

New York Care Workers: The Weight of Stress and Unpaid Caregiving

Worker Institute Data Snapshot

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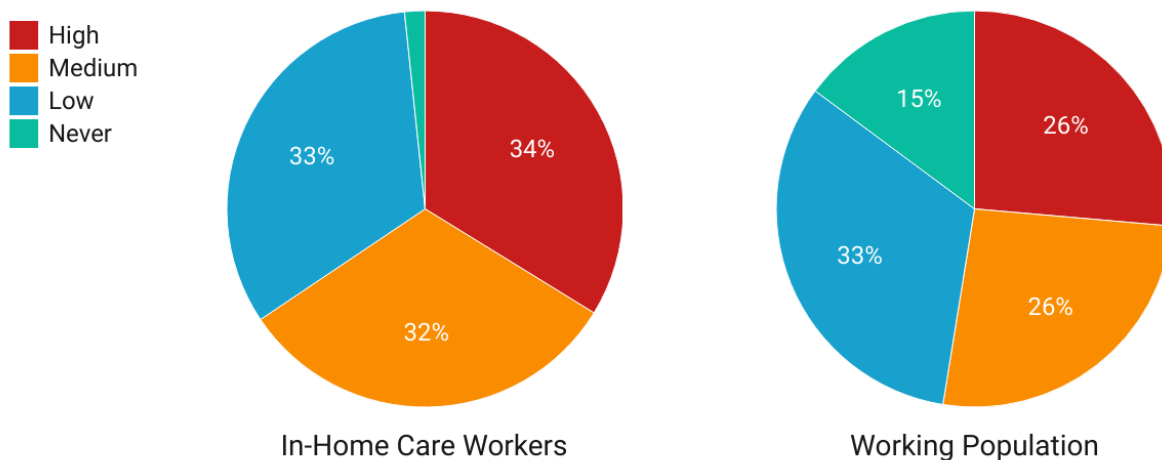
May 2024

This memo provides a snapshot of findings about the stress, burnout, and unpaid caregiving responsibilities of care workers in New York. The analysis is based on data from the 2023 Empire State Poll, carried out by the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR).¹

Overall, **care workers made up over one-third (34.6%) of the working population of Empire State Poll respondents** (529 of 1527).² In this memo, we highlight findings about certain groups of care workers, including:

- “Healthcare” includes respondents who indicated that they work in the healthcare field. (n=194)
- “In-Home” includes respondents who work as home care workers or as domestic workers (including nannies and house cleaners). (n=95)
- “Facility” includes respondents who work in early childhood education, childcare, elder care, disabled care, or social services (outside of the home). (n=209)
- “Care workers” includes all previously listed categories, as well as those who indicated that they work in an “other” care economy job not listed in the questionnaire. (n=529)

