



ILR School



NEW YORK @ WORK

2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome

Eighty years ago this fall, Cornell University's New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) was founded to address the great workplace conflicts of that era and promote better labor-management relations. Today, we continue to be the world's leading school focused on labor, management and the economy.

To that end, we are thrilled to release the fifth annual New York at Work report, drawing on ILR expertise, research-based data and policy analysis on a broad range of key issues affecting the state's workers, unions, communities and employers. The report, which includes work from our Center for Applied Research on Work (CAROW), is intended to serve as an informative, accessible and relevant resource for policymakers and the public. We hope that you find it useful, and we look forward to engaging with you as you work to improve the lives of your constituents.

For further assistance, please see the list of ILR Outreach institutes and programs with contact information at the end of the report.

Established by the New York State Legislature in 1945, ILR is guided by a commitment to social and economic justice and to improving the lives of New York's working people. Consistent with our mission and to honor New York's workers, the report is published annually around Labor Day.

Sincerely,

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ILR ASSISTS NEW YORK LAWMAKERS IN AMENDING THE STATE LABOR RELATIONS ACT

Cathy Crieghton, Buffalo Co-Lab director



Overview

Employees have the right to organize and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, as guaranteed in the New York State Constitution, Article I, Section 17. For almost a century, federal labor law under the National Labor Relations Act has ensured that constitutional right for most private sector workers in New York.

However, in the first week of his administration, President Donald Trump terminated a member of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and, as of this writing, has failed to fill vacancies, resulting in seven months without a quorum to operate. Because the NLRB is not fully operable, many New York private sector workers do not have a forum to have their state constitutional right to organize and bargain upheld.

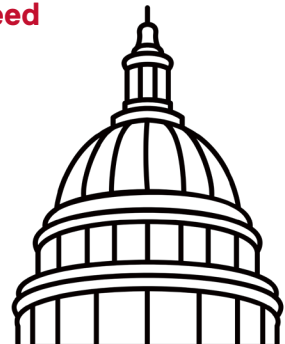
Beginning in January 2025, the ILR Buffalo Co-Lab worked with NYS Labor chairs Senator Jessica Ramos and Assemblymember Harry Bronson to craft changes to the New York State Labor Relations

Act. In June, the NYS Legislature passed Senate Bill S8034 to amend the law. The bill is awaiting the governor's signature.

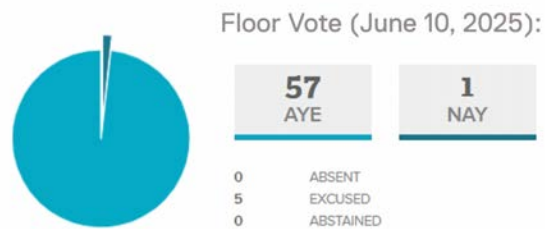
The potential public impact on New York workers is extraordinary.

Purpose of Senate Bill S8034

To make sure employees still receive protections guaranteed by the National Labor Relations Act if the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is unable to successfully assert jurisdiction.



Senate Bill S8034 Vote



Source: The New York State Senate

Impact

The new legislation modifies the existing New York State Labor Relations Act, passed in its original form in 1937. It allows unions, employees and employers to go to the NYS Public Employment Relations Board, unless the NLRB brings an action to claim jurisdiction over such workers. Under long-established Supreme Court case law, *NLRB v. Nash Finch*, 404 NLRB 138 (1971), the NLRB has the right to assert its jurisdiction. This amended bill proactively protects workers where the federal government has disabled federal protections.

Other states are passing similar bills because the federal government has left the NLRB largely nonfunctional. The ILR Buffalo Co-Lab has been working with representatives from California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, Vermont and the AFL-CIO and its affiliates, who are working on passing or amending their state statutes.

Key Components of Bill

- Gives the NYS Public Employment Relations Board the authority to act when the federal government is unable to act, and has failed to act, with regard to protecting workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively.
- Keeps workers' collective bargaining agreements in full force and in effect under state law.
- Ensures New York complies with its state constitutional provisions.
- Serves the people of the state as the NYS Public Employment Relations Board is empowered to promptly settle labor disputes, which promotes labor peace.
- Promotes workforce stability and uses New York state labor relations law where the federal government refuses or fails to act to protect state interests.

ILR Buffalo Co-Lab

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Scan to read about
NYS Senate Bill S8034A



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE ERIE COUNTY LABOR MARKET

Russell Weaver, Buffalo Co-Lab research director; Cathy Crieghton, Buffalo Co-Lab director

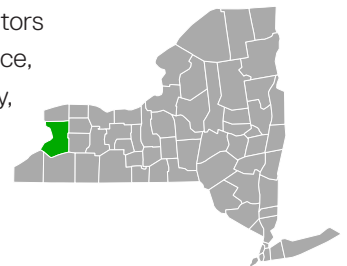


Overview

Through a combination of statistical analyses and focus group conversations, this report found that women working in Erie County, New York, relative to men, simultaneously experience lower pay (after controlling for relevant factors) and greater barriers to success. Although this phenomenon is national, if not global, in scale and therefore not unique to Western New York (WNY), by documenting conditions in the local economy, this report functions as a call to action for local and state representatives in Erie County. The industries that are creating the most jobs and largest footprints in the WNY economy are being powered disproportionately by women; however, women working in Erie County are not receiving an equal share of the value from their labor, nor are they being elevated equally into positions of political and economic influence.

