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# **The Trusted Voice for Aging**

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## **Presentation to the California Assembly Committee on Health Informational Hearing**

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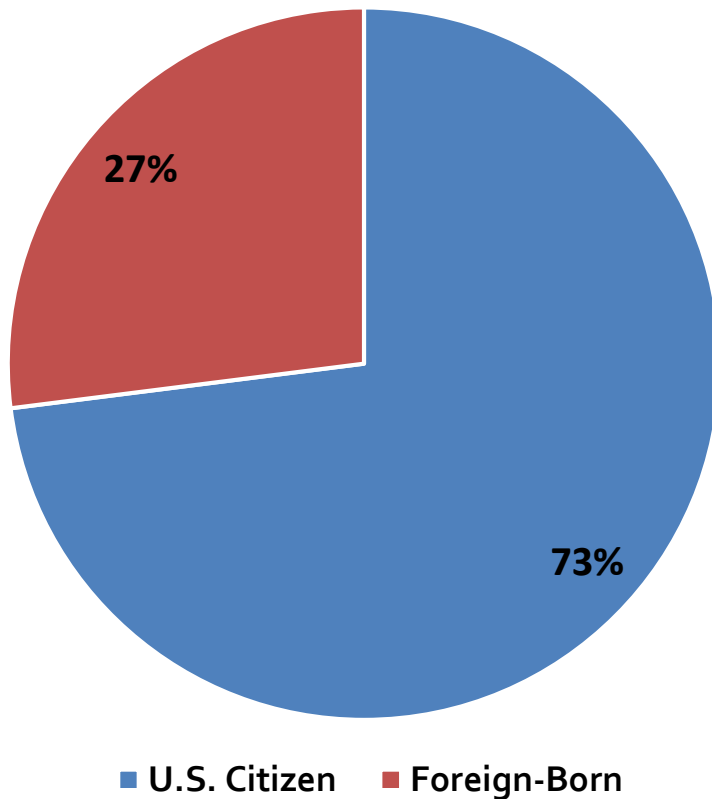
# Direct Care Professional Occupations

- Medical/social/environment intersection
- Frontline professionals (60-80% of care)
  - Certified nursing assistants
  - Home health/home care aides
  - Personal care attendants
  - Dietary aides
- Mostly female, low-income, people of color and immigrants

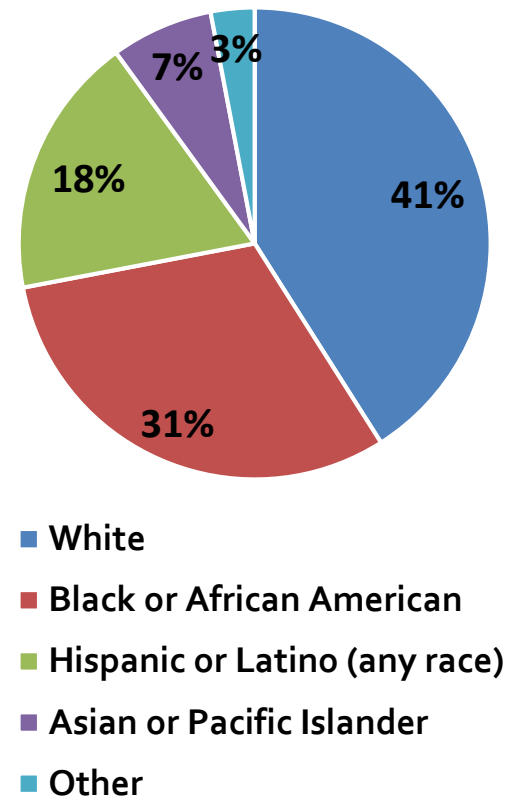


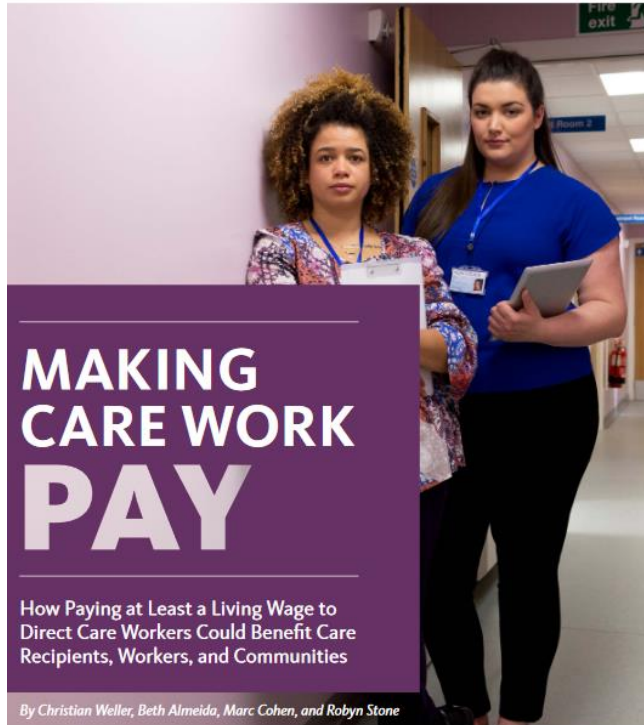
# Direct Care Workforce Race/Ethnicity and Immigration Status

