

## Key Vocabulary and Concepts



- **Climate Change** A long-term change in global or regional climate patterns, due to human activity.
- **Gig Economy** A labor market characterized by *short-term contracts* or freelance work rather than permanent jobs.
- **Heat Stress** A physical condition that occurs when the body cannot cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature, especially dangerous for outdoor workers.

# Climate Change Basics

- **Climate Change** there are increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the burning of fossil fuels.
- *Climate Change Effects on Workers*
  - Increased **heat-related illnesses** for outdoor workers
  - **Disruption of work schedules** due to extreme weather events
  - **Reduced productivity** in agriculture, construction, and delivery services



# Economic Vulnerability and Climate Change

- Connection to Jobs
  - Climate change disproportionately affects outdoor and gig workers who lack employer protections
    - Extreme weather events can completely **halt income for workers** without paid time off
    - Agricultural workers face changing growing seasons and **crop failures**
- Worker Vulnerabilities
  - Gig workers often **lack health insurance** to cover heat-related illnesses
  - Outdoor workers **face direct exposure to extreme temperatures**
  - *Economic instability increases when work is weather-dependent*
- Low-income communities have *fewer resources to adapt to* climate impacts

# Evidence and Personal Stories

- Real-Life Impact
  - Maria, a **food delivery cyclist** in an urban area, faces **dangerous heat conditions** during summer months. Without employee benefits, she must **choose between working in unsafe temperatures or losing essential income**. During last year's heat wave, **she suffered heat exhaustion but couldn't afford to take time off** to recover.
- Potential Solutions and Actions
  - Cities should **Create cooling centers** and shade structures in public spaces
  - Companies **can implement flexible scheduling** during extreme weather and provide heat safety training
- Communities might Develop mutual aid networks to **support vulnerable workers during climate emergencies**

Conclusion:

**Climate change harms workers; cities, companies, and communities must act.**



# Discussion Questions

- Gig workers often **lack benefits like paid sick leave, health insurance, or stable schedules.**
- *Extreme weather (heat waves, floods, storms) can cancel rides, deliveries, or outdoor jobs, cutting income immediately.*
- Traditional employees may have *workplace protections (OSHA standards, indoor workspaces, union representation)* that reduce exposure and provide compensation.
- **Raise awareness** through social media campaigns and school projects.
- **Support legislation** for worker protections (e.g., heat safety standards, hazard pay).
- **Partner with local organizations** to push for climate-resilient infrastructure.
- *Encourage gig platforms to provide emergency funds or flexible rescheduling during extreme weather.*

# Think-Pair-Share Activity

- Example: Food delivery drivers during a blizzard.
  - **Pair Discussion Ideas:**
    - *Community centers* could open **warming/cooling shelters**.
    - Local **governments** could provide **hazard pay** or **temporary bans on unsafe deliveries**.
    - **Neighbors** could **organize volunteer networks** to reduce reliance on gig workers during emergencies.
- **Class Share:** Highlight how **collective action** can **reduce risks** and **support vulnerable workers**.



# Application and Reflection

- **Identify local risks:** flooding, heat waves, snowstorms.
- **Notice which groups are most exposed** (delivery drivers, outdoor laborers, elderly).
- Recognize how **community** resilience depends on protecting vulnerable workers.
- Advocate for **local climate policies** (cooling centers, green infrastructure).
- **Reduce personal carbon footprint** (public transit, energy efficiency).
- **Support worker-friendly businesses** and policies.
- **Educate peers** about climate impacts on employment.
- How can gig platforms be held **accountable for worker safety?**
- **What role do unions or worker associations play** in protecting gig workers?
- **How can schools and youth groups influence local climate policy?**

