

Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT THE REPORT AND STUDY

What is Caregiving in the US?

Caregiving in the US (CGUS) is a comprehensive study of the American family caregiver and widely regarded as one of the most authoritative data resources on family caregivers. The report explores the challenges and opportunities associated with caregiving across different populations and across the lifespan. It helps us understand such areas as the impact of caregiving on caregivers' health, the financial implications of caregiving, and the gaps in supports and services for family caregivers and their care partner. The report is a pulse check on the economic and healthcare realities of America's growing community of family caregivers.

Caregiving in the US was first conducted in 1997 by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, and it has been repeated in 2004, 2009, 2015, and 2020, with each edition providing updated information on caregiver demographics and other factors affecting caregiving. The 2025 update is the most comprehensive study of this critical area of American life to date.

Why is CGUS important? What does this report and study data contribute to the field?

CGUS is one of the most rigorous studies of family caregiving in the U.S. In addition to providing a sound estimate of the number of family caregivers in the U.S., this survey provides information on the experience of caregiving along with information about family caregivers themselves. Information can inform healthcare providers, policymakers, researchers, and families providing care for loved ones.

Because CGUS data were collected in 2015 and 2020, CGUS 2025 data are particularly valuable for understanding trends over time in who is caregiving and what the caregiving experience looks like.

What information does the CGUS report include?

CGUS includes key findings like the number of caregivers in the U.S., the types of care they provide, the financial and emotional issues they face, and the impact of caregiving on their health and well-being. It also includes specific data points on the age and demographics of caregivers, care recipients, hours spent on caregiving, and challenges faced in accessing support. CGUS also provides information by different types of caregivers, for example those in rural areas vs. urban areas, results by different ages and by sex and race/ethnicity.

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What is new in the 2025 report?

There are several new additions to the information in CGUS this year:

- Caregiver health-related quality of life is quantified via the [CDC Healthy Days](#) measure.
- More data on the caregiver experience is available, particularly on care coordination and use of other caregiving help, via an expanded Level of Care Index.
- For the first time, information is now available to characterize the more than 11 million “paid family caregivers” who participate in caregiver payment programs, such as Medicaid home and community-based (HCBS) self-direction waivers.
- State-level data are now available, with a separate state report to be released in Fall 2025.

What are the high-level themes from CGUS 2025?

Themes from the 2025 report include: a significant growth in the number of family caregivers (even when excluding family caregivers who also receive compensation), caregivers find meaning and purpose in care, but caregiving is more complicated and complex than ever before. Also, family caregiving has significant financial impacts, some of which are negative, like using savings to help with care. Policies and supports through workplaces serve an important role for caregivers, and family caregivers need and want more support and services.

How do I cite CGUS 2025?

AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving. Caregiving in the US 2025. Washington, DC: AARP. July 2025.
<https://doi.org/10.26419/ppi.00373.001>

DEFINING FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Who are family caregivers, and how are they defined in this report?

In CGUS 2025, family caregivers are defined as those providing ongoing supports and management of complex care tasks for children and adults with chronic, disabling, or serious health conditions.

The screening question used to identify family caregivers was:

At any time in the last 12 months, has anyone in your household provided unpaid care to a relative or friend 18 years or older to help them take care of themselves? This may include helping with personal needs or household chores. It might be managing a person's finances, arranging for outside services, or visiting regularly to see how they are doing. This adult does not need to live with you.

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Does CGUS include information on both paid and unpaid family caregivers?

For the first time, the 2025 report expands its definition to include family caregivers who receive payment for some or all their caregiving duties through programs such as Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers, Veterans Affairs programs, or other state initiatives.

FAMILY CAREGIVER PREVALENCE

What is the latest estimate of prevalence of family caregivers in the United States?

An estimated 63 million adults in the United States - about 24% of the adult population - serve as family caregivers providing ongoing complex care. This includes individuals providing care to adults or children with a medical condition or disability, whether that care is unpaid, paid, or a combination of both. We define complex care as someone assisting with at least one Activity of Daily Living (ADL), Instrumental Activity of Daily Living (IADL), or medical/nursing task in the last 12 months.

Who is included in the 63 million family caregivers represented in CGUS?

This survey focuses on family caregivers over the age of 18 who provide care beyond raising children: they provide ongoing care for aging parents, spouses, other family members or friends with chronic conditions, and/or adult children with disabilities and serious medical illnesses. There are approximately 4 million young people, under the age of 18, who help provide care for adults in their lives. According to the 2023 U.S. Census, there are also approximately 91 million Americans raising children under the age of 18. Some of these parents and guardians are also caregivers represented by this study.

Does this report capture all caregivers?

The CGUS survey focuses specifically on family caregivers—family members or friends who provide care for older adults, people with disabilities, and people with serious illnesses. This includes family caregiving for children with serious illnesses and/or disabilities. However, the survey does not address routine childcare for healthy children under 18, an activity that engages more than 91 million parents and guardians nationwide.¹

¹U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). America's families and living arrangements: 2023. Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2023/demo/families/cps-2023.html>

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When viewed within the broader caregiving continuum that encompasses all forms of care—from parenting healthy children to caring for older adults—more than 130 million Americans are engaged in providing some form of care.² This highlights how caregiving, while often studied in specific segments, represents a fundamental aspect of American family life that spans generations, circumstances, and intensity.

Other reports indicate a different number of family caregivers in the U.S., why?

CGUS is focused on family caregivers, as defined by a specific set of caregiving activities these caregivers are performing. The study identifies examples of these activities. Other reports may define family caregivers differently.

For example, studies that report higher caregiver prevalence might use a task-oriented approach to identify family caregivers by asking whether someone has completed a care assistance-related task. Using this approach, more individuals may be identified as caregivers because respondents are more likely to have completed one task than to consider themselves someone who provided ongoing caregiving.

- By clearly indicating how family caregiving is defined, CGUS can contribute specifically to policy and practice change, which is crucial for developing effective policies and interventions to support family caregivers highly engaged in care related to aging, serious illness, and disability.
- CGUS provides a more focused view of Americans providing ongoing care and analysis of trends in caregiving over time.

²This rough estimation combines data from the 2025 Caregiving in the US (CGUS) survey on family caregivers providing care for older adults, people with disabilities, and people with serious illnesses—including sandwich generation caregivers who provide both family care and childcare—with the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data on parents and guardians of children under 18, accounting for potential duplication between these overlapping populations.