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# Live-in Caregivers in Fort McMurray: a Socioeconomic Footprint

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## Foreword

**L**ive-in Caregivers in Fort McMurray: a Socioeconomic Footprint looks at live-in caregivers in the context of the oil sands region of northern Alberta. Live-in caregivers are those who have come to Canada under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) to provide care for children or adults while living in their homes. As the urban service area to the Athabasca oil sands economic zone, Fort McMurray is home to hundreds of live-in caregivers. The report illuminates the importance of paid caregivers to the ability of the local workforce to keep up with the demands of employment and family, and examines caregivers' work experiences, life plans, and views on Canada's immigration policies.

Our focus on the socioeconomic benefits of the LCP adds a necessary dimension to the existing research on the migration and work experiences of live-in caregivers in Canada, much of which has illuminated the vulnerabilities and barriers that they face (Pittman 2012, GATES 2014, Neufeld et al. 2002, Spitzer 2009, Torres et al. 2012). Highlighting these benefits is not an easy proposition. Yes, foreign workers in the caregiving stream provide much-needed services, especially amid the intensive work-family challenges of the (usually) booming Fort McMurray economy. At the same time, we must acknowledge that a) they do so at great personal and financial costs and b) it is the delimited conditions of their employment that make them such "ideal" caregivers. They deserve better, given what they contribute, but they also deserve better conditions in which to make their contributions.

Evidence is presented from an online survey conducted with Fort McMurray-based live-in caregivers in August and September 2014, supplemented with findings from qualitative individual and group interviews conducted in the region between 2008 and 2014.

When we conducted the survey, the feared but also much expected reform of the LCP was yet to be implemented by the federal government. These policy changes, announced in November 2014, essentially dissolve the LCP into the general rules of

the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) by capping the number of applicants per year and delimiting the path to permanent residence that was previously available to all participants in the LCP. The federal government has also strived to improve the conditions of caregivers by removing the previously required "live-in" component.

Despite these changes in policy, our survey respondents' assessments of the LCP are as relevant as ever. Many of the problems raised about the overall conditions of being a foreign worker providing caregiving services for local families are still applicable to the newly announced strategy, and certainly also to the lives of the thousands of people each year who come to Canada to provide these services.

The report is designed to help policymakers, employers, and community leaders understand the significance of foreign workers who come as caregivers—both those who are still working under the conditions of the "old" LCP immigration stream and those now entering under the new policies—for the socioeconomic wellbeing of Canadian families, communities, and workplaces. It also aims to assess the conditions of life and work for those caregivers, including challenges and barriers that are likely to continue under the new rules. While based in the social and economic realities of northern Alberta, many of the report's arguments and conclusions are applicable to other parts of Canada, especially metropolitan areas and economic centres.

The research presented in this report was made possible by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which funds the national research project *On the Move: Employment-Related Geographical Mobility in the Canadian Context* and funded an earlier project entitled *Social Landscapes of Fort McMurray*.

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## ***On the Move: Employment-Related Geographical Mobility in the Canadian Context ~ a National Research Partnership***

- A Canadian research initiative with international links that investigates workers' extended travel and related absence from their places of permanent residence for the purpose of, and as part of, their employment.
- A project of the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health & Safety Research at Memorial University, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Research Development Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador (RDC), the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), and numerous universities and partners.
- The first comprehensive study of the spectrum of employment-related mobility in Canada from extended daily travel to long distance travel and related absences from home. Using the Canadian census, *On the Move* explores how this spectrum has changed since 1981. It also examines the policies that drive employment-related mobility and influence its effects on employers, workers and their families, and home and host communities.

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We are also thankful to the team of researchers responsible for The Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey (GATES), especially Dr. Ethel Tungohan, Gates Co-Investigator and Grant Notley Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Alberta Department of Political Science. The sample size, amplitude, and overall significance of the GATES project made it a useful model for standardizing some of our survey questions, which in turn facilitated data comparison (see Appendix - Survey Questionnaire). Dr. Tungohan also provided detailed feedback on an earlier version of this report.

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## Abbreviations

CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CLPNA	College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
GATES	The Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey
LCP	Live-in Caregiver Program
LMIA	Labour Market Impact Assessment
NOC	National Occupational Category
TFWP	Temporary Foreign Worker Program



## Executive Summary

The oil sands industry of northern Alberta, sometimes dubbed the “economic engine” of Canada, does not run on oil workers alone. Many thousands of people provide the services that keep Fort McMurray running, allowing the industry workforce to eat, sleep, bathe, dress, learn, play, volunteer, commute, and work. Among them are hundreds of live-in caregivers who are in Canada under the conditions of the recently reformed Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). These caregivers move to the region for many of the same reasons as other people in Fort McMurray—to take advantage of economic opportunity, to fill a labour demand, to provide for family, and to save for the future. And like many other workers in Fort McMurray, they experience it as a culturally challenging but economically exciting and busy place where people work long hours. At the same time, our evidence shows that live-in caregivers form a distinctive component of the Fort McMurray workforce in at least three important ways:

- Live-in caregivers are crucial to bridging work-family relations for their employers, especially those who work in the oil sands industry. How? By working long and irregular hours (they work longer hours on average per week than the local population, including trades workers), performing a broad range of duties for busy households working unpredictable schedules, and bringing substantial cost savings to their employers, especially in a context where child care options are limited and expensive.
- Live-in caregivers are highly educated and experienced. They have attained more postsecondary degrees on average than the Fort McMurray population as a whole, and have career aspirations in a number of high-demand areas including business,

education, health care, and the trades. In other words, they have the potential to continue to contribute much to the Canadian economy.

- The pathways that bring live-in caregivers to Fort McMurray, and the pathways that would allow them to capitalize on the socioeconomic opportunities it promises, are strewn with obstacles. Like other categories of workers under the broad Temporary Foreign Worker Program, live-in caregivers invest substantial amounts of money and time to move to Alberta and face multiple bureaucratic and systemic barriers to their goal of becoming permanent residents so they can sponsor families and build lives and careers in Canada. These include prohibitions against participating freely in the labour market, limited opportunities to work or build skills when moving from one status to another, precarious employment conditions and poorly regulated employers (on whom receipt of permanent resident status depends), and long waiting times for the paperwork required at multiple stages of their journey.

Radical changes to the LCP effective January 2015 remove the distinctiveness of the LCP by making it simply another stream within the TFWP, where legal limits to free labour market participation and inadequate monitoring of labour standards remain core problems. By also removing the incentive and promise of citizenship, these changes diminish the life chances of the many thousands of live-in caregivers who make significant contributions to Fort McMurray and other economic centres in Canada.

# Section One

## The Survey: Live-in Caregivers in Fort McMurray

### Highlights

- The survey, conducted in summer 2014, drew 56 participants working as live-in caregivers in dwelling units in and around Fort McMurray.
- The majority of those surveyed are female (88 percent), Filipina (87 percent), and between 25 and 44 years of age (82 percent).
- Live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray are also a relatively well-qualified social group. Ninety-six percent of survey respondents have at least some post-secondary education.
- Live-in caregivers share perspectives on living in Fort McMurray that are in many ways similar to those found generally among the local foreign- and Canadian-born populations.

Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) who were living and working in dwelling units in and around Fort McMurray. Given that there are an estimated 500 live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray, a sample of 56 most likely represents a response rate of some 10 percent. The survey questions were designed to capture the socioeconomic footprint of live-in caregivers in the region.

**Table 1.1: Fort McMurray live-in caregiver survey overview, 2014**

Target population size (estimate)	Sample size (n)	Participation criteria	Survey delivery methods	Details
500 individuals (based on triangulation of unofficial data)	56 individuals	1) Currently participate in the LCP 2) Live and work in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	Online (in partnership with the Fort McMurray Nanny Network) Summer 2014 (Aug 13 to Sep 17)	-The sampling error was calculated at +/-12.35 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level, assuming a 50/50 binomial percentage distribution. -Response rate calculated at 10 percent

Source: survey "Live-in Caregivers in Fort McMurray: a Socioeconomic Footprint," henceforth "survey."

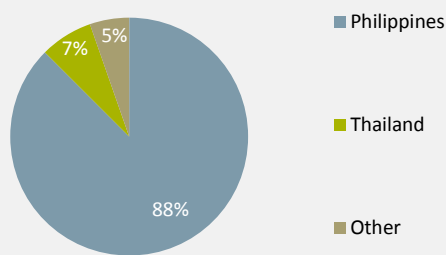
**B**uilding on exploratory findings from individual interviews and informal focus groups with live-in caregivers conducted between 2008 and 2014, we partnered with the Fort McMurray Nanny Network in summer 2014 to design and implement an online survey.<sup>1</sup> Fifty-six caregivers responded to the survey between August 13 and September 17, 2014 (Table 1.1). The target population consisted of temporary foreign workers in Canada under the

### Sample Profile

Most foreigners working as caregivers in Canada share a few important characteristics: gender, educational attainment, and motivations for employment migration. They are usually highly educated young women from developing countries with the drive and courage necessary to embark on a transnational move in search of personal and professional opportunity. As has been found in studies of the LCP in Alberta and elsewhere (Spitzer 2009, Pittman 2012, GATES 2014), the majority of the live-in caregivers surveyed in Fort McMurray are female (88 percent), Filipinas (88 percent) (Chart 1.1), and between 25 and 44 years of age (82 percent) (Chart 1.2).

<sup>1</sup> To mitigate the problems associated with online surveys (e.g., the survey being filled out by the same person more than once or by a person who is not within the target population), we took three measures: 1) The survey was distributed by the Fort McMurray Nanny Network to its members (we did not use open distribution lists or social media); 2) Recipients of the survey were requested to inform other potential participants in their social networks about the survey; 3) During data cleaning, we eliminated seven participants on the basis of inconsistencies; this decreased total participants from 63 to 56. 4) We verified the data by contacting 20 participants (36 percent of the sample) to check answers.

