

# WHO CARES?

A Fact Sheet on Unpaid Carework in Minnesota

**Unpaid carework is work that is not paid, involves nurturing or sustaining others, and expends energy and time.**

Although we are accustomed to thinking of these activities – such as rocking a baby or washing a uniform – as labor that is freely provided, unpaid carework is in and of itself a contribution to the economy. Without these voluntary contributions, this work would have to be compensated. Unpaid carework is the backbone of our paid labor force because it allows others to carry out paid work and nurtures the next generation.

## The Contribution of Unpaid Carework to Minnesota’s Economy

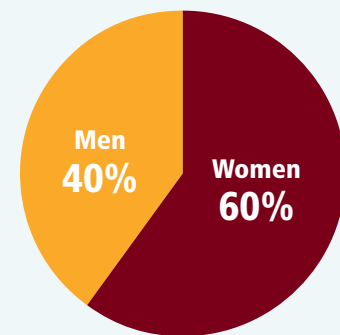
In this report, we are the first to calculate the monetary contribution of unpaid carework to Minnesota’s economy. If the hours of unpaid care that Minnesotans put in every day of the week were paid at the average hourly wage of a private household worker, it would cost \$88.1 billion per year to cover these services. Women contribute 60% of this value with unpaid labor worth \$52.8 billion while men contribute 40%, or \$35.3 billion.<sup>1</sup>

**If these unpaid services were included in Minnesota’s Gross Domestic Product, it would bring the state’s GDP to \$500.1 billion, with unpaid care accounting for 17.6% of the total.<sup>2</sup>**

In comparison to other states, Minnesota is not overly reliant on unpaid care. If we compare states on a per capita basis, Minnesota is among the 10 states least reliant on unpaid care. Overall, Minnesota ranks 41st, with 40 other states expending more on unpaid labor each year. This calculation reflects the time put in, as well as state differences in hourly wages for private household workers.<sup>3</sup> Even so, the contribution of unpaid care to the economy is enormous, and more importantly, there is an imbalance in the contributions made to that care - with women bearing greater responsibility than men.

**Annual Monetary Contribution of Unpaid Carework to Minnesota’s Economy**

**\$88.1 Billion**



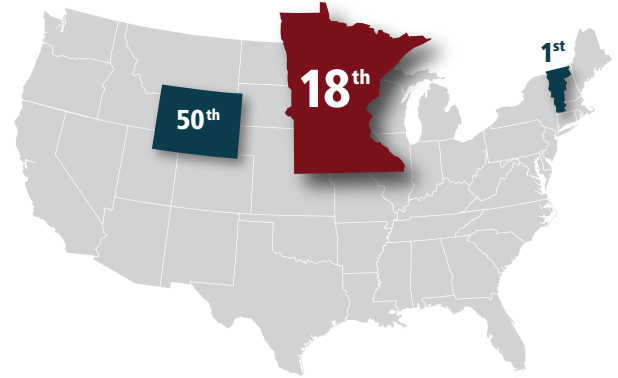
## The Male Deficit in Unpaid Carework

**Minnesota men can do better to share the burden of unpaid care.** Minnesota ranks 18th for the degree to which women and men equally share unpaid care, with women spending two more hours than men each day on unpaid labor. By comparison, the worst state is Wyoming (ranked 50th) with a four-hour gap and the best is Vermont (ranked first) with a gap of just twenty-seven minutes.<sup>4</sup>

Minnesotan women, both rural and urban, spend an average of six hours a day on unpaid labor compared to four spent by men.<sup>6</sup> Housework and child care are the two most time-consuming forms of unpaid care. Each day, the average Minnesota woman spends 36 more minutes a day on housework and 55 more minutes on child care than the average man.

While these figures combine individuals in all types of households, we know that same-sex couples share unpaid labor more equally than opposite-sex couples. On average, gay men living with a partner spend more time on household work than married straight men, and lesbian women living with a partner spend less time on household work than heterosexual women.<sup>7</sup>

### Minnesota Ranks 18 for Men and Women Equally Sharing Unpaid Care



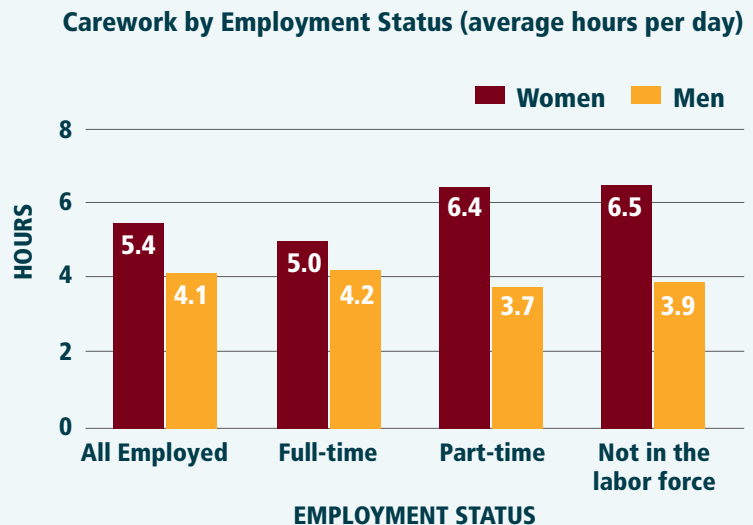
CWGPP analysis of American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021

### Women Spend on Average Two More Hours a Day than Men on Unpaid Carework



## Employment Status and Carework

**Regardless of employment status, Minnesota women consistently put in more unpaid labor than men.** However, the gendered division of care is greater for women who work part-time or are not in the paid labor force compared to full-time working women.<sup>8</sup>



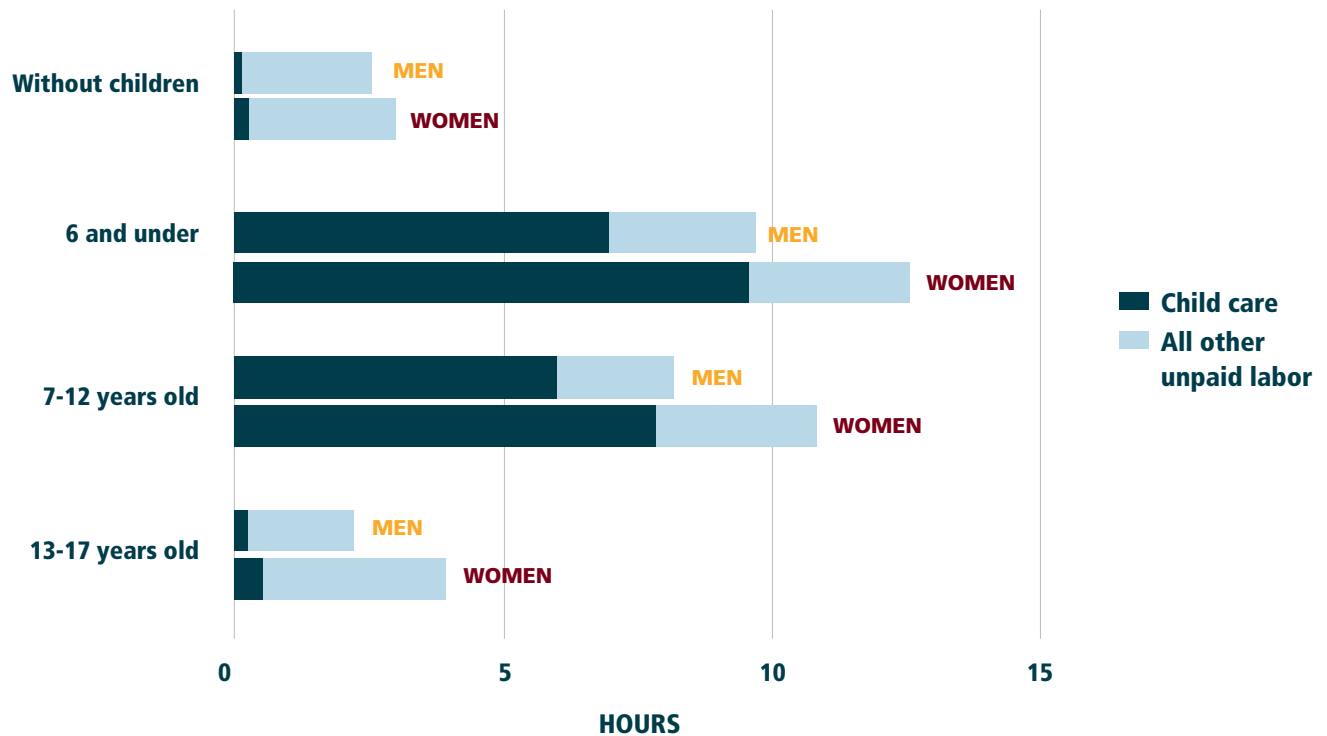
CWGPP analysis of American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021

