



What supports do caregivers in the Northeast use and what support do they still need?

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Providing care to children and adults requires time and resources. In this brief, we explore the supports that caregivers use and the supports they still need. Since the caregiving needs of children and adults vary, we also explore variations on supports used based on the type of care provided. Overall, we find that caregivers use and desire a variety of programs and resources to support them in their caregiving duties. There were important differences in needs based on who they care for. Those who care for both children and adults (also sometimes referred to as the sandwich generation) consistently reported greater needs for support while they are less likely to have health insurance.

Caregivers' Use of the Social Safety Net

The social safety net refers to programs and resources that support people's ability to meet their social and economic needs along the life course.

In the last 12 months, two-thirds of caregivers (67%) used social safety net programs to support their family. The most frequently used programs were SNAP (33%), followed by Medicaid (26%), Covid stimulus checks (20%), community support (11%), WIC (10%), CHIP (9%), and TANF (9%) (figure 1).

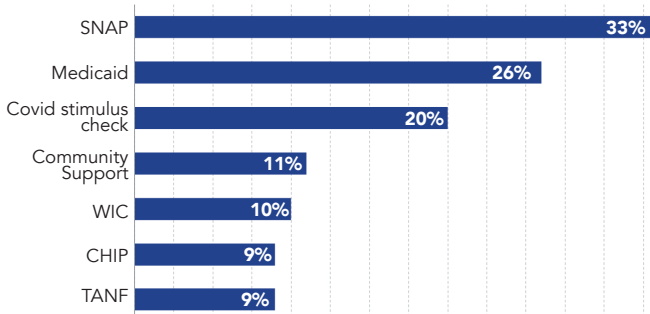


Figure 1. Social safety net programs used in last 12 months

The social safety net programs that caregivers used differed significantly based on who they care for.

- Those who care for both children and adults use social safety net programs the most (74%), followed by those who only care for children (61%), and those who only care for adults (59%).
- Looking at the most frequently used programs, those caring for both adults and children were most likely to use SNAP (37%; versus 31% of those who only care for children and 26% of those who only care for adults) and Medicaid (29%; versus 25% of those who only care for adults and 22% of those who only care for children).

Caregivers' Insurance Coverage

Over nine in ten (94%) caregivers reported that they had health insurance for themselves and their families. The most frequent source of coverage were employer provided plans (36%), followed by Medicare (28%), and Medicaid or CHIP (26%).

Those who care for both children and adults were uninsured at a higher rate (7%; versus 5% of those who only care for children or only for adults). The source of coverage did not vary based on the type of caregiving provided.

Caregivers' Use of Information and Resources

Caregivers have asked for a variety of information and resources in the past (figure 2). The top three most frequent requests for support were information about financial help (39%), information about help with caregiving duties (34%), and asking social network for caregiving help (34%).

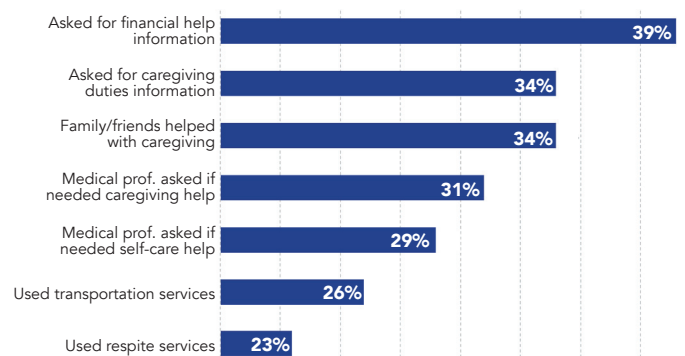


Figure 2. Use of information and resources

Caregivers' Use of Information and Resources (continued)

Those who care for both children and adults were more likely to ask for information and resources:

- Half (49%) of caregivers who cared for both children and adults have requested information about financial help for caregiving, compared to one-third of those who only care for adults (32%) or children (30%).
- 42% of caregivers who cared for children and adults have requested information about carrying out caregiving duties compared to about a quarter of those who only care for adults (29%) or children (26%).

Caregivers' Use of Online Resources

Almost three-quarters (71%) of caregivers have used online resources to assist with their caregiving responsibilities in the last 12 months. Most frequently they used online grocery ordering (28%), telehealth services (26%), online prescription ordering (26%), and ride services (19%).