Key Findings

- After controlling for factors like education, experience, occupation and industry, the adjusted average hourly wage for women is \$2.74 less than that of men.
- The wage gap widens with higher education – women with graduate or professional degrees earn \$3.68 per hour less than equally qualified men.
- Mothers in dual-income households earn \$3.18 per hour less than fathers, reinforcing national trends where caregiving responsibilities disproportionately affect women.
- Despite comprising 51.3% of Erie County's population, women hold only 27.3% of County Legislature seats and are just 30% of Buffalo's most influential business and civic leaders.



Gender Gap in Average Wages (Average Wage for Women Minus Average Wage for Men, 2024\$)



Recommendations

- Enforce pay transparency laws to ensure women have access to salary information and can challenge unfair wage disparities.
- Implement stronger workplace regulations to hold employers accountable for gender-based pay inequities.
- Introduce affordable, high-quality childcare programs to alleviate the burden on working mothers.
- Advocate for paid family leave policies, allowing women and men to balance career growth with caregiving responsibilities.
- Create leadership development programs to support women's advancement in corporate and government roles.
- Establish mentorship networks to connect women with influential leaders who can advocate for their career growth.
- Promote policies that encourage gender balance in political representation, such as recruitment initiatives and leadership training for women in Erie County.
- Support workplace unionization efforts.

Research Impact

Following the report launch, the authors were invited to speak at the sixth annual Women of Color (WOC) Summit in Niagara Falls, New York. The WOC Summit founder expressed interest in partnering with Erie County and ILR in Buffalo to pursue a specific recommendation – building networked support institutions for women. When interviewed, most study participants found the focus group portion of the study to be empowering. Many expressed that they would benefit from having a space where they could come together to speak freely and share their experiences with other women. One participant called for a “human library where we could check out people instead of books.” Building systems of support and care seems like a necessary step toward more egalitarian gender relations in Erie County and beyond. This study has already catalyzed conversations and budding partnerships to act on that objective.

ILR Buffalo Co-Lab

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EMPIRE STATE POLL 2025

Conducted by the Center for Applied Research on Work, with authorship and contributions by:

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Additional support was provided by:

Cassidy Stanley, CAROW program assistant; Phumthep Bunnak, CAROW research assistant; Tess O'Donoghue, CAROW research assistant.



Overview

The Empire State Poll (ESP) is designed to illuminate the concerns and labor and employment experiences of New York state residents. In 2024, the Center for Applied Research on Work (CAROW) at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations distributed the ESP to over 2,600 New York state residents to learn what they experience in the world of work. The report covers a wide variety of topics related to respondents' opinions and labor and employment experiences.

The ESP findings reveal the lived experience of New York state residents – their concerns, their relationships to work, labor market participation and experience. The data collected can serve as a guide to employers, policymakers, legislators and advocates to understand the opportunities and challenges for workers in New York state, and to address these challenges in 2025 and the years to come.

MORE THAN 68%

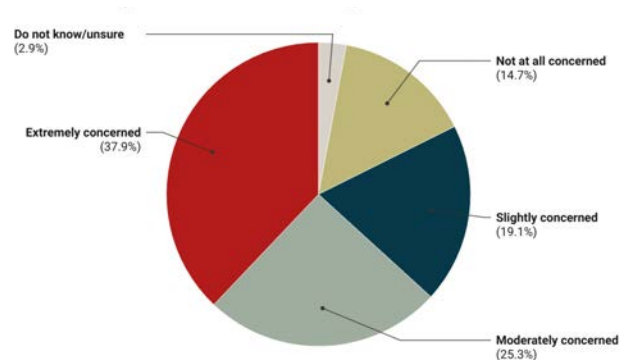
The amount of New York State respondents who said that **cost of living** is the most critical issue facing their household.



Key Findings

- More than 68% of respondents say that the cost of living is the most critical issue facing their household.
- More than 82% of respondents express some level of concern about how climate change will impact future generations.
- Over 50% of employed respondents have access to employer-sponsored health, vision and dental insurance, but access to those benefits is limited by disparities across race and education.
- Nearly 27% of respondents who reported caregiving responsibilities indicate that such responsibilities make it difficult to maintain a job.
- There is a high level of unionization (34.9% of ESP labor force participants who are not self-employed) and a high opinion of unions (65.9%), compared to just 12.1% who disapprove.
- The majority of respondents support strengthening employment protections in New York state:
 - 64.4% significantly support stronger protections for wage theft.
 - 58.3% significantly support stronger protections against employer retaliation.
 - 56.5% significantly support stronger protections against workplace discrimination.
 - 57% significantly support stronger protections against workplace harassment.

