



# Employed Caregivers in Canada

Infographic series based on analyses of  
Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey  
on Caregiving and Care Receiving

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# Executive Summary

Employed caregivers combine dual responsibilities of paid work and unpaid caregiving to family members, friends, and neighbours with long-term health conditions, physical or mental disabilities, or challenges related to aging. In doing so, employed caregivers contribute to their families and friends' well-being, workplaces, and society. Yet their efforts are often invisible to employers, policymakers, and the public.

The Research on Aging, Policies and Practice (RAPP) team from the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta has a longstanding interest in the intersection between family caregiving and paid work. National data from Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey (GSS) on Caregiving and Care Receiving enabled us to describe the experiences of employed caregivers in Canada and the workplace solutions that help. Our sample of 4,940 employed caregivers was aged 19 to 70 (typical employment age) living in the Canadian provinces.

The six snapshots compiled here combine descriptive and multivariate analyses to show how employed caregivers integrate their unpaid caregiving responsibilities and paid work lives and identify those at the most significant risk of poor work-life balance and job insecurity. They also provide evidence that supporting employed caregivers makes good business sense. This document is presented in six sections that answer the following questions:

1. Who are employed caregivers in Canada?
2. How does caregiving impact paid work for employed women and men?
3. Who are the employed caregivers at the greatest risk of poor work-life balance and job insecurity?
4. What are the availability and impact of flexible work arrangements for employed caregivers?
5. Why does it make good business sense to support employed caregivers?
6. How much do employed caregivers contribute to the Canadian economy?

## Key findings from our research show:

- Caregiving is a common workforce issue.
- In 2018, 5.2 million (or 1 in 4) Canadians of employment age (19 to 70), most of whom work full-time hours, combined paid work and caregiving.
- The same year, the annual cost of replacing the unpaid care work that employed caregivers provide was \$51.5 billion.
- Women more than men reported that caregiving impacts their job security and productivity.
- The nature of caregiving, especially providing more than 10 hours per week of care, predicted employed caregivers who were at higher risk of poor work-life balance and job insecurity.
- Employed caregivers' access to flexible work arrangements (FWAs) varied, but half of those who had access to FWAs believed that using them would hurt their careers.
- Some FWAs helped employers by retaining talented employees, reducing turnover costs, and improving employed caregivers' satisfaction with their work-life balance.

# Definitions

**Community** refers to the place of residence of the care receiver, living in a separate residence apart from the primary caregiver but not in supportive housing.

**Compassionate Care Leave (CCL)** is legislated under the Canadian Employment Insurance Act to enable eligible individuals to temporarily be away from their job to provide care or support to a family member (or like family) who is gravely ill and has a significant risk of death within 26 weeks. The duration of the leave varies across jurisdictions in Canada from 8 to 28 weeks, with most jurisdictions providing 27 or 28 weeks of leave. Compassionate Care Benefits (CCB) are also available for eligible caregivers, providing financial assistance of up to 55% of pre-leave salary to a maximum of \$650 per week in 2023.

**Employed caregiver** refers to individuals aged 19 to 70 (typical employment age) who combined paid work with caregiving to family and friends with a long-term health condition, physical or mental disability, or challenges related to aging during the 12 months prior to the General Social Survey.

**Flexible work arrangements (FWAs)** refers to work arrangements intended to help employees accommodate their paid work and family responsibilities. Examples of FWAs include having a flexible work schedule, working from home, working part-time hours, taking a paid or unpaid leave to take care of family, and taking an extended leave without pay for personal reasons.

**Presenteeism** refers to employees who have difficulty concentrating, fulfilling work responsibilities, or otherwise being distracted at work because of family responsibilities.

**Supportive housing** refers to the place of residence of care receivers who live in congregate living settings, including assisted living and residential care facilities.

**Work-life balance** refers to the level of perceived satisfaction with the balance between employed caregivers' jobs and home lives.



## Who are employed caregivers in Canada?

RAPP bridges research, policies and practice to make a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults and their families

### 5.2 million Canadians of employment age (19 to 70) combined paid work and caregiving in 2018

Employed caregivers contribute to their families' well-being, workplaces, and society, however, their efforts are often invisible to employers, policymakers, and the public. This infographic is the first (in a series of five) that sets the context for understanding how caregiving impacts employed caregivers' job security and productivity by describing common characteristics of employed caregivers.

