

## FROM CRISIS TO EMERGENCY

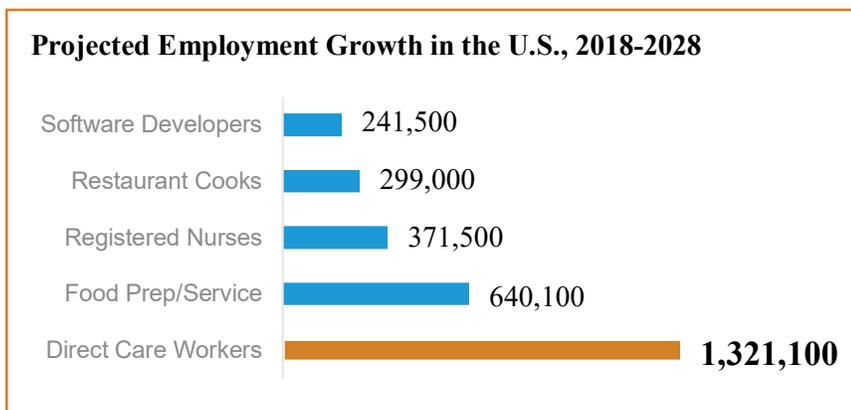
### 8.2 Million Direct Care Job Openings Expected by 2028

The direct care workforce is expanding rapidly as our population grows older, as people live longer with disabilities and chronic conditions, and as the supply of potential caregivers dwindles. The workforce nearly doubled within the last decade, from 2.9 million workers in 2008 to almost 4.5 million in 2018.

Here's what to expect in the decade ahead.

### Direct Care Will Add More New Jobs Than Any Other U.S. Occupation

From 2018 to 2028, the direct care workforce is expected to add 1.3 million jobs—more new jobs than in the second and third U.S. occupations with the most job growth combined.

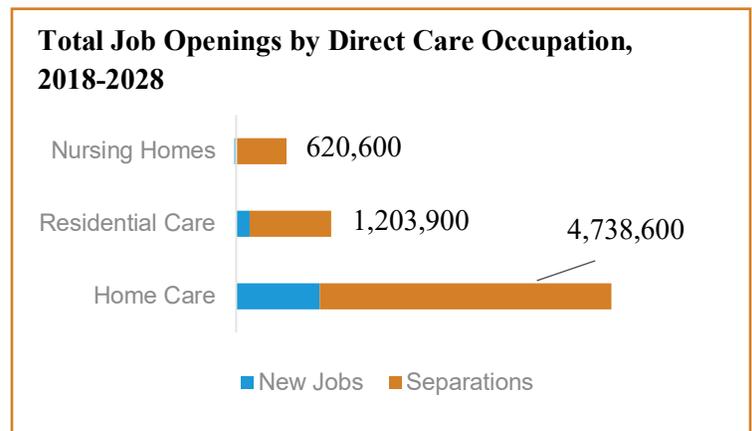


### Nearly 7 Million More Direct Care Jobs Will Become Vacant

The direct care workforce will need to fill an additional 6.9 million jobs during the next decade as existing workers leave the field or exit the labor force altogether.

### Within Direct Care, Home Care Will Have the Most Job Openings

Combining job growth and separations, nearly 8.2 million total direct care job openings are anticipated from 2018 to 2028. More than half of these job openings—4.7 million—will be in home care. (The total figure includes 1.6 million direct care job openings in hospitals and other non-long-term care settings.)



# IT'S TIME TO CARE ABOUT THE DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE

Direct care workers provide essential daily support for older adults and people with disabilities across a range of settings. For years, advocates have warned of a workforce crisis, as demand for direct care workers has outpaced improvements in their job quality—but many now describe the situation as a full-blown emergency. Employers are struggling to recruit and retain enough workers to fill vacant positions. Existing workers are shouldering the burden of growing demand without sufficient resources or support. Family members are under immense pressure, and consumers are scraping together the care they need—or forced to go without.

Resolving the workforce emergency will require a comprehensive, collaborative, cross-sectoral set of solutions. **Here are two immediate opportunities to fill those anticipated job openings in the decade ahead.**

## 1. Improve Compensation

There are numerous ways to improve job quality and thereby strengthen the direct care workforce—but the bottom line is that workers must be better compensated. Otherwise, the long-term services and supports sector will continue struggling to recruit and retain a strong workforce, especially given the fierce competition for entry-level workers across the labor market.

## 2. Build the Workforce Pipeline

To attract new workers to the field, one strategy is to target recruitment efforts at specific groups, including younger people, older workers, and men. The second strategy, on a different order of magnitude, is to reverse the tide of hostile immigration policymaking. Recent immigration policies threaten the pipeline of immigrant workers into direct care jobs, while also driving existing workers out of the workforce. By contrast, supportive immigration policies and pathways will help build and strengthen this essential segment of the workforce.

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

These workforce projections derive from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Projections Program's *2018 to 2028 Occupational Separations and Openings* table. "Separations" refer to job openings caused by workers leaving the labor force or moving into other occupations. These estimates do **not** include movement within direct care occupations (e.g., from one nursing assistant job to another).

For more information, see <https://PHInational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/>.

This fact sheet highlights key findings from *It's Time to Care: A Detailed Profile of America's Direct Care Workforce*. Released in January 2020, the report provides a detailed overview of the direct care workforce, an analysis of how direct care roles have evolved, and a statistical profile of the workforce. The report is the first installment in a year-long series of reports that examines the importance and impact of the direct care workforce. The final, comprehensive report—*Caring for the Future*—will be released in January 2021. This report series was made possible through generous support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Woodcock Foundation. Read *It's Time to Care* at [PHInational.org/CaringForTheFuture](https://PHInational.org/CaringForTheFuture).