



WCWI 

A STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOR EMPLOYERS

Advocating for Families + Caregivers

WCWI Well Practice

Members-Only Resource



WCWI's Membership and Community:

As a professional development and consultation organization for wellness strategists and people leaders, WCWI will help your organization shift employee wellbeing to a foundational strategy that is valued and understood by all. Over 650 wellness professionals use WCWI's Membership and certified trainings to be empowered and equipped to create strategic change; while organizationally they're experiencing the power of a designed-culture where employees will feel a sense of community, purpose, and impact.

- [WCWI Membership](#)
- [WCWI Members](#)

CAREGIVERS

Caregivers, paid or unpaid, provide care to dependents who need some degree of ongoing assistance with everyday tasks on a regular or daily basis. The recipients of care can live either in residential or institutional settings, range from children to older adults, and may have chronic illnesses or disabling conditions. A caregiver may be responsible for the direct care, protection, and supervision of children, adult, elderly, chronically ill, or physically or mentally disabled.

Examples include but are not limited to: biological parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, legal guardian, caregiver to elderly relative, caregiver to relative with physical or mental disability, caregiver to relative with chronic illness, caregiver to adult child unable to care for themselves, caregiver to child with chronic illness or disability.



SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES + CAREGIVERS: A STRATEGIC PRIORITY EMPLOYERS CANNOT OVERLOOK

Families and caregivers are more stressed than ever as they continue to adapt to a new normal that the pandemic has brought about. Employers are challenged to create a supportive culture to best meet the ever-changing needs of their employees and continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Additionally, it is an essential priority for employers to develop equitable strategies in support of the diverse representation of all types of parents and caregivers in the workforce across their varying needs.

The data is substantial and continues to develop rapidly – all pointing to the same story. Employers must assess and evolve the support they're providing to one of their largest diverse employee population: caregivers.

Why is supporting caregivers a strategic priority for employee wellbeing in 2021?

- **1 in 5 Americans are caregivers.**
There's been a 9.5 million increase of caregivers from 2015 to 2020. *Source: National Alliance for Caregiving: The US 2020 Report*
- **Caring for adults is on the rise and not slowing down.**
There's been an increase of over 8 million adults providing care to a family member or friend age 18 or older, primarily driven by a significant increase in the caring for a family member or friend who is age 50 or older. *Source: National Alliance for Caregiving: The US 2020 Report*
- **The caregiver role has evolved.**
 - 24% of caregivers of adults care for two or more recipients (up from 18 percent in 2015).
 - 40% of caregivers live together with their recipient. *Source: National Alliance for Caregiving: The US 2020 Report*
 - More American adults are taking on the role of unpaid caregiver for adult recipients who have increasingly complex medical or support needs. *Source: National Alliance for Caregiving: The US 2020 Report*
 - 61% of caregivers report working while caregiving and 60% have experienced at least one work-related impact. *Source: National Alliance for Caregiving: The US 2020 Report*
- **It supports diversity, equity, and inclusion within your workplace.**
Underrepresented racial groups are more likely to be working parents than white employees. *Source: 2020 Parents at the Best Workplaces Report*
- **2020 changed us.**
 - 4x more women than men dropped out of the labor force in September 2020, including 324,000 Latinas and 58,000 Black women. *Source: 2020 Parents at the Best Workplaces Report*
 - 1 in 4 women are considering downshifting their careers or leaving the workforce due to COVID-19. *Source: 2020 Parents at the Best Workplaces Report*
- **The decline in caregiver self-reported health is concerning. Employees are burned out.**
 - 23% of caregivers find it difficult to take care of their own health and a similar proportion report caregiving has made their own health worse. *Source: National Alliance for Caregiving: The US 2020 Report*
 - Over 2.4 million women are currently suffering from burnout. *Source: 2020 Parents at the Best Workplaces Report*
 - One in 5 caregivers report high financial strain as a result of caregiving. *Source: National Alliance for Caregiving: The US 2020 Report*
 - Mothers of color are suffering greater levels of burnout (33%). *Source: 2020 Parents at the Best Workplaces Report*

Additional Data & Articles Describing the Priority of Family + Caregiver Advocacy:

- A study of women in corporate America: [Women in the Workplace Report 2020](#)
- 2020 CNBC Article: [9.8 million working mothers in the U.S. are suffering from burnout](#)
- National Study of Working Parents: [2020 Parents at the Best Workplaces Report](#)
- 2018 Article: [A New Take on Employee Wellness for Working Parents](#)
- 2014 Journal Article: [Parents' Employment and Children's Wellbeing](#)
- National Alliance for Caregiving & AARP Research: [Caregiving in the U.S. 2020 Report](#)
- 2020 Willis Towers Watson Employer Survey Findings: [Employer's efforts to meet workers' childcare needs](#)

How are Wisconsin employers advocating for families and caregivers?

