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Always "On Duty": Women's Schedules in New Jersey's Retail, Food Service, and Logistics Industries

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Unpredictable and unstable scheduling, a ubiquitous feature of jobs in retail, food service, hospitality, and logistics, negatively affects women and their families. While both men and women are employed in these sectors, unstable scheduling further marginalizes women who already experience gender-based economic disadvantages. Women in the service sector earn less than men, and mothers experience an even greater wage differential, often referred to as the "mommy tax." Women's identities intersect with unstable scheduling practices in ways that exacerbate these issues. Precarious scheduling practices also make women more susceptible to sexual harassment and workplace bullying. These problems are amplified for women of color (Schneider & Harknett, 2019).

This report presents findings from focus groups of women who work in sectors known for having unstable scheduling. We focus on the intersection of scheduling with caregiving, stress and health, bullying and harassment, and economic security. Focus group participants – who were predominantly women of color – also tended to be members of households in which parents and adult children all struggled with non-standard and unpredictable schedules, leading to weekly conflict when trying to coordinate childcare for the youngest children in the household. Single women attending college who participated in the focus groups also expressed high levels of work-life conflict because they could not limit their shifts to days in which they were free from classes. Our study contributes to the growing literature on fair scheduling by probing deeper into the relationships between women and their supervisors in order to understand the process of requesting time off and negotiating work shifts.

Our focus groups also captured the ways in which unstable schedules have adverse economic effects. First, women experience economic instability through their paychecks because they are unable to plan and budget when the number of hours they work each week changes dramatically. Second, women have more difficulty completing degree programs because they must maintain open availability for their employers. Women in our study said they were scolded for having one or two days per week that they were consistently unavailable, making it impossible to schedule classes or to study. Third, managers and supervisors use their authority over schedules to pressure women into accepting a culture of bullying and sexual harassment.

Service Work and Scheduling

Nearly 850,000 people work in New Jersey's retail and hospitality sector and 48 percent of those workers are women (BLS, 2018). According to New Jersey Department of Labor projections, jobs in this sector will increase by 20 percent from 2014 to 2024. While these jobs are growing in number, they do not provide workers with economic security. Hourly jobs in retail and hospitality are often characterized by high turnover, no health or retirement benefits, and limited opportunities for advancement. These sectors are also where nonstandard and unstable scheduling practices are the most prevalent.

There is also growing concern that scheduling practices may have a role in perpetuating racial inequality. A recent national survey of unstable shift work highlighted the higher prevalence of unfair scheduling for workers of color (Schneider & Harknett, 2019). Of all demographic groups

studied, women of color were found to have the most unstable and unpredictable schedules, leading to household economic insecurity, hunger, and other negative outcomes.

Unstable scheduling, also referred to as unfair scheduling, is an umbrella term for a number of practices that improve flexibility for employers but can have negative consequences for workers. "Just-in-time scheduling," also called irregular work scheduling, refers to setting up different days and shifts each week so that workers do not have dependable days off (Golden, 2015; Henly et al., 2006). In some cases, an employee must leave open their availability and call in each day to find out if they should report to work, called "on-call" scheduling (Golden, 2015). "Mock" scheduling is the practice of frequently changing or modifying a schedule after it has been officially posted. It also refers to systematic efforts to deny employee requests for time off, contradicting official policies for paid time off and sick time (Halpin, 2015). Workers are also required to disregard official schedules when they are asked to work late or to change their shift times at the last minute. Employees can also be asked to close a store at a very late hour and then report to work very early in the morning, referred to as "clopening," leaving only a few hours to rest.

Workers also experience fluctuations in the number of hours they are scheduled to work each week because labor hours are allocated based on demand. "Just in time" scheduling uses software to generate schedules estimated on previous years' sales and other variables. "Just in time" scheduling is not only problematic for workers who need consistent hours to pay their bills, but also for managers who might want to accommodate workers' needs but are confined to the limits of scheduling software (Lambert & Henly, 2010). In addition, "open availability" refers to when workers must have availability surpassing the part-time hours that they usually work in order to remain in good standing. If workers do not comply, they may be allocated fewer hours or more shifts that are inconvenient (Alvarez, 2019; Sen & Razza, 2015).

