



**FREEDMAN**  
SEATING COMPANY

# **NO SEAT AT THE TABLE**

**Low Wages, Health and Safety  
Hazards, and Limited Worker  
Voice at Freedman Seating**

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**OCTOBER 2026**

## AUTHORSHIP AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Jobs to Move America (JMA)** is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that uses research, advocacy, and community organizing to transform public spending and corporate behavior. JMA and its coalition partners work with policymakers and communities across the country to ensure that government investments in manufacturing create good, clean jobs and contribute to healthy communities.

JMA's research combines rigorous academic standards with on-the-ground fieldwork conducted in partnership with workers and communities. As part of this work, JMA conducts worker and community surveys to better understand conditions in and around factories operated by companies that receive significant public subsidies and contracts.

This report was authored by Marcos Feldman, with HeeWon Brindle-Khym serving as editor. JMA's Midwest Team, Kassie Beyer, Andre Steele, and Ross Floyd, provided field expertise and support throughout the research and development of the report.

JMA would like to thank the research team at the **Center for Urban Economic Development (CUED) at the University of Illinois Chicago** for their partnership and expert analysis of the worker survey data, including the comparative wage analysis drawing on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Any errors or omissions are the author's own.

JMA also thanks the members of the **Good Work Coalition**, a coalition of community, workforce, and labor groups and rank-and-file workers rooted in the West Side of Chicago, for their knowledge, guidance, and partnership throughout this work. This research would not have been possible without the coalition partners and workers who helped distribute the survey, and especially the workers who shared their experiences with us. Workers' rights to discuss workplace conditions and act together around workplace concerns are protected under Sections 7 and 8(a)(1) of the National Labor Relations Act.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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|                                                          |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Executive Summary .....</b>                           | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Introduction .....</b>                                | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Findings .....</b>                                    | <b>6</b>  |
| Low Wages and Limited Wage Growth .....                  | 6         |
| Limited Opportunities for Advancement and Training ..... | 9         |
| Health and Safety Hazards.....                           | 10        |
| Workers Report Barriers to Speaking Up .....             | 11        |
| <b>Public Dollars, Public Responsibility.....</b>        | <b>12</b> |
| State and Local Subsidies .....                          | 12        |
| Public Contracts.....                                    | 12        |
| <b>Conclusion .....</b>                                  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Endnotes .....</b>                                    | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Methodological Appendix.....</b>                      | <b>16</b> |
| Survey Methodology.....                                  | 16        |
| Data Analysis.....                                       | 16        |
| Survey Sample Characteristics.....                       | 18        |
| Selected Survey Results .....                            | 19        |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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As a major transportation seating manufacturer that serves public sector customers and has benefited from public tax incentives and financing, Chicago-based Freedman Seating, now owned by Lippert Components, has a particular responsibility to provide jobs that deliver meaningful economic opportunity to workers and the surrounding community. For some of its major customers such as the Chicago Transit Authority, transit procurement can be a tool through which contracts “benefit disadvantaged workers and economically disadvantaged communities.”<sup>1</sup>

Jobs to Move America (JMA) investigated working conditions at Freedman Seating’s manufacturing facility on Chicago’s West Side, a largely Black and Latinx community impacted by historic disinvestment and poverty. Through a survey of 116 hourly manufacturing workers and with data analysis from the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago, our research found the following problems at Freedman:

- **Low wages:** The median hourly wage for survey respondents was \$19.45. The median hourly wage for surveyed assemblers (\$18.85) is closer to the city’s minimum wage of \$17.05 than to the Chicago Metro Area median of \$20.99 for assembler occupations.
- **Household precarity:** Roughly three-quarters of respondents reported struggling to pay for utilities (77%), food (74%), or housing (71%) at least sometimes over the past year; and 62% reported difficulty paying medical expenses at least sometimes.
- **Health and safety hazards:** 81% reported noticing one or more workplace hazards in the preceding 12 months. The most frequently cited hazards were a leaky roof (68%), excessive heat inside the factory (52%), rodents or pests (52%), poor ventilation (50%), slippery floors (41%), and lack of dust or fume extraction (39%).
- **Limited growth opportunities:** 40% disagreed that their chances for promotion and advancement are high and 42% disagreed that performance evaluations are done fairly.
- **Barriers to speaking up:** 40% reported raising a concern with management about their working conditions. Of these, nearly 70% reported that management took no action to resolve their concern, and multiple workers reported that after raising a concern, management increased monitoring of their work, increased their workload, or assigned more hazardous work – to name the most commonly cited management responses.
- **One-third of surveyed workers disagreed that they could speak up without fear of retaliation, while at least one-quarter indicated they did not feel comfortable informing a supervisor or manager about unsafe working conditions.**

These findings raise important questions about whether jobs supported by public contracts are meeting the standards Chicago workers and communities should expect. Addressing the issues raised by this research – higher wages, real opportunities for growth and advancement, healthier and safer conditions, and a meaningful voice on the job – could also support productivity and help Freedman recruit and retain the skilled, experienced employees it needs to succeed.



Exterior of the Freedman Seating Company manufacturing facility in Chicago.

Credit: Marcos Feldman

## INTRODUCTION

The bus or train seat you ride on may have been made on the West Side of Chicago in a community that has experienced decades of economic disinvestment and manufacturing job loss. This has been a point of pride for the Freedman Seating Company and many Chicagoans familiar with the factory. A local, multigenerational family company, Freedman expanded even as the city and region were shedding manufacturing jobs. But preserving manufacturing jobs is not enough. The quality of those jobs matters.

Manufacturing jobs were once widely associated with stable, family-sustaining careers. But research shows that the wage premium associated with manufacturing has eroded in recent decades,<sup>2</sup> with workers of color particularly affected by declining job quality.<sup>3</sup>

It is in this context that Jobs to Move America (JMA) investigated working conditions at Freedman Seating, a company that benefits from public contracts, has received state and local tax incentives and other forms of public support, and was acquired by Lippert Components, a subsidiary of LCI Industries, in April 2025.<sup>4</sup>

Freedman has built much of its business serving the public sector, where public purchasing is intended not only to procure goods but also to support good jobs and economic opportunity. For major customers such as the Chicago Transit Authority, transit procurement can be a tool through which contracts “benefit disadvantaged workers and economically disadvantaged communities.”<sup>5</sup>



If people got paid what they need to get by, it'd be a whole different company. People would be happy to show up and about half of all the problems would be done overnight. Productivity would improve and our products would be better. People are so unhappy that they just leave. We can't keep up with the work and that means we're going to be late on delivering for contracts. It's bad.

– Oliver

## FINDINGS

JMA conducted 116 surveys between October 2025 and June 2026 and follow-up interviews with hourly manufacturing workers at Freedman Seating Company in Chicago. Respondents were recruited primarily through QR code leaflets distributed outside of the facility with some additional surveys collected through worker referrals. Respondents were offered a \$25 electronic gift card for completing the survey. The survey questions covered wages and hours, training and professional development, worker voice, and health and safety. The survey was offered in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

JMA partnered with researchers at the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois Chicago to analyze the worker survey data and develop a comparative wage analysis drawing on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Survey respondents were largely Latinx (42%) and African American (40%), with a smaller share identifying as White (11%) and a handful of respondents identifying as Native American, Asian, or another background. Of the surveys, 16.4% were completed in Spanish; the rest in English. The sample is predominantly male (83%) and the average age is about 44, with a large majority over 40 (61.2%). Nearly three-quarters of respondents work the first shift (72%), with the remaining 28% on the second shift.

More detailed methodology, demographic, and sample characteristics are provided in the methodological appendix. To protect confidentiality, all participants quoted in this report are identified by pseudonyms.