In December 2020, WCWI launched a statewide survey that garnered participation representing 22% of WCWI employer members. The survey results captured the latest trends of family and caregiver advocacy in Wisconsin workplaces. [View the full survey results.](#)

Wisconsin employers are directly feeling the impact of 2020 with 51% of survey participants reporting that employees at their organization left their positions to focus on caregiving in the last year. However, Wisconsin employers have a remarkable opportunity to be a part of the solution to initiate advocacy and strategic support for families and caregivers.

The good news? Survey respondents indicated that 65% of executive leaders have formally expressed a focus to improve family and caregiver support within their organization. This foundational support of leadership is vital to create impactful strategies. The 3 most prevalent types of family and caregiving support survey participants reported their organizations provide are:

1. Offering Flexible Working Options. (86%)
2. Increased internal communications in support of caregiver advocacy (65%).
3. Providing common types of leave: FMLA (90%), STD (84%), and LTD (78%).

Wisconsin employers can make a substantial positive impact on the wellbeing of their employee population by increasing their family and caregiver advocacy. Based on the survey results, employers can take action to widen the scope of caregiver support and provide a suite of solutions for all types and all stages of caregiving.

The five areas of opportunity identified in the survey:

1. Formally assess the needs and interests of your employees across all types of caregivers, parents, and families.
2. Leverage the direct line of support to your employees through your managers. Educate all levels of managers and supervisors on the services and solutions your organization provides, and equip them with formal questions to ask and a process they can follow to offer support.
3. Identify if and how you can provide more flexibility and support through Flexible Working Options and Paid Time Off (PTO) policies.
4. Increase paid leave support and consider inclusive leave opportunities such as maternity, paternity, parental leave, adult caregiver, bereavement, etc.
5. Support adult and child care services in a variety of methods: financial assistance, direct connection to care options, onsite services, etc.

According to national data in the 2020 Parents at the Best Workplace Report, when companies reduce burnout they are better able to attract, keep, and unleash great talent. The top companies highlighted in the report as the best places to work for parents, revealed these outcomes:

- 35x more likely to recommend their employer
- 20x more likely to intend to stay
- 12x more likely to quickly adapt to change
- 10x more like to give extra

CREATE A CULTURE THAT ADVOCATES FOR FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

- 0= My organization has not done this and has no plans to in the future.
 1= My organization has not done this, but we are formally considering it.
 2= My organization considers this a strategic focus and has formal plans to do this within the next year.
 3= My organization considers this a strategic focus and has already done this within the past year.

Lay the Foundation	Your Score
1. Assess the support your organization currently provides <u>specifically</u> for parents and caregivers.	
2. Advocate to your leadership and wellness team that there's a business case for continuously monitoring and integrating caregiving support as an employee wellbeing strategy.	
3. Formally assess the family and caregiving needs of your employees.	
4. Executive leadership formally express their intention of having a culture that supports the diverse needs of families and caregivers.	
Circle the items that you scored 0 or 1. Considering these items, what is at least one actionable opportunity that you can focus on at your organization? <div data-bbox="1429 955 1583 1092" style="float: right; background-color: black; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; text-align: center; width: 80px;"> TAKE ACTION </div>	

Provide Flexibility	Your Score
5. Assess how your organization can offer more flexible working options. <small>Flexible Working Options can be permanent and enforced through a formal policy, offered short-term depending on the situation (ex: COVID-19 pandemic), varied based on the job type of the employee.</small>	
6. Offer formal and/or permanent flexible working options: <small>Examples include: part-time working, work from home, flexible "Flexi" time, term time working, compressed working hours, annualized hours, career break, job sharing.</small>	
7. Offer flexibility on a short-term/situation basis: <small>Examples include: allowing parents to work from home when dependents are ill or in need, allowing the build-up of 'time off in lieu' (TOIL), making flexi-time available during certain circumstances, enabling leave days to be broken down into hours, or allowing staff to buy additional annual leave.</small>	
8. Increase the time offered within your employee paid time off (PTO) policy to support caregiving needs and the traditional usage of PTO.	
9. Assess your PTO structure to ensure flexibility as to how your employees use their time.	
Circle the items that you scored 0 or 1. Considering these items, what is at least one actionable opportunity that you can focus on at your organization? <div data-bbox="1429 1774 1583 1911" style="float: right; background-color: black; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; text-align: center; width: 80px;"> TAKE ACTION </div>	