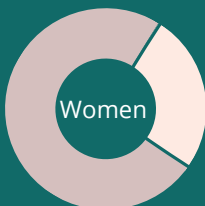
#### 1 in 4 Canadians of employment age are caregivers



- 1 in 4 Canadians of employment age (19 to 70) are family caregivers (26.5%) or an estimated 5.2 million people
- 52% are women and 48% are men

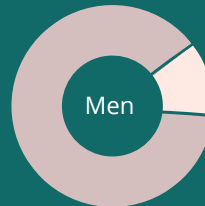
#### Most employed caregivers work full-time

74%  
Employed  
Full-time



26%  
Employed  
Part-time

88%  
Employed  
Full-time



12%  
Employed  
Part-time

Full-time: ≥ 30 hours /week  
Part-time: < 30 hours /week

#### Women spend more time on care tasks than men



On top of their paid work responsibilities, in 2018:

- **Women spent 13.8 hr/wk | Men spent 10 hr/wk on caregiving**

These numbers increased by almost 50% from 2012

- **In 2012, Women spent 9.5 hr/wk | Men spent 6.9 hr/wk on caregiving**

#### Most caregiving occurs in the home and community

Care receiver lives...



51% in the community



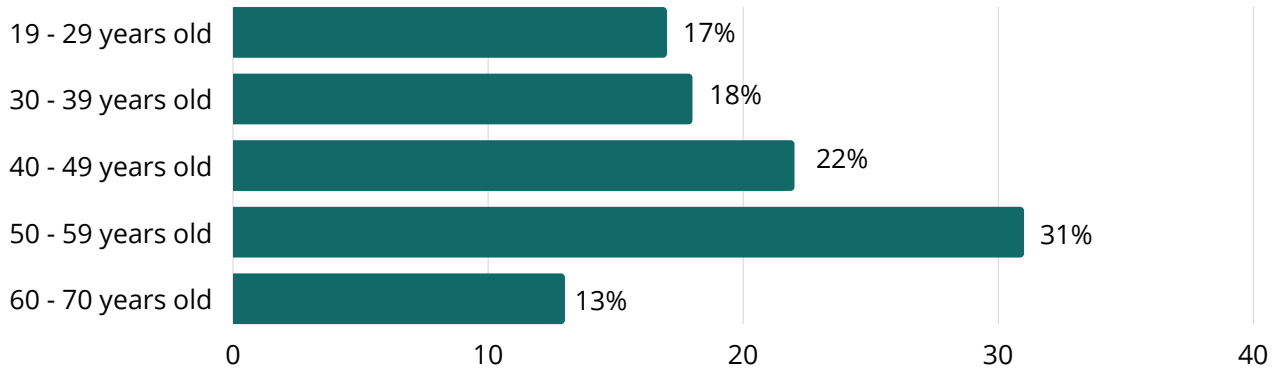
34% with the caregiver



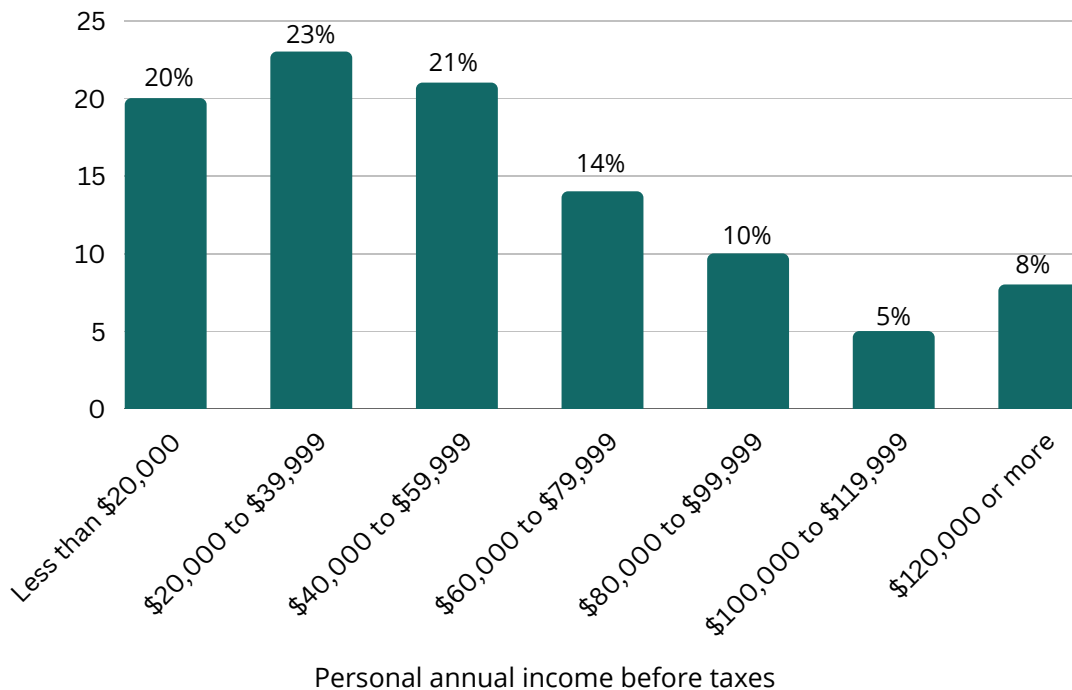
16% in supportive housing

