PAY, PROFESSIONALISM & RESPECT

Black Domestic Workers Continue the Call for Standards in the Care Industry

VOLUME 2

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2018
INTERVIEW
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PAY, PROFESSIONALISM & RESPECT

Black Domestic Workers Continue the Call
for Standards in the Care Industry

To obtain a copy of the report, please contact:
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Institute for Policy Studies

As Washington's first progressive multi-issue think tank, the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) has served as a policy and research resource for visionary social justice movements for more than four decades. Since its founding in 1963 by Richard Barnet and Marcus Raskin, IPS has been at the forefront of research and action for the civil rights, anti-war, feminist, environmental and global justice movements in the United States and around the globe. Today, the Institute's work is organized into more than a dozen projects, reflecting our public scholars' diverse areas of expertise. IPS is dedicated to turning ideas into action, based on the belief that dynamic social movements drive social change. Thus, IPS has partnered with grassroots advocacy organizations to provide public scholarship in support of organizing efforts which aim to build a more just and peaceful world. Learn more at www.ips-dc.org.

The Black Worker Initiative is a bold and exciting new effort launched by the Institute for Policy Studies, which is deeply committed to helping achieve both the historic and contemporary aims of the labor and civil rights movements. Black workers have been particularly hard hit by the rising tide of inequality in today's economy. We hope our Initiative will be part of the solution to helping expand opportunities for black worker organizing and thereby greatly aid the revitalization of the U.S. labor movement as a whole. Indeed, the Initiative operates under the belief that black workers hold a key role in union revitalization. Without a platform for their voices and perspectives, a vital piece of the progressive movement is absent from the greater public discourse on race and economic and social justice. The Initiative uses conferences, published reports, public education materials, and mainstream and social media in framing a road map to how black worker organizing can be an ongoing vehicle for the preservation of the labor movement and the promotion of civil rights and racial and economic justice.

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For more information about IPS or the Black Worker Initiative or to make a tax-deductible contribution to support IPS's work, please visit www.ips-dc.org or call the development office at 202.234.9282.

FOREWORD

ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

The Fight for Rights and Dignity Must Go Forward

Alicia Garza, Director of Strategy and Partnerships
National Domestic Workers Alliance

At the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), we believe that black women deserve to be powerful in every aspect of their lives. That is why we created We Dream in Black in 2014 as a project of the NDWA, the nation's premier organization fighting for rights, respect, and dignity for millions of domestic workers in the United States.

Domestic work is rooted in the legacy of slavery. Cleaning homes, taking care of other people's children, and caring for those with disabilities was considered black women's work under enslavement. Caring for and serving others was not just the role of women, but of black women in particular.

And yet, black women were not entitled to the same care that we were required to provide for others. A core tenet of enslavement was the dehumanization of black people and a forced inability to make decisions over our own lives. Another tenet of enslavement was the inability of black women to access the same protection that white women were offered in many aspects of their lives. Black women were not paid for our work of caring for white families. We endured horrible abuses. We were denied the right to care for our own families and for ourselves. And so the domestic work industry was shaped. As the demand for care increased, the conditions under which that care was provided deteriorated.

Today, the demographics of the industry have changed, but the conditions under which this work is done retains vestiges of

slavery. In the United States, care work is still largely women's work. Chattel slavery has formally been abolished; yet the dynamics that characterized it—abuse, dehumanization, exploitation, and invisibility—are alive and well. Immigrant women and women of color are still the backbone of the care industry, and black women, while occupying different roles within in it, are still a significant proportion of caregivers in the United States. Black women are still making less than our counterparts and still experiencing important disparities in every aspect of our lives, whether it be access to healthcare and childcare, or housing and education, or whether it be the ways in which black women are being criminalized for trying to access what we need to live well.

We Dream in Black pays homage to the black women upon whose shoulders we all stand. Before the NDWA, there was Domestic Workers United (DWU) in New York, which in 2010 organized for and won the first Domestic Worker Bill of Rights in the country. Comprised largely of black immigrant women from the Caribbean, the motto of Domestic Workers United was "Tell dem slavery is done." Before DWU, there was the National Domestic Workers Union, led by Dorothy Bolden, in 1968. Before that, there was the washerwomen's strike of 1881 in Atlanta, Georgia, where domestic workers organized a strike to raise the wages they received. Bolden pushed civil rights leaders, such as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to include the issues facing black women in the agenda for human rights. She worked with domestic workers to tie economic power to political power by requiring that all members of the NDWU were registered to vote.

Though the demographics of domestic work has changed, black women are still key to transforming the industry and raising the profile and benefits of domestic workers. The industry today still functions off of exploitation and structural racism. Domestic workers are still exempted from most federal labor protections—a holdover from a racist compromise made between labor union leaders and Southern legislators during the New Deal. Technology has also reached the domestic work industry. In addition to their exclusion from most federal labor protections, cleaners, nannies, and caregivers on tech platforms are now fighting a push to classify them as independent contractors—a move that would further

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distance workers from any kind of protections or rights to address grievances they might have with employers. Today, black women in the care industry are still being exploited in homes across America, and thus have a unique role to play in establishing the respect and rights we all deserve, while ensuring dignity for all of us.

We Dream in Black is an investment in black women. Our motto is "Across the diaspora, our organizing is our power." It expresses the need to bring together black women in the industry, whether they were born in the United States or migrated here, to fight for what we deserve and resist being divided by today's political debates around immigration. Together, we must ensure that black women are invested in as leaders and as architects of our own futures. We have built strong and growing chapters of domestic workers in Georgia and North Carolina who are looking for a political home, who yearn to acquire the skills to change conditions where they live, work, and play. We connect black women in different parts of the industry so that they can be powerful together by changing culture and laws. And, we work to restore dignity to the millions of domestic workers in this country by building black women's capacity to shape our future.

"We connect black women in different parts of the industry so that they can be powerful together by changing culture and laws. And, we work to restore dignity to the millions of domestic workers in this country by building black women's capacity to shape our future."

Alicia Garza *is an internationally recognized organizer, writer, and public speaker. In 2018, she founded the Black Futures Lab to experiment with new ways to build independent, progressive black political power. As the Strategy & Partnerships Director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance, Garza works to build a movement at the intersections of race, gender, and the economy. With Opal Tometi and Patrisse Cullors, Garza created the Black Lives Matter Global Network, an organizing project to end state violence and oppression against black people.*

“I’m still struggling for black women. They’ve been the burden bearer of all segments of blacks and I think they need the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, their abilities, and their knowledge.”

DOROTHY BOLDEN (1923-2005)

Founder and President of The National Domestic Workers Union (1968-1998) who worked as a domestic worker for more than 41 years

Source: Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History

DEFINING DOMESTIC WORK

The women profiled in this report daily ease pain, lift spirits, and save lives as professional caretakers of children, the elderly, the infirmed, and the disabled. Despite the great personal sacrifices they frequently make for the comfort and care of others, their work is often demeaned and undervalued and they are denied basic workplace protections afforded to other workers.

WHO IS A DOMESTIC WORKER?

Domestic worker is the term applied to a wide range of occupations including nannies, childcare providers, medical and non-medical caregivers ranging from home health and personal care aides to certified nursing assistants (CNAs), homecare workers, and house cleaners.

WHERE DO THEY WORK?

Some domestic workers are "live-ins," meaning they live in the private residences of their employers. Others are "live-outs," meaning they live outside of the client's home and come to the residence to work. Domestic workers also work in other non-residential settings, such as nursing homes, hospitals, and group homes.

WHO ARE THEIR EMPLOYERS?

Domestic workers are employed under a variety of arrangements, ranging from being employed by a client who may pay them directly to being employed by public and private agencies that send them out on assignments to clients.

INTRODUCTION

IT IS TIME TO CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

Low pay and lack of workplace protections for black domestic workers put our economy, care system, and humanity at risk

Kimberly Freeman Brown and Marc D. Bayard,
Institute for Policy Studies Black Worker Initiative

This report, *Pay, Professionalism & Respect: Black Domestic Workers Continue the Call for Standards in the Care Industry*, is a clarion call for change. Domestic workers provide an invaluable service to society. Like revered professionals such as teachers, active military and veterans, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians, domestic workers save and preserve lives. They sacrifice their personal health and safety for others and nurture the most vulnerable. Beyond their significant social contributions, domestic workers are vital to our economy. Nannies, childcare workers, home health aides, personal care aides, and housekeepers perform jobs that enable other workers to confidently leave their children, disabled loved ones, elderly parents, and homes in capable hands while they perform their work.

