

New Research on Frontline Workers Finds Widening Expectation Gap in Schedule Flexibility, Pay Clarity and Digital Tools

Frontline Worker Research from DailyPay and Workday Reveals Closing This Gap Unlocks Key Advantages in Recruiting, Retention and Productivity

NEW YORK and PLEASANTON, Calif., September 17, 2026— [DailyPay](#), the leader in On-Demand Pay, and [Workday, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: WDAY), the enterprise AI platform for HR, finance and IT, today released “The Frontline Worker Expectation Gap,” new research that shows a significant gap between what frontline workers expect and what their employers provide.

Frontline Workers Are Making Calculated Decisions About Work

Frontline workers are calculating the cost of essential expenses that can be largely invisible to employers: According to the report, 78% of frontline workers calculate costs such as gas, commuting, childcare and other expenses before deciding whether to accept a new shift.

These decisions come amidst broader financial pressures. Nearly half (46%) of frontline workers resort to borrowing money between pay periods, and they also track their earnings closely, with 69% checking their pay after each shift.

Against that backdrop, the research identifies three areas where frontline workers want more from their workplace experience: **autonomy** over their time and money, **transparency** around pay and communication and access to **digital tools**.

The Expectation Gap

Employees' top priorities are their biggest pain points. The research revealed, every aspect of work measured has a double-digit gap between how important it is to frontline workers and how satisfied they are with their employer's offerings.

Control over work schedule is important to 72% of employees (or respondents), but only 51% are satisfied with the level of control they receive. It's the same story with pay transparency and digital tools. Pay clarity and high wages dominate employee priorities (84% and 88%, respectively), yet only 57% are very satisfied with their pay clarity. Mobile tools are important to 70%, but only 53% are satisfied with what they have access to.

"Employee expectations regarding their time, money and jobs have evolved. Yet, the systems supporting them haven't kept pace," said Andrew Brandman, chief operating officer, DailyPay. "As employers look to close the gap, they're also positioning themselves to have a competitive advantage in hiring and retention."

Employer Opportunity

The findings point to implications across recruiting, retention and the employee experience.

- **Recruiting:** 45% of frontline workers rank their schedule among the top three factors in accepting their current job, second only to pay.
- **Retention:** More than three-quarters (77%) of frontline workers say access to on-demand pay sways their decision between two competitive job offers. 23% say the right digital tools make them more likely to stay with their current employer.
- **Productivity:** More than a third of frontline workers say digital tools (36%) and AI (34%) boost productivity, while 34% say digital tools improve manager communication. In fact, frontline workers are open to AI when it makes their jobs easier. Half (50%) still worry AI will replace their jobs, but among those whose employers already use AI, 64% report a positive impact.

"Frontline workers want tools that make their daily lives easier, not more complex," said Josh Secrest, vice president of Paradox, Workday. "Employers won't solve retention issues with piecemeal technology. When you bring scheduling, pay clarity, and frontline support together on one intuitive platform, you are able to build trust with your teams while helping your business thrive."

Many frontline workers don't expect these gaps to close. More than half (52%) don't expect their employers to address them. By giving frontline workers greater autonomy, clearer transparency and the right digital tools, employers can build the trust that drives recruitment, retention and productivity, ultimately helping them stand out in a competitive talent market.

The report includes detailed findings and recommendations for how employers can address the gap. Download the research report at www.dailypay.com/resource-center/frontline-worker-study.

Research methodology

The research was conducted online in the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of DailyPay among 2,208 adults ages 18-

45 who are employed and paid hourly. The survey was conducted April 23 – May 2, 2026.

Data is weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, industry, and smoking status to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

About DailyPay

DailyPay is the leader in On-Demand Pay, helping employers modernize how people get their pay. DailyPay serves more than 2,000 employers and over 6 million employees, including many of the world's most recognized brands. Through access to earned wages and financial wellness tools, DailyPay empowers workers to manage their finances and helps employers attract and retain talent. DailyPay is helping define the future of pay, where money moves at the speed of work. Learn more at www.dailypay.com/press.

About Workday

[Workday](#) operates at the heart of the enterprise – HR, finance, and IT – where the margin for error is effectively zero. By tightly coupling AI with the context, guardrails, and trusted processes that run the business, Workday goes beyond AI that assists with work to agents that are capable of driving measurable outcomes. More than 11,500 organizations worldwide, including more than 65% of the Fortune 500, trust Workday to deliver. For more information about Workday, visit workday.com.

© 2026 Workday, Inc. All rights reserved. Workday and the Workday logo are trademarks of Workday, Inc. All other brand and product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.

Media Contacts:

DailyPay Media Inquiries
press@dailypay.com

Workday Media Inquiries
media@workday.com

Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(1\)](#)

<https://newsroom.workday.com/2026-09-17-New-Research-on-Frontline-Workers-Finds-Widening-Expectation-Gap-in-Schedule-Flexibility.-Pay-Clarity-and-Digital-Tools>