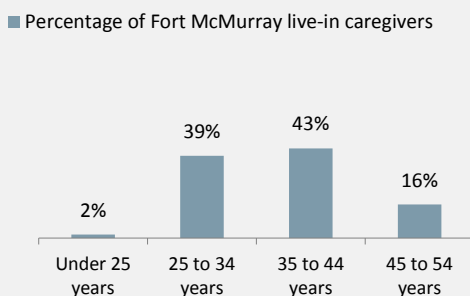
**Chart 1.1: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by country of origin, 2014**



Source: survey Q7 What is your country of citizenship? (n=56)  
Other: Bosnia and Herzegovina (2 percent); South Africa (2 percent); and Croatia (1 percent).

Our sample is consistent with the overall Canadian profile of live-in caregivers in terms of gender and national origin. In every year from 2000 to 2010, over 90 percent of principal applicants coming to Canada under the LCP were women, and by 2010 90 percent were from the Philippines. A higher percentage of our participants is 29 to 44 years of age than in the national sample: between 2006 and 2010 just 35 percent of principal applicants in Canada were in this age group (Chart 1.2) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012c).

**Chart 1.2: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by age group, 2014**

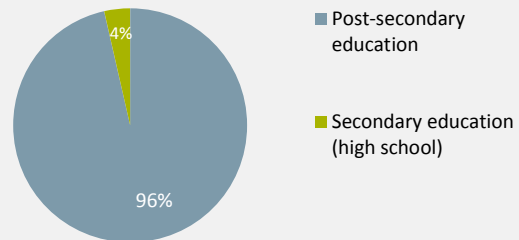


Source: survey; calculated based on Q6 Your year of birth? (n=56).

Live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray are also a relatively well-qualified social group. Ninety-six percent of survey respondents have post-secondary education (Chart 1.3). While the percentage of applicants to the LCP with education beyond high school has been steadily rising since the 1990s, the educational qualifications of live-in caregivers in our Fort McMurray sample are even higher than those currently found in the program as a whole. In

2009, 83 percent of LCP applicants in Canada had at least some post-secondary education (Kelly, Park, de Leon, and Priest 2011). In a more recent survey of 631 former and current Filipina live-in caregivers in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa, and Montreal, that number stood at 84 percent (GATES 2014).

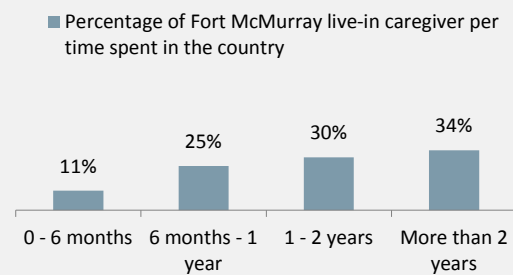
**Chart 1.3: Educational attainment of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers, 2014**



Source: survey Q9 What is your highest level of educational attainment? (n=56).

Most live-in caregivers (64 percent) participating in this study have been in Canada for one, two, or more years (Chart 1.4) and are thus in a position to provide useful insight into both the road that brought them here and the road ahead toward permanent immigration and further contribution to Canadian society.

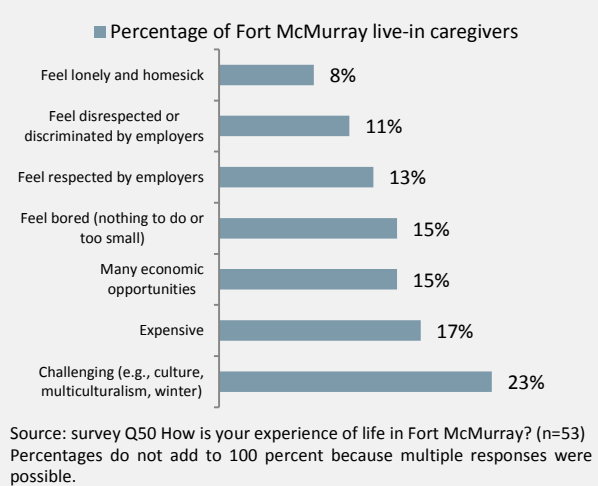
**Chart 1.4: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by time spent in Canada, 2014**



Source: survey Q18 How long have you been in Canada? (n=56).

Live-in caregivers share perspectives on living in Fort McMurray that are in many ways similar to those found generally among the local foreign- and Canadian-born populations. When asked in an open-ended question about their impressions of Fort McMurray, they pointed to the cold weather, limited social activities, homesickness, and cultural adjustment. Perhaps most importantly, they saw Fort McMurray as simultaneously full of economic costs and opportunities (Chart 1.5).

**Chart 1.5: Most frequent impressions and experiences of Fort McMurray among live-in caregivers, 2014**



## Conclusion

Live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray who participated in the survey are similar in gender and national origin to LCP participants across Canada, but seem to have a somewhat higher educational attainment. Like other residents of Fort McMurray, they find it isolated, cold, and expensive, but full of opportunity.

## Section Two

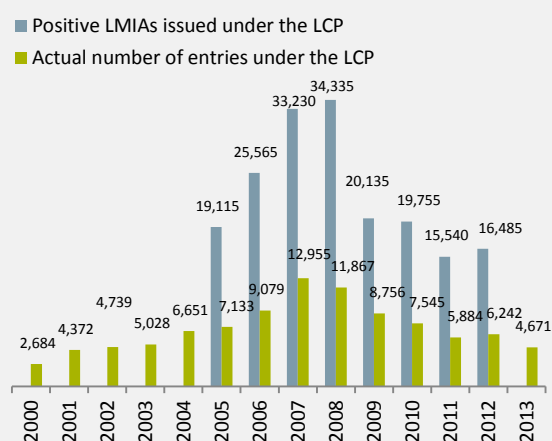
### The Live-in Caregiver Program: a Brief Overview

#### Highlights

- The number of people entering Canada under the Live-in Caregiver Program has risen and fallen over the last decade; Alberta is the only province where the number of Labour Market Impact Assessments issued under the LCP saw a substantial increase between 2005 and 2012.
- Under changes to the Live-in Caregiver Program announced in November 2014, permanent residence is no longer a guaranteed possibility for foreign workers entering Canada under one of the two newly created “caring classes.” Previously, the LCP was the only stream of the TFWP where eligibility for permanent residence was automatic (upon meeting the program’s requirements). Canada was unique in the global caregiving industry for offering permanent residence.
- While changes to the LCP include removing the “live-in” component of the program as a requirement, foreign workers in the caregiving stream continue to be treated as unfree labour whose status is dependent on their employers.

Given the benefits it offered to working Canadians and foreign workers, the LCP saw a steady increase in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and reached an all-time high of almost 13,000 new entries to Canada in 2007, at the height of the economic boom. Numbers of visas issued have since declined and have tabled out at five to six thousand over the last few years (Chart 2.1).

**Chart 2.1: Number of LMIA issued in comparison with number of entries under the LCP, 2000 - 2013**



Source: elaborated based on LMIA data (Employment and Social Development Canada 2013a), available up to 2012, and on actual entries of temporary foreign workers under the LCP; for entries between 2000 and 2012 see (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012b), and for 2013 entries see (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014a).

LMIA, or Labour Market Impact Assessment, is the process or report that verifies the actual need for foreign workers and authorizes their employment; the LMIA is requested by and issued to a prospective employer.<sup>2</sup> Trends in the total number of LMIA issued for the Live-in Caregiver Program in Canada show a similar pattern to visa entries, with a 14 percent decrease in total LMIA issued between 2005 (19,115) and 2012 (16,485) (Table 2.1).

<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2014 these were called Labour Market Opinions (LMOs). We use LMIA throughout.

**Table 2.1: Number of LMIAs issued in the LCP in 2005 and 2012 and number of LMIAs issued in 2012 per thousand households**

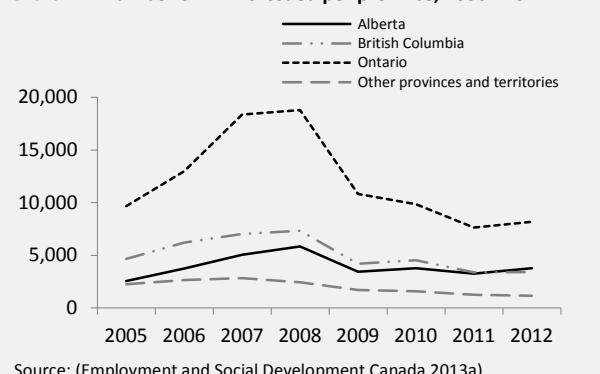
	2005	2012	Provincial share (%) of the total number of LMIAs issued in 2012	2005-2012 Change (absolute numbers)	Number of LMIAs issued in 2012 per thousand households
Alberta	2,545	3,775	22.9	1,230	2.72
Saskatchewan	155	205	1.2	50	0.50
Newfoundland and Labrador	10	35	0.2	25	0.17
Northwest Territories	10	35	0.2	25	2.38
Nova Scotia	55	70	0.4	15	0.18
Nunavut	-	-	0.0	0	-
New Brunswick	30	25	0.2	-5	0.08
Yukon	20	10	0.1	-10	0.71
Prince Edward Island	10	0	-	-10	-
Manitoba	155	70	0.4	-85	0.15
Quebec	1,810	705	4.3	-1,105	0.21
British Columbia	4,660	3,395	20.6	-1,265	1.92
Ontario	9,655	8,165	49.5	-1,490	1.67
Canada - Total	19,115	16,485	100.0	-2,630	1.24

Source: elaborated using LMIA data (Employment and Social Development Canada 2013a) and Statistics Canada estimates of population (Statistics Canada 2014a).

## Alberta in National Context

Alberta is the only province where the LCP experienced a substantial increase in LMIAs between 2005 and 2012 (Employment and Social Development Canada 2013b).<sup>3</sup> While in absolute numbers Ontario held more than twice as many live-in caregiver LMIAs as Alberta in 2012 (8,165), the province of Alberta had a significantly larger number of caregiver LMIAs per household at 2.72 per thousand households (Table 2.1), as compared to 1.67 in Ontario. Alberta has also shown the steadiest positive trend in LMIAs since 2006 (Chart 2.2), as well as a close correlation to variations in economic conditions in the same period (Chart 2.2).