Frequency of Stress at Work

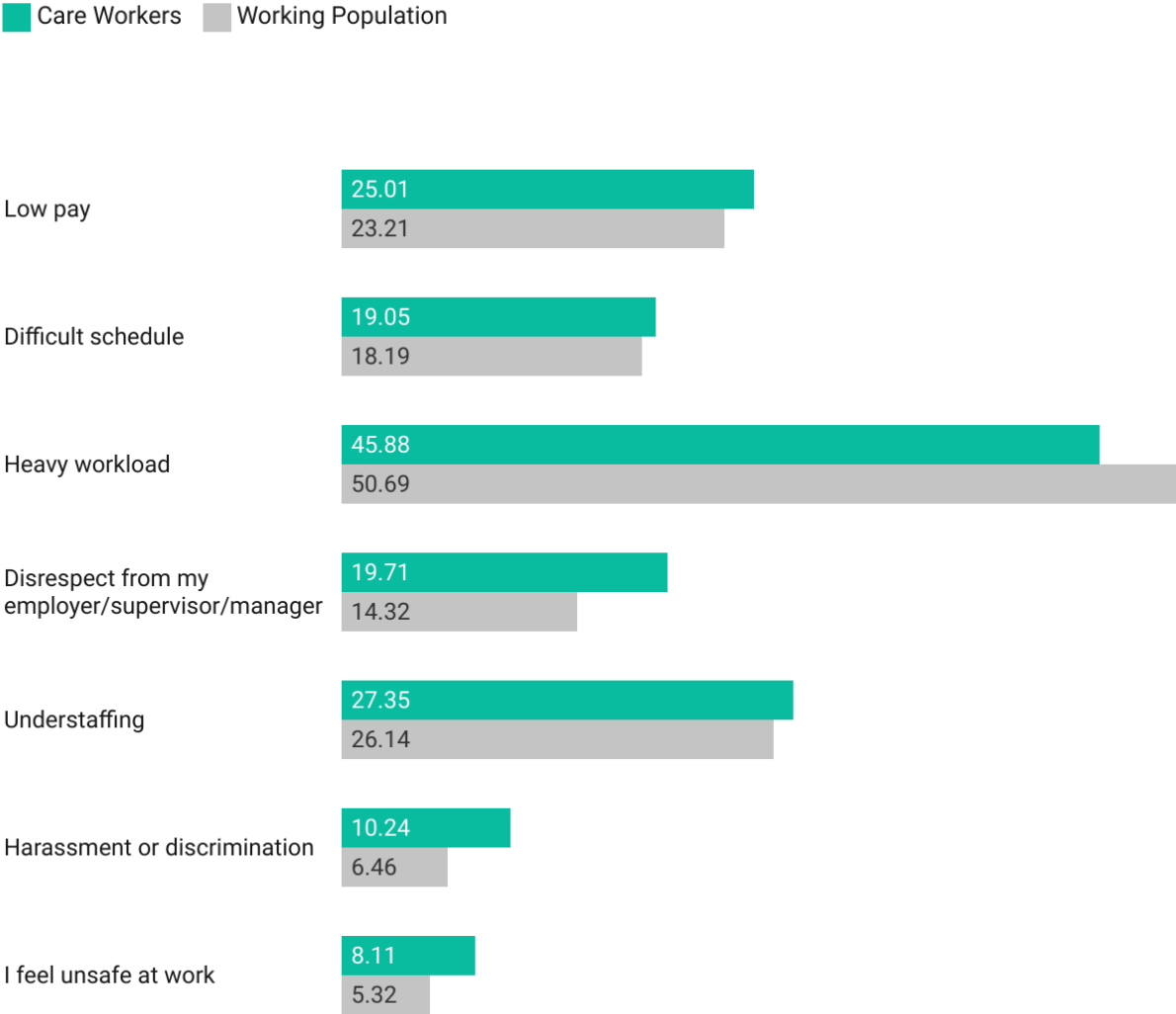


Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

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Over half (52%) of working New Yorkers responding to the Empire State Poll reported a medium or high frequency of feeling stressed out while working at their current job.³ In-home care workers reported experiencing stress at work even more frequently, with 66% reporting medium or high frequency of stress.

