

REI Workers Speak Out:

Racial Discrimination, Inequity, and the Fight for a Fair Workplace

Methodology and Data Supplement

Methodology

The National Employment Law Project (NELP) conducted an online survey of workers at 10 unionized Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) stores in November and December 2024. The REI Union assisted in worker outreach in select stores.

The survey was hosted on the SurveyMonkey platform. All respondents were confirmed to be employed at one of the 10 REI stores at the time of the survey. A list of store locations can be found in Table 1 of this supplement.

As all surveyed and interviewed workers were employed at unionized REI stores, the findings reflect the experiences of workers in these settings and may not represent the perspectives and experiences of REI workers at non-unionized stores.

The survey asked about workers' experiences at REI and workplace concerns including racial discrimination, scheduling practices, and health and safety issues. In addition to close-ended questions, the survey included 11 free-response questions that provided workers with an opportunity to describe their experiences and opinions in their own words. To supplement these findings, we also conducted five hour-long interviews via Zoom—three with current REI workers and two with former REI employees—between November 2024 and January 2025.

The final survey sample included 219 workers who had been working at REI for at least three months at the time of the survey. Although turnover rates in the retail industry are high (see [Fuller, Logan, Suarez, and Valkova, 2022](#) and the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025](#)), we estimate that 45 percent of workers at the surveyed stores responded.

Part of our survey analysis examined differences in responses by workers' race and ethnicity. Throughout the report, we present findings for REI workers of color (n = 75) and white workers (n = 141) who

responded to the survey.¹ While aggregating diverse racial and ethnic groups can mask important differences, small sample sizes limit our ability to conduct analyze each racial and ethnic group separately. This approach, while a limitation, ensures more statistically meaningful findings with the available data. To assess racial differences for specific outcomes, we conducted several logistic regressions. All differences that we report are statistically significant at a 95 percent confidence level. For each result, we report the odds ratios, 95 percent confidence intervals, and *p* values in endnotes.

To compare the racial distribution of REI's workforce to the national retail workforce, we used data from REI's most recent (2023) [Impact Report](#) and IPUMS American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2023, restricting the ACS sample to employed W2 employees working in the Retail Trade major industry. Following the approach used in REI's impact report, we treated Hispanic workers as a separate racial category. ACS estimates for other racial groups represent the percentage of the 2023 retail workforce identifying as non-Hispanic within each respective category (see [Table 1 in the main report](#)).

In the sections below, we provide frequency tables detailing survey sample characteristics and key findings. Tables 1-7 describe survey sample characteristics, tables 9-17 present results for the full survey sample, and tables 18-25 present results by worker race/ethnicity.



Source: REI Union

¹ For disaggregated analyses by respondent race/ethnicity, white workers are those who identified only as white, and workers of color include respondents who selected any other race or multiple racial/ethnic identities.

Survey Sample Characteristics

Table 1. Number and Percent of REI Workers by Store

Store	n	Percent
Bellingham, WA	33	15.1%
Berkeley, CA	7	3.2%
Boston, MA	5	2.3%
Lincoln Park, IL	41	18.7%
Cleveland, OH	9	4.1%
Durham, NC	22	10.0%
Castleton, IN	20	9.1%
Maple Grove, MN	11	5.0%
SoHo, NY	53	24.2%
Santa Cruz, CA	18	8.2%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Table 2. Worker Tenure at REI

Tenure	n	Percent
3–6 months	19	8.7%
7 months–1 year	26	11.9%
Over 1 year–5 years	130	59.4%
Over 5 years–10 years	23	10.5%
More than 10 years	21	9.6%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Table 3. Part-Time versus Full-Time at REI

Employment Type	n	Percent
Full-time (32+ hours per week)	60	27.4%
Part-time	134	61.2%
Part-time plus (16–24 hours per week)	21	9.6%
Unsure	3	1.4%
Not reported	1	0.5%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Table 4. Employment Type at REI

Status	n	Percent
Permanent employee	195	89.0%
Seasonal employee	3	1.4%
Temporary employee	1	0.5%
Unsure	20	9.1%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.
Note: We anticipated a small number of seasonal and temporary employees to respond to our survey, as workers had to have been employed by REI for at least 3 months to be included in the final sample.