Despite the similarities to other professions that provide care and service, domestic workers are not afforded the pay, protections, or respect that they deserve for the critical services they provide and the skill with which they perform their duties. The stories shared in this report, reflect their all-too-common experiences, including low pay and wage theft; job insecurity; vulnerability to sexual harassment and other workplace abuses; and lack of basic workplace safety protections that result in career-ending injuries.

The stories told by the women within these pages are not aberrations. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that even though black women have a higher labor force participation rate than other women (59.7 percent compared to 56.4 percent for white women), they experience poverty at higher rates than any other group except Native American women. This experience is particularly troubling because more than 75 percent of black working mothers are the sole earners in their home, according to a report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research and the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA).

The economic realities of black women nationally are reflected in the stories of black domestic workers in Georgia and North Carolina. The Institute for Policy Studies and NDWA selected these two states because they have some of the largest numbers of

> "We compromise the quality of our care, the vitality of our economy, and most importantly our humanity when we allow the treatment of domestic workers to continue to reflect America's historic racial and gender bias toward professions that are disproportionately performed by black women and other women of color."

domestic workers in the country and also some of the lowest levels of compensation. The federal poverty guideline for a family of four is $25,100 in annual income. Home health aides in North Carolina, for example, earn a median income of $19,680 yearly. Similarly, the Atlanta metropolitan area is home to the eighth-highest number of maids and housekeepers among U.S. metro areas, and nearly half of Georgia's maids and housekeepers are employed there. Yet high demand for this labor has not produced higher wages, as the median annual wage remains $19,380.

To gain a greater understanding of the impact of these disparities on domestic workers and their families, project leaders held focus groups, conducted interviews and launched citywide surveys in Durham and Atlanta in 2017 and 2018. The findings in these reports and the realities facing domestic workers are particularly troublesome in light of two trends:

- According to a 2017 forecast by the U.S. Department of Labor, the number of jobs in the home health aide and personal care aide fields alone is expected to grow 41 percent in the decade ending in 2026. Such projected growth in the field indicates that there should be a concerted effort to ensure that these jobs are quality jobs with appropriate benefits.

- Second, changing U.S. demographics show that America's workforce—a key driver of our economy—is becoming more female and of color. By 2015, women made up 46.8 percent of the labor force. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicts that by 2024, the number of women in the labor force will rise to 47.2 percent. In its 2017 projections, BLS also predicts that the shares of the women's labor force held

by Asians, blacks, Hispanics, and those classified as multiracial, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander will increase over the next decade.

Pay gaps, by gender and race, and the concentration of women of color in low-paying jobs that cannot support families has significant implications not only for individual families, but for our society as a whole. A core rubric of our Social Security program, for example, is that the labor of those currently in the workforce supports the care of those who are no longer in the workforce. When we allow a growing part of our workforce to be underpaid, unable to support their families, and at risk of abuse and career-ending injuries, all of us are under threat.

We compromise the quality of our care, the vitality of our economy, and most importantly our humanity when we allow the treatment of domestic workers to continue to reflect America's historic racial and gender bias toward professions that are disproportionately performed by black women and other women of color.

The stories in this report confirm the following truth: domestic work has been and continues to be elevated by black women in two important ways. First, they set a standard of professionalism that belies the conditions, treatment, and pay that they receive to do the work. Despite poverty wages and fluctuating work hours, a number of women we interviewed come out of pocket to meet their clients' needs or conduct research about their clients' conditions on their own time to find innovative ways to provide quality care and comfort.

Second, they elevate their work by using it as a nucleus of organizing and resistance. The women profiled in these pages often fight through the exhaustion of their work to stand up for themselves and advocate for others. The solidarity and sisterhood found through We Dream in Black fuels a sense of self-pride and respect for domestic work and among its members that combats how our current labor and economic systems dehumanize them and undervalue their work.

Pay, professionalism, and respect for domestic workers is long overdue. It is time to end the historic racial and gender bias that has resulted in the conditions these women endure. Caring for caregivers is an important metric that our nation must use to measure its commitment to dismantling persistent racism and sexism, which relegates a growing and essential part of our workforce to nearly inescapable poverty, and ensuring that our children, elderly, and disabled loved ones receive the care they deserve.

Kimberly Freeman Brown *is a writer, communications strategist, and organizational development consultant who supports organizations in actualizing their commitment to race and gender equity and justice.*

Marc D. Bayard *is an Associate Fellow and the Director of the Black Worker Initiative at the Institute of Policy Studies. He is an expert on labor, civil rights, and racial justice issues.*

Bayard and Brown have collaborated on three reports on the experience and leadership of women of color– "And Still I Rise: Black Women Labor Leaders' Voices, Power and Promise" (2015), "I Dream Detroit: The Voice and Vision of Women of Color on Detroit's Future" (2017), *and* "Pay, Professionalism & Respect: Black Domestic Workers Continue the Call for Standards in the Care Industry" (2018).

BUILDING POWER FROM BELOW: A HISTORY OF BLACK DOMESTIC WORKER ORGANIZING

By Premilla Nadasen, Professor of History, Barnard College

The working lives of African American women historically have been tied to paid household labor. Domestic work was one of the few occupations open to African American women in the first part of the 20th century and was weighted with a long history of slavery, servitude, and racial oppression. Black women labored as cooks, cleaners, and nannies in the homes of white Southerners (and Northerners after the Great Migration, which began in 1915 and continued until 1970) serving a cultural as well as an economic function. Black women's status as domestic workers was a result of white racial power and also reinforced it. The image of the "mammy"—the stereotype of a content and loyal African American servant—was featured prominently in advertising, the arts, and literature in the early 20th century. Domestic service, in many ways, became emblematic of racial inequality.

From left: Allena Pass, Lurika Wynn, Chanelle Croxton, Sonia Myers, Tonya Harrington, and Dovie Joyner-Dyson.

Employers often claimed their employees were "one of the family" and used this claim to demand additional work without pay or to offer hand-me-downs in lieu of pay. Although domestic workers were expected to fulfill familial responsibilities, they were rarely accorded familial rights—even such basic rights as sitting at the dinner table. Live-in workers were at the beck and call of their bosses, with little time to themselves and no clearly defined job description. For many employers, hiring domestic workers was not limited to hiring their services or their time—it was conflated with the purchasing of their very bodies. Some employers viewed their employees as racially different and inferior and used that construct to justify low wages and poor working conditions. The "othering" of domestic workers enabled abusive employers to reconcile their own sense of fairness with the inhumane treatment they meted out to workers.

The unequal and discriminatory treatment was also reflected in federal labor legislation. When the New Deal, a set of laws that offered economic protections to many American workers, was enacted in the 1930s, Southern members of Congress, concerned about maintaining control over the African American labor force, insisted on the exclusion of domestic and agricultural workers (two overwhelmingly black occupations) from Social Security, minimum wage, and collective bargaining laws for fear that granting rights to these workers would upset the racial order of the South. Consequently, domestic workers were denied the basic labor

"African American domestic workers continue to encounter inequality in the labor market and experience systematic underpayment and racial and gender harassment. Like earlier generations, they also organize and fight back, refusing to submit to any situation they deem unjust."

protections and avenues of protest that were guaranteed to nearly all others in the American workforce. Domestic workers were not given Social Security benefits until 1950. They earned the right to a minimum wage and overtime pay in 1974 in response to a national organizing effort by African American domestic workers. But even with the passage of this law, live-in workers were exempt from overtime pay; and home health care aides were excluded from minimum wage provisions until a Department of Labor ruling in 2015. Today, domestic workers do not have the right to unionize or to bargain collectively and are not covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act and civil rights employment laws, which apply only to businesses with fifteen or more employees. This lack of legal protection has resulted in a particularly vulnerable workforce that is at the mercy of employers. This vulnerability is compounded by the isolated nature of the work, which makes oversight and enforcement of existing laws difficult.

Despite the exclusions and legal limitations, African American domestic workers have a long history of organizing, dating back to the Atlanta washerwomen's strike of the 1880s when 3,000 African American women nearly shut the city down by striking for higher rates of pay. In the 1930s, domestic workers such as Dora Jones in New York City confronted Depression-era conditions that relegated African American domestics to informal day work, dubbed "slave markets" by African American journalists Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke. Jones established a hiring hall to match workers with jobs; campaigned for minimum wage and workers' compensation legislation; and insisted on signed contracts between workers and employers.