Workers who earn wages within the warehouses of the logistics industry often find themselves living with both unpredictable work hours and "perma-temp" status making their employment particularly precarious. Perma-temps are hired and paid by a temporary agency, and are employed at one job site for several months or even years but will not enjoy the benefits and protections of a permanent employee. Initially, temp workers are asked to report to an agency to be assigned to a job site, but workers do not know where they are going or the type of the work they will be doing. Once they have a job placement, they are reluctant to protest poor working conditions because they want to become a permanent salaried employee. Prior surveys suggest that nearly 46 percent of temporary help agency workers would prefer a traditional work arrangement but are trapped in temp work (Padin, 2019).

Many businesses are experimenting with improving scheduling practices. For example, Aeropostale, Carter's, David's Tea, Disney, PacSun, and Zumiez have ended the practice of "on-call" scheduling in their stores. The Gap, Inc. received attention for offering employees fixed schedules with a guaranteed minimum number of hours. The Gap worked with researchers to pilot a stable-scheduling experiment in some of its stores. Workers were given a 14-day advance notice of their schedules and a guarantee of 20 hours per week. They were also provided a digital app that helped them to switch shifts with another coworker. As a result of these policies, median

sales increased, labor productivity increased, and most associates received their requested number of hours (Williams et. al., 2018).

Project Design

In the summer and fall of 2019, the Center for Women and Work partnered with Make the Road New Jersey, United4Respect, and New Labor to convene 5 focus groups of 6-8 women each in New Jersey. We targeted women who were employed in some of the sectors most commonly associated with unfair scheduling: food service, retail, and logistics. Logistics coordinates goods and materials between different points on their way to market and involves packaging, transporting, and inventorying goods in warehouses. Some women in our sample were currently employed, others reflected on prior jobs. Three focus groups were conducted in English and two were conducted in Spanish by a bilingual staff member. Participants received $50 gift cards for their participation.

We asked questions about advance notice of work schedules and the frequency with which schedules changed. We also focused on the intersection of unstable schedules with key areas that included caregiving, health, harassment, and economic security. Additionally, we spent time discussing strategies that women used to negotiate their preferred schedules with supervisors. We also asked about other techniques women used to remedy a bad schedule, including collaborations with co-workers.

We recorded and transcribed the interviews in English and Spanish. Then we analyzed the data using the qualitative software NVivo to identify and extract salient themes. The Rutgers University Institutional Review Board approved this research.

Findings

Caregiving and Unpredictable Schedules

For participants working in retail and food service, schedules were generally posted in two-week intervals with only a few days' notice. Because shifts and days worked changed dramatically from week to week, workers had little notice to coordinate with other family members about childcare, transportation, and other important appointments. This situation represents an "impossible choice" in which workers cannot comply with the requirements of their employers but face retaliation or termination if they directly challenge these policies (Alvarez et. al. 2019). In general, participants found trying to maintain availability for their employer and juggling their responsibilities to be very distressing. Several women in our focus groups were caring for disabled family members. One participant described needing to coordinate schedules with her mother to take care of her father, who suffered from a long-term chronic illness. Without advance notice of her schedule she needed to call out of work frequently:

> *"…so sometimes it's kind of tricky to work around that because I have to help out with stuff. Because obviously, my mom can't just be lifting him and everything. I actually got*

fired at one point, because I kept calling out ... Because I was just having a lot of problems at home taking care of my dad.."

One of the participants, a Latina in her early 20's, said that she was forced to call out from her shift because her mother, also employed in a "just-in-time" scheduling job, was scheduled to work at the same time and no one would be home to watch her 1-year-old brother. Usually the family had a babysitter but the babysitter was not able to work at the last minute.

"I have a one-year-old brother, and I remember I called out because I had to watch him, nobody was there and they were like, 'Oh, well where's your mom?' They were like fighting with me over the phone and I'm like, 'You're not about to do this.' I hung up. I was like, 'Listen, I'm not coming in.' I had to watch my brother, my family comes first no matter what."

