

# Women of Color Shoulder Unfair Share of Caregiving, a New Oxfam and Prosperity Now Report Highlights

*More than one in four caregivers spend 22 unpaid hours weekly caring for loved ones*

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, April 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Women of color are disproportionately affected by the dual impact of paid work and unpaid care labor, according to a new report released today by [Oxfam](#) and [Prosperity Now](#). The report, "[Unseen Work, Unmet Needs](#)," examines the significant challenges posed by the intersection of women's paid and unpaid labor in the United States. Many of these same individuals face systemic barriers in accessing essential support, such as workplace flexibility, equitable pay, and affordable care services, further compounding the economic impacts of unpaid care responsibilities.



To build an economy that works for everyone, we must enact policies that address the inequities faced by women, especially women of color, and supports all caregivers."

*Marisa Calderon, president & CEO of Prosperity Now*

Well over one in four U.S. caregivers are sandwich caregivers—individuals who provide care to an adult while also caring for children living in their home. They spend an

average of 22 hours weekly providing unpaid care.

Other key findings include:

- Women provide a significantly higher share of unpaid caregiving for both children and adults than men, across race and ethnicity. In an average week, women spend seven and half more hours on child care than men.
- These divides become more extreme along class lines. Families earning over \$100,000 annually display a more equitable distribution of child care responsibilities between men and women. In contrast, families earning below \$100,000 show wider gender disparities in care.
- Black and Hispanic women are the most acutely affected by this phenomenon, showing higher involvement in unpaid caregiving when compared to other ethnic and racial groups and when compared to their male counterparts.
- Despite high labor force participation rates, Black individuals face alarmingly high unemployment rates—almost double the rates of their white and Asian counterparts—and earnings disparities are stark when race and ethnicity are taken into account. This discrepancy

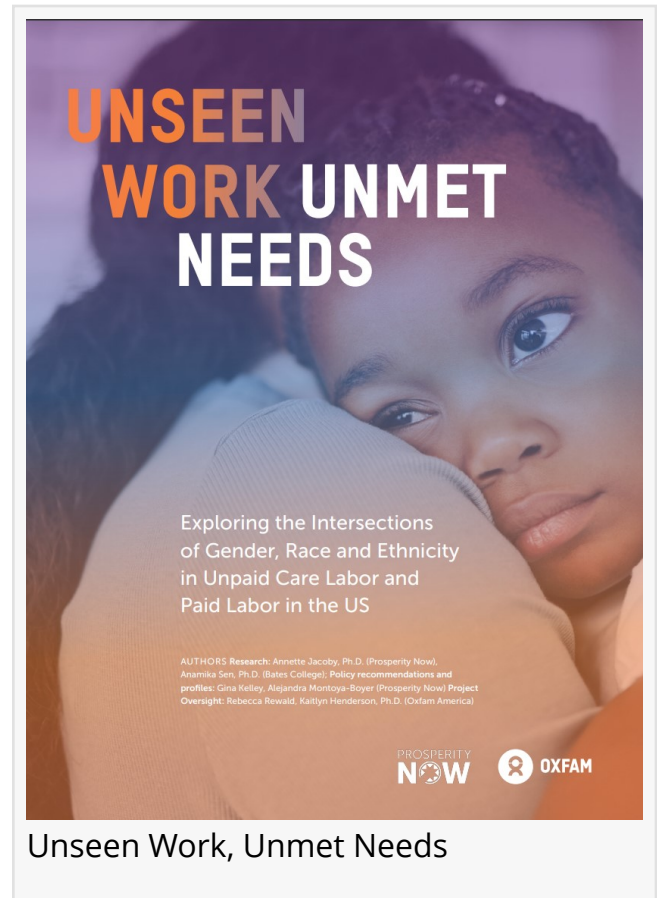
underscores the importance of support systems, child care availability and affordability, and policy reforms to balance child-rearing responsibilities and enable greater labor force participation for women of color.

- Significant gender differences were observed across all racial and ethnic groups regarding abstaining from paid work due to unpaid care duties. For instance, almost ten percent of Hispanic women reported refraining from paid work due to caregiving, compared to two percent of Hispanic men. A similar trend was observed among Asian, white, and Black respondents.

The report also includes several policy recommendations to address the inequities in our economic system, including:

- A national paid family and medical leave program would allow for workers to earn a percentage of their pay while they take time off work to address a serious health condition, care for a loved one with a serious health condition, or care for a newborn, newly adopted child or newly placed foster child.
- Investment in safe, accessible, and affordable child care systems is essential to providing relief to women, especially women of color. The current ad-hoc state of child care fails to meet many working families' needs and the diverse needs of children, especially those with disabilities. These investments must center the needs of women of color and their children as well as provide high-quality and well-paying jobs to the providers who do incredibly valuable early childhood education.
- Increased access to affordable and quality long-term and home- and community-based care, such as home health aides, would also be essential to reducing women's time spent providing unpaid labor. This cannot be done without also providing quality pay and jobs to the care providers themselves who are also disproportionately women and women of color.
- Part-time work can be a helpful tool for women to manage their unpaid caregiving needs, but too often workers are underpaid, unprotected, and unsupported. Pay and benefit parity between part-time and full-time workers would encourage the financial success of many caregivers. And policies that support flexible schedules for workers would allow people to more easily balance their paid work and unpaid care responsibilities.

"This country desperately needs to build a viable care economy and start cutting women a break," said Paige Castellanos, Senior Manager of the Gender Justice Inclusion Hub at Oxfam America. "Women of color disproportionately bear the financial burden of unpaid care responsibilities, often finding themselves forced to leave the workforce altogether due to the



Unseen Work, Unmet Needs

strains of appallingly low wages and unaffordable care services. It's time for policymakers to recognize the time, energy, and mental demands of care work—paid or unpaid—and invest in safe, accessible, and affordable child care systems for everyone."

"Despite its crucial societal role, unpaid labor, such as caregiving for children and adults, is unnoticed and undervalued," said Marisa Calderon, President & CEO, Prosperity Now. "This original research report shines a light on the gender and racial disparities in unpaid care and the devastating inequities in the paid labor force. To build an economy that works for everyone, we must enact policies that address the inequities faced by women, especially women of color, and supports all caregivers."

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#### About Oxfam America

Oxfam is a global organization that fights inequality to end poverty and injustice. We offer lifesaving support in times of crisis and advocate for economic justice, gender equality, and climate action. We demand equal rights and equal treatment so that everyone can thrive, not just survive. The future is equal. Learn more at [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org).

#### About Prosperity Now

Since 1979, Prosperity Now (formerly CFED) has been a persistent voice championing economic opportunity, innovating outside of and beyond existing systems to build power for all communities. We advance racial and ethnic economic justice by investing in bold new ideas, and we work deeply at both the grassroots and national level to impact the entire ecosystem. By setting goals for our economy and following through with targeted approaches based on need, we are equipped to drive forward and cement big structural solutions. Learn more at [www.prosperitynow.org](http://www.prosperitynow.org).

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