In the 1960s and 1970s, in the context of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, domestic workers established a nationwide

movement. Geraldine Roberts in Cleveland formed the Domestic Workers of America in 1965. In Atlanta, Dorothy Bolden started the National Domestic Workers Union (NDWU). Geraldine Miller and Carolyn Reed organized the Household Technicians in New York City and Mary McClendon formed the Household Workers Organization in Detroit. With the help of an employer organization, the National Committee on Household Employment, these workers formed the first-ever national domestic workers' organization, the Household Technicians of America (HTA), which adopted the slogan "pay, professionalism, and respect."

The HTA organized in public places, such as parks, playgrounds, and buses. In Atlanta, Dorothy Bolden rode every city bus line handing out leaflets and encouraging workers to join her union. On the buses, poor women could share grievances and concerns, trade stories of abuse, exchange information about wages and workload, and learn about their rights. Bolden set up a hiring hall, screened potential employers, and organized an annual Maid's Honor Day to bring greater recognition to the occupation. In 1972, Governor Jimmy Carter signed an executive order proclaiming an official Maid's Honor Day in the state of Georgia. Bolden led the NDWU for 28 years and remained committed to improving working conditions for Atlanta's domestic workers.

Storytelling was a key strategy used by domestic workers to build their movement. Domestic workers were not a natural political constituency. So, storytelling became their way of connecting with one another and developing a base of solidarity. They shared stories about their mothers, aunts, grandmothers, and sisters. They shared their own stories of abuse and mistreatment, and they offered up strategies for resistance and subversion. Geraldine Miller told stories she had heard about a "slave market" in the Bronx where employers would drive by looking to hire for the day a woman with the most scarred knees because that was evidence that she scrubbed floors on her hands and knees. Miller told this story in disgust and anger in part to convey to other domestic workers that no one should ever have to scrub the floor down on all fours. Using these strategies to organize from the ground up, household workers also lobbied for expanded federal protection. They mobilized employer groups, testified before Congress, and in 1974 won federal minimum wage protection. Equally important, they made strides in removing the badge of servitude associated with the occupation.

Although the percentage of African American domestic workers has declined considerably, they still represent some of the most exploited workers. And they are still a high portion of household workers in Georgia and North Carolina. As the stories in this report illustrate, African American domestic workers continue to encounter inequality in the labor market and experience systematic underpayment and racial and gender harassment. Like earlier generations, they also organize and fight back, refusing to submit to any situation they deem unjust. Through sustained commitment and collective engagement, they offer a vision for a better life and a strategy to achieve it that others can emulate.

Premilla Nadasen *is a professor of history at Barnard College, Columbia University, and is the author of several books, including the award-winning* Household Workers Unite: The Untold Story of African American Women Who Built a Movement. *A longtime scholar-activist, Nadasen works closely with domestic workers' rights organizations, for which she has written policy briefs and served as an expert academic witness. She also writes for various popular media outlets and speaks widely about poor and working-class women of color.*


WE
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IN
BLACK

CHAKILAH ABDULLAH ALI

Healthcare Worker Uses Her Voice to Advocate for Domestic Workers and the Incarcerated

Chakilah Abdullah Ali sees a connection between her career as a care worker and her work on mass incarceration. Both are struggles for basic dignity on behalf of mostly black people, who are disregarded by society despite their essential labor.

She has worked as a home healthcare worker for 20 years. She comes from a family of care workers; her mother and both of her grandmothers were domestic workers. She began taking care of her grandparents and two of her aunts and expanded from there into private care. She is taking care of her brother today. She also works at a factory to supplement her income.

Ali grew up wanting to be a preacher like her grandmother and has pursued that interest through public speaking. That and her love of research help her to motivate, connect, and take better care of her patients.

Ali has become an impassioned speaker about her faith in Islam and the issue of mass incarceration following her own incarceration in 1978. She is active in Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee and Inside-Outside Alliance of Durham, and first met the lead organizer of We Dream in Black at a rally against mass incarceration in Durham.

Since then, Ali has been an active member of We Dream in Black; sat on panels in New Orleans, Charlotte, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C., to discuss domestic work; and brought many other domestic workers into the organization. She feels that her work with We Dream in Black is necessary as the organization pushes for domestic workers to receive the pay, benefits, and respect that they deserve. Domestic work needs to get respect in order to attract workers who will take care of future aging generations, she says.

Less than 2% of domestic workers received retirement or pensions benefits from their primary employer.[1]

> "They treat us like prisoners without bars."

I was born and grew up on the East Side of Durham. I have lived in Durham my whole life. My father was a mechanic, and my mother was a domestic worker. Both of my grandmothers were also domestic workers.

I do some home healthcare and some manual labor at a factory. I have been doing home healthcare work for 20 years. This is my third or fourth month working at the factory to supplement my income and take care of my household. My work in home healthcare started with the elderly family members getting sick. I took care of my grandparents, two of my aunts, and now my brother. I then began going to home healthcare facilities to find private clients.

My work consists of feeding people during meals; cleaning; a lot of physical health care work, as far as lifting; and doing whatever is required. A lot of clients don't have what they need to take care of themselves by themselves.

I love just taking care of people. I am a great motivational speaker, and I have great ability to assist others with physical needs... I have to research things in order to accommodate my clients.

The challenges are pay, for one thing. Then, when you start aging as I am, doing what I do is more difficult. Agencies are difficult to work with. They only send people two to three hours of the day; and agencies don't pay enough to live on. For me, transportation and being able to take clients to the places they need to go, like the grocery store, is difficult. I think home healthcare workers should make enough to take care of their own households.

I think education about medical assistance is key and necessary in this field, and they don't give you enough rent money or money for food,

NORTH CAROLINA HAS 12.13 HOME HEALTH AIDES PER 1,000 JOBS, ONE OF THE HIGHEST LEVELS IN THE COUNTRY. [2]

let alone the money for that kind of training.

I know people feel like domestic workers are a lower grade of people. I don't think they give us as much credit as they should. And people have a tendency, because of low pay, to think that they can treat us any kind of way. Their expectations of domestic workers are more than they should be. They don't think we're human.

The public perception of domestic workers makes me feel belittled. Without spiritual inclination, you're not going to be able to get through some days. But because I have that inclination, it gets me far.

I think that we're a very important part of the workforce. Nothing gets done without domestic work.

We Dream in Black has done a lot to make students aware of domestic work and what we do. We've protested for higher pay and received a plaque from the County Commission of Durham for our work.

You find power in numbers. The more people you have who are integrated and willing to bring in their time, effort, and sometimes money, it's going to be a positive experience.

Other workers should join We Dream in Black because it's beneficial to their spirit and it's beneficial to their pocketbooks, too. We don't have enough care workers. It's necessary work.

What I do know is that black women have always been domestic workers. Whether that's for the public or to their own families. Domestic workers are the backbone of society.

I have always been inclined to stand up and fight for what I think is correct or well deserved. And I also have family members who gave me insights into what I should be doing to stay focused in this crazy world.

There needs to be changes in the laws. It is necessary for us to have the stamp of approval from lawmakers in order to grow and be acknowledged. Otherwise, there aren't going to be enough healthcare workers as people get older in the next century.

Incarcerated people are also workers, and they need to be paid fairly. Incarcerated people are slaves also because they work for little or no pay. And they are expected to excel when they return to society with little to nothing in their hands.

"I think that we're a very important part of the workforce. Nothing gets done without domestic work."

There is a relationship between fighting for the rights of incarcerated people and domestic workers. They treat us like prisoners without bars. They've always done this to black people. Now immigrants are coming here, and they're being mistreated too. We keep doing the work. It's just not fair. But a lot of things in life aren't fair, and we've got to change that.


WE
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LURIKA WYNN

Healthcare Worker Reflects on How We Dream in Black Has Sustained Her Through Long Hours, Low Pay, and Sexual Harassment

Lurika Wynn has struggled with scheduling unreliability, low pay, lack of benefits, and serious work-related injuries. To manage her bills, she has worked four jobs at once.

Despite the hardships, Wynn is committed to her caregiving work, which she considers a calling. Wynn began caring for two of her grandparents—both of whom had cancer—when she was young. Taking care of them and other family members convinced her to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA), a career than has spanned more than 27 years.

She currently works at a facility that serves some of Durham County's veterans. But, the work is demanding; and Wynn generally works 12-hour, 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. shifts.