Without advance notice of her schedule, another participant discussed how she coordinated with her sister to take care of her mother.

"I had to leave early to rush my mom to the emergency room a couple of times, which is to say, she's got a lot of health issues and stuff. But yeah, after surgeries, my sister and I were kind of like, she lives like 45 minutes away from us so we have to kind of figure out, okay, well, mom needs help she can't move her arms right now so she'll hang out with you for three days and then she'll come back to my house. She lives with me mostly."

The limited notice caused by "just in time" scheduling created hardships for all of the participants. However, participants from the logistics industry (mostly Latinas who spoke English as a second language) experienced greater precarity with their schedules. Most worked as "perma-temps" for temporary agencies that sent them to work at varying locations. They did not know how long the assignment would be, so it was difficult to coordinate childcare or health appointments. Inevitably, this meant that women would need to call out or leave work early to attend an existing appointment. Their supervisors would often respond by sending the women back to the referring agency.

"When someone leaves early or takes off from work for an appointment or to take their kids to the doctor, you run the risk that you will not be sent again to the company, you will no longer be a 'regular' at the company and you have to start all over again. You have to go back to the agency and wait from 5 AM to see what work is available for you."

Retail and food service workers also expressed difficulty when trying to exert control over their schedules, and when they were forced to call out, they said their manager would retaliate against them.

"I'm always good with not calling out because I know the consequences that will come up. Either my hours will be cut by one day, which is about 8 hours, so that's why I try not to. So usually I'll work about 25 hours, so if I call out one day because of a family emergency I can lose one of the weekend shifts; they just do it just to show me that you can't call out. And it does affect me because I need that money to pay bills. And when I tell them that, they were like oh the schedule's already made…"

These last-minute schedules constantly fluctuate, making it difficult for workers to juggle employment with other obligations.

Inflexible Schedules and Stress

The inflexibility of most jobs to accommodate appointments or changes to childcare arrangements is a major driver of gender inequality in the workforce (Fuller, 2018). Women often seek out part-time work to allow for the additional carework and unpaid domestic work they perform (Henly & Lambert, 2014). Unfortunately, managers' expectations that employees maintain open availability, or be available to work many more hours than they actually were scheduled each period, greatly interfered with our participants' other obligations. In this context, open availability means that the employee must agree to accept shifts on any day of the week, at any time, and should not expect to have consistent days off. One of our participants explained that because of the long hours her store was open, she needed to maintain availability for approximately 133 hours per week. She explains the process of setting her availability:

> *"I work at a big box retailer, and they make all coworkers fill out an availability form. And depending on what department you work in, there is a required number of hours that you are... That it's mandatory you fill out that availability for. And when you don't do it, they repeatedly make you fill it out again until it meets the hours that they want."*

Women from all three industries expressed frustration with their managers' and supervisors' expectations that they have open availability. Without consistent days off, the women in our focus groups had little ability to plan or schedule. Some of the women attending college felt they were intentionally deceived because they disclosed their school obligations when they were hired. However, soon after, their manager told them that they needed to work additional hours.

> *"They always make it seem before you get the schedule for the semester, oh education's very important, we understand that, but then when you give them your availability, they start asking you, hey can you work more hours on the weekend? And that's when I would work all day on Saturdays, and half a day on Sunday. I would find myself exhausted… So they would just assume that I can do those hours and not even tell me."*

Another woman felt compelled to drop out of college because she could not balance the pressure of her changing work hours and her coursework. Her family relied on her income to maintain secure housing and to pay the rent.

> *"I had to drop out of college because I had a panic attack in my psychology class. I was working full-time and going to school full-time and my major was psychology- I love psychology. And we were talking about anxiety and guess what, I almost passed out. Everything started getting dark, I almost fell out of my desk, other students were looking at me funny, I'm like, oh my god, and I never went back because I couldn't do it. Plus at the time, I had to support my family and I couldn't pick school over work because otherwise my family, we'd be homeless again…"*

Because of the pressure to maintain open availability, our participants frequently relied on procedures to request time off for important events or appointments. Due to the vast availability

our participants were required to maintain, time off requests were some of the only ways they could schedule important events in advance. The process for requesting time off varied among our participants: some employers required two weeks advance notice for requests, while for others it was 30 days. Retail employees often used a phone app to process time off requests but the majority of workers said requests were written in a desktop agenda or made by putting a note on a calendar.