**Chart 2.2: Number of LMIAs issued per province, 2006 - 2012**



Source: (Employment and Social Development Canada 2013a).

<sup>3</sup> We use LMIAs for provincial comparisons because unlike visa entry data, which is only available at the national level, LMIA statistics are available by province.

The relatively high numbers of LMIAs issued in Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta, provinces that are home to large metropolitan areas (Toronto and Vancouver) and to population centres experiencing economic booms (Calgary, Edmonton, and Fort McMurray), seem to indicate that the LCP has been fulfilling its official role as a program “geared to the labour market” that “is more long-term in nature and brings workers to Canada for live-in caregiving when there are not enough Canadians to fill the available positions” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012a).

## Requirements and Rules of the Live-in Caregiver Program

The live-in caregivers surveyed in Fort McMurray obtained work permits based on LMIAs submitted (received by CIC) before or on November 30, 2014, and were therefore subject to the following eligibility criteria to participate in the program (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014d, Employment and Social Development Canada 2014i):

- successful completion of the equivalent of a Canadian secondary school education;
- proof of six months training or one year of full-time work experience as a caregiver or in a related field (including at least six months with a single employer);
- good knowledge of English or French.

Upon meeting the basic requirements, which were verified throughout the application process, candidates needed to find a potential employer in Canada. Their employers needed then to apply to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)<sup>4</sup> for the LMIA and bear the cost of \$1,000 per application (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014g). To process the LMIA, employers were required to submit, among other documents, a signed employment contract containing details

<sup>4</sup> Formerly Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

on the following: employer-paid wage and benefits, job duties, hours of work, wages, accommodation, leave entitlements, and termination of employment. ESDC, which determines the market need to hire a foreign worker for such positions, then checked the contract and verified proof that the applicant (employer) had the economic means and adequate conditions to hire a foreign worker. Once a positive LMIA was issued, live-in caregivers then needed to gather all the documents and apply for a visa at a Canadian Immigration Office abroad. Once the visa was granted, they could travel to Canada and clear customs at the port of entry, where the border authorities issued them a work permit.

Live-in caregivers with LMIA's submitted prior to or on November 30, 2014 are subjected to institutionally determined rates of pay, which vary across the country (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014i). Alberta's prevailing gross hourly wage was updated from \$10.19 to \$10.20 on September 1, 2014. Overtime in Alberta starts to be computed after 44 hours a week, and should not exceed four hours a week unless otherwise stated in the employment contract. The overtime rate is currently set at 1.5 times the regular salary.

Until November 30, 2014, live-in caregivers working in Canada were required to live at the employer's home. The maximum stipulated deductions for room and board were set at \$3.27 for each meal and \$4.31 per day for lodging, for a total of \$14.12 per day (assuming three meals a day). Just like other workers in Canada, live-in caregivers are entitled to meal breaks, minimum resting periods, and paid annual leave (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014i).

Live-in caregivers holding work permits based on LMIA's submitted before or on November 30, 2014 are also entitled to permanent residence upon meeting the program's requirements while working in Canada, namely:

- completion of 24 months of authorized full-time live-in employment (or 3,900 hours of authorized full-time employment within a minimum of 22 months, where total hours can include up to 390 hours of overtime) within four years of the arrival date;
- possession of a valid work permit to work in a home offering live-in care for children, seniors, or the disabled (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014b).

Because periods of unemployment, extended stays outside of Canada, and time working as a caregiver outside of an employer's home do not count toward fulfilling the work experience requirement (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014b), caregivers' choices and decisions regarding work and family are further delimited while they are trying to fulfill requirements toward their permanent resident application.

In addition, nuclear family members of live-in caregivers are automatically entitled to permanent residence in Canada upon passing medical and criminal screening in the country of origin. However, family members need to be included in the live-in caregiver's application; they cannot be sponsored at a later date (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014b). Including family members in the application is desirable but spells a long and complex process since it involves both the CIC and the visa office overseas (see Section Six for further discussion). Live-in caregivers and their families can only be reunited once the application process is complete.

According to the new rules (discussed in the following subsection), live-in caregivers holding work permits based on LMIA submitted before or on November 30, 2014 can move out of the employer's home and include this experience working as a live-out caregiver in their applications for permanent residence (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014b). In these cases, however, they need to apply for permanent residence through one of the two newly created caregiving streams under the TFWP (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014b) – streams that carry caps on the total number of permanent resident approvals granted per year.

### The Live-in Caregiver Program Post-November 2014: an Overview of the Transformation

The collection of official government sources recently published on the so-called reform of the LCP actually suggests that the traditional LCP as a special category of temporary foreign work has been completely discontinued (Department of Citizenship and Immigration 2014b, a, Employment and Social Development Canada 2014f, e, d, c, b, a, Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014f, g, e). LMIA issued after November 30, 2014 will be processed through two newly created occupational classes: the *Caring for Children Class* (Department of Citizenship and Immigration 2014a) and the *Caring for People with High Medical Needs Class* (Department of Citizenship and Immigration 2014b).

These changes bring caregiving work in alignment with the generic rules and principles of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, especially the following: A) eligibility criteria for foreigners to work in Canada under the two “caring classes;” B) employment conditions (living arrangements, wages, and room and board fees); C) eligibility for permanent residence status; and D) possibility of obtaining permanent residence status (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2: Old LCP and new “caring classes”: a comparative overview, 2014**

Items	Old LCP (being phased out)	Caring for Children Class or Lower-Skilled Stream (being phased in)	Caring for People with High Medical Needs Class or Higher-Skilled Stream (being phased in)
Occupations categories (National Occupation Classification of Canada)	Caregiver	caregiver (home child provider)	registered or psychiatric nurse; licensed practical nurse; nurse aide, orderly, or patient service associate; home support worker (excluding housekeeper)
<b>Eligibility Criteria to Work in Canada</b>			
Educational background/ Training	Equivalent of a Canadian secondary school education	According to job position & National Occupation Category (NOC) / Ensured by employers	
Work Experience	Six months training or one year of full-time work experience as a caregiver or in a related field	According to job position & National Occupation Category (NOC) / Ensured by employers	
Language	Good knowledge of English or French	Level of fluency enabling effective and independent communication in an unsupervised setting	
<b>Employment Conditions</b>			
Wage	Institutionally determined	Market-determined	
Living arrangement	Live-in mandatory	Live-in optional	
Room and Board	Paid by the live-in caregiver	When applicable (live-in), paid by the employer	
<b>Eligibility for Permanent Resident Status</b>			
Educational requirement	Equivalent of a Canadian secondary school education	Canadian educational credential of at least one year of post-secondary studies; or a foreign diploma, certificate, or credential equivalent of at least one year of Canadian post-secondary studies	
Work experience	At least 24 months or 3,900 hours of full-time work experience in Canada, including up to 390 overtime hours (obtained within four years)	At least two years of full-time work experience in Canada	
Type of work experience	Full-time; authorized under a work permit; acquired while the foreign worker had temporary resident status; excludes self-employment or work experience while studying full-time		
Living arrangements*	Live-in mandatory	Live-in optional	
Language requirement	No language test	benchmark 5 (initial intermediate)	benchmark 7 (adequate intermediate) for registered nurse or psychiatric nurse; benchmark 5 for others
<b>Obtaining Permanent Resident Status in Canada</b>			
Possibility	HIGH (universal upon meeting the requirements)	MEDIUM/LOW (subject to market demand)	
Number of permanent resident applications per year	Between 2011 and 2013, 4,500 caregivers applied	Cap of 2,750 applicants/year for each “caring class” (initial plan for 2014 – 2019)	
Backlog	60,000+ (applicants and dependants)	None (at the moment)	
Promised /actual processed time	Six months / three years on average	Six months / no comparative data available yet	

\* “Living arrangement” is both a condition of employment and a requirement of the application for permanent resident status. Sources: collection of documents and websites published by CIC and ESDC on the reform of the LCP as cited in the text.



## Eligibility Criteria for Foreigners to Work in Canada under the Two “Caring Classes”

The eligibility criteria for caregivers to work in Canada have become increasingly market-oriented. Employers must meet the recruitment and advertising requirement for hiring a caregiver based on the stipulations of the National Occupational Category (NOC). Applicants for positions under the “Caring for Children Class” (lower-skilled stream) are likely to require secondary school education, training courses, on-the-job training, or specific work experience (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014d), while applicants for positions under the “Caring for People with High Medical Needs Class” (higher-skilled stream) will likely require secondary school or college education, vocational education, and/or apprenticeship programs, including specific licenses<sup>5</sup> (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014d). Language requirements (English or French only) are also subject to the needs of the job position, varying across occupations.

Despite changes in the eligibility criteria to work as a caregiver, the application requirements for foreign nationals willing to participate in one of the newly launched “caring classes” of the TFWP remain the same as the old LCP (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014d) with regard to finding a potential employer, applying for the LMIA, obtaining the visa overseas, and getting a work permit at the port of entry (see “Requirements and Rules of the Live-in Caregiver Program” above).

<sup>5</sup>To work in Alberta, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses must have registration and a valid practice permit from the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA). The procedures to register and obtain a practice permit from the CLPNA when the applicant is a foreign national entails a long process where credentials and experiences obtained abroad are assessed, evaluated, and verified; applicants also need to successfully pass nursing-related examinations in Canada, as well as an English proficiency test (advanced level in all abilities); Canadians who obtained their nursing degrees abroad do not need to pass an English proficiency test.

## Employment Conditions (living arrangements, wages, room and board)

Citizenship and Immigration Canada has also dropped the long criticized “live-in” requirement of the program. Thus, live-in caregivers already in Canada can now move out of the employer’s home, but this implies having to apply for permanent residence under one of the newly created “caring classes” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014h)<sup>6</sup> and taking the risk of having their applications denied due to factors such as annual quotas and/or changes in market demand.