We Dream in Black helped to give Wynn a voice and an understanding of her rights as a worker. In return, Wynn has become a tireless recruiter for the organization, reaching out to fellow domestic workers through social media and often calling multiple times to get them to attend meetings. Wynn believes that work conditions will only change when all domestic workers come together and exert their power collectively to truly show people just how essential domestic labor is to everyone's lives.

"We Dream in Black teaches us that we have a voice and shows us how to use that voice."

I got into the field taking care of my grandparents. They both ended up with cancer. My grandmother had colon cancer and my grandfather had prostate cancer. I had to take care of them both. Even when my grandfather had both of his legs amputated, I took care of him as a young girl. Me, being the oldest daughter, they pulled me out of high school. I had to stay at home, watch my sister's child and my grandparents, cook and clean. I grew up really quick.

Three months later, I got my GED. Then about six years later, I decided to get certified as a CNA. My grandfather had a lot to do with that. Before he passed, I was his main caretaker and he was like, "You're really good at this. Please tell me that you will help people. That's your calling." I got to know so much because whenever the nurses would come in, I would just sit there and just soak up everything. He was like, "Whatever you do, when you see somebody in need, you help them." I've lived that until now.

I take care of veterans. That care consists of monitoring their food, their diets. I'm really blessed to have this case. Any other time, you get people where you got to go in and you're just cleaning up for them. They really think you are their maid. I've been asked to go and take somebody's bed down, pull the refrigerator out, clean the dishwasher. I've been asked to cook somebody's Thanksgiving dinner. You don't know what you're going to run into sometimes when you get into people's houses. It's so unfair. And the companies say, "Okay, if you don't want to do it, we'll find somebody else who will."

People, they love me. I think that I've come so far. At the facility where I work, if I am walking down the hall and I see you on the carpet, whether you're my patient or not, I'm going to stop. Since I've been there, I've got six families talking about how awesome I am. It takes compassion. It takes a person that's lived it. It takes a person to know that, "Look. I may be there one day." You've got to have a

Domestic workers are excluded from federal antidiscrimination laws, including the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Family and Medical Leave Act because these acts only cover employers with 15 employees or more. They cannot sue for sexual harassment under federal law.[3]

passion for this. It isn't about the money. That passion is what brings me back. That passion is what makes me happy. Making them smile. Any little thing that I can do to make their day go right, I'm your girl.

The pay is definitely a challenge. Like I said, you can't come into this field looking for pay. You're not going to get it. There are no benefits. If you get hurt, that's you. I don't have health insurance. I don't have anybody that can support me and say, "Okay, you can be out of work while you take care of your back." You need a support system for this type of job, and it's sad. If you don't get the hours, you end up having to work more jobs, like four or five houses a day for two hours there, three hours here. They may be way across town somewhere, but you don't get any money for that. You don't get any gas fare for that. The only thing you know is you've got a bill coming up.

I've worked four jobs at one time before. I'm working three now. I do 12 hours, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. four nights a week, on top of taking care of a veteran five days a week for three, sometimes four hours a day.

I have torn ligaments, plus I have nerve pain from lifting and pulling. Sometimes, I will go to these clients' homes or even the facility in pain, but I've got to try to help [clients get] up. Yes, I have injuries to my back from this job. I'm never going to [get workers' comp] for it. When this back is done, I'm out.

I once worked for a woman who had an agency. One day I didn't have transportation to get to a site and she sent her husband to pick me up and take me. He was sexually harassing me. When I brought it to her attention, she said, "Lurika, you weren't the first one."

I didn't feel like I had much power until maybe last year when I picked up this job at the facility. We Dream in Black teaches us that we have a voice and shows us how to use that voice. It prepares us to speak to people. We lobby. We go to the state legislature. We go to city council board meetings. When they brought someone from the Department of Labor in to teach us our rights, that gave us a voice. That gave us power, because now we know that we're supposed to be getting paid. Companies won't conform to the laws. We do so much to get people's attention.

We do other things too. We get together on a sister-level. We might go bowling or go to the ballpark. We just try to keep ourselves grounded so that we can make a breakthrough whenever we step out. Those are some of the things that I love, love, love about this group.

26%

OF RESPONDENTS TO THE IPS CITYWIDE SURVEY LIST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AS A WORKPLACE ISSUE.

PRISCILLA SMITH

Seasoned CNA Cares for the Families of Others While Raising a Child with a Disability

As a home healthcare worker and the mother of a disabled child, Priscilla Smith has seen the problems with both sides of the state healthcare system. It has been hard to make enough money when working as a healthcare aide on two- and three-hour shifts. And, she has struggled to get enough care for her daughter, who is partially paralyzed.

While working at a facility for dementia patients and disabled people, Smith developed what she called a "ground up" relationship with her patients. Despite the racism, sexism, and abuse she endured, Smith treated every patient with respect and has often gotten the most difficult patients to appreciate her.

Smith recently left the job she loves and did so because of an injury she incurred on the job. She has not, however, left the fight for better pay and conditions. As a member of We Dream in Black, Smith has not only connected with other domestic workers, but also worked with other low-wage employees in the Durham area. This year, she spoke in Brazil for an International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) conference. These experiences have given her a newfound sense of the value of her labor and the importance of organizations, such as We Dream in Black, in improving the treatment of working people across the world.

40% of domestic workers report paying some of their essential bills late in the previous months.[4]

23.5% of African Americans in North Carolina live in poverty.[5]

> "Working in home healthcare was no longer something that I could live off of."

I'm a licensed certified nursing assistant (CNA). I recently worked in a facility with disabled people and dementia patients. I broke my toe and I don't feel secure enough to be lifting patients because I'm unstable. I've recently applied to be a McDonald's manager because I can't do lifting right now. Once I get well, I'll be back into the nursing field.

Working in home healthcare was no longer something that I could live off of. People in this field make $7.25 an hour most of the time—and that's with going to three or four different clients just to make 40 hours a week. Many people don't make 40 hours a week. I needed more money. My children were getting older.

No one should have to work three or four jobs just to make ends meet, to pay bills, to have a car to get back and forth to work, to have a roof over their head. People should not work three or four jobs and still not be able to pay their light bill. That's not fair, and there are many families out here in that situation. I've been in that situation—where I was working two jobs and still struggling. I got four kids. I can barely buy clothes and shoes because my light bill is just as much as my rent.

As a home healthcare aide, the reason you have sometimes three or four clients is because you do not get eight hours of work from the state. They come out and evaluate the patients. They say the patient needs extra care, but [do not approve] the amount of care that the patient actually needs. The state has rules and guidelines that they follow, and then it does not always suit the needs of the patient.

I can give you a personal example from when my daughter was critically ill. She couldn't walk 50 feet but could bend her knees. The state said that she didn't need the aide because she had family in the home. No matter what our schedule was, we were supposed to be there automatically to help her.

I am proud of treating every single patient with respect, even when they don't deserve it. I've been spit at. I've been called [the n-word]. I've been called a "spook." I've been called a "heifer." I've been called a B-I-T-C-H. I've been told to go back where I came from. You just have to be respectful; you just have to be. And believe it or not, they will break because of your simple human kindness. When you respect them as people, and you demand respect for yourself, they'll break. That's the most important thing about this field: They appreciate you after a while because they know when you come on duty, they're going to be well taken care of.

At a nursing facility, you do as you're told.

76% OF RESPONDENTS TO THE IPS CITYWIDE SURVEY SAY THEIR INCOME IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR ALL OF THEIR LIVING EXPENSES.

And if you don't do as you're told, then you get replaced. Even at home healthcare, if you don't do as you're told in those people's homes, most patients will say, "I can replace you tomorrow," or "I want you to clean my toilets," or "I want you to wash my husband's clothes"—even if it's not in the personal care plan or what you were hired to do.

I've been a member of We Dream in Black for two years. I learned what We Dream in Black was about a month after I had lost my father. My daughter was critically ill, so I needed something positive to do. We're mostly focused on CNA workers and home healthcare workers, and patient care associate workers because Durham is the City of Medicine.

Through this organization, I've learned to be strong-minded and I've learned that our struggle is global. It's not just local. Bringing awareness to our situation is one thing, but what are they going to do to change it? How are you going to make it right? Raising wages is nice; that's a good start. But, along with raising the wages, are you going to give me the equal respect that I need? Are you going to give me the best hours that'll work for my schedule? Are you going to help with transportation? Because many people don't have transportation.

