

A group of people, likely restaurant workers, are holding up a large sign. The sign is dark with a white border and contains the text 'WILL WORK FOR FAIR WAGES' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The background is a warm, orange-red color with a blurred image of the people holding the sign. On the left side, a portion of a check is visible, showing fields for 'PAY TO THE ORDER OF', 'AMOUNT', 'BANK NAME', 'STREET NAME', and 'CITY NAME, CA 90000'.

**WILL WORK
FOR
FAIR WAGES**

Addressing the Illinois Restaurant
Industry's Ongoing Staffing Crisis

FEBRUARY 2023

One Fair Wage

UC Berkeley Food Labor Research Center

1 | INTRODUCTION

The subminimum wage for tipped workers is still \$7.80 per hour an hour in the state of Illinois, and \$9.24 per hour in Chicago.¹ This is less than the state’s full minimum wage of \$13 per hr and Chicago’s minimum wage of \$15.40 per hr.² A direct legacy of slavery, the subminimum wage affects a state workforce of close to 200,000 tipped workers that is 63 percent women and 40 percent people of color.³

After Emancipation, the restaurant industry sought to hire newly freed Black people without paying them – forcing them to live on tips.⁴ This concept was made law in 1938 as part of the New Deal, excluding a workforce of mostly Black women from the full minimum wage, even when other workers received the federal minimum wage for the first time.⁵ Today, Illinois remains one of 43 states that permits this business model built on slavery, and has allowed a workforce that is overwhelmingly women and disproportionately women of color to continue to receive a subminimum wage 150 years since Emancipation.⁶ Tipped restaurant workers in Illinois and across the country have struggled with twice the poverty rate of other workers and the highest rates of sexual harassment of any industry because they must tolerate inappropriate customer behavior to feed their families in tips.^{7,8}

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the subminimum wage for tipped workers became unlivable. Workers across the country reported that tips went down, and harassment went up, and as a result, millions of workers started leaving the industry.⁹ This report presents new data from recent surveys conducted with over 1200 Illinois restaurant workers from June 2022 to January 2023 that documents the ongoing staffing crisis in the Illinois restaurant industry.

TABLE 1.
Demographics of
Illinois Tipped and
Restaurant Workers

GENDER

Men	34%
Women	66%

GENDER

White	72%
People of Color	28%

Source: OFW Analysis of American Community Survey Responses from 2016-2020 pulled from IPUMS USA

KEY FINDINGS

1 | Illinois’ restaurant industry is facing the worst staffing crisis in its history, and workers report low wages as the primary factor preventing them from returning.

- › Nationally, there are more job openings per job seeker than at any point in the past decade. The restaurant industry has one the highest ratios of job openings to job seekers.

- › In Illinois, more than 1 in 7 restaurant workers (14 percent) have left the industry and not returned.
- › According to workers surveyed by One Fair Wage, over one third (36 percent) of workers who remain in the Illinois restaurant industry are considering leaving their job.
- › The number one reason restaurant workers report they are leaving the industry is due to low wages.
- › The number one factor that restaurant workers report would make them return to work is a full, stable, livable wage with tips on top.

2 | A significant percentage of current Illinois tipped restaurant workers (56 percent) report they are regularly not receiving enough tips to bring them to the full minimum wage – more so than their counterparts in other states - and this problem is even worse for Black restaurant workers.

- › Black restaurant workers in Illinois are more likely than their counterparts in other states to report tips are regularly not bringing them to full state minimum wage and employers are not making up the difference (59 percent in Illinois compared to 48 percent nationally).
- › Nearly two thirds of Black women tipped workers in Illinois (61 percent) report not earning enough in tips or wages to bring them to the full minimum wage. White men and women tipped restaurant workers report that they also are regularly not receiving enough tips or wages to bring them to the full minimum wage. One in two white women and one in three white men in Illinois report that tips do not bring them to the state’s full minimum wage.

3 | Hundreds of Illinois restaurants have raised wages to recruit staff.

