

Millions of low-wage workers losing ground to inflation as economic recovery continues.



Demonstrators in support of fast-food workers protest on July 29 outside a McDonald's in New York City's Union Square. (Photo: John Minchillo, AP)

Story Highlights

- Low-wage jobs have dominated employment gains in economic recovery
- Many older workers stuck in low-paid positions
- Corporations say higher wages mean fewer jobs and higher prices

Low-wage workers across the country are clocking out and rising up.

Fast-food employees plan a day of nationwide strikes today to demand higher pay in the largest of a series of industry protests that have rippled across the USA since last fall.

In the pre-Labor Day walkout, workers in at least 58 cities will picket restaurants such as McDonald's, Burger King and KFC during peak lunch hours, calling for \$15-an hour-pay and the right to form a union without fear of retaliation. The event is also intended to roughly coincide with the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, a protest as much about economic justice as civil rights.

At a ceremony Wednesday commemorating the march, President Obama said that many of its goals have been achieved — but not economic opportunity for all Americans.

"For over a decade, working Americans of all races have seen their wages and incomes stagnate, even as corporate profits soar, even as the pay of a fortunate few explodes," he said. Obama has called for raising the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9, but the measure has stalled in Congress.

The wave of fast-food demonstrations comes as low-wage jobs dominate employment growth in the 4-year-old recovery, and as more adults find themselves aging in positions that used to be career stepping-stones for teenagers. The trend has strained the nation's social safety net: More than a quarter of Americans earning less than \$15 an hour receive one or more social services, such as food stamps and Medicaid, says the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. Nearly 48 million people receive food stamps, more than in any year of the 2007-09 recession.

Link to news report: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2013/08/28/low-wage-workers/2711379/>