

Caregiver Navigation in Action: AAA Insights and Program Evaluation

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Speakers + Team

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Today's Objectives

- ***Describe*** common characteristics of AAAs that provide caregiver navigation services, identifying key structural and contextual factors that shape program delivery.
- ***Highlight*** how AAAs promote caregiver services through their websites.
- ***Describe*** the workforce and staff who are providing caregiver navigation through AAAs and community-based organizations participating in an evaluation of caregiver navigation.
- ***Present*** details on reasons caregivers seek navigation and the referrals that they receive.

What Sets AAA Caregiver Navigation Programs Apart?



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Interactive Question



Background

- ***The Aging Network*** consists of a partnership between federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, which supports the work of those who assist all older Americans.

- ***Caregiver Navigation*** is assistance at any level to help caregivers know about or access services and supports (including navigating various agencies, organizations, and resources) to assist them in their caregiver journey.

- While anecdotal evidence suggests navigation is helpful, there is limited empirical data exploring the characteristics of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) that identify as offering caregiver navigation.

Purpose of the Study

- ***Identify*** characteristics that distinguish AAAs offering caregiver navigation.
- ***Compare*** general characteristics (budget size, rural vs. urban location, staffing levels) of AAAs that offer specialized caregiver navigation vs. those that do not.
- ***Examine*** caregiver services (e.g., types of respite, availability of evidence-based training) offered by AAAs with navigation programs vs. those without.

Methods

The National Survey of Area Agencies on Aging has been conducted regularly since 2007, collecting data on emerging trends, needs and challenges in the Aging Network.

This iteration of the survey was launched in March 2025 and disseminated to all 613 AAAs across the U.S.

Data collection concluded at the end of April 2025.

Descriptive statistics and logistic regression were used.



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Results

- 444 AAA organizations completed the survey.

- Respondents represented AAAs in:
  - 7 different organizational structures (e.g., nonprofit agency, part of a city or county government)
  - 7 different types of areas served (e.g., predominantly urban, a mix of urban and suburban, etc.)
  - 6 different designations (e.g., Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC))

Results - Characteristics of AAAs by Caregiver Navigation Status

	Caregiver Navigation (n=313) Average (SD) or n (%)	**No Caregiver Navigation (n=113)** Average (SD) or n (%)	p-value
Consumers Served	24,363 (60,003)	11,301 (22, 751)	0.033
Populations Served			
Dementia (under 60)	170 (54.31%)	39 (35.45%)	0.001
Caregivers (of all ages)	245 (78.27%)	60 (54.55%)	0.000
Imputed Budget	15,300,000	9,228,575	0.015
Rural	121 (38.66%)	56 (49.56%)	0.044

Results - AAA Service Differences Based on Status

	Caregiver Navigation (n=313) n (%)	No Caregiver Navigation (n=113) n (%)	p-value
Access Assistance	243 (77.64%)	77 (68.14%)	0.045
Caregiver Assessments	263 (84.03%)	84 (74.34%)	0.023
Caregiver Counseling	233 (74.44%)	60 (53.10%)	0.000
Information and Referral	298 (95.21%)	100 (88.50%)	0.014
Support Groups	246 (78.59%)	66 (58.41%)	0.000
Training/Education	266 (84.8%)	75 (66.37%)	0.000

**Only services that were significantly different by caregiver status are presented in the table. Other services include (respite, legal services, supplemental services, income assistance/stipend)*

Discussion

- Sites offering Caregiver Navigation were more likely to:
  - serve more consumers, have a higher budget, serve primarily nonrural areas, and serve people with dementia, caregivers and kinship caregivers.

→ These findings suggest that sites that identify as offering caregiver navigation have more enhanced organizational capacity and a more robust array of specialized support services.

- The survey data tells us a lot about how AAAs perceive the services they provide.
  - While 26% of respondents reported they don't offer “caregiver navigation,” it is possible this is due to those respondents not identifying with this term.

How do AAAs describe their caregiver sevices online?



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Study Background and Purpose

- Websites are a primary ‘door’ into AAAs sharing information about their services and for consumers seeking information.

We sought to…

- ***Identify*** descriptions on websites for “caregiver services” delivered by AAAs
- ***Evaluate*** the ease with which a layperson can actually identify and access those services online

Methods

- Reviewed AAA websites.
- Utilized a standardized form to complete each website review.
  - Accessibility & Compliance
  - Usability
  - Language & Literacy
  - Service Presentation & Connection Options
- Trained website reviewers (n=6) and conducted biweekly audits on 10% of websites.

