

WORKING DAUGHTERS IN THE WORKPLACE: 2023 REPORT



There are more than 30 million people balancing the unpaid work of caring for someone over the age of 18 while also working a paying job, and that number is expected to increase. In fact, caregivers are the fastest growing employee group. They are also arguably the highest risk for leaving the workforce; 70 percent of working caregivers suffer work-related difficulties due to their dual roles.

Meanwhile, employers cite finding talent as one of the biggest challenges they face. In order to hold on to highly skilled, loyal workers, companies must address working caregivers' needs in the workplace. If companies don't move quickly to implement workplace supports for these family caregivers, they risk decreased service and productivity levels and increased recruitment and training costs.*

We surveyed 586 family caregivers and conducted interviews with dozens of women balancing eldercare and career to understand how their caregiving responsibilities impact their work, and what they need from their employers to remain in the workforce. The research revealed that most family caregivers caring for adults feel invisible and unsupported at work. However, when employers do acknowledge working caregivers, it can make a big difference at home and at work.

By engaging with, and supporting caregiving employees, companies can avoid a costly and unnecessary brain drain in the coming years.

“I really want to continue in my career and I really need to take care of my mother. I shouldn’t have to choose one over the other. Working caregivers need help!!!” – survey respondent



Here are the main findings from the Working Daughters at Work 2023 study:

Caregiving employees are never off the clock.

More than a third of the people surveyed (37%) live under the same roof as the person they care for, making it highly unlikely these caregivers have time for rest or self-care.

“Living in the same home as those you care for is mentally draining.” – survey respondent

Another third of the respondents (35%) care for someone who is living in their own home. We know that the average family caregiver spends 20 hours caring for someone else. Caregiving tasks range from assistance with bathing, toileting, and dressing, to helping with finances and errands, to performing complex medical tasks.

The majority of family caregivers work outside the home.

Despite their family responsibilities, the majority of respondents work at a company location (41%). Approximately one third work from home and just under 20 percent have a hybrid work arrangement.

Dementia care is common and consuming.

Just over half of the respondents care for a family member with some type of dementia such as Alzheimer's. Family caregivers of people with dementia report spending an average of 9 hours per day helping their affected family member.

“Being a caregiver for a loved one with Alzheimer’s has had a devastating impact on my career. The sacrifice is enormous. There needs to be more genuine support and resources for people who end up with the role of having to be family caregivers.” – survey respondent



Caregiving affects all employees, not just Xers and Boomers.

Caregiving responsibilities start young. One third of the caregivers surveyed were between the ages of 33 and 34 and 13 percent were under age 33. As far as career level, caregiving impacts mid-level employees the hardest. More than half, of survey respondents (55%) identified as mid-level employees.

The top 5 benefits working caregivers want:

When asked, “What I wish my employer would do to help me balance caregiving and work,” these 5 benefits were the top choices in order of preference:

1. Flexibility
2. Paid Leave
3. Financial assistance
4. Caregiving resources
5. Workplace support groups

Flexibility

Flexibility, the number one request of working caregivers, must be implemented flexibly. There is no one size fits all solution. In addition to wanting the ability to work from home, at least part of the time, and work off hours when needed, here’s what survey respondents had to say about flex:

“Allow me to be results driven instead of adhering to an 8 to 5 schedule.”

“Allow me to flex my hours to take my loved on to appointments and make up the time.”

“Put me on a team that can cover each other when things come up suddenly.”

The 4-day work week holds appeal for family caregivers, but not if it means cramming 40 hours into a condensed schedule.

“I’m finding it hard to accomplish everything I have to – help with appointments, lawyer meetings, looking at care facilities....without a day off during the week.”

“Aides are hard to find. It would give me one less day I’d have to worry about.”

“If it means working 10 hour days, not interested!”

Paid Leave

While 40 percent of survey respondents said they would take time off, any way they could get it – paid or unpaid – more than half (55%) respondents said if leave isn’t paid, they can’t afford to take it.