Overwhelmingly, women in our focus groups said these requests were not honored. Despite following the procedure, more often than not, they would be scheduled for the day they requested off. For example, one of the workers describes how the requests were never really read or reviewed before the schedule was made.

> *"I used to have managers that wouldn't let you have the time off unless you could find somebody to cover. And then people started doing that too much so then they stopped and they don't allow you to do it anymore so now you have to go to them and then they're like, 'Well, I don't have time for this.' Well like that's cool, I need to go to the doctor's, so..."*

Understanding that requests were rarely granted, participants said that they would have to speak directly with their manager to get time off. Women across all three industries said this contributed to a culture of favoritism where workers needed to garner favors from managers to get time off or better shifts. This environment is what Woods (2018) calls "flexible discipline," or an intentional disregard of formal policies so managers can grant favors to exert greater control over employees.

> *"They choose when they want to enforce a rule and when they don't. When you need to request days off or need to come in late, they punish you by giving you the shifts no one wants. They also won't work with you to help you find coverage."*

Participants describe instances of managers refusing to change the posted schedule even when it seemed obvious to do so. A manager insisted on keeping one of our participants on the schedule even after she resigned. She reminded him of her end date, but he still called her and scolded her for not coming in to work. Other women had similar stories of excused absences like jury duty or other compulsory events where the manager refused to change the schedule. Research on retail managers links many of these practices to a need to contain labor costs (Lambert & Henly, 2010). Managers typically have limited advance notice of their monthly staffing hours.

Our participants described the use of "mock schedules," or consistently being asked to work hours and shifts that are never posted on the general schedule (Halpin, 2015). Workers complained that the posted schedule changed so many times that they stopped relying on it. The women in our focus groups said that they needed to keep checking in with their manager, verbally or by text, to make sure they knew when to come to work.

> *"…flexibility is always for the benefit of them (the employer) not for us… so the schedule changes three times after it is posted and it doesn't matter if I have plans or appointments. If I have an issue or need time off it is always a big problem, but if they*

need something last minute, I have to drop everything. One week we were notified that the schedule changed three times and that we should make sure to check it."

The use of mock schedules contributes to overall chaos and confusion, causing women to rely on verbal discussions with their manager to verify their schedules. Women describe having to relinquish any formal guarantee of time off or expectation of advance notice of their workweek, and they are burdened with having to constantly reconfirm with their manager that they can have their assigned shifts. These circumstances put workers in a precarious situation because managers often forgot or disavowed verbal agreements in order to punish workers if they failed to comply with last-minute schedule changes or difficult shifts.

The culture of maintaining open availability and never calling out is in direct contrast with provisions in New Jersey's sick days law. New Jersey's law allows all workers, part-time and full-time, to accrue 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to a maximum of 40 hours of leave per year. Many of our participants in retail and food service were unaware that they were eligible for New Jersey's paid sick days provisions. Among those who were aware, with the exception of a few participants from big retailers that had implemented hotlines and electronic record-keeping systems for sick days, our participants reported being discouraged from taking the time they had accrued. Several reported their supervisors demanding they physically come into work to prove they were sick so they could avoid a penalty.

"You have to let them know, and sometimes, if you say you are vomiting, then they're going to be like, 'Oh you need to get a doctor's note. Or else it's a call out for no reason.' They get kind of nasty."

Bullying and Harassment

When formal policies for time off requests, advance notice of schedules, and paid sick time are ignored, workers must rely on tenuous agreements with management to get the flexibility they need. However, work environments based on garnering favors from one's manager can make workers in low-wage industries more vulnerable to bullying and sexual harassment (Wood, 2018).