CWGPP analysis of American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021. \*Figure does not include unemployed.

## Parenthood Increases Unpaid Carework

While carework increases with parenthood, the leap is greater for mothers. Minnesota mothers spend about three times as many hours per day on unpaid labor than women without children. Mothers also spend 70 minutes more each day on child care than fathers. Mothers with young children disproportionately take on unpaid caregiving responsibilities.

Unpaid labor in Minnesota, by Gender and Parenthood (average hours per day)



CWGPP analysis of American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021. Parents are categorized by the age of their youngest child living in their household. For example, parents with children "6 and under" includes parents whose youngest child living in their household is 6 years old or less.

## Heterosexual Marriage Increases Carework for Women

Married mothers in Minnesota spend more time than single mothers on unpaid labor.<sup>9</sup> While we might assume that single mothers' lower unpaid care hours relate to their greater likelihood to work full-time, or purchase care services, that is not true. Research has shown that single mothers experience greater leisure and do less housework than married mothers, while each spends a similar amount of time on child care. This difference has been attributed to the gendered expectations among heterosexual couples that women will prioritize housework more than men or even because men generate carework for women.<sup>10</sup>

### Hours of Carework Per Day



Single Mother

8 hrs  
28 min



Married Mother

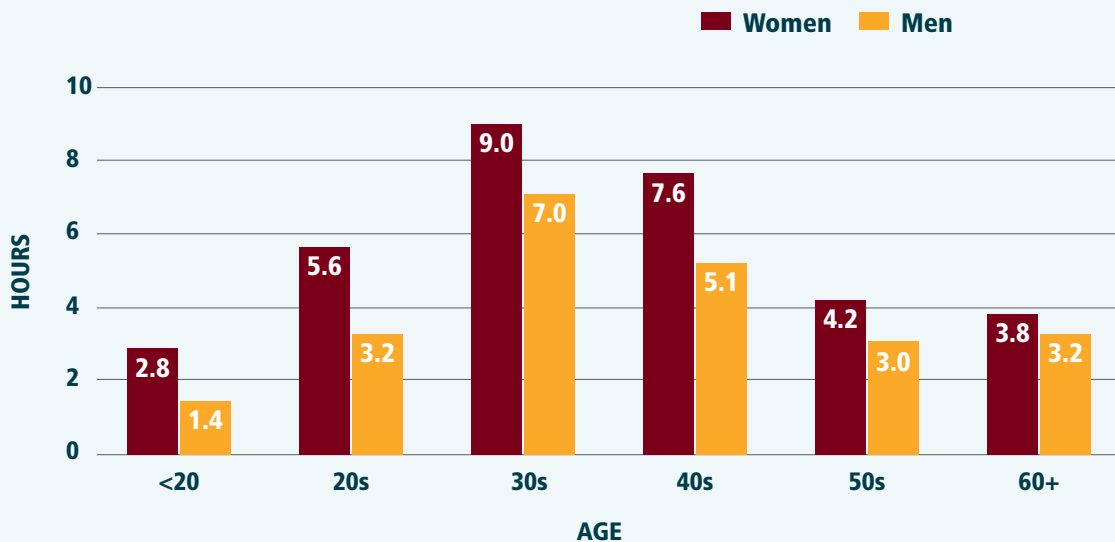
10 hrs  
38 min

CWGPP analysis of American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021.