### Low Wages and Limited Wage Growth

Surveyed Freedman workers reported wages below regional standards for comparable manufacturing occupations. The median hourly wage among survey respondents was \$19.45. The median wages for the two most commonly reported job titles representing 44% of surveyed workers, welders and assemblers, were \$22.00 and \$18.85, respectively. Each was substantially below the median wage for comparable manufacturing occupations in the Chicago metro area, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

**Table 1: Median Hourly Wages for Freedman Seating Survey Respondents Compared with Chicago-Area Occupational Wages**

|                                                                                                          | Freedman<br>Median<br>Hourly Wage | BLS Chicago-<br>Area Median<br>Hourly Wage | Hourly<br>Wage<br>Gap | Percent<br>Below<br>BLS<br>Median |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>All survey respondents</b><br>BLS comparison <sup>6</sup> :<br>Production<br>Occupations<br>(51-0000) | \$19.45 <sup>i</sup>              | \$22.57                                    | \$3.12                | 13.8%                             |
| <b>Welders</b><br>BLS comparison:<br>Welders, Cutters,<br>Solderers, and<br>Brazers (51-4121)            | \$22.00 <sup>ii</sup>             | \$25.31                                    | \$3.31                | 13.1%                             |
| <b>Assemblers</b><br>BLS comparison:<br>Miscellaneous<br>Assemblers<br>and Fabricators<br>(51-2090)      | \$18.85 <sup>iii</sup>            | \$20.99                                    | \$2.14                | 10.2%                             |

<sup>i</sup> Based on 115 hourly manufacturing workers at Freedman Seating surveyed from October 2025 to June 2026. One respondent who did not report an hourly wage was excluded.

<sup>ii</sup> Based on 25 respondents who identified as welders and reported an hourly wage.

<sup>iii</sup> Based on 25 respondents who identified as assemblers and reported an hourly wage.

In May 2025, the BLS median wage for Chicago-area welders was \$25.31, compared with \$22 among Freedman welders surveyed between October 2025 and June 2026, a gap of \$3.31, or 13.1%. Assemblers surveyed at Freedman earned a median of \$18.85,<sup>7</sup> 10.2% less than the Chicago-area BLS median of \$20.99. Across all respondents, the median Freedman wage of \$19.45 was 13.8% below the BLS median of \$22.57 for production occupations.

Survey results also suggest limited wage progression over time. Workers with one to two years at the company reported a median wage of \$18.45, while workers with two to five years earned \$19.30; the median for five to ten years of tenure was \$19.77; workers with 10 to 15 years of tenure earned \$21.50; and those with 15 or more years reported a median of \$20.

Better pay was a frequently volunteered recommendation for improving the job. Respondents commented on the demands of the job and the difficulty of keeping up with the cost of living. Some also expressed frustration at the lack of professional growth.

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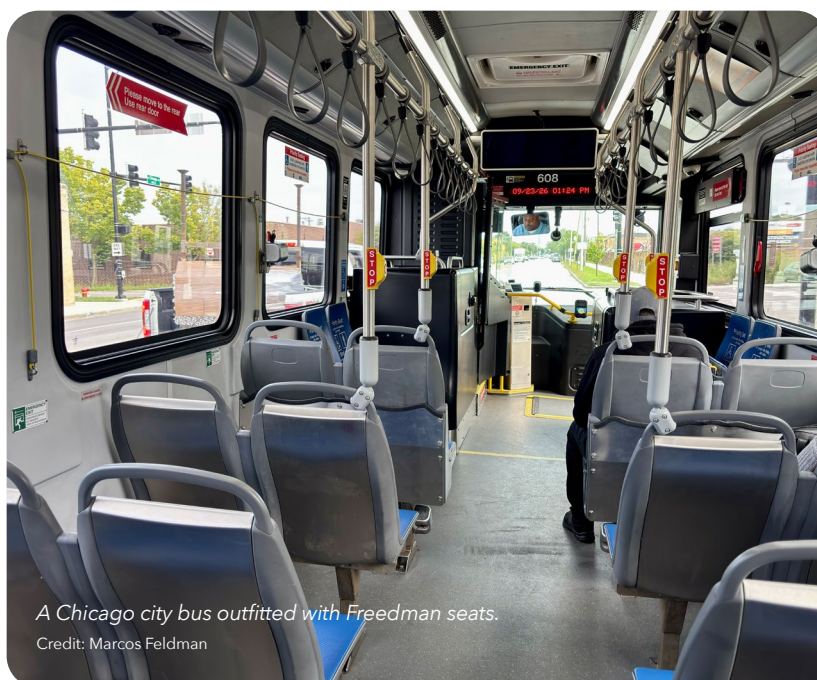
This is not minimum wage work even though that's basically what we get paid. It's hard on the body - heavy lifting, being stooped over for hours, your hands going numb from using power tools, it's detailed, tedious work.

– Oliver

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I'm looking for another job but it's hard because of my background. Lots of guys are like that in here. You feel trapped. No matter if you paid society back, you did your time, but when you go apply for a job it's, "you're over-qualified", "you're under-qualified", always something. But here they hire [guys like me], they get some kind of tax refund. So you're stuck and they can pay you whatever they want.

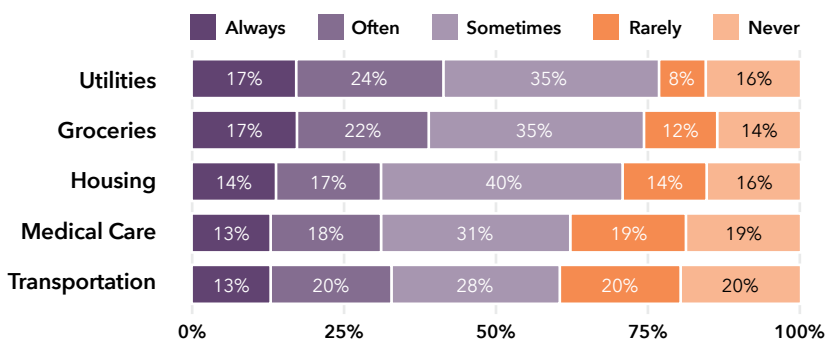
– Peter



Alongside low wages, respondents reported substantial household financial precarity. Roughly three-quarters of respondents reported struggling to pay for utilities (77%), food (74%), or housing (71%) at least sometimes over the past year; 62% reported difficulty paying medical costs (Figure 1).

Peter, an interview respondent, noted the toll that low wages take on his family: "I barely get by on what they pay me. It's affecting my marriage. I have to do jobs on the side... We should be able to do more than barely survive working full time making seats for the government."

**Figure 1: Frequency of Struggle to Pay Monthly Expenses in the Previous 12 Months**

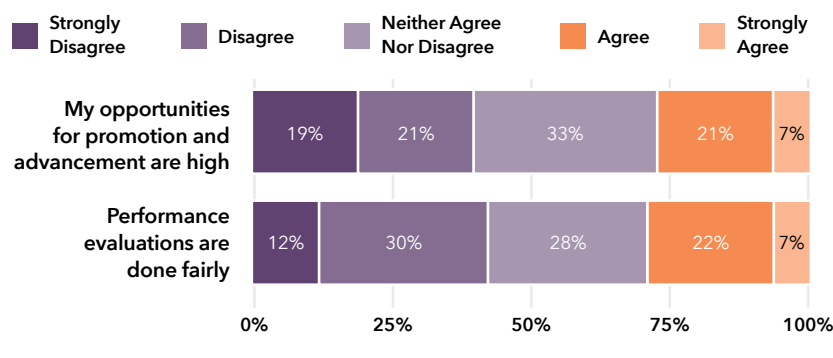


\* Struggled = delayed paying or not able to pay a bill or expense.

## Limited Opportunities for Advancement and Training

Working at Freedman could provide a pathway into a manufacturing career. But survey results suggest that many workers see limited opportunities for advancement within the company.

**Figure 2: Worker Views of Promotion Opportunities and Performance Evaluation Fairness**



Many respondents reported limited opportunities for promotions and advancement. Only 28% agreed that their chances for advancement were high, while 40% disagreed. Just 29% agreed that performance evaluations were conducted fairly, compared with 42% who disagreed. In open-ended responses, workers frequently described perceived favoritism and subjectivity in the evaluation and promotion process.

