

**Providing Assistance to Older Adults and Grandchildren:
Caregiver Needs Assessment of Riverside County Employees**

Executive Summary

**Prepared for the
Riverside County Department of Human Resources
County of Riverside Office on Aging**

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Background

Caregiving involves a wide range of activities from providing assistance with shopping and transportation to full responsibility for bathing, feeding, and other essential activities to assist an individual. In some instances, caregiving may involve providing assistance to an individual some distance from the caregiver. With increased longevity, some employees are providing care for their elderly parents and other aging individuals. Other employees are providing care for their grandchildren or other children under 18 years of age that are not their own child.

In the winter of 2003, the Riverside County Department of Human Resources and the Riverside County Office on Aging conducted a caregiver needs assessment to study the issues and needs of working caregivers. A questionnaire, "Providing Assistance to Older Adults and Grandchildren," was developed by Joan Branin, Ph.D., Chair, Graduate Programs in Gerontology, University of La Verne, and Rebecca Martinez, D.P.A., Consultant, H.S.S. Consultants, to assess the needs of Riverside County working caregivers. The questionnaire, accompanying by a cover letter, was distributed to Riverside County employees by email and mail. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, completed questionnaires were returned directly to the consultants. Three hundred fifty-six (356) questionnaires were received and used in this needs assessment.

Analysis of the Caregiver Needs Assessment Findings

Incidence of Caregiving

Over 50% of the Riverside County employees reported that they were working caregivers. Seventy-seven percent reported that they currently were providing care or assistance to at least one older adult and 10% were providing care for at least one child under 18 that was not their own. Of those providing care to older adults, the majority was caring for their parents or parents-in-law. Most of the older adults who were receiving care were females, over 80 years of age, living in Riverside County but are not living with the working caregiver. The working caregiver was their main caregiver.

Most of the working caregivers providing care for children under 18 and not their own were caring for a grandchild between the ages of 7-12 years. Only nineteen percent of the children receiving care were young, i.e., under 4 years of age. Most of younger care recipients lived in Riverside County with the caregiver.

Interestingly, 13% of the working caregivers among Riverside County employees were providing care for both an older adult and a child under 18 and not their own.

Of those currently not providing care, 48% indicated that they anticipated providing care to an older adult within the next five years, while only 13% anticipated providing care to a child not their own within the next five years.

Analysis of the Caregiver Needs Assessment Findings (cont'd)

Working Caregivers of Older Adults

Characteristics of Caregivers. Most of the working caregivers of older adults were female, between 40-59 years of age, Euro American, married, with an undergraduate degree, in very good or good health, with an annual household income of \$40,000-\$79,000.

Type of Assistance Provided. The majority of the assistance provided was for instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) rather than activities of daily living (ADLs). Transportation, emotional assurance, and managing personal finances were the three most frequent types of assistance provided; transferring an older adult from place to place was the least frequent type of assistance provided. Forty percent provided direct financial support. Most of these caregivers provided four or more types of assistance and received assistance from others usually a spouse or partner or a sibling. Only 1% used paid caregivers.

Amount of Time Spent Caregiving. Fifty-five percent of the caregivers caring for older adults spent less than 15 hours per week caregiving. Sixteen percent spent 30 or more hours.

Type of Problems Experienced by Caregivers. In the past year, working caregivers of older adults experienced a variety of caregiving-related and work-related problems. The major caregiving-related problems experienced were physical strain or fatigue and interference with work. Issues related to oneself such as fatigue and financial strain were experienced somewhat more

frequent than issues related to the logistics of providing care. Rankings of various types of caregiving-related problems are presented below.

Type of Caregiving-Related Problem	Rank
Experiencing physical strain or fatigue	1
Interference with work	1
Feeling emotional upset	2
Interference with social activities	2
Getting cooperation from family members	2
Locating needed services	3
Having enough money to pay for care	3
Experiencing financial strain	3
Interference with family relationships	3
Interference with free time	3
Understanding governmental programs	3
Finding affordable residential services	4
Finding trained and reliable providers	5
Finding out about legal options	5
Dealing with a breakdown in care arrangements	5

The major work-related problems experienced by working caregivers of older adults were feeling overwhelmed and taking time off due to an older adult's illness. In general, the logistics of providing care was a greater work-related problem than taking care of oneself as a caregiver. Rankings of various work-related problems are presented on the next page.

Type of Work-Related Problem	Rank
Feeling overwhelmed	1
Getting time off due to older adult's illness	2
Receiving numerous telephone calls at work	3
Having less energy for work	3
Being absent	4
Feeling less productive	5
Not able to work overtime	5
Being late for work	6

Use of County Resources. Only twenty-five percent of these working caregivers had contacted the Riverside County Office on Aging for assistance; even fewer had contacted the Riverside County Department of Human Resources or the Employee Assistance Program.

