



The Ultimate Guide to Improving Caregiver Job Satisfaction



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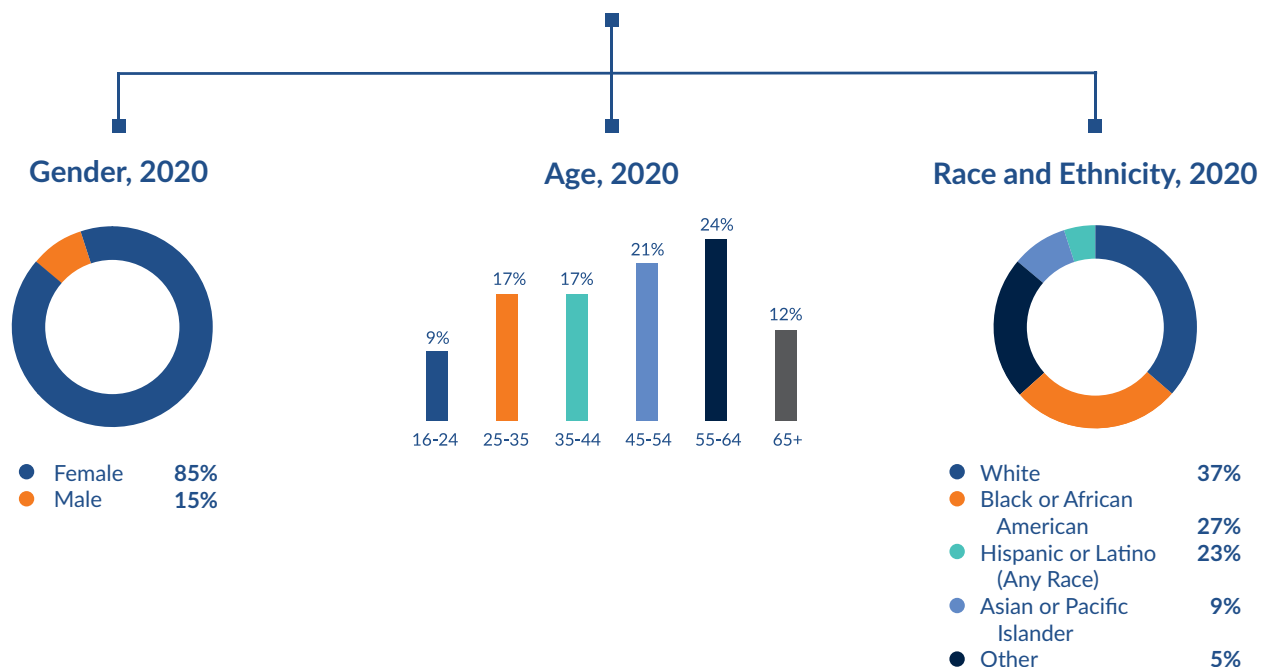
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Introduction

Meet Jenny. She's a woman, a person of color, and a full-time caregiver. She's 48-years-old, has a child at home, and a high school education. Jenny makes \$14.09 an hour and relies on public assistance to bridge the gaps between what her family needs and what she earns at her job. And yet, Jenny works hard for her clients every day. She ensures they have nutritious meals, companionship, and are engaged in the community. She also assists with their hygiene and activities of daily living. Despite the challenges she faces in her everyday life, Jenny still chose to put her own health at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic because she truly cares for her clients' well-being.

Jenny represents the demographics of the average homecare worker¹. It may be easy to see why someone like Jenny, who must contend with an emotionally complex career, and many stressors outside of work, may become burned out and dissatisfied with their career as a caregiver. Thankfully, it doesn't have to be this way. If Jenny's employer can implement certain organizational changes, Jenny will be able to continue to provide excellent services to her clients, her feelings of job satisfaction will increase, and she may even be more likely to stay with her company for years to come.

Homecare Workers by¹



What “Job Satisfaction” Really Means

Providers want to understand the factors that contribute to caregiver job satisfaction so they can create a working environment that keeps their caregivers happy, engaged, and interested in staying with their company. But before we dive into methods for improving job satisfaction, we first need to understand what the term really means.

Employee job satisfaction is the measure of contentedness a person feels about their job, and more importantly, their feelings about the many distinct aspects of that job².

The reality is that even if an employee loves one part of their job, if other areas are dissatisfying, they may end up feeling dissatisfied overall. Here in this guide, we lay out actionable steps providers can follow to improve their caregivers’ job satisfaction, and ultimately improve caregiver retention.



