

# Report: The State of Financial Health of Today's Workforce



# Introduction

Wonolo's survey of 1,000 gig workers and 1,000 corporate workers across the United States found 55% of gig workers and 42% of workers in full-time corporate jobs are living paycheck to paycheck, with about 3 in 4 corporate and gig workers worried about their financial health if a recession were to happen in the next year.

This report takes a comprehensive look into the financial situation of Americans dealing with inflation, rising housing costs, and lack of flexibility amid a predicted recession. The report also uncovers the ways in which jobs are impacting workers' personal lives and health. The findings reveal how gig work can provide a solution to enhance American lives, and curb financial and flexibility concerns that all workers face.

In the following sections, we examine the commonalities and differences between gig workers and corporate workers, and explore sentiments gathered from both groups.

# Gig Workers vs. Corporate Workers

## Side-by-side comparisons

### 1 Corporate and gig workers are equally worried about a pending recession, with worries concentrated on paying for housing and essential bills

- More gig workers (55%) than corporate workers (42%) are able to pay their bills, but are living paycheck to paycheck
- The vast majority of both corporate workers (92%) and gig workers (85%) said the cost of their bills have increased in the last six months, but just two in five (41%) corporate workers and 42% of gig workers have received an increase in pay in the last six months
- Roughly the same number of corporate workers (75%) and gig workers (78%) worry about their financial health if a recession were to happen in the next year
- Both gig and corporate workers worry most about not being able to pay their essential bills (28% of gig workers, 25% of corporate workers) and not being able to pay their rent or mortgage (24% gig, 19% corporate). Gig workers also worry about not being able to pay for emergencies (17%), while corporate workers worry about losing their job (21%)

### 2 Despite corporate workers often having more benefits, gig workers win out on flexibility

- While 61% of both corporate and gig workers have set work hours that can be adjusted in special cases, gig workers tend to have more flexibility overall, with 19% of gig workers able to work any time or day they want as long as they get their work done, compared to 14% of corporate workers
- Additionally, while 9-5 may be the traditional schedule that 88% of corporate workers follow, just 66% of gig workers take on work during that time, with a quarter (26%) most likely to take on work at night and 8% most likely to take on work over the weekend, when it might work better for them

### 3 Both gig and corporate workers feel mental and physical health impacts from their jobs, but employers can combat the impacts with benefits adjustments

- Nearly a third (29%) of gig workers think their jobs negatively affect their mental and physical health, 20% think their jobs are negatively affecting their mental health and 16% think their jobs are negatively affecting their physical health. In comparison, a quarter (25%) of corporate workers think their job is negatively affecting both their physical and mental health, while 19% think it's negatively affecting just their mental health and 6% think it's negatively affecting just their physical health
- For gig workers, the top three things that they indicated would help improve their health are Designated Mental Health days (76%), better financial benefits (73%) and better health benefits (69%), while for corporate workers the top are Designated Mental Health days (76%), if their company hired more workers to lessen the workload (72%) and more flexibility in their scheduled work hours (71%)

# Gig Workers vs. Corporate Workers

## Side-by-side comparisons

### 4 Both gig and corporate workers moved in waves this year – many due to lower cost of living, new jobs or family growth

- More gig workers (38%) than corporate workers (29%) have moved in the last year, and while 39% of corporate worker and 40% of gig workers moved somewhere with a lower cost of living, more than a third (37%) of both corporate and gig workers moved somewhere with a higher cost of living
- Top reasons for gig workers to move included living somewhere with a lower cost of living (28%), moving in with family or friends to help with or get help caregiving (25%), moving for a new job (or a new job of a spouse/partner) (22%) and needing more space for a growing family (11%)
- Top reasons for corporate workers to move were needing a lower cost of living (31%), moving for a new job or role/new job of a spouse or partner (24%) and needing more space for a growing family (23%)

### 5 Gig workers have a clear interest in paid time off and more financial benefits to match corporate workers

- A quarter (25%) of corporate workers don't feel they can comfortably pay for all the necessities for their family with a full-time job income, while nearly a third (32%) of gig workers feel the same
- Nearly double the number of gig workers (53%) indicated that they have fewer than 15 days of PTO compared to corporate workers (28%)
- Almost double the number of gig workers (48%) than corporate workers (27%) report not having a 401K through their job or work, making saving for the future more difficult

