

# How to Support Employees Who Are Caring for Others During the COVID-19 Pandemic

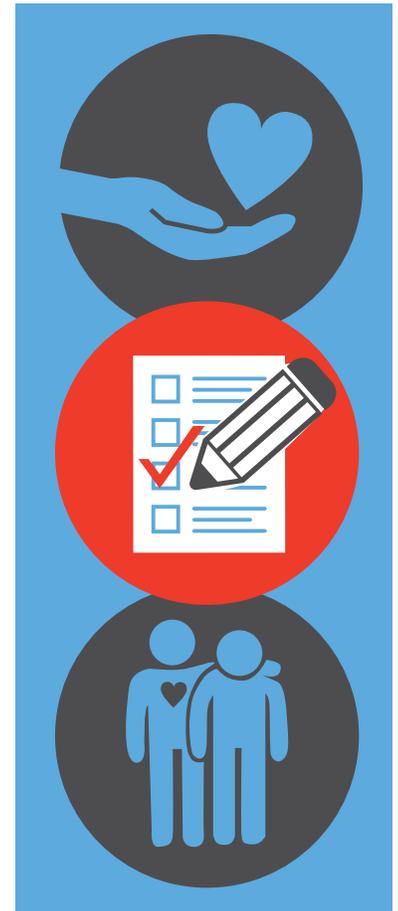
Over the past few weeks, you've likely adapted and implemented strategies for keeping your organization running during the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic downturn has compounded these unique challenges for individuals, communities, and businesses. AARP is providing a list of steps employers can take to support the caregivers in your workforce through this crisis.

On average 1 in 5 employees provide care for an aging, ill, or disabled loved one. During the current health crisis, this number will inevitably increase. Those who have not previously cared for loved ones before are likely doing so now, or will be in the very near future, while juggling their work responsibilities at the same time.

According to many of AARP's 38 million members, working family caregivers are concerned about reducing the risk of COVID-19 exposure to themselves and their loved ones. They worry about staying connected and making sure their loved ones have what they need. Many may also be juggling childcare and education needs during school and daycare closures. Disruption is the norm right now, but employers can help manage further disruption of both work and care with a few thoughtful steps.

## As employers, what can we do?

- 1. Require remote work for as many employees as possible.**  
Telework should be utilized to the greatest extent possible. When it is not possible to work from home due to the nature of the work, implement flexible or alternative scheduling options to minimize the number of employees in one space, to maximize physical distancing, and to provide workers flexibility to provide care during the days/times when they are needed most.
- 2. Commit to personal safety for employees.**  
Adapt the physical work environment to protect employees. Disinfect workspaces frequently and provide hand sanitizer and cleaning wipes. For employees who interact with consumers, encourage contactless transactions, online or phone customer service support, and require 6 feet physical distancing between staff or between an employee and customer.
- 3. Provide paid leave and guidance about how to use it.**  
Ask all employees who feel sick to stay home and seek care if needed. Provide guidance on how they can use sick leave or family and medical leave to care for themselves or a loved one who is ill. Stay up to date on the latest information and employer requirements, such as local and state paid sick leave laws and expanded family and medical leave requirements stipulated in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for employers with fewer than 500 employees. Visit the Department of Labor's [COVID-19 and the Workplace](#) webpage for more information.
- 4. Empower (and encourage) people managers to be as flexible as possible** since many employees are juggling work and caring for loved ones, such as older adults or children who are now at home, too.



## RESOURCES

**AARP COVID-19 webpage:**  
[www.aarp.org/coronavirus](http://www.aarp.org/coronavirus)

**AARP Employer Caregiving:**  
[www.aarp.org/employercaregiving](http://www.aarp.org/employercaregiving)

- 5. Build a “Use Your Benefits” tip sheet to remind employees about specific resources.**  
What benefits do you offer to help your employees take care of their own health and mental health? Are telehealth services available to your employees? Does your EAP offer counseling or provide resources to navigate senior support, such as meal delivery?
  
- 6. Create an internal Working Caregivers Community on your internal messaging platform,** such as Yammer, Google Chat, Slack, Skype Teams, or Discord. Let your employees support each other, share ideas and make it inclusive of all caregivers– those caring for adults, for kids and for both. Encourage members of your caregiving employee affinity groups, if one exists in your organization, to support each other on these platforms.
  
- 7. Ask your employees what help they need.**  
Send a quick survey out. Ask employees if they know about and are using the leave and remote work and flexible scheduling opportunities, and what else you can do to make these key supports easier to use.
  
- 8. Set a visible example.**  
In your email communication to employees this week, highlight a story of a senior leader in your organization who is caring for a loved one, and how they are managing their work and caregiving responsibilities. This sends a powerful message and gives permission to all employees to use what is offered.
  
- 9. Share this tip sheet with your vendors and partners,** and ask them to take action to support their own employees.
  
- 10. Share AARP’s free COVID-19 resources with all your employees.**

#### FREE RESOURCES

**AARP’s COVID-19 webpage:**  
[www.aarp.org/coronavirus](http://www.aarp.org/coronavirus)

**AARP’s weekly Live Q&A Teletown Hall event:**  
every Thursday at 1pm ET.  
Call 1-855-274-9507

**AARP Employer Caregiving webpage:**  
[www.aarp.org/employercaregiving](http://www.aarp.org/employercaregiving)

***Preparedness for Caregivers During COVID19 tip sheet:***

English:  
[www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/caregiving/pdf/2020/coronavirus-preparedness-for-caregivers.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/caregiving/pdf/2020/coronavirus-preparedness-for-caregivers.pdf)

Spanish:  
[www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/caregiving/pdf/2020/preparate-para-enfrentar-el-coronavirus.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/caregiving/pdf/2020/preparate-para-enfrentar-el-coronavirus.pdf)

This material is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended to constitute legal advice. For more information, check out AARP’s Employer Caregiving resources at [www.aarp.org/employercaregiving](http://www.aarp.org/employercaregiving). To stay up to date on the latest information on COVID-19, visit [www.aarp.org/coronavirus](http://www.aarp.org/coronavirus).