**“live-in caregivers already in Canada can now move out of the employer’s home, but [they risk] having their applications for permanent resident status denied”**

Wages of foreign nationals entering the country under the new scheme for caregiving occupations will be market determined

(Employment and Social Development Canada 2014f). The new prevailing wages are to be based on the median hourly wage (or annual salary) for a given caring occupational category as published on the Job Bank website ([www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca)).<sup>7</sup> Hourly wages could vary from \$10.66 for basic child care to \$42.60 for a registered nurse (Table 2.3). However, the wages of caregivers in lower-skilled streams (NOC 6474 - babysitters, nannies, and parent helpers) will remain largely unchanged: a median hourly wage of \$10.66 on the Job Bank versus a minimum wage of \$10.20 under the old LCP (Table 2.3). Thus, the scale of financial gains live-in caregivers enable for their Fort McMurray employers (see Section Five of this report) are unlikely to change under the new conditions.

<sup>6</sup>In this regard, CIC states: “If you choose to live out of your employer’s home, you will be leaving the Live-in Caregiver Program: You will need to apply for a regular work permit. Your current or future employer will need a new Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) before you apply. The work you do on a live-out basis may count towards the work requirement in order to apply through either the Caring for Children or Caring for People with High Medical Needs pathway.” In addition: “Live-in caregivers must live in the private home where they work in Canada” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014h).

<sup>7</sup>In case the median wage is not available, employers must pay foreign workers a wage that is equal to or higher than the median wage for the economic region where the work will be located (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014f).

**Table 2.3: Market wages for the newly created “caring classes”: a comparative overview, 2014**

Caring class	Occupation (popular name)	National Occupational Category code	Skill-level	Average wage (based on the 2013 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey)	Median wage (based on Job Bank), Wood Buffalo – Dec 2014)
Caring for Children Class	Home child care providers, often called nannies	6474 – Babysitters, Nannies, and Parents Helpers	Lower-skilled	NA	\$10.66 per hour
	Registered nurse or registered psychiatric nurse	3152 – Registered Nurse	Higher-skilled	\$42.6 per hour (\$63,922 gross annual)	\$40 per hour
Caring for People with High Medical Needs Class	Licensed practical nurse	3233 – Licensed Practical Nurse	Higher-skilled	\$28.43 per hour (\$45,170 gross annual)	NA [Alberta’s median equals \$26.80 per hour]
	Nurse aide or patient service associate	3413 – Nurse Aides, Orderlies and Patient Service Associates	Lower-skilled	\$20.0 per hour (\$31,005 gross annual)	\$19.40 per hour
	Home support worker	6471 – Visiting Home Makers	Lower-skilled	\$17.92 per hour (\$26,353 gross annual)	\$15.75 per hour

Sources: for skills, see (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014a); for wages, see (Government of Alberta 2014).

The end of the “live-in” requirement has meant alterations to the rules regarding deductions of room and board. Caregivers entering under the new scheme do not have to live in the employer’s home, but may in some cases negotiate living in as one of the terms of employment. In those cases, unlike under the LCP, caregivers are not to be charged by the employer (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014d).<sup>8</sup>

Whether “live-in” or “live-out,” caregivers continue to be entitled to the meal breaks, minimum resting periods, and paid annual leaves (Cf., Employment and Social Development Canada 2014f) (Table 2.4) to which other workers in Canada are also entitled.

<sup>8</sup> In this regard, Employment and Social Development Canada, the organ responsible for issuing LMIA’s, states: “Employers cannot under any circumstance require a caregiver (either lower-skilled or higher-skilled) to live in their home. As a result, employers can only advertise the position with the option of the caregiver living in their home and it MUST [in the original] be, at no cost to the worker” (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014d).

**Table 2.4: Old LCP and new “caring classes”: a comparative overview regarding overall employment conditions, 2014**

Required items	Old LCP (phasing out)	Caring for Children Class (phasing in)	Caring for People with High Medical Needs Class (phasing in)
<b>Wage</b>	Policy-defined at \$10.20 (in Alberta, as of September 1, 2014)	Market defined according to the Job Bank Canada website	
<b>Overtime rates</b>	1.5 time employee’s regular wage		
<b>Maximum hours</b>	48 hours/week or more if stipulated in the labour agreement; agreement must indicate the number of hours worked in excess of the daily limit		
<b>Minimum resting periods</b>	1 day a week; 2 consecutive days for every 2-week period; 3 consecutive days for every 3-week period; 4 consecutive days for every 4-week period or 24 consecutive working days		
<b>Meal break</b>	One 30-minute break if work shift exceeds 5 hours		
<b>Maximum deductions for room and board</b>	\$3.27 for each meal and \$4.31 per day of lodging, totalizing \$14.12 per day (assuming three meals a day)		When room and board is provided by the employer, it must be at no cost to the foreign caregiver, as per the policy under the TFWP
<b>Vacation time</b>	2 weeks/year or 3 weeks/year after 5 consecutive years of employment		
<b>Vacation leave and pay requirements</b>	4% of wages/year or 6% of wages after 5 consecutive years		

Sources: ESDC’s website prior to and after reforms to the LCP. See (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014i, f).

## Eligibility for and Probability of Obtaining Permanent Resident Status

Caregivers entering the country with a work permit based on any LMIA issued after November 30, 2014 will no longer be automatically entitled to permanent residence upon meeting the program’s requirements. Just like any other foreign worker under the broad umbrella of the TFWP, caregivers in both “caring classes” will have to first fully meet the requirements of the class through which they entered Canada (see Table 2.2, above) and then apply for permanent residence, approval of which will be subject to market conditions such as wage levels and adjustment of supply and demand. Such market conditions are expressed through an annual cap or limit in the number of applications considered (see Table 2.2, above). In addition, eligibility for permanent resident status now includes “the ability to become economically established in Canada” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014c). Caregivers will still be allowed to include their nuclear family members in applications for permanent resident status, but they will be evaluated with the same

criteria as any other application under the TFWP—that is, according to the points-based system. These changes stand in contrast to the previous criterion of eligibility: meeting the basic requirements of the program (see previous subsection “Requirements and Rules of the Live-in Caregiver Program”).

### Implications for Live-in Caregivers already in Canada

Live-in caregivers holding work permits based on LMIA submitted before or on November 30, 2014, which includes all of our survey respondents, are in one sense grandfathered in: they retain the right to gain permanent residence status upon meeting the original requirements of the program (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014g, f). However, since those requirements include living in the employer’s home, caregivers currently in Canada under the old LCP can only ensure receipt of permanent resident status—one of the strong motivators for coming to Canada in the first place—by continuing to live with their employers (cf. Table 2.4). Under these conditions, the new policy does not reduce the vulnerability to workplace violations faced by many live-in caregivers already in Canada (see Section Six). For those caregivers who are already working in an exploitative situation, the choice is even more impossible: move out and risk having their permanent residence application denied under the new stream, or stay and deal with the extra hardship that the “live-in” factor represents.

While continuing under the old stream means eligibility for permanent resident status, it also means facing a relatively long waiting time, depending on how efficiently the government is able to clear the current backlog of pending applications of live-in caregivers and their dependants.

Furthermore, the “live-in” factor needs to be analyzed against external factors such as rental and transportation costs, (low) wage levels, as well as environmental conditions. In Fort McMurray, for instance, live-in caregivers cannot afford to move out unless they are willing to live in shared accommodation and spend approximately half of their net income on accommodation costs. Fort McMurray’s long winter and limited public transportation might also prevent current live-in caregivers from moving out. Accommodation and transportation costs as well as environmental conditions are expected to shape how future caregivers negotiate the “live-out” factor as part of their contracts.

**“future participants in the two newly established ‘caring classes’ will be subject to the same rules and conditions as other temporary foreign workers and thus the same sorts of vulnerabilities”**

Lastly, the alignment of the LCP with the TFWP reproduces the dependence of a caregiver on a specific employer (as determined in the LMIA),

which can make foreign workers particularly vulnerable to abuses and workplace violations. Alignment with the TFWP also continues to disallow caregivers from undertaking any formal studies or training while in Canada, which confines them to lower-skilled and lower-paid occupations and compromises their capacity to integrate into the Canadian economy upon obtaining permanent residence.

### Conclusion

The reform of the LCP will in the long run blur any policy-related differences between caregivers and temporary foreign workers in other occupations (e.g., the service sector); future participants in the two newly established “caring classes” will be subject to the same rules and conditions as other temporary foreign workers and thus the same sorts of vulnerabilities. The most obvious expressions of this re-alignment between the LCP and the TFWP are the termination of both the “live-in” requirement and the universal concession of

permanent residence for foreign workers in caregiving occupations who meet program requirements. Overall, such an alignment with the TFWP represents a downgrading in the conditions and opportunities of foreign nationals providing caregiving services in Canada.

Although the end of the “live-in” requirement has the potential to mitigate some workplace abuses for caregivers, it does not eliminate many of the key policy-related conditions that make caregivers and other temporary foreign workers vulnerable, nor does it practically apply

to caregivers who obtained an LMIA prior to or on November 30, 2014—including the caregivers in Fort McMurray who participated in the survey.

The Fort McMurray context (see Sections Three and Four of this report), marked by high work intensity, flexibility, and cost of living, has the potential to deepen the challenges already faced by people who come to Canada as live-in caregivers. Further research will be needed to assess how reforms to the LCP impact the lives and decisions of caregivers already providing services in Fort McMurray and across Canada.

## Section Three

### The Fort McMurray Context and the Need for Live-in Caregivers

#### Highlights

- Given its economic environment, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo attracts the highest rate of overall in-migration in the country; approximately 40 percent of the resident population has moved there in the last five years.
- Residents of Fort McMurray work the longest hours in the country: more than 30 percent of the population works 50 hours or more per week. Workers are also often on rotational shift work, which usually entails long stretches of work as well as nights, weekends, and holidays.
- Fort McMurray is home to a “baby boom” of thousands of young families, yet the availability and cost of child care services are prohibitive. Licensed day care options are among the most expensive in the province, costing from \$1300 to more than \$2000 per month. There is also a critical shortage of licensed services, including child care outside of standard working hours.
- In Fort McMurray, as with many other economic centres in Canada, live-in caregivers have functioned as a solution, if only a partial one, to the work-family conflicts that affect Canadian families and workplaces (e.g., through stress, fatigue, absenteeism, lowered productivity).

