

# Counting the Hustle:

## Platform Workers and Digital Entrepreneurship in Federal Household Surveys

**Platform workers** use a digital platform, such as a mobile app or website, to exchange goods and services. Federal survey do not directly ask about platform workers, so they are classified across occupations.

To find **platform workers**, we turned to detailed occupation write-ins on the American Community Survey (ACS).

- ACS 2018, 2019, & 2021
- Developed 8 platform related job or employer titles
- Identified unique text strings using write-in answers

b. What was the name of this person's employer, business, agency, or branch of the Armed Forces?

*NYC Rideshare App*

c. What kind of business or industry was this? Include the main activity, product, or service provided at the location where employed. (For example: elementary school, residential construction)

*Driving service*

e. What was this person's main occupation? (For example: 4th grade teacher, entry-level plumber)

*Driver*

f. Describe this person's most important activities or duties. (For example: instruct and evaluate students and create lesson plans, assemble and install pipe sections and review building plans for work details)

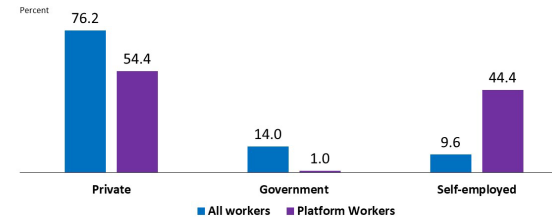
*Pick people up in my car, drive them where they need to go, and drop them off*

**Taxi Driver**

Final Census Code and Classification

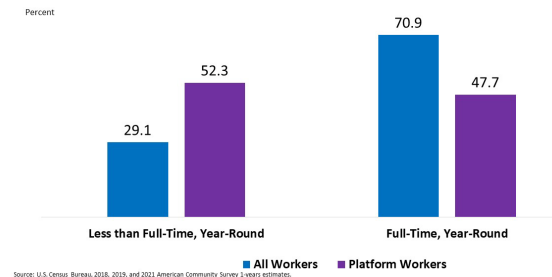
2018 Census Occupation Code: Taxi drivers, 9142  
 2017 Census Industry Code: Taxi and limousine service, 6190

Just over four out of ten **platform workers** classify themselves as self-employed.



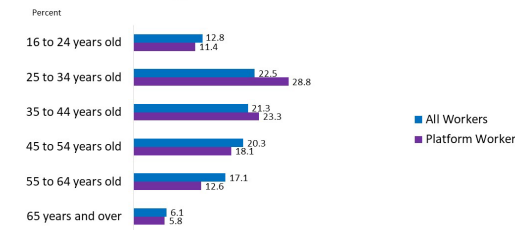
Note: Estimates for "unpaid family workers" not shown due to small sample size.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018, 2019, and 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

**Platform workers** are more likely to work part-time.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018, 2019, and 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

More than a quarter of **platform workers** are between the ages of 25 to 34.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018, 2019, and 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

### Platform Workers

People who use digital platforms to perform services or sell goods in exchange for income

- Task Workers**: Complete ad hoc tasks
- Sellers**: Sells new or used goods
- Rideshare Drivers**: On demand rides
- Real Estate Managers**: Manages short term rental property
- Food Delivery**: Delivers food from restaurants and grocery stores
- Social Media**: Social media influencers, video game streamers, vloggers, and bloggers
- Freelance Workers**: creatives who do projects for individuals or businesses
- Multiple Platform Workers**: Does work across two or more platforms

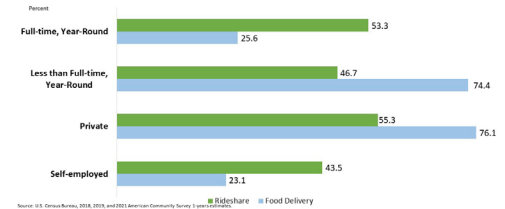
*Rideshare and food delivery are among the most common types of platform workers*

**490,000**  
 Number of platform workers in 2021, up from 367,000 in 2018

**61.5%**  
 Share of platform workers who are ride share drivers

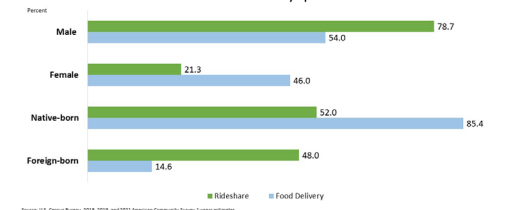
**13.7%**  
 Share of platform workers in food delivery

Selected employment characteristics of rideshare and food delivery platform workers



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018, 2019, and 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

Selected demographic characteristics of rideshare and food delivery platform workers



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018, 2019, and 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, visit [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech)