

Executive Summary

Based on the current jobs available as well as projected job growth, a survey was designed to measure the experiences of downtown's low-wage service workers. The survey sought to understand the experiences of workers in several of the largest low-wage occupations in the downtown redevelopment area with respect to their wages, benefits, working conditions and other factors that influence their overall quality of life. Our targeted occupations were retail salespersons, janitors, combined food preparation and service workers, parking lot attendants, security guards, and hotel housekeeping workers. We chose these job categories because they are representative of current and future trends toward low-wage service sector employment in San Diego (See Figure 1) and they represent several of the largest low-wage occupations in the Centre City area. For the remainder of this report, "workers" shall refer to the workers in these surveyed occupations.

Findings

Left Behind found that the majority of downtown workers in these occupations are adults who are not in school. They are working long hours for wages below self-sufficiency levels, and many are uninsured. Affordable housing, transportation, health care and low wages are the primary challenges faced by low-paid service workers in San Diego.

Downtown's Working Poor: Adults and Families

- 59% of workers are either married, have children, or both.
- 84% of workers are not enrolled in college or school of any kind.
- Only 2% of workers are high school students.

Long Hours, Low Wages

- The median hourly wage is \$8.50 an hour.
- 65% work more than 40 hours a week.
- On average, workers have been employed at their current jobs for 3.24 years.
- 64% of workers do not have paid sick days, 58% do not have paid holidays, and 54% do not have paid vacation days.

High Rates of Uninsured

- 42% of workers do not have health insurance.
- 58% of workers have employers who offer health insurance, yet only 34% of workers are enrolled.
- Of those who are not enrolled in employer-offered plans, 58% said this is because the insurance is too expensive.
- The average individual monthly premium for those who are enrolled in employer plans is \$94.20.

Unaffordable Housing

- 76% of workers are renters, and only 14% are homeowners.
- The average contribution towards housing paid per month is approximately \$651.29, or 49% of gross monthly income.

Common Commutes

- 90% of workers do not live downtown.
- 84% live in the City of San Diego.
- Over 58% of workers do not live downtown because it is too expensive.
- 42% of workers rely on public transportation, and 45% commute to work by car.