



The Status of Caregiving

Family caregivers: Burned out and on the brink...

There are 48 million family caregivers in the United States and each day 66,000 more join the ranks – many unexpectedly thrown into the role due to a crisis, accident or emergency. The Caregiving Cliff is looming as more and more family caregivers are needed and the population grows older, yet few family members or friends are available for this massive aging population. With no long-term care system, caregivers provide \$600B of care per year - more than Medicaid.

Most family caregivers provide 20 hours of unpaid labor per week, and spend \$7,200 per year on caregiving costs - which amounts to 25% of the average caregiver's income.

Caregivers are more likely to have - and neglect - health issues.

Our health system depends on caregivers. Even more care is shifting to caregivers with programs like 'Hospital-at-Home'; yet training and support for caregivers is not keeping pace.

Family caregiving will impact all of us – everyone will either be a caregiver, need a caregiver, or help a caregiver!

Of the nearly 50 million caregivers in the US - half are under 50, and a quarter are under 25. The youngest caregivers often face the most strain on their lives, with many forced to put their lives on hold indefinitely.

Minority populations are more likely to become caregivers and costs are often higher.

Caregiving also places higher burdens on LGBTQIA+ individuals. LGBTQIA+ caregivers more often report caregiving has caused high levels of financial strain, reporting being unable to afford basic expenses, and more frequently describe being in fair or poor health compared to non-LGBTQIA+ caregivers.

What Caregivers Need

Visibility and Voice - Caregivers should not remain invisible. Together, we can help this growing community to better amplify their voices, feel empowered to discuss their challenges, and show elected officials that they need more help.

Updated Policy – Common sense changes can begin to make a difference. Polling shows that caregiving not only resonates with voters - 77% of the electorate identifies as a past, current, or future caregiver - but that it also influences turnout.

Employer Protections - Most caregivers are desperately trying to balance work with raising kids, while also caring for an older loved one - some with very complex health care needs. Caregivers who work are scared to tell their managers about their “second part time job” for fear of judgment and fewer promotional opportunities and raises. More protections in the workplace are critical to ensure that caregivers are able to perform both of their jobs well.

Emotional Support - The current care system is so painfully inadequate that family caregivers are relied upon for the care of our aging loved ones - again, this care is worth \$600B a year. However, the costs are even higher on a family caregiver’s mental health. Caregivers more often experience depression, anxiety, and burn out. Caregivers need, and deserve, better mental health resources.

[Learn more](#)

- [AARP’s Family Caregiver Resource Guides Resource Guides](#) (assistance in your state)
- AARP Report (Infographic): [Caregiving in the United States](#)
- AARP Public Policy Institute: [Valuing the Invaluable 2023 Update: Strengthening Supports for Family Caregivers](#) (the unpaid contributions from family caregivers)
- The New York Times: [The Agony of Putting Your Life on Hold to Care for Your Parents](#)
- American Psychological Association: [When Caregivers Need Care](#)
- National Alliance For Caregiving, AARP (Fact Sheet): [The “Typical” LGBTQ Caregiver](#)
- AARP Poll: [Voters 50-Plus Want Candidates Who Support Help for Caregivers](#)
- Personal caregiving stories: [Ayda](#) quit her job to care for her Dad and [Carrie](#) moved back home to care for her grandfather.
- [AARP Family Caregivers Discussion Group](#)

Please contact ADudek@TheCreativeCoalition.org to schedule a writers’ room briefing, to put you in touch with Family Caregiver Ambassadors to give you a first-hand look at the stories and the characters who shape these stories, or to answer any inquiries about joining the Commission.