**W**ith a population of approximately 76,000 residents (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo 2012), Fort McMurray accounts for 95 percent of the total resident population of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and serves as the core population centre to the oil sands region of northeast Alberta. With over 132 projects

currently in operation in the region (Oil Sands Operations 2014), Alberta’s bitumen production has doubled in ten years to reach nearly two million barrels per day (Alberta Government 2014a). According to 2012 figures, oil sands output accounts for almost one quarter of Alberta’s GDP (Alberta Government 2014a) and directly employs 121,500 people (Alberta Government 2014b), supplying one in sixteen jobs in Alberta.<sup>9</sup> In the Regional Municipality itself, resource-based industries accounted for 36.7 percent of employment in 2010 (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo 2010). When the percentage (27.3) of residents in the construction sector is also taken into account, the proportion of people directly employed in the oil industry rises to over half of the local population (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP 2013), depending in part on economic conditions.

#### Fort McMurray: Social and Economic Opportunity

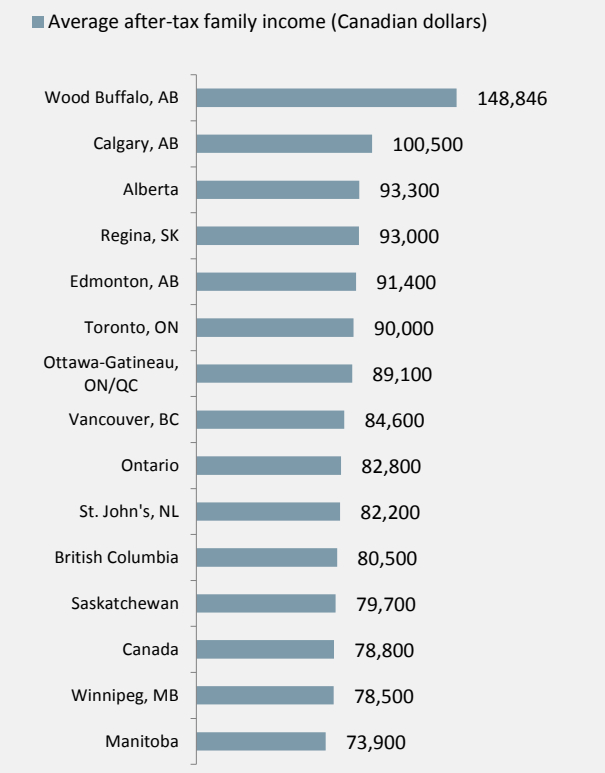
The impact of bitumen extraction in the regional and national economies as well as in people’s lives is irrefutable. Like other boomtowns, Fort McMurray offers excellent income opportunities on a comparative basis. The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo currently presents an after after-tax annual family income of \$148,846,<sup>10</sup> which is the highest in the country and almost twice as high as the national average of \$78,800 (Chart 3.1).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> This measure is for people between 15 and 60 years of age.

<sup>10</sup> Currencies are in Canadian dollars unless otherwise specified.

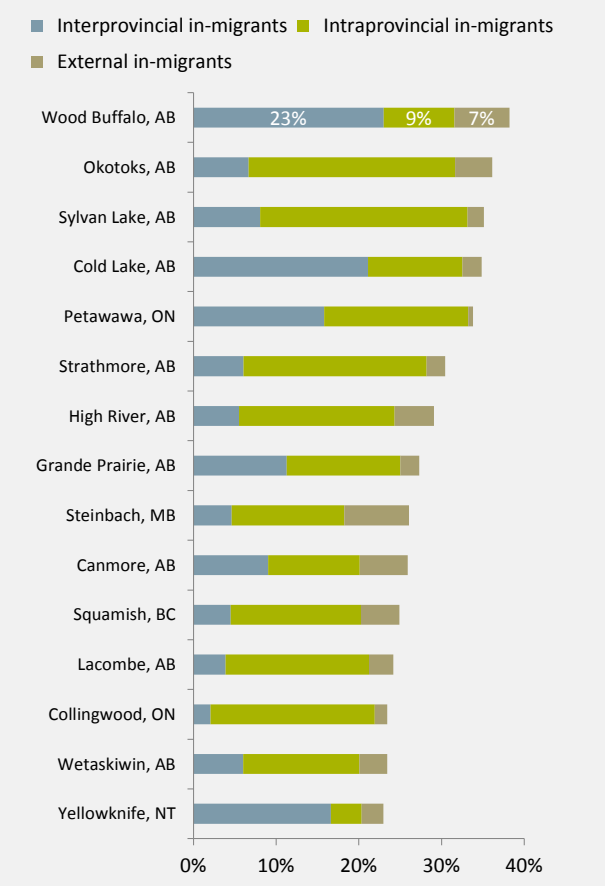
<sup>11</sup> The median after-tax annual family income in Wood Buffalo is equally high at \$142,776 (2010). This is twice that of the median in Canada of \$67,400 (Cf. Statistics Canada 2013a).

**Chart 3.1: Average after-tax family income in Canada (provinces and selected areas), 2010**



Source: for average after tax-income in Wood Buffalo, see (Statistics Canada 2013c); for average after tax-income elsewhere, see (Statistics Canada 2013b).

**Chart 3.2: Share of recent in-migrants in the total population by source, as found in the top 15 destinations in 2011**

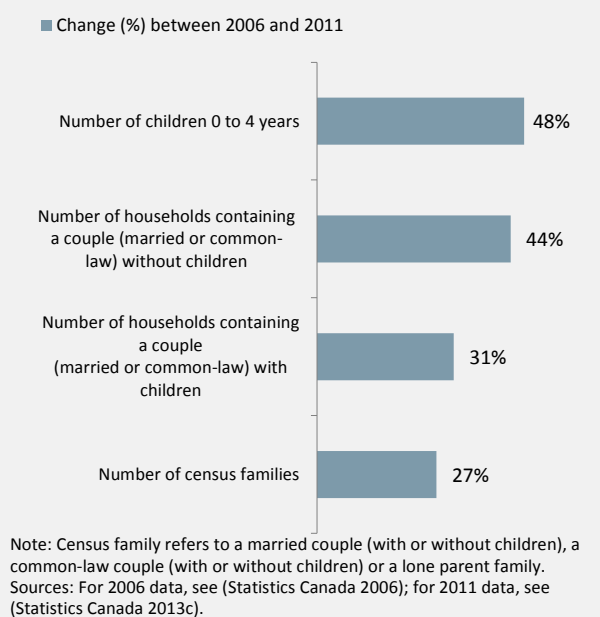


Source: elaborated based on components of migration (in and out) (Statistics Canada 2011a) and population count (Statistics Canada 2012b).

Fort McMurray has the third highest overall employment rate (78.9 percent) in Canada (Statistics Canada 2013a) and also boasts a low unemployment rate at 4.7 percent (Statistics Canada 2013a); the national rate has been above 7 percent for the past five years (Statistics Canada 2014b). Given its positive economic environment over the last fifteen years, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo has attracted the highest rate of overall in-migration in the country, which includes intra-provincial, inter-provincial, and international immigrants. In-migrants account for 38 percent of its population (Statistics Canada 2011a), and notably, they mostly move from outside of the province and outside of the country (Chart 3.2).

It is not just single tradesmen who are making the move; young families are also being formed or are moving to Fort McMurray. Households comprised of couples with children saw a remarkable increase of 31 percent from 2006 to 2011, and in the same five-year period the number of children between 0 and 4 years of age soared 48 percent (Chart 3.3), giving Fort McMurray the added moniker of “baby boom town” (National Post 2014, Klinkenberg 2012). Fort McMurray’s birth rate per thousand women, which stands at 34.7, is substantially higher than the provincial rate of 27.4 (Alberta Government 2013).

**Chart 3.3: Change in the Wood Buffalo population according to selected characteristics, 2006 - 2011**



## The Social Costs of Opportunity in Fort McMurray

Growth and prosperity in Fort McMurray come at a high cost, however. Residents of Fort McMurray work the longest hours in the country (Howell 2014). According to the latest comparative data available, 86 percent of the resident workforce works 30 or more hours in a given week, against 79 percent at the national level (Statistics Canada 2006). Furthermore, residents working 50 hours or more account for 32 percent of the population, against only 17 percent at the national level. The percentages of women working more than 30 (78 percent) and 50 hours a week (17 percent) in Fort McMurray each exceed the respective national values by seven percentage points (Statistics Canada 2006). In addition to long working hours, workers are also often on rotational shift work, which entails working nights, weekends, and sometimes holidays. Long and variable working hours combine with high mobility and turnover to contribute to both social opportunities and social stresses, including shortages of time for

**“residents of Fort McMurray are challenged to seek alternative solutions to meeting their and their families’ needs while also maximizing their disposable income”**

volunteering, leisure, family, and other social reproductive activities (Phillips, Hilbrecht, and Smale 2014).

Fort McMurray residents also have to manage a high cost of living, which is one of the main areas of dissatisfaction among in-migrants and locals in Alberta’s oil sands region. Almost all goods and services in Fort McMurray, from food, shelter, and clothing to appliances, transportation, and health care services, cost at least 1.5 times more than elsewhere in Alberta (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo 2014). Housing costs are the highest in Alberta and among the highest in Canada. Single-detached houses cost \$750,000 on average, while two-bedroom rental units are estimated to rent for at least \$2,000 a month (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2013).

