



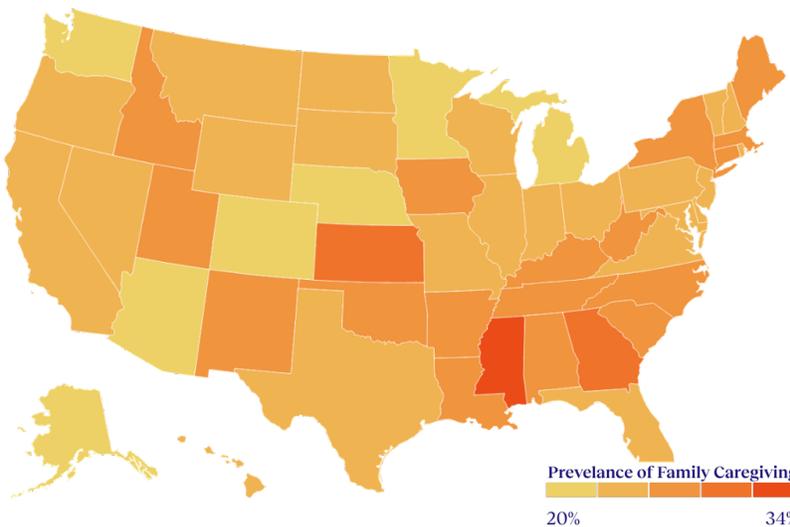
2026 Policy Agenda

Family caregivers are the backbone of our nation’s healthcare system and economy, strengthening our communities and families. With 63+ million family caregivers providing ongoing, complex care for family and friends in every state and every community, the need for meaningful policy action has never been greater.

The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) is a catalyst for change, transforming how the United States recognizes, supports, and values family caregivers. Through our nationally recognized caregiving research and advocacy, we drive policy, system, and culture change to elevate family caregivers as a national priority. We foster partnerships across aging, disability, healthcare, philanthropy, and the private sector with the goal of making family caregiving more sustainable, equitable, and dignified.

Our policy priorities reflect a core belief: family caregivers deserve better, more supportive systems of care. We seek common ground across the aisle to strengthen Medicare’s support for caregivers, improve access to quality healthcare, lower costs, simplify care coordination, and increase federal investment in community-based programs that sustain caregivers and the people they care for.

Prevalence of Family Caregiving Across the U.S.



Family Caregivers Are In Every Community

Across all 50 states, family caregivers make up at least 1 in 5 adults — and in some states, as many as 1 in 3. Nationally, 24% of American adults — 63 million people — provide ongoing care for a family member or friend with a serious illness, disability, or complex medical need. NAC is championing policy change to ensure they are recognized, valued, and supported.

Who are our nation's family caregivers?

**63+ million—1 in 4 adults—
provides ongoing, complex care**

29%

are sandwich generation caregivers—caring for both children and adults

51%

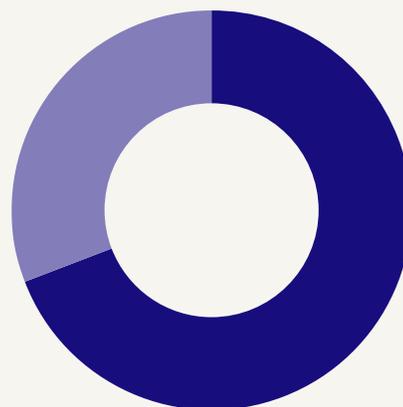
find purpose in caregiving

7 in 10

balance working while caregiving

44%

are in high-intensity caregiving situations providing at least 27 hours of care per week



61%
Women

39%
Men



61%
White*

16%
Latino/Hispanic

13%
African American/Black

6%
Asian American or Pacific Islander

4%
Other including multi-racial

**non-Latino*

Policy Framework

Our policy framework is anchored in the belief that caregivers are essential to our families, healthcare systems, and economy, and they deserve systems that truly support them. Building on three strategic objectives, we advocate for policies that make family caregiving more sustainable, equitable, and dignified.

Strategic Policy Objectives

Champion Caregiver Health & Wellness

Goal: Address the complex and often interrelated physical, social support, and mental health needs of family caregivers.

Foster Caregiver Friendly Communities

Goal: Strengthen home and community-based services and other vital supports including aging, respite, and disability services and systems for all family caregivers.

Promote Caregiver Financial Well-Being

Goal: Ensure financial and workplace security throughout the lives of family caregivers.



