

Domestic Work in California

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**workplace
justice lab**

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Executive Summary

Families across California rely on more than 330,000 domestic workers to care for their loved ones and keep their homes clean. **Yet we find that 67,000 domestic workers in the state lost an average of more than \$282 million each year from being paid below the California state minimum wage.**

This study uses 2014-2023 data from both the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Groups (CPS-MORG) to better understand the domestic workforce in the state of California. We define domestic workers as including three major occupational groups consistent with previous profiles on domestic work. *Childcare providers* take care of children within the home (rather than at childcare or day care centers); *House cleaners* help keep homes clean, healthy and safe; and *homecare attendants* provide personal or health-related care to persons with disabilities or who are ill. Homecare attendants may be employed directly by private households (i.e., nonagency-based) or employed by agencies (i.e., agency-based).

Other key findings of the report include:

- An estimated 20 percent of domestic workers were paid below the minimum wage during this 10-year period, including 28 percent of childcare providers and 32 percent of house cleaners. A domestic worker experiencing these violations on average loses \$4,197 in earned wages a year if working year-round.
- The state minimum wage nearly doubled over this period from \$8 in 2014 to \$15.50 in 2023 thanks to the organizing and advocacy done by economic justice organizations across the state, leading wages to grow for all domestic worker groups and other workers. Yet the median wage for domestic workers of \$15 in 2019-23 was still 40% below the median wage of \$25 for all other California workers during this period.
- Eighty percent of California domestic workers speak English well, and nearly half (46%) have attended or graduated from college.
- Two-thirds of California domestic workers are employed through agencies as homecare attendants.
- An estimated 127,000 domestic workers live in the Los Angeles metro area.
- The majority of California domestic workers (54%) were born outside of the U.S. The most common places of origin include Mexico (21%), Central America (9%), and the Philippines (7%).
- Nearly 75% of California domestic workers are U.S. citizens; 47% were citizens at birth while 27% were naturalized.
- Most domestic workers are also people of color. Nearly half of all domestic workers identify as Latine, and another quarter identify as either Asian or Pacific Islander (API) or Black.
- Most California domestic workers are female (84%), with household cleaners and childcare providers particularly likely to identify as female.