

U.S. HOME CARE WORKERS

KEY FACTS



PHI QUALITY CARE
THROUGH
QUALITY JOBS

U.S. HOME CARE WORKERS

Over 2.1 million home care workers provide personal assistance and health care support to older adults and people with disabilities in their homes and in community-based settings across the United States.

In the past 10 years, the provision of long-term services and support has increasingly shifted from institutional settings, such as nursing homes, to private homes and communities. To meet this changing need, the home care workforce more than doubled in size between 2007 and 2017.¹ In the years ahead, the rapidly growing population of older adults will drive demand for home care workers even higher. By 2050, the population of people 65 and older will nearly double, from 47.8 million in 2015 to a projected 88 million in 2050.²

As evidenced by the growing workforce shortage in home care, employers are struggling to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of workers to meet demand.³ Their struggle is exacerbated by the poor quality of home care jobs. With a median hourly wage of \$11.03 and inconsistent work hours, home care workers typically earn \$15,100 annually.⁴ One in five home care workers lives below the federal poverty line and more than half rely on some form of public assistance.⁵

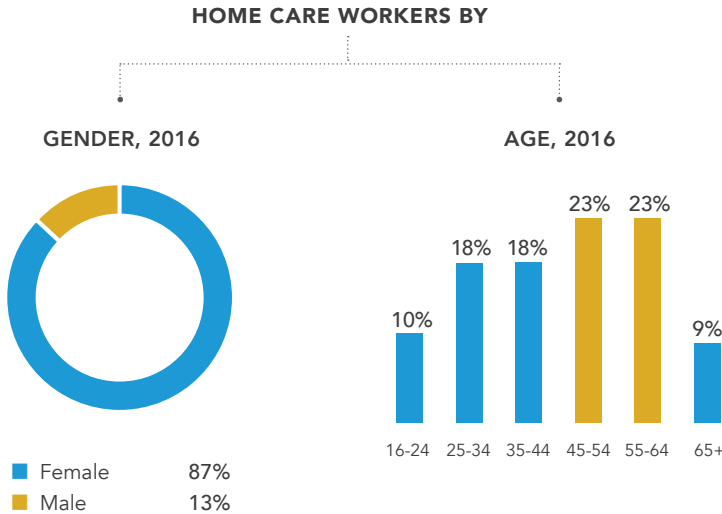


Chart Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2017. *American Community Survey (ACS), 2016 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html>; analysis by PHI (July 6, 2018).

WHO ARE HOME CARE WORKERS?

Home care workers are direct care workers (**personal care aides, home health aides, and nursing assistants**) who assist older adults and people with disabilities in their homes.

- **Nearly 9 in 10 home care workers are women, and their median age is 47.**

Home care roles generally have low legal and employer-based requirements for education, experience, and training. As a result, workers may find opportunities in home care when they would otherwise encounter language, educational, or discriminatory barriers.

- **While people of color make up just over one-third of the total U.S. workforce, they comprise 60 percent of all home care workers.**⁶

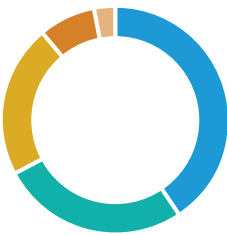
- **Over one-quarter of home care workers were born outside the United States.**

Thirty-two percent report speaking English “not well” or “not at all.”⁷ Eighty-six percent are U.S. citizens.⁸

- **Half of home care workers have completed no formal education beyond high school.**

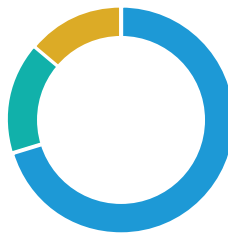
HOME CARE WORKERS BY

RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2016



White	40%
Black or African American	27%
Hispanic or Latino (Any Race)	22%
Asian or Pacific Islander	8%
Other	3%

CITIZENSHIP STATUS, 2016



U.S. Citizen by Birth	71%
U.S. Citizen by Naturalization	16%
Not a Citizen of the U.S.	14%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2016



Less than High School	17%
High School Graduate	35%
Some College, No Degree	29%
Associate's Degree or Higher	19%

Chart Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2017. *American Community Survey (ACS), 2016 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html>; analysis by PHI (July 6, 2018). White and Black or African American do not include people who identify as Hispanic or Latino.

