

### Help Wisconsin develop an infrastructure to support the important work of family caregivers

In Wisconsin, 580,000 family caregivers are providing approximately **\$9.2 billion** in unpaid care<sup>1</sup> filling an essential role in our fractured long-term services and supports (LTSS) system.<sup>2</sup> These families could be siblings banding together to care for an aging parent, parents caring for their child who has a disability, a partner struggling to support a loved one with dementia, or one of the roughly 32% of grandparents nationally who are responsible for raising their grandchildren.<sup>3</sup>

Family and friends take on these caregiving roles out of love and out of need. Did you know that most private health insurance plans do **not** cover the costs of respite care,<sup>4</sup> assisted living, or other in-home care?

Wisconsin is facing a paid workforce crisis, with more than one in four direct caregiver positions vacant!<sup>5</sup> This adds even more pressure to family members who step in to provide necessary care.

**Keep in mind** that many caregivers are juggling these important responsibilities while trying to maintain part-time or full-time employment. In fact, in 2014, **60%** of family caregivers had full- or part-time jobs in addition to their caregiving roles.<sup>6</sup> Caregiving responsibilities have forced some to reduce hours at work, retire early, or step away from the workforce altogether.

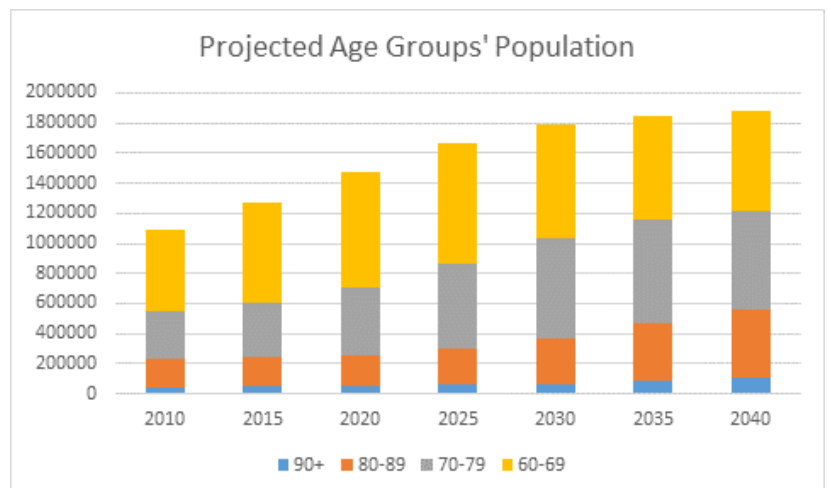
The caregiving strain will only increase with time. One in seven current non-caregivers expect to **become caregivers** within two years.<sup>7</sup> And by 2050 in Wisconsin, there will be fewer than three family caregivers to care for each family member older than 80.<sup>8</sup> All of these statistics tell us we need to do more to prepare. Caregiver issues will impact every Wisconsinite, whether we are the ones receiving care or the ones providing the care. We need to have an infrastructure in place to meet this demand.

There's **good news!** According to Federal Reporting data for 2023, the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) offered direct services to 4,234 Wisconsin family caregivers. Each caregiver received some sort of necessary support ranging from respite care, transportation, assistive technology, in-home care, or other services. **In Wisconsin, we can do more!**

### WAAN's position:

There is an increased demand for family caregivers. To support the important work of these individuals, Wisconsin needs to establish:

- (1) **A new Wisconsin caregiver support program** to complement the National Family Caregiver Support Program funded at \$5 million annually.
- (2) **A paid family and medical leave program** and expand eligibility for the state's current family and medical leave program.



- 1) Establish a new Wisconsin caregiver support program to complement the National Family Caregiver Support Program, funded at \$5 million annually. Legislation establishing this new program should include caregivers of those adults 60 and older, or who have dementia, or older relatives (not parents) age 55 and older providing care to children under the age of 18; and older relatives, including parents, age 55 and older providing care to adults ages 18-59 with disabilities who reside in their own homes or community settings.<sup>9</sup> With this state caregiver program, we could directly support more than 5,000 caregivers next year!