Type of Resources and Information Needed. Resources or information that would be useful if available include assistance in locating services, legal assistance and consultation, flexible work scheduling, and long-term care insurance for family members. These working caregivers preferred to receive written information through the mail or via email. The least preferred methods were after work and weekend seminars. Rankings of the usefulness of various types of resources and information are presented on the next page.

Usefulness of Resource and Information	Rank
Assistance locating services	1
Legal assistance / consultation	2
Flexible work schedule	3
Long-term care insurance for family members	3
Medical information	4
Caregiver support groups	5
Financial information	5
Adult day care	6
Respite care	6
Housing options	7
Part-time or job sharing	7
Long distance caregiving	8
Work-based adult day care	8
Work-based child day care	9

Role of Government in Caregiving. Most working caregivers of older adults felt that the Federal and state governments were not doing enough to provide programs and services for working caregivers. Most felt that it was still the primary responsibility of the family to provide care for older adults. Of the various governmental entities, the Federal government was seen as the governmental entity most responsible for providing caregiving for older adults. Employers were seen as least responsible for the caregiving of older adults.

Analysis of the Caregiver Needs Assessment Findings (cont'd)

Working Caregivers of Children Under 18 and Not Their Own

Characteristics of Caregivers. Most working caregivers of children under 18 that were not their own were female, between 50-59 years of age, Euro American, married or divorced, with a high school diploma or less, in very good or good health, and with an annual household income of \$20,000-\$59,000.

Type of Assistance Provided. The majority of these working caregivers needed to seek childcare assistance in order to work. During the past year, the types of childcare used most frequently were a relative in the caregiver's own home, after school activities, and a spouse or partner. The type of childcare used least frequently was an unrelated person in the caregiver's own home.

Amount of Time Spent Caregiving. The number of hours per week spent on childcare varied from less than 5 to 30 or more hours with some assistance from others mostly a spouse or partner. Almost seventy percent spent 30 or more hours per week providing childcare.

Estimated number of hours per week spent on caregiving was 30 or more

Not surprising, mothers provided only 3% of the care or assistance. Most of the children receiving care resided in Riverside County. The working caregiver was the child's main caregiver.

Financial Impact of Caregiving. Almost fifty percent of working caregivers did not pay for childcare; while twenty-six percent spent between \$250-\$499 per month.

Estimated average monthly expenditure for childcare was \$228.00.

Type of Caregiving Problems. In the past year, working caregivers of children under 18 and not their own experienced a variety of caregiving-related and work-related problems. The type of caregiving-related problem experienced most frequently was scheduling all activities. Other major problems were finding care for a sick child, taking children to and from school, and taking them to the doctors. The major problems were related to transportation and providing childcare while working. Most of these working caregivers experienced four or more childcare problems in the past year. Almost forty percent experienced ten or more problems, an average of almost one per month. Rankings of the various types of caregiving-related problems are presented below.

Type of Caregiving-Related Problem	Rank
Scheduling all activities	1
Picking children up to and from school	2
Finding care for a sick child	2
Taking them to the doctors	2
Maintaining one's own health status	3
Finding childcare during school holidays	3
Paying for childcare	4
Providing discipline	4

Finding care when childcare provider is sick	4
Finding childcare to match work schedule	5
Finding information on available childcare	6
Ensuring their safety	6
Getting to the location of the childcare	7
Obtaining adequate health insurance for them	8

The work-related problem experienced most frequently was taking time off due to a child's illness or doctor's appointments. Other major problems were inability to work overtime and less energy for work. Sixty-nine percent had experienced four or more work-related problems in the past year.

Type of Work-Related Problem	Rank
Needing time off for child's illness or doctor's appointment	1
Being unable to work overtime	2
Having less energy for work	2
Feeling less productive	3
Being absent from work	3
Receiving numerous telephone calls at work	3
Being late for work	4
Being unable to travel for work	5
Needing to reduce number of hours worked	6
Needing to take extended leave	6

Use of County Resources. Many working caregivers caring for children under 18 and not their own had contacted the Department of Social Services for assistance but few had contacted the Department of Human Resources.

Type of Resources and Information Needed. The most useful resources or information needed by these working caregivers were work-based child day care, legal assistance and consultation, and flexible work scheduling. Working caregivers preferred to receive information from a website or the Internet and written information through the mail. The least preferred method was weekend and after work seminars. Rankings of the usefulness of various types of resources and information are presented below.

