

# Immigration Reform: Easing the Workforce Crisis

## In a Nutshell:

The caregiver shortage in the home care industry has reached unprecedented levels at a time when immigration numbers are rapidly declining. An efficient way to address this shortage is to reform the way the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) approves immigrant visas by adding caregiving to the list of Schedule A occupations, streamlining the process.

## What is Schedule A?

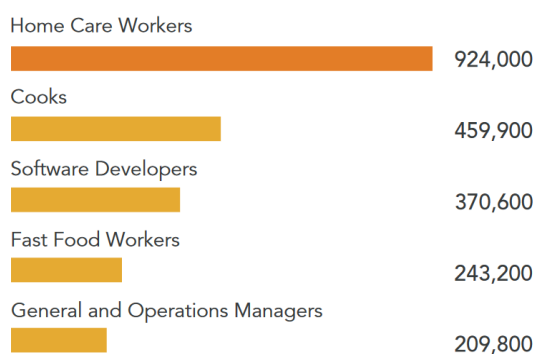
For certain occupations, DOL has predetermined that there are not enough U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available to be hired. Those occupations are then placed on the Schedule A list, allowing for a more streamlined visa approval process with decreased wait times. DOL is currently considering revising the occupations on the Schedule A list.

## The Caregiving Crisis by the Numbers:

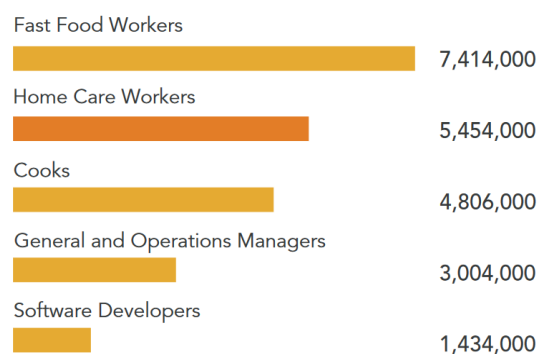
In the 40-year span between 2020 to 2060, the population of adults age 65 and older is projected to increase dramatically from 56.1 million to 94.7 million.<sup>1</sup> The number of adults age 85 and older is expected to nearly triple over the same period from 6.7 million to 19 million.<sup>2</sup> This demographic shift is the underlying driver of the explosive job growth in the caregiving space.

Demand for caregivers is sky high. From 2021 to 2031, the home care workforce will have an astounding 5.5 million job openings.<sup>3</sup> The home care workforce ranks second among all U.S. occupations for total projected job openings:

### OCCUPATIONS WITH MOST JOB GROWTH, 2021 TO 2031



### OCCUPATIONS WITH THE MOST TOTAL JOB OPENINGS, 2021 TO 2031



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 National Population Projections Datasets, Projected Population by Single Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: 2016 to 2060.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.phinational.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DCW-in-the-United-States-2022-PHI.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> BLS EPP, 2022a; 2022b.

## Why Caregiving Should be on the Schedule A List:

The dramatic need for more caregivers is on a direct collision course with the population demographics of the United States. Data predicts that between 2020 and 2030, the number of U.S. citizens 85 years of age or older will double from the current 2.4 million. Many are calling this demographic shift a “silver tsunami.”

As this “silver tsunami” crests, we are witnessing a simultaneous and dramatic decrease in the flow of immigrants, who traditionally make up about a third of the caregiving workforce. According to the [Migration Policy Institute](#), the pandemic led to sharp drops in immigration to levels not seen in decades. Issuance of visas for legal permanent residence fell 48 percent between fiscal years 2019 and 2020, while temporary visa issuances dropped 54 percent. These statistics plainly indicate the dire need to supplement our insufficient domestic caregiving workforce with more able bodies. This can be efficiently accomplished through Schedule A reform.

## Our Ask:

Urge DOL to add caregiving to its list of Schedule A occupations, which it is currently reviewing. DOL should seek to strike an appropriate balance between the need to provide U.S. workers notice of and ability to apply to available, permanent job opportunities with the need to offer employers access to foreign labor through effective administration of the visa process.

Adding caregiving to Schedule A would make the lives of the millions of citizens who rely on home care every day healthier, easier, and more fulfilling. The unprecedented growth of and demand for caregiving necessitates a nimble response from DOL policymakers. This response should include adding caregiving to Schedule A to alleviate the evidently unnecessary permanent labor certification process.

Americans have made it clear they wish to remain in their homes as they age and receive care. They deserve a robust, well-trained workforce that supports them in that goal.

