



Caregivers in Alberta: 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 because of challenges resulting from chronic illness, disability or aging. More than **1 in 4 Albertans** (26%) age 15+ is a caregiver.

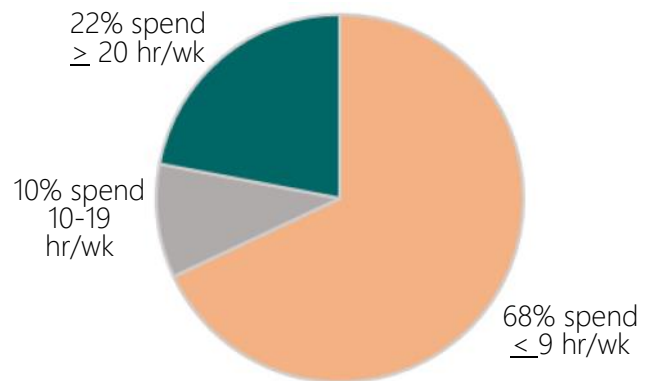


That's about

929,000

caregivers in Alberta (age 15 and older) based on a 2018 national survey.

Time spent providing care



In 2018, more than **1 in 5** caregivers (22%) spent 20 or more hours per week providing care.

Caregivers' time is valuable

In 2018, caregivers in Alberta spent 15.1 hrs/wk on average providing care. That's about

647 million

hours per year of unpaid care in Alberta.

Caregivers' time has a monetary value. Using generalist cost methods, the economic value of caregivers' time is estimated conservatively at



\$12.0 billion

each year based on hiring replacement workers at \$18.50 per hour, the provincial median hourly wage rate for home support workers.

Caregivers surveyed said



I wish I had more time and energy for the person I care for, for my job, for my friends and to take care of myself • I worry that when I need to be a full-time caregiver, I will have to leave my job and will lose my income • I would like compensation for the care I provide.

Caregiving impacts caregivers' employment and Alberta's economy



Nearly 2 in 3 caregivers (63%) in Alberta are age 30-64 and in their prime employment years.



75% of men and 69% of women caregivers in Alberta are also employed.



More than **1 in 2** caregivers (58%) are **employed full-time** and another **14%** work **part-time**. One in 10 Alberta caregivers (10%) who were not working at the time of the survey in 2018 said that caregiving prevented them from working at a paid job ¹.

1 in 2



51% miss days of paid work because of their caregiving — missing 6.5 days per year on average, and often unpaid.

1 in 7



14% reduce paid work hours because of their caregiving — working 12.1 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 Alberta's economy



77.8M fewer hours worked for pay in 2018 impacts employers and governments.

23,716 caregivers left the Alberta labour force in 2018 because of their caregiving.

Caregiving impacts caregivers' financial security

2 in 3



66% incur **extra expenses** because of their caregiving — often on transportation, prescription and OTC drugs and home modifications

1 in 6



18% who have extra care-related expenses report **financial hardship**, putting their current and future financial security at risk.

4 in 5



85% who experience financial hardship **use or defer savings** to pay for these extra costs, limiting their ability to meet their own needs.

The financial impact of caregiving is more extreme for some Albertans. The lowest 20% of income earners earn an average of just under \$6,200 per year while the highest 20% earn an average of just under \$135,000 annually. Not surprisingly, lower income caregivers have no choice but to be more hands on because they cannot afford to purchase support services privately, and care-related expenses take up a bigger proportion of their income. And income inequality is increasing in Canada.

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