Sample

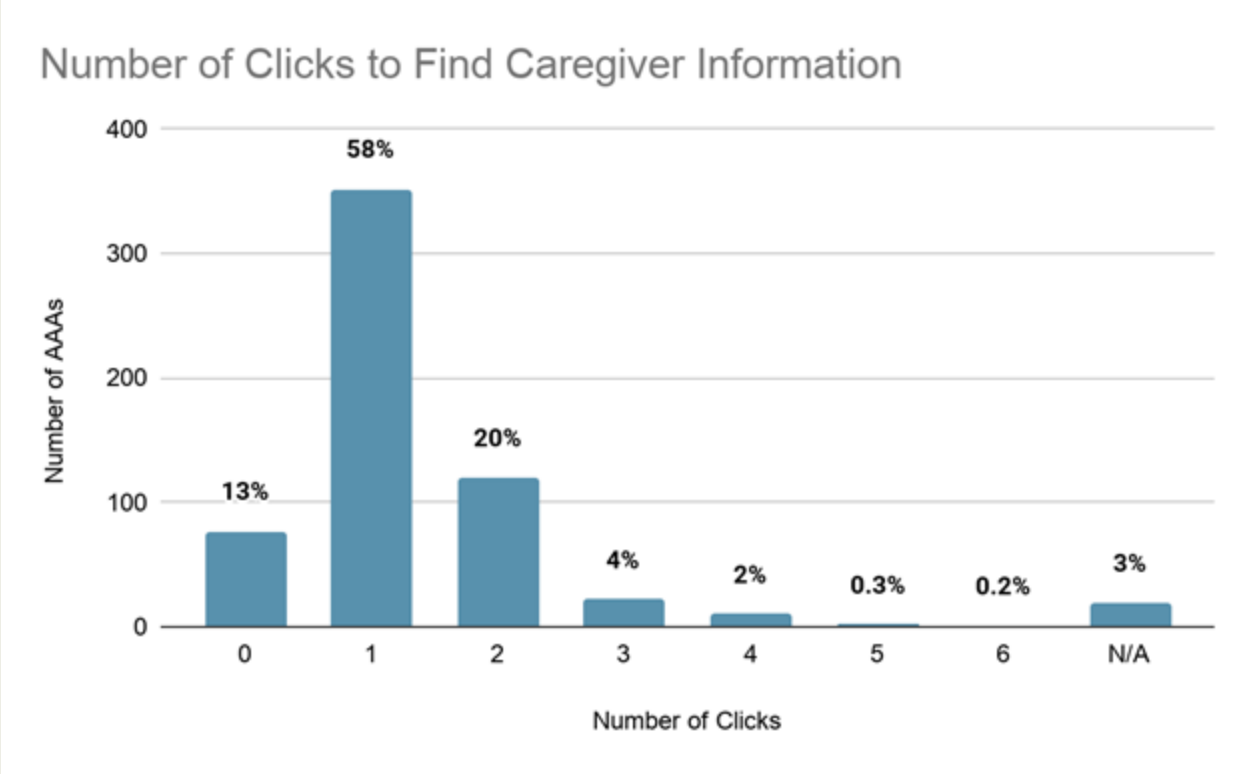
- Started with 620 AAAs
  - Removed AAAs without websites (n=7), broken website links (n=7), or only a presence on Facebook (n=3)
- Final sample was 603 AAA websites

Interactive Question



Results: Accessing Caregiver Specific Services (n=584*)

- For the majority of websites, caregiver information could be found with 1 click or less.
- Very few sites required 3 or more clicks to get to caregiver information.



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*Of the 603 websites reviewed, 584 had caregiver-related information.

Results: Accessing Caregiver Specific Services (n=584*)

Variable	Median or % Yes
How many clicks does it take to get to Caregiver Services from the Home Page?	1.22 (range 0-6)
Was the link to Caregiver Support/Services/Caregiver Navigation in the Main Menu?	41.2%
Is there a dedicated caregiver intake phone number (i.e. phone number only used for caregiver services, not older adult services)?	17.8%