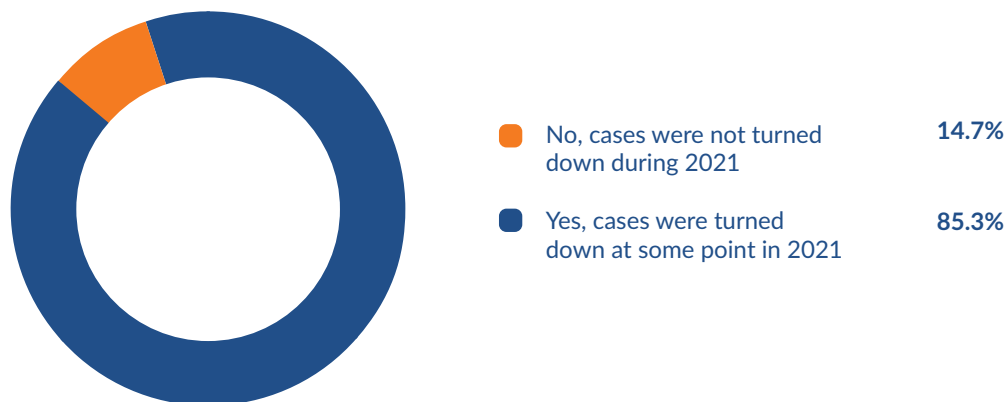
The Importance of Caregiver Job Satisfaction

The demand for homecare has never been higher, but the industry may struggle to meet this growing demand without qualified caregivers available to do the work. 34% of homecare agencies cited the caregiver shortage as having an extremely negative impact on their business, and 85% of agencies said they had to turn down cases as a direct result of the shortage³. And the shortage isn't just because of recruitment difficulties. Caregivers are becoming dissatisfied in

their jobs, and leaving the industry. In 2021, the median homecare caregiver turnover rate was 64%³. If caregiver job satisfaction isn't made a priority, then qualified, experienced caregivers may find work elsewhere.

Caregivers' work is critical and must be recognized for its importance. It's time to address caregivers' needs and improve their workplace experience.

Percentage of Agencies That Turned Down Cases at Any Point in 2021 Due to Caregiver Shortage³



How to Improve the Caregiver Workplace Experience

Thankfully, there are actionable steps providers can take to improve the caregiver workplace experience, and ultimately the lives of their employees. The areas where there is the most opportunity for improvement include upskilling caregivers with more condition-specific knowledge and training; creating meaningful opportunities for them to take part in interdisciplinary care planning; and developing career pathways for caregivers by supplying training and ongoing support for supervisors and peer mentors⁴.

Training and Career Mobility



Technology and Inclusion in the Care Team



Wages and Employment Benefits



Well-Trained Supervisors and Peer Mentors



HOW TO IMPROVE THE CAREGIVER WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

Training and Career Mobility

Training and career mobility have one of the highest correlations to caregiver job satisfaction. Engaging, well-constructed training can improve job quality, satisfaction, and even care outcomes. When offered within a formal credentialing framework, it can also allow caregivers to move up the career ladder⁴. While many may believe that the rungs of the career ladder go from caregiver to licensed medical professional, that isn't always realistic for many caregivers due to the educational prerequisites, training time, and costs involved.

Many caregivers progressing into nursing, therapy, or other administrative roles would require work-based learning, tuition assistance, time to take classes outside of work, and other wraparound supports (to address childcare, transportation, and other needs). If an agency can provide this type of training and support to its caregivers, that's wonderful, but the reality is that supplying these robust career benefits isn't possible for most providers. Thankfully, there are other types of training and programming they can offer caregivers that aren't expensive or complicated, but still result in increased job satisfaction.

For example, research suggests that homecare workers who received basic training on common medical issues, such as heart failure, indicated that they were more satisfied in their jobs than those without training⁵. This is because caregivers who feel prepared, confident, and capable of doing their job enjoy it more and are more likely to keep the position.

Career mobility does not have to mean becoming a CNA or nurse; there are many career pathways providers can foster for their employees. Providing them with training to become specialized caregivers for certain populations, or creating leadership opportunities like a peer mentorship program, allows caregivers to gain knowledge and boost their resume.