Sources of Stress at Work



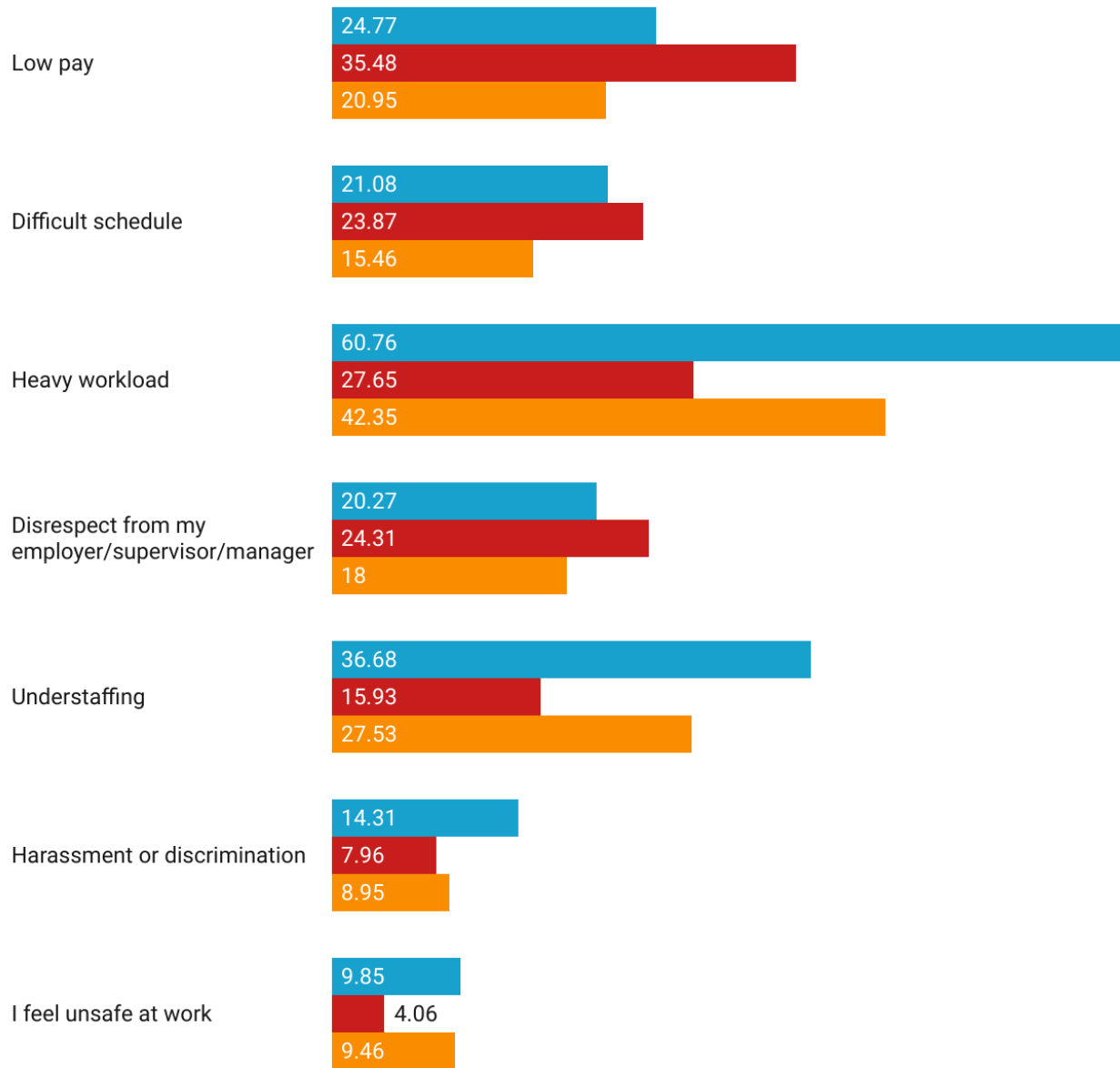
Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Compared with the general working population of Empire State Poll respondents, **care worker respondents were more likely to report low pay, disrespect, understaffing, harassment and discrimination, or feeling unsafe at work** as the sources of their stress and/or burnout at work.

When we look at specific groups of care workers, **healthcare workers were more likely to report heavy workload, understaffing, and harassment/discrimination** as sources of stress. **In-home care workers were more likely to report low pay and difficult schedules** as sources of stress. **Disrespect from employers, managers, and supervisors** was reported as a source of stress at higher levels across healthcare, in-home, and facility workers. **Healthcare and facility care workers were nearly twice as likely to report feeling unsafe at work** as a source of stress, compared with the general working population of respondents.