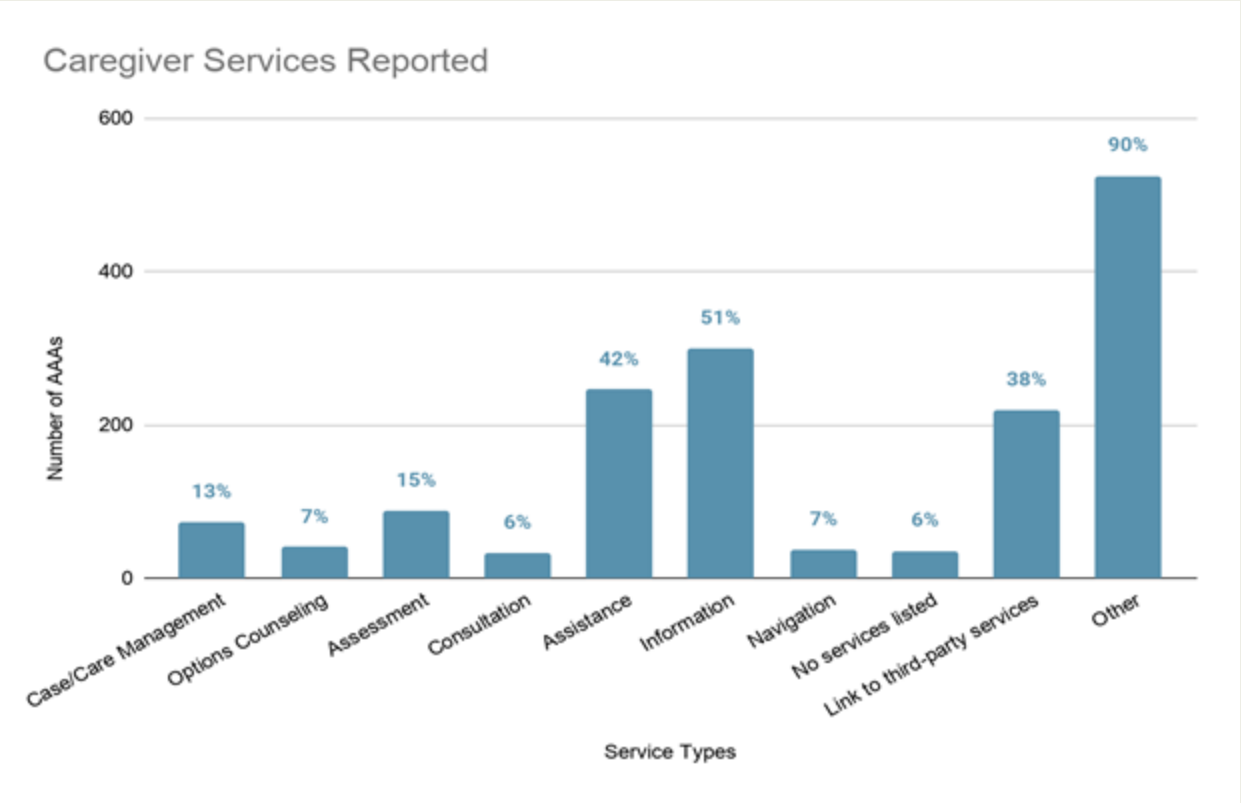
**Of the 603 websites reviewed, 584 had caregiver-related information.*

Results: Website Communication (n=603)

Variable	Median or % Yes
Was the link to Caregiver Support/Services/Caregiver Navigation in the Main Menu?	41.2%
Is there a dedicated caregiver intake phone number (i.e. phone number only used for caregiver services, not older adult services)?	17.8%
Is there an online "Live Chat"?	5.5%
Is any AI used to provide information to the caregiver?	5.3%
Is a large text option available?	29.7%
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	13.1 (range 6.6-23.5)
Is there an online "Inquiry Form"?	54.9%
Is there a "Translate" button or Spanish/other language options?	40.1%

Frequency of Services Reported* (n=584)

- The most commonly reported service was Information, followed by Assistance.
- Most websites had “other” services.

