

# THE REALITY OF UNSTABLE AND UNPREDICTABLE SCHEDULES:

Across the country, millions of workers in low-wage industries like retail, healthcare, and hospitality suffer from unstable and unpredictable schedules.

## PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES. IMAGINE THAT:



Your work schedule changes from week to week or even day to day. Some days you work night shifts, while others you work days.



You only get 2-3 days notice of your work schedule.



You are scheduled to work 30 hours one week and 6 hours the next, with no expected pattern or warning.



Some days you pay for child care and transportation across the city, only to have your manager send you home without pay.

## IF YOU'RE ONE OF THESE WORKERS...



Most months, you can't make ends meet because your wildly fluctuating work hours mean you can't count on a steady paycheck.



You can't save for emergencies, to buy a house or car, go on vacation, or retire.



You can't go back to school to better your circumstances because your schedule won't let you attend class regularly.



You can't get good daycare for your kids, because most daycare services won't accept children on a sporadic basis or at night.



You probably need two or more jobs to make ends meet, but your schedules often conflict. You sometimes have to choose which job to skip, and your employers brand you as irresponsible.



Your family life is compromised, putting stress on everyone. You often miss family dinners, school plays, and homework time. You can't schedule doctor's appointments, parent-teacher conferences, or other activities because you don't know your schedule far enough in advance.

## IT'S BAD FOR BUSINESS AND SOCIETY TOO.

In industries with unstable and unpredictable schedules, employee morale and loyalty are low, leading to high turnover. In some industries turnover rates can be more than 100 percent! The costs of constantly hiring and training new employees are massive. And all too often, these workers make so little that they have to rely on public assistance—taxpayer dollars—to get by.

## IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY.

Employers like Costco are proving that treating workers well is good for business. Costco guarantees a minimum number of hours to their workers. They also post higher stock prices than other retailers, and their turnover costs are a fraction of their nearest competitors. But more employers need to join them. Women Employed is collaborating with employers to make schedules more consistent, predictable and adequate—benefiting workers and their families, and the businesses themselves.



**We need more people to learn about the issue and pledge to make a difference.** You can visit [womenemployed.org/publications](https://womenemployed.org/publications) to read about the issue, employers who use fair scheduling practices, and more solutions to the problem in our policy brief, *Tackling Unstable and Unpredictable Work Schedules*.