- › As noted in Indeed.com postings, hundreds of Illinois restaurants have voluntarily raised tipped workers’ wages to the full minimum wage with tips on top in order to recruit staff. However, many report that, while they fare better in finding workers when they raise wages, they still cannot find enough staff, because workers want a guarantee that wage increases will be permanent. There is a need for statewide policy change to signal a permanent increase in wages.

Given the restaurant industry’s ongoing and severe staffing crisis, there is national momentum for change; in November 2022, 76 percent of Washington, D.C. voters voted to raise the wage for tipped workers from \$5.35 to the full minimum wage of \$16.10 per hour. Advancing policy to support these restaurant workers and owners



by ending the subminimum wage for tipped workers would positively impact an overall restaurant industry of over 450,000 workers in Illinois.^{10,11} D.C. will join seven states that already require that tipped workers be paid a full minimum wage with tips on top – Alaska, California, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.¹² These seven states have had the same or higher restaurant sales, employment growth rates, small business growth rates, and tipping averages than Illinois and the 42 other states with a subminimum wage for tipped workers.¹³ Workers in these states also report one half the rate of sexual harassment as workers in Illinois and the dozens of

states with a subminimum wage for tipped workers, since women in the seven states receive tips – often at higher rates than in the states with subminimum wages – but are not as dependent on tips to feed their families to survive.¹⁴

Following suit, hundreds of Illinois restaurants are already raising wages to recruit staff, but many restaurateurs are finding that these workers will not return without a policy guaranteeing a full minimum wage with tips on top.¹⁵

2 | THE ONGOING STAFFING CRISIS IN THE ILLINOIS RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

With the COVID-19 pandemic and the initial economic shutdown in the spring of 2020, over 6 million workers lost their jobs. In Illinois, over 90,000 restaurant workers lost their jobs at the start of the pandemic.¹⁶ At that time, 39 percent of restaurant workers surveyed by One Fair Wage reported they could not access unemployment benefits because they were told their subminimum wage was too low to qualify for benefits.¹⁷ By the end of 2021, over 1 million workers still had not returned to the industry nationwide.¹⁸ In Illinois, out of the 90,000 workers who lost their jobs, nearly 1 in 7 (13,000) have still not returned to the restaurant industry.¹⁹



Nearly two-thirds of current Illinois tipped workers surveyed reported that their tips have decreased by at least half at least in part because sales dramatically decreased.^{20,21} Workers also reported that customer hostility, health risks and harassment increased, with women tipped workers being asked to remove their masks so men could judge their looks and their tips on that basis.²²

Not surprisingly given decreased income and increased harassment, the restaurant industry in Illinois and nationwide has experienced a severe and ongoing staffing crisis. Across the national economy, there are more job openings per job seeker than anytime in the last ten years.²³ At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when millions of workers were laid off, the ratio of job openings per job seeker fell to 0.24; roughly four workers were competing for one given job. Compared to the last major recession in 2008-2009, there were even more job seekers per job opening (0.15) and the labor market recovered slowly.²⁴ However, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are significantly more job openings per job seeker. As of July 2022, across all industries, there are 2.45 job openings per job seeker.

The rate of job openings in the restaurant industry per job seeker is the highest of almost any industry.²⁵ Among restaurant workers this increases to 2.72, i.e. almost three jobs available for every one worker. This means workers have a greater ability to choose between jobs, seeking the best option, and demand better conditions and higher pay.²⁶ The restaurant industry has seen many workers return since the

start of the pandemic, but even with many returning to work, the industry still employs far less workers than it did pre-pandemic.²⁷



In addition, the staffing crisis has been compounded by ongoing growth in the industry and the need for even more workers, as seen by the fact that the number of job postings in the industry is over 500,000 more than before the pandemic.²⁸ Finally, the monthly quit rate for workers in the industry remains nearly 30 percent higher than before the pandemic.²⁹

The number one reason people are leaving the industry is due to low wages.