How concerned are you about how climate change may affect today's children and future generations?



Universe: all 2024 ESP participants [n=2,686 weighted observations]

Chart: Climate Jobs Institute - Source: 2024 Cornell University ILR School Empire State Poll
Created with Datawrapper

Research Impact

New York state faces myriad challenges and opportunities related to labor, employment and the communities where workers live. It is vital for policymakers and people leaders to understand the concerns of New Yorkers as they make decisions that have broad implications for our state. The Empire State Poll offers a unique window into the daily lives of New Yorkers that can inform policy and practice.



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UPDATE ON NEW YORK'S RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICIES, PLANS & PROGRESS: A CLIMATE JOBS PERSPECTIVE

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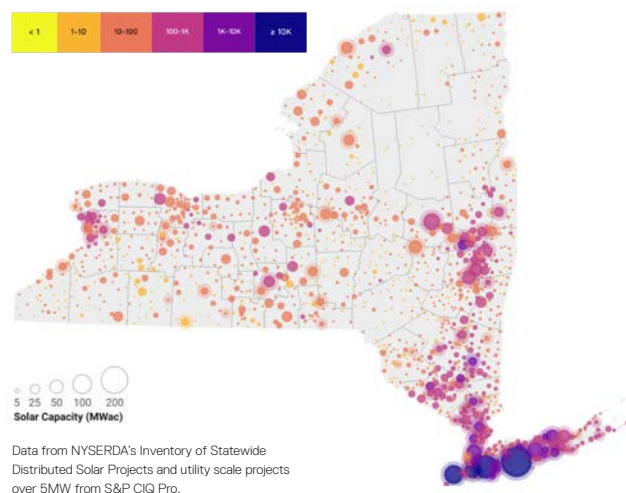


Overview

This report analyzes the state's progress toward meeting its clean energy generation targets, examines where and how renewables are being built in the state, and explains the impact of the renewable energy transition on job creation and job quality. The analysis finds that, although New York has nation-leading labor standards on clean energy work and met its short-term rooftop and community solar goal, it is falling behind on its larger goals to lower emissions and generate clean electricity at the pace and scale that science demands. This report also identifies areas of job growth, inequities in opportunity, and strategies to ensure that the future jobs created are high-quality, family-sustaining, union careers.

New York State Solar Installations

Solar installations and capacity aggregated by groups of NY zip codes, from 2000 to the end of June 2024. This map includes 230,000 installations with a total capacity of 5 Gigawatts alternating current.



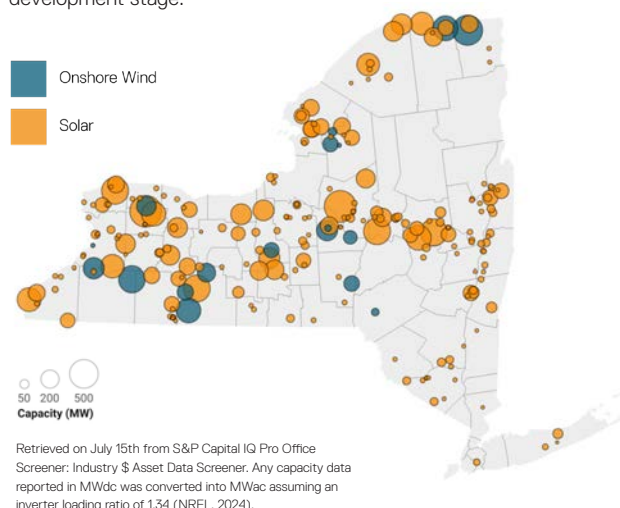
Data from NYSERDA's Inventory of Statewide Distributed Solar Projects and utility scale projects over 5MW from S&P CIQ Pro.

Key Findings

- New York is falling short of its renewable energy goals. Clean energy will cover only 38%-44% of the state's electricity demand by 2030, and it will take at least three more years to reach its 70% target for that year.
- The outlook is mixed. Siting and permitting reforms have expedited clean energy development, but supply chain instability and changes at the federal level have caused considerable uncertainty and delays.
- Clean energy promises substantial job creation, but the opportunities are not distributed equitably. Women and Black workers remain underrepresented in the industry, and 65% of solar workers relocated to New York for a job.
- Unions are the key to recruiting and training a skilled clean energy workforce. Labor has fought for and achieved groundbreaking labor standards on large-scale renewable projects in New York, but most distributed solar installations pay neither union wages nor benefits.

Large-Scale Solar and Wind Projects Planned for New York State

Planned onshore wind and solar projects, scaled by rated capacity (MW). Nearly 10% of solar capacity and 33% of wind capacity are under construction or in an advanced development stage.



Recommendations

- New York must invest in more renewable energy projects to meet projected demand.
- Developing more publicly owned projects, especially onshore wind and solar, will help offset uncertainty at the federal level.
- The state should broaden labor protections for renewable energy workers not currently covered by recent reforms, such as in smaller-scale projects, energy storage and adjacent industries.
- Future clean energy projects must have targeted pathways for high-quality jobs for frontline communities.

