

## *Fact Sheet<sup>1</sup>*

### *Low-Wage Women Workers in New Jersey: Home Health Aides*

*March 2020*



#### **FACT SHEET TAKEAWAY**

Home health aides are employed to assist the elderly and people with disabilities with activities of daily living that may include bathing, dressing, and meal preparation. They are often a source of companionship and social and emotional support for clients. Home health aides are a lifeline for many clients and can offer a preferable alternative to assisted living or nursing home care and allow a client's family to continue their paid jobs and careers. Some home health aides live with their clients and provide support 24/7. Others see a range of clients, getting assignments through home health agencies. Some families hire a home health aide directly. Funding for home health aides varies, with the majority coming from government programs such as Medicaid and Medicare.

New Jersey has some of the highest employment levels of home health aides in the country. In New Jersey, 95 percent of all home health aides are women; over half are immigrants; and, almost 70 percent are Black or Latina. The annual mean wage in New Jersey ranges from \$23,380-\$25,330. New Jersey is not a top paying state for home health aides, but even top paying states average no more than \$35,450. As the majority of their work takes place in the private residences, home health aides are considered domestic workers.

#### **KEY FACTS<sup>2</sup>**

- New Jersey has some of the highest employment levels of home health aides in the country. The number of domestic workers in New Jersey has increased by almost 50 percent since 2003, and the majority of those workers are home health aides.
- New Jersey employs over 60,000 domestic workers, up from 40,000 workers in 2003. About 60 percent of those domestic workers are home health aides, mostly hired through an agency and some hired independently.

