

Request for Articles: Understanding the Rise of Low-Wage Jobs and Nonstandard Work Arrangements

Russell Sage Foundation

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CALL FOR ARTICLES

RSF: THE RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION JOURNAL OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Issue on New Developments in American Job Quality: Understanding the Recent Rise of Low-Wage Jobs and Nonstandard Work Arrangements

Edited by

David R. Howell, The New School

and

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The question of job quality has emerged as a key challenge for researchers and policy-makers in the 21st century. The growing realization that the quality, not just the quantity, of jobs is central to addressing a myriad of social and economic problems—such as economic development, family formation and social integration, poverty and inequality, and individual well-being—has put this age-old topic on the front burner for social scientists.

This issue of RSF will focus on two important dimensions of the quality of jobs created in the past three decades in the United States. First, there has been an expansion of low-wage jobs, a phenomenon that has been documented by numerous studies, many of which have been sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation. This proliferation of low-wage work, especially among younger workers, has contributed to the weakening of the middle class, reversing the dramatic improvements experienced by the middle of the income distribution in the three decades following World War II.

Second, there has been a dramatic increase in nonstandard jobs such as temporary help agency workers, on-call workers, contract workers, and independent contractors or freelancers. Many of these jobs are *uncertain, unstable and insecure*, in which *employees bear most of the risks* of work (as opposed to businesses or the government) and *receive limited social benefits and statutory protections*. Recent studies document an increased incidence of alternative work arrangements, especially among workers hired through contract firms. While some nonstandard jobs may be good ones—such as well-paid consultants who have high control over the terms and conditions of work—most such jobs are characterized by low pay, low security, and poor working conditions.

This journal issue aims to bring together papers that examine three main topics related to job quality in the United States: the causes of the increase in low-

wage and nonstandard jobs; their *impacts on workers and their families*; and *policies* that are needed to enhance the quality of low-wage and nonstandard jobs. We discuss each topic area in turn, and illustrate the kinds of papers that we encourage for this journal issue.

[Please click here for a full description of the topics covered in this call for papers.](#)

Anticipated Timeline

Prospective contributors should submit a CV and an abstract (up to two pages in length, single or double spaced) of their study along with up to two pages of supporting material (e.g., tables, figures, pictures, etc.) no later than 5 PM EST on **December 20, 2017**, to:

rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com.

All submissions must be original work that has not been previously published in part or in full. Only abstracts submitted to rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com will be considered. Each paper will receive a \$1,000 honorarium when the issue is published. All questions regarding this issue should be directed to Suzanne Nichols, Director of Publications, at journal@rsage.org and not to the email addresses of the editors of the issue.

A conference will take place at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York City on **June 8, 2018**. The selected contributors will gather for a one-day workshop to present draft papers (due in a month prior to the conference) and receive feedback from the other contributors and editors. Travel costs, food, and lodging will be covered by the foundation. Papers will be circulated before the conference. After the conference, the authors will submit their final drafts on or before August 1, 2018. The papers will then be sent out to three additional scholars for peer review. Having received feedback from reviewers and the *RSF* board, authors will revise their papers before January 10, 2019. The full and final issue will be published in September 2019. Papers will be published open access on the RSF website as well as in several digital repositories, including JSTOR and UPCC/Muse.

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