THE ROLE OF HOME CARE WORKERS

All home care workers assist with daily tasks such as eating, dressing, and bathing, while other responsibilities differ across occupational groups. **Personal care aides** provide social support to help older adults and people living with disabilities remain active in their communities. **Home health aides** and **nursing assistants** perform certain clinical tasks under the supervision of a licensed professional. (See Notes on Occupational Titles and Industry Classifications, page 9, for more details.)

- The home care workforce more than doubled in size over the past 10 years, from nearly 840,000 in 2007 to over two million in 2017.

Personal care aides accounted for more than three-quarters of this occupational growth, reflecting the increasing demand for non-medical in-home support.

- PHI estimates that at least **325,000 home care workers are employed directly by consumers as independent providers**.⁹ Due to recent methodological changes in the Bureau of Labor Statistic's Occupational Employment Survey, most of these independent providers are included in

the 2017 data in the "Home Care Worker Employment by Occupation" figure below. However, due to survey under-reporting, this estimate likely excludes many home care workers who are hired directly by consumers through the "gray market."

- Home care workers constitute **nearly half** of the total direct care workforce, which also includes workers who are employed in nursing homes and a range of other settings.¹⁰ The total number of direct care workers across all industries tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is **4.3 million workers**.

HOME CARE WORKER
EMPLOYMENT
BY OCCUPATION,
2007 TO 2017

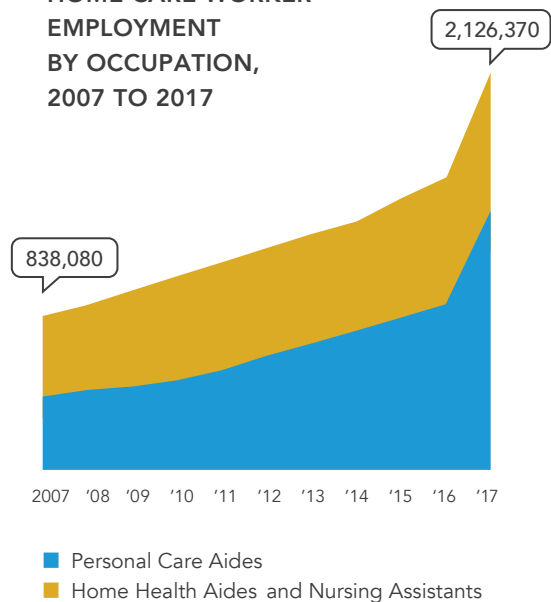
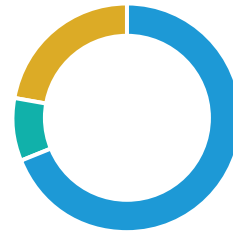


Chart Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), *Employment Projections Program. 2017. Employment Projections: 2016–26, National Employment Matrix - Occupation.* <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), *Employment Projections Program. 2017. Employment Projections: 2016–26, Occupational Projections Data.* <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>; analysis by PHI (July 19, 2017). Note that the BLS Occupational Employment Survey was revised in 2013 to better capture consumer-directed workers. This methodological change accounts for some of the employment growth reported in 2016 to 2017.

- More than **two-thirds** of the home care workforce is employed by for-profit companies.
- Home care jobs are predominantly government-funded. Payments from public programs (primarily Medicare or Medicaid) constituted **65 percent** of the Home Health Care Services industry's **\$77.6 billion annual revenue** in 2016.¹¹

Chart Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2016. *American Community Survey (ACS), 2016 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html>; analysis by PHI (July 6, 2018).

HOME CARE WORKERS
BY TYPE OF EMPLOYER, 2016



For-Profit	69%
Non-Profit	9%
Independent Providers	22%

THE CHALLENGES FOR THIS WORKFORCE

- **On average, home care workers' wages have barely risen over the past 10 years:** inflation-adjusted median hourly wages were \$10.66 in 2007 and \$11.03 in 2017. This means that while goods and services increased in price, the purchasing power of home care workers' wages remained nearly the same. There was some variation among occupational groups: **personal care aide wages rose by \$0.95 over that decade, while home health aide and nursing assistant wages dropped by \$0.11.** However, personal care aide wages remain lower than home health aide and nursing assistant wages, at a median wage of \$10.92 compared to \$11.24.