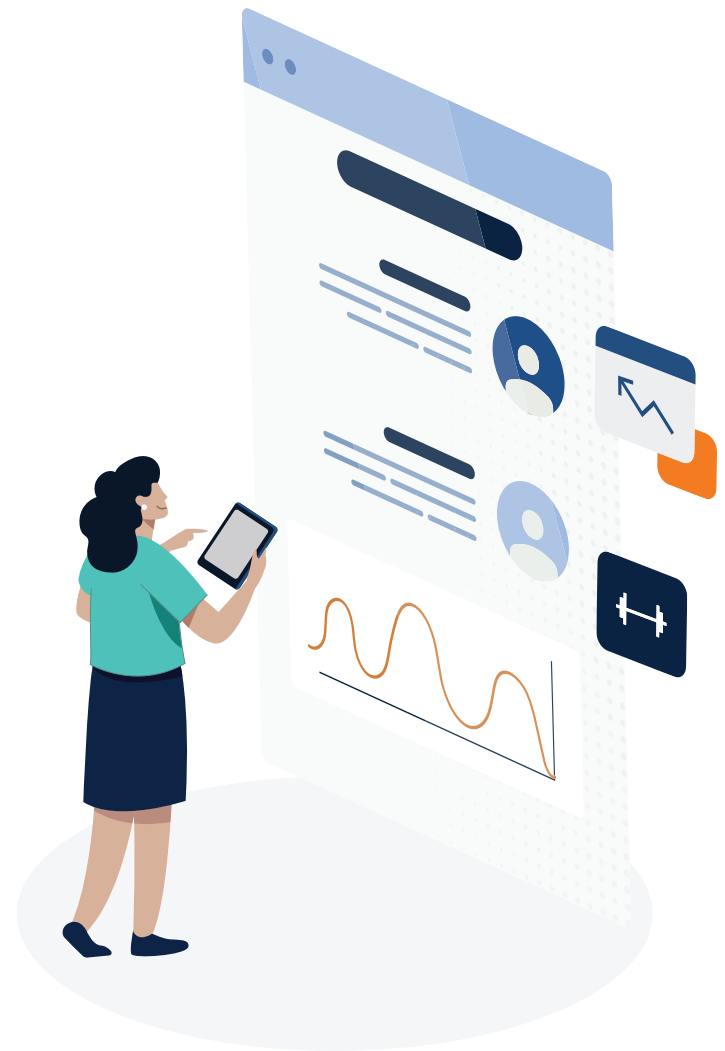


Technology and Inclusion in the Care Team

Technology enables caregivers to streamline their work and spend more time focused on their clients. Certain technologies, like the HHAeXchange mobile app, empower caregivers and help them become active, engaged members of the care team by giving them the tools to communicate any concerning symptoms or behaviors they observe.

Providing caregivers with the training and resources to observe, record, and report changes in condition, as well as building structured communication protocols between frontline caregivers and other clinical providers, create meaningful opportunities for homecare workers to take part in interdisciplinary care planning and have been shown to increase caregiver job satisfaction⁴. There has been direct evidence that Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) integration interventions are well-received by participants and are associated with higher team confidence, team communication, and care outcomes⁴.

Additionally, this type of communication is great for the client. As more people begin receiving care in their homes, including acute level care, it will be critical for care teams to use these methods to collaborate effectively and provide the highest level of care.



Wages and Employment Benefits

It likely comes as no surprise that salary is a common reason people leave their jobs, and the lack of competitive wages in the homecare industry can result in employees leaving caregiving for other careers with similar entry-level requirements, but higher pay. Turnover is highest among caregivers whose pay is below the 25th percentile, which is why homecare agencies should ensure they are paying their employees at or above the market average³. Despite the importance of paying caregivers well, increasing your caregivers' salary is not the only way to improve retention. Offering other benefits can supplement base pay and increase caregiver job satisfaction. Consider the following:



Access to Health Insurance

While 90% of homecare agencies provide some form of caregiver benefits³, the percentage of agencies that supply major health insurance is significantly less. Only 20% of agencies with up to 50 employees offer health insurance. Yet, caregivers are three times more likely than the average person in the United States to struggle with anxiety and depression⁸. Additionally, one of the biggest challenges caregivers reported was struggling to find time for their own healthcare. Providers who look out for their caregivers' physical, mental, and emotional health by offering them insurance benefits greatly improve their caregivers' quality of life.



Consistent Scheduling & Notice of Scheduling Changes

Caregivers who are uncertain of when they will get their next shift may get frustrated that they can't plan their days. Consistent scheduling and promptly notifying caregivers about schedule changes can go a long way towards improving job stability and reducing caregiver stress. Consistent schedules for workers can also improve care outcomes for clients. When you provide a client with the same caregiver on a regular basis, the caregiver may be able to better understand the client's needs, and the client will feel more comfortable⁷. To ensure regular scheduling, employers need reliable systems and processes that track their staff preferences, schedules, hours worked, client needs, and communicate open shifts⁶.



Access to Full-time Hours

Many caregivers don't have access to full-time hours. By giving them access to full-time hours, they can increase the amount of money they bring home, and not have to work a second or third job. Getting full-time hours can greatly reduce the stress of juggling multiple jobs and improve economic stability⁶.

Wages and Employment Benefits



Paid Sick Days and Time Off

Caregiver burnout can quickly lead to quality workers leaving the industry. One of the best ways to combat burnout is by taking time away from work to rest, recharge, and relax. Giving caregivers paid time off to reset their batteries can go a long way towards making them feel appreciated and like their employer cares about their well-being.



