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The UCLA Labor Center has received a \$125,000 grant from the [Stuart Foundation](#) to fund innovative research on California's young workers and advance understanding about their social and economic well-being.

For this new research initiative, titled "The State of Young Workers in California," the UCLA Labor Center will collaborate with the [UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center](#) to analyze high school, community college and young workers 18-24 years of age in California, with a focus on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted them.

UCLA Labor Center Project Director [Janna Shaddock-Hernández](#) and Senior Research Analyst [Lucero Herrera](#) will be the principal investigators, with support from Vivek Ramakrishnan and Sophia L. Angeles, Ph.D. candidates from the UCLA Department Of Sociology and UCLA School of Education and Information Studies, respectively.

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“Young workers are a critical part of California’s economy, yet we know very little about their experiences and work conditions,” said Shadduck-Hernández. “With the Stuart Foundation’s funding, we’ll be able to better understand the conditions and challenges young workers face today, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The grant will aid in expanding on the research and the findings of the UCLA Labor Center’s 2020 report, “[Young Workers in California: A Snapshot](#),” which focused on young people working across the state. The report illuminated the critical situation of young workers with the following key findings:

- Young workers comprise one-quarter (25%) of California’s workforce
- One in two of young people work in low-wage front-line jobs and a one in three in work in restaurants and retail
- 29% of California young workers also attend school or college
- Young workers experience higher unemployment rates than all other workers

“To date, the majority of studies on young workers have focused on the precariousness and exclusion from formalized workplace practices and policy. With this project, we’re aiming to dispel myths about young workers and gain insights into ways to support workforce development pathways and improve their workplace protections,” said Herrera. “We are deeply grateful for the transformational support that the Stuart Foundation has provided, allowing us to accomplish this.”

The Stuart Foundation is a family foundation dedicated to improving life outcomes for young people through education. Since 1985, the foundation has invested more than \$400 million in people, programs and ideas that improve the lives of children in California and Washington.