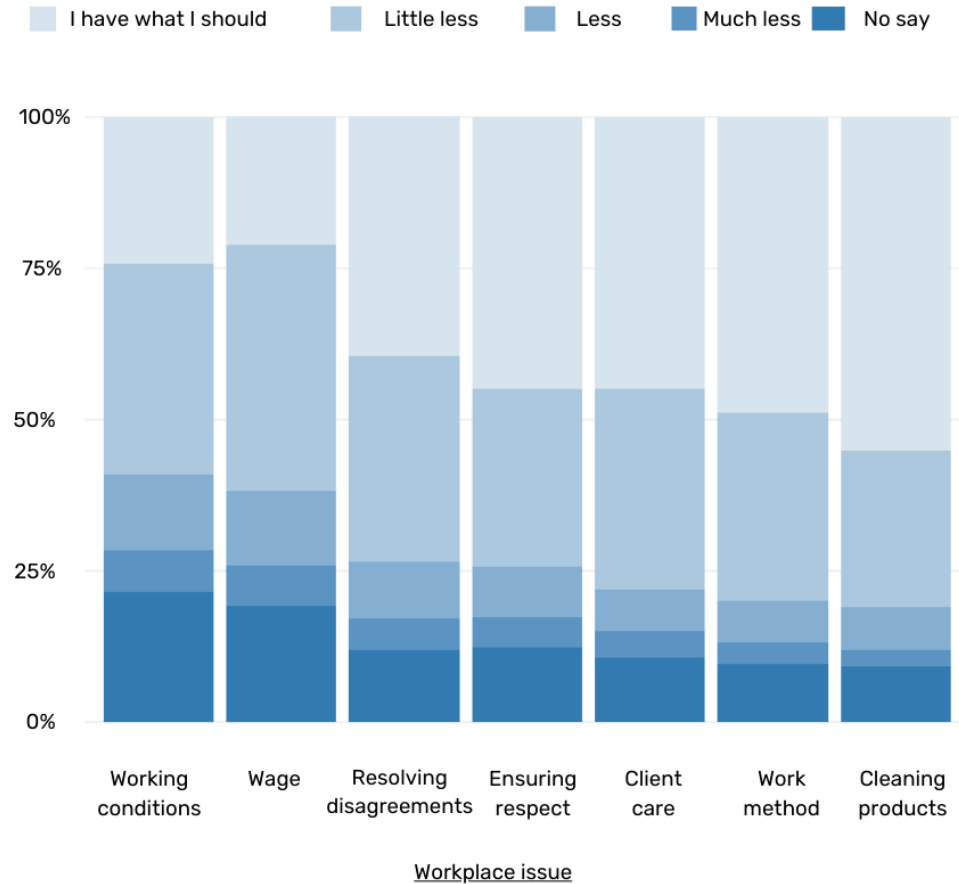
Data from 1,632 unique respondents was collected, between April and June of 2024, through an already existing survey tool utilized by the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), a Facebook Messenger chatbot called La Alianza. In addition to responding to surveys, domestic workers were active participants in different stages of the research process.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Survey results show domestic workers have less say than they believe they ought to have in almost all workplace issues we asked about.
  - Working conditions and wages were the two areas where workers reported the largest voice gaps.
- The set of characteristics associated with having a larger voice gap were: lower wages, lower English proficiency, working for an agency, and being a homecare worker or a nanny – compared to a house cleaner.
  - Across all domestic work occupations, we found that higher wages were associated with lower voice gaps, as expected.
  - Surveyed domestic workers who were hired by agencies (e.g., nanny or homecare agencies and housecleaning service companies) were more likely to perceive larger voice gaps compared to those who were hired directly by the client.
- Homecare workers reported a larger voice gap in all workplace issues, but most notably in determining their compensation, compared to nannies and house cleaners.
- About 43% of respondents in our sample who answered the well-being questions met the criteria, according to the World Health Organization<sup>4</sup> to warrant further depression screening.
  - Larger voice gaps were associated with lower overall well-being.

## Domestic workers reported the largest voice gaps in relation to working conditions and wages

In your main job, how much say or influence do you have in [workplace issue] compared with how much say you should have?



Note: n = 1,632. Client care was asked only to homecare workers and nannies, while cleaning product choice was asked only to house cleaners.

Source: NDWA's La Alianza Survey

<sup>1</sup>Banerjee et al. (2022). Domestic Workers Chartbook 2022. <https://www.epi.org/publication/domestic-workers-chartbook-2022/#table1>

<sup>2</sup>Lopez Gonzalez, Nuñez, Diaz-Linhart, Kochan (2025). *Worker Voice in Private Homes: Measuring Domestic Workers' Say in Workplace Issues*. <https://www.domesticworkers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Worker-Voice-Report-English.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>We use an instrument developed by Diaz-Linhart et al. (2023) *Bridging the Gap: Measuring the Impact of Worker Voice on Job-related Outcomes*. [https://mitsloan.mit.edu/sites/default/files/2024-01/Diaz-Linhart%20et%20al.%20Families%20and%20Workers\\_Work%20Voice\\_Report%2011%2009%202023%20final.pdf](https://mitsloan.mit.edu/sites/default/files/2024-01/Diaz-Linhart%20et%20al.%20Families%20and%20Workers_Work%20Voice_Report%2011%2009%202023%20final.pdf), which builds on Kochan et al. (2019) *Worker Voice in America: Is There a Gap between What Workers Expect and What They Experience?* <https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793918806250>

<sup>4</sup>World Health Organization. The World Health Organization-Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2004.

License CC-BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/mental-health/who-5\\_english-original4da539d6ed4b49389e3afe47cda2326a.pdf?sfvrsn=ed43f352\\_11&download=true](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/mental-health/who-5_english-original4da539d6ed4b49389e3afe47cda2326a.pdf?sfvrsn=ed43f352_11&download=true)