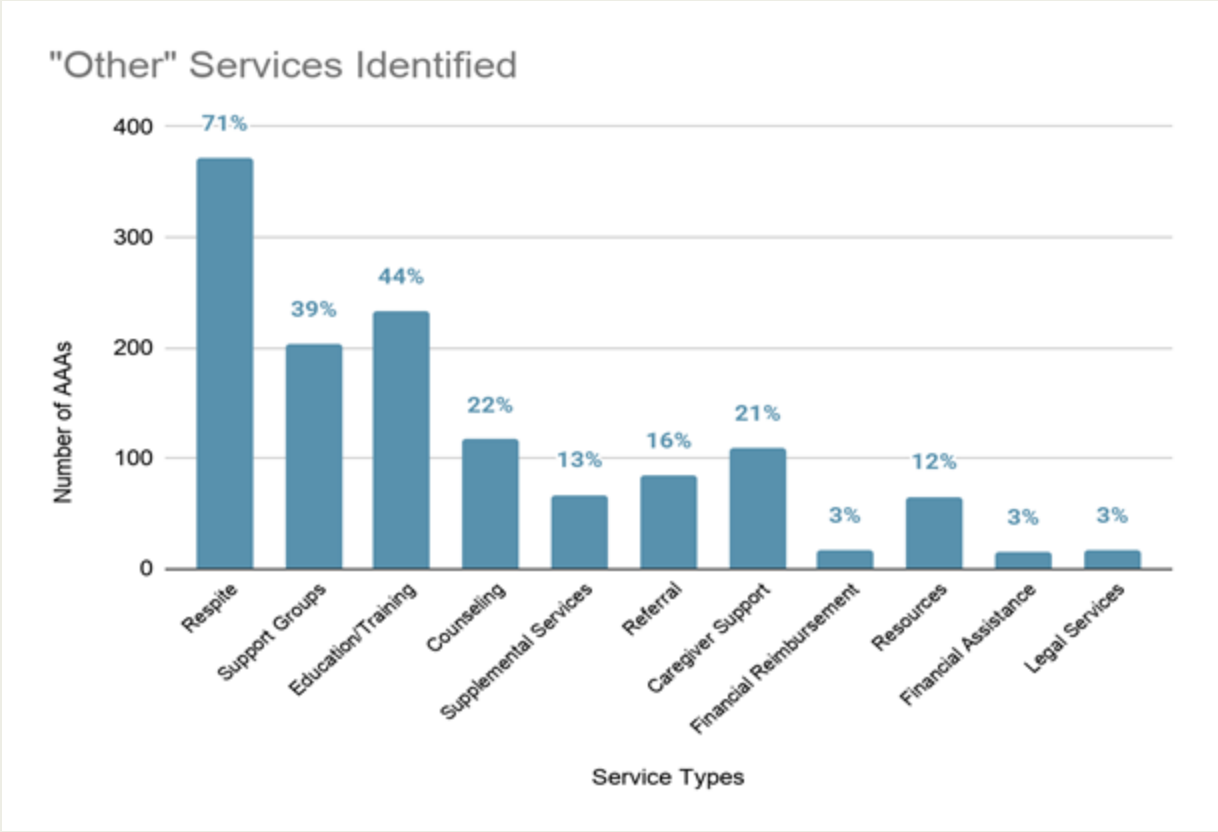


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**Person-centered planning, care coordination, and decision-support process were not found in the search and excluded from this chart.*

Frequency of “Other” Services Reported (n=525*)

- The most commonly reported “other” service was respite, followed by education/ training.



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*Of the 584 websites with caregiver-related information, 525 had “other” services.

Recommendations?



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Who is the Caregiver Navigation workforce and how can they be supported?



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Purpose of the Study

- ***Understand*** the current roles and backgrounds of staff members providing caregiver navigation services.
- ***Identify*** common characteristics or experiences of caregiver navigation staff.
- ***Highlight*** training or educational opportunities to strengthen caregiver navigation staff skills.
- ***Distinguish*** barriers and facilitators to providing caregiver navigation services.

Method

- Staff members of 11 organizations who are currently evaluating their caregiver navigation programs as part of a federal grant led by USAging were invited to participate.

- Descriptive Analysis

Results

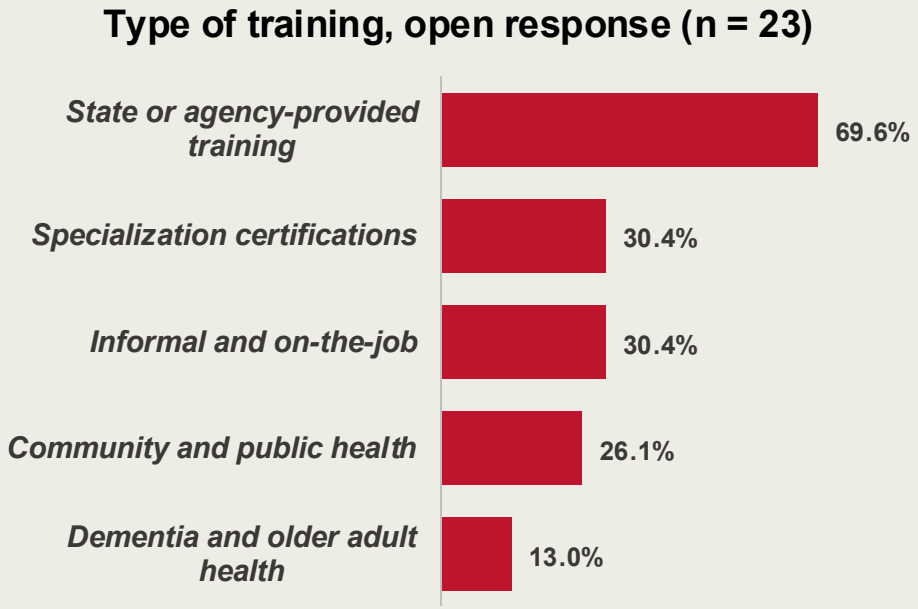
- 45 staff members from 11 different organizations completed surveys about their experience providing caregiver navigation services
- Staff members were:
  - Primarily female (88.9%) working full time (88.9%), and held their current job for an average of 84 months (7 years).
  - 15 staff members (33.3%) reported holding a previous position in this role.

