

Time's Up, Measure Up
**Policy Prescriptions
to Foreground Black
and Latinx Women
when Addressing the
Caregiving Crisis**

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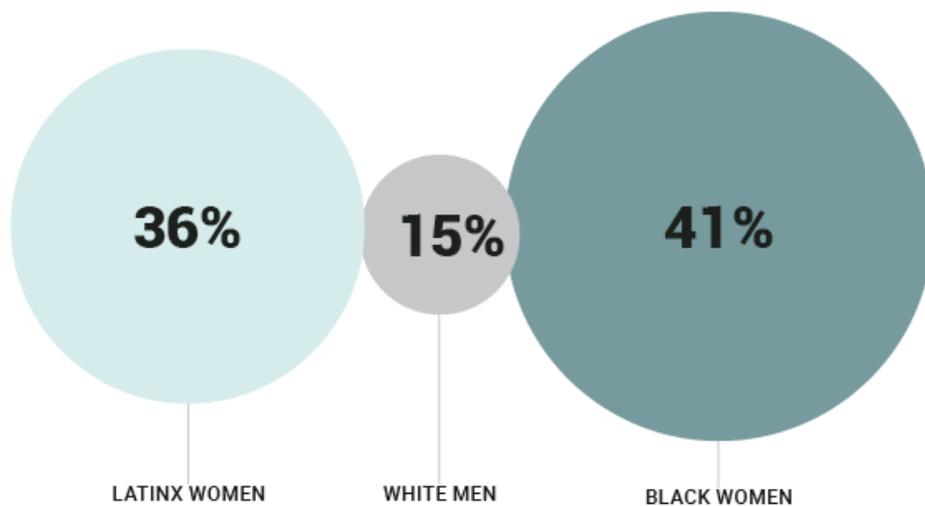
This is the first quarterly brief for Time's Up, Measure Up. Time's Up, Measure Up is a five-year initiative to study and report on the impact of gender and racial inequities that have only grown with the COVID-19 crisis. The initiative fills critical knowledge gaps, drawing on quantitative data, qualitative research, and personal stories to help us understand — and solve — these problems. We are keeping women front and center in policy conversations in the short term, as well as challenging the deeply embedded sexist and racist attitudes that have held women back in our economy and our society for far too long. This initiative was funded with the early and critical support of Pivotal Ventures, an investment and incubation company created by Melinda Gates.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic upheaval on women's well-being has been thoroughly documented, including one factor that has had an outsized effect: unpaid caregiving responsibilities.

Caregiving — spanning child care, elder care, care for a loved one with a serious illness or disability, and self-care at all stages of life— has trapped women, particularly Black and Latinx women, between outdated gender norms that expect women to shoulder this work without compensation and the need to financially support their families.

In this brief, we focus specifically on Black and Latinx women, who shoulder many of the paid and unpaid caregiving responsibilities in this country. We also want to acknowledge that many AAPI immigrants and Indigenous women face similar care burdens and decisions; unfortunately, the data we have access to do not allow us to draw conclusions about these groups. While labels such as Black and Latinx encompass many different identities and experiences, the policies we advocate for here will lift up all women as we continue to push for better, more nuanced data.

Who had to take unpaid time off from work or give up a job in order to provide child care, elder care, remote-learning, or home-schooling support during COVID?

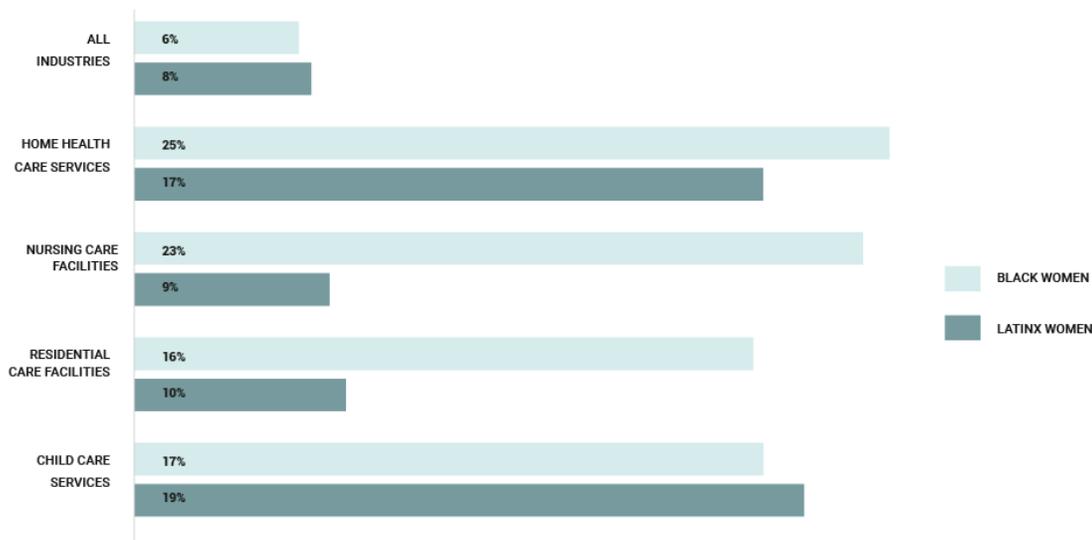


Source:

<https://timesupfoundation.org/work/times-up-impact-lab/times-up-measure-up/foundations-for-a-just-and-inclusive-recovery/>

In real-time, women are experiencing the consequences of an economy that treats care as an individual, and highly gendered and racialized, responsibility, rather than important social infrastructure that should be valued and well-compensated. Many Black and Latinx women in particular are employed as paid caregivers, an industry that often pays poverty wages, while also taking on unpaid care responsibilities because of our underfunded care infrastructure.