Forty two percent of Illinois restaurant workers surveyed reported that the reason they are leaving the industry is due to low wages and tips – 20 percentage points higher than any other reason. In fact, nearly half (48 percent)

of Illinois restaurant workers surveyed said a full stable livable wage would be the primary factor that would make them return to the industry – more than double the rate of most other factors.³⁰

3 | BLACK TIPPED WORKERS IN ILLINOIS ARE NOT EVEN EARNING THE MINIMUM WAGE

As described above, with the pandemic, nearly two thirds of all Illinois tipped workers reported that their tips decreased. A significant percentage (56 percent) of all Illinois tipped workers now report that their tips regularly do not even bring them to the full minimum wage as required by state and federal law. In fact, Illinois tipped workers surveyed by One Fair Wage were more likely than workers in other states to report that they were not earning the full minimum wage in tips and wages. In Illinois, 56 percent of workers reported that their tips did not bring them up to minimum wage, compared to the national average of 48 percent.

This phenomenon is most prevalent among Black tipped workers in Illinois, who experience even greater violations of their rights than their counterparts both in Illinois and across the country.

Almost 60 percent (59 percent) of Black tipped workers in Illinois surveyed reported they regularly did not receive enough tips to bring them to the full minimum wage, compared to 41 percent of white workers, and 48 percent of workers nationally.

TABLE 2
Illinois Tipped Workers Receipt of Full Minimum Wage by Race

Source: One Fair Wage Survey Data, July 7, 2022 to February 13, 2023

<i>Do your tips or additional wages from your employer bring you up to the minimum wage in your state?</i>					
BLACK WORKERS IN ILLINOIS			WHITE WORKERS IN ILLINOIS		
Yes	115	21%	Yes	45	32%
No	340	61%	No	57	41%
ALL TIPPED WORKERS IN ILLINOIS			NATIONAL AVERAGE TIPPED WORKERS		
Yes	252	20%	Yes	542	27%
No	714	56%	No	957	48%

Black women were even more likely to report that tips did not bring them to the full minimum wage; nearly two thirds of Black women reported this, compared to 48 percent of white women, and 33 percent of white men.

TABLE 3
Illinois Tipped Workers Receipt of Full Minimum Wage by Race and Gender

Source: One Fair Wage Survey Data, July 7, 2022 to February 13, 2023

Do your tips or additional wages from your employer bring you up to the minimum wage in your state?

	BLACK WOMEN		WHITE WOMEN		WHITE MEN			
Yes	115	21%	Yes	27	31%	Yes	14	33%
No	340	61%	No	41	48%	No	14	33%

The race and gender disparities represented in these responses have implications for Black women’s ability to support themselves and their families without accessing government assistance, including their need to access SNAP benefits and housing assistance. More than half of Black women tipped workers reported needing access to SNAP benefits (56 percent) compared to 23 percent of White women and 14 percent of White men. Similarly, Black women tipped workers were more than 3 times as likely to need government housing assistance as White women (7 percent) and White men (5 percent).

TABLE 4
SNAP Benefit Survey Responses for Black and White Women, and White Men

Source: One Fair Wage Survey Data, July 7, 2022 to February 13, 2023

Do you currently receive SNAP benefits? (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

	BLACK WOMEN		WHITE WOMEN		WHITE MEN			
Yes	309	56%	Yes	20	23%	Yes	6	14%
No	246	44%	No	66	77%	No	36	86%

TABLE 5
Government Housing Assistance Survey Responses for Black and White Women, and White Men

Source: One Fair Wage Survey Data, July 7, 2022 to February 13, 2023

Do you receive any government housing assistance?

	BLACK WOMEN		WHITE WOMEN		WHITE MEN			
Yes	147	26%	Yes	6	7%	Yes	2	5%
No	408	74%	No	80	93%	No	40	95%

4 | HUNDREDS OF ILLINOIS RESTAURANTS HAVE RAISED WAGES TO RECRUIT STAFF

By tracking Indeed.com job postings, One Fair Wage has identified nearly 5,000 restaurants nationwide and over two hundred in Illinois that are now voluntarily offering tipped workers a full minimum wage with tips on top, even though they are allowed to pay the state subminimum wage of \$7.80.³¹ This significant increase in the number of restaurants paying a full minimum wage is reflective of a national trend that has emerged in response to the national staffing crisis in the restaurant industry. According to data from 2021, over one third of businesses in the restaurant industry reported that they raised wages – up from 10 percent in 2020.³² Establishments within the food and accommodation industry raised wages more than in any other industry.³³

Even with these wage increases, the industry continues to face its worst staffing crisis in recent history. Restaurant employers continue to seek help in recruiting staff – and many more are supporting policy change to create a level playing field and signal to thousands of workers that wage increases will be permanent and it is worth returning to work in restaurants. For example, RAISE, an association of ‘responsible’ restaurant employers supportive of policy to raise the minimum wage and end subminimum wages, has grown from 800 restaurants pre-pandemic to 2,500 restaurants today, as many more employers have become supportive of One Fair Wage policy.

TABLE 6
Illinois Restaurants
Providing Wages Above
the Subminimum Wage,
January 2023

Makray Memorial Golf Club	Barrington
Morettis Ristorante & Pizza	Bartlett
Apple Villa	Batavia
Cintas	Bedford Park
St. Clair Country Club	Belleville
Westminster Village	Bloomington
Master Axe	Bolingbrook
Burnzees Bar & Grill	Brimfield
Joanie’s Pizzeria	Buffalo Grove
King Bruwaert House	Burr Ridge
Round the Clock Restaurant	Calumet

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Source: OFW review of job postings on Indeed.com between January 2021 through February 2023

TABLE 6 Continued

Galati's Hideaway	Cary	Don Pedro Mexican Restaurant	Chicago
Lincolnshire Fields Country Club	Champaign	El Nandu Restaurant	Chicago
Lula Cafe	Chicago	Flammin Restaurant	Chicago
Split-Rail	Chicago	Herb Thai Restaurant	Chicago
The Grail Cafe	Chicago	Huaraches Dona Chio	Chicago
Flour Power	Chicago	Huaraches Mexican Restaurant	Chicago
Honky Tonk BBQ	Chicago	Josephine's Southern Cooking	Chicago
5 Loaves Eatery	Chicago	Broken Barrel Bar	Chicago
Superkhana	Chicago	Vermilion	Chicago
Big Jones	Chicago	Barangaroos	Chicago
Cabra	Chicago	Baba Pita	Chicago
Sushi by Bou	Chicago	Chicago Oyster House	Chicago
Radio Room	Chicago	Berghoff Restaurant	Chicago
Tequila CJ	Chicago	Burger Theory	Chicago
The Budlong Hot Chicken	Chicago	The Sit Down Cafe & Sushi Bar	Chicago
The X Pot	Chicago	Kingston Mines	Chicago
Junebug Cafe	Chicago	Jefferson Tap & Grill	Chicago
Tanaka Ramen	Chicago	The Clare	Chicago
Second City Theaters	Chicago	Drury Hotels	Collinsville
Scofflaw Group	Chicago	South Side Country Club	Decatur
The Darling	Chicago	Cafe la Cave	Des Plaines
Ella's BBQ	Chicago	The Melting Pot	Downers Grove
Ed Debevic's	Chicago	Salty Boar	Du Quoin
Kitchen United	Chicago	River Street Taven	East Dundee
Sunda	Chicago	Bella Milano	Edwardsville
Qiao Lin Hotpot	Chicago	Eagle Rail Depot	Eldorado
Siena Tavern in River North	Chicago	Sushi Station	Elgin
Adelaide Hall	Chicago	Three Crowns Park	Evanston
Bar Sotano	Chicago	Ten Mile House	Evanston
Boulevard Sports Lounge	Chicago	The Junction Diner	Forest Park
Bureau Bar	Chicago	BBQ'd Productions	Gages Lake
Carmelo's Tace Place	Chicago	Greenfields of Geneva	Geneva
Cousin's Grill	Chicago	The Herrington Inn & Spa	Geneva

