

Fighting the 'Gigification' of Work

App-Based Workers Demand Good Jobs

Corporations operating through digital labor platforms—Uber, Lyft, Instacart, DoorDash and other app-based or “gig” companies—tout their business model as “innovative,” but the practice of excluding workers from fundamental workplace protections is nothing new. Using vast amounts of surveillance data fed into hidden algorithms that dictate basic terms, like who gets work and how much (or little) they get paid, these corporations mask their control and extract monopoly profits by gouging workers and consumers alike. The result? A second class ‘gig’ workforce comprised disproportionately of Black, immigrant, and other workers of color denied minimum and overtime wages, protections from discrimination or harassment, and the right to unionize. But workers are fighting back, demanding the fundamental workplace protections they are entitled to, and insisting that app-based jobs can be good jobs.

Above the Law? App-based Companies’ Legislative Playbook

App-based companies have lobbied aggressively to seek exemptions from state law, hoping to avoid responsibility under labor and employment laws and tort regulations, transfer the costs of doing business to their workers, and evade social insurance obligations. These exemptions aren’t limited to the taxi and delivery industries. Find out more:

- [Rights at Risk: Gig Companies’ Campaign to Upend Employment as We Know It](#)
- [The Bully’s Playbook: How App Corporations Hold Back Worker Organizing and Harm Democracy](#)

Surveillance Wage Setting and Algorithmic Control

App-based companies are pioneering a new price- and wage- setting model: Collect vast amounts of data on consumers and workers and use that data to feed a hidden algorithm that sets individualized prices and wages. Consumers pay for services according to the highest amount they are individually willing to pay, and workers earn whatever the lowest amount they are willing to accept. Troublingly, this model is spreading to new industries.

- [Prohibiting Surveillance Prices and Wages](#)
- [Uber’s Price-Gouging and What We Can Do About It](#)
- [Uber for Nursing: How an AI-Powered Gig Model Is Threatening Healthcare](#)¹

This model enables app-based companies to misclassify their employees as independent contractors and offer fake portable benefits that pale in comparison to real portable benefits programs.

- [Remote Control: The Truth and Proof about Gig Companies as Employers](#)
- [Why Workers Need Real Portable Benefits](#)

App-Based Workers Earn Poverty Wages

Many app-based workers are working harder and earning less. Because the companies classify them as independent contractors, app-based workers have no minimum wage or overtime protections, or even the right to a paystub that explains their pay and deductions. Many earn less than the applicable minimum wage where they live.

As a result, app-based workers across the country are fighting for a real, enforceable pay floor. Ridehail drivers in several places, including [New York City](#)² and [Minnesota](#),³ have won basic wage standards, as have app-based delivery workers in [New York City](#)⁴ and [Seattle](#).⁵ But these protections must be expanded and established nationally. App-based workers are also demanding transparency about their work hours, pay, and the app-based corporations' cut of each fare or assignment (called the "take-rate").

- [Uber Takes Us for a Ride](#)
- [Gig Passenger and Delivery Driver Pay in Five Metro Areas](#)⁶
- [The 2025 Annual Gig Mobility Report: Your Guide to the Present & Future of Rideshare & Delivery](#)⁷
- [App-Based Workers Speak: Studies Reveal Anxiety, Frustration and a Desire for Good Jobs](#)
- [National Survey of Gig Workers Paints a Picture of Poor Working Conditions, Low Pay](#)⁸
- [Murdered Behind the Wheel: An Escalating Crisis for App-Based Workers](#)⁹

What App-Based Workers Want

- A **strong minimum wage** that compensates them for expenses and all time worked.
- **Transparency about the terms and conditions of work**, including hours, pay, take-rate, and how workers' data is collected and used.
- A **ban on exploitative practices** like individualized algorithmic wage-setting and excessive take-rates.
- **Employment benefits**, including unemployment insurance and workers' compensation.
- The right to **collectively bargain** with app-based corporations.

Endnotes

- ¹ Katie J. Wells. Funda Ustek Spilda, *Uber for Nursing: How an AI-Powered Gig Model Is Threatening Health Care*, (Roosevelt Institute: 2024), https://rooseveltinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/RI_Uber-for-Nursing_Brief_202412.pdf.
- ² Dmitri Koustas, James Parrott, Michael Reich, *New York City's Gig Driver Pay Standard: Effects on Drivers, Passengers, and the Companies*, (The New School Center for New York City Affairs: 2020), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ee4f0be4b015b9c3690d84/t/5fcfc3dda8cbdc2f053a82fc/1607451614588/DriverReport_Dec8th.pdf.
- ³ James Parrott, Michael Reich, *Transportation Network Company Driver Earnings Analysis and Pay Standard Options*, (Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry: 2024), https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/TNC_driver_earnings_analysis_pay_standard_options_report_030824.pdf.
- ⁴ *Restaurant Delivery App Data: April-June 2024*, New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection: 2024), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/workers/Restaurant-Delivery-App-Data-Q2-2024.pdf>.
- ⁵ Seattle Office of Labor Standards, “*App-Based Worker Minimum Payment Ordinance*,” Seattle, April 25, 2025, <https://www.seattle.gov/laborstandards/ordinances/app-based-worker-ordinances/app-based-worker-minimum-payment-ordinance>.
- ⁶ Ken Jacobs, Michael Reich, Tynan Challenor & Aida Farmand, *Gig Passenger and Delivery Driver Pay in Five Metro Areas* (UC Berkeley Labor Center & Center on Wage Employment Dynamics, 2024), <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Gig-Passenger-and-Delivery-Driver-Pay-in-Five-Metro-Areas.pdf>.
- ⁷ *Annual Gig Mobility Report 2025*, (Gridwise Analytics: 2025), <https://gridwise.io/analytics/2025-annual-gig-mobility-report/>.
- ⁸ Ben Zipperer, Celine McNicholas, Margaret Poydock, Daniel Schneider, Kristen Harknett, *National Survey of Gig Workers Paints a Picture of Poor Working Conditions, Low Pay*, (Economic Policy Institute: 2022), <https://www.epi.org/publication/gig-worker-survey/>.
- ⁹ *Murdered Behind the Wheel: An Escalating Crisis for App Drivers*, (PowerSwitch Action: 2023), https://www.datocms-assets.com/64990/1686088796-gig-safety-now_06-2023.pdf.