

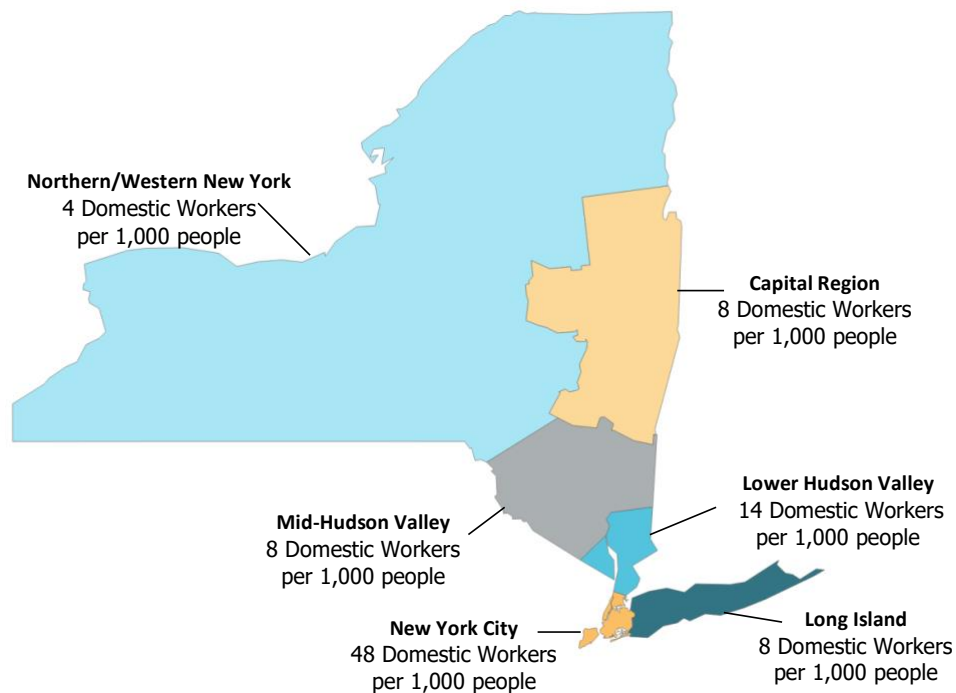
# Domestic Workers Are Essential Workers: By the Numbers in New York

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**THROUGHOUT THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS DOMESTIC WORKERS** have been placed under a double pressure. Already underpaid, many domestic workers have lost their jobs, or lost hours on the job, putting them under added financial stress. Even when on the job, however, domestic workers find themselves under added physical and psychological stress, acting as essential workers during a pandemic at some risk to their own health as they protect the health of others. Domestic workers include house cleaners, nannies, and home care aides who care for people with disabilities or who are elderly or infirm.

There are 328,000 domestic workers in New York, the majority of whom work in New York City (71 percent) followed by Northern/Western New York (12 percent), Long Island (7 percent), Lower Hudson Valley (6 percent), Capital Region (3 percent), and Mid-Hudson Valley (2 percent). Some of these regions represent a larger share of the population relative to other regions in the state. The map below reflects the number of domestic workers per capita.

Domestic Workers per Capita: Highest in NYC and Lower Hudson Valley



**Map** Data on domestic workers provided to the Fiscal Policy Institute by the Economic Policy Institute, based on 2019 American Community Survey IPUMS microdata; data on population from ACS 2019 5-year summary tables.

New York City has 48 domestic workers per 1,000 people living in the city, a far higher proportion than in other parts of the state, with the next-highest per capita share in the Lower Hudson Valley (14 domestic workers per 1,000 in the population). (See Map.)

Of the 328,000 domestic workers in New York, 84 percent work as home care aides who help older and sick New Yorkers, and people with disabilities, to live with dignity. The remaining domestic workers are made up of nannies (8 percent) and house cleaners (8 percent). (See Figure 1.)

Some domestic workers, particularly some home care aides, are represented by unions. Home care aides are either agency based or work directly for a private home (non-agency based). Many agencies are unionized, which results in better wages and working conditions. Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, it also results in *safer* working conditions. Non-unionized home care aides and other domestic workers are at higher risk of not having access to adequate personal protective equipment and other substandard working conditions.

Home health aides are the biggest share of domestic workers in all regions, between 60 and 80 percent of the total. There is significant variation in the share of house cleaners and nannies in different parts of the state. On Long Island house cleaners are 18 percent of domestic workers, while in the Lower Hudson Valley nannies make up 25 percent of all domestic workers. The Mid-Hudson Valley and the

### Home Care Workers Make Up the Majority of Domestic Workers in New York State

Employment in Domestic Worker Occupations, 2019, Number	Capital Region	Long Island	Lower Hudson Valley	Mid-Hudson Valley	Northern/Western New York	New York City	New York State
House Cleaners	1,600	4,000	2,800	500	2,100	15,000	25,900
Nannies	500	2,100	4,900	500	2,600	17,300	27,900
Home Care Aides							
Agency-Based	6,900	15,500	11,600	6,100	29,600	191,900	261,600
Non-Agency	400	800	200	700	3,400	96,400	12,500
<b>Total Domestic Workers</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>38,000</b>	<b>321,000</b>	<b>328,000</b>
House Cleaners	16%	18%	14%	6%	6%	6%	8%
Nannies	5%	10%	25%	6%	7%	7%	8%
Home Care Aides							
Agency-Based	74%	69%	60%	79%	78%	83%	80%
Non-Agency	5%	3%	1%	9%	9%	3%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 1 Analysis provided to the Fiscal Policy Institute by the Economic Policy Institute, and is based on 2019 American Community Survey IPUMS microdata. Numbers under 1,000 should be read with caution due to small sample size.