Research Impact

This research compiled climate and clean energy data from a labor perspective, looking at both the quantitative buildout of clean energy and the qualitative impacts on jobs and disadvantaged communities. The accompanying webinar and panel discussion featured state lawmakers, labor leaders and climate policy experts, and had over 100 attendees. The Capitol Pressroom podcast featured the report in a recent episode. CJI followed this research with an additional report, "Key Interventions for New York State," which was released during Climate Week 2025. That report recommends the top 10 initiatives the state can take to meet its climate, clean energy and labor goals.



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OCCUPATIONAL RESTRICTIONS AND INADEQUATE RELIEF IN STATE-LEVEL CLEAN SLATE EFFORTS

Matt Saleh, J.D., Ph.D., Criminal Justice and Employment Initiative senior associate director; Jason Hoge, Esq., Criminal Justice and Employment Initiative consulting reentry specialist; Ethan Mulroy, Harvard Business School research associate



Overview

Having a criminal conviction can make it extremely difficult to find stable employment. In an effort to help justice-impacted individuals, New York has become one of the most recent states to pass “clean slate” legislation. The Clean Slate Act (CPL 160.57) offers automatic record sealing for certain offenses after a period of time has passed. One goal of the act is to curb private employer discrimination by limiting access to criminal records for the 2.2 million New Yorkers with criminal convictions during the hiring process. While this is usually achieved by “sealing” – or hiding – the records, one problem with New York’s approach is that it does little to overcome barriers stemming from legally imposed occupational licensing restrictions.

ILR’s Labor and Employment Law Program’s Criminal Justice and Employment Initiative (CJEI) is engaged in an ongoing effort to catalog and analyze New York state laws and regulations that

restrict employment access for people with criminal convictions. The state currently has 500 laws and regulations restricting work access based on criminal records, and the act specifies that records are not sealed where state or federal occupational restrictions apply. This has serious repercussions, as more than one in five jobs in New York state require occupational licenses.

**1 OUT
OF 5 JOBS**
requires an
occupational license
in New York state



Key Findings

- In New York, one in five jobs requires an occupational license. As a result, New Yorkers with criminal records face automatic or nearly automatic disqualification from hundreds of thousands of jobs requiring licenses or certification, undermining the goal of Clean Slate.
- Many government-related jobs require a fingerprint-based background check, meaning potential employers are still allowed to review conviction records.
- New York has 500 separate laws and regulations restricting work access based on a criminal conviction. The new Clean Slate Act largely does not seal records for these purposes.
- Record “sealing” is often mistaken for “expungement.” They are not the same: expungement usually means the record is destroyed, while sealing means access is hidden in certain contexts.
- The record sealing waiting period is three years for eligible misdemeanors and eight years for eligible felonies. The clock starts either after incarceration is complete or from the date of sentencing, if there was no sentence of incarceration. These waiting periods pose barriers, and many occupational restrictions are “indefinite,” with no time limit. This means even after waiting significant periods for Clean Slate relief, a person may still find themselves ineligible for jobs where these restrictions apply.

Recommendations

- Employers and licensing/certifying bodies face an increasingly complex legal environment and need to understand their legal obligations. This can be accomplished by training the state agencies that have licensing/certifying authority.

- Clean Slate, Corrections Law Article 23-A, and the hundreds of occupational restrictions create confusion over legal requirements. This is clear in recent lawsuits where hiring restrictions were found to be discriminatory (e.g., DoorDash, NYC Department of Education). Building public awareness for justice-impacted groups, reentry providers and employers can help avoid misunderstandings that undermine the state's public policy goals for fair chance hiring and hurt the state economy.

Research Impact

CJEl combines research, direct interfacing with key stakeholders and law/policy expertise to deliver just-in-time curriculum and training needs around New York state. As new laws like the Clean Slate Act come into effect, CJEl seeks feedback from diverse groups around the state to understand where challenges and opportunities arise in fair chance hiring efforts. A big part of this effort is delivering training modules to justice-impacted individuals, legal and justice-system professionals, workforce and reentry organizations, employers and licensing/certifying bodies.

These trainings aim to dispel myths, increase compliance and ultimately lead to better employment outcomes for justice-impacted New Yorkers. By addressing gaps in public awareness and understanding of the legal rights and requirements related to hiring justice-impacted groups, CJEl aims to advance New York state public policy by increasing fair chance hiring, while also addressing “demand side” labor market needs, such as labor market shortages.



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STATE OF THE LAST-MILE DELIVERY INDUSTRY

Institute for Compensation Studies; Buffalo Co-Lab; Worker Institute

Overview

An interdisciplinary team from the ILR School has secured funding from the National Science Foundation to study the “last-mile” delivery industry. Researchers at the Institute for Compensation Studies, the Buffalo Co-Lab and the Worker Institute are examining the nature of parcel delivery work. The team is assessing the differences in wages, job quality and working conditions across four companies – USPS, UPS, FedEx and Amazon – that employ or engage delivery workers. Researchers will also evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of new technologies, such as electric vehicles, dashboard cameras, vehicle sensors and digital parcel tracking, and the role of unionization in light of changing labor market dynamics in last-mile delivery. This ambitious three-year, multi-regional study will conclude in May 2028 and include an in-depth analysis of Buffalo, New York.