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TABLE 6 Continued

Edley's Bar-B-Que	Glen Carbon	White Chocolate Grill	Naperville
Marinella Italian Restaurant	Glen Ellyn	Maggiano's Little Italy	Naperville
Valley Lo Club	Glenview	Cooper's Hawk Winery & Restaurants	Naperville
Kohl Children's Museum	Glenview	WhirlyBall	Naperville
Tangled Roots Brewing Company	Glenview	Monarch Landing	Naperville
Hawthorn Woods Country Club	Hawthorn Woods	Rosati's Pizza	New Lenox
The Summer Inn	Highland Park	DESTIHL Brewery	Normal
Kitakata Ramen Ban Nai	Hoffman Estates	Hop House Southern Eatery	O'Fallon
The Saddle Room	Hoffman Estates	Butterfield Country Club	Oak Brook
QP Greek Food with a Kick	Hoffman Estates	Lou Malnati's Pizzeria	Oak Brook Terrace
Mist Lounge	Itasca	Crab King Cajun Boil & Bar	Oakbrook Terrace
Som Za Thai Cuisine	Joilet	Mora Asian Kitchen	Oak Park
The Haley Mansion	Joilet	Georgios Banquets	Orland Park
Luccas Ristorante	La Grange	Square Celt Alehouse & Grill	Orland Park
Barrel House Social	La Grange	Heng Wing Restaurant	Palatine
La Grange Country Club	La Grange	Avalon Food & Spirits	Palos Hills
Oaken Bistro and Bar	Lake Forest	Zaza Cucina	Park Ridge
Kuro Bistro	Lake Forest	Cobbler Corner	Pekin
Grandma's Wine Bar & Cellar	Lakemoor	The Original Pancake House	Peoria
Next Mex	Lemont	Old Chicago Pizza	Peoria
Harbor Kitchen & Tap	Libertyville	Red Lobster	Peoria
Nancy's Pizza	Litchfield	The Fox Pub and Cafe	Peoria
Beacon Hill	Lombard	2 Chez Restaurant	Peoria
Uncle Julio's	Lombard	Lou's LaGrotto	Peru
Flat Top Grill	Lombard	Moretti's Ristorante and Pizzeria	Rosemont
The Village Tavern	Long Grove	Culver's	Saint Charles
Hidden Manna Cafe	Matteson	AJ Sliders	Saint Charles
Bar Louie	Matteson	StoneWood Ale House	Schaumburg
Tom's Steakhouse	Melrose Park	Brazil Express Grill	Schaumburg
EggCetera Cafe	Mokena	Shuffles	Schaumburg
Fifth Avenue Syndicate	Moline	May's Lounge	South Elgin
Moretti's	Morton's Grove	Engrained Brewery	Springfield
SixtyFour Wine Bar & Kitchen	Naperville	Conn's Hospitality Group	Springfield