Results - Roles and Responsibilities

- Staff members reported working with many different populations:
    - 95.6% reported working with older adults
    - 28.9% reported working with people with disabilities
    - 86.7% reported working with caregivers
    - 13.3% reported working with other populations such as families, grandparents raising grandchildren, and veterans.

Results - Roles and Training

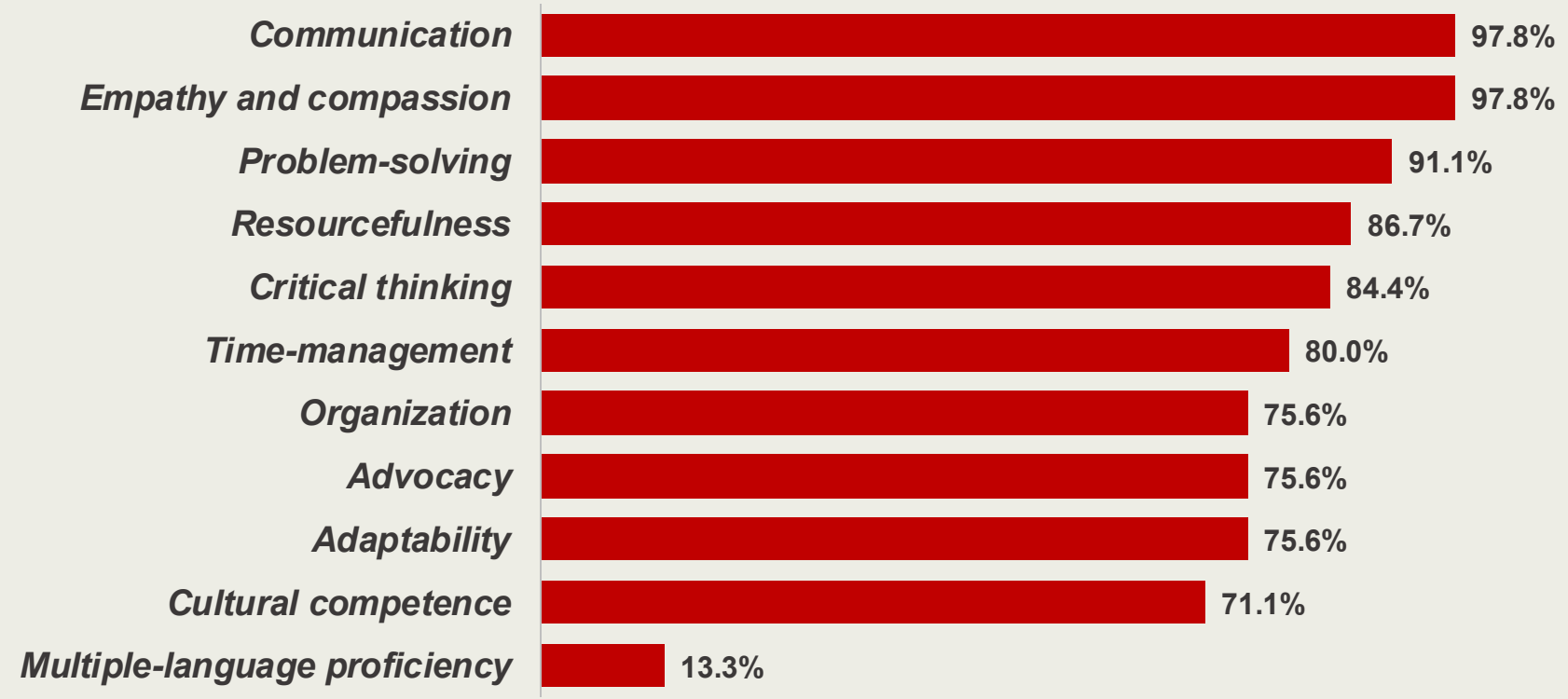
- Staff reported their role primarily consisted of providing:
  - I&A / I&R (88.4%)
  - Training and support (37.2%)
  - Ongoing case management (11.6%)
- 56.6% of staff also reported receiving formal training for their role as a caregiver navigator.