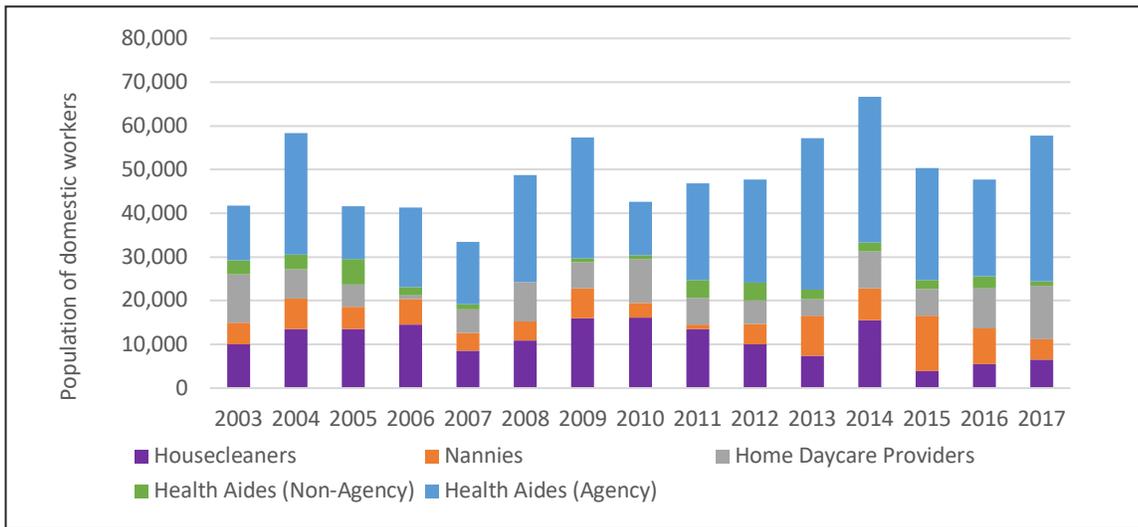


Figure 1. Home Health Aides and Other Domestic Workers in New Jersey

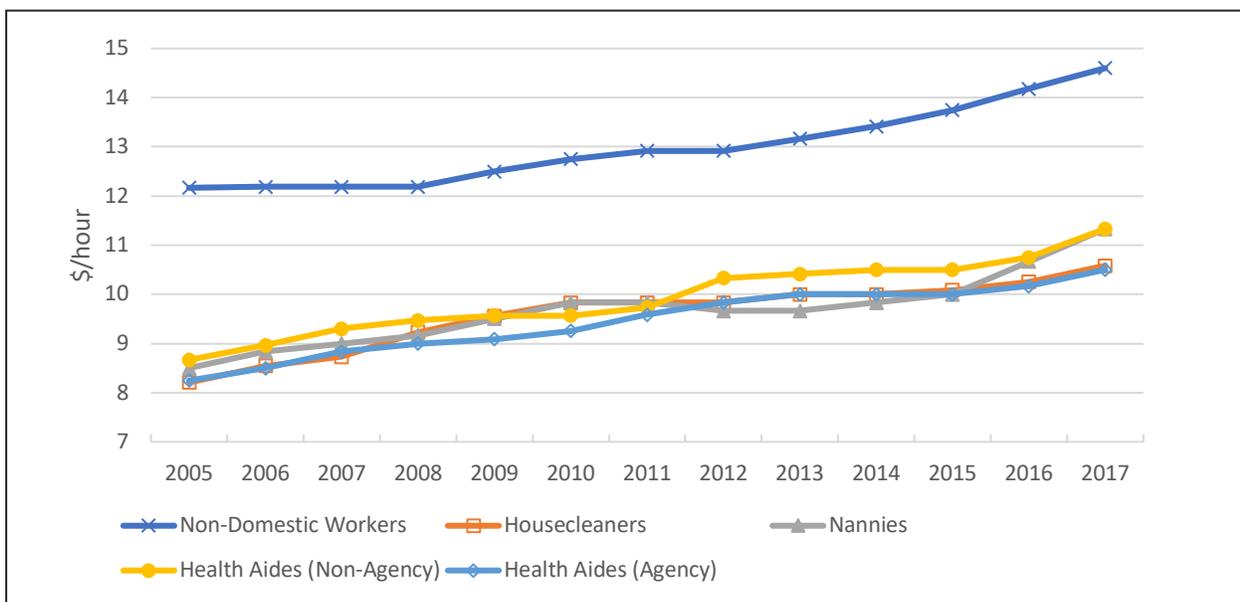
- The growth in the number of health aides reflects the changing demographic composition of the population and the increasing need for people to provide caring labor.
- Home health aides are predominantly women: 95 percent of agency-based home health aides are women, which is more than double the percent female among all non-domestic-worker occupations in New Jersey.
- The share of home health aides who are immigrants is also far higher than other kinds of workers in the state: over half of all home health aides are immigrants, including both naturalized and not naturalized, compared to about one quarter of other kinds of workers in New Jersey.
- New Jersey's home health aides are predominantly non-white: 69 percent of home health aides are Black, Hispanic, or Asian.

*Table 1. Home Health Aides in New Jersey and the U.S. Overall (In percent).*

	<i>New Jersey</i>		<i>United States</i>	
	<i>Non-Domestic Workers</i>	<i>Home Health Aides</i>	<i>Non-Domestic Workers</i>	<i>Home Health Aides</i>
Gender				
Women	45.7	94.7	46.1	88.9
Men	54.3	5.3	53.9	11.1
Nativity				
U.S. born	72.1	48.7	83.1	71.8
U.S. naturalized	15.8	27.6	8.1	14.4
Immigrant not naturalized	12.1	23.7	8.8	13.8
Race/ethnicity				
White	59.7	30.8	64.3	40.7
Black	12.0	38.8	11.1	29.7
Hispanic	17.7	29.2	16.5	19.2
Asian	9.8	1.2	5.9	8.0
Other	0.8	0.0	2.3	2.5

Source: Constructed using Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group pooled microdata for 2015-2017.

- Compared to the national averages, New Jersey has proportionately more home health aides who are women, immigrants, and non-white.
- New Jersey’s home health aides earn substantially less than other paid employees. Hourly wages for home health aides are roughly 3 to 4 dollars per hour lower than non-domestic workers.



*Figure 2. Median Nominal Hourly Wages for Home Health Aides and Other Workers in New Jersey*

- The annual mean wage in New Jersey ranges from \$23,380-\$25,330. New Jersey is not a top paying state for home health aides, but even top paying states (which include Delaware and Massachusetts) average no more than \$35,450.<sup>3</sup>
- Fewer than half of New Jersey household employers who have hired a domestic worker, including home health aides, are familiar with the Fair Labor Standards Law pay and working hour provisions that apply to domestic workers.

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<sup>1</sup> The Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University conducts cutting-edge research relevant to gender, workplace policies, education, career development, women's leadership and advancement, work-life integration, and other issues of importance to New Jersey's and the nation's working families. For more information about CWW, visit our website at <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/CWW>.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Rodgers, Yana, and Elaine Zundl. 2019. "The Future of Work in New Jersey: Care Workers and the Gig Economy," Report, New Jersey Future of Work Task Force Resources. <https://newjersey.github.io/fow/resources.html>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2018/may/oes311011.htm#nat>.