## Increased Unpaid Child Care Conflicts with Career-Building Years

**Working women with children face the dilemma of how to build employment experience during their reproductive years.** Minnesota women perform more unpaid carework than men across their lifetimes, but the greatest burden coincides with peak employment years. The gender gap in unpaid carework is the largest when women are in their 20s - 40s, ages when women are establishing careers, and often simultaneously, families.<sup>11</sup>

**Minnesota Women's and Men's Unpaid Carework by Age (average hours/day)**



CWGPP analysis of American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021.

Child care is the key source of women's increased unpaid carework in their 20s - 40s. If we look at housework alone (removing child care from the picture), the burden of housework remains relatively consistent across women's life course. Women contribute about an hour a day to housework (between 54 and 72 minutes), regardless of age, and men less than half of that time (between 12 and 24 minutes) until men near retirement age of over 60. Men over 60 increase their share of housework to an average of 48 minutes a day.

## Carework Contributions Vary Across Race, Ethnicity, and Education

### Women of all races carry out more unpaid carework than men

Across all racial and ethnic groups, national time use data shows that women spend more time on unpaid carework than men.<sup>12</sup> There is variation among women and men of different race and ethnic groups, with Asian and Latina women putting in greater hours than white women, and Black women putting in less time than white women.<sup>13</sup>

### Men with more education contribute more carework.

Minnesota women consistently put in more unpaid hours of carework than men across educational levels.<sup>14</sup> However, education is positively related to men's carework contributions. College-educated Minnesota men dedicate more time to unpaid labor than those that have not attended college.

# Policies to Promote Greater Sharing of Unpaid Carework

In the state of Minnesota, women, across race and ethnicity, and urban and rural geographies, bear the cost of necessary and unpaid carework.

The gendered disparities in carework performed in two-parent, heterosexual households are especially stark. As a result, Minnesota women may experience diminished employment opportunities, earn less over the course of their lifetimes, have less time for leisure and self-care, and experience greater life-stress due to caring for others.<sup>15</sup> They also make critical and unrewarded contributions to Minnesota's broader economy.

Policymakers can and should take steps to build a caring infrastructure at the state and federal levels.

Research shows that paid parental leave for up to 30 weeks, and accessible and affordable child care are highly effective in allowing more women to enter the labor force.<sup>16</sup> These policies ease care duties and also can reduce the gender wage gap.<sup>17</sup> Policymakers should also encourage greater sharing of care between women and men, whether in nuclear families, extended and non-traditional families. In other countries, policies such as "use it or lose it" father leaves have been highly effective in establishing father-child bonds that spill-over into greater contributions to both housework and child care.<sup>18</sup>

## **To help address the male care deficit and its impact on women, Minnesota lawmakers should consider:**

### **Paid caregiver leave of up to 30 weeks.**

Eleven states and the District of Columbia have enacted paid family leave insurance programs. At minimum, Minnesota lawmakers could pass the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act to provide up to twelve weeks of state administered, partial wage replacement for family and medical leave.<sup>19</sup>

### **Encouraging father's leave.**

Minnesota lawmakers should develop and pass a version of paid paternity leave. One option could be paid leave for each parent, but additional pay only if both partners take a minimum specified period of leave. Higher pay of at least 70% of existing salary, can also incentivize fathers to take leave.<sup>20</sup>

### **Accessible and affordable child care.**

Child care is unaffordable for many families and child care workers often receive low wages, leading to high turnover and labor shortages.<sup>21</sup> To address the high cost of child care, lawmakers should expand direct state support for child care providers *and* to families.<sup>22</sup>

### **Allow for flexible work hours and predictable schedules.**

COVID-19 has led to more flexible working arrangements for some workers, while others, especially low-wage workers, have long lacked control over their work hours, a phenomenon that has worsened with the growth of "just in time scheduling". Policy makers can set employer standards for work schedule predictability, while employers can allow greater flexibility, to help individuals balance work and care responsibilities.

