



# Notes from the storm:

Black Immigrant Domestic  
Workers in the Time of COVID-19

**PAY, PROFESSIONALISM & RESPECT DATA BRIEF**

Presented by **The Institute for Policy Studies** in partnership with  
**National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) We Dream In Black Program**

## NOTES FROM THE STORM:

### Black Immigrant Domestic Workers in the Time of COVID-19

# Black immigrant domestic workers are at the epicenter of three converging storms—the pandemic, the resulting economic depression, & structural racism.

**The current public health and economic crises in America are racialized, gendered, classed and citizenship stunted.** Black immigrant domestic workers are at the epicenter of three converging storms—the pandemic, the resulting economic depression, and structural racism. Intersectional identities such as Black, immigrant, woman, and low-wage worker make these essential workers some of the most invisible and vulnerable workers in our country.

The *Institute for Policy Studies' (IPS) Black Worker Initiative*, in partnership with the *National Domestic Workers Alliance's (NDWA) We Dream in Black* program, conducted a survey on May 19-June 6, 2020 of Black immigrant domestic workers in three locations— with data from Massachusetts, Miami-Dade, Florida, and New York, New York— to look at the impact of COVID-19 on Black domestic workers.

**Over 800 domestic workers responded to the We Dream in Black Domestic Worker Survey.**

[See complete totals in Appendix.]

As the nation turns toward reopening in the midst of racial reckoning, the experiences of Black immigrant domestic workers show all that we must reject and all that we must build to become a safer, stronger, and more just country. We must ensure federal relief efforts reach Black domestic workers, and that they are at the center of our economic recovery efforts and plans to rebuild.



# All Locations: Massachusetts, Miami-Dade, FL and New York, NY

## Personal Economic Impact

### Job Loss.

In all locations, 70 percent of the Black immigrant domestic workers surveyed have either lost their jobs (45 percent) or received reduced hours and pay (25 percent). Among the three locations surveyed, Miami-Dade has been hit hardest, with 93 percent of respondents either having been terminated (83 percent) or working fewer hours with less pay (9 percent).

*Undocumented workers were nearly twice as likely as documented workers to be terminated (64 percent as compared to 35 percent).*

*Documented workers are nearly twice as likely as undocumented workers to have fewer hours and less pay. (30 percent as compared to 16 percent).*

*More than half (52 percent) report that their immigration status has a negative impact on their ability to find new work. The percentage was higher for undocumented workers (67 percent).*

### Housing Insecurity.

Across all locations, 65 percent of respondents said that they are fearful or at risk of eviction or utility shut off in the next three months. Among the three locations surveyed, Miami-Dade workers are most vulnerable, with 90 percent of respondents reporting being at risk of eviction or having their utilities shut off.

*The percentage was much higher for undocumented workers (77 percent) than for their documented counterparts (58 percent). In Miami-Dade, 94 percent report being at risk.*

### No Safety Net.

Among all respondents, 49 percent are fearful of seeking assistance or resources from the federal, state, or local government due to their immigration status.

*The number was much higher for undocumented workers (76 percent) than documented workers (35 percent). The highest percentage was in Massachusetts (95 percent), followed by New York (80 percent) and Miami-Dade (70 percent).*



Black immigrant domestic workers surveyed have experienced, or live with someone who has experienced, COVID-19 symptoms.

## Health & Safety Vulnerability

### Lack of PPE.

Across all locations, 73 percent have not received personal protective equipment (PPE) from their employers.

*The percentage is much higher for undocumented workers (84 percent compared to 68 percent). The highest percentage reported was in Miami-Dade, at 95 percent.*

### Lack of Medical Insurance.

Across all three cities, 51 percent of respondents reported that they do not have medical insurance. Miami-Dade workers are worse off, with 85 percent reporting that they have no medical insurance.

*Undocumented workers have the highest uninsured rates (88 percent as compared to 32 percent of documented workers). In Miami-Dade, 100 percent of undocumented workers report that they lack health insurance.*

### Exposure to COVID-19.

In all three locations, 25 percent have experienced or live with someone who has experienced COVID-19 symptoms. Exposure to risk is lower for undocumented workers (9 percent) and higher for documented workers (32 percent). In Massachusetts, 50 percent of domestic workers report exposure.