Proactively Communicate	Your Score
10. Increase internal communications to bring awareness of caregiver benefits and further caregiver advocacy. Examples include: talent recruitment, new hire training, learning and development training, staff meetings, annual reviews, 1:1 manager meetings, emails, direct mail, bulletin boards, videos, intranet, online employee portal, etc.	
11. Have leadership directly communicate to employees their support of families and caregivers. Leaders can use this opportunity to remind employees of organization's core values, inform of employee benefits and processes, and share personal stories.	
12. Externally promote your organization's family focused culture.	
Circle the items that you scored 0 or 1. Considering these items, what is at least one actionable opportunity that you can focus on at your organization?	



Equality of Opportunity	Your Score
13. Educate managers on caregiver benefits and services your organization provides, and equip them with supportive questions to ask and processes to follow.	
14. Require managers to formally dedicate time to address caregiving needs in performance reviews and/or ongoing meetings.	
15. Formally promote that your organization offers flexible working options and/or will consider requests for flexible working in job advertisements, internally and externally.	
16. Provide a formal process that employees can use to communicate individual requests and needs.	
17. Widen the scope of employment leave your organization offers. For scoring this section use: 0 = your organization provides 0-2 types of leave 1 = your organization provides 3-5 type of leave 2 = your organization provides 6-8 type of leave 3 = your organization provides 9+ type of leave FMLA Unpaid Parental Leave Short-term Disability Long-term Disability Paid Maternity Leave Paid Paternity Leave Paid Parental Leave Personal Leave Paid Family Leave to Care for Ill Family Members Leave of Absence/Sabbatical Bereavement (and care) Leave	
Circle the items that you scored 0 or 1. Considering these items, what is at least one actionable opportunity that you can focus on at your organization?	



Supporting Specific Needs	Your Score
18. Assess your organization's definition of parents and caregivers to ensure comprehensive inclusivity in the support. Examples include but are not limited to: biological parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, legal guardian, caregiver to elderly relative, caregiver to relative with physical or mental disability, caregiver to relative with chronic illness, caregiver to adult child unable to care for themselves, caregiver to child with chronic illness or disability.	
19. Provides a suite of services and benefits that support all parents and caregivers representing diverse demographics and needs.	