Most respondents entered Freedman without a formal training pipeline: 76% reported that they were not hired through a workforce training pipeline. The training they reported receiving on the job was more commonly compliance-oriented than focused on advancement. While 59% reported receiving health and safety training and 68% reported receiving sexual harassment training, only 24% reported receiving training to advance into a new job or role and 32% reported receiving training to acquire new skills.

Opportunities for advancement may be particularly important for Freedman workers because many respondents reported barriers to obtaining other good-paying jobs. When asked what barriers make it hard to get or keep a good-paying job, the top answers were a criminal justice background (25%), lack of a degree or credential (24%), lack of reliable transportation (19%), and racial discrimination (14.7%).

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I've been trying to move up and get a better job, but they say I can't take the test because there's no openings. But then they're hiring people from outside for the job I want. I asked one of the new guys who got the job I wanted and he didn't have any experience. So why am I being overlooked? Doesn't it matter that I've been committed to the company all this time?

— James



Everyone's just wet with sweat all day. There aren't any additional breaks, but if someone's overwhelmed and about to pass out, the supervisors will let them go to the cafeteria for AC for a 10 minute break, but then they have to catch up. The heat - 8 hours in that - it take[s] a real toll, it's exhausting. I get home and just need to sit in front of the AC to recover.

– Oliver



The dust and fumes are really bad. And it's so hot that people can't really wear the masks they give us. I worry that we're all going to be really sick later on - breathing problems, cancer - because of all this stuff in the air.

– James

## Health and Safety Hazards

Seat manufacturing involves a range of potential health and safety hazards. At Freedman, 94 respondents (81%) reported experiencing one or more of the workplace hazards listed below in the previous 12 months. The most frequently reported concerns involved facility conditions, heat, air quality and ventilation, and material-moving operations.

**Table 2: Full List of Health and Safety Hazards Noticed by Respondents in the Previous 12 Months**

| Reported Health / Safety Hazard                   | N  | Percent |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|---------|
| Leaky roof                                        | 79 | 68.1%   |
| Too hot inside the factory                        | 60 | 51.7%   |
| Rodents / pests                                   | 60 | 51.7%   |
| Poor ventilation                                  | 58 | 50.0%   |
| Slippery floor                                    | 48 | 41.4%   |
| Lack of extraction of dust or fumes               | 45 | 38.8%   |
| Obstructed pathways                               | 35 | 30.2%   |
| Unsafe forklift driving                           | 35 | 30.2%   |
| Dirty or unhygienic employee break areas          | 29 | 25.0%   |
| Using outdated or faulty equipment                | 28 | 24.1%   |
| Unsafe operations due to lack of training         | 14 | 12.1%   |
| Other: "Old broken pallet jacks not enough carts" | 1  |         |

\* Multiple responses allowed

Facility conditions were among the most frequently reported concerns. Among respondents, 68% reported a leaky roof, 52% excessive heat inside the factory, 52% rodents or pests, and 41% slippery floors. Several workers also described water entering work areas during rain, raising concerns about slips and electrical equipment. One welder described the water problem this way: "water consuming the floor when it [is] raining creating a serious[ly] dangerous environment."

Air quality was another frequently reported concern. Although 94% of respondents said Freedman provides sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE), 50% cited poor ventilation, 39%

reported lack of dust or fume extraction, and 43% reported experiencing exposure to hazardous fumes, vapors, or dust during the previous year.

Air contaminants produced during metalworking, including during the welding, grinding, and polishing of metal seat parts, can pose serious respiratory hazards if not properly controlled. Depending on the substances involved, exposure can contribute to respiratory illness and other serious health effects.<sup>8</sup> The air quality concerns raised by surveyed workers are notable in light of a prior OSHA citation at Freedman involving chromium hazards. A July 2019 complaint-based inspection of the facility resulted in two serious citations and \$7,000 in penalties. OSHA found that a welder was “exposed to chromium” and that “the employer did not train employees on the hazards associated with chromium.”<sup>9</sup>

In 2025 and 2026, multiple welders, polishers, and other Freedman workers spoke at length with researchers about their concerns with air quality and ventilation related to welding and polishing, noting how different issues interact to exacerbate health hazards. Some workers pointed out that the lack of air conditioning in the summer makes it difficult to use available PPE. Yet, as Peter noted, the inadequate ventilation and fume extraction means “You turn on the fan and it’s blowing heat and dirty air at you.”

Other hazards mentioned by respondents included obstructed pathways (30%), unsafe forklift driving (30%), using outdated or faulty equipment (24%), and unsafe operations due to lack of training (12%). Open-ended responses described obstructed pathways, unsafe material moving, and worn equipment.

## Workers Report Barriers to Speaking Up

Of the surveyed workers, 46 (40%) reported raising a concern with a supervisor about working conditions during the previous 12 months. The most common concerns raised involved unsafe working conditions and low pay. Among workers who raised concerns, nearly 70% reported that management took no action to resolve their concern, and multiple workers reported that management took other actions as a result of their raising a concern, including increased monitoring of their work, increased workload, or assignment to more hazardous work.<sup>10</sup>

These findings are consistent with broader concerns about worker voice. One-third of surveyed workers disagreed that they could speak up without fear of retaliation, while at least one-quarter



We have too much stuff in the way on the floor – pallets, boxes, metal, random stuff. Someone in my department mentions it almost every meeting, but nothing happens. People trip or have to lift awkwardly because there’s stuff in the way of the materials we need. There’s no space. Toward the end of the shift everyone is stretching trying to feel better from lifting heavy stuff at weird angles. We’re all just destroying our backs just because they won’t move some pallets.

– James



Worn out tools that can’t keep up with [the] quota that is being requested. Superiors don’t listen to concerns we voice to avoid complications ahead of time.

– Polisher

//

Properly maintained welding machines, currently many are held together with many, many layers of electrical tape.

– Welder

//

Management just doesn't listen. And it really bothers me that I'm not taken seriously.

– Oliver

indicated they did not feel comfortable informing a supervisor or manager about unsafe working conditions. Open-ended responses repeatedly described frustration with what workers perceived as a lack of meaningful management action.

## PUBLIC DOLLARS, PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

As a major Chicago manufacturer that serves public-sector customers and has benefited from taxpayer-supported incentives and financing, Freedman has a particular responsibility to provide jobs that deliver meaningful economic opportunity to workers and the surrounding community.

Over several decades, Freedman Seating has benefited from state and local tax incentives, publicly supported industrial financing, and substantial business generated through public-sector transit contracts.

### State and Local Subsidies

Freedman's factory properties on the West Side of Chicago have received reduced property tax assessments under Cook County's Class 6(b) incentive program.<sup>11</sup> The incentive was most recently renewed by Cook County in November 2024, when the county found the relief necessary for the company to continue operating at its current location,<sup>12</sup> just months before Freedman Seating's business was acquired by Lippert Components in April 2025. Freedman has also received industrial revenue bond financing through the Illinois Finance Authority,<sup>13</sup> including up to \$10 million authorized in 2014.<sup>14</sup>

More recently, Illinois approved Freedman in November 2024 for state income tax credits estimated at \$4.01 million, tied to the creation of 50 new full-time jobs and the retention of 676 jobs.<sup>15,16</sup> The Chicago Development Fund also provided an \$11 million New Market Tax Credit allocation to fund the company's expansion through property acquisition and upgrades to existing facilities and machinery.<sup>17</sup>

### Public Contracts

Public-sector transportation agencies are also significant customers for Freedman Seating products. Freedman was the seating supplier for Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) 2021 contract with Nova Bus, valued at up to \$334 million for an initial order of 100 buses with options

for up to 500 additional buses.<sup>18</sup> Freedman has also contracted directly with CTA, including a 2018 contract worth \$737,400 for 20,000 non-fabric seat inserts,<sup>19</sup> and supplies seating to other public agencies across the country. The company is a seat supplier under contracts with the states of New York<sup>20</sup> and Maine<sup>21</sup> and the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System,<sup>22</sup> among other government customers.