*Documented workers in this study are three times more likely to be exposed to the coronavirus than undocumented workers (32 percent compared to 9 percent), probably because they are more likely to still be employed.*

# Massachusetts

## Personal Economic Impact

### **Job Loss.**

In Massachusetts, 59 percent of all respondents have lost their jobs (21 percent) or have fewer hours and less pay (38 percent). Undocumented workers are much more likely to have been terminated (58 percent) than documented workers (16 percent), but less likely to have fewer hours and less pay (16 percent) than their documented counterparts (41 percent). Among all respondents, 33 percent believe that their immigration status has a negative impact on their ability to find new work. The percentage is much higher among undocumented workers (63 percent) than their documented counterparts (28 percent).

### **Housing Insecurity.**

In Massachusetts, 56 percent of all respondents reported being at risk of eviction or having their utilities shut off in the next three months. Among undocumented workers, 68 percent report being at risk as compared to 55 percent of documented workers.

### **No Safety Net.**

In Massachusetts, 51 percent of survey respondents fear seeking assistance or resources from federal, state, and local government due to their immigrant status. The percentage of undocumented workers who report fear of seeking assistance is much higher (95 percent) than their documented counterparts (54 percent).

## Health & Safety Vulnerability

### **Lack of PPE.**

In Massachusetts, 52 percent of respondents reported receiving no safety clothing or PPE from their employers. The percentage is higher (63 percent) for undocumented workers than their documented counterparts (54 percent).

### **Lack of Medical Insurance.**

In Massachusetts, 20 percent of all respondents and 42 percent of undocumented workers do not have medical insurance. Among documented workers, 18 percent do not have medical insurance.

### **Exposure to COVID-19.**

In Massachusetts, 49 percent of respondents have experienced or live with someone who has experienced COVID-19 symptoms or been at a higher risk. Undocumented workers are less likely to have experienced symptoms or have been at a higher risk of exposure (26 percent) than their documented counterparts (52 percent).

# Miami-Dade, Florida

## Personal Economic Impact

### **Job Loss.**

In Miami-Dade, 93 percent of respondents have either lost their jobs (83 percent) or have fewer hours and less pay (9 percent). For undocumented respondents, 96 percent have been terminated (as compared to 67 percent of documented workers) and 2 percent have fewer hours and less pay (as compared to 20 percent of documented workers). Additionally, 89 percent of respondents believe that their immigration status negatively affects their ability to find new work. For undocumented workers, 95 percent believe that their immigration status is an impediment to finding new work (as compared to 80 percent of documented workers).

### **Housing Insecurity.**

In Miami-Dade, 90 percent of respondents reported being at risk of eviction or having their utilities shut off in the next three months. Among undocumented workers, 94 percent report being at risk as compared to 85 percent of documented workers.

### **No Safety Net.**

In Miami-Dade, 58 percent of survey respondents fear seeking assistance or resources from federal, state, and local government due to their immigrant status. The percentage of undocumented workers who report fear of seeking assistance is higher (70 percent) than their documented counterparts (42 percent).

## Health & Safety Vulnerability

### **Lack of PPE.**

In Miami-Dade, 89 percent of respondents reported receiving no safety clothing or PPE from their employers. The percentage is higher (95 percent) for undocumented workers than documented workers (82 percent).

### **Lack of Medical Insurance.**

In Miami-Dade, 85 percent of all respondents and 100 percent of undocumented respondents do not have medical insurance (as compared to 65 percent of documented workers).

### **Exposure to COVID-19.**

In Miami-Dade, 7 percent of respondents have experienced or live with someone who has experienced COVID-19 symptoms or been at a higher risk. Among undocumented workers, 2 percent report symptoms or exposure as compared to 52 percent of documented workers.

# New York, NY

## Personal Economic Impact

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### Job Loss.