<p>20. Assess how your organization eases financial stress such as “no-layoff commitments”, early paychecks, food or financial support during school closures for families who rely on school lunch, and other actions supporting financial hardship.</p>																	
<p>21. Widen the scope of support your organization provides to parents with childcare needs and school-aged children with specific policies or benefits. For scoring this section, use: 0 = your organization provides 0-2 types of support 1 = your organization provides 3-6 type of support 2 = your organization provides 7-10 type of support 3 = your organization provides 11+ type of support</p> <p>Specific Policies for this population</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Flexible Work Options</td> <td>Connection to Additional/Back-up Childcare Options</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PTO</td> <td>Onsite Childcare</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Library of Resources</td> <td>Onsite Tutoring</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Depended Care FSA</td> <td>Parenting Coaches and Workshops</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employee Resource Groups</td> <td>College Coaches</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mental Health Coverage for the Whole Family</td> <td>Employer-Sponsored College Savings Plans</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Financial Assistance for Childcare Services</td> <td>Financial Planning Resources</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Other</td> </tr> </table>	Flexible Work Options	Connection to Additional/Back-up Childcare Options	PTO	Onsite Childcare	Library of Resources	Onsite Tutoring	Depended Care FSA	Parenting Coaches and Workshops	Employee Resource Groups	College Coaches	Mental Health Coverage for the Whole Family	Employer-Sponsored College Savings Plans	Financial Assistance for Childcare Services	Financial Planning Resources		Other	
Flexible Work Options	Connection to Additional/Back-up Childcare Options																
PTO	Onsite Childcare																
Library of Resources	Onsite Tutoring																
Depended Care FSA	Parenting Coaches and Workshops																
Employee Resource Groups	College Coaches																
Mental Health Coverage for the Whole Family	Employer-Sponsored College Savings Plans																
Financial Assistance for Childcare Services	Financial Planning Resources																
	Other																
<p>22. Widen the scope of support your organization provides to single parents/guardians with specific policies or benefits. For scoring this section, use: 0 = your organization provides 0-1 types of support 1 = your organization provides 2-3 type of support 2 = your organization provides 4-5 type of support 3 = your organization provides 6+ type of support</p> <p>Specific Policies for this population</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Flexible Work Options</td> <td>Library of Resources</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PTO</td> <td>Parenting Coaches and Workshops</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FMLA</td> <td>Legal and Financial Counseling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paid Parental Leave</td> <td>Other</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employee Resource Groups</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Flexible Work Options	Library of Resources	PTO	Parenting Coaches and Workshops	FMLA	Legal and Financial Counseling	Paid Parental Leave	Other	Employee Resource Groups								
Flexible Work Options	Library of Resources																
PTO	Parenting Coaches and Workshops																
FMLA	Legal and Financial Counseling																
Paid Parental Leave	Other																
Employee Resource Groups																	
<p>23. Widen the scope of support your organization provides to adoptive and/or foster parents with specific policies or benefits. For scoring this section, use: 0 = your organization provides 0-1 types of support 1 = your organization provides 2-3 type of support 2 = your organization provides 4-5 type of support 3 = your organization provides 6+ type of support</p> <p>Specific Policies for this population</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Flexible Work Options</td> <td>Library of Resources</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PTO</td> <td>Parental Coaches and Workshops</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FMLA</td> <td>Legal and Financial Counseling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paid Parental Leave</td> <td>Other</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employee Resource Groups</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Flexible Work Options	Library of Resources	PTO	Parental Coaches and Workshops	FMLA	Legal and Financial Counseling	Paid Parental Leave	Other	Employee Resource Groups								
Flexible Work Options	Library of Resources																
PTO	Parental Coaches and Workshops																
FMLA	Legal and Financial Counseling																
Paid Parental Leave	Other																
Employee Resource Groups																	
<p>24. Widen the scope of support your organization provides to caregivers of adults or children with chronic illness or disability with specific policies or benefits. For scoring this section, use: 0 = your organization provides 0-2 types of support 1 = your organization provides 3-6 type of support 2 = your organization provides 7-10 type of support 3 = your organization provides 11+ type of support</p> <p>Specific Policies for this population</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Flexible Work Options</td> <td>Financial Assistance for Care Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PTO</td> <td>Elder Care Coaches and Workshops</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FMLA</td> <td>Legal and Financial Counseling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paid Leave</td> <td>Mental Health Coverage for the Whole Family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employee Resource Groups</td> <td>Other</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dependent Care FSA</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Library of Resources</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Connection to Additional Care Options</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Flexible Work Options	Financial Assistance for Care Services	PTO	Elder Care Coaches and Workshops	FMLA	Legal and Financial Counseling	Paid Leave	Mental Health Coverage for the Whole Family	Employee Resource Groups	Other	Dependent Care FSA		Library of Resources		Connection to Additional Care Options		
Flexible Work Options	Financial Assistance for Care Services																
PTO	Elder Care Coaches and Workshops																
FMLA	Legal and Financial Counseling																
Paid Leave	Mental Health Coverage for the Whole Family																
Employee Resource Groups	Other																
Dependent Care FSA																	
Library of Resources																	
Connection to Additional Care Options																	
<p>25. Widen the scope of support your organization provides to mothers with specific policies and benefits that support all mothers at various stages within motherhood. For scoring this section, use: 0 = your organization provides 0-4 types of support 1 = your organization provides 5-10 types of support 2 = your organization provides 11-17 types of support 3 = your organization provides 18+ types of support</p>																	

<p>Specific Policies for this population</p> <p>Flexible Work Options (ex: return-to-work plan, flex schedule)</p> <p>PTO</p> <p>FMLA</p> <p>Paid Parental Leave</p> <p>Mental Health and Counseling Benefits</p> <p>Infertility Support – Financial</p> <p>Parental Coaches and Workshops</p> <p>Legal and Financial Counseling</p> <p>Employer Resource Group or “Buddy System”</p> <p>Library of Resources</p>	<p>Communications describing mental health and counseling options</p> <p>Dedicated, accessible, clean, and private space for lactating mothers to express milk.</p> <p>Dedicated, accessible, and clean space to safely store breastmilk.</p> <p>Connection to Care Consultants (ex: lactation)</p> <p>Allowance of reasonable time to express milk</p> <p>A congratulatory message in support of their new addition</p> <p>A thorough message describing the benefits and support available to them</p> <p>A specific benefit to support lactating employees who travel frequently to ensure they can pump and store breastmilk</p> <p>Support and appropriate accommodations in situations of serious illness or loss</p> <p>Other</p>	
---	--	--

Circle the items that you scored 0 or 1. Considering these items, what is at least one actionable opportunity that you can focus on at your organization?