Key Findings

Emerging findings from pilot research in Buffalo, New York, have suggested three themes that will be investigated via a large-scale survey of last-mile delivery drivers:

- Compared to experienced workers, new labor market entrants/younger workers are less aware of, and less concerned about, wage-benefit differences across employers.
- Part-time and/or contract workers tend to be more satisfied with their jobs than full-time, permanent workers because they understand their job to be temporary.
- Technology masks and buffers the conflict typically associated with front-line supervision.



Recommendations

Recommendations for policymakers and industry participants will be forthcoming in subsequent publications.

Research Impact

The study aims to identify challenges faced by last-mile delivery workers and their managers and develop recommendations for policies and practices that create high-quality jobs, build strong and profitable businesses and provide excellent customer service.



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CANNABIS AND THE WORKPLACE: ARE EMPLOYERS CONFUSED?

Esta R. Bigler, Labor and Employment Law Program director

Overview

The 2021 Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), which legalized adult-use cannabis, amended the New York labor law to prohibit employers from discriminating against employees based on the use of cannabis outside the workplace and outside work hours. Employers are now prevented from testing prospective or existing employees for cannabis, except in very limited circumstances where required by federal or state law.

While cannabis use can be prohibited during work hours, testing cannot be used to enforce this, as current tests do not demonstrate impairment or indicate when cannabis was used, as it remains in a person's system for thirty days.

The uncertainty in identifying impairment or use on the job, and drug testing panels that include results for cannabis, cause confusion. Questions about cannabis testing were included in the 2024 Empire State Poll to gather information about how New York employers are adapting their policies for this change in the law.

Key Findings

- Eleven percent of workers stated they had been tested for cannabis by their employer in the previous year.
- Of the 25% who tested positive, 57% stated they had been fired, suspended or given a warning.
- Twice as many Black workers, compared to white workers, reported being tested for cannabis, while results showed that more than twice as many white workers, compared to Black workers, tested positive.



Recommendations

- Expand research and data collection to provide a better understanding of which sectors, industries, job types, regions, unionization, etc., may lack updated employment policies reflecting current cannabis-testing guidelines.
- Promote education and awareness to help employers, unions, workers and advocates understand when employees can and cannot be tested for cannabis use in New York.

Research Impact

The data suggests a possibility that not only are many employers unaware or dismissive of the changes around testing for cannabis, but also that the continuation of outdated testing policies may further the same discriminatory outcomes legalization was meant to address. The sample size is small, and expanded data is needed, but these results provide a crucial baseline for tracking employer compliance with New York's restrictions on cannabis testing in the workplace.



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REDESIGNING WORKPLACE DISPUTE RESOLUTION: GLOBAL LESSONS AND INSTITUTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW YORK

Javier Ramirez, National Conflict Resolution Service executive director



Overview

Cornell ILR has long served as a resource for effective dispute resolution in New York and beyond. Drawing from the fieldwork of neutral mediators, union and management leaders, and ILR's instructional expertise, this report examines how dispute resolution systems can be strengthened to meet today's challenges and how New York can become a national leader in dispute resolution.

Recent research – including a six-country comparative study and a national analysis of U.S. dispute systems – reveals growing global momentum toward early, informal and relationship-based conflict engagement. Meanwhile, the U.S. remains highly fragmented and privatized. For many U.S. workplaces, especially outside the unionized sector, access to consistent, transparent and fair conflict resolution is limited. The erosion of centralized federal support further highlights the need for institutional leadership at the state and local levels.

This report offers key insights and recommendations for building integrated, scalable workplace Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) systems that reflect public values and adapt to the realities of delivery across New York's diverse employment landscape.

Key Findings

- Globally, public ADR agencies are embracing early, informal and relationship-based approaches.
- Some countries, such as Ireland and New Zealand, invest in integrated public-facing ADR as core institutional infrastructure.
- The U.S. system is fragmented and privatized, creating gaps in access, oversight and quality.
- Nonunion and individual workers in the U.S. often lack access to public, accountable conflict resolution tools.
- Effective workplace conflict resolution depends on early engagement, emotional intelligence and sustained relationships.
- Supportive legislation and investment can link public institutions, academics and practitioners to build robust, scalable workplace ADR across New York

Recommendations

- Promote hybrid workplace ADR systems that blend public values with private delivery realities.
- Expand availability of early resolution services across industries and employment settings.
- Improve coordination and transparency in privatized ADR systems.
- Support the development of practitioner training through entities like the ILR School and workforce pipelines rooted in emotional and relational competence.
- Invest in local conflict resolution infrastructure that serves as a public good.