Table 5. Usual Hours Worked Each Week

Hours	n	Percent
Fewer than 10 hours	22	10.0%
10–20 hours	82	37.4%
21–30 hours	46	21.0%
31–40 hours	64	29.2%
More than 40 hours	2	0.9%
Not reported	3	1.4%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Table 6. Worker Gender

Gender	n	Percent
Woman	77	35.2%
Man	116	53.0%
Transgender	6	2.7%
Non-binary	16	7.3%
Other gender	2	0.9%
Not reported	2	0.9%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Table 7. Worker Race and Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity	n	Percent
American Indian and Alaska Native	2	0.9%
Asian	21	9.7%
Black	20	9.3%
Hispanic	34	15.7%
Middle Eastern and North African	3	1.4%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	1	0.5%
White	160	74.1%
Other race/ethnicity	3	1.4%
Not reported	3	1.4%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Note: As workers could select multiple racial/ethnic categories, percentages will add up to over 100%.

Table 8. Worker Race and Ethnicity (Exclusive Categories)

Race/ethnicity	n	Percent
American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0%
Asian	12	5.5%
Black	14	6.4%
Hispanic	23	10.5%
Middle Eastern and North African	1	0.5%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	0	0%
White	141	64.4%
Other race/ethnicity	2	0.9%
Multiple racial/ethnic identities	23	10.5%
Not reported	3	1.4%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Department Preferences: Full Sample

Table 9. Would you prefer to work in a different department at REI?

Response	n	Percent
Yes, and I would need additional training to work in that department	60	27.4%
Yes, and I have all the necessary training to work in that department	24	11%
No, I prefer to continue working in the department(s) where I currently work	133	60.7%
Not reported	2	0.9%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Scheduling Items: Full Sample

Table 10. In the last six months, have you experienced any of the following scheduling issues at REI?

Response	n	Percent
My work hours and shift times changed a lot from week to week	117	54.4%
My work hours were cut substantially	106	49.3%
I got scheduled for shorter shifts than I would prefer	107	49.8%
There was a week that I expected to work, but I was not scheduled for any hours	35	16.3%
I was scheduled to close the store and then open it the next day	88	40.9%
I am currently looking for another job because the hours I get at REI do not meet my needs	66	30.7%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Note: N = 215. As workers could select multiple scheduling problems, percentages will add up to over 100%.

Table 11. If you could change your schedule at REI, what would you change?

Response	n	Percent
I would choose a more consistent and predictable schedule	153	70.8%
I would work the same number of hours but on a different schedule	30	13.9%
I would work more hours each week	98	45.4%
I would work fewer hours each week	7	3.2%
Although I currently work part-time, I would prefer to work full-time	37	17.1%
I would like to have more of a say in making my schedule	97	44.9%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Note: N = 216. As workers could select multiple desired scheduling changes, percentages will add up to over 100%.

Racial Discrimination at Work: Full Sample

Table 12. Percent of REI Workers who Have Experienced or Witnessed Racial Discrimination at Work, by Type

Response	n	Percent
Any	102	46.6%
Discipline	68	31.1%
Hiring	39	17.8%
Promotions	40	18.3%
Scheduling	36	16.4%
Layoffs	50	22.8%
Not reported	6	2.7%

*Source: NELP survey of REI workers.
Note: Percentages will add up to over 100%.*

Retaliation: Full Sample

Table 13. Have you ever experienced retaliation from REI management for speaking up about workplace conditions or exercising your labor and employment rights?

Response	n	Percent
No	152	69.4%
Yes	61	27.9%
Not reported	6	2.7%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Manager Advocacy: Full Sample

Table 14. How often do your managers advocate for you when a customer behaves in a way that is inappropriate or discriminatory?

Response	n	Percent
Always	28	12.8%
I have not experienced inappropriate or discriminatory behavior from a customer at REI	66	30.1%
Never	10	4.6%
Rarely	37	16.9%
Sometimes	70	32.0%
Not reported	8	3.7%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Health and Safety Concerns and Injury: Full Sample

Table 15. Are you concerned about health and safety risks working at REI?

Response	n	Percent
Unsure	25	11.4%
No	71	32.4%
Yes	115	52.5%
Not reported	8	3.7%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Table 16. Have you ever been injured as a result of your work at REI?

Response	n	Percent
Unsure	7	3.2%
No	109	49.8%
Yes	95	43.4%
Not reported	8	3.7%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Direction of REI as a Place to Work: Full Sample

Table 17. Do you think REI is becoming a better place to work, worse place to work, or not changing one way or another?