We Dream in Black means power. It means respect. It gives me a sense of honor. It gives me a sense of unity because I've met women who have been through things way worse than me, and they still stand up strong, and they still hold their head up with a smile on it, and that's inspiring to me.

I went to Brazil to speak at a conference for the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF). It is one thing to see global poverty on television, but it's not the same if you see it in person. It's not the same to shake somebody's hand who's been working from six years old and who didn't have a choice and they're still working and it hasn't broken them. It's not the same as shaking the hand of a woman who's been held hostage by terrorists, who's been raped, who's been brutally beaten and you see the fear in her eyes as she's telling her story and she still works as a domestic worker. It's not the same to hear about it versus feeling their heartbeat when they're talking about it. So, to learn that is real, and to learn that these women are so powerful and so strong, you have no choice but to respect them. And if they can do it, then I can do it.

THE POVERTY RATE FOR BLACK DURHAM COUNTY RESIDENTS (22.7%) IS NEARLY TRIPLE THE POVERTY RATE FOR WHITES (8.1%).[6]

ALLENA PASS

Healthcare Worker Must Work Seven Days a Week and as a Restaurant Server to Support Herself

Allena Pass works seven days a week and supplements her caregiver income by working as a waitress at a hotel. She wants to get a better-paying job at Duke University Medical Center, though she has had difficulty finding an opening.

She grew up in Durham, nicknamed the City of Medicine, in a family of healthcare workers. Both of her parents were nurses. Watching them care for people convinced her that she wanted to be in healthcare professionally as well. Pass has worked as a nursing assistant for private agencies since she was 19. She loves taking care of clients and making them happy and enjoys the diversity of tasks she may have to perform over the course of a day. Pass has developed many skills over 35 years of work and loves her clients, but she also finds the job underpaid and grueling. It has taken a toll on her body.

Pass first became involved in activism through Fight for $15, a national movement that has waged successful campaigns for a living wage and union organizing rights for low-wage employees. Through Fight for $15 she met organizers for We Dream in Black and became a member in 2015. Since joining the organization, she has traveled to conferences throughout the country and taken part in protests for fair wages throughout the South. Pass says these actions make others listen to domestic workers and learn about their work and struggles.

She believes that only by coming together and demanding change collectively through organizations, such as We Dream in Black, can help domestic workers receive the pay, benefits, and respect that they deserve.

26% of respondents to the IPS Citywide Survey say they work seven days a week.

"Appreciate me and treat me with respect because I treat my job with respect."

I was born in Durham. I have lived here my whole life. My dad worked at Durham Regional Hospital (now Duke Regional Hospital) for 47 years and retired. He was a licensed practical nurse. My mother was a registered nurse at the old Duke Hospital (now Duke University Medical Center). My father worked at Watts Hospital as well. I liked my parents caring for people who couldn't care for themselves. It was like I was born into it.

I do home healthcare and waitressing at a downtown hotel. I got into home healthcare through school. There was a program I went to at Durham Technical Community College. Then I went to North Carolina Central University and took some classes there. Then I went to get a job and, through that job, I found out about certified nursing assistants. But, now I'm not certified. I haven't been certified for the last five years. I lost my certification when I didn't have a job and my license expired. They told me that it's been too long, and I would have to pay for classes again.

I've been trying to get a job at Duke University Medical Center, but they say you have to know someone to get that kind of work. I have filled out 10 applications. They pay $10 an hour. I get $7.50 an hour now and I work seven days a week. I don't ever have a day off.

Days as a CNA start with a "Good morning." In the worst-case scenarios, I start with patients that can't do anything for themselves. You have to do everything. Easier scenarios are with someone who can do something. I don't have to do as much. I do everything from bathing to cleaning up to washing clothes to running errands. Everything. Everything that goes on in the household that a disabled person can't do.

I love the clients. Making them happy. Satisfying them. In the care that I give

"I get $7.50 an hour now and I work seven days a week. I don't ever have a day off."

them each day, I've got to keep my head up and be able to deal with different stuff. I have been exposed to most everything that a disabled person needs done. I have come across all kinds of situations: AIDS patients, staph infections. I have been exposed to all of that; and I know the precautions and rules for all kinds of patients. I know how to take care of the patient and myself.

The thing I hate about the job is the wear and tear on your body. It breaks you down: the aches and pains and soreness. The frustration you have when you have people in the home that can't help and won't help. When you have people in the home that are never satisfied no matter what you do or how you do it. I know what I'm doing, and I know I'm doing right. The boss lady who interviewed the client sees the house before we come in, and she can see how I've cleaned it up.

I want the public to appreciate me and treat me with respect because I treat my job with respect. When they say negative things about it, it means that they are uneducated and don't know. But the ones that know congratulate you. And it makes a difference, when people know how hard it is—CNA, housekeeping, and all of the rest of the domestic worker jobs.

I have been a member of We Dream in Black since about 2015. I've done a lot of activities—protesting; big conferences in Chicago, Detroit, and D.C.; conferences on legislation, on how we could change things. We went to a conference with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and I wanted to be part of that union too.

I love being a member of We Dream in Black because we feel like we have power. People listen to us. People cheer us.

I never heard about organizing until I got older. Fight For $15 got me interested in organizing. It hooked me up with a whole bunch of organizations that fight for the same thing. We're fighting for change. Everything needs to be changed: the laws, the president, everything. It's still the same as back in the day. I lived it, so I know.

My dream is for us to change the world—for us to have power and grow as a group and for people to see us as people and not as poor people or rich people. Just people. Because if you don't have any money, then you're seen as nothing. You're not on the map.

And achieving that dream is going to take all of us working together. All of us to push, pull, tear, whatever we need to do without violence, to get what we need to get. With paperwork, and boards, and meetings, and conferences, and all of that. And it's going to take a whole lot of us to get it done, but it might get done.

According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, an individual would have to earn $23.80 an hour to cover the basic costs of a one adult/one child family in North Carolina.[7]


WE
DREAM
IN
BLACK

SONIA MYERS

Caregiver Who Supports Large Family Fears Losing Job

Sonia Myers was inspired by her mother to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA). Working in home healthcare, she takes pride in her capacity for love and her ability to build trust with her clients. In addition to raising five sons, Myers also has taken care of her twin sister; her best friend; and friends from church, who she has unofficially adopted into her unofficial family.

Despite the love and care she puts into the job, Myers has struggled to support herself and her family and to earn respect while working for private agencies. Clients have cursed and spat at her. Employers have taken her for granted.

Myers has been a member of We Dream in Black for two years. Meeting and discussing her work and struggles with other domestic workers has given Myers both a new perspective on many of the issues she has faced and a new sense of confidence in herself and her work. She credits We Dream in Black with helping her to realize the value of her work and her gift, and for motivating her to find a job she truly loves. Myers now provides care at a group home for adults with special needs. The job has a steadier schedule and better pay, but she has to work seven days a week.

In all of her years working as a CNA, Myers says she only found her voice once she began attending meetings for We Dream in Black.

39.7% of respondents to the IPS Citywide Survey say they support three people or more on their income.

> "I have five sons...and support a lot of people...that I consider family."

I have five sons; and I support a lot of people who are not related to me that I consider family. My best friend, who's like a sister, has two small children. I help her financially. I have my twin sister. She's going through a divorce, so I'm there to help her as well. And I support a couple of people that go to my church as well.

My mother retired as a CNA. She did that for 32 years before she passed away. My twin sister is also in that field. She has two group homes here in Durham that she opened herself and is operating. My grandmother was a nanny for this prestigious family in our hometown. She was more than a nanny; she raised their children. The children looked at her as mom while the parents were out working.

I love to help. I love caring for people. That's my passion. I've tried other things, but it didn't set well with me. I've been a cashier. I did merchandising, cooking. But it's nothing like what I'm doing now. I love caring.

I am a group home manager for adult males with disabilities and special needs. I stay with

patients seven days a week. I'm required to make sure their basic needs are attended, like their health and their finances and food and doctor's appointments. I'm basically the doctor, I'm the nurse, I'm the cook, I'm everything—all at once as a group home manager.

Before that, I worked as a CNA for a private agency. The average day as a CNA for me at that time was underpaid, for one. I had bedridden clients, so that was stressful because they couldn't do anything for themselves. I had to make sure their needs were attended. I had to make sure they had breakfast and all this other stuff, and I wasn't even getting paid $8 an hour.