Research Impact

This report draws on a six-country comparative study and a national analysis of U.S. dispute resolution systems. Together, they highlight a global shift toward accessible, integrated and relational models of workplace ADR. Cornell ILR's Scheinman Institute is uniquely positioned to translate those lessons into practice – through research-informed services, practitioner training and cross-sector partnerships. While public-sector institutions, such as New York's Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), provide essential functions, workplace conflict now spans all sectors and employment types. Strengthening public-serving ADR infrastructure will improve access, fairness and efficiency for workers and institutions alike – positioning New York as a national leader in dispute resolution system design.

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NEW YORK CARE WORKERS: THE WEIGHT OF STRESS AND UNPAID CAREGIVING

Zoë West, Worker Institute senior researcher, worker rights and equity; Michael Lenmark, Worker Institute senior research support specialist, worker rights and equity



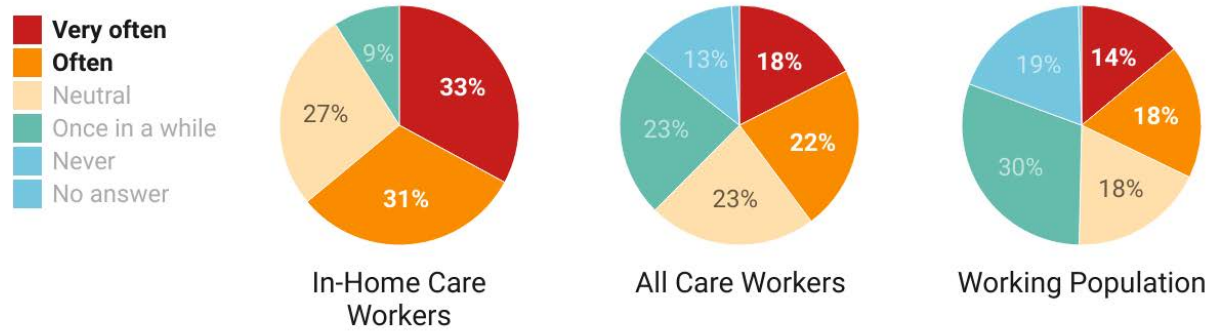
Overview

This memo provides a snapshot of the stress, burnout and unpaid caregiving responsibilities of care workers in New York. The analysis is based on data from the 2023 Empire State Poll, a statewide poll carried out by Cornell University's ILR School. Overall, care workers made up over one-third (34.6%) of the working population of Empire State Poll respondents (529 of 1527). In this memo, we highlight findings about certain groups of care workers: healthcare workers, in-home care workers (including home care workers and domestic workers), and care workers who work in facilities (such as facilities for the care of children, older adults or people with disabilities).

Key Findings

- Care worker respondents were more likely to report low pay, disrespect, understaffing, harassment, discrimination or feeling unsafe at work as sources of stress and/or burnout.
- Stress and burnout had greater impacts on care workers than on the general working population of respondents, making it difficult for them to take care of themselves and/or spend time with loved ones.
- In addition to providing paid care work, care workers were also more likely to bear responsibility for unpaid caregiving in their personal lives.

Impact of Stress and Burnout



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Research Impact

Amid broad recognition of a “care crisis” – marked by labor shortages across different sectors of the care economy alongside rising demand for these services – these findings point to the urgency of ensuring that care economy jobs are dignified, well-paid and safe. The findings also highlight the importance of confronting the root causes and effects of the stress and burnout that care workers experience.

ILR Worker Institute

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REGENERATIVE ORGANIZING: A PILOT PROGRAM PROMOTING PERSONAL HEALING AND COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE FOR CARE WORKERS

Zoë West, Worker Institute senior researcher, worker rights and equity; Ariana Shapiro, M.S. '25



Overview

Care workers deal with significant stress and trauma in their jobs, yet often face barriers to accessing care themselves. As unions, worker centers, advocates and policymakers push for structural solutions to improve care workers' pay and working conditions, there is also greater visibility into the impacts of stress and trauma that care workers face due to the nature of their work and their position as a devalued workforce made up disproportionately of women, people of color and immigrants.

This report provides an overview of a pilot Regenerative Organizing program that addressed stress and trauma for care workers in the New York metropolitan area. The Worker Institute at Cornell University's ILR School convened nurses, domestic workers and home care workers for a months-long

training and coaching process in “regenerative practices” – frameworks and tools that support personal and collective wellbeing and foster more resilient collective organizing.

CARE WORKERS

deal with significant stress and trauma in their jobs, yet often face barriers to accessing care themselves.





Participants applied learnings from the program within their organizational structures and practices, shaping their work with members, staff, and community members.

Participants applied the program learnings in their daily work and organizing to more effectively move through conflict and reactive patterns.

The “regenerative interventions” that participants developed during the coaching period provided a formal way for them to share the learnings from the training with members of their unions and organizations.

Key Findings

- The program sharpened participants’ understanding of the effects of stress, trauma and oppression at both the individual level and the organizational/collective level.
- Participants began to see personal healing as an important foundation to becoming more effective in leadership, organizing and supporting others.
- Participants applied the program’s learnings within their organizational structures and practices, shaping their work with members, staff and community members.

