

## Macro Roundup Article

**Headline:** [The Independent Contractor Workforce: New Evidence on Its Size and Composition and Ways to Improve Its Measurement in Household Surveys](#)

**Article Link:** <https://www.nber.org/papers/w30997>

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**Tweet:** 15% of American workers are independent contractors, according to a Gallup survey that was carefully constructed to avoid data problems that had previously plagued the space. @kgahome @BHershbein @bethtruesdale

**Summary:** We find that, upon probing, roughly one in 10 workers who initially reports working for an employer on one or more jobs (and thus is coded as an employee) is in fact an independent contractor on at least one of those jobs. Incorporating these miscoded workers into estimates of work arrangement on the main job nearly doubles the share who are independent contractors, to about 15 percent of all workers. Young workers, less educated workers, workers of color, multiple-job holders, and those with low hours are more likely to be miscoded. Taking these workers into account substantively changes the demographic profile of the independent contractor workforce. Our research indicates that probing in household surveys to clarify a worker's employment arrangement and identify all low-hours work is critical for accurately measuring independent contractor work.

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**Primary Topic:** Workforce Reorganization

**Topics:** Academic paper, Data, Unemployment/Participation, Workforce Reorganization

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