In New York, 62 percent of respondents have either lost their jobs or have fewer hours and less pay. While documented workers have been terminated at a higher rate (34 percent vs 30 percent), undocumented workers were more likely to be working fewer hours with less pay (31 percent vs 28 percent). Among all respondents, 35 percent reported that their immigration status negatively impacts their ability to find new work.

### Housing Insecurity.

In New York, over half (54 percent) of Black immigrant domestic workers reported being at risk of eviction or having their utilities shut off in the next three months. Undocumented workers (60 percent) are at higher risk than documented workers (51 percent).

### No Safety Net.

In New York, 43 percent of survey respondents fear seeking assistance or resources from federal, state, and local government due to their immigrant status. The percentage is much higher for undocumented workers (80 percent) than their documented counterparts (28 percent).

## Health & Safety Vulnerability

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### Lack of PPE.

In New York, a staggering 75 percent of respondents reported receiving no safety clothing or PPE from their employers, with little difference between documented and undocumented immigrant workers.

### Lack of Medical Insurance.

In New York, 45 percent of respondents do not have medical insurance. The biggest divide between documented and undocumented workers is around medical insurance coverage. While 29 percent of documented workers have no form of medical insurance, a whopping 83 percent of undocumented workers have no medical insurance.

### Exposure to COVID-19.

In New York, 24 percent of respondents have experienced or live with someone who has experienced COVID-19 symptoms or been at higher risk. Documented workers (28 percent) reported a higher risk than undocumented workers (14 percent).

# APPENDIX

## Respondents — totals by location

	All Cities	New York	Miami-Dade	Massachusetts
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (811)</b>	<b>51% (413)</b>	<b>28% (227)</b>	<b>21% (171)</b>
<i>Undocumented (percent of all)</i>	33% (267)	45% (121)	48% (127)	7% (19)
<i>Documented (percent of all)</i>	67% (544)	54% (292)	18% (100)	28% (152)

## Type of Work (respondents may perform more than one job)

	All Cities	New York	Miami-Dade	Massachusetts
Nanny or private childcare	<b>56% (457)</b>	<b>79% (326)</b>	<b>34% (78)</b>	<b>31% (53)</b>
<i>Undocumented</i>	66% (176)	84% (101)	50% (64)	58% (11)
<i>Documented</i>	52% (281)	77% (225)	14% (14)	28% (42)
Homecare or paid caregiver*	<b>29% (233)</b>	<b>15% (60)</b>	<b>31% (70)</b>	<b>61% (103)</b>
<i>Undocumented</i>	18% (47)	9% (11)	24% (30)	32% (6)
<i>Documented</i>	34% (186)	17% (49)	40% (40)	64% (97)
House cleaner or housekeeper	<b>25% (205)</b>	<b>16% (66)</b>	<b>53% (121)</b>	<b>11% (18)</b>
<i>Undocumented</i>	48% (127)	25% (30)	72% (91)	32% (6)
<i>Documented</i>	14% (78)	12% (36)	30% (30)	8% (12)
Other non-domestic industry	<b>9% (72)</b>	<b>2% (10)</b>	<b>20% (46)</b>	<b>9% (16)</b>
<i>Undocumented</i>	14% (37)	3% (4)	25% (32)	5% (1)
<i>Documented</i>	6% (35)	2% (6)	14% (14)	10% (15)
Newborn specialist in client's home	<b>7% (58)</b>	<b>7% (28)</b>	<b>13% (29)</b>	<b>0.6% (1)</b>
<i>Undocumented</i>	14% (38)	7% (9)	23% (29)	0%
<i>Documented</i>	4% (20)	7% (19)	0%	>1% (1)
Unpaid family caregiver of an older adult or person w/disability				
	<b>5% (44)</b>	<b>1% (5)</b>	<b>16% (36)</b>	<b>2% (3)</b>
<i>Undocumented</i>	12% (33)	3% (4)	23% (29)	0%
<i>Documented</i>	2% (11)	>1% (1)	7% (7)	2% (3)

\*Including CNA, PCA, HHA and uncertified workers







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