



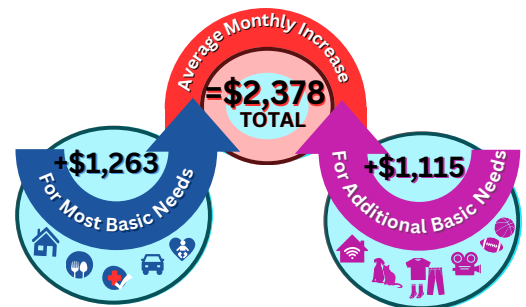
Worker Well-Being Is Community Well-Being

Why the Human Service Workforce Needs a Living Wage

Illinois Partners for Human Service conducted a survey to ascertain whether wages for community-based, full-time, frontline human service workers adequately support their basic needs and ability to thrive.

Key Findings:

- **82% of all survey respondents self-report not making a living wage.**
- The highest percentages of non-living wage earners based on any single characteristic (outside of household demographics) is level of education.
- The most common characteristics of individuals most likely to earn a living wage were for a White man, age 18-24, with a professional degree, working as a counselor or social worker.
- The most common characteristics of individuals least likely to earn a living wage were for a Black woman, age 25-44, with a High School Diploma or GED, some college/trade/technical/vocational/associate's degree working as a direct service professional, advocate or case worker.
- 92% of workers in single income households with children, the majority of which are women, do not earn a living wage.
- The supplemental income required to fully cover the cost of all basic needs is an average monthly increase of \$2,378.



Recommendations for Employers:

- **Increase paid time off** and flexible working week models whenever possible;
- **Enact pay transparency and policies that foster pay equity across racial, gender, and ability status;**
- **Offer clear career pathways**, including advancement opportunities, schedules and expectations for promotions, and professional development resources;
- **Participate in advocacy efforts to elevate the health and human services workforce.**

Recommendations for Government:

- **Raise reimbursement rates and increase state contracts;**
- **Address student loan burdens and enact measures to alleviate debt;** allocate full funding for Human Services Professional Loan Repayment Program Act Appropriations [HB4601/SB3082](#);
- **Ease administrative burden on Black and Brown-led, and smaller community-based health and human services organizations** by improving processes of state grant-making agencies and implementing legislation like the Community Partner Fair Contracting Act [HB5064/SB3457](#);
- **Enact/Expand Child Tax Credit Laws** at the State ([SB3329/HB4917](#)) and Federal levels;
- **Commit to understanding and eliminating the unique pay disparities in the human services sector by enacting [HB4912](#), The Human Services Equitable Pay Act.**

[See full report](#) for a more detailed accounting of key findings and complete list of recommendations