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TABLE 6 Continued

Li'l Willy's Somkehouse BBQ	Springfield	Bloomington Country Club	Bloomington
Soulcial Kitchen	Swansea	Half Day Brewing Company	Lincolnshire
Prarie Landing Golf Club	West Chicago	Buffalo Wings & Rings	Naperville
Pappadeux Seafood Kitchen	Westmont	North Shore Distillery	Liberyville
Uncle Bubs BBQ	Westmont	Machine	Chicago
Red Mango	Wheaton	Agostino's Restaurant & Bar	Fairview Heights
Ridgeview Grill	Wilmette	Boulder Ridge Country Club	Lake in the Hills
Westmoreland Country Club	Wilmette	Rabbits Bar & Grill	Chicago
Maxwell's Restaurant & Bar	Woodhull	Dozy's Grill	Chicago
MJB Restaurant Group	Chicago	Tortilla Flatz	Plainfield
Zoup!	Woodridge	Hollywood Boulevard Cinema	Woodridge
Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen	Fairview Heights	Grant Park Bistro	Chicago
Gyu-Kaku Japanese BBQ	Naperville	The Silo Restaurant	La Grange
Pazzo's bar & Eatery	Lisle	Marianos	Westmont
Jeni's Ice Creams	Naperville	Brunch Cafe	Niles
Puttshack USA Inc	Oak Brook	Somsri Thai Cuisine	Winfield
Lake Street Pub	Roselle	Standard Market	Westmont
Clarendale of Algonquin	Algonquin	Fujiyama Japanese Steakhouse	Jacksonville
Riddles Comedy Club	Alsip	Iron Age Korean Steakhouse	Chicago
Champaign Country Club	Champaign	Harry Caray's Italian Steakhouse	Lombard
Nola Bar & Kitchen	Chicago	Bongo Room	Chicago
Pinstripes	Northbrook	Ashbury at Boughton Ridge	Bolingbrook
Georgio's Pizzeria & Pub	South Barrington	The Original Papa Joe's	Chicago Ridge
Fast Eddies Bon Air	Alton	Marshall's Landing	Chicago
Cozy Corner Restaurant	Chicago	Little Wok	Chicago
Alpine Country Club	Round Lake	501 Local	Winnetka
The Pub	Carol Stream	Aha Sushi	Gurnee
Fire Bar & Grill	Crystal Lake	Gatsby's Gaming	Clay City
Jack's Restaurant	Normal	Bottom Lounge	Chicago
Country Club of Peoria	Peoria Heights	Black & Gray Brewing Co	East Dundee
Home Run Inn	Chicago	El Cochino	Lake in the Hills
Noodles Pho U	Lombard	The Grove Country Club	Long Grove
The Balmoral Restaurant	Campton Hills	Todoroki	Evanston

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TABLE 6 Continued

Naperville Country Club	Naperville	Truluck's	Chicago
Buck's Pit Club	Hodgins	All Star Seafood & Sports	Chicago
The Aviary	Chicago	Murphy's Pub & Grill	Rockford
Alinea	Chicago	Balkan Taste	Mount Prospect
Roister	Chicago	Ron and Pats Pizza Shack	Antioch
Thassos Greek Restaurant	Palos Hills	Kyoto Garden	Glenview
Basil Leaf Cafe	Chicago	Lake Bluff Brewing	Lake Bluff
Tiny Tapp Cafe	Chicago	Willby's Restaurant & Lounge	Willowbrook
Tall Ship Windy	Chicago	LondonHouse	Chicago
Sushi Hall	Chicago	Berger Bros Pub	Winfield
Players Pub & Grill	Prospect Heights	Perla Negra Mariscos	Bolingbrook
Off the Wall Cafe	Park Ridge	Everyday Kitchen	Champaign
Shoreacres	Lake Bluff	Qahwah House	Lombard
Vito and Nick's 2 Pizza	Hickory Hills	The Monte Bello Estate	Lemont
Skokie Country Club	Glencoe	Le Colonial	Lake Forest
The Breakfast Club	Chicago	Cajun Boil and Bar	Oak Park
QC Coffee and Pancake House	Rock Island	FoxFire	Geneva
Pho Noodle House	East Peoria	Tac Quick	Chicago
The Lincoln Inn Family Restaurant	Dekalb	Chai Asian Bistro	Chicago
Eduardo's Enoteca	Chicago	Cocoa Chili Restaurant & Catering	Chicago
Blufish Sushi Bistro	Park Ridge	Doughboy's Chicago	Chicago
Bullpen Bar and Grill	Peoria	Flavor Cajun South Loop	Chicago
Beggars Pizza	New Lenox	Golden Thai Restaurant	Chicago
Bobby Deerfield	Deerfield	Carmelos Taco Place	Chicago
Oak Park Country Club	River Grove	Herb Restaurant	Chicago
Blue Sky Vineyard	Makanda	Huaraches Doña Chio	Chicago
Hollywood Casino Joliet	Joliet	Immm	Chicago
Goddess and the Baker	Chicago	Indie Cafe	Chicago
Jarabe	Chicago	Rock Wrap & Roll	Chicago
Whiffleboys Pizza	Murphysboro	Jaiyen Sushi & Noodle	Chicago
The Hampton Social	Chicago	Kinnaree Thai Kitchen	Chicago
Mora	Oak Park	Lizzy J Cafe	Chicago
Pescadero Seafood & Oyster Bar	Wilmette	Mole Village	Chicago