Interactive Question



Skills used in the role, select all that apply (N = 45)



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Results - Opportunities for Growth

62.2% say their organization offers skill growth refinement opportunities

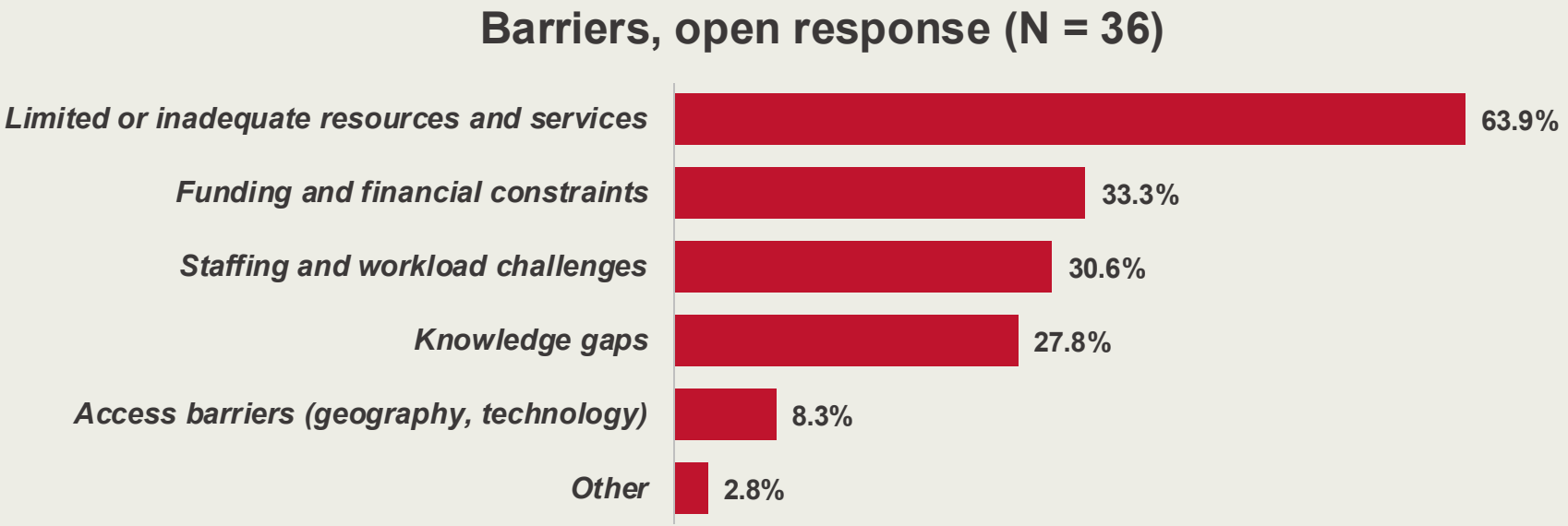
28.9% say their organization "sometimes" offers opportunities for skill growth and refinement

8.9% say their organization does not offer these types of opportunities



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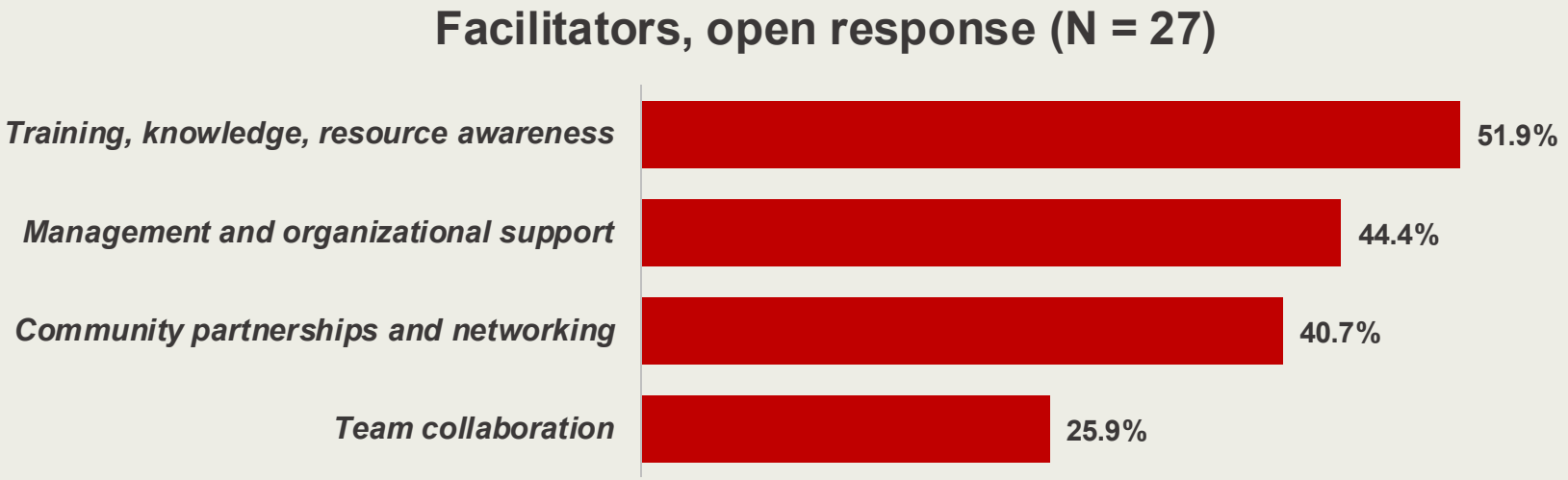
Results – Barriers to Providing Caregiver Navigation Services