This infographic was co-created by Andrew Magnaye, Choong Kim, Jacquie Eales, and Janet Fast based on analyses of Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey on Caregiving and Care Receiving.

## Almost 1 in 3 employed caregivers are 50 to 59 years old



## 1 in 5 employed caregivers make less than \$20,000 per year



### Methodology

Findings are based on analyses of Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey (GSS), which was conducted with respondents aged 15+ living in the ten Canadian Provinces. Our sample of 4,940 employed caregivers was aged 19 to 70 (typical employment age) and combined paid work with caregiving to family and friends who had a long-term health condition, physical or mental disability, or challenges related to aging, during the 12 months prior to the GSS survey.



# How does caregiving impact paid work for employed women and men?

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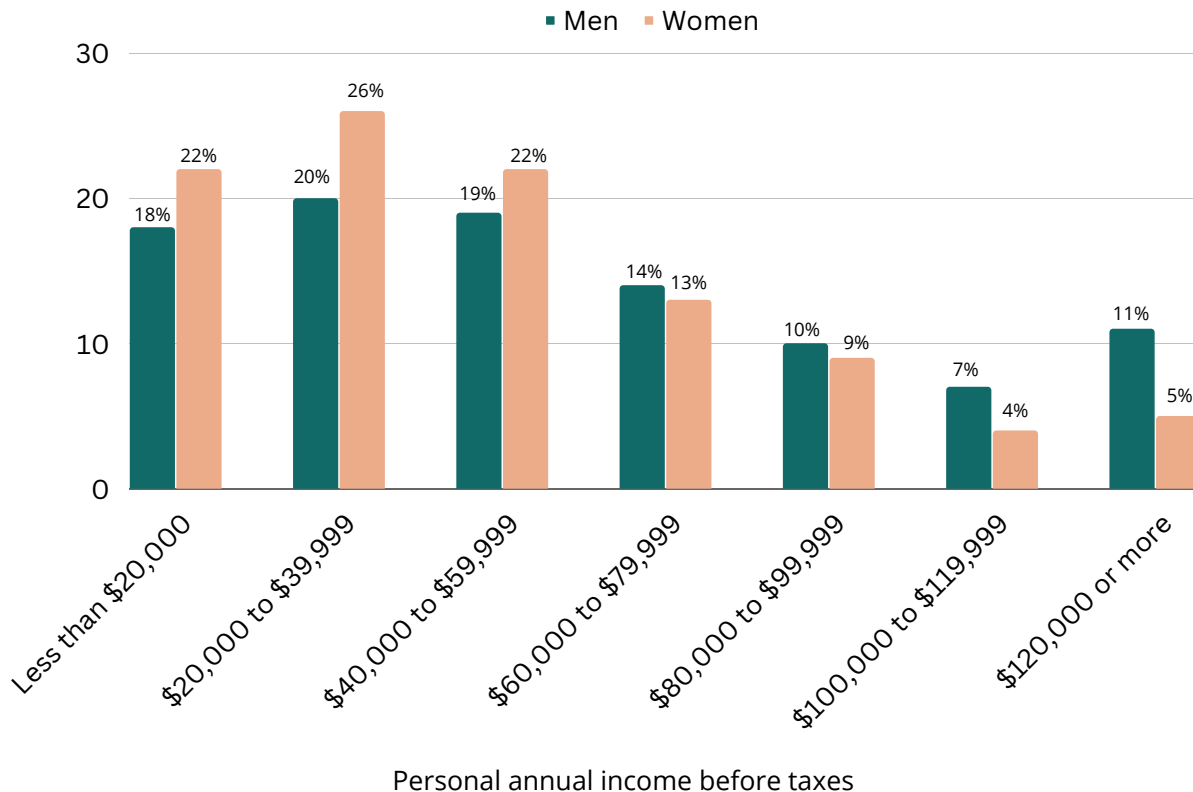
## More women than men reported caregiving impacts their productivity and job security