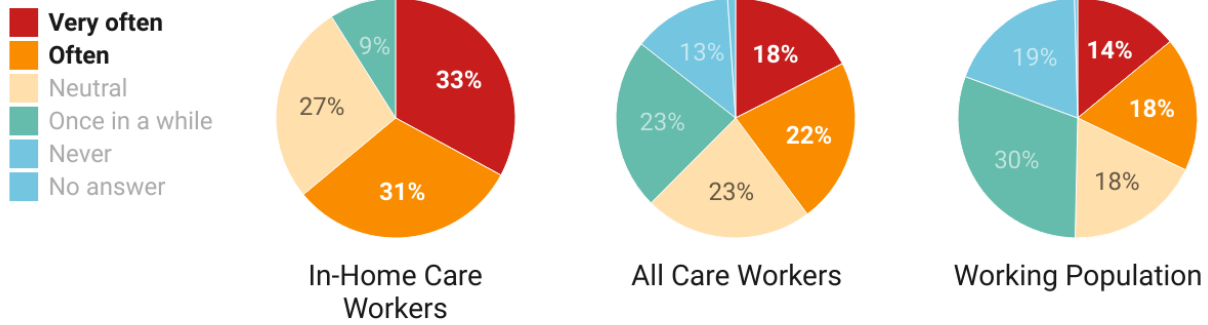
Sources of Stress at Work

Healthcare In-Home Facility



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

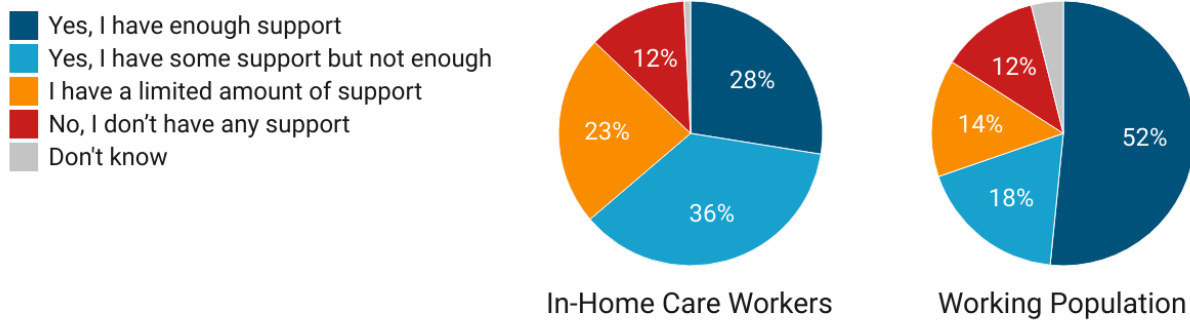
Impact of Stress and Burnout



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

When asked how often job stress and/or burnout makes it difficult to take care of themselves and/or spend time with people they care about, **care workers generally reported a greater impact of stress and burnout compared to the working population.** Stress and burnout had a particularly heavy impact on in-home care workers in this regard.

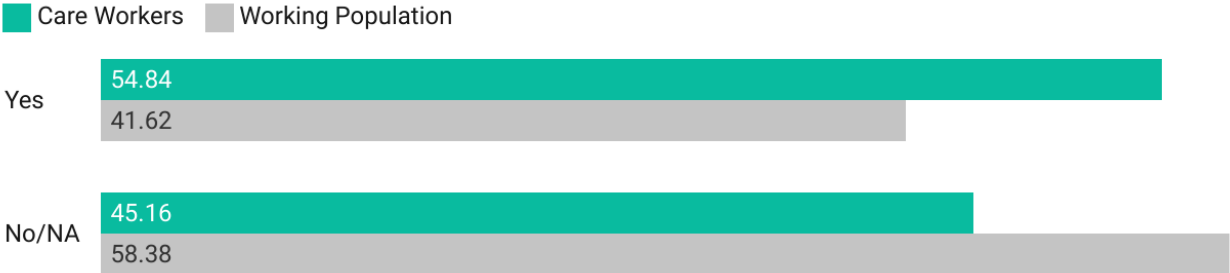
Resources for Managing Stress



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

When asked if they had enough resources for managing stress, trauma, and/or burnout from their jobs, **in-home care workers were more likely to report that they had limited or no support for managing stress compared to the general working population.**

Unpaid Caregiving



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

In addition to providing care as their paid work, care workers were also more likely to bear responsibility for unpaid caregiving in their personal lives. When asked if they provide *unpaid* caregiving support to children or adults on a regular basis, care workers reported unpaid caregiving at higher rates compared to the general working population. In-home care workers were the most likely to have unpaid caregiving responsibilities compared to other categories.

