



Investing In Care Infrastructure Will Accelerate Economic Recovery, Create Jobs, Promote Gender & Racial Equity

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed and exacerbated pre-existing cracks and inequities in the caregiving economy. We need a robust investment in a family-friendly care infrastructure that works for the millions of people who need care and support, those who have had to leave the workforce to become unpaid caregivers, and for the paid caregivers who have been historically undervalued.

Instability and underinvestment in child care, long term and elder care, and our care workforce hurts our economy and has disproportionately affected women — primarily Black and Brown women.

- When the coronavirus hit, over 30 million people in America did not have access to a single paid sick day. Four in five workers had no paid family leave through their jobs.
- Every year, families in the United States stand to lose \$64.5 billion in wages to care for loved ones because they lack access to home care or paid leave.
- Before the pandemic, parents forewent approximately \$30-35 billion in income to pay for child care, translating into a loss of \$4.2 billion in annual tax revenue.
- Demographic shifts alone require adding 1.1 million more home care jobs to our economy by 2028, to support the aging of our population.
- The lack of a care infrastructure continues to leave caregivers vulnerable to economic instability and greater financial strain, especially Black and immigrant women who disproportionately perform paid and unpaid care.
- Domestic workers are three times as likely to be living in poverty as other workers.
- Fewer than one in 10 domestic workers are covered by an employer-provided retirement plan and just one in five receives health insurance coverage through their job. 53% of home care workers rely on some sort of public assistance.
- By 2030, nearly one-fifth of the total US population will have reached the traditional retirement age of 65. If more workers don't go into care work, we'll have a national shortage of 350,000 paid care providers by 2040.



The pandemic has worsened these disparities.

- More than 2.3 million women left the labor force in 2020, more than 600,000 of whom were Black and 618,000 of whom were Latina. Now, women's participation in the labor force is the lowest it's been since 1988.
- Economists say women leaving the workforce can prevent the economy from growing by \$30 trillion.
- One in four women — at twice the rate of men — reported unemployment during the pandemic due to a lack of child care.
- More women than men will face economic insecurity due to disproportionate time out of the workforce or having to cut their work hours.
- Care providers have also suffered economic hardship — almost one in six child care jobs lost during the pandemic have not returned.

Investing in care infrastructure, like investing in physical infrastructure and clean energy, boosts the economy and creates new jobs.

- Going big on care infrastructure investments could support the creation of 3 million new jobs.
- Social care investments have the potential to generate twice as many jobs as infrastructure spending and 50% more jobs than green energy development.
- Investing in the care economy, in turn, produces widespread benefits in the restaurant and retail sectors as caregivers spend their disposable income. Both sectors are major employers for low-income workers and women, and have disproportionately struggled during the pandemic.
- Family and medical leave programs will strengthen and solidify our economic growth. Mothers are 20-50% less likely to separate from the labor force five years after giving birth if they have access to paid leave.
- Investments in care leads to equitable job growth, creating jobs for low-income households and improving the earnings of poor workers.
- An investment of 2% of GDP in the care industry has the potential to reduce the gender gap in employment by half in the United States.

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“Investment in the care industry, in addition to creating a higher number of jobs, would also address the care deficit and reduce gender inequality. Such a policy would contribute towards creating a more inclusive model of development as well as lifting economies out of recession.”

— [International Trade Union Confederation](#)

“Public investment in care would allow millions of family caregivers who have left the labor market, reduced their hours, or lost their jobs in 2020 to return to work, strengthening overall economic activity and ensuring that a generation of women’s labor market gains do not disappear.”

— [Time’s Up](#)

Care economy experts agree that investing in care infrastructure will benefit the economy and promote racial and gender equity.

“All of the sectors that would experience major job creation are dominated by low-wage workers — the majority of whom are women of color — precisely the workers who have been disproportionately harmed by the pandemic.”

— [Time’s Up](#)

“Like transportation, energy, and public health, we need a robust care ‘infrastructure’—policies, services and workforces that allow us to provide for our families and contribute to the economy [...] We have a unique opportunity to bring these policies into the 21st century and rebuild our economy in a way that meets the growing needs of the oncoming demographic shift and creates good paying jobs.”

— [Ai-jen Poo](#), Director of Caring Across Generations and Executive Director of National Domestic Workers Alliance

“Women predominate in caregiving professions and family caregiving roles. For far too long, we have under-invested in and undervalued our caregiving infrastructure, and now we are suffering the consequences. We need strong and healthy caregiving systems to relieve the pressure on those who

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are caring for children, parents, family members with disabilities. Our families, communities, and our economy cannot thrive until we make that investment.”

— Cherita Ellens, President And Chief Executive Officer
Of Women Employed

“The time is now to think big and come together to build the high-quality, accessible, affordable universal care infrastructure that will not only help families and promote equity and opportunity, but will benefit us all for generations”

— Brigid Schulte, Director Of The
Better Life Lab At New America