Workplace Design + Environment	Your Score
<p>26. Offer onsite services and amenities in support of parents and caregivers. For scoring this section, use:</p> <p>0 = your organization provides 0 types of support</p> <p>1 = your organization provides 1 type of support</p> <p>2 = your organization provides 2-3 types of support</p> <p>3 = your organization provides 4+ type of support</p> <p>Wellbeing Room</p> <p>Onsite Childcare</p> <p>Onsite Tutoring</p> <p>Onsite Learning Pods/Virtual learning</p> <p>A dedicated, accessible, clean, and private lactation space</p> <p>Concierge Services (ex: groceries, laundry, car service, etc.)</p> <p>Expectant and New Parent Designated Parking</p> <p>Other</p>	

Circle the items that you scored 0 or 1. Considering these items, what is at least one actionable opportunity that you can focus on at your organization?



TOTAL SCORE	
--------------------	--

YOUR ADVOCACY LEVEL

0-26 – Developing Advocate

My organization is in the early stages of identifying and implementing a supportive culture that advocates for families and caregivers.

27-51 – Progressing Advocate

My organization is actively implementing a supportive culture that advocates for families and caregivers; we have some current initiatives, policies, and cultural support but we are in the process to assess and improve.

52-98 – Exemplary Advocate

My organization is actively implementing a supportive culture that advocates for families and caregivers; we have several current initiatives, policies, and cultural support and we are continuously collecting the feedback and needs of our caregivers and parents as a trusted supporter.

We're here to help!
**REGISTER FOR YOUR
 WCWI CONSULTATION**

Your WCWI coach will review your results and support you in co-creating an action plan for your organization based on the unique opportunities you identified.

www.wellnesscouncilwi.org/WCWI/Consultations.htm



EMPLOYEES: ADVOCATE FOR YOUR OWN FAMILY + CAREGIVER NEEDS

REFLECT

What are your personal and professional priorities as a working parent or caregiver? What type of support would be most impactful to your experience as a working parent or caregiver? Some examples may include:

- Establishing support and understanding with your direct manager
- Communicating your unique situation and/or experiences with your co-workers, including those who are not parents or caregivers
- Understanding the existing support services and advocating for additional or revised formal employer-sponsored support and policies

EXPLORE

Considering your employer assessment results and your personal experiences, how can you become your own champion, express your needs, and garner support? Some examples may include:

	Conversational	Cultural Micro-Shifts
WITH YOUR MANAGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the opportunity to share family, caregiving, and/or personal-related updates in meetings with your manager and team. • Offer feedback related to work policies and processes that impact your family and/or caregiving needs. • If you identified with any specific data from the survey results, national data, or your employer assessment, request to discuss this with your manager(s). Be prepared to share constructive feedback with industry data and your own personal experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your work calendar shareable and include family and caregiving related appointments. Examples include: lunchtime, doctor appointments, school-related volunteering, care consultants, etc.) • If your manager is not supportive of family and caregiving advocacy, consider connecting with a HR representative to voice your concerns. Empower yourself to share your suggestions based on the data presented in this report and your own personal experience.
WITH YOUR COWORKERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you encounter a conversation with co-workers that does not seem inclusive of families or caregivers, speak up! Offer a moment to recognize that others may be inadvertently left out or not considered, and share insight about your own experience. • Set boundaries by being forthright in communicating your schedule with your team members, such as: "I won't be accessing email during this time because I do daycare drop-off", "I take my elderly mother to her PT appointment every other Monday", etc. This will help normalize your integrated work and home life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express interest in team members sharing stories of daily life across all members of the team. If the moment arises, welcome the opportunity for team members to introduce their family and/or dependents during meetings. • Consider implementing a common understanding of how you meet as a team. This may include verbal support of interruptions during meetings or setting guidelines as to when meetings can take place. For example, "no meetings before 8:00 AM or after 4:00 PM", "no lunchtime meetings", "we will welcome you back when you're ready".
WITH POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve your organizational policies and services by leveraging the employer assessment and bringing it forthright to your manager(s) to discuss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the use of organizational policies and benefits by providing a formal testimonial to your employer or sharing with team members how you use the benefits and how they positively impact your family and caregiving needs as well as your work experience.