Recommendations

- Unions and worker organizations should take seriously the impact of stress and trauma on their members, staff and organizational dynamics, and integrate programming into existing organizational strategies and priorities.
- Attending to workers’ stress and trauma can enhance their capacity to take leadership in advocating for their needs and engaging in collective action.
- Care workers must be provided more opportunities to join learning communities with other care workers and organizers across different unions, organizations and sectors.

Research Impact

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers and organizations have recognized the acute need to address the impacts of stress and trauma. However, limited guidance is available on interventions that connect individual healing to building power through worker organizations. This report documents a new model for worker organizations seeking to address these issues while building the leadership and strength of their members and staff. While this pilot program was tailored for care workers, the Regenerative Organizing program could be adapted for workers, unions and organizations across various sectors.

ILR Worker Institute

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DOMESTIC WORKERS RISING: AN EVALUATION OF THE WE RISE PEER TRAINING PROGRAM

Zoë West, Worker Institute senior researcher, worker rights and equity; Ketchel Carey, '23;

Anne Marie Brady, Worker Institute research director, worker rights and equity



Overview

Domestic workers perform the critical labor of caring for children and cleaning homes, yet the value of their work has long been diminished by low pay and challenging workplace conditions. They have been excluded from core labor protections and collective bargaining rights because of who is performing this labor – disproportionately women of color and immigrants – and because this labor is carried out in the home.

This report is based on an in-depth evaluation of the impact of the We Rise Nanny Training, a peer education program in New York, incubated by the Worker Institute. The program aims to lift standards in the domestic work industry by integrating workers' rights education with professional development, using popular education pedagogy. The evaluation was designed as an 18-month, mixed-method, longitudinal study that was shaped by the principles of community-based participatory research.

Key Findings

- The training empowered participants to increase their wages, improve working conditions and secure both written contracts and overtime pay. This helped formalize their terms of employment and increased employers' compliance with employment law.
- Participants became more involved in activities central to lifting industry standards and expanding the domestic workers' rights movement – sharing information with other nannies, conducting outreach and recruitment, and engaging in organizing and advocacy activities.

Recommendations

- Recognize popular education and peer training as a critical part of enforcing and lifting standards for domestic workers and other precarious workers.
- Expand access to training programs that firmly ground professional/workforce development within a framework for building workers' power.
- Integrate training programs into broader strategies to institutionalize precarious workers' collective power.
- Support the sustainable expansion of the We Rise Nanny Training for domestic worker organizations.

PEER EDUCATION & POPULAR EDUCATION

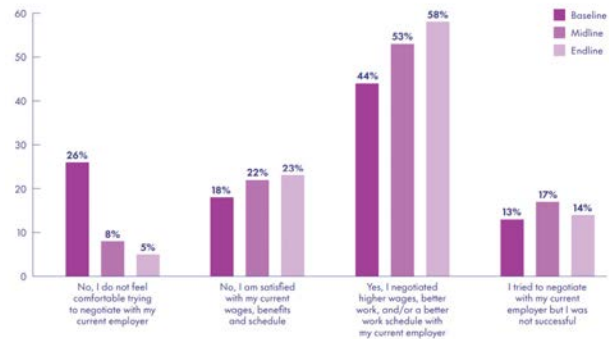


can play an important role in **improving domestic workers' workplace conditions**, enforcing and raising standards within the industry and fostering solidarity and organizing.

Comparing Average Hourly Wages Across Surveys for Respondents Currently Employed as Nannies



Ability to Negotiate Better Wages and Benefits



Research Impact

In the face of widespread workplace violations across low-wage industries, worker training and education have been one important tool to inform workers of their rights and to strengthen their ability to advocate for themselves. This research evaluates the impact of one such training program – the We Rise Nanny Training in New York, a collaboration between a growing coalition of worker organizations and the Worker Institute at Cornell University's ILR School. Research into the program's impact highlights the critical role of popular education and peer training in lifting and enforcing labor standards for domestic workers. The findings also reveal a peer training model that can be replicated for domestic workers nationally and other precarious workers.

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SHIFTING DISABILITY SYSTEMS TO ALIGN WITH EMPLOYMENT FIRST IN NEW YORK STATE

Kaitlyn Jackson, Ph.D., Yang-Tan Institute policy associate; Ellice Switzer, Yang-Tan Institute senior extension associate; LaWanda Cook, Ph.D., Yang-Tan Institute senior extension associate



Overview

Employment First (E1st) is a national systems-change framework centered on the premise that all individuals, including those with the most significant disabilities, can fully participate in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and community life. This brief shares insights into that philosophy and the current state of Employment First in New York.

This brief summarizes findings about barriers that may hinder New York's full adoption of E1st strategies for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities or with other significant disabilities. The authors derived these findings from two distinct research and program evaluation efforts conducted by faculty at Cornell's Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability (YTI). The brief suggests practice and policy solutions to help the state meet the goals of Governor Kathy Hochul's New York State Executive Order (EO) 40, Committing New York to Be an Employment First State to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment for New Yorkers with Disabilities.