With constantly fluctuating schedules, workers rely on switching or picking up shifts with willing coworkers. Unfortunately, retail and food service are notorious for high turnover. Participants said their workplaces were chronically understaffed, limiting the possibility of trading shifts. Moreover, participants said that the workers employed the longest had informal seniority and would get the best shifts. Newly hired workers were given the worst shifts and had the least control over their schedules. This was a major reason why women who were unhappy with their current employer would not quit. Leaving meant making new relationships and garnering favors with a new manager who could possibly be more hostile.

"But then someone else was speaking of these jobs have such a high turnover rate that they'll shame you into staying, but they don't really care. They know you're expendable, almost; I think that's why they also want your time to be so expansive, because they feel like, you know, anyone could kind of do this job and people need jobs"

Women in the logistics industry had the least control over their schedules and described having to wait at the referring agency without pay until they were given an assignment. These assignments did not have official start or end dates.

> *"Here they talk about how you have to get in line outside the agency around 5:30 AM to be able to get assigned work and if you are at the end of the line you might be out of luck and get no work. And sometimes you have to wait until 9:00 AM since the agency is waiting to get a call from the factory, if there is work and if not, sorry, you have to go home."*

The threat of having to go back to the agency made women reluctant to question their managers. Perma-temp workers in logistics would often assume the costs of having to stay late, like paying a rideshare if public transportation stopped running at night, or paying childcare for late pick-ups, rather than tell the manager they needed to leave. Their main rationale for assuming these costs was that they wanted to become a permanent employee at the end of the assignment.

> *"When my kid was little I had a babysitter…..I always had three babysitters so I had back up options. Because at work sometimes you are obligated to stay at work-- even if it's not really worth it because you have to pay more-- but you feel obligated to stay."*

Another woman in food service recounted an instance in which the lack of a formalized schedule caused discord between her and her fellow coworkers. Her boss verbally granted her request for time off but did not change the posted schedule. She then received harassing calls and texts from fellow workers saying that she put them in a "bad position" by calling out of work at the last minute. She believed her manager did not tell the other employees about her scheduled day off in retaliation for her request.

The need for scheduling favors and the great discretion managers have with administering policies make it difficult to challenge harassing and bullying behaviors in the workplace. Many women, especially in food service, described instances of sexual harassment by male customers who were in plain view of their male co-workers. These experiences were in conjunction with a highly sexualized atmosphere where women were told they were hired because they are young and attractive.

> *"Because there was another employee that had been working there for a while and was scheduled from 5 Am to like 11 AM and that was perfect… I wanted those hours. But he was like we get more tips when there's a girl at the counter; so he didn't teach me how to do anything else, but would also do weird stuff like squeeze past me and put his hands on my shoulders."*

> *"Women who flirt with the managers get promoted more quickly and get paid more with better shifts."*

Another woman recounted an instance of being harassed by a customer in the store and her complaint was not taken seriously.

"And I told my manager- hey, I had a customer treating me really rudely - that cussed me out on the way out the store. He (the manager) checked the security cameras and told me I did nothing wrong but that wasn't what I asked him. So there was no protocol to deal with disruptive customers, especially when they were harassing employees. I felt like, I don't know, all the men are in on it, you know? It was just so really disgusting. I felt gross after that."

Women were intimidated about challenging the sexualized environment in their workplaces because they believed their employer would retaliate by cutting their hours or giving them shifts that conflicted with their other responsibilities.

Economic Security

Women in our focus groups suffered economic instability from the uneven hours they worked from week to week. Participants also mentioned other economic consequences of unstable work that led to additional financial costs in their daily lives. As mentioned previously, participants offered up examples of direct costs like childcare and transportation where they had to pay extra because of their schedules.

"I would be hopeful that I could pick up my kids on time. But the problem was if you cannot get home in time to pick them up, it costs extra money, another five dollars, and another five dollars, to pay the babysitter."

Without a guaranteed number of work hours per week, budgeting was nearly impossible. Participants struggled with periods of being scheduled for too many hours and at other times not having enough hours.

"At my job, I can work a double shift. They give us the option but they do not pay us double, they make us work the other shift with another agency."