Caregiving not only impacts men’s and women’s health and wellbeing differently<sup>1</sup> but also their paid employment. This infographic is the second (in a series of six) that describes how combining paid work and caregiving impacts men and women differently and, for some, threatens their workplace productivity, jobs, and ultimately income security.

## More employed women caregivers make less than \$60,000/yr



In 2018, the average personal annual income for employed caregivers was \$72,000 for men and \$51,000 for women, reflecting a persistent gender income gap in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, a higher proportion of women than men employed caregivers have personal incomes (before taxes) below \$60,000 per year.



<sup>1</sup> [More than half of women provide care to children and care-dependent adults in Canada – StatCan – The Daily \(Nov. 8, 2022\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Average and median gender pay ratio in annual wages, salaries and commissions – StatCan \(Mar. 23, 2022\)](#)

This infographic was co-created by Andrew Magnaye, Choong Kim, Jacquie Eales, and Janet Fast based on analyses of Statistics Canada’s 2018 General Social Survey on Caregiving and Care Receiving.

## Caregiving impacts job security

### Women accounted for almost 60% of all employees who left the paid labour force because of caregiving

Collectively, **214,000 employees** left the paid labour force because of caregiving in 2018.

- **Women: 126,000 | Men: 88,000**



**1 in 20**

employed caregivers (6%) left or intended to leave the paid labour force altogether because of caregiving in 2018. Some chose to retire early or quit, while others were terminated or fired.

### Women were more likely to reduce their hours of paid work



**1 in 7**

employed caregivers worked fewer hours for pay as a strategy to balance both paid work and care work responsibilities.

- **Women: 17% | Men: 12%**

On average, these employees worked 11.7 fewer hours per week for pay because of caregiving.

- **Women: 12 fewer hours/week | Men: 11 fewer hours/week**

### Two-thirds of employed caregivers who took the Compassionate Care Leave (CCL) were women



**1 in 7**

employed caregivers have taken the Compassionate Care Leave (CCL) in the past, providing end-of-life care to someone.

- **Women: 67% | Men: 33%**

Compassionate Care Leave (CCL) varies across jurisdictions from 8 to 28 weeks with most jurisdictions providing 27 or 28 weeks of leave. For eligible caregivers, Compassionate Care Benefits (CCB) are available through the federal Employment Insurance program, providing up to 55% of pre-leave salary, to a maximum of \$638 per week in 2022. However, most people who qualified for CCB in the past five fiscal years did not receive the maximum benefit nor for the maximum duration.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Annex 2.17: Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits

## Caregiving impacts job productivity

### Women reported missing more days of paid work because of caregiving than men

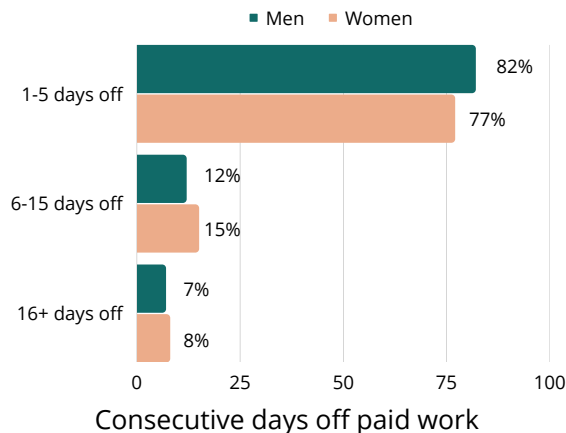
Employed caregivers in Canada miss **15 million days of paid work** annually.



**1 in 2**

employed caregivers (51%) missed part or full days of work because of caregiving.