Key Findings

- Research and evaluation efforts have identified common barriers within the disability service and employment systems, as well as in society and the built environment.
- The brief notes common barriers to CIE for people with significant disabilities in the areas of service system design, transportation, and attitudes of families and support staff.
- Targeted actions, such as policy and rate adjustments by state agencies, could remove several barriers to expanding CIE opportunities for people with significant disabilities.

Recommendations

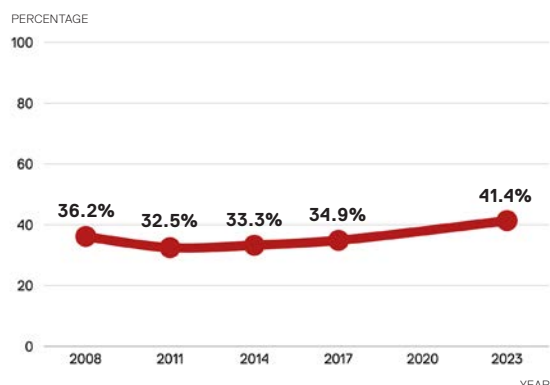
- Consider a statewide transportation task force.
- Evaluate Medicaid-billable (HCBS) services and care coordination to ensure that outcomes align with E1st priorities.
- Establish mechanisms for requiring benefits counseling when establishing eligibility for services from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.
- Require training for direct support professionals on employment for people with significant disabilities, and require ongoing business engagement training for employment professionals.
- Establish research-based standards for non-work programming that support work exploration.
- Improve coordination between the New York State Education Department and state agencies serving youth with disabilities.

Research Impact

People with significant disabilities want to work in the community at a competitive wage; however, their support systems and communities may unwittingly prevent them from reaching that goal. Researchers at YTI have synthesized the results of two separate inquiries into New York's disability employment services system into recommendations for New York policymakers and systems leaders to help remove those barriers. The recommendations focus on improving transportation, changing provider attitudes and competencies, and adjusting reimbursement structures among state agencies.

EMPLOYMENT BY YEAR IN NEW YORK

www.DisabilityStatistics.org



The employment rate of non-institutionalized males or females with any disability, ages 21-64, all races, regardless of ethnicity, across all levels of education in New York.

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Key ILR Institutes and Programs Impacting New York State:

ILR Buffalo Co-Lab

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The [*Cornell ILR Buffalo Co-Lab*](#) for Economic Development continues to play a leading role in Buffalo's resurgence with a more equitable economy. By partnering with Western New York businesses, unions, government, education and community organizations, the Buffalo Co-Lab impacts New Yorkers statewide through workplace health and safety programs, economic development and labor research, immersion experiences for students and many other initiatives.

ILR CAROW

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The [*Center for Applied Research on Work*](#) supports research that solves practical problems, improves the lives of workers and informs policymaking. We serve as an incubator for applied research. We provide funding and coordination for innovative projects and initiatives. Our network of affiliated faculty, researchers and practitioners helps guide and facilitate novel approaches to advancing work, labor and employment.

ILR CJEI

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The [*Criminal Justice and Employment Initiative*](#) improves employment opportunities for people with criminal records by designing and delivering legal employment training to close information gaps, implement best practices, and integrate job seekers with criminal records into the workforce.

ILR CJI

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The [*Climate Jobs Institute*](#) is guiding New York and the nation's transition to a strong, equitable and resilient clean energy economy. CJI's approach tackles the climate crisis, creates high-quality jobs, confronts race and gender inequality, and builds a diverse and inclusive workforce.

ILR ICS

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The [*Institute for Compensation Studies*](#) is an interdisciplinary center that researches, teaches and communicates about monetary and non-monetary rewards from work, and how these rewards influence outcomes for individuals, companies, industries and economies.



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The [Labor and Employment Law Program](#) examines the laws and policies that impact the workplace and offers educational programs. We provide labor and employment law education for job seekers, employees, employers, government agencies, community organizations and unions in support of the Cannabis Workforce Initiative.



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The [Scheinman Institute](#) combines the academic depth of faculty in conflict/dispute resolution, employee relations and labor relations with the practical knowledge of leading practitioners in the field to provide intensive skill development for individuals and best practices for organizations.

The institute trains more students in mediation and arbitration than any other school in the United States.



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[The Worker Institute](#) engages in research and education on contemporary labor issues to confront growing economic and social inequalities. A core value of the Worker Institute is that collective representation and workers' rights are vital to a fair economy, robust democracy and just society.

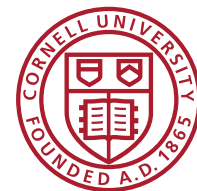


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For over 60 years, the [K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability](#) has conducted a unique combination of research and outreach. With a mission of advancing the inclusion and full participation of people with disabilities in the workplace and community, our research, training and technical resources expand knowledge about disability inclusion, leading to meaningful change.



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