Providing workers with a path through challenging times to a more equitable economy

Highlights of EPI’s recent accomplishments

Since our founding in 1986, the Economic Policy Institute has worked for an economy where all working people have good jobs, a voice at work, fair schedules, quality health care, retirement security, and realistic hopes for a better future. Our efforts to center the concerns of working Americans in economic policy debates are as urgent as ever. The global pandemic and ensuing deep economic distress have exacerbated acute systemic inequities. EPI’s cutting-edge research and policy analyses provide lawmakers, opinion leaders, advocates, activists, journalists, and the public with a sound evidence base for a strong policy response—to get through the crisis and to a post-pandemic economy centered on worker power and racial and gender justice.

For more information on our work, visit epi.org.
Charting a course through the COVID-19 pandemic

At the outset of the crisis, EPI shifted into rapid response mode, providing an accurate and timely picture of the economic shock. Policymakers, advocates, and the media turned to us to understand the effects on workers and the threats to their health and financial security. Through reports, webinars, testimony, and countless interviews, our experts helped win protections for vulnerable workers, ensure paid sick leave, extend unemployment insurance, and identify a path to full economic recovery.

In early March, EPI urged the federal government to blunt the economic pain of the pandemic by picking up the tab for COVID-19-related health spending, providing cash payments to households, and mandating paid sick leave.

go.epi.org/reliefplan

Predicting 14 million jobs lost by summer, EPI argued for $2.1 trillion in the initial fiscal stabilization package (the CARES Act) and continues to call for more relief to boost economic demand and lower unemployment.

go.epi.org/sizeofstimulus

EPI showed how the loss of health care coverage for millions of workers “laid bare the huge uncertainty that employer-linked health insurance introduces into U.S. families’ lives.”

go.epi.org/healthinsurancelosses

EPI made the case for federal aid to state and local governments and for sustaining the $600 increase in weekly unemployment insurance benefits. A bipartisan EPI panel of top economists linked state and local aid to protecting jobs in education and other sectors and to economic growth.

go.epi.org/aidtostates • go.epi.org/restoreui

EPI shone a light on the ways that distance learning during the pandemic is likely widening educational inequalities. In a webinar featuring Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, and Philadelphia middle school teacher Ivey Welshans, EPI researchers laid out their plan for rebuilding the U.S. education system.

go.epi.org/covideducation • go.epi.org/covideduevent

More at epi.org/research/coronavirus
Making the case for racial justice

The disproportionate impact of the coronavirus pandemic on Black and Latinx workers and the demonstrations that followed George Floyd’s murder further exposed the systemic racial and ethnic disparities in the U.S. economy. Since 2008, EPI’s Program on Race, Ethnicity, and the Economy (PREE) has worked with other EPI programs to show how persistent disparities in unemployment, wages, income, poverty, and wealth are rooted in policy choices.

goe.epi.org/covidrace • go.epi.org/latinxworkersandcovid

HIGHLIGHTS

EPI research revealed the racial and ethnic disparities in access to health care, wealth, employment, wages, housing, income, and poverty that leave Black and Latinx workers most at risk during the coronavirus crisis.

goe.epi.org/covidresponse

During EPI’s “Reconstruction 2020” webinar, Color of Law author Richard Rothstein, PREE Director Valerie Wilson, and Black leaders discussed policies to value Black lives and bolster Black economic opportunity.

goe.epi.org/reconstructionevent

The 1,000 participants in EPI’s “Rebuilding the House That Anti-Blackness Built” webinar learned how to build an inclusive economy centering the needs of Black women.

goe.epi.org/covidresponse

goe.epi.org/blackwagegap • go.epi.org/blackgenderpaygap

More at epi.org/pree
In the last five years, EARN has been involved in over 30 successful minimum wage campaigns, including passage of a statewide $15 minimum wage in Virginia—the first among Southern states—and a November ballot initiative for a $15 minimum wage in Florida.

epi.org/minimum-wage-tracker

EARN in the South and EARN in the Midwest are recent initiatives to strengthen the progressive economic policy and grassroots infrastructures in those regions to win state and local policies that advance worker, racial, and gender justice through close EARN group and grassroots collaboration. EARN’s Worker Power Project, another new initiative, bolsters state-level efforts to give workers a stronger voice on the job.

More at earn.us
Building worker power

One of the strongest forces for equality and a vibrant middle class is the collective power of workers. When unions are robust, they secure rights, wages, and workplace protections that benefit all workers. When laws and institutions favor asymmetrical power of employers, however, workers lose out. In 2020, the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act passed the U.S. House thanks in part to EPI research and an EPI petition signed by more than 130 groups. During the floor vote, members of Congress cited EPI research.

HIGHLIGHTS

An EPI analysis early in 2020 showed that a weakened labor movement leads to rising economic inequality.
[link]

An EPI COVID-19 report explained how unionized workers have secured enhanced safety measures, additional premium pay, and paid sick time during the pandemic, and cited 12 policies that would boost worker rights, safety, and wages.
[link]

EPI launched the Unequal Power project, dedicated to the memory of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, to address the faulty assumption that there is equal power between employees and employers—an assumption that persists in economics, law, political science, and philosophy. Project reports and case studies argue for frameworks that advance the rights, freedom, and power of American workers.
[link]

A federal court struck down most of a harmful Department of Labor rule, citing EPI research on the rule’s $1 billion annual cost to workers. By narrowing the definition of a joint employer, the rule would have let more firms off the hook for violating wage and hour protections.
[link]

The National Labor Relations Board resumed union elections in the spring after EPI analysis and social media blasted the suspension of elections for depriving workers of power at a time when nurses and other essential workers were being forced to work without adequate protective gear or sick leave.
[link]

More at epi.org/research/unions-and-labor-standards
Reaching broad audiences in the news and social media feeds

Media interviews of EPI experts hit record levels, as influential national and local outlets relied on EPI to explain the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic—and the benefits and shortcomings of the policy response. EPI has been mentioned almost 50,000 times across TV, radio, print, and online stories this year. EPI also substantially increased its social media engagement.

HIGHLIGHTS

117,000 views
EPI videos on YouTube

221,000 followers
Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram

366,000
EPI email subscribers

1.4 million
Peak monthly page views on epi.org

Follow @economicpolicy on all social media channels
Leading the way in data sharing and visualization

Each year, EPI researchers publish hundreds of charts and maps that tell an important story in a single glance. They are interactive, so anyone can download the underlying data, and are made to share on social media. Our charts appear in tweets by thought leaders, articles by prominent journalists, books on economics, briefings by members of Congress, and even in a display case at the National Museum of American History!

HIGHLIGHTS

Teachers are now paid 19.2% less than other college graduates with similar characteristics

Source: Economic Policy Institute

What economy will President-Elect Biden inherit?

- 7.0 million Employed but experiencing cut in pay and hours
- 4.5 million Dropped out of labor force
- 11.1 million Officially unemployed
- 3.1 million Unemployed but misclassified as employed or not in the labor force

Source: Economic Policy Institute

When inequality goes up, working people pay the price

Top 1% wages +402%
Productivity +253%
Pay +116%

Source: Economic Policy Institute

Visit epi.org/signup to be sent our latest charts.

See Teacher Pay Penalty Dips but Persists in 2019, by Sylvia Allegretto and Lawrence Mishel, September 17, 2020 go.epi.org/teacherpaygap

See “What the Next President Inherits,” by Heidi Shierholz, November 6, 2020 go.epi.org/presidentelect
