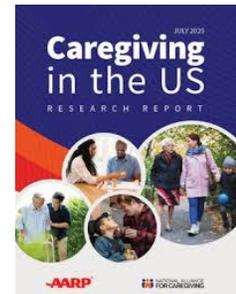


Community Care Corps: How Volunteer Programs Are Reshaping Caregiving

Family caregiving in the United States has reached a critical juncture. According to the [Caregiving in the US, 2025](#) report, nearly 63 million Americans, almost one in four adults, are providing unpaid care, marking a 45% increase since 2015. These caregivers are performing increasingly complex medical and personal tasks, often without training or adequate resources.

Nearly 64% report high emotional stress, 45% experience physical strain, and one in four struggle to afford basic necessities. At the same time, loneliness among adults aged 45 and older is rising, with four in ten reporting isolation, creating a dual crisis of burnout and social disconnection.¹ These trends underscore the urgent need for programs that provide respite, training, and emotional support to caregivers while helping care recipients maintain independence in their communities.



The **Community Care Corps (C3)** program, funded through a cooperative agreement between the Administration for Community Living, Oasis, USAgings, Caregiver Action Network, and Altarum, is designed to meet this challenge head-on. Initiated in 2019, C3 fosters the development of innovative local programs that provide volunteer nonmedical assistance to family caregivers, older adults, and individuals with disabilities (18+), helping them maintain independence in the community. C3 awards grants to local organizations to deploy volunteers to assist with nonmedical tasks such as transportation, errands, companionship, and technology support. This model not only alleviates caregiver burden but also facilitates community-based living for care recipients.

How C3 Works: Volunteers Making a Difference

Since 2019, C3 has funded five cohorts of grantees nationwide. Four have completed their entire grant cycle, which includes program implementation, survey administration, data collection, and evaluation. The fifth cohort is currently mid-grant cycle implementing varied volunteer models tailored to local needs. Across the first four cohorts, C3 awarded grants to 109 organizations across urban, suburban, rural, frontier, and tribal communities, representing 41 states and US territories. Nonmedical volunteer assistance focused on three populations: older adults, adults with disabilities age 18+, and family caregivers. Collected outputs metrics demonstrate that 47,252 individuals were served by 16,281 volunteers who provided 439,739 hours of service, at an estimated value of \$14.27 million.

¹ AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving. (2025). *Caregiving in the U.S. 2025*. Washington, DC: AARP. doi.org/10.26419/ppi.00373.001

The current cohort, Cohort 5, includes another 23 organizations actively providing volunteer-led programs of support for individuals and their caregivers in their respective communities across the country. These volunteers provide services ranging from friendly visits and meal preparation to minor home modifications and respite care. These interventions directly address gaps highlighted in the report, particularly the lack of consistent access to respite and social support for caregivers experiencing stress across states.

Real-World Impact

Evaluation data collected by grantees through caregiver and care recipient surveys reveal compelling outcomes that closely align with findings from the *Caregiving in the US, 2025* report. Both sources highlight the urgent need for more robust programs to address caregiver stress, loneliness, and financial strain. Just as national research highlights, our own program outcomes demonstrate the difference that community-based support can make:

- Care Recipients
 - 82% reported volunteer assistance helped them maintain their current living situation.
 - 87% noted improvement or stability in physical health; 85% in mental health.
 - 87% experienced reduced loneliness or no increase in isolation.
 - 97% would recommend C3 services to others.
 - Nearly 70% of one-time assistance recipients said volunteer help significantly alleviated a major life concern.
- Caregivers
 - 80% reported decreased difficulty in supporting their loved one's living situation.
 - 87% saw improvement or stability in physical health; 85% in mental health.
 - Many caregivers cited respite as critical for reducing stress and sustaining their caregiving role.

Dollars and Sense: The Economic Upside of Community Care

The value of these programs goes beyond well-being; they also offer measurable economic advantages for society as a whole. Volunteer nonmedical assistance helps ease caregiver stress, delays the need for institutional care, and promotes greater independence and well-being among older adults and adults with disabilities. Altarum's modeling, leveraging grantee data and national cost estimates, suggests that even modest reductions in loneliness and caregiver stress can yield significant healthcare savings, reinforcing the assertion that caregiving has far-reaching financial consequences for families and the broader health system.

Beyond dollars saved, the C3 model delivers long-term value through its emphasis on community-driven solutions. By recruiting and mobilizing local volunteers, grantees expanded local capacity to care for at-risk populations and fostered stronger connections among neighbors. These volunteer-led efforts created dependable, local support systems that reflect the unique needs of each

community. The program's ability to fill nonmedical service gaps without duplicating existing healthcare infrastructure makes it a highly efficient complement to other aging and caregiving initiatives.

The C3 model's community-driven approach not only improves well-being and quality of life but also delivers public value by having the potential to delay institutionalization and reduce costly nursing home admissions. Even modest reductions in emergency room visits, hospitalizations, or nursing home admissions could generate additional savings and societal benefit, suggesting that the true cost-benefit ratio of the program may be significantly higher than currently measured.

Meeting the Caregiving Challenge Ahead

C3 exemplifies the type of innovative, community-based intervention needed to address America's caregiving challenges that the report advocates for:

- Training and deploying volunteers to assist caregivers and care recipients
- Reducing stress, isolation, and financial strain through practical, nonmedical support
- Strengthening families and communities by creating a sustainable network of care

As the caregiving population grows, and with 29% of caregivers now part of the "sandwich generation" balancing care for aging parents and children, programs like C3 are essential to sustaining family caregiving as the backbone of long-term care in the United States. Further, the program's outcomes advance the nationwide goals of the [2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers \(PDF\)](#), which emphasizes volunteer engagement, respite services, and community-based supports.

By reducing stress and isolation, providing respite, and supporting independent living, C3 delivers measurable benefits for caregivers and care recipients alike. Scaling and sustaining this model will be critical as demographic trends continue to drive demand for caregiving support. Investing in C3 is not just a compassionate choice, it is a strategic imperative to strengthen families, communities, and the nation's long-term care infrastructure.

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