

# In the Driver's Seat

## *An Uber Driver Survey*

*A national  
online survey by  
Coworker.org  
and the  
Partnership for  
Working Families*

**SPRING 2016**

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### INTRODUCTION

Uber's rapid expansion to more than 170 cities and markets over the last three years has generated much public discussion on the company's impact on employment standards, transit access and public safety. Yet these discussions often do not include the input of key industry experts: drivers. To learn more about Uber drivers' experience and to inform how policymakers should shape the future of on-demand ride services, Coworker.org and Partnership for Working Families conducted a national online survey of more than 300 self-identified Uber drivers.

The new data collected in this survey shows that Uber drivers share a common interest in raising wages and connecting with fellow drivers to address issues at work. Low fares, a major factor in driver income, top the list of driver concerns. While the majority of drivers report making significant investments in their cars to drive for Uber, most also report that driving for the company does not provide a stable source of income.

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### METHODOLOGY

Over ten weeks in spring 2016, Coworker.org and Partnership for Working Families conducted an online survey of Uber drivers. The survey queried drivers about their experiences driving for the company and opinions on a variety of issues. It also solicited comments through open-ended questions. The survey was distributed by email to self-identified Uber drivers who have engaged with campaigns on Coworker.org, on online message boards and via social media.

## FINDINGS



**A desire to connect.** In a survey of more than 300 Uber drivers nationally, 70 percent of drivers said they want to connect with fellow drivers to discuss common concerns, including information sharing on Uber policies, maximizing earnings and forming a driver association.



**Money in does not equal money out.** Drivers are investing in Uber, but say income is unstable. While just 23 percent of drivers see working for Uber as a stable source of income, 57 percent have bought, leased, or made substantial investments in vehicles to drive for Uber.



**Raising fares—and thus wages—is a top priority for drivers.** While Uber claims that lower fares do not hurt driver earnings, broad support for raising fares suggests drivers may not agree. Significantly, 80 percent of drivers said they support raising fares.



**Although the survey did not specifically ask Uber drivers about tips, many drivers wrote in that they would like an option for riders to provide tips within the app, like Lyft.** One driver wrote: *"Please put a place [in the app] where people can tip. People want to tip me all the time but do not have cash."* Additionally, thousands of self-identified drivers have joined a campaign on Coworker.org calling for Uber to add an in-app tip option.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this survey suggest that, despite varying schedules and geographically dispersed workplaces, Uber drivers have common concerns around wages and income stability and share the desire to connect with one another.

More exhaustive independent studies of Uber drivers' experiences, attitudes and earnings are necessary to inform stakeholders and policymakers as cities shape the future of this new industry. Drivers should have avenues to participate in policy discussions related to on-demand ride services, as well as to secure fair working conditions. Ultimately, drivers' insights will help cities ensure a safe, reliable and equitable transportation system for commuters, residents and drivers alike.