A Care Economy Data Infrastructure:

Assessing the economic impacts of public + employer policies

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Specific area of focus: Role of policy in shaping economic outcomes for working caregivers

- Current data infrastructure lacks the necessary nuance for developing and implementing evidence-backed policies that genuinely meet working caregivers' needs.

  - Policy complexity not well-represented

  - Policy interactions nearly impossible to track (esp. due to absence of linked employer-worker data)

  - Limited longitudinal data with necessary variables over sufficient periods of time

  - Absence of demographic granularity (e.g., race, earnings, family relationships)

  - Absence of sufficient detail on care recipients

What types of policies support working caregivers?

	Public policies	Employer policies
Unpaid leave		
	FMLA (federal, state)	job-protected leave of absence
Paid leave		
	paid sick + safe time (state, local)	paid sick + safe time
	paid family medical leave (state)	paid family medical leave
		personal leave
		consolidated PTO
Scheduling flexibility		
	fair scheduling regs (state, local)	flex time
		worker scheduling control
Work location flexibility		
		remote work options

Which economic outcomes should we care about?

Worker-level	Earnings volatility Labor supply (extensive + intensive margin) Wage/earnings growth (career mobility)
Family-level	Income volatility Income growth
Employer-level	Productivity e.g. retention, turnover (quits), absenteeism, time-to-hire
Macro-level	Fiscal cost/benefit analysis re: caregiving policy

What do we need to know about workers' care-related employer benefits?

- Details re: availability of paid leave

    - Paid family and medical leave, including job protection, eligibility (e.g., p/t, job tenure, family relationship), duration of leave across leave types, intermittency, wage replacement rates

    - Paid sick and safe time

    - Paid personal time/vacation

    - PTO

- Details re: availability of employer policy re: unpaid leave

- Scheduling policies (e.g., flex time, intermittent, scale up/down, worker control)

- Availability of remote work options

What do we need to know about workers' care-related public benefits?

- Details re: availability of public paid leave (varies by state + local)

  - Paid family and medical leave, including job protection, eligibility (e.g., p/t, job tenure, family relationship), duration of leave across leave types, intermittency, wage replacement rates

  - Paid sick and safe time

- Details re: availability of public unpaid leave (varies by state + local)

  - State extensions to FMLA

- Details re: public fair scheduling regulations (varies by local + some state)

(With appropriate geocoding, this info could be merged in by an individual researcher. Time consuming + inefficient.)

What do we need to know about additional public benefits available to workers and care recipients?

- SSDI, Medicare/Medicaid, UI, SNAP, WIC, TANF eligibility + uptake

- Why?

  - Understand potential fiscal cost/benefit to expanded public/private supports for working caregivers

  - Understand policy interactions to better support/simplify for working caregivers

What do we need to know about workers to understand the relationship between care-related benefits and labor market outcomes?

- Person-level

  - Race

  - Gender

  - Earnings/wage

  - Work schedule

  - Geography (state + city)

  - Potential care recipients (e.g. children, elders, etc. – specifics)

What do we need to know about workers' families to understand the relationship between care-related benefits and labor market outcomes?

- Household-level

  - Income

  - Wealth

  - **Intrahousehold labor supply** – partner employment status, earnings, work arrangements (e.g., flex or remote), public and employer-based benefits eligibility

  - Geography (state + city)

  - Potential care recipients (e.g. children, elders, etc. – specifics re age)

What do additional information do we need to know about workers during caregiving period?

- Care provision

  - Type of care provided (e.g. task assistance, medical care)

  - Intensity of care provided (e.g. duration, p/t or f/t, intermittent, etc.)

- Benefits

  - Eligibility, uptake, benefit receipt – source, details

  We also need this same data for others in the working caregivers' household.

What do we need to know about care recipients to understand the relationship between care-related benefits and labor market outcomes?

- Demographics (race, gender, age, income/earnings, wealth)

- Relationship to caregiver

- Place – mileage/commuting time between caregiver/recipient

- For non-parental caregiving: specifics re: illness type + care needs

- Additional forms of caregiving support, including source + cost (e.g. OOP home health aide)

- Economic resources: assets/wealth, insurance (l/t care, Medicare, health), benefits (Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, SSDI)

What do we need to know about workers' employers to understand the relationship between care-related benefits and labor market outcomes?

- Employer-level

  - Firm size (granular, especially re: small businesses)

  - Establishment size (granular)

  - Industry

  - Multinational/multi-state (+ home country/state)

  - Intra-firm earnings distribution, employment structure (e.g. p/t share)

  - Job design, e.g., cross-training v. task-specific approach

  - HR data, e.g. job tenure, turnover, time-to-hire

How does data need to be structured to identify impacts of care-related benefits access on labor market outcomes?

- Granular levels of detail on policy, distinction between availability, eligibility, and uptake

- Longitudinal – including pre-care, during, and post (ideally with 10+ year follow-up, to track longer-term outcomes)

- Worker-household-care recipient information

- Linked employer-worker (to identify relationships between employer-level characteristics + worker outcomes)

- Administrative data (to identify benefits receipt over time, also potentially earnings/employment)

- Survey data, e.g. commuting time to caregiver requires (?) survey

Wishlist: Worker perspectives (longitudinal, ideally linked to administrative data)

- Worker preferences

    - Trade-offs

    - Preferred benefit structure

- Worker knowledge

    - What do workers know about benefits availability (public + private)?

    - Where do workers face challenges/barriers re: uptake?

    - How do workers receive information re: benefits?

- Culture

    - Perceived consequences of care-related leave (with granularity re: type of care, caregiver gender/earnings/education/race/region/industry)

Wishlist: Employer perspectives (longitudinal, ideally linked to administrative data)

- Perceived level of difficulty re: implementation

- Perceived level of difficulty covering workers taking care-related leave

Summary

- Earlier presentations have articulated the challenges in enumerating potential care recipients + the challenges in evaluating short- and long-term consequences of giving and receiving care

- Additional layer provided here is key for understanding how policies for supporting caregiving shape economic outcomes

- No existing data source includes the necessary pieces for telling a nuanced story about how best to promote economic security and/or economic mobility for working caregivers → inadequate policy response to a growing problem.

- ++ Goldilocks Dilemma re: existing data

  - Need for a portal that includes both high-level accessible data for policy/practitioners *and* technical data for researchers *and* well-organized bibliography of past work. (Goals: avoid duplication, encourage replication, make evidence more accessible.)