

Gig Economy Facts

Who are the workers of the gig economy?

- There are 50 million gig workers in the U.S. today, making up 33% of the entire workforce
- 64% are independent contractors; 14% freelance business owners; 10% temporary workers; 8% moonlighters; 3% diversified (workers with multiple sources of income), based on primary source of free agent income
- 88% choose free agency for positive reasons, with personal empowerment/career opportunities topping the list
- Free agents are as likely to hold higher degrees of education as those in traditional employment
- Free agency is more popular among older generations, though Gen Y free agents are on the rise, increasing significantly from 26% in 2015 to 32% in 2016
- More than traditional workers, free agents are likely to possess a professional/technical skillset
- Free agency cuts across all industries

Why do they matter?

- Micro-businesses (freelance business owners with fewer than five employees) constitute 17% of U.S. GDP, generating \$2.4 trillion in sales¹
- 82% of free agents are financial contributors to their households, and 69% are the sole or primary wage earner
- Free agent ranks have grown over the years and are critical to how work gets done

What are the concerns?

- 47% of free agents feel “unprotected/naked” without a safety net of traditional employment benefits
- 59% of free agents believe the current protections for free agents are inadequate
- 75% of free agents are interested in providing financial support for candidates and legislators favoring policies that provide better safety nets to free agents
- 52% of free agents are concerned about the availability of health insurance, while 50% are concerned about the availability of retirement funding.
- 68% of surveyed firms agree that the social contract – whereby health, retirement and other benefits are generally tied to traditional, full-time W-2 employment – should be reformed²
- While only 28% of traditional workers say they would consider working as a free agent in the future, that number jumps to 47% if benefits were made available
- 67% of free agents agree that there needs to be an organization that provides greater protections and benefits to Free Agents, and 41% say they are likely to support such an organization

Source: Kelly Services Research & Analysis, except where noted

¹ Association for Enterprise Opportunity, as read in http://www.huffingtonpost.com/claudia-viek/microbusiness-is-the-back_b_4215562.html

² *Workforce of the Future Survey*, which was sponsored and developed by Burson-Marsteller, the Markle Foundation, The Aspen Institute's Future of Work Initiative and *TIME*: <http://www.burson-marsteller.com/the-workforce-of-the-future-survey/#sthash.kb9nhDJ7.dpuf>