Usefulness of Resources and Information	Rank
Work-based child day care	1
Legal assistance / consultation	1
Flexible work schedule	1
Medical information	2
Assistance locating services	3
Long-term care insurance for family members	3
Caregiving workshops	4
Respite care	4
Financial information	4
Non work-based child day care	4
Caregiver support group	5
Housing options	6
Part-time or job sharing	6
Child rearing information	7
Work-based adult day care	8
Long distance caregiving	9

Role of Government in Providing Childcare. Similar to working caregivers of older adults, working caregivers of children under 18 and not their

own felt that the Federal and state governments were not doing enough to provide programs and services for working caregivers such as themselves. Although the major responsibility for childcare is with the family, county government and the community of residence were seen as the governmental entities most responsible for providing childcare for these children. Employers were seen as least responsible for child caregiving.

Recommendations

Several recommendations for further investigation and action are proposed. These recommendations can be classified as either internal or external. Internal recommendations are those recommendations that relate to Riverside County government; external recommendations are those recommendations that relate to Riverside County and the businesses and other stakeholders within the County.

1. **Conduct a comparative assessment of surrounding counties**

A comparative assessment of Riverside County government employees with those of other surrounding counties using the same assessment tool, "Providing Assistance to Older Adults and Grandchildren" is recommended. These comparative findings can assist Riverside County and the other surrounding counties in the collaboration and coordination of working caregiver services and programs.

2. **Assess private businesses within Riverside County**

Using this same assessment tool, a study should be conducted of the Directors of Human Resources of the Riverside County business community. A comparison of the results from these two studies--Riverside County government employees and private businesses within Riverside County--can be of assistance in defining broad working caregiver policies and developing collaborative programs that can be utilized by both government and nongovernment employees within the County.

3. **Conduct working caregiver focus groups**

Focus groups comprised of working caregivers representing government and/or nongovernment employees should be conducted. These focus groups would enable the County to explore and identify caregiver needs and issues directly from working caregivers. Caregiver focus groups comprised of employers and employees also could be used to collaboratively develop working caregiver programs and policies.

4. **Develop an educational awareness campaign with linkages to EAP and Human Resources**

An educational awareness campaign should be initiated with linkages to EAP and Human Resources to disseminate informational brochures to educate employees about existing information and resources for working caregivers and how to access these resources. Individuals may not be aware of existing resources because there is no imminent need to use them or they may not be utilizing them because they do not know how to access information about available community resources. Many community resources may be underutilized.

5. **Develop a marketing plan for a business-to-business educational outreach**

A marketing plan for a business-to-business educational outreach should be developed outlining how to promote community working caregiving services and resources directly to private businesses. One marketing

strategy for a business-to-business educational outreach might be the collaborative development of collateral materials about working caregiving resources for distribution at employer worksites. Another marketing strategy might be the development of a table display or video discussing caregiving by employees, issues faced by working caregivers, and how to address them effectively through community resources. Working caregivers could be referred to a resource directory or hotline to identify and locate specific providers of services needed within the County.

6. **Expand ongoing employee wellness program**

Another recommendation is to expand the ongoing employee wellness program for County government employees to specifically target working caregiver issues similar to those targeted to women's health. This program should address and include mental health counseling for caregiver burden and depression, stress reduction and relaxation techniques, and work-site caregiver support groups.

7. **Continue to assess multiple caregiving needs**

The caregiver literature often focuses on working caregiver needs and issues as they relate to caring for a single older adult or child under 18 that is not one's own. This is particularly true of caring for older adults. Many working caregivers are caring for both older adults and children or multiple older adults or multiple children. How are these caregivers able to handle the responsibilities of caring for multiple individuals? Do they have a different type of support network or access services and resources

differently than the caregiver of a single individual? Are there any lessons to be learned from multiple caregiving? An exploratory study of multiple caregiving could be conducted through personal interviews with these types of working caregivers. This assessment should be an integral part of further County working caregiver needs assessments.

8. **Expand the resource database of community services to include Internet-based information**

The resource database of community services of information and resources for working caregivers should be expanded to include Internet-based information. The existing resource database needs to be continually updated and reflective of newer issues and resources in working caregiving such as long distance caring.

9. **Develop bilingual community services and resources targeted toward working caregivers**

The need for and type of bilingual community services and resources for working caregivers should be identified. These bilingual community resources and resources should be congruent with the values of different ethnic and cultural groups and represent the diversity of Riverside County. Any information and resources should be more than simply a translation of existing materials into another language.

10. **Target the Riverside County Office on Aging's InfoVan to reach county employees who are caregiving**

One area of need is for more information about caregiver services and resources. The flexibility and mobility of the InfoVan makes it an excellent vehicle for the dissemination of information directly to employees at their worksites in Riverside County.

11. **Investigate models and funding for work-based adult and child day care**

An exploratory study of models for work-based adult and child day care both in the U.S. and other countries should be conducted to examine any models that may be adapted to the needs of working caregivers residing and working within Riverside County. This would involve an extensive search of the literature and contacting leaders in the field.