HOME CARE WORKER MEDIAN
HOURLY WAGES ADJUSTED
FOR INFLATION, 2007 TO 2017

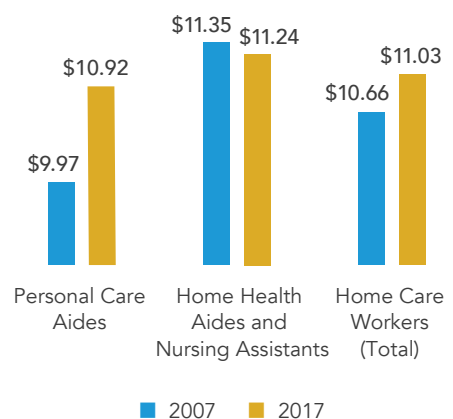


Chart Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Division of Occupational Employment Statistics. 2018. *May 2007 to May 2017 National Industry-Specific Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesosci.htm>; analysis by PHI (July 2, 2018).

- **Two in five home care workers work part time**, defined as less than 35 hours per week. Thirty-two percent work part time for “non-economic reasons,” which include personal or family obligations and health problems. Eight percent work part time for “economic reasons,” which means they are not able to find full-time work due to business conditions at their workplaces or in the broader labor market.¹²
- Because of low wages and inconsistent hours, **the median annual income for home care workers is \$15,100.**¹³
- Low incomes lead to high poverty rates among home care workers: **nearly one in five lives in a household below the federal poverty line**, compared to 7 percent of all U.S. workers.¹⁴
- Because of high poverty rates among home care workers, **more than half receive some form of public assistance.**

HOME CARE WORKERS

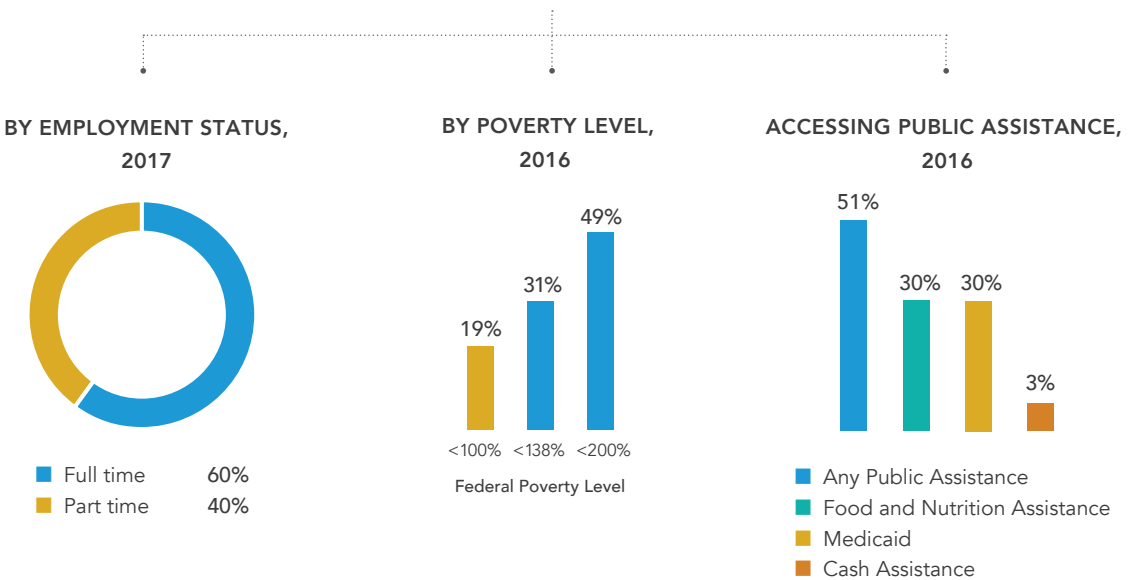
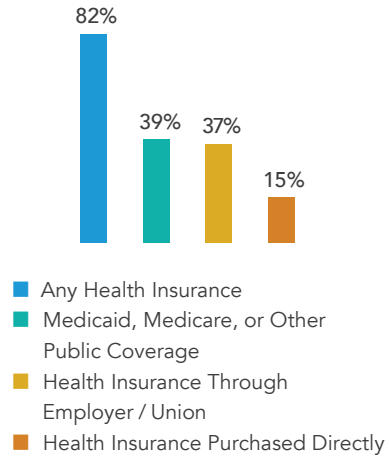


Chart Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. 2018. *January 2017 to December 2017 Basic Monthly Current Population Survey (CPS)*. https://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps_ftp.html; analysis by PHI (July 19, 2018); U.S. Census Bureau. 2017. *American Community Survey (ACS), 2016 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html>; analysis by PHI (July 6, 2018). “Any Public Assistance” includes food and nutrition assistance, public health insurance, and cash assistance.