You know you had to keep the bills paid. You know you had to keep food on the table because you know your children depended on you. That was more stressful, but you had to do what you could do because the industry doesn't pay much.

I've been cussed at, lied to, spit on. It was typical some days. I had some clients that had dementia. I've been cursed at. I had to call the police on one client. I've been through it all. It's a lot working in that type of environment and in situations like that, but you've got to keep going.

Love. Love is my basic skill. And trust. Because when I'd go into someone's home when I was a CNA, they could feel the trust. I have had clients tell me that they trusted me, that they appreciated my work, and that means a whole lot to me when someone can value your work. Because you don't get that from the company. They don't ever tell you that they appreciate what you do. They don't show you that they appreciate what you do. You hear that from your clients themselves, so that's very important.

Since getting the job at the group home, I can rest better knowing that my kids will be

fed, knowing that my bills are being paid on time. I can meet my needs. Even though it comes with me leaving my children for seven days at a time, they're not babies anymore so they understand. They know that mama's out here making a provision for them.

"I've been cussed at, lied to, spit on. It was typical some days."

In the past, I had no power because my voice didn't matter. There are a lot of voices out there that want to be heard, but no one is listening. I joined We Dream in Black and met other women from different organizations, from different walks of life, different countries, different cities, different worlds, and we began to talk and we began to put everything together. I thought I was alone before I came into this organization, but I realized that we're not alone. The more we can come together, the more power we got.

The public knows very little about domestic workers. They don't realize how hard it is, what we have to deal with. They don't realize the work that's involved. They don't realize the struggles and the stress that we go through. They feel as if we're just there to take care of their loved one; but it's more than that. I believe that some of the family members of my clients know how hard it is, but they couldn't do it themselves so that's why they rely on someone to do it for them. It's not an easy job. Especially when you've got problems in your own life and then you have to deal with this problem.

In We Dream in Black, we've done rallies, we've done marches and protests. We went to state officials, we went to legislators. We've done block parties, we've done functions, we've done banquets. We've done it all. Knocking on doors. Just recently, the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) went to Atlanta to help a young woman become an elected official. She won because of our persistence knocking on doors.

It means a great deal to me to be a member. Since I've been a member here, I've brought in family and friends that were blind like I was. Now they see and hear for themselves how real this is and the struggles that we all go through. Our voices can make a change if we all come together as one; and that's what we've done. That's what we're doing. We're not stopping until we get what we want.

It feels great to bring other people in because once you realize the potential in you, once you realize the greatness in you, once you realize that you can do better, and you can help someone else, it makes you feel powerful. It makes you feel like you're on top of the world. We are just as important as anybody who is a millionaire, or a doctor or a lawyer. We are more than just the help.

My dream for myself is to make sure everybody understands what I've done and why I did involve myself in this: because I don't want to see other women start the way I started. By that, I mean going from paycheck to paycheck, feeling worthless, feeling disrespected, thinking that there's no better way. I want people to realize there is a way. From the two years that I started as a member of NDWA, I am a different person. I have a better outlook on life. I feel better. I feel great.

TONYA HARRINGTON

Health Caregiver Shares Stories of Routinely Working Sick to Support Her Family

As a home healthcare worker, North Carolina native Tonya Harrington is routinely asked to enter people's homes and care for their loved ones without ever being asked if she has the resources to take care of her own family.

Harrington has worked in patient care for 17 years. During her career, she has taken care of the most basic needs of her clients and recognizes how much they need both her labor and her presence.

Her commitment to work, the long hours, and the lack of benefits has affected her personal life and health. Her job does not provide sick pay, so she has often gone to work sick. To earn enough to live, Harrington has had to effectively work nonstop for multiple clients. Not only has that had an impact on her health, the grueling schedule prevented her from spending time with her four children as they were growing up.

Harrington believes that the root of a lot of issues facing domestic workers is the general public's lack of knowledge about the kind of work they do, the value of their work, and the difficulties domestic workers face daily on the job.

She has been active in We Dream in Black in Durham for four years, showing other domestic workers how to educate the public about the realities and importance of domestic work. We Dream in Black has helped her recognize the value of the work she does and the foundational role of black women in transforming this country through collective action.

About 1 in 3 North Carolina workers earned wages at or below the official poverty line for a family of four in 2014. This is the 2nd-worst ranking in the nation.[8]

"If we don't show up for work, nobody else can go to work."

I have worked as a patient care assistant. I worked for a private agency. I have been doing domestic work for 16-17 years. I am not currently working in the field. That work meant cooking, cleaning, preparing meals, bathing, changing diapers, normal stuff that you do in a household.

I loved interacting with the people. You really get attached to the clients. You really do. Because they are so needy. My communication skills, I am very outgoing, I get along with everybody. And I have a lot of wisdom at my age that I can pass on to help them get through.

I had to get up at 5:30 a.m. to commute to my patients in Chapel Hill. Can't miss any days of work, whether you're sick or not. No sick pay. The pay was terrible. For all of the stuff that you have to do, $7.25 to $7.50 an hour is nothing. That doesn't even cover your bus fare. For a week, a bus ticket is like $30.

It felt good to be needed, wanted, and appreciated. But it was taxing on my family and myself. It did impact my health. There wasn't a lot of time to be at home. I didn't get to see my kids as much as I would like to.

People don't know anything about domestic work and what domestic workers go through. How they're treated. The public is blind to the struggles that the aides go through. Sometimes they get paid and sometimes they don't. They're not making enough money to live off of. They have to have two or three clients in order to really make money. If they have that, then they don't have time for anything else.

It makes me feel bad because of the simple fact that they don't even ask to know. They bring you in to take care of their parents and loved ones, and they don't make the effort to

IN NORTH CAROLINA, BLACK WOMEN ARE PAID 64 CENTS FOR EVERY DOLLAR PAID TO WHITE, NON-LATINO MEN.[9]

know the struggle of what we do. It would be nice if they knew what was going on. How we don't make enough money to really take care of our own families.

I want people to know that it's long hours and strenuous work; and we're not getting the treatment we deserve. If the public was more involved, then maybe the wages would go up and people would understand what domestic work is.

I have been a member of We Dream in Black since Day 1. This is my fourth year. I love it. It really opened my eyes to possibilities, so that we can get benefits, and it allowed me to meet people who have the same problems that I have.

I also do job training. This will be my third year of teaching people to go door to door to raise awareness of issues facing domestic workers and to get out the vote for political campaigns. We went to a retreat to meet the other chapters. We do not get together as often as a I like, but when we do, we put a lot on the table, get a lot of feedback. It's a great time.

It means a great deal to be a member because it is mostly black women who are all domestic workers—women of color—and we're standing up for our health, and we're fighting for our rights, and there can be nothing greater than that. And we're making history.

I've brought a couple of domestic workers into We Dream in Black. It was exciting for me to see them learning the same things that I learned years before. It's as mind-boggling to them as it was to me.

I am thinking that the more people we have involved, the better results we'll have. We'll finally be heard. If we have 5,000, even 1,000 people to go to the state board, wherever we need to go, we can make an impact. The more people, the more power we'll have.

Black women have played a big part in this world. We have been the backbone of America for so long, even during slavery times. We carry a lot of pressure on us. We're living and loving. We're caring and hard workers. And we deserve to be treated like real human beings.

My dream is to finally find a job where I can really make money to take care of my family properly. I'd love for it to be in domestic work. I have a passion for it. Regular people don't want to do this work. They don't want to change Pampers. They don't want to do this dirty work that we do.

My dream is for domestic workers to finally be off the bottom of the pyramid because, right now, domestic workers are the base of the pyramid. If we don't show up for work, nobody else can go to work. If we're not there to take care of their loved ones, their sick and disabled, then the bank won't open, the doctors won't be able to show up for work.

> "Can't miss any days of work, whether you're sick or not. No sick pay. The pay was terrible. For all of the stuff that you have to do, $7.25 to $7.50 an hour is nothing."

DOVIE JOYNER-DYSON

While Working a Full Schedule and Raising Four Boys, Chef-Turned-Caregiver Makes Time to Organize

Since she was a child helping her mother prepare dinner, Dovie Joyner-Dyson has loved to cook. As an adult, Joyner-Dyson pursued her passion by attending culinary school and landing a job at a Caribbean restaurant. When she was not cooking there, she enjoyed bringing her extended family together for food and fellowship in her home.