Having inconsistent hours also meant that women struggled with maintaining their eligibility for public benefits. In particular, women said that if their jobs gave them a sudden spike in hours around the holidays or other busy periods, they would need to fill out paperwork to requalify for Medicaid.

"When I go to do an application (for Medicaid) and I have a pay stub that is for 40 hours it's as if it were for the whole year I was getting paid 40 hours a week but it was not like I was earning 40 hours all the time. I don't understand. If we work for an agency it's not a permanent job."

When her hours were suddenly cut during a slow period in the summer, one woman relied on the food pantry at her college:

"And like groceries, you have to pay for. But fortunately I was living on campus over the summer, and there were like resources for off-campus living... like the food pantry. You get a week's worth of groceries for free if you were a student."

Older workers discussed not being able to make rent or electricity bills in the winter months. This phenomenon was more prevalent among women in logistics who experienced long down periods between work placements.

Women who worked in unstable jobs for the majority of their lives said that they were struggling economically because they received fewer hours and their raises were not keeping up with rent and other costs. Many women mentioned wanting to pick up additional work because their jobs were not giving them enough hours, but they could not offer both jobs open availability. Some women said they started driving for Lyft and Uber because these were the only jobs that would fit in with their already unstable work schedule.

> *"Yeah, because I want to do something different because I don't want to leave him (her son) with a sitter. I don't want to leave him with different people at night when I'm working, so that's why I had to look for another option."*

Women talk about not being able to advance out of low-quality jobs due to their difficult schedules. They have tried to develop their professional skills for better work but feel stuck because they need to maintain their current income streams. Low-quality jobs frequently offer few opportunities for within-firm advancement and inhibit workers' ability to upskill and search for better work (Lambert & Haley-Lock 2004). College-aged women participants, predominantly in retail, had been working since they were in high school. They report that the work disrupted their lives for years. Many feared that these jobs kept them from engaging in internships and other school activities that could propel them into better careers.

> *"And I think about often, the jobs I'm doing before and while getting my degree and if they're related at all. And if an actual professional employer who's in my field that I want to be in, is going to take me seriously or not because they're like, so your only vocational experience is, you know, point of register systems? I think about that a lot. Am I spending too much time on jobs trying to focus on making ends meet? And not trying to focus on jobs that could maybe propel me and give me some kind of upward mobility. Like not just working dead-end jobs. But when you need money, the dead-end jobs are how you make ends meet."*

Others said that hourly jobs have hurt them academically because they are pressured to work more than they can. Some of the college-aged participants said they had agreed to work more hours over the summer but could not negotiate fewer hours once the school year resumed. They felt that their ability to balance work with school was hindered by their fluctuating hours.

> *"It was all over the place, like really unsteady. One week, you'd have a lot of hours and one week, you won't. I remember my first job, it was like kind of balanced, you know, like of course the summer I'm not really doing much, I can like work more. It was like always under 30 hours. But I remember my second job, it was 40 or more, even on school days. Every week that I like worked there, I was doing more than 40 hours."*

Conclusions

Unstable schedules complicate the lives of many low-wage workers. In this study, we highlight how women working in retail, food service, and the logistics industries struggle to comply with their employers' demands for open availability, fluctuating work hours, and last-minute requests to change shifts. Employers use these scheduling practices to maximize their own power. Employees are at the mercy of such policies. Employers use and post schedules that are at best suggestions for the coming week because they change so frequently.

Workers who do not enjoy predictable schedules are often forced to make difficult choices. Participants in this study reported frustration with having to cancel doctor's appointments, pay late fees at childcare pick up, and inadvertently letting co-workers down when they were unable to meet the demands of last-minute schedule notices and changes. Workers who were balancing participation in higher education with paid work shared feelings of defeat and being stuck when having to miss a class or lose a job which they needed to pay their bills.

For most workers, including those who have a great deal of autonomy and flexibility in their work lives, planning and coordinating care for children and aging family members is a challenge. For low-wage workers managing unpredictable schedules, ensuring that their families are safe, healthy and well cared for, the challenge becomes even more acute. And for women who have relatives or children with disabilities, the stress of trying to maintain employment and attend to their loved one's needs created an overall feeling of despair.