Access to Community Organizations and Resources

Considering the homecare industry is comprised primarily of women and people of color, caregivers are disproportionately affected by racial and social inequalities¹. This can result in difficulties with things like housing, transportation, and childcare. To help alleviate some of these external stressors, and ultimately allow caregivers to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities, providers can connect with community-based organizations that supply extra support and resources. Referring caregivers who need aid to helpful community-based resources can lift some of the burden off the caregivers' shoulders.



Grief Support and Bereavement Leave

Caregiving can be emotionally taxing, especially when a client passes away. Not properly addressing the emotional toll loss can have on caregivers can quickly lead to burnout and feelings of dissatisfaction. Offering paid bereavement leave when a family member passes away shows caregivers you care about their mental and emotional health.



Merit, Seniority, and Other Types of Base Pay Increases

While margins are often tight in the homecare business, going the extra mile and giving pay increases based on merit and seniority can be an excellent incentive and shows caregivers that their hard work and dedication are appreciated.



The Happy Caregiver

Benefits: Access to helpful training, technology, peer mentors, PTO, and health insurance.

How do they feel? Prepared, respected, valued, and motivated.

The Unhappy Caregiver

Pain Points: No one to direct questions to, unpredictable schedule, no career mobility, inadequate training, and few to no performance incentives

How do they feel? Stressed, burned out, overwhelmed, and undervalued.



HOW TO IMPROVE THE CAREGIVER WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

Well-Trained Supervisors and Peer Mentors

Providing your caregivers with well-trained supervisors and supportive peer mentors is a simple but effective way of helping your caregivers succeed at their jobs and reduce their stress. Evidence from across industries shows that a good supervisor can help reduce job stress and improve job satisfaction⁴. And in the long-term services and supports (LTSS) space, the effectiveness of supervisors has been identified as a major driver of job satisfaction, intent to leave, and turnover.

One study tested this idea by implementing a coaching supervision model in 17 nursing homes and homecare agencies. They found that the businesses with coached supervisors saw significant improvements in staff job satisfaction and the staff's satisfaction with their supervisors. The supervision training also saved the providers an estimated \$6000 due to increased efficiency⁴.

If implementing a new supervisor training program isn't in the cards right now, consider starting a peer mentorship program. Identify people within your own workplace that can serve as mentors. Not only will the selected employees be able to add this leadership role to their resume, but your other employees will have people to turn to for support and guidance. This method for supporting caregivers while also providing a career advancement opportunity for experienced workers is a cost-effective way of fostering a collaborative and supportive culture.



Listening to and Learning From Your Caregivers

While there are best practices that homecare agencies can put in place, the reality is every business is different and has employees with unique needs. That's why it is so important to listen to and learn from your caregivers' feedback. To better understand what resources, tools, and benefits your caregivers may need, try conducting an anonymous employee survey.

There are two types of employee surveys that homecare providers may find beneficial:

- 1. Employee opinion and satisfaction surveys.** These surveys measure how employees view the business.
- 2. Employee engagement surveys.** These surveys measure employees' commitment, motivation, sense of purpose, and passion for their work and organization.

Both survey types can reveal a lot about how employees are feeling about their jobs and give providers feedback about potential improvements that can be made to their caregivers' work environments.

Providers can choose to manage the survey process themselves or hire a vendor who specializes in conducting employee surveys. Either way, it is important to remember that collecting survey responses is only the beginning. The survey is only valuable if providers act on the feedback they receive.

According to SHRM, an organization's responsiveness to their employees' feedback leads to higher retention rates, lower absenteeism, improved productivity, better customer service, and higher employee morale⁹. Acting after the survey results come in shows caregivers that their energy wasn't wasted filling out the survey and that they're being listened to. Feeling heard and understood can go a long way towards making someone feel like a valued and respected employee.



Improve Caregiver Job Satisfaction with HHAeXchange

We understand that caregiving is tough work, which is why we created the HHAeXchange mobile app! Our mobile app allows caregivers to easily pick up desired shifts, view their schedule, communicate with their agency, get notifications about available training, and quickly clock in and out. Additionally, our Care Insights solution empowers caregivers to collect real-time data and record observations at the point of care, leading to improved patient outcomes and more confident and engaged caregivers.

To learn more about how HHAeXchange can improve your caregivers' job satisfaction, visit info.hhaexchange.com/demo.

About HHAeXchange

Founded in 2008, HHAeXchange is the leading technology platform for homecare and self-direction program management. Developed specifically for Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS), HHAeXchange connects state agencies, managed care organizations, providers, and caregivers through our intuitive web-based platform, enabling unparalleled communication, transparency, efficiency, and compliance.



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