The availability and cost of child care services in Fort McMurray are also significant obstacles for young families, especially dual-earner and lone-parent families. Licensed child care centres and day home services are among the most expensive in the province, costing from \$1300 to more than \$2000 per month. In Edmonton and Calgary, by comparison, median costs for licensed child care centres range from \$700 to just over \$1000 per month, depending on the age of the pre-school child (Macdonald and Friendly 2014). There is also a critical shortage of out-of-home licensed child care in Fort McMurray—just over 800 spaces (Duncan 2014) for a population of at least 6,000 children six years of age and under (Statistics Canada 2013a)—in addition to a shortage of before- and after-school care for young elementary school students (Duncan 2014). In the context of the oil sands work regime of shift schedules and long commute times, this is greatly exacerbated by a lack of licensed 6 pm to 6 am child care services (Dorow forthcoming 2015, Duncan 2014).

Confronted with an intense and variable work regime and an environment marked by the high cost and limited availability of goods and services, residents of Fort McMurray are challenged to seek alternative solutions to meeting their and their families' needs while also maximizing their disposable income in this work destination. Thus, many families turn to live-in caregivers to care for their children (or in some cases, adults or seniors)<sup>12</sup> while they are away at work. For many families with child care responsibilities, the expense of a full-time caregiver is far outweighed by the higher work hours, career opportunities, extra resting time, and peace of mind that the Live-in Caregiver Program facilitates.

## Conclusion

In Fort McMurray, as with other economic centres and metropolitan areas across Canada, the LCP has functioned as partial solution to the work-family conflicts that affect both families and workplaces (e.g., through stress, fatigue, absenteeism, lowered productivity).

This is all the more true in the context of a high demand, high turnover oil sands resource economy, and in the absence of adequate levels of institutional and policy support for families and child care.

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<sup>12</sup> None of the live-in caregivers interviewed for this report provides care for seniors.



## Section Four

### Live-in Caregivers in Fort McMurray: A Transnational Dimension of the Oil Sands Economy

#### Highlights

- The majority (95 percent) of the live-in caregivers surveyed in Fort McMurray had international work experience as caregivers prior to their arrival in Canada.
- Seventy percent of the sample surveyed invested between \$4,000 and \$8,999, including agency or recruiter fees, for the opportunity to move to Canada for work.
- Ninety-three percent of the live-in caregivers interviewed in this survey had already applied or were planning to apply for permanent residence in Canada.
- In spite of problematic working conditions (see Section Six), the Fort McMurray live-in caregivers in this project expressed a positive outlook on the Live-in Caregiver Program because of the opportunity it offered to work and settle in Canada (prior to changes announced in November 2014).

As home to a labour-intensive mega-sized resource industry, the oil sands region attracts and depends on workers from all over Canada and the world, including engineers, retail and service workers, trades workers, and administrators. Live-in caregivers make up a modest but important component of this diverse transnational workforce, having traveled an expensive and circuitous global pathway to get to Fort McMurray. Like many other workers in the region, they have come for the opportunity to work and to fill a demand.

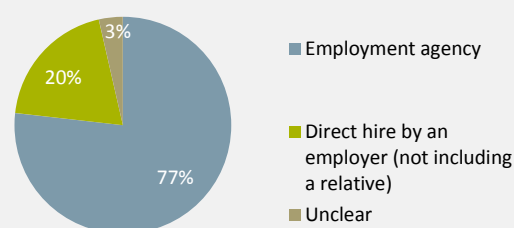
And like many other transnational migrants, they were drawn by the opportunity to settle in Canada permanently. Until changes announced in November 2014, Canada had become a preferred destination within the ever-growing global care industry because of the unique promise of permanent residence that it gave to all participants in the Live-in Caregiver Program.

#### The Cost of Employment-Related Mobility

##### Agents and Recruiters

Many caregivers rely on the services of employment agencies in both the sending nation and Canada. Among those we surveyed, 77 percent (Chart 4.1) had used an employment agency or recruiter and had spent on average \$3,779 (Chart 4.2) for this service alone.

Chart 4.1: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by recruitment channel, 2014

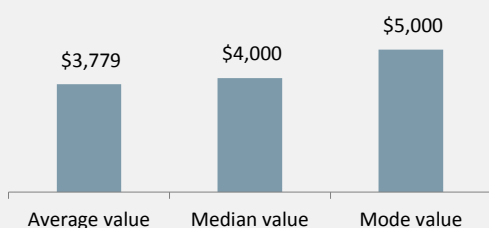


Source: survey Q8 How were you recruited to Canada as a caregiver? (n=56).

The median value paid by live-in caregivers, that is, the value at the centre of the sample distribution, was \$4,000: half of the sample paid less than \$4,000, while the other half paid more.

The mode, or the value that occurred most often, is even higher at \$5,000 (Chart 4.2).

**Chart 4.2: Agent/recruiter fees paid by Fort McMurray live-in caregivers, 2014**

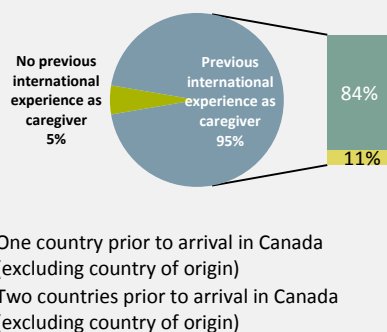


Source: survey Q15 If you used an agent/recruiter, how much did you pay for it? (n=47).

Agents in Canada help employers with the screening of candidates and the LMIA application process. Agents overseas primarily help caregivers to secure employment. Many agencies, however, also offer employment training and document preparation services. Agents and recruiters price their services according to wage levels and life opportunities in the country of destination. Such a pricing disparity reflects the global hierarchy of countries, within which Canada lists high. For instance, fees for positions in Canada have historically been more expensive than for Hong Kong or Saudi Arabia.<sup>13</sup> Our qualitative investigations indicate that agent and recruitment fees have played an important role in the decision-making processes of live-in caregivers, including the decision to choose Canada because of the opportunity for permanent residence.

To save money and gain accredited experience, many live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray have worked as caregivers in other countries prior to applying to Canada. This survey confirmed our qualitative findings; the majority (95 percent) of the live-in caregivers surveyed in Fort McMurray had international work experience as caregivers prior to their arrival in Canada (Chart 4.3).

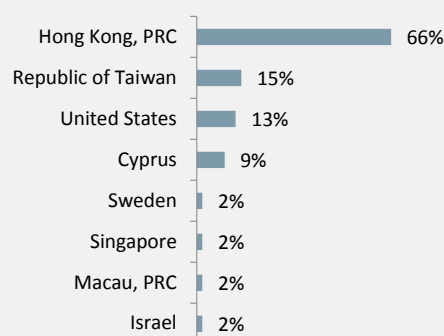
**Chart 4.3: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by previous international experience as a caregiver, 2014**



Source: survey Q12 Have you worked in any other country previously as a live-in caregiver? (n=56) / Q13 Please, indicate the countries where you have worked as a live-in caregiver before (n=53).

Sixty-six percent of the live-in caregivers interviewed worked in Hong Kong, China, before coming to Canada. Taiwan, the United States, and Cyprus were other important “stepping stones” before getting to Canada (Chart 4.4).

**Chart 4.4: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers who previously worked as caregivers, by country, 2014**

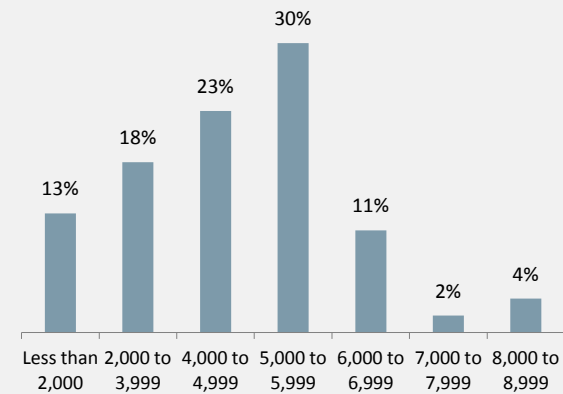


Source: survey Q13 Please, indicate the countries where you have worked as a live-in caregiver before (n=53). Percentages do not add to 100 percent because multiple responses were possible.

Regardless of how caregivers find a position and process their application, the option to work in Canada as a live-in caregiver does not come cheap. On the contrary, live-in caregivers generally invest more to come and work in Canada than their employers do to hire them. Seventy percent of the sample surveyed invested between \$4,000 and \$8,999 in total to come to Canada to work (Chart 4.5), while their employers most likely spent \$3,000 or less.

<sup>13</sup> It is too early to tell how the recent transformation of the LCP will affect recruiting practices and fees.

**Chart 4.5: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by total amount expended to come work in Canada, in Canadian dollars (CAD), 2014**



Source: survey Q14 How much money did you spend in order to come work in Canada? (n=56) Percentages do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

We have calculated the amount expended by employers assuming the LMIA fee at \$1,000 (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014e) and the average airfare (from the Philippines to Edmonton or Calgary) at \$2,000 (round-trip),<sup>14</sup> which is usually paid by the employer (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014h). The potential cost of recruiters is not included because according to our qualitative findings, agents and recruiters tend to charge only at the live-in caregiver end of the business operation.

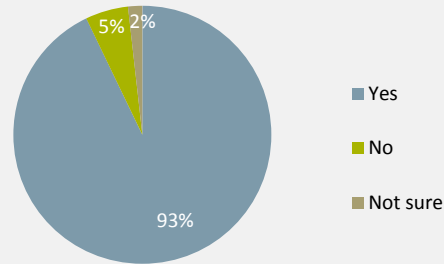
**“seventy percent of the sample surveyed invested between \$4,000 and \$8,999 to make the move to work in Canada, while their employers most likely spent \$3,000 or less”**

### Challenges and Opportunities: the LCP as a Pathway to Immigration

For live-in caregivers, the LCP has been a reliable if long and winding route to settling in Canada, potentially sponsoring family, and permanently contributing to and participating in the social and economic life of the nation. Ninety-three percent of the live-in caregivers interviewed in this survey had already applied or were planning to apply for permanent residence in Canada (Chart 4.6).