# Gig Workers Findings

## Financial Health

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### **Some gig workers struggle to pay for the necessities for their family, and many lack the benefits that could help support their lives**

Nearly a third (32%) of gig workers don't feel they can comfortably pay for all necessities for their family with their current pay from hourly or temporary work. When asked about their financial status:

- 55% are able to pay their bills, but are living paycheck to paycheck
- 12% are unable to pay their bills

When asked about worker benefits:

- 40% of gig workers do not have healthcare benefits available through their current work
- 53% have less than 15 days of PTO per year
- 50% have paid sick days separate from PTO
- 57% do not have parental leave

### **Despite working with multiple companies or multiple jobs, many are still missing important payments**

About half (51%) of gig workers work with one company or in one job, while 40% work with two to three companies and 8% work with four to five companies.

- More men (45%) than women (36%) indicated that they work with two to three companies at once
- Looking specifically how the economy has impacted gig workers in the last year, 74% have had to cut down on their regular spending budget, and more than two in five gig workers have had to miss their phone bill (43%), credit card bill (41%) or utility bill (42%) because they couldn't afford the bill
- More than a third (36%) have also missed a rent or mortgage payment

### **Gig workers are worried about their financial health and have reconsidered critical healthcare and repair expenses.**

More than three-quarters (78%) of gig workers worry about their financial health if a recession were to happen in the next year.

- 28% are most worried about not being able to pay their essential bills
- 24% are most worried about not being able to pay their rent or mortgage
- 17% are most worried about not being able to pay for emergencies

Many gig workers, fearing the associated costs, have skipped out on:

- Routine doctor's visits (50%)
- Home repairs (49%)
- Routine dental visits (53%)
- Mental health support (43%)
- Car repairs (52%)
- Emergency healthcare visits (39%)

# Gig Workers Findings

## **Pay increases have not matched the increased cost of bills, and it's caused gig workers to adjust their lifestyle**

Nearly all (85%) gig workers said the cost of their bills have increased in the last six months, but only 42% have received an increase in pay in the last six months. Gen Zers (51%) are the most likely to have received an increase in pay.

- The increase in the cost of bills has likely been a factor that caused 32% of gig workers to have to move in with family or friends in the last year because they couldn't live on their own
- 39% to have had to take on a second or additional jobs to pay their bills
- 21% of gig workers have had to sell their home or move because they could no longer afford the rent

Additionally, of the 28% of gig workers who drive for Uber, Lyft or another rideshare service, 80% say that the increase in gas prices has caused them to drive less and earn less money, causing monetary concerns.

## **Personal Lives & Health**

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### **Even with flexibility, some gig workers are still missing out on important life events**

Almost half of gig workers (44%) have had to miss birthdays of family or close friends because of work, while:

- 42% have had to miss family vacations
- 37% have had to miss weddings of family or close friends
- 34% have had to miss children's sports games, recitals, etc.
- 34% have had to miss funerals or memorial services of family or close friends

### **Gig workers think their work is negatively impacting their mental or physical health, but businesses can help combat this**

Nearly a third (29%) of gig workers think their work negatively affects their mental and physical health, while 20% think their work is negatively affecting their mental health and 16% think their work is negatively affecting their physical health.

Of gig workers who said their work negatively impacts their mental or physical health, the top three things that would help improve their health are:

- Designated mental health days (76%)
- Better financial benefits (73%)
- Better health benefits (69%)
- Gen Z gig workers (72%) are the most likely to say that more flexibility in their scheduled work hours would improve their mental or physical health

# Gig Workers Findings

## **Gig workers get their start for a variety of reasons – from passion to money – but younger generations expressed more interest in gaining experience**

Nearly a third (32%) of gig workers went into their line of work because they're passionate about the work, while:

- 21% went into it because they like the flexibility
- 16% were in between salaried jobs and need to make extra money
- 11% don't feel qualified for salaried positions
- 10% wanted to gain more job experience for other opportunities
- Gen Zers (16%) were nearly twice as likely as other generations to go into their line of work to gain more experience for other opportunities

Nearly two thirds (63%) of gig workers would consider shifting to longer-term assignments or a corporate full-time job as their main source of income, with Gen Zers (73%) most interested in the shift.