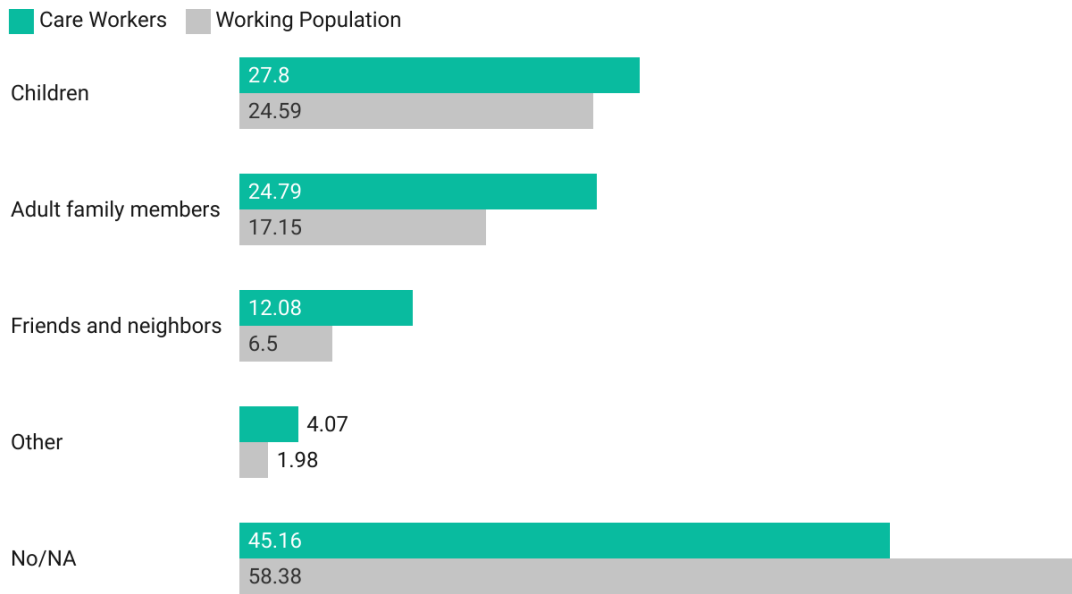
Unpaid Caregiving



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

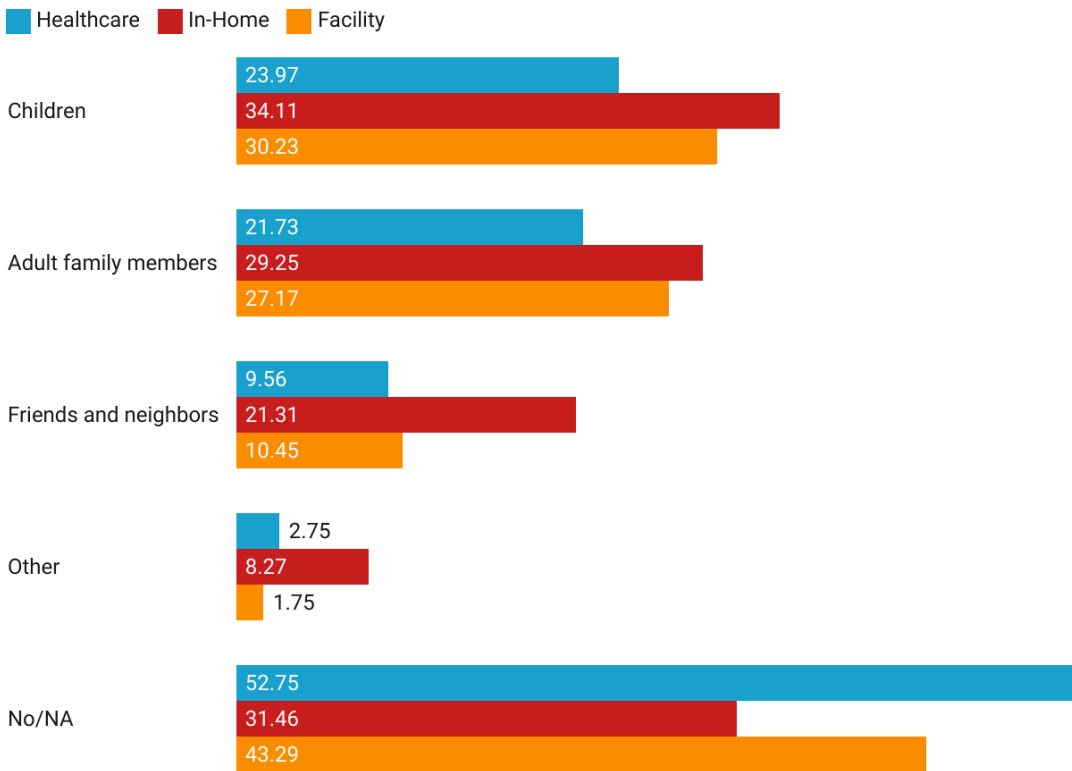
Compared with the general working population of respondents, care workers were more likely to report all forms of unpaid caregiving—for children, adult family members, friends and neighbors, and “other” people.