The women in our focus groups represented a variety of ages and family arrangements. Despite these differences, they were all concerned with feeling trapped in a cycle of dead-end work because they could not juggle work with any other competing demands. When women could not comply with the requirements like constant open availability, schedules that changed daily or requests to work extra hours at the end of a shift last minute, they were pressured to quit or confronted with a reduction in hours.

Recommendations

Our focus group evidence contributes to a richer understanding of the effects of unstable schedules on women workers, especially women of color, and their ability to meet their responsibilities. These challenges are not without solutions and below we offer a range of pathways to consider as well as some specific steps New Jersey stakeholders can act upon.

Participants in our study explain how schedule instability leads to economic hardship because of limited opportunity for career growth and fluctuating paychecks. Research has indicated that women of color often experience the worst schedules (Schneider & Harknett, 2019). Widespread implementation of fair scheduling practices may help address racial inequalities. Evaluation research would be needed to understand if implementation of fair scheduling practices lives up to its promise to help correct this type of workplace inequality.

Fair Workweek legislation is gaining support across the country. Municipal Fair Workweek laws have passed in New York, Seattle, San Francisco, San Jose, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Oregon is the first state to pass statewide fair scheduling legislation. Research is currently underway to evaluate the implementation of Seattle's Secure Scheduling Ordinance (Haley-Lock et. al., 2018). Collection of baseline data in New Jersey could prove valuable in informing and evaluating effectiveness of any legislative efforts in the State aimed at achieving predictable scheduling.

Workers and employers can benefit when employees have advance notice of their schedules, regular predictable shifts, and a minimum number of hours per week. Employers can reduce turnover and increase employee loyalty by offering workers predictable schedules (Williams, et. al. 2018; Boushey & Glynn, 2012). With more employers experimenting with stable scheduling practices, research partnerships with employers to understand the benefits and challenges of implementing these policies would go a long way toward informing practitioners and policy makers about what works.

We recommend that government agencies and policymakers, employers, industry groups, worker advocates, researchers, and practitioners do more to help workers with unstable schedules.

- Workplaces should ensure advance notice of schedules, and reject the practice of "open availability," so that workers can set health appointments, attend classes, and schedule childcare.
- Scheduling software that drives "just in time" scheduling should be programmed to give managers and employees reasonably predictable staffing hours.
- Employers can offer group communication tools that employees can use, or maintain standby lists that facilitates workers taking time off.
- Firms that have implemented stable scheduling practices can consider requiring that their own policies be followed throughout the supply chain.
- New Jersey should consider legislative action that advances fair work week schedules and strengthens the ability of low wage workers to budget and plan.
- New Jersey should consider requiring staffing agencies to give each temporary employee certain information in writing about each new assignment, including a description of the work, the location and number of hours, so that workers can make informed decisions about these assignments.
- While some retailers have ended on-call scheduling, legislative solutions to support on-call workers through some level of remuneration could be explored.
- We encourage worker advocates and organizers to continue documenting instances of workplace violations, including sexual harassment, and empower workers to understand and utilize their rights.
- We also encourage the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to expand outreach and implementation efforts on New Jersey's Earned Sick Days law.
- Researchers and employers should partner to implement and evaluate workplace policies that provide consistent schedules so that employers can benefit from documented best practices in this area.

Recommendations in this report are grounded in our understanding of the best available research evidence and are informed by the voices and experiences of workers in this study. In addition to the above recommendations, we encourage dialogue across stakeholders and affected workers and industries for the purpose of improving the working conditions and lives of low wage workers in New Jersey through identification of enhanced workplace/industry practices. We also encourage the development of evidence-informed policy solutions.

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR WOMEN AND WORK

The Center for Women and Work (CWW) engages in research, education and programming that promotes economic and social equity for women workers, their families and communities. CWW's work focuses on addressing women's advancement in the workplace; providing technical assistance and designing programming for educators, industry and government; and, engaging in issues that directly affect the living standards of working families in New Jersey and across the nation. CWW is housed within the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and is a member of the Institute for Women's Leadership Consortium.

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