

# Over 8 million Canadians take on significant costs along with other challenges associated with caregiving

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Nearly half of unpaid family caregivers under 55 spend more on monthly care-related costs than groceries, childcare, and internet bills

CALGARY, Nov. 9, 2023 - As economic conditions continue to tighten across the country, Canada's unpaid family caregivers are facing disproportionate additional monthly costs compared to non-caregivers.

According to a recent survey from the [Petro-Canada](#) CareMakers Foundation™, developed in partnership with Leger, t five (60 per cent) unpaid family caregivers spend up to \$500 on care-related costs each month, while one in five (17 per cent) spends \$500 or more, creating a cost burden for more than 8 million Canadians<sup>1</sup>. This on top of the mental and emotional challenges associated with caregiving.

Nearly half (47 per cent) of unpaid caregivers, spends more on care-related costs than other typical monthly bills, including groceries, personal care, phone and internet bills, monthly groceries, utility bills, car payments, and monthly childcare costs. Juggling these costs, combined with other financial obligations, can be challenging. Over half (52 per cent) report difficulty managing these costs in today's economy.

"Many caregivers are feeling the financial strain that comes with caring for a loved one, which can be even more pronounced when budgets are tight," says Leila Fenc, Executive Director, [Petro-Canada](#) CareMakers Foundation. "Whether it's the cost of pay for customized supplies, modifications to the home, respite care, or the fact that they must adjust their regular work schedule to provide care, today's unpaid family caregivers are absolutely feeling the weight that can come with this work."

The cost of unpaid family care is not just financial

Unpaid family caregiving can be a challenging role that many step into unexpectedly, providing critical support, often without training or additional help. Whether caring for a parent with a neurological condition, a partner who suffered an unexpected accident or a child with chronic illness, unpaid caregiving is a role that half of all<sup>2</sup> of Canadians are likely to serve in at some point in their lives. That's why The [Petro-Canada](#) CareMakers Foundation is proud to raise awareness about the issue of family caregiving and provide grants - over \$7 million to date -- to organizations that support family caregivers.

In Canada, an estimated 75 per cent of care is provided by unpaid caregivers, which equates to over \$24 billion in unpaid care per year<sup>3</sup>. Providing a family member in need with paid care can be expensive, so much so that half (50 per cent) of Canadian unpaid family caregivers under 55 have recently taken on a caregiver role due to the rising cost of paid care.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.caremakers.ca/about>

<sup>2</sup> Care counts: Caregivers in Canada, 2018 ([statcan.gc.ca](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/95-02/2018001/article/00001-eng.htm))

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6400651/>

Unpaid family caregiving can require up to 19 hours per week (ibid), which many caregivers work in addition to full-time work. This often leads to other challenging lifestyle implications, which caregivers under 55 are more likely to experience.

Over half of current or former Canadian caregivers under 55 stated that caregiving negatively impacts or impacted their health (55 per cent), personal friendships and relationships (51 per cent), and that, as a caregiver, they've had to pass up promotions, jobs, or other career transitions (51 per cent).

Notably, some challenges disproportionately impact women: 53 per cent of female caregivers report missing out on time for themselves because of caregiving, compared to 42 per cent of male caregivers.

#### Non-caregivers' perspective on unpaid family care

The survey also asked Canadians who are not currently caregivers about their perception of caregiving. Among non-caregivers, two in five (37 per cent) do not know what caregiving costs could be; one in five (19 per cent) believes it could be over \$2,000 a month. Over half (58 per cent) of this group also feels they are not prepared to take on the cost and assumed time associated with caregiving, should the need arise.

Even though caregiving can be challenging, unpaid family caregivers in Canada feel a strong sense of fulfilment. Up to 72 per cent of caregivers report finding caregiving duties fulfilling and enjoy caring for their loved one. This sentiment is mirrored somewhat among non-caregivers; 56 per cent said they would be comfortable making sacrifices in their lives to become a caregiver.

What both groups agree on is the level of support that current caregivers receive. Four out of five, or 80 per cent of Canadians, believe there should be more resources and support for unpaid caregivers.

"We need to do more to provide critical support to millions of unpaid family caregivers, especially given the economic challenges Canadians are facing," says Fenc.

#### About Petro-Canada CareMakers Foundation

Launched in 2020, the [Petro-Canada](#) CareMakers Foundation™ creates awareness about family caregiving in Canada and inspires Canadians to help by raising funds to enable charitable organizations across the country to provide critical programs and resources for family caregivers. CareMakers is a registered Canadian Charity that receives contributions from Suncor, the proud owner of [Petro-Canada](#)&TRADE, as well as other corporate and individual donors.

#### About Leger

Leger is the largest Canadian-owned full-service market research firm. An online survey of 1,652 Canadians aged 18+ including n=500 current/former caregivers and n=1152 non-caregivers was completed between September 22 and 25, 2023, using Leger's online panel. Leger's online panel has approximately 400,000 members nationally and has a retention rate of 90 per cent. A probability sample of the same size would have a margin of error of  $\pm 2.4\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

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