- **Nearly 20 percent of home care workers lack health insurance.** Thirty-nine percent rely on public health care coverage, most commonly Medicaid.

Chart Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2017. *American Community Survey (ACS), 2016 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html>; analysis by PHI (July 6, 2018).

**HOME CARE WORKERS
BY HEALTH INSURANCE STATUS, 2016**



FUTURE DEMAND FOR HOME CARE WORKERS

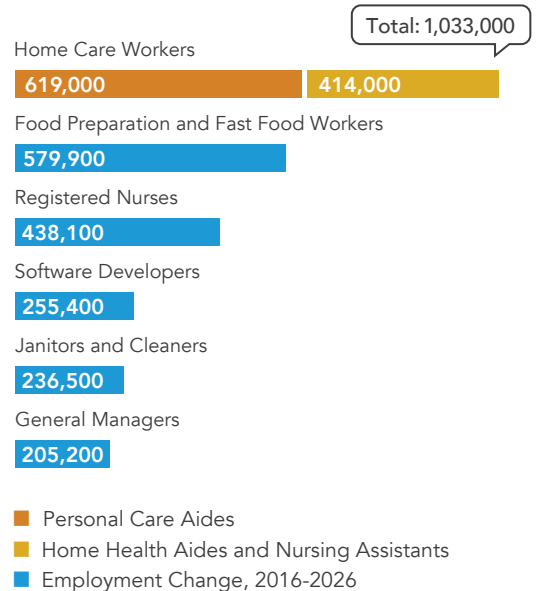
- Home care ranks among the **top 10 fastest-growing occupations in the U.S.** Furthermore, **from 2016 to 2026, home care workers are projected to add more jobs than any other single occupation, with over 1 million new jobs anticipated.**

Personal care aides will account for more than three-quarters of the projected home care employment growth. To note: because Bureau of Labor Statistics employment projection models account for recent industry and employment trends, not projected population growth, these home care projections likely underestimate future demand.

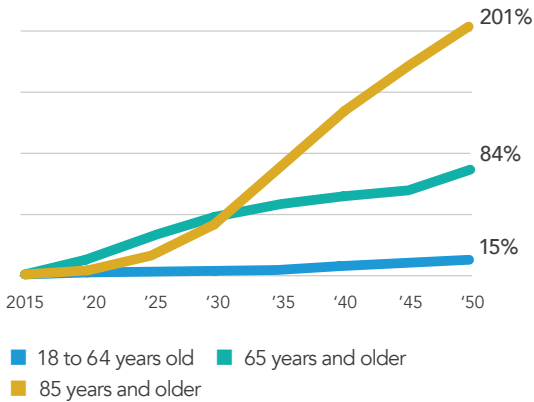
Chart Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Employment Projections Program. 2017. *Employment Projections: 2016–26, National Employment Matrix - Occupation*. <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>; BLS, Employment Projections Program. 2017. *Employment Projections: 2016–26, Occupational Projections Data*. <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>; analysis by PHI (July 19, 2018).

OCCUPATIONS WITH THE MOST JOB GROWTH, 2016 TO 2026

(In Thousands)



PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH BY AGE GROUP, 2015 TO 2050



- **From 2016 to 2050, the population of adults over age 65 will nearly double, from 47.8 million to 88 million.** The number of adults over 85 is expected to more than triple over the same period, from 6.3 million to 19 million. This demographic shift is the primary driver of employment growth for home care workers.

In contrast to this rapid growth in the older adult population, the population of working-age adults (aged 18 to 64) is expected to remain relatively static. Currently, there are 32 working-age adults for every adult over age 85; by 2050, that number will drop to 12.

- **Labor force participation among women ages 20 to 64, who currently comprise the majority of the home care workforce, is declining,** with fewer women now entering the workforce than in previous generations. This workforce will increase by 3.5 million in the next decade, compared to 7.7 million in 1996 to 2006.