<sup>14</sup> For instance, round trip tickets between Manila (Philippines) and Calgary, AB, cost between \$1,300 and \$1,500 on average (including taxes) according to various flight-booking websites such as CheapOair, Flighthub, FlyFar.ca, and Tripcentral.ca (accessed in October and November 2014). Thus, employers are most likely spending less than the estimated \$3,000 to procure the services of a live-in caregiver through the LCP.

**Chart 4.6: Permanent resident applications submitted among Fort McMurray live-in caregivers, 2014**



Source: survey Q52 Have you or will you apply for PR? (n=56).

While the guaranteed pathway to permanent residence was eliminated with the changes to the program announced in November 2014, the caregivers we surveyed are all still eligible to apply under the old LCP, which Citizenship and Immigration Canada will phase out as they complete the many thousands of immigration cases related to it. New immigration cases filed after November 30, 2014, however, will be processed in one of the two newly created “caring classes” under the TFWP.<sup>15</sup>

The workers eligible for immigration under the LCP are mostly women, many of whom have left their own children and other family behind to embark on a journey to permanent residence that lasts for at least three years: fulfilling the required period of employment as a caregiver, pulling together documentation to apply for permanent resident status, waiting for that status to become official, and then finally being reunited with family (Neufeld et al. 2002, Pittman 2012, Spitzer 2009, GATES 2014).

Unfortunately, this is not always a smooth path. Research on the topic has shown the conditions of foreign workers in the caregiving stream to be associated with employer abuses and workplace violations as well as weak monitoring and regulation (Spitzer 2009, Kalaw and Gross 2010,

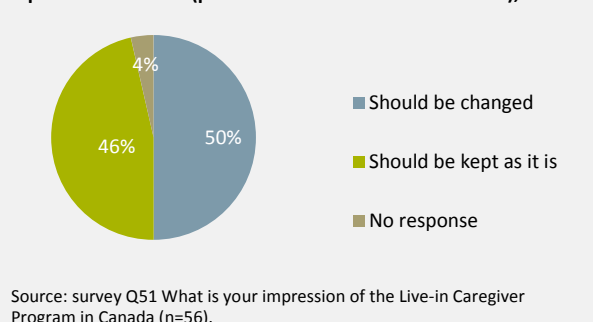
<sup>15</sup> The timing of the announcements did not allow us to conduct follow-up research with Fort McMurray live-in caregivers about their experience of the overhaul of the program.

Torres et al. 2012). Live-in caregivers experience distress stemming from these and other characteristics of the program, including:

- a policy-imposed physical separation of family members (i.e., children and spouses are not allowed to accompany foreign workers coming to Canada as caregivers);
- limited sociability (i.e., given the typical “live-in” work arrangements and conditions under the LCP, they have had few opportunities to develop a social network in Canada);
- length of time for the processing of permanent residence (family reunification through the LCP had a backlog causing delays up to ten years)<sup>16</sup>, which could take many years if the promise of fast processing launched with the new “caring classes” is not realized;
- the ongoing fear and uncertainty of having carefully planned major life decisions up-ended by changes in immigration policies, including eligibility for permanent residence.

Nonetheless, the live-in caregivers in our study expressed a surprisingly positive outlook on the old LCP because of the opportunities it represented. In the short term, income from caregiving employment provided support for themselves and for their families back home; in the long-term, permanent residence provided the opportunity to bring families to Canada and to actively use and build skills through further employment in the Canadian workforce. For these reasons, they indicated a willingness to endure their diminished social conditions. When surveyed about their impressions of the LCP (prior to the discontinuation of the program), live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray were split, with half asserting that the program needed to undergo some kind of change, as discussed in Section Two, and the other half responding that the program should be kept as it is (Chart 4.7).

**Chart 4.7: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by input about the LCP (prior to reforms in November 2014), 2014**



The desire for change may be under-represented here. Qualitative investigations in Fort McMurray indicate that many caregivers abstain from formally critiquing the program (e.g., in surveys) for fear that their input could be misinterpreted or misused to curtail or terminate the program, or might get back to their employers. As discussed in Section Six, the main causes of dissatisfaction regarding the LCP as it was structured prior to November 2014 included salary rate, poor screening of employers, and processing time of LCP-related procedures, including the permanent residence application.

## Conclusion

Live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray have sacrificed substantial financial savings and long years without their own spouses and children to work for families in the oil sands region. It all seems worth it because of the unique promise of immigration for caregivers and their families under the old LCP. At local focus groups held in spring and summer 2014, live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray conveyed anxiety about constant changes to policies that affected their lives and that reverberated to their families back home, even before the major changes announced later in the year. Given how hard they have worked to get here, and how hard they work once they are here, the opportunity to immigrate is what keeps them going.

<sup>16</sup> See (Friesen 2014).

## Section Five

### The Socioeconomic Importance of Live-in Caregivers for the Community of Fort McMurray

#### Highlights

- Live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray provide flexibility and availability to families in a region characterized by intensive work schedules and severely limited child care options.
- Live-in caregivers work early and late shifts as well as weekend shifts. They are available to their employers for an average of 10 hours a day, and report working more hours per week on average (53.7) than trades workers in the oil sands industry (51.2).
- Thirty percent of the live-in caregivers interviewed provide care for two pre-school children, saving their employers an estimated \$6,970 per year in child care costs.
- Ninety percent of the live-in caregivers interviewed are also responsible for light housecleaning, for which they get paid substantially less than would a commercially hired cleaner (\$10.20/hour compared to \$16/hour). Eighteen percent of them are also responsible for general household maintenance (e.g., mowing lawn, shopping for groceries, watching pets, etc.).
- The total amount of annual remittances to families overseas from the live-in caregivers in our sample (\$440,944) is just two-thirds the total amount of annual savings in child care they represent for their employers overall (\$662,994).
- Live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray are a highly qualified group with much to contribute. Half of them hold a bachelor's degree, which is higher than in the local population as a whole.

Among the advantages live-in caregivers bring to the work-family balance of their employers, flexibility, availability, and cost are the most remarkable and immediate. Also important are the training and skills they can offer to the social and economic future of the region, especially when we consider the forecasted investment, activity levels, and hiring outlook in Canada's oil and gas industry for the next decade (Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada 2013).<sup>17</sup>

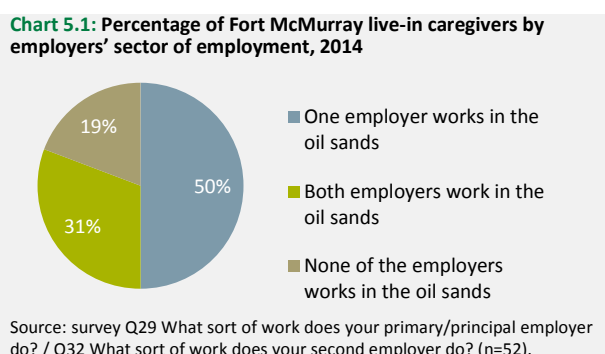
#### Flexibility and Availability – Relieving Time Pressures

The oil sands economy entails, among other things, hyper-flexibilized work schedules (rotational work, odd schedules, and on call work, among others), long hours of work, and complex patterns of spatial mobility (long and short distance commuting, and heavy transport traffic). These dynamics affect different people in different ways, depending on variables such as job type and family arrangement. Nonetheless, the space-time of the oil sands industry affects everyone in the region, and can make the conciliation of family and work life extremely complex and stressful. The situation is particularly hard for young families who have moved to the region for the short or long term

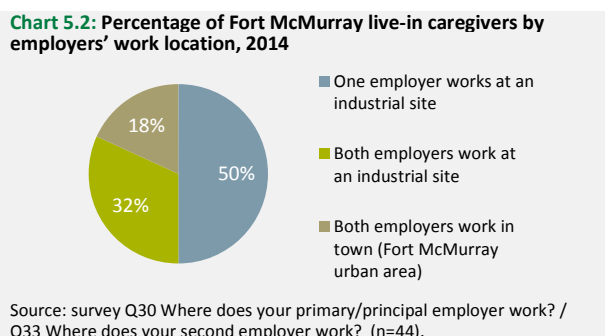
<sup>17</sup> In a conservative scenario of slow growth, overall employment levels in Canada's oil and gas sector will sustain an annual average of 894,100 direct, indirect, and induced jobs (driven by increase in consumer spending) across the country, with 80 percent of such a demand being created in Western Canada and in the oil sands sector of Alberta in particular (Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada 2013).

that cannot find or afford a spot in a local licensed child care centre and (as is usually the case) have no extended family members in town to help with child care responsibilities.

It is thus no coincidence that more than 80 percent of the families relying on the work of the live-in caregivers we surveyed include at least one adult employed in the oil sands (Chart 5.1). For 31 percent of the live-in caregivers surveyed, both employers (in most cases, a husband and a wife) work in the oil sands, while for another 50 percent of them, one employer works in this sector (Chart 5.1).



Furthermore, for half of the live-in caregivers (Chart 5.2) one of their employers is working out at site (i.e., at one of the bitumen extraction projects outside of town), while approximately one-third report that both employers work at site. In other words, it is common for their employers to be commuting long distances from home on a daily basis.

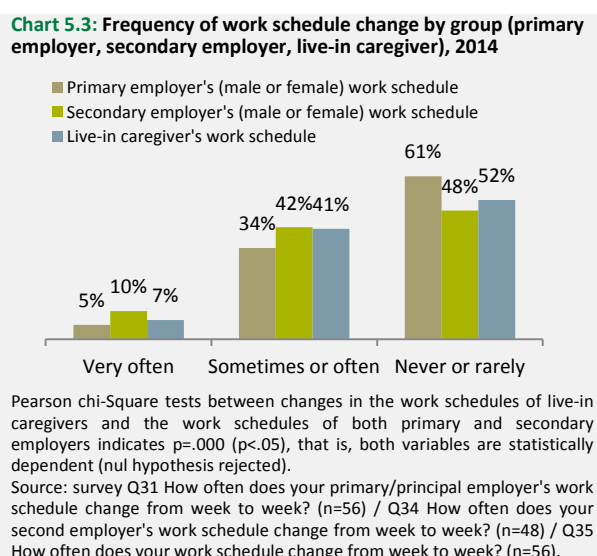


Together, these figures (Charts 5.1 and 5.2) corroborate qualitative findings suggesting that live-in caregivers are “the oil sands workers’

child care of choice” (Dorow forthcoming 2015). In other words, the oil sands industry is dependent on the sort of flexibility and consistency provided to its workers by live-in caregivers.