## **The majority of younger gig workers have moved in the last year – often to higher cost areas**

Nearly two in five (38%) gig workers moved in the last year, with Gen Zers (52%) the most likely to have moved.

- Baby Boomer gig workers (28%) are the most likely to have moved somewhere with a lower cost of living, while Gen Xers (48%) are the most likely to have moved somewhere with a higher cost of living
- 40% of those who moved relocated to somewhere with a lower cost of living
- 37% of those who moved relocated to somewhere with a higher cost of living than their old location

Top reasons for gig workers to move included:

- Living somewhere with a lower cost of living (28%)
- Moving in with family or friends to help with or get help caregiving (25%)
- Moving for a new job or role (or a new job of a spouse/partner) (22%)
- Needing more space for a growing family (11%)

# Gig Workers Findings

## Flexibility

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### Gig workers have some flexibility in where and when to work

More than three in five (61%) gig workers stated they have set work hours, but they can be adjusted in special cases, while:

- 20% have strict hours that can't be adjusted
- 19% can work any time or day as long as they get their work done
- Gen Zers (71%) were the most likely to indicate that they have set work hours, but they can be adjusted in special cases, while Baby Boomers (30%) were the most likely to indicate they'd be able to work at any time / day as long as they get their work done

When it comes to location, half (50%) of gig workers must be in-office and/or on site for every workday/job, and:

- 25% can work remotely some days if they make a request in advance, but are mainly on site
- 13% work fully remotely
- 12% work a mixture of on site and remote

Regarding working hours:

- 66% of gig workers are most likely to take on work during 9-5 weekday working hours
- 26% are most likely to take on work at night
- 8% are most likely to take on work on weekends
- Gen Zers (32%) are the most likely to take on work at night



# Corporate Workers Findings

## Financial Health

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### **Corporate workers are taking on side gigs to supplement their incomes and pay for big purchases**

A quarter (24%) of corporate workers don't feel they can pay for all necessities with their full time income. More than a quarter (28%) of corporate workers have a part-time job or side gig in addition to their full time job.

- More men (33%) than women (25%) indicated they have a side gig
- More Gen Zers (44%) stated they have a part-time job or side gig compared to Millennials (32%), Gen Xers (15%) or Baby Boomers (15%)
- The majority (51%) of corporate workers who have a side gig use it to supplement their income and be to pay their bills, while 24% have one to help save for a large/significant purchase
- Nearly a third (32%) of corporate workers would consider leaving their full-time corporate job to work gig/freelance jobs as their main source of income

### **Many corporate workers are still living paycheck to paycheck and missing bill payments**

Nearly half (42%) of corporate workers are able to pay their bills, but are living paycheck to paycheck.

- Roughly a third of corporate workers have missed payments on their phone bill (34%), credit card bill (34%) or utility bill (32%) in the past year because they couldn't afford it
- More than two-thirds (68%) cut down on their regular spending budget in the last year
- Some have even gone so far as to forgo home repairs (45%), routine doctor's visits (40%), dental visits (41%), car repairs (40%), mental health support (31%), emergency health care visits (28%) and more because they feared the associated costs

While nearly all (92%) corporate workers said the cost of their bills have increased in the last six months, just 41% of workers have received a raise or cost of living increase at their full-time corporate job in the last six months.

Gen Zers (48%) are the most likely to have received a raise or cost of living increase in the last six months, compared to Millennials (42%), Gen Xers (39%) or Baby Boomers (38%), and men (45%) are more likely to have received a raise or increase than women (39%).

### **A potential recession is worrisome to most workers, with paying bills and job loss the biggest concerns**

Three in four (75%) workers worry about their financial health if a recession were to hit in the next year.