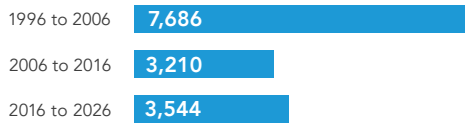
This trend suggests the need to recruit new, “non-traditional” workers to the home care field.¹⁵ For example, another 2.2 million men aged 20 to 64 will join the labor force in

the next decade. The number of older adults (above the age of 65) who participate in the labor force is expanding significantly, with an expected increase of 5.3 million from 2016 to 2026.

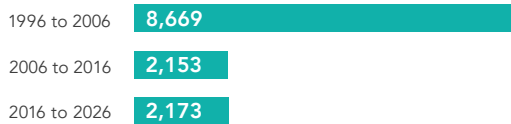
INCREASE IN LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY GENDER AND AGE, 1996 TO 2026

(In Thousands)

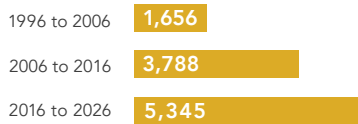
Women 20 to 64 Years



Men 20 to 64 Years



All Genders 20 to 64 Years and Over



The home care field is experiencing a significant and growing shortage of home care workers due to greater demand for home care services, paired with limited growth in the labor force. To bridge this gap, it will be necessary to improve the quality of home care jobs to make them more competitive, including by offering higher wages and benefits, full-time hours, better training and advancement opportunities, and improved working conditions.

NOTES ON OCCUPATIONAL TITLES AND INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATIONS

OCCUPATIONAL TITLES

Direct care worker occupational categories are defined by the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Workers are classified based on their on-the-job responsibilities, skills, education, and training. Occupation definitions can be found at: <http://www.bls.gov/SOC>.

TITLE	OTHER TITLES	JOB DESCRIPTION
Personal Care Aides (SOC 39-9021)	Personal Care Attendant, Personal Assistant, Direct Support Professional (for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities); also includes Independent Providers (employed directly by consumers)	In addition to assisting with activities of daily living (ADLs), personal care aides often help with housekeeping, chores, meal preparation, and medication management. They also help individuals go to work and remain engaged in their communities, and they advise on nutrition, household maintenance, and other activities.
Home Health Aides (SOC 31-1011)	Home Hospice Aide, Home Health Attendant	In addition to assisting with ADLs, home health aides also perform clinical tasks such as wound care, blood pressure readings, and range-of-motion exercises. Their work is supervised by licensed nurses or therapists.
Nursing Assistants (SOC 31-1014)	Certified Nursing Assistant, Certified Nursing Aide, Nursing Attendant, Nursing Aide, Nursing Care Attendant	In most states, nursing assistant credentials are portable to home- and community-based settings. In the context of home care, nursing assistants perform the same work as home health aides.

◀ **Chart Sources:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2014. *National Population Projections Tables, Projections of the Population by Sex and Selected Age Groups for the United States: 2015 to 2060*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2014/demo/popproj/2014-summary-tables.html>. Projections are shown as cumulative percentages, which indicate growth for each age group relative to 2015 population estimates; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Employment Projections Program. 2017. *Civilian Labor Force, by Age, Sex, Race, and Ethnicity, 1996, 2006, 2016, and Projected 2026*. <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>; analysis by PHI (August 8, 2018).

HOME CARE INDUSTRIES

Home care industries are defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) developed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Business establishments are coded based on their primary activity. Industry definitions can be found at <https://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>.

TITLE	EXAMPLES	INDUSTRY DESCRIPTION
Home Health Care Services (NAICS 621610)	Home Health Care Agencies, Visiting Nurse Associations, In-Home Hospice Care Services	This industry comprises establishments that provide personal care, homemaking, and companionship services. They also provide skilled nursing care and a range of other home-based medical services.
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (NAICS 624120)	Non-Medical Home Care Providers, Homemaker Service Providers, Self-Help Organizations, Activity Centers for Older Adults and People with Disabilities, Companion Service Providers, Adult Day Care Centers	This industry comprises establishments that provide social assistance services to improve the quality of life for older adults, persons diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or persons with disabilities who live in their homes and communities. Services include non-medical personal care and homemaker services.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

The analyses in this fact sheet include personal care aides, home health aides, and nursing assistants who are employed in two home care industries: Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities and Home Health Care Services. All numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number unless shown otherwise.