## CONCLUSION

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The survey findings point to persistent concerns about job quality at Freedman. Surveyed workers reported wages below the regional occupational benchmarks and limited opportunities for advancement while many also described difficulty meeting basic household expenses. Workers reported widespread health and safety concerns, including problems with facility conditions such as heat, ventilation, and dust or fumes, as well as barriers to raising concerns with management.

The recent change in ownership adds another dimension to these findings. Lippert Components, a subsidiary of LCI Industries, acquired Freedman Seating's business in April 2025, approximately six months before JMA began surveying workers. Freedman is no longer the local, multigenerational company it once was; it is now part of a much larger corporate organization. As Lippert integrates the business, the transition should be judged not only by whether jobs are retained or production grows, but by whether working conditions improve. The concerns identified in this report regarding wages, opportunities for advancement and training, health and safety, and workers' ability to raise concerns, provide clear measures for assessing that progress.

Freedman's longstanding relationship with public agencies and public financing makes the quality of these jobs a matter of public concern. Public investment in manufacturing should support not only the preservation and growth of jobs but also improvements in job quality, including economic security, opportunities for advancement, safe and healthy working conditions, and a meaningful voice on the job. As Freedman enters this new phase under Lippert, continued public support should be tied to clear, measurable, enforceable commitments to improve job quality with meaningful opportunities for workers and the surrounding community to shape and evaluate those commitments. The findings in this report raise important questions about whether the jobs supported by that public investment are meeting the standards Chicago workers and communities should expect.



I do take a lot of pride in what I do at work. When I get on the bus, being able to say “I know how to disassemble this and put it back together, how to weld the legs” just everything. It can also be bad because I’ll see defects and it bothers me because I know the company could be better. It’s an interesting conversation to have when people talk to me on the bus and ask what I do-- what you’re sitting on! I made those! And there is pride in that, to make something useful.

– Oliver

## ENDNOTES

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- 2 Federal Reserve Board Working Papers, "Are Manufacturing Jobs Still Good Jobs? An Exploration of the Manufacturing Wage Premium," March 2022, revised September 2024.
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- 5 Chicago Transit Authority, Procurement Policy and Procedures, updated May 7, 2026, p. 10, [https://www.transitchicago.com/assets/1/28/CTA\\_Procurement\\_Policies\\_and\\_Procedures.pdf](https://www.transitchicago.com/assets/1/28/CTA_Procurement_Policies_and_Procedures.pdf).
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- 10 Two workers reported being given a less favorable schedule; one worker reported reduced hours; another reported reduced pay and being threatened with termination; and another respondent reported being, "threatened to give me a bad review."
- 11 City of Chicago, "Resolution: Support of Class 6(b) Tax Incentive for Property at 4545 W. Augusta Blvd.," January 17, 2023, <https://ocprodstorageev1.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/lsmatterattachmentspublic/e12570c1-47c5-49a3-a723-f2a70c57637b.pdf>; Cook County Board of Commissioners, Legislation File No. 24-5660, "Freedman Seating Company Class 6b Sustainable Emergency Relief (SER)."
- 12 Cook County Board of Commissioners, Legislation File #24-5660, "Freedman Seating Company Class 6b Sustainable Emergency Relief (SER)," <https://cook-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6897645&GUID=235F1D94-1E77-4DCA-ABD2-A1FD2F9CE5F4&Options=&Search=&FullText=1>.

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- 14 Illinois Finance Authority, Public Board Book, meeting minutes, September 22, 2014, Item 1, "Industrial Revenue Bonds for Freedman Seating Company," [https://www.il-fa.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Public-Board-Book-09-22-14-v1\\_0.pdf](https://www.il-fa.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Public-Board-Book-09-22-14-v1_0.pdf).
- 15 Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, EDGE Incentive Agreements, accessed August 25, 2026, "Freedman Seating IL EDGE Act Tax Credit Agreement," November 25, 2024, <https://dceo.illinois.gov/expandrelocate/incentives/edgeagreements.html>.
- 16 The company may not yet have claimed these credits if it has not fulfilled the job creation and retention commitments under the EDGE program. As of year-end 2024, the only progress report available to date stated it had hired six FTEs (Illinois DCEO, Progress Reports for 2024: Freedman Seating Company), [https://dceoapps.ildceo.net/ilcorpacct/corpacct/output/2024/2024-Freedman\\_S-Chicago\\_8691.pdf](https://dceoapps.ildceo.net/ilcorpacct/corpacct/output/2024/2024-Freedman_S-Chicago_8691.pdf).
- 17 Chicago Development Fund, "Featured Projects: Freedman Seating Company," accessed August 30, 2026, <https://chicagodevelopmentfund.org/portfolio-item/freedman-seating-company/>; New Markets Tax Credit Coalition, "Projects: Freedman Seating Company," accessed August 30, 2026, <https://nmtccoalition.org/project/freedman-seating-company/>; Block Club Chicago, "West Side Manufacturer Announces \$4 Million Investment To Spur Growth, Add 50 Jobs," February 7, 2025, <https://blockclubchicago.org/2025/02/07/illinois-invests-4-million-in-west-side-seat-manufacturer-preserving-nearly-700-jobs/>.
- 18 Chicago Transit Authority, "Board Approves Nova Bus Contract," press release, February 10, 2021, <https://www.transitchicago.com/chicago-transit-board-approves-contract-to-purchase-new-clean-diesel-buses/>; Chicago Transit Authority, Contract Search Results, Contract #C20FT102342998, [https://vcsearch.transitchicago.com/contractPaymentDetail.php?CONTRACT\\_NUMBER=C20FT102342998](https://vcsearch.transitchicago.com/contractPaymentDetail.php?CONTRACT_NUMBER=C20FT102342998).
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- 22 San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, "Approval of Purchase Agreement for Class E Cutaway Vehicles," June 26, 2025, <https://www.sdmts.com/sites/default/files/2025-06-26-final-packet.pdf>.

# METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

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## Survey Methodology

JMA conducted 116 surveys between October 2025 and June 2026 and three follow-up interviews with hourly manufacturing workers employed at Freedman Seating Company in Chicago. The survey was administered online through the Alchemer platform and respondents were recruited primarily through QR code leaflets distributed outside the facility, with some additional surveys collected through worker referrals. Respondents were offered a \$25 electronic gift card for completing the survey. Twenty surveys were collected through paid referrals, for which workers were offered a \$10 referral incentive.

The survey instrument consisted of up to 64 questions, with fewer questions presented to individual respondents depending on their responses and applicable skip patterns. Survey questions covered wages and hours, training and professional development, worker voice and experiences raising concerns with supervisors, household economic conditions, and health and safety, among other areas of inquiry. The survey was offered in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

JMA partnered with researchers at the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois Chicago to analyze the worker survey data and develop a comparative wage analysis drawing on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Survey respondents were recruited through field outreach and worker referrals rather than random sampling. The findings should therefore be understood as describing the experiences of participating workers.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with workers to provide additional context on issues identified through the survey. Quotes included in the report are drawn either from these in-depth interviews or from responses to open-ended survey questions. Interview participants are identified by pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

## Data Analysis

JMA partnered with researchers at the Center for Urban Economic Development (CUED) at the University of Illinois Chicago to analyze the worker survey data and develop a comparative wage analysis drawing on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

CUED conducted code-based analysis using the R statistical software package. Where JMA had already recoded survey variables, CUED used those recoded variables in its analysis, including job classifications, wages, and criminal justice-related measures. Open-ended survey responses and reported job titles were also coded into categories for analysis. Similar job titles were grouped into broader occupational categories where appropriate, and job titles represented by very small numbers of respondents were combined or redacted where necessary to protect confidentiality.