## Minnesota at a Glance

- In 2021, **Minnesota was the 22nd most populous state** in the U.S. with about 5.7 million residents. Females represent 49.9% of the state's population, and males 50.1%.<sup>23</sup>
- **Just over half of Minnesotans live in the Twin Cities metro area.** About 55.2% live in the Twin Cities metro and 44.8% in Greater Minnesota.<sup>24</sup>
- The percentage of Minnesota households with a **same-sex married couple** was 0.49%. Just over 8% of adults aged 18 and over identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT).<sup>25</sup>
- Minnesota's **racial and ethnic composition** is 79% white and 21% non-white including 6.4% Black, 5.5% Latinx, 4.9% Asian, 3.4% other or multiple, and 0.9% Native American.<sup>26</sup>

## About the Fact Sheet

This fact sheet was prepared by Youngmin Chu, doctoral student at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and Dr. Christina Ewig, Director of the Center on Women, Gender and Public Policy. It was made possible by financial support of the Carlson Family Foundation and the Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

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## Citations

- 1 We base our calculation of the monetary value of unpaid carework on Benjamin Bridgman, "Accounting for Household Production in the National Accounts: An Update, 1965-2014," *Survey of Current Business: The Journal of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis* 96, no. February (2016): 1-5, and Jooyeoun Suh and Nancy Folbre, "Valuing Unpaid Child Care in the U. S.: A Prototype Satellite Account Using the American Time Use Survey," *Review of Income & Wealth* 62, no. 4 (December 2016): 668-84. We include unpaid child care, adult care, cooking, cleaning, shopping, gardening, domestic travel, and household odd jobs. We use the following formula: Monetary value of unpaid labor = Average hours of unpaid work/day in 2020-21 \* Hourly wage of private household workers in 2021 \* 7 days \* 52 weeks \* Population 18 and over in 2021. Hours of unpaid work per day are drawn from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) (2020-2021). ATUS data may underestimate unpaid care if the care is not provided daily, as responses are based on care performed the day prior to the survey call. Flood, Sarah M., Sayer, Liana C., and Backman, Daniel, "American Time Use Survey Data Extract Builder: Version 3.1" (College Park, MD: University of Maryland and Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2022).
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- 3 To calculate the per capita rankings, we multiply the hours of unpaid work performed annually (based on our analysis of the American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021) by the average wage of a private household worker in each state.
- 4 CWGPP analysis of American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021.
- 5 "Other" includes adult care, cooking, gardening, shopping, domestic travel, and odd jobs.
- 6 CWGPP analysis of American Time Use Survey, 2017-2021.
- 7 Michael E. Martell and Leanne Roncolato, "The Homosexual Lifestyle: Time Use in Same-Sex Households," *Journal of Demographic Economics* 82, no. 4 (December 2016): 365-98; Maaike van der Leuten, Eva Jaspers, and Tanja van der Lippe, "Same-Sex Couples' Division of Labor from a Cross-National Perspective," *Journal of LGBT Family Studies* 17, no. 2 (March 15, 2021): 150-67.
- 8 The time difference between men and women is statistically significant across all employment categories ( $p < 0.1$ ), as well as among men and women of different employment categories. Statistically significant means that we know there is a difference among groups. When a comparison lacks statistical significance, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference across groups.
- 9 Total unpaid labor time differences between single and married mothers are statistically significant, but differences in child care are not.
- 10 Joanna R. Pepin, Liana C. Sayer, and Lynne M. Casper, "Marital Status and Mothers' Time Use: Childcare, Housework, Leisure, and Sleep," *Demography* 55, no. 1 (February 1, 2018): 107-33.
- 11 The difference between women and men is not statistically significant in groups under 20 and over 50.
- 12 To look at differences among race and ethnicity, we analyzed national data, as only national data has a sufficient sample size to make valid comparisons among these smaller groups. Only the category of other or multiple is not statistically significant between women and men.
- 13 These differences are statistically significant.
- 14 The differences among women of different educational levels is not statistically significant.
- 15 Francine D Blau and Lawrence M Kahn, "Female Labor Supply: Why Is the United States Falling Behind?," *American Economic Review* 103, no. 3 (May 1, 2013): 251-56; Emanuele Ferragina, "Does Family Policy Influence Women's Employment?: Reviewing the Evidence in the Field," *Political Studies Review* 17, no. 1 (February 1, 2019): 65-80; Lyn Craig, Judith E Brown, and Jiweon Jun, "Fatherhood, Motherhood and Time Pressure in Australia, Korea, and Finland," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 27, no. 2 (June 1, 2020): 312-36.
- 16 Ferragina, "Does Family Policy Influence Women's Employment?"
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