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TABLE 6 Continued

Nana Organic	Chicago	Sweet & Tart Shoppe	Park Ridge
Nipsey's Restaurant	Chicago	TaKOREA Cocina	Chicago
Noodles Etc	Chicago	Tanuki Sushi & Grill	Chicago
Peach's on 47th	Chicago	The New Look Salon and Restaurant	Chicago
Pearl's Place Restaurant	Chicago	The Woodlawn	Chicago
Peke's Pozole	Chicago	Wherewithall	Chicago
Pink Panini Soups & Salads	Hazel Crest	Windy City Café	Chicago
Ruk Edgebrook	Chicago	Wynwood Kitchen & Spirits	Chicago
Ruk Kimball	Chicago	Zhivago Restaurant	Skokie
Windy City Ribs & Whiskey	Chicago	Arun's Thai Restaurant	Chicago
Salsa's Grill	Chicago	Superkhana International	Chicago
Satay Restaurant	Chicago	Jibaritos on Harlem	Chicago
Silver Spoon Thai Restaurant	Chicago	La Humita Restaurant	Chicago
Snakes & Lattes	Chicago	DeColores Pilsen	Chicago
Sol de Mexico	Chicago	Flavor Brunch	Hazel Crest
Spoon Thai	Chicago	Jayien Sushi & Noodle	Chicago
		Gino's East and the Comedy Bar	Chicago

5 | CONCLUSION

Thousands of tipped workers in Illinois have left the restaurant industry and are not willing to return without One Fair Wage – a full minimum wage with tips on top. More than any other factor, workers have been abundantly clear that the primary factor that would make them return to work in restaurants is the guarantee of a full, stable, livable wage with tips on top. Hundreds of IL restaurant employers understand this and have raised wages voluntarily to a full minimum wage in order to recruit staff. It is time to support these responsible restaurant owners and their employees by requiring all restaurants in Illinois to pay a full minimum wage with tips on top – creating a level playing field in the industry and signaling to thousands of workers that it is worth returning to work in restaurants. Especially since a significant percentage are not even earning enough tips and wages to bring them to the state minimum wage, these workers are not likely to return without the guarantee provided by legislation requiring all restaurants to pay workers a full minimum wage with tips on top.



Passing policies to phase out the subminimum wage for tipped workers will end a legacy of slavery, increase wages for workers who are overwhelmingly women and disproportionately people of color, significantly reduce sexual harassment in the restaurant industry, bring thousands of workers back to work in the restaurant industry, allow thousands of restaurants in Illinois to fully reopen, and lead to a stronger restaurant industry overall.



APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

To measure employment and wage statistics of workers in the restaurant industry across a five-year period (2016 to 2020) One Fair Wage used Current Population Survey data, hosted by IPUMS, and included the following occupation codes:

- › 4000 Chefs and head cooks
- › 4010 First-line supervisors/managers of food preparation and serving workers
- › 4020 Cooks
- › 4030 Food preparation workers
- › 4040 Bartenders
- › 4050 Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food
- › 4060 Counter attendants, cafeteria, food concession, and coffee shop
- › 4110 Waiters and waitresses
- › 4120 Food servers, nonrestaurant
- › 4130 Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers
- › 4140 Dishwashers
- › 4150 Hosts and hostesses, restaurant, lounge, and coffee shop
- › 4160 Food preparation and serving related workers, all other

Data about worker experiences comes from a survey of 2003 respondents nationally with 1283 of those respondents in Illinois who reported that they are current restaurant workers who work in a position that receives tips. The survey asked workers primarily about work in the restaurant industry since the pandemic. The survey was sent to a non-representative sample from the One Fair Wage COVID-19 Tipped and Service Workers' Emergency Relief Fund applicant pool of tipped service workers in various states, and in person by OFW organizers collected between July 7, 2022 to February 13, 2023. This data is not exhaustive.

ENDNOTES

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