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Open-response categories were coded and can overlap, so percentages may total more than 100%.

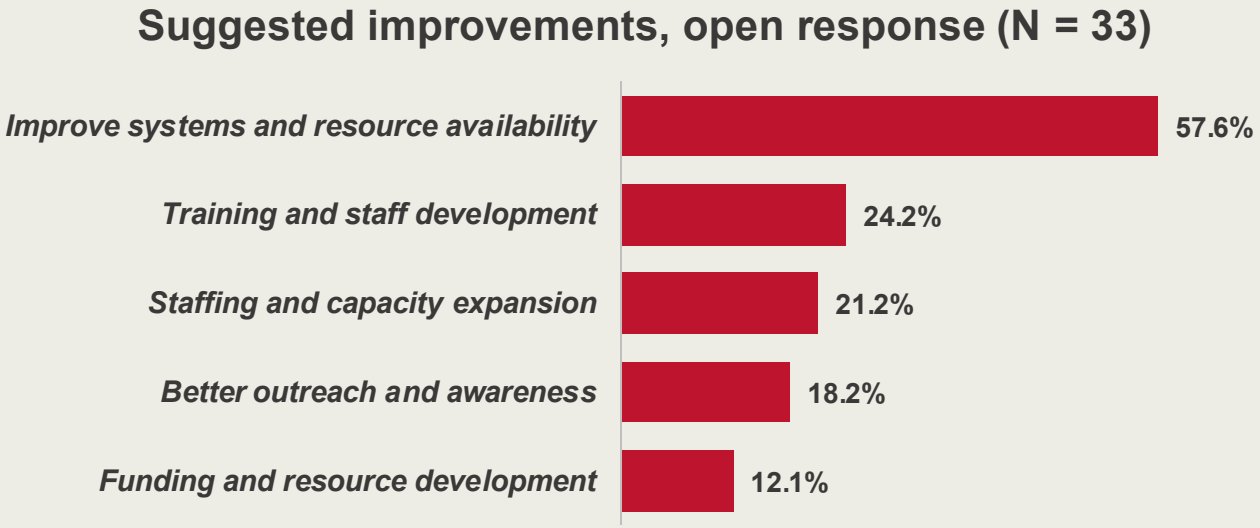
Results – Facilitators to Providing Caregiver Navigation Services



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Open-response categories were coded and can overlap, so percentages may total more than 100%.

Results – Suggested Improvement Opportunities



EXAMPLE RESPONSE

"Provide more and better training"

EXAMPLE RESPONSE

"Give us more resources and a dedicated person with no other responsibilities"

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Open-response categories were coded and can overlap, so percentages may total more than 100%.

Implications for the field

Invest in the people doing caregiver navigation

A skilled, mission-driven workforce with strong communication and empathy, but nearly a third cite staffing and workload strain.

Close the training gap

44.4% report no formal training. Standardized onboarding and certifications could help.

Maintain vetted resource lists

Limited and hard-to-track resources are the top barrier. Shared, current directories can help.

Build peer networks

Navigators ask for mentoring, inter-agency learning, and conferences.

How does Caregiver Navigation support families?



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Study Background and Purpose

- More than 63 million people are providing unpaid care in the U.S.
- Family caregivers often need support from multiple programs and service delivery systems, rather than a single service.

We sought to ..

- ***Understand*** the needs of family caregivers- what prompts them to seek out help and what additional needs are being met.

- ***Identify*** how navigation programs respond and guide family caregivers to resources and services.