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Most working people in the United States do not have paid family leave through their jobs<sup>10</sup>, including about 77 percent — about 2.4 million workers — in Wisconsin. Even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is inaccessible for 62 percent of Wisconsinites.<sup>11</sup>

- 2) **Establish a paid family and medical leave program and expand eligibility for the state's current family and medical leave program.**

Offering paid family and medical leave encourages people looking for a job, to get a job; helps to address the direct caregiver crisis; and helps to support working family caregivers. According to a Gallup Poll, *“The cost of replacing an individual employee can range from one-half to two times the employee's annual salary.”*<sup>12</sup> The cost of maintaining an employee who takes leave is far less costly to an employer.

A majority of legislators from all parties polled by Marquette University Law School in November [2022] favored paid leave.<sup>13</sup>

These additional supports are needed to reduce the strain and recognize the important work of family caregivers.

**Sources for this issue brief can be viewed on page 3**

Find this and other WAAN issue briefs at: <https://gwaar.org/issues-and-initiatives>

(5-2024)

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### Core member organizations

Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW) • Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Chapter Board on Aging and Long Term Care (BOALTC) • Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (WADSA) • Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A) • Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS) • Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND) • Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC) • Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA) • Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) • Wisconsin Senior Advocates • Wisconsin Senior Corps Association (WISCA) • Wisconsin Tribal Aging Unit Association

### Mission

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) works with and for all older adults by educating community members and policy makers on priority issues while advocating for meaningful change. Learn more at <https://gwaar.org/waan>.

## Wisconsin Caregivers Need Reliable Support Sources:

### 1. Family Caregivers in Wisconsin Provide \$9.2 Billion in Unpaid Care to Loved Ones:

<https://states.aarp.org/wisconsin/wi-valuing>

### 2. Valuing the Invaluable 2023 Update: Strengthening Supports for Family Caregivers:

<https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/ltss/family-caregiving/valuing-the-invaluable-2015-update/>

### 3. Grandparents Living With Grandchildren (census.gov)

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/03/grandparents-living-with-grandchildren.html>

### 4. What Is Respite Care? | National Institute on Aging (nih.gov)

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/what-respite-care>

### 5. American Rescue Plan Act: Medicaid HCBS Direct Care Workforce Reform and Analysis | Wisconsin Department of Health Services

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/arpa/hcbs-directcareworkforce.htm#:~:text=Wisconsin%27s%20direct%20caregiving%20workforce%20is,home%20care%20workers%20by%202024>

### 6. AARP: WI Caregivers Provide \$7 Billion in Unpaid Care

<https://states.aarp.org/wisconsin/wi-caregivers-provide-7-billion-in-unpaid-care-sc-wi-wp-advocacy>

### 7. Caregivers in WISCONSIN | Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/aging/data/infographic/2015/wisconsin-caregiving.html>

### 8. Caregiver crunch: Baby boomers juggle raising children while helping aging parents (jsonline.com)

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/investigations/2018/08/03/invisible-workforce-caregivers-wearing-out-boomers-age/879214002/>

### 9. National Family Caregiver Support Program | ACL Administration for Community Living

<https://acl.gov/programs/support-caregivers/national-family-caregiver-support-program>

### 10. EBS Home : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov)

<https://www.bls.gov/ebs/home.htm>

### 11. Datasets - CKAN (diversitydatakids.org)

[https://data.diversitydatakids.org/dataset?vocab\\_Subtopic=FMLA&\\_ga=2.14449139.551199344.1673292061-1693714331.1656615545](https://data.diversitydatakids.org/dataset?vocab_Subtopic=FMLA&_ga=2.14449139.551199344.1673292061-1693714331.1656615545)

### 12. This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses \$1 Trillion (gallup.com)

<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/247391/fixable-problem-costs-businesses-trillion.aspx>

### 13. Evers proposed paid family leave. What you need to know about the plan (jsonline.com)

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2023/02/21/evers-proposed-paid-family-leave-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-plan/69924344007/>

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