



Bad Gig: the costs of being an independent contractor

By CASEY MINER • SEPTEMBER 12, 2016



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Instead of working just one job for a single employer, more and more of us are becoming gig workers: people who consult, freelance, contract, temp, and do jobs on-call. The number of Americans with these alternative work arrangements has been growing steadily over the last ten years.

Mobile apps have made it easier to juggle multiple gigs — you can deliver groceries, walk dogs, and chauffeur people around, all in one work day. But this new kind of freedom is coming with unexpected costs.

Most gig workers are considered independent contractors, and that means they're responsible for taking care of a lot of social benefits others take for granted: things like paying their own taxes, social security, and health insurance.

Attorney Shannon Liss-Riordan says it's one of the oldest tricks in the book to hire independent contractors to save money on labor costs. She's been representing gig workers for nearly 20 years. Right now she's advocating specifically for Uber drivers.

In this story that originally aired on the podcast [Life of the Law](#), Reporter Casey Miner looks at what the law can and can't do for gig workers.