Methods

- Service interaction data collected across 11 participating sites including AAAs and contracted CBO providers

Measures Captured:

- Interaction duration
- Reason(s) for contact
- Resource(s) received
- Caregiver rating of whether needs were met

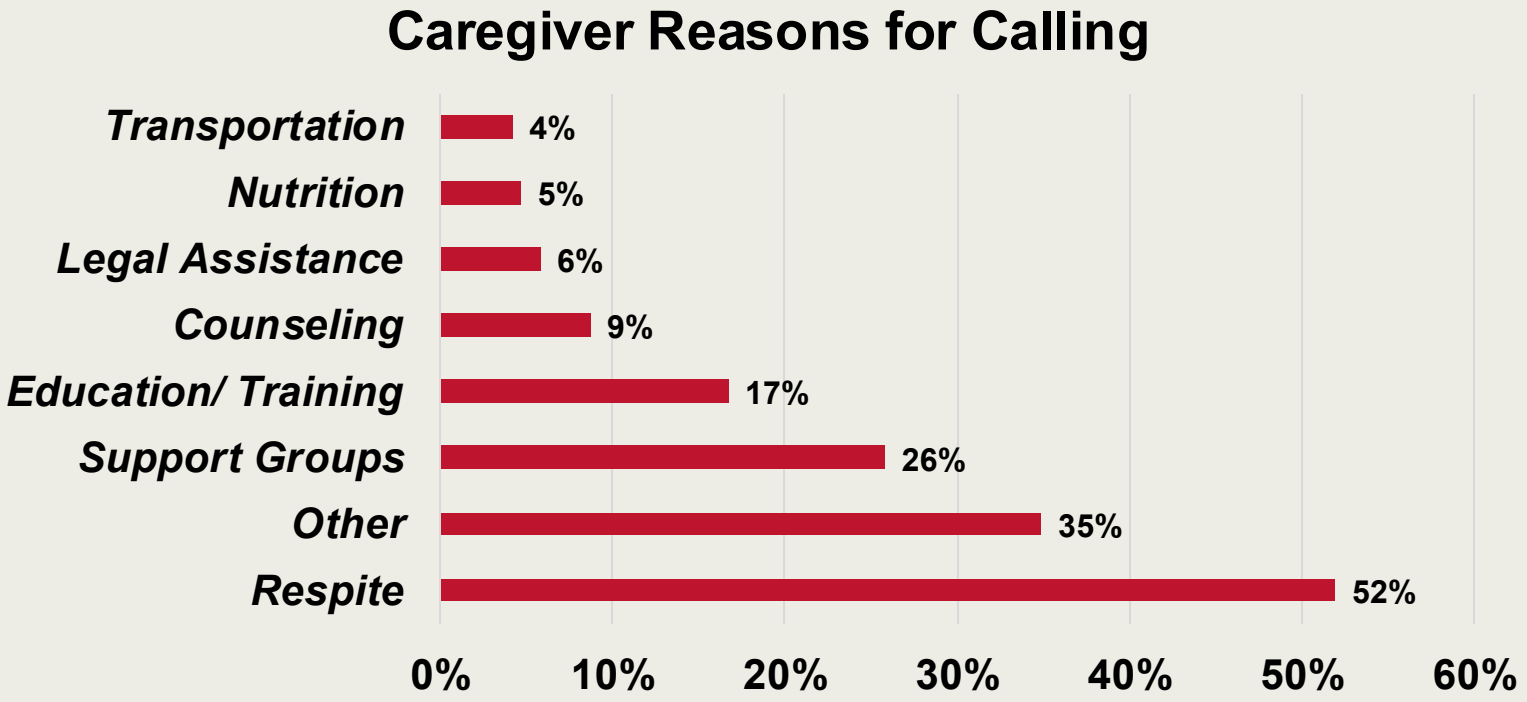
Caregiver navigation is not a one-size-fits-all interaction

- Median interaction: 17 minutes
- Mean interaction: 28.78 minutes
- Range: <1 minute to 205 minutes

Interactive Question



What brings caregivers to navigation services?



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Results – “Other Needs”

Financial

- Reimbursement/coverage resources for over the counter items

Caregiving Work

- “How to get paid as the caregiver”

Supplemental Supplies

- Incontinence products,

Kin Support

- School clothes, shoes and purchase of school books, inquiry about Kinship program and eligibility

Information

- Caregiver newsletter

Medicaid

Long-term care Information

- Looking for Assisted Living/NH placement ideas, LTC Insurance and planning

Other, other

- Safety/Emergency Preparedness (grab bars); Housing-related (home repair, home modification)

What happens during navigation?

Service	Resources Received
Respite	51.9%
Support groups	26.55%
Counseling	10.5%
Education and Training	24.0%
Nutrition	6.7%
Transportation	5.3%

Other resources include case management, program referrals, supplemental supplies, housing assistance, financial assistance, dementia care, LTC ombudsman, and kinship support

Interactive Question



97.3%

Nearly all caregivers gave a rating of 4 or 5 when asked if their needs were met by the navigation interaction.

Conclusion and Discussion

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