After working as a licensed chef for years, Joyner-Dyson quit the job that she loved to take care of her husband's grandmother, who died a few months later. Arthritis and carpal tunnel prevented Joyner-Dyson from returning to work as a chef, so she began working for a home healthcare agency.

Five days a week, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., she works two-hour shifts for three clients in different cities across Durham County. Every other week, she meets with a fourth client. And when she is not with a client, Joyner-Dyson is expected to respond to calls when other agency workers don't show up. She is not paid for the time it takes to drive to her clients, nor is she reimbursed for gas.

Despite having to balance her heavy work schedule with raising four young boys aged 7-16, Joyner always finds the time to work with We Dream in Black. For Joyner-Dyson, We Dream in Black has inspired her to become an active leader, recruiter and speaker. One of Joyner-Dyson's proudest moments since joining the organization was meeting the family of Dorothy Bolden—the legendary activist and founder of the National Domestic Workers Union—at an NDWA conference in Atlanta. The meeting rooted Joyner-Dyson's own work in a long and proud history, and convinced her of the potential of small gatherings of black women to grow and change the world. ●

In 2015, activism across the U.S. resulted in most of the country's home care workers winning federal wage and hour rights. Before this victory, the Fair Labor Standards Act excluded nearly all home care workers from its minimum wage and overtime protections.[10]

> "One woman can move 20 women, if your story's the truth."

I started taking care of my grandfather when I was 18. I've also cared for my husband's grandmother who had diabetes, my father who had cirrhosis of the liver and gout, and my grandfather who had dementia. Caring for them all made me really move toward the homecare work that I've done.

I'm a licensed chef. That's my other career. I went to culinary arts school and got my certificate as a chef in 2012. I worked at a Caribbean restaurant in North Carolina. I made jerked chicken, curried chicken, rice and beans, and "Reggae pasta." I always loved to cook when I was younger. I used to be in the kitchen with my mother and cut the collard greens, peel the sweet potatoes, and help cut the pepper and onions. When I got my own place, I would bring the family together, cook the food, and have a feast where we would get together, eat some good food, and talk about our week.

But I quit my job to help care for my grandmother-in-law. My in-laws didn't have anybody to come in to give the care that my grandmother-in-law needed, which a personal care assistant (PCA) does. So, I quit my job and I worked with my grandmother-in-law for about eight months until she passed away. That's how my profession started.

I am a PCA, and I'm about to go back to school for my nurse's assistant certification. I just made a year and a half with a company in North Carolina. I am what you call a cold caller—the one who picks up somebody else's slack. So, I have three clients. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. I'm ripping and running. I'm at one client's house for two hours. After those two hours, I have to leave, rush to another town to go to client number two. Then 2:30 to 4:00, I'm at client number three's house. Client number four is every other Saturday, or if my boss is not running me around to pick up the slack for other people that can't do part of their job. My days off are Tuesdays and Thursdays if I don't get a phone call. I don't get paid for mileage.

I have one client that can't move from the waist down. I have to lift him up off the chair onto the toilet. I put him in the shower chair, give him a shower. After the shower, wipe him down, lift him up again, put him in a wheelchair, roll him to his bed, lift him up again, put him on his bed, and help him get dressed. I have to make sure that his face is shaved and his teeth are brushed. He has callouses on his feet. The aide that he had before wasn't doing anything about his feet. It's really not in my job description, but I bought cream from out of my pocket and put it on his feet. So now, his feet are clearing up.

Another client is 96 and has dementia. He has sores in his head from laying and not wanting to rotate. He is 249 pounds. I only weigh roughly 190 pounds. I don't know how

"There are a lot of domestic workers out here that are going through a crisis; that are not getting paid the way that they're genuinely supposed to get paid; that are sexually mistreated; that are undocumented; and that have just been through a lot of things that get swept under the rug. We don't get the acknowledgement that we need. "

the other aides do, but I know for me, I rotate my clients. My back is shot. I mean shot to the moon and back because of the lifting.

And then I take care of my children—the sports that they do, and the camp that they do. I have one that's a boxer, one that's a dancer, and one is in sports. My older one, he just loves computers, so we're trying to find something with that. Then, my husband works at night. We only have one car.

My heart is so big. What I tell all my clients from the first day that I meet them is, "If I can walk into your house and give you 100 percent of me, when I walk out, I just need you to give me 5 percent of you, which is a smile." If I can make my clients smile everyday that I walk out of the house, that means that I did something.

I had one client that wasn't eating before I met her. She didn't eat for four months. I came into this lady's house, and in two days, I got her to eat. That was a blessing to see her go from 92 pounds to 110 pounds in three months.

Since joining We Dream in Black, I've been organizing. I've been an activist showing my power, listening to other people, and trying to help other people out in this industry.

Joining this organization gave me a better perspective. There are a lot of domestic workers out here that are going through a crisis; that are not getting paid the way that they're genuinely supposed to get paid; that are sexually mistreated; that are undocumented; and that have just been through a lot of things that get swept under the rug. We don't get the acknowledgement that we need.

When We Dream in Black go out, we actually speak to people. Some people straightaway will sit there and listen. A lot of people are scared. You have undocumented people that are scared to really talk. I'm scared for them and they work for less than nothing. I encourage and let them know that they will be okay.

One woman can move 20 women, if your story's the truth. Dorothy Bolden, she was a phenomenal woman. She made a movement starting with just a few people. I met her family, wonderful people. They're domestic workers as well. It's an honor when you know that somebody started something from such humble beginnings. It started as a mustard seed and she made it blossom into a beautiful tree. The only thing that you can possibly do is try to continue to work and live in the legacy that Dorothy Bolden left.

Being an organizer, you really have to make time. You got to be dedicated. That's just like anything in life that you really have passion for. I truly love NDWA. From day one, I was committed. I got four kids, and a husband. When my leader calls me and says, "Dovie, can you...?" I'm like, "Listen, I'm there."

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

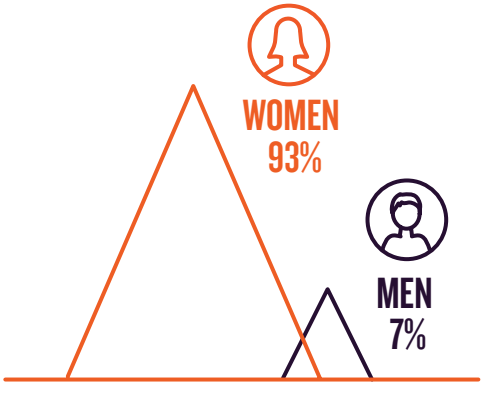
CITYWIDE SURVEY OF BLACK DOMESTIC WORKERS

In August 2017, the Institute for Policy Studies and We Dream in Black, an initiative of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, launched a citywide survey of black domestic workers in Durham, North Carolina. The survey was designed to give Durham's black domestic workers—an often invisible and isolated workforce—an opportunity to collectively share their experiences and insights. Through their responses, survey respondents confirm themes explored in individual narratives in this report.