- **Women: 55% | Men: 45%**



**4 in 5**

employed caregivers (79%) who reported missing paid work took from 1 to 5 consecutive days off.

The average number of consecutive days taken off work for caregiving were:

- **Women: 9.7 days off | Men: 6.8 days off**

### More women than men reported presenteeism



**1 in 2**

employed caregivers (46%) reported presenteeism “at least sometimes.” That means having difficulty concentrating, fulfilling work responsibilities, or otherwise being distracted at work because of family responsibilities.

- **Women: 51% | Men: 41%**

### Methodology

Findings are based on analyses of Statistics Canada’s 2018 General Social Survey (GSS), which was conducted with respondents aged 15+ living in the Canadian provinces. Our sample of 4,940 employed caregivers was aged 19 to 70 (typical employment age) and combined paid work with caregiving to family and friends who had a long-term health condition; physical or mental disability; or challenges related to aging during the 12 months prior to the GSS survey.





## Who are the employed caregivers at greatest risk of poor work-life balance and job insecurity?

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### Nature of caregiving, especially hours provided, predicts at-risk employed caregivers

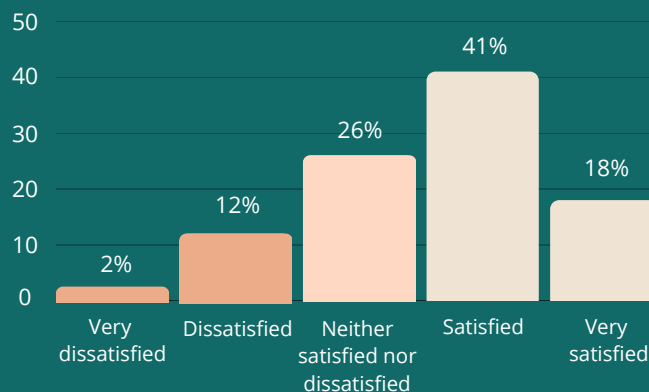
Work-life balance and job security are important to all workers, including employed caregivers, and contribute to happier, healthier, and more productive employees. This infographic is the third (in a series of six) that describes how the nature of care puts some employed caregivers at higher risk of poor work-life balance and job insecurity.



### 1 in 7 employed caregivers are dissatisfied with their work-life balance

While most employed caregivers were satisfied with the balance between their jobs and home lives in 2018, 1 in 7 (14%) were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

There were no significant differences between men and women in reported satisfaction with work-life balance.



### Four predictors of at-risk employed caregivers



#### 1. Providing more hours of care

- Employed caregivers who provided **11 to 20 hours per week** of care were twice as likely to have poor work-life balance and 1.7 times more likely to reduce their hours of paid work compared with those providing less than 10 hours per week of care.
- Those providing **more than 20 hours per week** of care were 1.9 times more likely to have poor work-life balance, 1.7 times more likely to reduce paid work hours, and twice as likely to leave the labour force entirely, compared with those providing less than 10 hours per week of care.

This infographic was co-created by Andrew Magnaye, Choong Kim, Jacquie Eales, and Janet Fast based on analyses of Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey on Caregiving and Care Receiving.



### 2. Caring for someone with cancer or mental health and addictions

Compared with employed caregivers caring for someone with aging-related conditions or frailty (excluding cognitive conditions):

- Those caring for someone with **cancer** were 2.5 times more likely to reduce their paid work hours.
- Those caring for someone with **mental health and addiction issues** were 1.9 times more likely to have poor work-life balance.



### 3. Caring for a spouse or partner

Compared with employed caregivers caring for their spouse or partner:

- Those **caring for their children** (including adult children) were 64% less likely to exit the paid labour force.
- Those **caring for extended kin** such as grandparents and siblings were 76% less likely to exit the paid labour force.



### 4. Caring for someone living in supportive housing

Employed caregivers whose care receivers live in **supportive housing** (assisted living and residential care facilities) were 1.9 times more likely to reduce their paid work hours than those caring for someone living in the same household. Caregivers continue to provide care to those living in supportive housing, enhancing their quality of life and staff capacity.

## Methodology

Findings are based on multivariate analyses of Statistics Canada’s 2018 General Social Survey (GSS), which was conducted with respondents aged 15+ living in the Canadian provinces. Our sample of 4,940 employed caregivers was aged 19 to 70 (typical employment age) and combined paid work with caregiving to family and friends with a long-term health condition; physical or mental disability; or challenges related to aging during the 12 months prior to the GSS survey. Analyses controlled for respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, marital status, having children under 5 in the household, personal income) as well as the four care-related risk factors (hours of care, health condition of the care receiver, and relationship to and living arrangements of the care receiver).

