



New York City Comptroller
Scott M. Stringer

NEWS

PRESS RELEASE

PR15-03-028

NEWS RELEASE

Contact : Eric Sumberg, (212) 669-3535, esumberg@comptroller.nyc.gov

March 18, 2015

COMPTROLLER STRINGER REPORT FINDS NEW YORK IS AMERICA'S HARDEST WORKING CITY

New York City's Typical Work Week and Commute add up to 49.1 Hours; Lower Wage Workers Face Toughest Commutes

(New York, NY) – Full-time workers in New York City have longer workweeks than those in 29 other major U.S. cities when commuting times are taken into account, according to a first-of-its-kind [analysis of workplace trends](#) released today by New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer. The study found that lower-wage workers often endure the most brutal commutes, and the findings suggest a need for workplace policies that help to balance work and family life, in addition to better investment in our mass transit system.

“New York is America’s hardest working city, but it’s a one-two punch for lower wage workers, who get paid less and travel longer to get to work,” Comptroller Stringer said. “This means employees in the Big Apple get paid less than it appears on an hourly basis, because their commutes are significantly greater than anyone else in the country. New Yorkers are dedicated, ambitious and tough, but to compete in the 21st century we need to expand our transit networks and advance policies like flexible work arrangements and predictable scheduling.”

Comptroller Stringer’s study examined microdata from the 1990 and 2000 census and the 2013 American Community Survey to evaluate trends in work and commuting hours. The analysis found that full-time workers in New York City spend slightly more time at work than do workers in the next 29 largest cities, but they also spend about two hours more per week commuting — an average of 6 hours and 18 minutes per week. The combined work and commuting workweeks of New York City workers averages over 49 hours – three to four hours longer than in some other large cities.

Further findings of the study include:

- **In almost all common occupations, full-time New York City workers have longer combined work-commuting weeks than their counterparts in other large cities.** Finance sector workers in New York City top off at 53 hours per week, almost four more hours per week than their counterparts in other cities. Longer work hours, relative to other cities, are characteristic of the majority of New York’s industries, including advertising, media, computer, and legal

services. Accountants and auditors, financial managers, cashiers, and janitors and building cleaners also have unusually long workweeks.

- **Occupations like security guards and home health care workers are heavily burdened by longer work weeks and commutes.** While employees in higher paid sectors can afford to live closer to the City's core in areas well-served by mass transit, lower-wage workers increasingly live in neighborhoods outside the city's job core—forcing them to spend more time commuting and less time with family. For instance, security guards have the longest commutes, spending more than eight hours per week commuting on average. Nursing and home health aides and maids and housekeepers also report long commutes, while chief executives, physicians and surgeons report some of the shortest commutes.
- **Significantly fewer women with children work in New York City than in other cities across the country.** The Labor Force Participation Rate for New York City women with children is 3 percentage points lower than the average of the other 29 cities in the study and well below that of Boston, Philadelphia and San Francisco. Fewer working mothers in New York City work part time than in other large cities, and the rate of working from home is about the same. Despite the long workweeks and commutes, there is no evidence that workers in New York City have greater scheduling or telecommuting flexibility than workers elsewhere.
- **On average, New York City's full-time workers earned about 16 percent more than workers did in other large cities in 2013.** However, when New Yorkers' longer work hours and commutes are factored in, that wage advantage plays out in dramatically different ways. Some higher-income groups, like lawyers and judges, retained an effective wage premium of 15 percent, while others, such as cooks (8 percent) and waiters and waitresses (4 percent) did not benefit as much from their lengthy workweeks. The situation is reversed at the lower end of the spectrum: Due to long commutes and lower pay, nursing and home health care aides earned an effective wage premium that was *11 percent less* than their counterparts in other large cities even before adjusting for the higher cost of living.
- **Nationally, the longest workweeks are in the mining, motion pictures and broadcasting, legal services, advertising, and computer systems industries.** Workers in cities that have a high concentration of those industries, including San Francisco, Washington D.C., Charlotte and Houston typically spend the most hours at work. New York City ranks 12th among the top 30 U.S. cities in terms of usual hours spent at work.

“If New York City is going to symbolize the American Dream, we can't be a nightmare when it comes to long work hours and commuting. Our residents deserve better. We need to give New Yorkers a 21st century transit system and better utilize women's skills so that they don't have to choose between work and family,” Stringer concluded.

Visit www.comptroller.nyc.gov for latest news, events and initiative
Follow Comptroller Stringer on [Twitter](#). To receive Twitter updates via text message,
text "follow scottmstringer" to 40404.
View the latest Comptroller's office videos on [Youtube](#).

###