- 25% worry most about not being able to pay their essential bills
- 21% worry most about losing their job
- 19% worry most about not being able to pay their rent or mortgage
- Gen Zers (35%) are the most worried about losing their job if a recession were to happen in the next year, compared to Millennials (19%), Gen Xers (23%) or Baby Boomers (13%)

# Corporate Workers Findings

## Personal Lives & Health

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### Corporate workers are missing out on important life events due to work

More than a third (35%) of corporate workers have had to miss birthdays of families or close friends because of work, while:

- 31% have had to miss family vacations
- 29% have had to miss children's sports games, recitals, etc.
- 26% have had to miss weddings of family or close friends
- 26% have had to miss funerals or memorial services of family or close friends
- Gen Zers (41%) are the most likely to miss family vacations because of work, compared to Millennials (34%), Gen Xers (28%) or Baby Boomers (14%)

### Corporate workers feel their mental and physical health are negatively impacted by their job

A quarter (25%) of corporate workers think their job is negatively affecting both their physical and mental health, while 19% think it's negatively affecting just their mental health and 6% think its negatively affecting just their physical health.

- Women (28%) were more likely than men (20%) to say their job negatively affects both their mental and physical health
- Gen Zers (24%) were the most likely to say their job negatively affects their mental health
- Gen Xers (28%) were the most likely to say their job negatively affects both their mental and physical health

Of workers who said their job negatively impacts their mental or physical health, the top three things that would help improve their health are:

- Designated mental health days (76%)
- If their company hired more workers to lessen the workload (72%)
- More flexibility in their scheduled work hours (71%)
- For Gen Zers:
  - Better financial benefits (74%)
  - More flexibility (74%)
  - Better health benefits (76%)

# Corporate Workers Findings

## **Younger corporate workers are moving most, and often to more expensive locations, while other generations are looking for lower cost of living areas**

Nearly a third (29%) of corporate workers have moved in the last two years. Gen Zers (57%) are much more likely to have moved in that time.

- Nearly two in five (39%) corporate workers who moved in the last two years moved somewhere with a lower cost of living, while 37% moved somewhere with a similar cost of living to their old location and 24% moved somewhere with a higher cost of living
- Gen Zers (35%) are the most likely to have moved somewhere with a higher cost of living, while Baby Boomers (50%) are most likely to have moved somewhere with a lower cost of living
- The top reasons corporate workers moved were:
  - Needing a lower cost of living (31%)
  - Moving for a new job or role/new job of a spouse or partner (24%)
  - Needing more space for a growing family (23%)

## **Flexibility**

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### **Despite changing pandemic policies, most corporate workers are now required to be on site and work set hours**

Most corporate workers (61%) have set work hours, but they can be adjusted in special cases, while 25% have strict hours that cannot be adjusted, and 14% can work at any time/day as long as their work gets done.

- 54% of corporate workers must be in-office and on site for every workday/shift
- 19% can work remotely some days if they make a request in advance but are mainly on site
- 15% work fully remotely
- 12% work part-time on site and part-time remote
- Gen Zers (32%) are nearly twice as likely as Millennials (19%), Gen Xers (15%) or Baby Boomers (14%) to be able to work remotely some days if they make a request in advance, but are mainly on site

# Resources

## Survey Methodology

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This survey was designed to take a comprehensive look at how the current state of the economy is impacting workers with gig jobs versus corporate jobs. The survey was conducted in August 2022 via Pollfish, and was fielded to a total of 2,000 respondents aged 18+ in the United States who were currently working. The respondents were categorized into two groups: 1,000 who work in a corporate environment full-time as the main source of their income (referred to as "corporate workers" throughout) and 1,000 who work in one or more gig or temporary jobs as the main source of their income (referred to as "gig workers" throughout). This was a 21-question mobile survey for corporate workers and 24-question mobile survey for gig workers. The generation breakdowns for respondents were as follows: Gen Z: 18-25; Millennials: 26-41; Gen X: 42-57; Baby Boomers: 58-73.

## About Wonolo

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Wonolo is an on-demand job marketplace that has connected over one million workers ("Wonoloers") to retail, manufacturing, hospitality, and other types of hourly and flat-rate jobs posted by thousands of businesses across the United States. Wonolo is on a mission to make work flexible and fulfilling for everyone, while enabling businesses to efficiently fill local job opportunities. For more information, visit [www.wonolo.com](http://www.wonolo.com) or follow Wonolo on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).