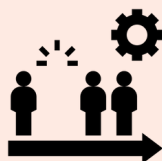


## What are the availability and impact of flexible work arrangements for employed caregivers?

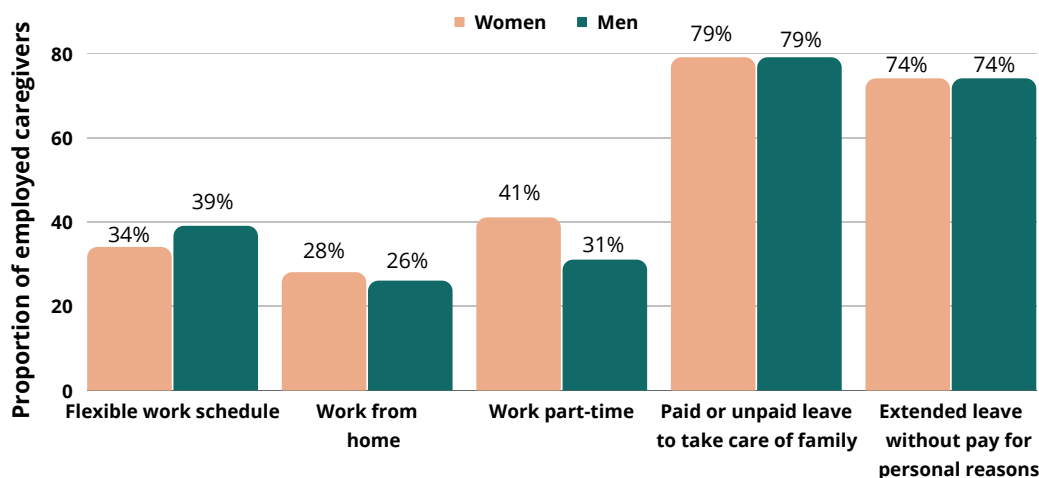
RAPP bridges research, policies and practice to make a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults and their families

### Access to flexible work arrangements (FWAs) varies

Employed caregivers often want flexible work arrangements (FWAs) to help them integrate their dual responsibilities of paid jobs and unpaid family caregiving. This fourth infographic (in a series of six) describes employed caregivers' access to a range of flexible work arrangements and identifies the impact that specific FWAs have on strengthening job security.



**3 in 4** employed caregivers said paid or unpaid leaves of absence from their jobs were available to help them meet their caregiving responsibilities



### Almost half believe that using FWAs would jeopardize jobs



**1 in 2** employed caregivers who have access to FWAs believed that using them would have a negative impact on their careers

- Women: 43% | Men: 50%

## FWAs reduce the likelihood of employment consequences

Flexible work arrangements are intended to help employees accommodate paid work and family responsibilities while retaining labour force attachment and some income security. FWAs cost employers less because turnover costs are reduced and talented staff is retained. In the long run, FWAs are better for employed caregivers and employers!



### Option to work part-time

Compared with those without FWAs, employed caregivers who had the option of **working part-time** were:

- 1.8 times more likely to reduce paid work hours from full-time to part-time, and
- 1.7 times more likely to take a less demanding job because of caregiving.



### Option to take extended leave without pay

Compared with those without FWAs, employed caregivers who had the option of **taking an extended leave without pay** were:

- 53% less likely to take a less demanding job, and
- 45% less likely to exit the labour force because of caregiving.



### Option to take a paid or unpaid leave

Employed caregivers who had the option of **taking a paid or unpaid leave** for personal reasons were 1.4 times more likely to miss days of paid work compared with those without FWAs, which is the intent of such arrangements to allow employees to focus on caregiving responsibilities.

## Methodology

Findings are based on descriptive and multivariate analyses of Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey (GSS), conducted with respondents aged 15+ living in the Canadian provinces. Our sample included 4,940 employed caregivers aged 19 to 70 (typical employment age) who combined paid work with caregiving to family and friends with a long-term health condition, physical or mental disability, or aging-related challenges in the 12 months prior to the survey. Analyses controlled for respondents' age, gender, education, having children under 5 in the household, personal income, and immigration status.



