

OLDER MAINE WOMEN & ECONOMIC SECURITY

Thousands of older Maine women **lack the economic security to meet their basic needs** because of a **lifetime of economic disparities**. The effects are significant and will continue to grow.



Women are more likely to:

be **outside the labor force**.

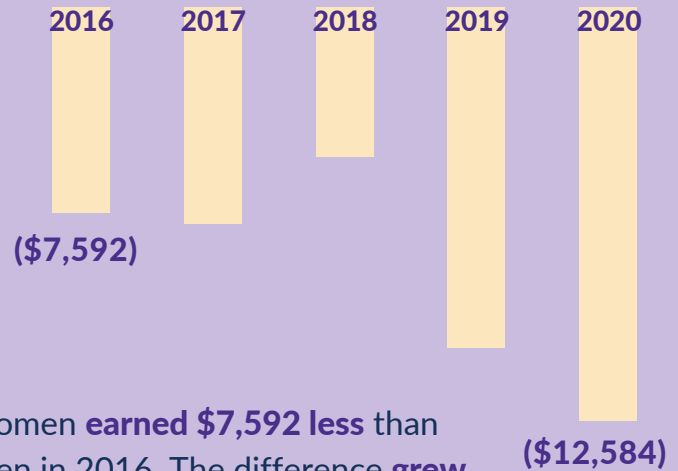
be **paid less** when they work.

work in industries with **low wages**.

work part-time jobs without benefits (health insurance/retirement plans).

provide unpaid labor (childcare/other unpaid family responsibilities).

INCREASING WAGE DISPARITIES



Maine women **earned \$7,592 less** than Maine men in 2016. The difference **grew to \$12,584** in 2020.

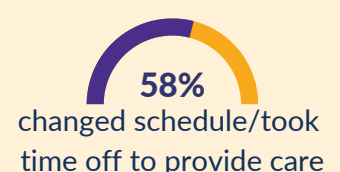
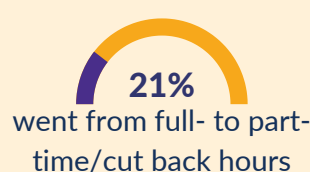
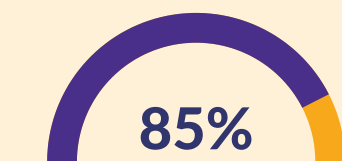
Women are more likely to live in **poverty** than men. And - the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender have compounding effects: **women of color face even higher rates of poverty compared to white women - across all ages.**

RACE, ETHNICITY, & GENDER

PAID & UNPAID CARE

Caregivers are in **high demand**, in **short supply**, and **underpaid** (when they are paid at all). They're also **mostly women**.

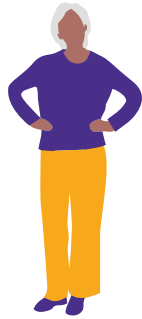
MAINE CAREGIVERS ARE WOMEN



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Maine women 60+ are over

2x more likely than men to
live alone AND make
>\$12,880/year



Older women have increasing rates of disability with age compared to older men. As a result, they have a **higher need for long-term care**.

Women 80+ are 2x more likely to live in poverty than men 80+.

CARE COSTS

Despite caregivers' unpaid labor and direct support workers' underpaid work, long-term care costs are significant. Maine's 2020 estimated median private pay long-term care annual costs include:

\$65,483

in-home homemaker
health aid

\$71,298

private, one-bedroom
assisted living facility

\$115,705

semi-private room
nursing home facility

At least half of older Maine women who live alone have difficulty covering their basic needs and will not be able to afford to pay for the support and care they need as they age.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic disparities over the course of a woman's lifetime mean that older Maine women are far more likely to live in poverty than Maine men. Due to higher rates of disability and the likelihood of living alone, older Maine women are more likely to need long-term supports and services. However, their higher rates of poverty make it less likely they will be able to afford those services.

Policymakers, Maine state agencies, and Maine municipalities must work with experts and advocates to:

- **Create better statewide systems to support care** like paid family medical leave and childcare improvements (birth through school age), and find additional ways to support unpaid caregivers.
- **Fairly value and compensate professional caregivers** including direct support workers and childcare providers, who are overwhelmingly women.
- **Continue to address gender-based discrimination** in wages and workplaces.
- **Improve our long-term care systems**, such as addressing gaps in long-term support and services, and expanding eligibility for programs that help people pay for those services.
- **Fund supports to help people live alone:** aging in place home modification, home alert systems, increased access to accessory dwelling units, and targeted and consistent outreach to older Mainers who live alone.

This summary is based on a report written by the Cutler Institute for Health & Social Policy for the Maine Women's Lobby Education Fund and the Maine Council on Aging. For the full report and citations, visit: bit.ly/OlderEcoSecReport.



Maine
Women's
Lobby