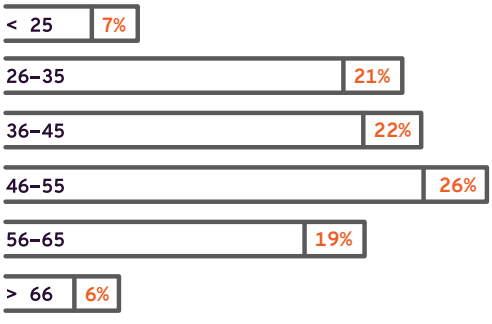
SURVEY OVERVIEW

101

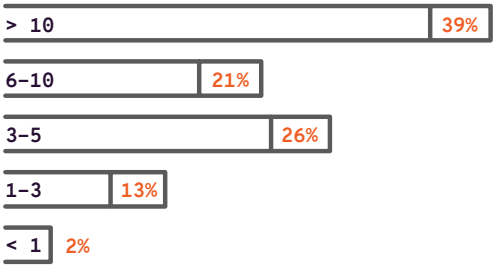
TOTAL RESPONDENTS



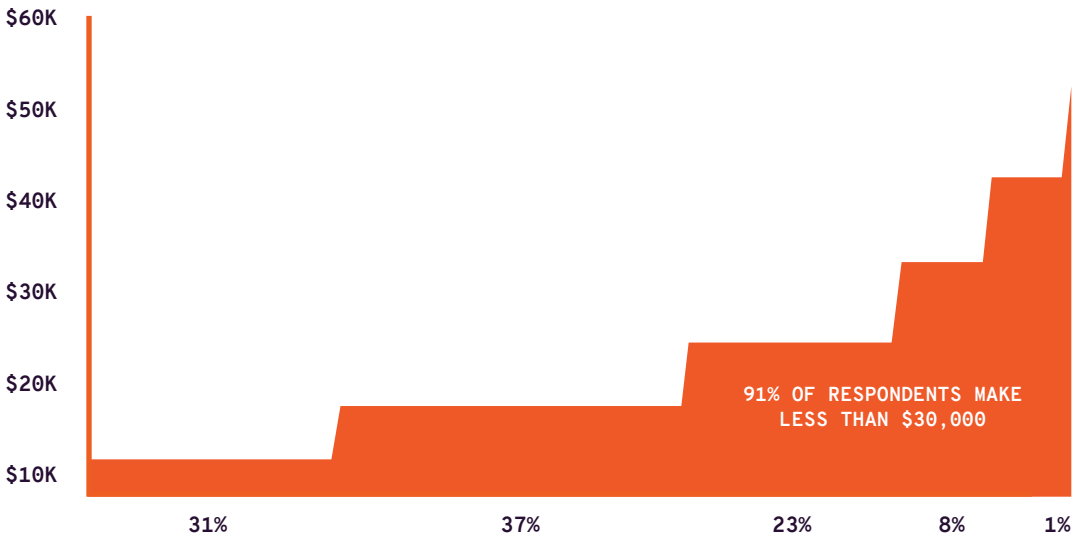
AGE



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



ANNUAL INCOME



TYPE OF DOMESTIC WORK PERFORMED

79% HOME HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

16% CHILD HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

5% HOUSE CLEANER

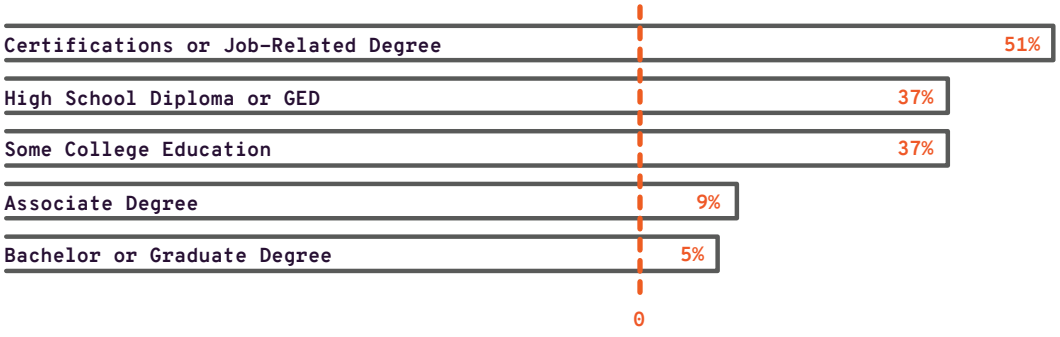
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY INCOME

60% SUPPORT MORE THAN THEMSELVES

62% EARN 100% OF THE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

19% EARN MORE THAN HALF OF THE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

EDUCATION



TOP WORKPLACE CONCERNS

95% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORTED WORKPLACE CONCERNS

85% LOW WAGES

37% WORKPLACE INJURIES OR HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

31% ASKED TO DO WORK DIFFERENT FROM ORIGINAL HIRED JOB

22% LACK OF EMPLOYER BENEFITS

45% LACK OF JOB SKILLS AND TRAINING

36% ASKED TO WORK MORE THAN SCHEDULED HOURS

26% EXPOSED TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

12% FEAR OF BEING REPORTED TO IMMIGRATION OR POLICE

30% REPORTED NON-PAYMENT OF WAGES

57% WORKED WHILE SICK

49% BORROWED MONEY UNTIL PAYDAY

30% CANCELED A MEDICAL APPOINTMENT BECAUSE OF WORK

30% HAD TO FIND LAST MINUTE CARE FOR CHILD OR PARENT TO WORK

64% DO NOT HAVE ANY WORK CONTRACTS

76% NOT ENOUGH TO COVER LIVING EXPENSES

73% FEEL THEIR INCOME IS UNFAIR

26% WORK SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

BENEFITS

DESIRED BENEFITS

81% DISCOUNTS ON VISION AND DENTAL

73% LIFE INSURANCE PLANS

58% DISCOUNTS ON UNIFORMS, SCRUBS, AND SAFETY SHOES

50% DISCOUNTS ON BUYING A CAR, CAR INSURANCE, OR CAR MAINTENANCE

50% DISCOUNTS ON SCHOOL SUPPLIES

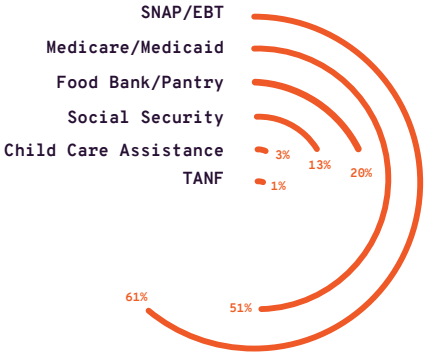
48% DISCOUNTS ON CELL PHONE PLANS

40% DISCOUNTS ON MOVIES, ENTERTAINMENT, AND SHOPPING

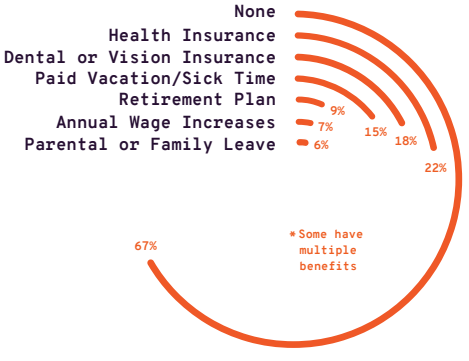
41% TAX-PREPARATION DISCOUNTS

RELIANCE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

59% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS RECEIVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE



BENEFITS REPORTED*



RECOMMENDATIONS

Toward righting the historic and contemporary wrongs, we endorse the following recommended actions:

1 Expand and leverage public investment in home care to create quality jobs.

Eighty-three percent of home care services for the elderly and disabled are funded by public programs—most notably, Medicaid. Consequently, the government has a tremendous opportunity to shape and influence standards in the field that will make domestic jobs quality jobs that offer livable wages, access to healthcare, occupational health and safety protections, and paid time off.

2 Establish basic labor protections for domestic workers in all employment settings.

The National Employment Law Project (NELP) has focused much of its research on home care workers and recommends that labor protections be established to which employers can be held accountable. We believe that baseline protections should be applied across all domestic work fields in all employment settings. Recognizing that "one size will not fit all," the baseline protections should be specific to the different fields and tailored to fill the protection gaps within federal and specific state laws that define workers' rights and occupational safety and health protections.

3 Prioritize investment in enforcement of labor standards and protections for domestic workers in all employment settings.

Laws are only as strong as the enforcement infrastructure behind them. Therefore, we call for investment in systems and structures that continually monitor adherence to labor standards and protections.

4 Strengthen workers' ability to organize and collectively bargain for greater accountability.

Similar to many other professions, domestic workers who are covered by a union contract are advantaged over their non-union counterparts. A national survey of unionized and non-unionized home care workers conducted in 2016 by NELP found that the union advantage for home care workers included earning higher wages (a weighted average of $2 an hour more); being more likely to receive health insurance (61 percent of unionized vs 28 percent of non-unionized); and being more likely to have paid time off (55 percent of unionized vs. 23 percent of non-unionized). We recommend that any and all barriers to domestic workers joining or forming a union or entering collective bargaining be removed.

5 Extend to domestic workers similar economic, educational, and social benefits extended to veterans, law enforcement officers, and teachers.

Domestic workers should be included with other esteemed workers who are eligible for social benefits including education and training grants, housing-related assistance, access to quality health care, and discounts at private companies for cars, food, cell phones, and other essentials. For example, the Federal Housing Administration offers teachers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, and law enforcement officers assistance to purchase a home at a 50 percent discount off the list price in a designated U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development revitalization area. The Department of Veterans Affairs offers financial support to active service members, veterans and, in some cases, their dependents, for education and training that ranges from vocational and technical training, and licensing and certification tests, to undergraduate and graduate degrees.

PAY, PROFESSIONALISM & RESPECT

VOLUME 2: DURHAM

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