The use of online resources varied based on the caregiving provided:

- One-third (32%) of caregivers who cared for both children and adults used telehealth services, compared to about one-fifth of those who cared only for adults (20%) or children (21%).
- Over a quarter of caregivers who cared for children and adults (28%) and caregivers who care only for adults (27%) have used an app or website for prescription refills and delivery, compared to 20% of those who only cared for children.

Desired Supports to Participate in the Workforce

For caregivers who were not working, programs and resources most helpful to (re)enter the workforce include financial support to help with caregiving or respite care (75%), flexibility in workplace arrangements (69%), and paid leave, time off, or sick leave (69%) (figure 3).

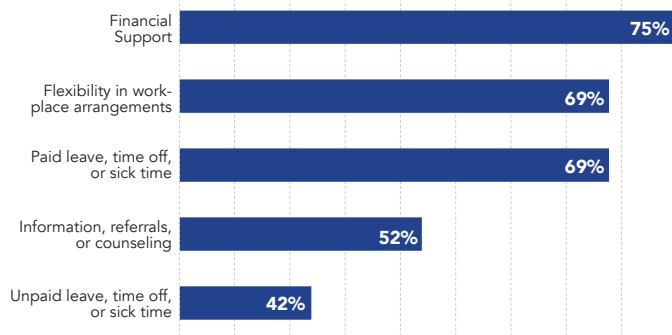


Figure 3. Programs and resources seen as helpful to (re) enter the workforce

The desired programs and resources to enter or return to work varied little based on who the respondents cared for.

Desired Information and Resources

Caregivers were most interested in information about keeping the person they care for safe (27%), stipends or financial compensation for caregiving (25%), activities to do with the person they care for (24%), and managing challenging behavior of the person they care for (22%).

Those who care for adults (either alone or with children) have different preferences than those who care only for children.

- One-third of those who care for both children and adults (31%) and adults only (30%) were more likely to be interested in information about keeping the person they care for safe, compared to a one-sixth of those who care only for children (17%).
- Similarly, about one-fourth of those who care for both children and adults (26%) and adults only (21%) are more interested in managing challenging behavior of the person they care for, compared to one-sixth of those who care only for children (17%).

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Desired Childcare Supports

Those caring for children were asked about their desires for support for childcare. Around two-thirds reported interest in financial support for food and groceries (69%), a tax credit to help with childcare (64%), financial support for respite care for special needs children (64%), and free quality childcare and pre-K options (64%) (figure 4).

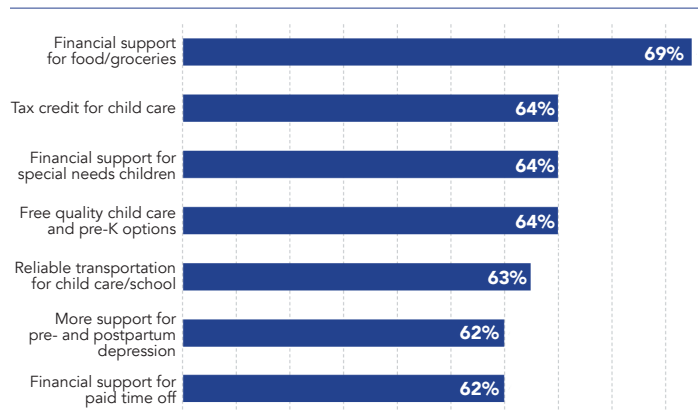


Figure 4. Supports wanted by caregivers with children

About this research

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Methods and dataset: The survey was conducted in 2023 with 4,480 responses from the 13 states of the Northeast Region through a Qualtrics online panel. NER-Stat: Caregiving Survey is the regional household survey that the [North Central Regional Center for Rural Development](#) (NCRCRD) conducted in collaboration with [Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development](#) (NERCRD), The Ohio State University and the National Farm Medicine Center. NCRCRD has also previously conducted the NCR-Stat: Caregiving survey in the North Central Region. The technical documentation, survey codebook, and the open access dataset are available for download here: Inwood, S.; Bednarik, Z.; Becot, F.; Caldera, S.; Henning-Smith, C.; Cohen, S.; Finders, J.; Brown, L. (2024). Northeast Region Household Data. NER-Stat: Caregiving Survey. Purdue University Research Repository. doi:10.4231/TP7N-8B10.

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