For relevant survey questions, CUED created frequency tables reporting both the number and percentage of respondents in each response category. Some questions have different numbers of respondents because certain questions were contingent on responses to earlier questions and because “don’t know” responses and refusals were excluded from the final tables. The survey’s race and ethnicity question allowed respondents to select multiple categories; the four respondents who selected more than one racial or ethnic category were classified as “Multiple Selections.” CUED’s analysis also included results disaggregated by respondents’ self-identified race and ethnicity for selected questions.

Open-ended responses were reviewed and coded into categories to identify recurring themes across respondents. This coding was used to analyze questions in which workers described workplace conditions, concerns, or recommendations in their own words. Coded open-ended responses were considered alongside the quantitative survey results to provide additional context for findings related to wages, advancement, health and safety, and worker voice.

CUED also conducted a basic wage analysis examining reported hourly wages across demographic and employment characteristics. One respondent who reported an hourly wage of \$0.00 was excluded from the wage analysis. Reported job titles were coded and grouped into broader occupational categories where appropriate. For example, the machine operator category includes robot, brake press, and other types of machine operators, while the Lead category combines leads from different roles based on their common position as more advanced hourly production workers within a department.

To provide a regional benchmark, reported wages were compared with May 2025 Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics data for the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin metropolitan area. The analysis compares Freedman welders with BLS Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers (51-4121); assemblers with Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators (51-2090); and the overall Freedman survey sample with Production Occupations (51-0000). BLS occupational wage estimates are not specific to the manufacturing industry, although manufacturing accounts for the largest share of national employment in each of the occupational categories used for comparison.

In addition to the occupational wage comparison, the analysis examined wages by years employed at Freedman and summarized survey results across the major areas examined in the report, including household economic conditions; training and opportunities for advancement; health and safety conditions; and workers’ experiences raising concerns with supervisors or management.

## Survey Sample Characteristics

| Respondent Demographic Information |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Race/Ethnicity                     |              |
| White                              | 11.2% (n=13) |
| Black or African American          | 39.7% (n=46) |
| Hispanic / Latino                  | 42.2% (n=49) |
| Native American                    | 0.9% (n=1)   |
| Asian or Asian-American            | 0.9% (n=1)   |
| Multiple Selections                | 3.4% (n=4)   |
| Other                              | 1.7% (n=2)   |
| Age Group                          |              |
| Under 30                           | 16.4% (n=19) |
| 30 to 39                           | 22.4% (n=26) |
| 40 to 49                           | 24.1% (n=28) |
| 50 to 59                           | 19% (n=22)   |
| 60 or over                         | 18.1% (n=21) |
| Gender                             |              |
| Male                               | 82.8% (n=96) |
| Female                             | 17.2% (n=20) |

| Respondent Job Characteristics |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Job Type                       |               |
| Welder                         | 22.4% (n=26)  |
| Assembler                      | 21.6% (n=25)  |
| Other                          | 56% (n=65)    |
| Job Tenure                     |               |
| Less than 1 year               | 7.8% (n=9)    |
| 1 to less than 5 years         | 50% (n=58)    |
| 5 to less than 10 years        | 19% (n=22)    |
| 10 to less than 20 years       | 20.7% (n=24)  |
| 20 years or more               | 2.6% (n=3)    |
| Hours per Week                 |               |
| 1 to 20 hours per week         | 0.9% (n=1)    |
| 21 to 39 hours per week        | 2.6% (n=3)    |
| 40 hours per week              | 94.8% (n=110) |
| 41 to 50 hours per week        | 1.7% (n=2)    |
| Hourly/Salary                  |               |
| Hourly                         | 100% (n=116)  |
| Shift                          |               |
| First shift                    | 71.6% (n=83)  |
| Second shift                   | 28.4% (n=33)  |
| Works Multiple Jobs            |               |
| No                             | 90.5% (n=105) |
| Yes                            | 9.5% (n=11)   |

## Selected Survey Results

### 1. Wages and Employment

| Wage Response Data     |             |           |                   |                       |                              |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|                        | Median Wage | Mean Wage | Median Start Wage | Average Wage Increase | Average Annual Wage Increase |
| <b>All Respondents</b> | 19.45       | 20.07     | 16.5              | 4.52                  | 0.76                         |

| Wage Response Data               |    |             |           |                   |                       |                              |
|----------------------------------|----|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Race                             | n  | Median Wage | Mean Wage | Median Start Wage | Average Wage Increase | Average Annual Wage Increase |
| <b>White</b>                     | 13 | 22.10       | 22.03     | 18.18             | 3.95                  | 0.99                         |
| <b>Black or African American</b> | 46 | 19.00       | 19.31     | 16.45             | 4.21                  | 0.69                         |
| <b>Hispanic / Latino</b>         | 49 | 19.45       | 20.02     | 16.50             | 4.73                  | 0.71                         |

| Wage Response Data |    |             |           |                   |                       |                              |
|--------------------|----|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Gender             | n  | Median Wage | Mean Wage | Median Start Wage | Average Wage Increase | Average Annual Wage Increase |
| <b>Male</b>        | 96 | 19.5        | 20.15     | 16.50             | 4.72                  | 0.77                         |
| <b>Female</b>      | 20 | 19.0        | 19.70     | 16.75             | 3.60                  | 0.69                         |

| Wage Response Data              |    |             |           |                   |                       |                              |
|---------------------------------|----|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Tenure                          | n  | Median Wage | Mean Wage | Median Start Wage | Average Wage Increase | Average Annual Wage Increase |
| <b>Less than 1 year</b>         | 9  | 19.00       | 19.27     | 18.00             | 0.55                  | 0.63                         |
| <b>1 to less than 2 years</b>   | 26 | 18.45       | 18.75     | 17.50             | 0.84                  | 0.57                         |
| <b>2 to less than 5 years</b>   | 32 | 19.30       | 20.01     | 17.00             | 2.48                  | 0.89                         |
| <b>5 to less than 10 years</b>  | 22 | 19.77       | 20.88     | 15.55             | 5.65                  | 0.78                         |
| <b>10 to less than 20 years</b> | 24 | 20.00       | 20.87     | 9.38              | 10.73                 | 0.83                         |
| <b>20 years or more</b>         | 3  | 22.37       | 21.86     | 8.00              | 10.99                 | 0.43                         |

| Wage Response Data |    |             |           |                   |                       |                              |
|--------------------|----|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Job Type           | n  | Median Wage | Mean Wage | Median Start Wage | Average Wage Increase | Average Annual Wage Increase |
| <b>Welder</b>      | 25 | 22.00       | 22.55     | 19.00             | 4.45                  | 0.95                         |
| <b>Assembler</b>   | 25 | 18.85       | 18.95     | 16.65             | 3.87                  | 0.64                         |
| <b>Other</b>       | 65 | 19.00       | 19.55     | 16.20             | 4.80                  | 0.73                         |