Northern/Western New York are the only regions in the state where the share of nannies is greater than the share of house cleaners.

Due to an aging population, these occupations are expected to grow dramatically. Over the next 10 years the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that jobs for domestic workers will increase three times as fast as other occupations. This growing occupation is paid significantly less than other workers in New York. Pooling data for the past 10 years, 2010-2019, the overall median hourly wage for domestic workers statewide was just \$12.20, compared to a median of \$21.45 for all other workers in New York State. (See Figure 2.) Many domestic workers will have been helped by the increasing minimum wage, which increased in most areas of the state to \$15 per hour over the 10-year period in our data pool, and to \$12.50 in upstate New York. What is clear, though, is that over this time period the typical domestic worker's hourly earnings were less than three-fifths (56 percent) of a typical worker's in other occupations. The combination of lower average hours for which they are paid and much lower median wages results in substantially lower hourly earnings for domestic workers relative to other workers.

### Domestic Workers Earn Just 56 Percent of What Other Workers Earn

Median Hourly Earnings, 10-Year Average

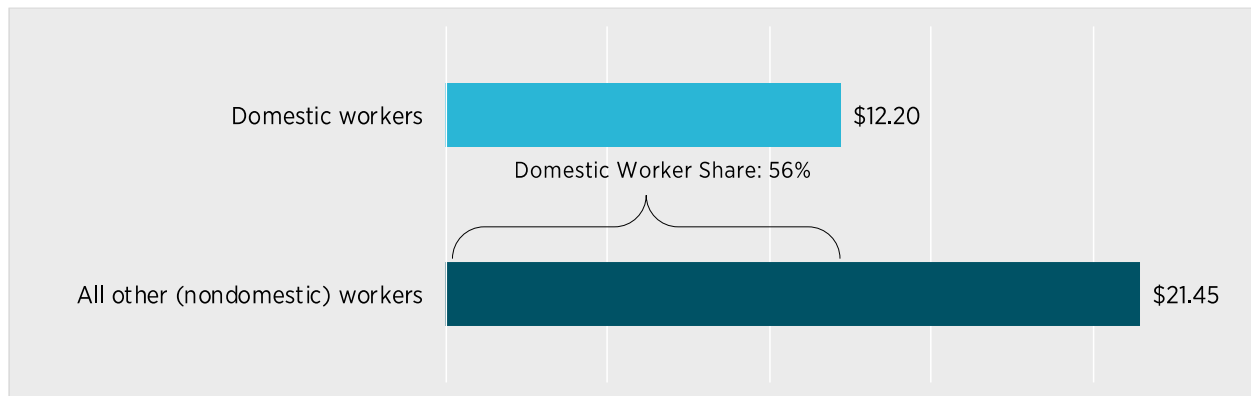


Figure 2 Data provided to the Fiscal Policy Institute by the Economic Policy Institute, based on an analysis of Current Population Survey outgoing rotation group monthly microdata, 2010-2019.

### The Enduring Legacy of Slavery and Jim Crow

Domestic work is real work. Throughout the country's history, this work has been done overwhelmingly by women as unpaid workers caring for family members. And from the days of slavery and Jim Crow it has been done by unpaid or underpaid women of color working outside, and within, their own families. Today, that history is reflected in the low wages of domestic workers, and in the demographics of the labor force: overwhelmingly women, disproportionately immigrant women and women of color. Of the 328,000 domestic workers in New York State, 92 percent are women, 63 percent immigrants, 34 percent

Hispanic, and 28 percent Black, and 13 percent Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI). (See Figure 3.) Domestic workers are continuing to put their lives at risk despite knowing that Black people, people of color, and immigrants have experienced the highest fatality rates for COVID-19. The disparate racial impact of the virus is deeply rooted in the historic and ongoing racial disparities in health care, economic and social injustices. The identities of Black immigrant domestic workers are at the intersection of three converging storms—the pandemic, the resulting economic depression, and structural racism, as shown in the report, [Notes From the Storm: Black Domestic Workers in the Time of Covid-19](#), by The Institute for Policy Studies, National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) We Dream in Black Program.

### Domestic Workers are More Likely to be Black, Hispanic, Immigrants, and Women

Demographic	Domestic Workers	All Workers
AAPI	13%	9%
Black	28%	14%
Hispanic	34%	18%
Immigrants	63%	26%
U.S. Born	37%	74%
Women	92%	51%
Median Age	48	46

Figure 3 Analysis provided to the Fiscal Policy Institute by the Economic Policy Institute, and is based on 2019 American Community Survey IPUMS microdata. AAPI is Asian American and Pacific Islander.

Domestic workers are doing the intense and intimate labor of caring for our families and our households. As the fallout of the global pandemic has made clear, they are essential to our economy. More needs to be done to ensure that these essential workers have access to fair pay, labor protections, and rights needed to stay healthy and provide for their own families, during the global pandemic and beyond.

By: Shamier Settle

Shamier Settle is a Policy Analyst at the Fiscal Policy Institute.

The Fiscal Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research and education organization committed to improving public policies and private practices to better the economic and social conditions of all New Yorkers. FPI's Immigration Research Initiative looks at immigration issues in New York State, and around the country.