



Caregivers in Nova Scotia: economic costs and contributions

Making a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults and their families by bridging research, policies and practice

A caregiver is someone who assists a family member or friend with challenges resulting from illness, disability or aging. Nearly **1 in 3 Nova Scotians** (32%) age 15+ is a caregiver.

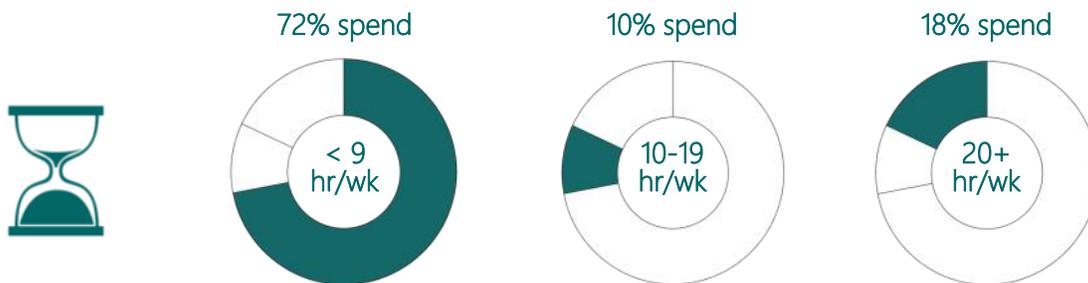


Assuming that the same proportion of Nova Scotians provided care in 2019 as did in 2012, that's about

267,120

caregivers in Nova Scotia based on growth in the population since the 2012 national survey.

Caregivers in Nova Scotia spend considerable time providing care



Caregivers' labour is valuable and contributes to the economy

Caregivers in Nova Scotia spend **12 hrs/wk** on average providing care to others. That's about

149 million hr

of unpaid care in Nova Scotia each year.

Caregivers' time saves the Nova Scotia health care system a conservatively estimated

\$1.64 billion

each year based on hiring replacement workers at Nova Scotia's minimum wage of \$11.05/hr.

Nova Scotia caregivers surveyed said

"The expectations of our role are very, very high. I have worn many hats from hands on personal care to all aspects of daily needs, medical assistance, household chores, finances and recreation. It is a very restrictive way of living. Life simply becomes about the disabled person as their needs are so tremendous. What about my needs?"

Caregiving impacts Nova Scotia caregivers' lives



2 in 3 (68%) caregivers in Nova Scotia are in their prime employment years (age 30-64).

72% of female  77% of male  caregivers are employed



3 in 5 (61%) caregivers in Nova Scotia are **employed full-time**. Nearly 1 in 7 (14%) work less than 30 hrs/wk. 1 in 4 (25%) caregivers are not employed, including those who are retired.

IMPACT ON PAID JOBS

2 in 5



40% miss days of paid work because of their caregiving — the longest time off from their job being 7 days on average.

1 in 11



9% reduce paid work hours because of their caregiving — working 9.2 fewer hrs/wk for pay on average reduces income.

1 in 20



5% exit paid labour force because of their caregiving — often not by choice.



IMPACT ON NOVA SCOTIA'S

That's 11M fewer hours of paid work per year, which impacts employers and governments.

6,547 caregivers in Nova Scotia left the labour force because of their caring.

IMPACT ON FINANCES

3 in 5



59% incur extra expenses because of their caring — \$570 per year on average, often on transportation, prescription and OTC drugs and home modifications.

1 in 6



16% who have extra care-related expenses report financial hardship, putting their current and future financial security at risk.

2 in 3



66% who have extra care-related expenses use or defer savings to pay for these extra costs, limiting ability to save for retirement.



Nearly 1 in 6 caregivers have annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 (16%) while most have household incomes between \$30,000 to \$79,999 (43%) or \$80,000 or more (41%). Care-related extra expenses add financial stress to making ends meet and jeopardize caregivers' financial security, especially for low-income Nova Scotians, now and in later life. The NS Caregiver Benefit may help offset some of the financial costs of caregiving for those caregivers who provide 20 or more hours of care per week to someone with high needs and low income.

¹Consequences questions are asked only of caregivers who provide 2 or more hours per week.