National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers

Our policy framework aligns with the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers, a first-of-its kind roadmap for federal and state policymakers, agencies, the private sector, community leadership, and philanthropic leaders to increase coordination and access to support and services for family caregivers across the United States.

Spearheaded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the National Strategy catalyzes action across 15+ federal agencies to advance five core goals:

Increase awareness of, and outreach to, family caregivers

Advance inclusion and engagement of family caregivers within care teams

Advance innovations in family caregiver services and supports

Strengthen financial and workplace security of family caregivers

Advance a family caregiver national research and data collection strategy

2026 Policy Priorities

Champion Caregiver Health and Wellness

Family caregivers are the backbone of our healthcare system, serving as essential partners to both patients and healthcare providers, yet their expertise and needs are often overlooked by the system they support.

Strengthen Medicare's recognition and support of family caregivers.

- Expand Medicare coverage of additional in-home health benefits for beneficiaries and their caregivers.
- Promote the integration and utilization of caregiver assessments to proactively identify and provide targeted intervention and support for family caregivers.
- Incentivize Medicare Advantage and Accountable Care organizations to better engage and support family caregivers.

Improve access to quality healthcare for caregivers and their care partners.

- Simplify or eliminate burdensome prior authorization requirements and “fail first” (step therapy) protocols that delay access to critical care and force caregivers to spend excessive time on administrative tasks.
- Increase access to telehealth for the delivery of family caregiver support and training services.

Improve affordability of complex care by lowering out-of-pocket costs and eliminating barriers such as copay accumulators, copay maximizers, and restrictions on alternative funding programs that prevent caregivers from accessing needed treatments.

Simplify care coordination by reducing administrative burden and supporting scalable models that help caregivers navigate benefits, coordinate services, and connect with community resources.

- Support passage of the bipartisan Alleviating Barriers for Caregivers (ABC) Act to reduce administrative burden on family caregivers navigating Medicare, Medicaid, and related programs.
- Expand caregiver navigation programs that provide professional guidance to help caregivers understand benefits, coordinate services, and make critical treatment decisions.
- Promote interoperable digital care coordination tools to centralize medical records, appointments, and care plans.
- Invest in community-based support that offers accessible local resources and immediate assistance.

64%
of family caregivers
experience high
emotional stress
with **45%** reporting
physical strain¹

¹National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. Caregiving in the US 2025. Washington, DC: AARP, July 2025. <https://doi.org/10.26419/ppi.00373.001>



Foster Caregiver Friendly Communities

Community-based supports, services, and resources are vital for recognizing and sustaining family caregivers. Yet, these essential services often remain limited or inaccessible to those who need them most.

Increase federal investment in community-based caregiver support by strengthening appropriations for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and services.

- Reauthorize and increase funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP).
- Reauthorize the RAISE Family Caregivers Act and the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Acts to ensure continued federal coordination in support of family caregivers.
- Increase federal appropriations for programs that support family caregivers, including grants for implementing the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers at the state and national levels and the Lifespan Respite Care Program.

Protect and preserve access to Medicaid funded home and community-based services for family caregivers and their care partners, including “self-direction” programs.

Advance and protect the vital connections between direct care workers and family caregivers to promote care team integration that will lead to shared decision making, collaborative problem solving, and better communication.

39%

of family caregivers say respite would be helpful, **but only 13% use it**, citing structural and subjective barriers¹

Promote Caregiver Financial Well-Being

Despite contributing an estimated \$600 billion² to our economy, family caregivers remain largely unrecognized by our nation's economic policies and employers, greatly jeopardizing both their financial health and our broader economic stability.

Advocate for policies that promote economic security and workforce participation, including comprehensive paid family and medical leave and long-term care financing.

Provide financial recognition for family caregivers by establishing both a caregiver tax credit and Social Security credits that acknowledge their essential economic contributions.

Address the toxic impacts of debt and debt collection practices that family caregivers experience as they navigate complex healthcare and support systems.

47%

experience at least one negative financial impact including taking on more debt, delaying retirement, and letting bills go unpaid¹

¹National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. Caregiving in the US 2025. Washington, DC: AARP, July 2025. <https://doi.org/10.26419/ppi.00373.001>

²Reinhard, S. C., Caldera, S., Houser, A., & Choula, R. B. (2023). Valuing the Invaluable 2023 Update: Strengthening Supports for Family Caregivers. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.26419/ppi.00082.006>.