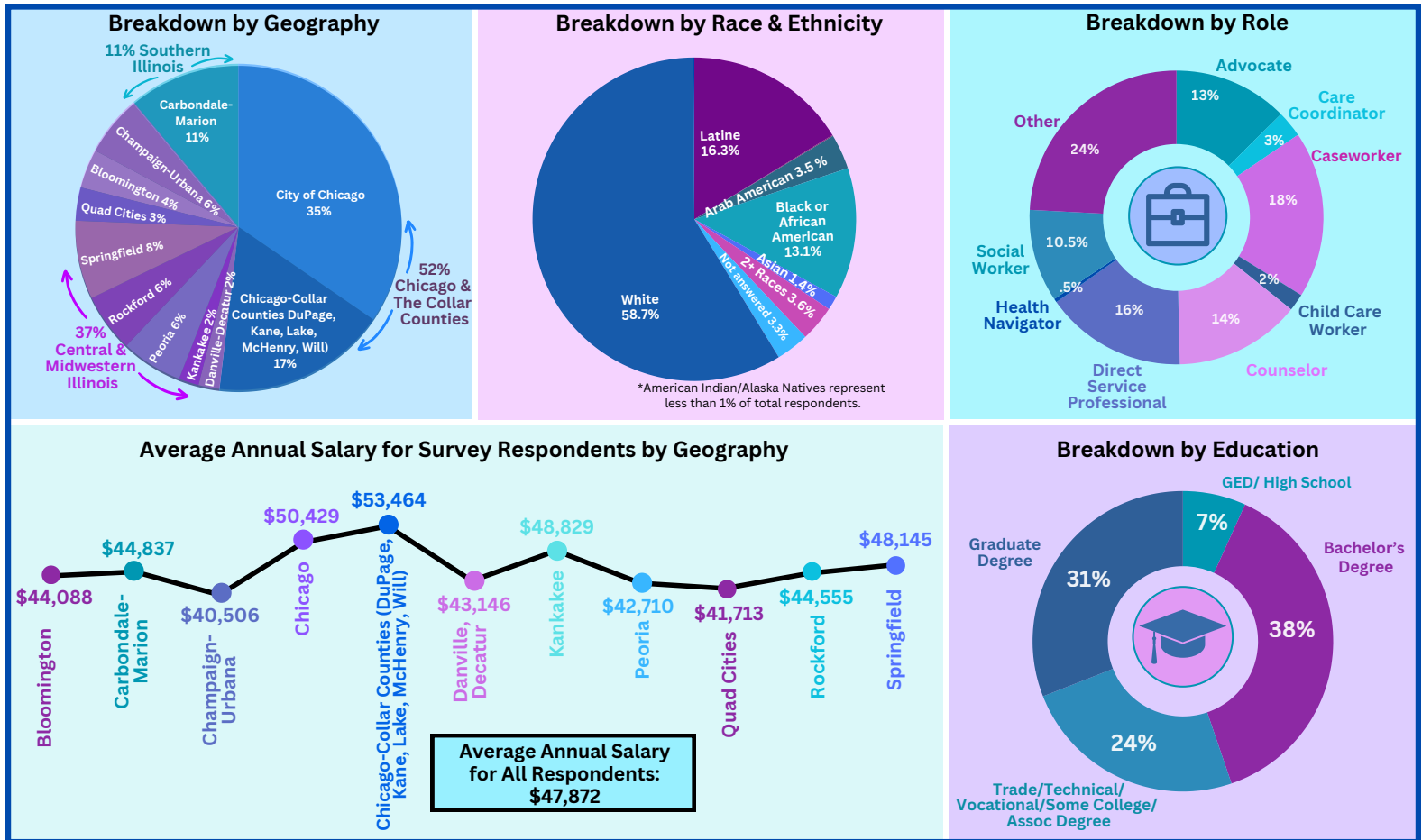


About Our Survey Respondents...



More than 850 full-time frontline human service workers responded with salary and personal information. The following is an overall breakdown of all survey respondent profiles.

See [full report](#) for further details and more comprehensive data.



Centering Workers' Voices

"I decide [which bill to pay] by who won't turn us off this month."

"I've worked in a fast paced, money chasing, go getting environment and it burned me out, mentally and physically. I never loved it, and it never loved me back. And this job, I knew I loved it from the first day, and I feel the love every day. I choose to stay because I must."

"We deserve a decent life."

"Because of the clients. Always because of the clients and the help that I feel I give them. That's the only rewarding thing."

"I wish people viewed my profession with the same heroic reverence we reserve for firemen, first responders, or servicemen."

"We risk being homeless or being without food or transportation. We are only a paycheck away from being in the population that I serve on a daily basis."

"We take on working extra hours for little to no pay to make sure that we are supporting our community."

STATE POLICIES, FUNDING & RESOURCES

RECRUIT & RETAIN EMPLOYEES

Career advancement opportunities and educational pathways

Tuition reimbursement and loan forgiveness

SUPPORT & STABILIZE EMPLOYERS

Increased reimbursement rates and flexible state contracts

Reduced administrative burden in grant application and reporting processes

BUILDING A STRONG HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES WORKFORCE

Pay equity across gender, race, and ability status

Transparent policies regarding salary and promotions

Equitable pay for all types of human service provision

Funding that keeps pace with the cost of doing business

Expanded eligibility for public benefits

Competitive wages that reflect and ensure a true living wage

Licensing and credentialing reforms

State conducted assessment of pay disparities

Collaborative efforts to build and enhance employee well-being

Work/life balance, mental health support, paid leave

IMPACT:

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Commitment to promote the value of community-based human services

Efficient contract and grant systems with timely payments