Wage and employment trends were sourced from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program, and employment projections were sourced from the BLS Employment Projections program.

Home care worker wages were calculated as a weighted average of median hourly wages for each occupation in each industry. In this context, median wages are preferable to mean wages, which are skewed by a small proportion of atypically high-paid home care workers. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for All Urban Consumers (Current Series) was used to adjust wages for inflation.

Home care worker demographics, annual earnings, poverty status, reliance on public assistance, and health insurance status were sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), as was the estimate on independent providers. Employment status was sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. Since these surveys do not provide data at the level of the Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities industry, the parent industry (Individual and Family Services) was used instead.

NOTES

1. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Division of Occupational Employment Statistics (OES). 2018. *May 2007 to May 2017 National Industry-Specific Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrci.htm>; analysis by PHI (July 2, 2018).
2. U.S. Census Bureau, 2014. *National Population Projections Tables, Table 3. Projections of the Population by Sex and Selected Age Groups for the United States: 2015 to 2060*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2014/demo/popproj/2014-summary-tables.html>.
3. Espinoza, Robert. 2017. *8 Signs the Shortage in Paid Caregivers is Getting Worse*. Bronx, NY: PHI. <https://60caregiverissues.org/the-future-of-long-term-care-issue-1.html>
4. BLS OES, 2018.
5. U.S. Census Bureau. 2017a. *American Community Survey (ACS), 2016 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html>; analysis by PHI (July 6, 2018).
6. U.S. Census Bureau. 2017b. *American Community Survey (ACS), 2016 1-year Estimates, Employment Status*. https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/16_1YR/S2301; analysis by PHI (July 6, 2018).
7. U.S. Census Bureau, 2017a.
8. The unrounded numbers for U.S. citizens by birth and by naturalization are 70.5 percent and 15.9 percent, which is why this summary percentage (86 percent) does not align directly with the percentages shown in the figure on citizenship status.
9. This estimate of independent providers includes home care workers who report that they are self-employed or government-employed in the American Community Survey (ACS). As the ACS surveys individuals, this estimate cannot be combined with the workforce data from the BLS Occupational Employment Survey, which surveys establishments.
10. Other industries employing direct care workers include (but are not limited to) continuing care retirement communities, assisted living facilities, residential facilities, employment services, and vocational rehabilitation services.
11. U.S. Census Bureau. 2017c. *Service Annual Survey, Table 4: Estimated Sources of Revenue for Employer Firms: 2013 through 2016*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/econ/services/sas-naics.html>; analysis by PHI (July 13, 2018).
12. Campbell, Stephen. 2018. *The Part-Time Dilemma for Direct Care Workers*. Bronx, NY: PHI. <https://phinational.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Part-Time-Dilemma-PHI-2018.pdf>
13. U.S. Census Bureau, 2017a.
14. U.S. Census Bureau, 2017a. Federal poverty thresholds, which are updated each year, can be accessed here: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>.
15. Scales, Kezia. 2018. *Men and the Direct Care Workforce*. Bronx, NY: PHI. <https://phinational.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Male-Workers-PHI-2018.pdf>; Scales, Kezia. 2018. *Older Workers and the Direct Care Workforce*. Bronx, NY: PHI. <https://phinational.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Older-Workers-PHI-2018.pdf>.

PHI works to transform eldercare and disability services. We foster dignity, respect, and independence for all who receive care, and all who provide it. As the nation's leading authority on the direct care workforce, PHI promotes quality direct care jobs as the foundation for quality care.

Drawing on 25 years of experience working side-by-side with direct care workers and their clients in cities, suburbs, and small towns across America, PHI offers all the tools necessary to create quality jobs and provide quality care. PHI's trainers, researchers, and policy experts work together to:

- Learn what works and what doesn't in meeting the needs of direct care workers and their clients, in a variety of long-term care settings;
- Implement best practices through hands-on coaching, training, and consulting, to help long-term care providers deliver high-quality care;
- Support policymakers and advocates in crafting evidence-based policies to advance quality care.

For more information, visit PHI at www.PHInational.org and 60CaregiverIssues.org.



400 East Fordham Road, 11th Floor
Bronx, NY 10458
Phone: 718.402.7766
Fax: 718.585.6852
Email: info@PHInational.org
www.PHInational.org