Response	n	Percent
Better	8	3.7%
No change	56	25.6%
Worse	140	63.9%
Not reported	15	6.8%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Select Survey Sample Characteristics by Race as a Binary Variable

Table 18. Worker Tenure at REI by Race

Tenure	Workers of color		White workers	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
3 months–1 year	19	25.3%	25	17.7%
1 year–5 years	49	65.3%	80	56.7%
Over 5 years	7	9.3%	36	25.5%
<i>Source: NELP survey of REI workers.</i>				

Table 19. Usual Hours Worked Each Week by Race

Hours	Workers of color		White workers	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Fewer than 10 hours	12	16%	10	7.1%
10–20 hours	36	48%	44	31.2%
21–30 hours	12	16%	34	24.1%
31–40 hours	13	17.3%	51	36.2%
More than 40 hours	1	1.3%	1	0.7%
Not reported	1	1.3%	1	0.7%
<i>Source: NELP survey of REI workers.</i>				

Table 20. Part-Time versus Full-Time at REI by Race

Job Type	Workers of color		White workers	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Full-time	11	14.7%	49	34.8%
Part-time	58	77.3%	73	51.8%
Part-time plus	5	6.7%	16	11.3%
Unsure	1	1.3%	2	1.4%
Not reported	0	0%	1	0.7%
<i>Source: NELP survey of REI workers.</i>				

Table 21. Usual Hours Worked by Part-Time Employees Each Week by Race

Hours	Workers of color		White workers	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Fewer than 10 hours	12	16%	10	7.1%
10–20 hours	36	48%	44	31.2%
21–30 hours	12	16%	34	24.1%
31–40 hours	13	17.3%	51	36.2%
More than 40 hours	1	1.3%	1	0.7%
Not reported	1	1.3%	1	0.7%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Department Preferences by Race as a Binary Variable

Table 22. Would you prefer to work in a different department at REI?

Response	Workers of color		White workers	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Yes, and I would need additional training to work in that department	32	42.7%	27	19.1%
Yes, and I have all the necessary training to work in that department	7	9.3%	17	12.1%
No, I prefer to continue working in the department(s) where I currently work	35	46.7%	96	68.1%
Not reported	1	1.3%	1	0.7%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Scheduling Items by Race as a Binary Variable

Table 23. In the last six months, have you experienced any of the following scheduling issues at REI?

Response	Workers of color		White workers	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
My work hours and shift times changed a lot from week to week	35	47.9%	81	58.3%
My work hours were cut substantially	40	54.8%	65	46.8%
I got scheduled for shorter shifts than I would prefer	39	53.4%	66	47.5%
There was a week that I expected to work, but I was not scheduled for any hours	15	20.5%	19	13.7%
I was scheduled to close the store and then open it the next day	29	39.7%	58	41.7%
I am currently looking for another job because the hours I get at REI do not meet my needs	22	30.1%	43	30.9%

*Source: NELP survey of REI workers.
Note: n workers of color = 73 and n white workers =139. As workers could select multiple scheduling problems, percentages will add up to over 100%.*

Table 24. If you could change your schedule at REI, what would you change?

Response	Workers of color		White workers	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
I would choose a more consistent and predictable schedule	50	68.5%	101	72.1%
I would work the same number of hours but on a different schedule	14	19.2%	16	11.4%
I would work more hours each week	39	53.4%	58	41.4%
I would work fewer hours each week	3	4.1%	4	2.9%
Although I currently work part-time, I would prefer to work full-time	13	17.8%	23	16.4%
I would like to have more of a say in making my schedule	28	38.4%	69	49.3%

*Source: NELP survey of REI workers.
Note: n workers of color = 73 and n white workers =140. As workers could select multiple scheduling problems, percentages will add up to over 100%.*

Racial Discrimination at Work by Race as a Binary Variable

Table 25. REI Workers who Have Experienced or Witnessed Racial Discrimination at Work, by Race and Type of Discrimination

Response	Workers of Color		White Workers	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Any form of discrimination	46	61.3%	55	39%
Discipline	31	41.9%	36	25.9%
Hiring	14	19.2%	25	18.2%
Promotions	21	28.8%	19	13.9%
Scheduling	18	25.4%	18	13%
Layoffs	22	30.6%	28	20.6%

Source: NELP survey of REI workers.

Note: Range n workers of color: 71–74. Range n white workers: 136–139. Percentages will add up to over 100%.