## Supporting employed caregivers makes good business sense

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### Caregiving is a common workforce issue

1 in 4 Canadians of employment age (19-70) combine mostly full-time jobs with family caregiving responsibilities. Yet most employers are unaware of the challenges these 5.2 million employees with caregiving responsibilities face and the impact it can have on their business. This fifth infographic (in a series of six) describes the aggregate impact of caregiving on talent retention and productivity and the solutions that help.



**1 in 4 Canadians of employment age are caregivers**

### Caregiving impacts talent retention



**1 in 20** employed caregivers left or intended to leave the paid labour force because of caregiving

Collectively, that's 214,000 employees who left the paid workforce in 2018, with women accounting for almost 60% of them. Their departure leaves a gap in organizational knowledge and skills for employers to fill.



**1 in 7** employed caregivers worked fewer hours for pay (12 hours per week less on average) to manage paid work and caregiving responsibilities

Collectively, they worked 312 million fewer hours per year. To fill this gap, employers would need to hire 171,000 full-time employees.



Turnover costs to recruit and train new workers are estimated at **1.5 times<sup>1</sup> their annual salary** even though there is no guarantee that their position can be filled promptly and adequately.

<sup>1</sup> Employee retention: What is the true cost of losing an employee?, *Simply Benefits* (Jul. 25, 2020)

### Some flexible work arrangements (FWAs) strengthen retention

Employed caregivers who had the option to **take extended leave without pay for personal reasons** were:

- 53% less likely to take a less demanding job because of caregiving, and
- 45% less likely to exit the labour force because of caregiving.

In addition, employed caregivers who had the **option to work part-time** were more likely to take advantage of this option by reducing paid work hours from full-time to part-time or taking a less demanding job. Overall, these FWAs help retain talented employees and reduce employer costs.

Offering flexibility where and when employees worked also improved employed caregivers' satisfaction with their work-life balance.

## Caregiving impacts job productivity



**1 in 2** employed caregivers (51%) missed one or more days of work because of caregiving (the longest consecutive absence being 8 days on average)

Conservatively, that's at least 15 million days of absenteeism per year.



The direct cost of absenteeism is estimated at **2.4% of gross annual salary**.<sup>2</sup> When indirect costs such as productivity losses, customer dissatisfaction, poor employee morale, and administrative costs are considered, the cost to organizations is substantially higher.

<sup>2</sup> Missing in action: Absenteeism trends in Canadian organizations, The Conference Board of Canada (Sept. 2013)

## Almost half believe that using FWAs would jeopardize jobs



**1 in 2** employed caregivers who have access to FWAs believed that using them would have a negative impact on their careers

## Targeting support to most vulnerable employees

Having supportive workplace relationships can enable supervisors to recognize four aspects of the nature of care that put some employed caregivers at higher risk of poor work-life balance, performance management issues, and job insecurity:

1. Providing more than 10 hours per week of care
2. Caring for someone with cancer or mental health and addictions
3. Caring for a spouse or partner
4. Caring for someone living in supportive housing



## Methodology

Findings are based on descriptive and multivariate analyses of Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey (GSS), conducted with respondents aged 15+ living in the Canadian provinces. Our sample included 4,940 employed caregivers aged 19 to 70 (typical employment age) who combined paid work with caregiving to family and friends with a long-term health condition, physical or mental disability, or age-related challenges in the 12 months prior to the GSS survey. Analyses controlled for respondents' age, gender, education, having children under 5 in the household, personal income, and immigration status.



## How much do employed caregivers contribute to the Canadian economy?

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### Annual cost of replacing the unpaid care work provided by employed caregivers is \$51.5 billion

We wondered what it would cost to replace employed family caregivers' unpaid care work with the services of paid home support workers. To calculate the monetary value, we used the national median hourly wage paid to home support workers (\$17/hour). We estimated, conservatively, the value of employed family caregivers' contributions to be \$51.5 billion per year, which represents three times the national expenditures on home, long-term, and continuing care services.<sup>1</sup>