Unpaid Caregiving



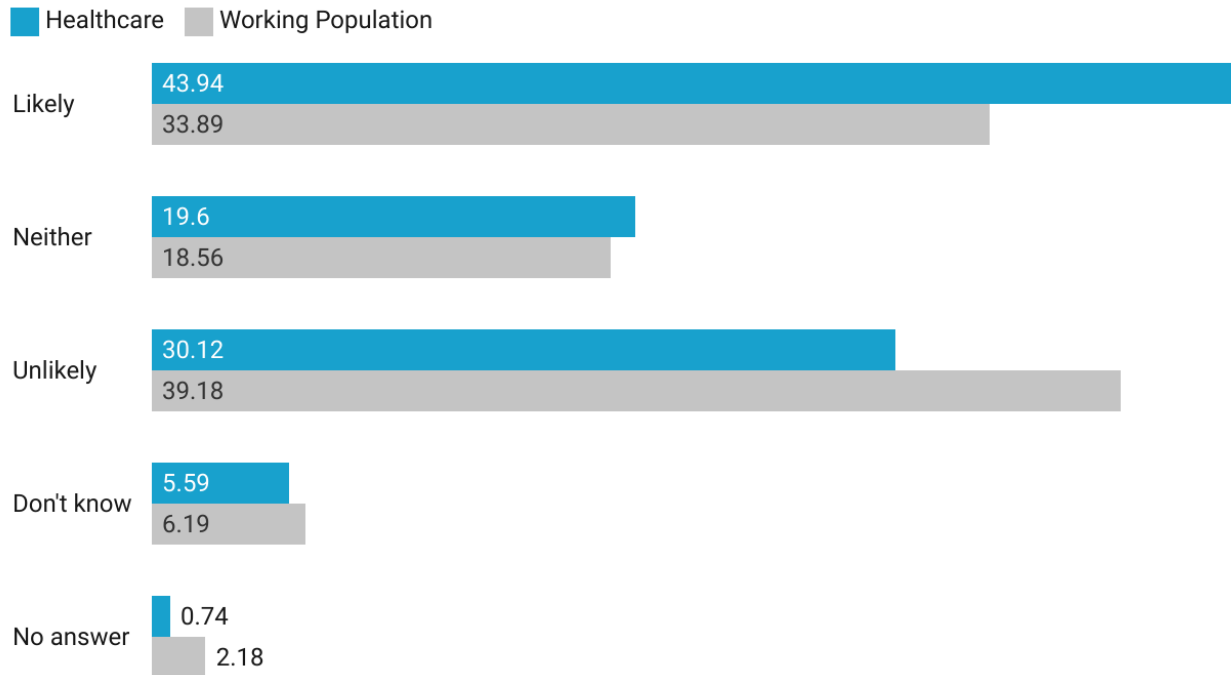
Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Unpaid Caregiving



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Likelihood that amount of time spent providing unpaid caregiving will affect ability to do paid work in 2023



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

When asked how likely it is that time spent on their unpaid caregiving responsibilities would affect how much paid work they do for the rest of the year, healthcare workers reported the greatest likelihood, compared with the general working population and other categories of care workers.⁴

ENDNOTES

- 1 The Empire State Poll (ESP), first launched in 2003, is the first statewide survey of its kind for New York State (NYS), specifically designed to provide timely and actionable data on NYS residents. The Poll is administered by the ILR School at Cornell University. The core instrument includes workplace, community, governmental, economic, and special topical issue questions, in addition to rotating omnibus modules submitted by researchers. This memo summarizes key highlights from these data, which were collected between July - November 2023.
- 2 The “working population” includes all respondents who indicated that they are working full- or part-time, as well as those who are currently on paid leave. The 2023 Empire State Poll had a total of 2593 respondents in the final weighted dataset. When compared to the United States Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, the Empire State Poll obtained similar results on major demographic benchmarks, including age, education, income, and race. However, 13% of the 2023 sample is foreign-born, which is below the 23% estimate found in the 2022 ACS for New York State. As such, the ESP may not be fully representative of the foreign-born population in New York State. This memo should be read with this limitation in mind, given the disproportionate representation of immigrant workers in certain sectors of care work in New York. For example, data from the 2017-2021 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the ACS indicates that 31% of home care workers in New York State were non-citizens; in the 2023 Empire State Poll, only 5.66% of “In-Home Care Workers” (including home care workers and domestic workers) were foreign-born without a U.S. parent. See PHI Data Workforce Center for further PUMS ACS data analysis of the direct care workforce: <https://www.phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/>
- 3 Response options were collapsed for this analysis. “Low” includes the response options “a few times a year” and “once a month.” “Medium” includes “a few times a month” and “once a week.” “High” includes “a few times a week” and “every day.”
- 4 Response options were collapsed for this analysis. The “likely” category was collapsed to include respondents who indicated both “likely” and “extremely likely.” Similarly, the “unlikely” category was collapsed to include respondents who indicated both “unlikely” and “extremely unlikely.”