Who is employed in care industries?



Source: <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat18.htm>

Our economy cannot reach its full potential without women, and women cannot reach their full potential without a reimagining of care. Importantly, 90% of voters agree that providing caregiving infrastructure will provide support and stability for millions of people. We can make this vision a reality, but doing so will require a multi-pronged approach; we must **change the cultural narrative** around who is responsible for care, **encourage and enforce equitable caregiving benefits** from the private sector, and **demand public sector investment** in this crucial social infrastructure that undergirds the entire economy.

Any public policy fixes being considered as part of relief and recovery conversations must center the Black and Latinx women who are so often balancing trade-offs between paid employment and unpaid caregiving by providing sustainable solutions for both paid and unpaid caregivers. Investing in care as infrastructure makes good economic sense while advancing TIME'S UP's mission of safe, fair, and dignified work for all women, across our multifaceted identities.

Drawing on Time's Up, Measure Up's recent research, below are four policy prescriptions for addressing the caregiving crisis:

Expand the care conversation beyond child care and invest in it.

Caregiving is more than child care, and we must support paid caregivers across the care spectrum. Women are 76% to 94% of the workers in the child care, residential care, and home health care sectors; additionally Black workers make up between 18% to 31% of the employees in these sectors, while Latinx employment ranged from 13% to 22%. Investing at least \$77.5 billion per year (an amount in line with a proposal from the Biden-Harris Transition Team) in the child care, residential care, and home health care sectors could lead to \$220 billion in new economic activity annually, almost a 300% return on investment, according to a new paper from TIME'S UP Foundation. This proposal would support over 2 million new jobs, with about one-third of those jobs coming from increased economic activity and would immediately provide employment for many Black and Latinx women in industries that have been essential during the pandemic.

Make care jobs, good jobs.

Making care jobs desirable and sustainable employment options are essential to creating a durable and equitable care infrastructure, and 80% of voters agree that care workers deserve better. For workers in the child care, residential care, and home health care sectors, the median hourly wage is \$13.34, more than \$3/hour below the \$16.54 estimated living wage in the United States. Increased wages and benefits, paid family and medical leave and paid sick days, access to training, certification, and career pathways, and a choice to advocate for themselves by joining unions or other worker organizations will increase the standard of living for millions of Black and Latinx care workers. In addition, ensuring legal status by way of a path to citizenship is key to making these kinds of jobs sustainable for undocumented workers.

Make care affordable for all.

When care is unaffordable, it is often women who reduce their work hours or leave the labor force to meet the unpaid caregiving needs due to outdated gender norms and the persistent gender pay gap. A recent [Time's Up, Measure Up study](#) showed that Black and Latinx women were respectively three times and two times more likely than white men to say that unpaid caregiving responsibilities had caused them to take unpaid time off from work or give up a job. The lack of affordable care comes at a [cost](#): absenteeism, shifts to part-time work, staff turnover, and workday interruptions cost businesses over \$30 billion annually in 2006 dollars, to say nothing of the lost talents and ambitions of these caregivers. Another [analysis](#) suggests that for every three elderly parents who make the switch from informal care provided by a daughter to formal home care, one daughter returns to the workforce full-time. Investing in care allows women to re-enter and remain in the workforce and will future-proof our economy as the population continues to age. This could be done by strengthening and modernizing Medicaid and Medicare to create universal home and community-based services and supports.

Ensure paid leave and paid sick days for all.

Paid leave and paid sick days are essential for caregivers to balance paid and unpaid work, and they're especially important for Black and Latinx women. Eight-four percent of Black women and 76% of Latinx women in a recent [TIME'S UP/LUNA](#) poll reported needing paid sick days for financial and health security, and 69% and 60% respectively reported needing paid leave to care for a family member or loved one. Establishing these benefits universally will take some burden off of unpaid caregivers and allow some women to re-enter the workforce. The gender norms that place caregiving mostly on women, and often unpaid women and BIPOC women, could result in women losing [\\$64.5 billion](#) in wages per year if more caregiving support isn't provided. These gender imbalances have knock-on effects for women throughout their lives and to the public in terms of lost tax revenue and the lost ambitions and achievements of these women.

Care can't wait

In the last 80 years, we have come close to universal child care [twice](#). Today, in the midst of intertwined health, economic, and racial justice crises, investing in a robust caregiving infrastructure is one way to boost our economy and reshape our society in an equitable way, something that [economic leaders](#) are discovering. The way we think about care has compelled over [two million women](#) to quit the labor force in the past year and forced women of color to endure [crisis levels of unemployment](#). Now is the time to get the job done. We must support our caregivers, particularly the Black and Latinx women who take on so much paid and unpaid care work, and do so in a way that moves us towards an equitable future.

To learn more about
Time's Up, Measure Up, visit
timesupmeasureup.org

About TIME'S UP Foundation

The TIME'S UP Foundation insists upon safe, fair, and dignified work for all by changing culture, companies, and laws. We enable more people to seek justice through the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund. We pioneer innovative research driving toward solutions to address systemic inequality and injustice in the workplace through the TIME'S UP Impact Lab. And we reshape key industries from within so they serve as a model for all industries. The TIME'S UP Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.