#### 3 billion hours

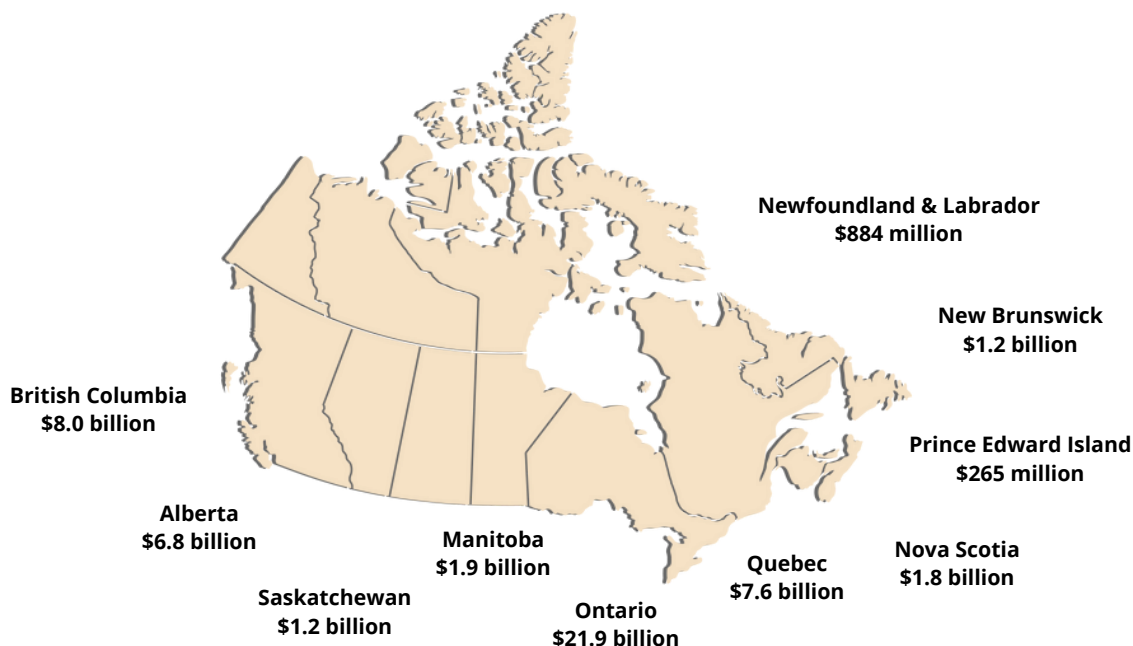
The total amount of care provided annually by 5.2M employed caregivers in Canada.



#### 1.9 million full-time workers

The number of full-time workers (based on full-time equivalency of 30 hours per week) needed to replace the care work provided by employed caregivers.

### Economic value of caregiving labour provided by employment age (19 to 70) Canadians by province



<sup>1</sup>Health Expenditure Data in Brief – Canadian Institute for Health Information (Nov. 2021)

This infographic was co-created by Andrew Magnaye, Choong Kim, Jacquie Eales, and Janet Fast based on analyses of Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey on Caregiving and Care Receiving.

## Employed caregivers' aggregate time and value by province

Province	% of caregivers among employees (19-70)	Total number of employed caregivers	Total time spent caregiving (hours/year)	Economic value of unpaid caregiving labour
Alberta	25	630,000	400.4 million	\$6.8 billion
British Columbia	27	696,000	473.2 million	\$8.0 billion
Manitoba	28	202,000	109.2 million	\$1.9 billion
Ontario	27	2.1 million	1.3 billion	\$21.9 billion
New Brunswick	26	99,000	67.6 million	\$1.2 billion
Newfoundland & Labrador	28	72,000	52.0 million	\$884 million
Nova Scotia	30	142,000	104.0 million	\$1.8 billion
Prince Edward Island	28	23,000	15.6 million	\$265 million
Quebec	23	1.0 million	447.2 million	\$7.6 billion
Saskatchewan	26	165,000	67.6 million	\$1.2 billion
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>5.2 million</b>	<b>3.0 billion</b>	<b>\$51.5 billion</b>

### Methodology

Findings are based on analyses of Statistics Canada’s 2018 General Social Survey (GSS), which was conducted with respondents aged 15+ living in the Canadian provinces. Our sample of 4,940 employed caregivers was aged 19 to 70 (typical employment age) and combined paid work with caregiving to family and friends who had a long-term health condition; physical or mental disability; or challenges related to aging during the 12 months prior to the GSS survey. Results are weighted to the population.



# Acknowledgements

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- University of Bristol
- University of Waterloo
- Vanier Institute of the Family

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