## Immigration Status



## Race and Ethnicity





# Making Care Work Pay Report

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# Why Pay Direct Care Workers (DCWs) a Living Wage in 2022?



3/4 of DCWs will receive higher wages than today; 15.5% avg wage gain



Modest \$9.4b price tag; compared with \$400b spending in the field



Fewer staff shortages-adds 330,000 DCW jobs; 9.1% employment boost



Modest turnover reduction of 0.7-1.7%+\$5.5b productivity increase=offset costs of higher pay

# Paying DCWs a Living Wage (cont.)



Robust economic growth—additional DCW spending adds \$17b to \$22b to the economy in 2030



Enhance DCW financial well-being

Doubling workers who have retirement savings

Reduce use of public assistance by \$1.6b/year



## STRATEGY 1

### EXPAND THE CAREGIVER PIPELINE

The LTSS field is experiencing a workforce crisis. There are simply not enough professional caregivers to provide high-quality support to older adults and younger people with disabilities. This crisis calls for new and concerted efforts to:

- Target recruitment efforts to nontraditional workers like high school students, displaced workers, and older people who want or need to work past retirement age.
- Change immigration policies so we can expand the potential labor pool for LTSS jobs by increasing the number of foreign-born individuals who can work in the United States.

## STRATEGY 2

### ENHANCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The LTSS field depends on direct care professionals to help deliver high-quality LTSS across a variety of settings, and implement delivery and payment reforms focusing on care coordination and integration. To attain these goals, policymakers must:

- Identify competencies that direct care professionals must demonstrate.
- Support the development of training that addresses those competencies.
- Establish public/private partnerships to invest in initial and specialized training that is relevant and high-quality.

## STRATEGY 3

### FACILITATE CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Direct care professionals are the eyes and ears of the health system. Their long-standing relationships with care recipients allow them to observe subtle changes in condition before serious health issues emerge. These observations, when shared with care teams, can inform clinical decision-making and therapeutic interventions.

To carry out this critical role, professional caregivers must be given opportunities to:

- Become condition-specific specialists.
- Take on advanced caregiving roles.
- Join multidisciplinary care teams.
- Perform health maintenance tasks under the supervision of a registered nurse.
- Follow a variety of career paths, including nursing, social work, therapy, and management.

## STRATEGY 4

### INCREASE COMPENSATION

Professionalizing the direct care workforce can improve the recruitment and retention of caregivers (Weller et al., 2020a). One step in that process calls for increasing the pay of direct care professionals to a living wage in their states of residence. A 2020 LeadingAge study demonstrated that this level of compensation would:

- Provide caregivers with enhanced financial security.
- Reduce turnover and staffing shortages at aging services organizations.
- Boost worker productivity.
- Enhance quality of care.
- Increase overall economic growth in communities where direct care professionals live.

## STRATEGY 5

### PREPARE UNIVERSAL WORKERS

Federal policymakers could identify competency-based training standards designed to prepare individuals to work across all LTSS settings as “universal workers.” Such a strategy could give professional caregivers the flexibility to work across settings and even across state boundaries, responding to caregiver shortages in specific markets.

## STRATEGY 6

### REFORM THE LTSS FINANCING SYSTEM

The Medicaid program, the primary source of LTSS funding, is under severe budgetary stress. For this reason, a growing number of states are exploring social insurance approaches to financing LTSS. The infusion of insurance-based dollars into the LTSS system can provide additional and more consistent financing that, in part, can help ensure more adequate wages for the LTSS workforce.

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*The pandemic gave new relevance to LeadingAge's long-standing efforts to encourage all Americans to reexamine how they view direct care professionals and the work they do.*

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#### READ THE FULL REPORT

***Feeling Valued Because They Are Valued:***  
*A Vision for Professionalizing the Caregiving Workforce in the Field of Long-Term Services and Supports*



#### READ THE COMPANION REPORT

***Making Care Work Pay:*** *How Paying at Least a Living Wage to Direct Care Workers Could Benefit Care Recipients, Workers, and Communities*

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