Financial Assistance

According to the AARP, family caregivers spend more than \$7,200 a year on out-of-pocket costs such as rent, mortgage, assisted living, and home modifications. That may be why almost half (49%) of survey respondents said financial planning assistance from their employers would be very helpful. And almost two-thirds (72%) said a caregiving subsidy would be very helpful.

Resources and Support

Working caregivers are looking to their employers to help them balance work and care.

- 61% of respondents said concierge services that help them find help at home would be very helpful.
- 57% said stress management programs would be very helpful.
- 53% said return to work programs would be very helpful after a caregiving-related break.
- 47% said support groups in the workplace would be very helpful.
- 47% would find it very helpful if their employers shared resources on caring for a family member.

“There is so little conversation around this compared with childcare, and yet once you start discussing it there are many people dealing with these issues.”

“There is so little information on where to go for help or find what is available.”

“I feel so alone.”

Working caregivers crave compassion.

Beyond workplace benefits and support programs, working caregivers are seeking compassionate workplaces. Compassion can be simply acknowledging a working caregiver’s family responsibilities, offering mental health breaks, providing time and privacy to handle personal business when it arises during the work day, and demonstrating a general understanding of what it takes to balance work and care.

“It was a difficult and stressful transition to become a caregiver. No one even asked if I was okay even though they saw I was struggling and even cited it on my yearly evaluations.” – survey respondent



And for those employers who do create caring cultures and support working caregivers? They gain loyal, focused and engaged employees in return.

“My mother died a year ago and I benefited from my employer’s flexibility and understanding. It is such a relief to be able to look back on my mother’s care and not have any regrets!”

Recommendations for employers:

Supporting caregivers at work doesn’t require a massive, or even expensive, undertaking. To implement meaningful changes that will truly support caregivers in the workplace, companies should start by surveying their employee base to understand the magnitude of employees’ caring responsibilities.

Questions to ask in a care census:

- Are you providing care to a family member or friend? How old is the care recipient?
- If you are not already providing care, do you believe you will have caregiving responsibilities in the near future?
- Have your caregiving responsibilities impacted your ability to perform your job?
- Have your job responsibilities impacted your ability to provide care?
- How can our company support you?

Beyond the census, companies should:

Acknowledge the workers with caregiving responsibilities. Whether via management emails or during staff meetings, or better yet both, owners and managers should acknowledge that their workforce may be wrestling with caregiving issues right now. Help working caregivers set up support groups where they can exchange information, advocate for best practices and foster a sense of inclusion.

Audit company benefits and policies. Do your benefits and policies support workers *with* parents as well as workers who *are* parents? If you offer backup childcare, do you also offer backup eldercare? Do you offer family leave, or just parental leave? Also, consider providing caregiving employees with stipends to purchase services such as caregiver coaching and assistances with household chores.

Revisit your flex policies, and/or consider implementing them. Even companies that can't support work from home operations, should consider allowing employees to commute during off-peak hours, create flexible schedules, and job share so they have the flexibility they need to be available to their families.

Train compassionate leaders. It's not easy managing a dynamic and hybrid workforce. Companies should invest in training for mid-level managers in order to equip them with the skills and compassion necessary for leading a complex workforce.

The good news is there are many companies that are committed to caring cultures and supporting all employees as they balance life and work. Your working caregivers need to hear from you! Take some of the actionable steps outlined above that will make a major difference in the lives and careers of workers caring for older family members. Then make sure you employees know what is available to them. To highlight your efforts and see how your caregiver benefits stack up against other companies, apply to the Best Places to Work for Working Daughters program. [Learn more here. workingdaughter.com/best-places-to-work/](https://www.workingdaughter.com/best-places-to-work/)

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- *The average cost to hire an employee is \$4,129, with around 42 days to fill a position. (Society for Human Resource Management)
 - Companies lose \$17.1 billion annually in lost productivity due to caregiving. (Family Caregiver Alliance)
 - Replacing working daughters who leave due to caregiving costs companies \$3.3 billion. (Family Caregiver Alliance)
 - Caregiver absenteeism costs the U.S. economy an estimated \$25.2 billion in lost productivity. (Gallup)