## 2. Household Economic Conditions

| In the past 12 months, how often have you struggled to pay for any of the following expenses? "Struggled" means if you delayed paying or were not able to pay a bill or expense. |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                  | All Respondents<br>(n=116) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or African American<br>(n=46) | Hispanic / Latino<br>(n=49) | Native American<br>(n=1) | Asian or Asian-American<br>(n=1) | Multiple Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
| <b>Groceries / Food</b>                                                                                                                                                          |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
| Never to rarely                                                                                                                                                                  | 25.9% (n=30)               | 23.1% (n=3)     | 23.9% (n=11)                        | 30.6% (n=15)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| Sometimes                                                                                                                                                                        | 35.3% (n=41)               | 38.5% (n=5)     | 30.4% (n=14)                        | 36.7% (n=18)                | 100% (n=1)               | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 50% (n=1)      |
| Often to always                                                                                                                                                                  | 38.8% (n=45)               | 38.5% (n=5)     | 45.7% (n=21)                        | 32.7% (n=16)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Utility bills</b>                                                                                                                                                             |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
| Never to rarely                                                                                                                                                                  | 23.3% (n=27)               | 15.4% (n=2)     | 17.4% (n=8)                         | 32.7% (n=16)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| Sometimes                                                                                                                                                                        | 35.3% (n=41)               | 30.8% (n=4)     | 32.6% (n=15)                        | 36.7% (n=18)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 100% (n=2)     |
| Often to always                                                                                                                                                                  | 41.4% (n=48)               | 53.8% (n=7)     | 50% (n=23)                          | 30.6% (n=15)                | 100% (n=1)               | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Medical care</b>                                                                                                                                                              |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
| Never to rarely                                                                                                                                                                  | 37.9% (n=44)               | 30.8% (n=4)     | 37% (n=17)                          | 40.8% (n=20)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 25% (n=1)                    | 50% (n=1)      |
| Sometimes                                                                                                                                                                        | 31% (n=36)                 | 30.8% (n=4)     | 28.3% (n=13)                        | 36.7% (n=18)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 25% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| Often to always                                                                                                                                                                  | 31% (n=36)                 | 38.5% (n=5)     | 34.8% (n=16)                        | 22.4% (n=11)                | 100% (n=1)               | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Transportation Costs</b>                                                                                                                                                      |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
| Never to rarely                                                                                                                                                                  | 39.7% (n=46)               | 30.8% (n=4)     | 41.3% (n=19)                        | 44.9% (n=22)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| Sometimes                                                                                                                                                                        | 27.6% (n=32)               | 23.1% (n=3)     | 23.9% (n=11)                        | 24.5% (n=12)                | 100% (n=1)               | 0% (n=0)                         | 75% (n=3)                    | 100% (n=2)     |
| Often to always                                                                                                                                                                  | 32.8% (n=38)               | 46.2% (n=6)     | 34.8% (n=16)                        | 30.6% (n=15)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 25% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Monthly rent or mortgage payment</b>                                                                                                                                          |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
| Never to rarely                                                                                                                                                                  | 29.3% (n=34)               | 15.4% (n=2)     | 26.1% (n=12)                        | 38.8% (n=19)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| Sometimes                                                                                                                                                                        | 39.7% (n=46)               | 61.5% (n=8)     | 34.8% (n=16)                        | 36.7% (n=18)                | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 75% (n=3)                    | 50% (n=1)      |
| Often to always                                                                                                                                                                  | 31% (n=36)                 | 23.1% (n=3)     | 39.1% (n=18)                        | 24.5% (n=12)                | 100% (n=1)               | 0% (n=0)                         | 25% (n=1)                    | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Child care</b>                                                                                                                                                                |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
| Never to rarely                                                                                                                                                                  | 75% (n=87)                 | 69.2% (n=9)     | 84.8% (n=39)                        | 67.3% (n=33)                | 100% (n=1)               | 100% (n=1)                       | 50% (n=2)                    | 100% (n=2)     |
| Sometimes                                                                                                                                                                        | 11.2% (n=13)               | 15.4% (n=2)     | 6.5% (n=3)                          | 14.3% (n=7)                 | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 25% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| Often to always                                                                                                                                                                  | 13.8% (n=16)               | 15.4% (n=2)     | 8.7% (n=4)                          | 18.4% (n=9)                 | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 25% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)       |

### 3. Training and Advancement

| Were you hired after receiving training from any of the following programs? |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                                             | All Respondents<br>(n=110) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or African American<br>(n=44) | Hispanic / Latino<br>(n=46) | Native American<br>(n=1) | Asian or Asian-American<br>(n=1) | Multiple Selections<br>(n=3) | Other<br>(n=2) |
| <b>No - None of the above</b>                                               | 76.4%<br>(n=84)            | 61.5%<br>(n=8)  | 75% (n=33)                          | 82.6%<br>(n=38)             | 100% (n=1)               | 0% (n=0)                         | 100% (n=3)                   | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>West Side Health Authority</b>                                           | 1.8% (n=2)                 | 0% (n=0)        | 4.5% (n=2)                          | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>SAFER Foundation</b>                                                     | 14.5%<br>(n=16)            | 15.4%<br>(n=2)  | 20.5%<br>(n=9)                      | 8.7% (n=4)                  | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>JARC - Jane Addams Resource Corp</b>                                     | 6.4% (n=7)                 | 15.4%<br>(n=2)  | 0% (n=0)                            | 8.7% (n=4)                  | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Manufacturing Renaissance / Manufacturing Connect</b>                    | 0% (n=0)                   | 0% (n=0)        | 0% (n=0)                            | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>CARA Collective</b>                                                      | 0.9% (n=1)                 | 7.7% (n=1)      | 0% (n=0)                            | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Get To Work</b>                                                          | 0% (n=0)                   | 0% (n=0)        | 0% (n=0)                            | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |

| For the following statements, please indicate how much you agree or disagree. |                   |                 |                            |                 |                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                                                               | Strongly Disagree | Disagree        | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree           | Strongly Agree  |
| <b>Overall, my workplace is a good place to work.</b>                         | 9.5%<br>(n=11)    | 10.3%<br>(n=12) | 33.6%<br>(n=39)            | 32.8%<br>(n=38) | 13.8%<br>(n=16) |
| <b>My supervisor treats me with respect.</b>                                  | 7.8% (n=9)        | 5.2% (n=6)      | 21.6%<br>(n=25)            | 47.4%<br>(n=55) | 18.1%<br>(n=21) |
| <b>I can speak up without fear of retaliation.</b>                            | 9.5%<br>(n=11)    | 23.3%<br>(n=27) | 18.1%<br>(n=21)            | 31% (n=36)      | 18.1%<br>(n=21) |
| <b>Health and safety is a priority even when we are behind schedule.</b>      | 6% (n=7)          | 8.6%<br>(n=10)  | 22.4%<br>(n=26)            | 37.1%<br>(n=43) | 25.9%<br>(n=30) |
| <b>My opportunities for promotion and advancement are high.</b>               | 19% (n=22)        | 20.7%<br>(n=24) | 32.8%<br>(n=38)            | 20.7%<br>(n=24) | 6.9% (n=8)      |
| <b>Performance evaluations are done fairly.</b>                               | 12.1%<br>(n=14)   | 30.2%<br>(n=35) | 28.4%<br>(n=33)            | 22.4%<br>(n=26) | 6.9% (n=8)      |

**From the following list, please select the types of training you have completed for your employer. You may select more than one option.**

|                                                                       | All Respondents<br>(n=116) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or African American<br>(n=46) | Hispanic / Latino<br>(n=49) | Native American<br>(n=1) | Asian or Asian-American<br>(n=1) | Multiple Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Workplace health &amp; safety training when I was first hired.</b> | 58.6%<br>(n=68)            | 84.6%<br>(n=11) | 54.3%<br>(n=25)                     | 57.1%<br>(n=28)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 75% (n=3)                    | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Occasional health and safety training after I was hired.</b>       | 50% (n=58)                 | 61.5%<br>(n=8)  | 58.7%<br>(n=27)                     | 38.8%<br>(n=19)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 100% (n=2)     |
| <b>Training to help me keep this job</b>                              | 26.7%<br>(n=31)            | 15.4%<br>(n=2)  | 30.4%<br>(n=14)                     | 26.5%<br>(n=13)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Training to acquire new skills</b>                                 | 31.9%<br>(n=37)            | 46.2%<br>(n=6)  | 28.3%<br>(n=13)                     | 32.7%<br>(n=16)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Training to advance to a new job or role</b>                       | 23.3%<br>(n=27)            | 30.8%<br>(n=4)  | 19.6%<br>(n=9)                      | 26.5%<br>(n=13)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 25% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Anti-discrimination training</b>                                   | 45.7%<br>(n=53)            | 46.2%<br>(n=6)  | 37% (n=17)                          | 51% (n=25)                  | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 100% (n=4)                   | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Sexual harassment training</b>                                     | 68.1%<br>(n=79)            | 76.9%<br>(n=10) | 60.9%<br>(n=28)                     | 73.5%<br>(n=36)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 100% (n=4)                   | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>None of the above</b>                                              | 12.9%<br>(n=15)            | 0% (n=0)        | 15.2%<br>(n=7)                      | 12.2%<br>(n=6)              | 100% (n=1)               | 100% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Other</b>                                                          | 1.7% (n=2)                 | 0% (n=0)        | 0% (n=0)                            | 4.1% (n=2)                  | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |

#### 4. Health and Safety

| In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following? Please select all that apply to you. |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                                                                        | All Respondents<br>(n=116) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or African American<br>(n=46) | Hispanic / Latino<br>(n=49) | Native American<br>(n=1) | Asian or Asian-American<br>(n=1) | Multiple Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
| <b>Exposure to hazardous fumes, vapors, or dust</b>                                                    | 43.1%<br>(n=50)            | 53.8%<br>(n=7)  | 43.5%<br>(n=20)                     | 38.8%<br>(n=19)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 75% (n=3)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Handling or contact with chemical products or substances</b>                                        | 19.8%<br>(n=23)            | 30.8%<br>(n=4)  | 21.7%<br>(n=10)                     | 14.3%<br>(n=7)              | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 25% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Operating or handling heavy machinery</b>                                                           | 12.9%<br>(n=15)            | 0% (n=0)        | 15.2%<br>(n=7)                      | 6.1% (n=3)                  | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 100% (n=4)                   | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Exposure to electrical hazards</b>                                                                  | 12.1%<br>(n=14)            | 15.4%<br>(n=2)  | 10.9%<br>(n=5)                      | 10.2%<br>(n=5)              | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 25% (n=1)                    | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Working at heights over two feet above the ground</b>                                               | 6% (n=7)                   | 0% (n=0)        | 8.7% (n=4)                          | 6.1% (n=3)                  | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Noises so loud you have to raise your voice to be heard</b>                                         | 32.8%<br>(n=38)            | 30.8%<br>(n=4)  | 28.3%<br>(n=13)                     | 32.7%<br>(n=16)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 100% (n=4)                   | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Exposure to high heat</b>                                                                           | 32.8%<br>(n=38)            | 23.1%<br>(n=3)  | 30.4%<br>(n=14)                     | 30.6%<br>(n=15)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 100% (n=4)                   | 100% (n=2)     |
| <b>None of the above</b>                                                                               | 41.4%<br>(n=48)            | 46.2%<br>(n=6)  | 45.7%<br>(n=21)                     | 40.8%<br>(n=20)             | 100% (n=1)               | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Other</b>                                                                                           | 1.7% (n=2)                 | 0% (n=0)        | 4.3% (n=2)                          | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |

| Does your employer provide sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep you safe on the job? |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                                                                        | All Respondents<br>(n=113) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or African American<br>(n=45) | Hispanic / Latino<br>(n=47) | Native American<br>(n=1) | Asian or Asian-American<br>(n=1) | Multiple Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
| <b>No</b>                                                                                              | 6.2% (n=7)                 | 7.7% (n=1)      | 4.4% (n=2)                          | 6.4% (n=3)                  | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 25% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Yes</b>                                                                                             | 93.8%<br>(n=106)           | 92.3%<br>(n=12) | 95.6%<br>(n=43)                     | 93.6%<br>(n=44)             | 100% (n=1)               | 100% (n=1)                       | 75% (n=3)                    | 100% (n=2)     |

**In the last 12 months, have you noticed any of the following health or safety hazards in your workplace?  
Please select all that apply.**

|                                                                         | All<br>Respondents<br>(n=116) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or<br>African<br>American<br>(n=46) | Hispanic /<br>Latino<br>(n=49) | Native<br>American<br>(n=1) | Asian or<br>Asian-<br>American<br>(n=1) | Multiple<br>Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Leaky roof</b>                                                       | 68.1%<br>(n=79)               | 76.9%<br>(n=10) | 67.4%<br>(n=31)                           | 63.3%<br>(n=31)                | 100% (n=1)                  | 100% (n=1)                              | 100% (n=4)                      | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Slippery floor</b>                                                   | 41.4%<br>(n=48)               | 61.5%<br>(n=8)  | 34.8%<br>(n=16)                           | 40.8%<br>(n=20)                | 0% (n=0)                    | 100% (n=1)                              | 75% (n=3)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Obstructed pathways</b>                                              | 30.2%<br>(n=35)               | 53.8%<br>(n=7)  | 28.3%<br>(n=13)                           | 24.5%<br>(n=12)                | 100% (n=1)                  | 0% (n=0)                                | 50% (n=2)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Poor ventilation</b>                                                 | 50% (n=58)                    | 76.9%<br>(n=10) | 39.1%<br>(n=18)                           | 53.1%<br>(n=26)                | 100% (n=1)                  | 0% (n=0)                                | 75% (n=3)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Lack of extraction of dust<br/>or fumes</b>                          | 38.8%<br>(n=45)               | 61.5%<br>(n=8)  | 37% (n=17)                                | 34.7%<br>(n=17)                | 100% (n=1)                  | 0% (n=0)                                | 50% (n=2)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Too hot inside the factory</b>                                       | 51.7%<br>(n=60)               | 84.6%<br>(n=11) | 37% (n=17)                                | 53.1%<br>(n=26)                | 100% (n=1)                  | 0% (n=0)                                | 100% (n=4)                      | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Unsafe forklift driving</b>                                          | 30.2%<br>(n=35)               | 38.5%<br>(n=5)  | 32.6%<br>(n=15)                           | 26.5%<br>(n=13)                | 100% (n=1)                  | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Unsafe operations due to<br/>lack of training</b>                    | 12.1%<br>(n=14)               | 0% (n=0)        | 19.6%<br>(n=9)                            | 6.1% (n=3)                     | 100% (n=1)                  | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Dirty or unhygienic<br/>employee break areas</b>                     | 25% (n=29)                    | 38.5%<br>(n=5)  | 17.4%<br>(n=8)                            | 24.5%<br>(n=12)                | 100% (n=1)                  | 100% (n=1)                              | 50% (n=2)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Rodents / pests</b>                                                  | 51.7%<br>(n=60)               | 61.5%<br>(n=8)  | 43.5%<br>(n=20)                           | 51% (n=25)                     | 100% (n=1)                  | 100% (n=1)                              | 100% (n=4)                      | 50% (n=1)      |
| <b>Using outdated or faulty<br/>equipment</b>                           | 24.1%<br>(n=28)               | 46.2%<br>(n=6)  | 28.3%<br>(n=13)                           | 12.2%<br>(n=6)                 | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 75% (n=3)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>None - No safety hazards<br/>currently exist in my<br/>workplace</b> | 18.1%<br>(n=21)               | 7.7% (n=1)      | 21.7%<br>(n=10)                           | 20.4%<br>(n=10)                | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Other</b>                                                            | 0.9% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 0% (n=0)                                  | 2% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |

**In the last 12 months, have you noticed work being done in your workplace in a way that puts you or your  
co-workers at risk?**

|            | All<br>Respondents<br>(n=116) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or<br>African<br>American<br>(n=46) | Hispanic /<br>Latino<br>(n=49) | Native<br>American<br>(n=1) | Asian or<br>Asian-<br>American<br>(n=1) | Multiple<br>Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
|------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>No</b>  | 81.9%<br>(n=95)               | 100%<br>(n=13)  | 71.7%<br>(n=33)                           | 85.7%<br>(n=42)                | 100% (n=1)                  | 100% (n=1)                              | 75% (n=3)                       | 100% (n=2)     |
| <b>Yes</b> | 18.1%<br>(n=21)               | 0% (n=0)        | 28.3%<br>(n=13)                           | 14.3%<br>(n=7)                 | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |

## 5. Worker Voice

| Do you feel comfortable informing your supervisor or manager about unsafe working conditions? |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                                                               | All Respondents<br>(n=116) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or African American<br>(n=46) | Hispanic / Latino<br>(n=49) | Native American<br>(n=1) | Asian or Asian-American<br>(n=1) | Multiple Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
| <b>No</b>                                                                                     | 25.9%<br>(n=30)            | 30.8%<br>(n=4)  | 30.4%<br>(n=14)                     | 20.4%<br>(n=10)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Yes</b>                                                                                    | 71.6%<br>(n=83)            | 69.2%<br>(n=9)  | 67.4%<br>(n=31)                     | 75.5%<br>(n=37)             | 100% (n=1)               | 100% (n=1)                       | 50% (n=2)                    | 100% (n=2)     |
| <b>Other</b>                                                                                  | 2.6% (n=3)                 | 0% (n=0)        | 2.2% (n=1)                          | 4.1% (n=2)                  | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                     | 0% (n=0)       |

| During the last 12 months, did you raise a concern about your working conditions with your supervisor or manager? |                            |                 |                                     |                             |                          |                                  |                              |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                                                                                   | All Respondents<br>(n=116) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or African American<br>(n=46) | Hispanic / Latino<br>(n=49) | Native American<br>(n=1) | Asian or Asian-American<br>(n=1) | Multiple Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
| <b>No</b>                                                                                                         | 60.3%<br>(n=70)            | 61.5%<br>(n=8)  | 58.7%<br>(n=27)                     | 61.2%<br>(n=30)             | 0% (n=0)                 | 100% (n=1)                       | 50% (n=2)                    | 100% (n=2)     |
| <b>Yes</b>                                                                                                        | 39.7%<br>(n=46)            | 38.5%<br>(n=5)  | 41.3%<br>(n=19)                     | 38.8%<br>(n=19)             | 100% (n=1)               | 0% (n=0)                         | 50% (n=2)                    | 0% (n=0)       |

| What were the specific concerns that you raised? Select all that apply. |                               |                 |                                           |                                |                             |                                         |                                 |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                                         | All<br>Respondents<br>(n=116) | White<br>(n=13) | Black or<br>African<br>American<br>(n=46) | Hispanic /<br>Latino<br>(n=49) | Native<br>American<br>(n=1) | Asian or<br>Asian-<br>American<br>(n=1) | Multiple<br>Selections<br>(n=4) | Other<br>(n=2) |
| <b>Paid below the minimum wage</b>                                      | 3.4% (n=4)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 6.5% (n=3)                                | 2% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Not paid for all hours worked</b>                                    | 0.9% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 2.2% (n=1)                                | 0% (n=0)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Forced to work off the clock</b>                                     | 0.9% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 2.2% (n=1)                                | 0% (n=0)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Forced to work overtime</b>                                          | 0.9% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 2.2% (n=1)                                | 0% (n=0)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Not paid for overtime</b>                                            | 0.9% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 2.2% (n=1)                                | 0% (n=0)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Not paid on time</b>                                                 | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)        | 0% (n=0)                                  | 0% (n=0)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Unsafe working conditions</b>                                        | 22.4%<br>(n=26)               | 38.5%<br>(n=5)  | 26.1%<br>(n=12)                           | 14.3%<br>(n=7)                 | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 50% (n=2)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Discrimination</b>                                                   | 6.9% (n=8)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 10.9%<br>(n=5)                            | 4.1% (n=2)                     | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Sexual harassment</b>                                                | 4.3% (n=5)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 6.5% (n=3)                                | 4.1% (n=2)                     | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>No breaks, or not enough breaks</b>                                  | 0.9% (n=1)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 2.2% (n=1)                                | 0% (n=0)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 0% (n=0)                        | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Bad schedule/shift</b>                                               | 2.6% (n=3)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 2.2% (n=1)                                | 2% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Needed a raise/pay is too low</b>                                    | 21.6%<br>(n=25)               | 15.4%<br>(n=2)  | 28.3%<br>(n=13)                           | 18.4%<br>(n=9)                 | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Increased workloads</b>                                              | 12.1%<br>(n=14)               | 23.1%<br>(n=3)  | 8.7% (n=4)                                | 12.2%<br>(n=6)                 | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Short staffing</b>                                                   | 12.1%<br>(n=14)               | 15.4%<br>(n=2)  | 10.9%<br>(n=5)                            | 12.2%<br>(n=6)                 | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Lack of safety training</b>                                          | 6.9% (n=8)                    | 7.7% (n=1)      | 6.5% (n=3)                                | 6.1% (n=3)                     | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Lack of personal protective equipment</b>                            | 5.2% (n=6)                    | 7.7% (n=1)      | 4.3% (n=2)                                | 4.1% (n=2)                     | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |
| <b>Other</b>                                                            | 3.4% (n=4)                    | 0% (n=0)        | 2.2% (n=1)                                | 4.1% (n=2)                     | 0% (n=0)                    | 0% (n=0)                                | 25% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)       |

| Did your employer take any action to resolve the issue(s) that you raised a concern about? |                        |             |                                  |                          |                       |                               |                           |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
|                                                                                            | All Respondents (n=46) | White (n=5) | Black or African American (n=19) | Hispanic / Latino (n=19) | Native American (n=1) | Asian or Asian-American (n=0) | Multiple Selections (n=2) | Other (n=0) |
| <b>No</b>                                                                                  | 69.6% (n=32)           | 80% (n=4)   | 63.2% (n=12)                     | 68.4% (n=13)             | 100% (n=1)            | 0% (n=0)                      | 100% (n=2)                | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Yes</b>                                                                                 | 30.4% (n=14)           | 20% (n=1)   | 36.8% (n=7)                      | 31.6% (n=6)              | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |

| Did your employer or supervisor do any of the following as a direct result of you raising a concern? Select all that apply. |                         |              |                                  |                          |                       |                               |                           |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
|                                                                                                                             | All Respondents (n=116) | White (n=13) | Black or African American (n=46) | Hispanic / Latino (n=49) | Native American (n=1) | Asian or Asian-American (n=1) | Multiple Selections (n=4) | Other (n=2) |
| <b>Threaten to fire you or your co-workers</b>                                                                              | 1.7% (n=2)              | 0% (n=0)     | 2.2% (n=1)                       | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 25% (n=1)                 | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Threaten to call the police or immigration</b>                                                                           | 0% (n=0)                | 0% (n=0)     | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Threaten to close or move the company</b>                                                                                | 0% (n=0)                | 0% (n=0)     | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Fire you or your co-workers</b>                                                                                          | 0% (n=0)                | 0% (n=0)     | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Suspend you or your co-workers</b>                                                                                       | 0% (n=0)                | 0% (n=0)     | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Increased monitoring of your work</b>                                                                                    | 7.8% (n=9)              | 0% (n=0)     | 10.9% (n=5)                      | 6.1% (n=3)               | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 25% (n=1)                 | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Increased your workload</b>                                                                                              | 6% (n=7)                | 0% (n=0)     | 4.3% (n=2)                       | 8.2% (n=4)               | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 25% (n=1)                 | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Reduced your pay</b>                                                                                                     | 0% (n=0)                | 0% (n=0)     | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Reduced your hours</b>                                                                                                   | 0% (n=0)                | 0% (n=0)     | 0% (n=0)                         | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Moved you to less favorable schedule</b>                                                                                 | 1.7% (n=2)              | 0% (n=0)     | 4.3% (n=2)                       | 0% (n=0)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>Gave you more hazardous work</b>                                                                                         | 3.4% (n=4)              | 0% (n=0)     | 2.2% (n=1)                       | 2% (n=1)                 | 100% (n=1)            | 0% (n=0)                      | 25% (n=1)                 | 0% (n=0)    |
| <b>None of the above</b>                                                                                                    | 60.3% (n=70)            | 61.5% (n=8)  | 58.7% (n=27)                     | 61.2% (n=30)             | 0% (n=0)              | 100% (n=1)                    | 50% (n=2)                 | 100% (n=2)  |
| <b>Other</b>                                                                                                                | 0.9% (n=1)              | 0% (n=0)     | 0% (n=0)                         | 2% (n=1)                 | 0% (n=0)              | 0% (n=0)                      | 0% (n=0)                  | 0% (n=0)    |