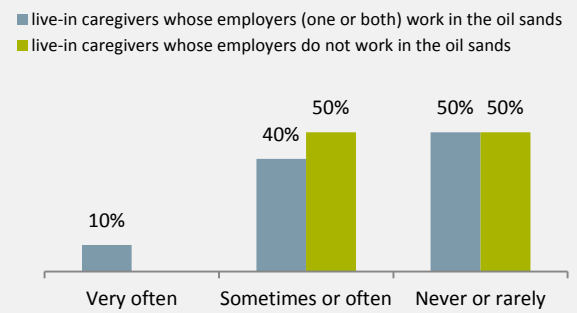
## Irregular Schedules Work

The frequencies of unpredictability and change in the work schedules of live-in caregivers are directly correlated with those of their employers’ schedules (Chart 5.3). In other words, as their employers’ irregular work schedules change, so do theirs. This is a statistically significant relationship.



When the sample is divided into two groups according to the type of work done by the employers (one or both employers work in the oil sands versus no employers who work in the oil sands), the similarities in work schedule patterns between employers and caregivers does not show a statistically significant difference (Chart 5.4). This finding suggests that schedule patterns within individual households may have a more direct impact on the “flexibility” of live-in caregivers than does the types of work done by employers.

**Chart 5.4: Change frequency in the work schedule of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers according to employers grouped by work type, 2014**

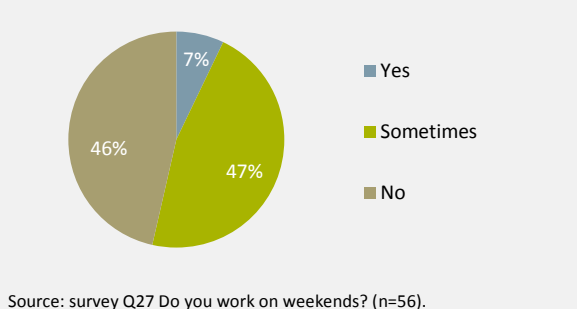


Pearson Chi-Square test between changes in the work schedules of the two different groups of live-in caregivers indicates  $p=.500$  ( $p>.05$ ), that is, both variables are statistically independent (null hypothesis selected).  
Source: survey Q29 What sort of work does your primary/principal employer do? / Q32 What sort of work does your second employer do? / Q35 How often does your work schedule change from week to week? (n=52)

## Work On Weekends

A large percentage of live-in caregivers (46 percent) reports working on weekends some of the time while seven percent say they regularly do so (Chart 5.5).

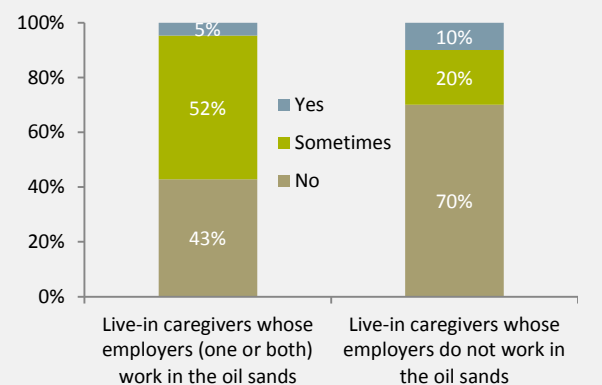
**Chart 5.5: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers working on weekends, 2014**



Source: survey Q27 Do you work on weekends? (n=56).

Among the sample investigated, the percentage of live-in caregivers working on weekends on a regular or frequent basis (“yes” or “sometimes”) is higher (Chart 5.6) among those where one or both employers work in the oil sands (57 percent, against 30 percent). That this is not a statistically significant relationship may once again be testament to the direct and indirect impacts of oil sands dynamics on the lives of most people in the region, making the employment of live-in caregivers important to all yet particularly convenient for those who are more subject to flexible and odd work schedules.

**Chart 5.6: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers working on weekends according to employers grouped by work type, 2014**

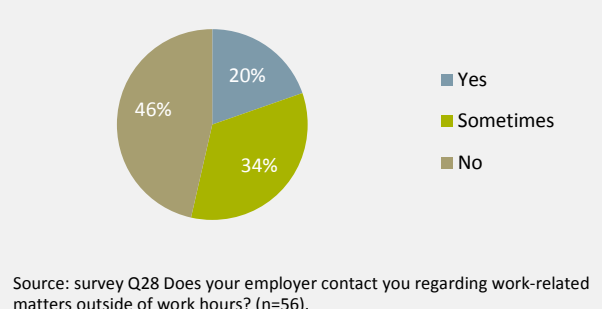


Pearson Chi-Square test between work on weekends schedules of live-in caregivers and both groups above indicates  $p=.178$  ( $p>.05$ ), that is, both variables are statistically independent (null hypothesis selected).  
Source: survey Q29 What sort of work does your primary/principal employer do? / Q32 What sort of work does your second employer do? / Q27 Do you work on weekends? (n=52).

## Contact Outside of Work Hours

Fifty-four percent of the sample investigated (Chart 5.7) is contacted outside of working hours (“yes” or “sometimes”).

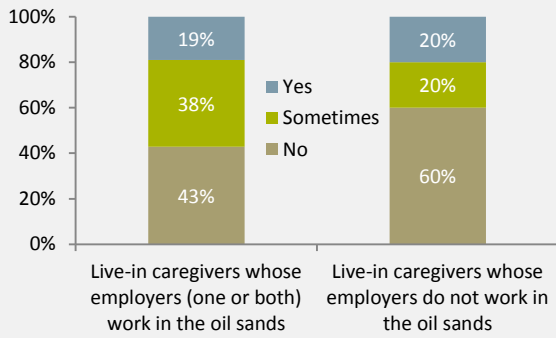
**Chart 5.7: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers being contacted outside of work hours, 2014**



Source: survey Q28 Does your employer contact you regarding work-related matters outside of work hours? (n=56).

The percentage contacted outside of work hours is even higher (Chart 5.8) among those whose employers (one or both) work in the oil sands (57 percent, against 40 percent).

**Chart 5.8: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers being contacted outside work hours by type of work done by employers, 2014**



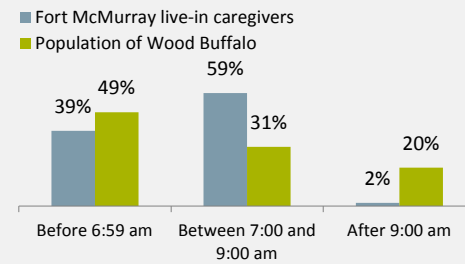
Pearson Chi-Square test between live-in caregivers being contacted out of work hours and both groups above indicates  $p=.527$  ( $p>.05$ ), that is, both variables are statistically independent (null hypothesis selected).  
 Source: survey Q29 What sort of work does your primary/principal employer do? / Q32 What sort of work does your second employer do? / Q28 Does your employer contact you regarding work-related matters outside of work hours? (n=52).

The frequency of contact outside of work hours is extremely high considering the degree of precariousness that such an occupation entails, and is facilitated by the “live-in” aspect of the LCP. While living-in is no longer mandatory for caregivers who enter Canada under the two new “caring classes” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014g, f, e), live-in caregivers who apply for permanent residence under the old LCP rules are still required to reside at the employer’s home. The fact that caregivers tend to live and work in the workplace (the household) can make the separation between work time and rest time difficult to honour for both live-in caregivers and their employers.

### Start and Finish Work Times

More than one-third (39 percent) of the survey respondents start work before seven in the morning, while 59 percent start their workday between seven and nine in the morning (Chart 5.9). A much lower proportion (2 percent) of live-in caregivers reports starting the workday after 9 am than is found among the Wood Buffalo population as a whole (20 percent) (Chart 5.9).

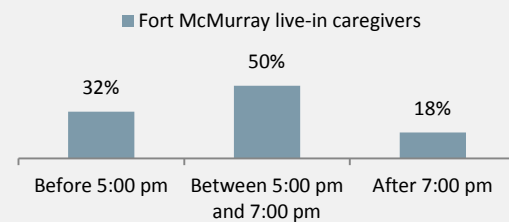
**Chart 5.9: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers and the local population by start times on an average work day, 2014**



Source: survey Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start? (n=56); for the population of Wood Buffalo, see (Statistics Canada 2013c). The National Household 2011 actually computes “time leaving for work” instead of start time. For this analysis, however, we are treating these two variables equally and considering that when individuals leave for work they are already in “work mode.” In addition, Statistics Canada has no data available on the time individuals start work.

Eighteen percent of our respondents indicate finishing work after 7 pm (Chart 5.10); unfortunately, there are no available statistics on finishing times among the Wood Buffalo population generally.

**Chart 5.10: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers’ finish times on an average work day, 2014**



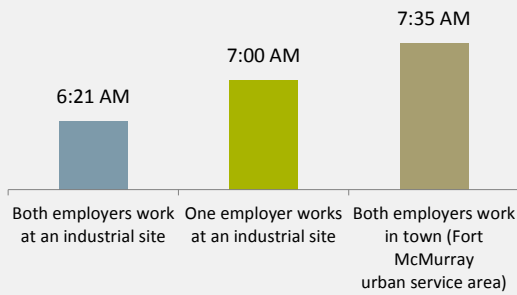
Source: survey Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually finish? (n=56).

Start times to the workday become more salient when we examine live-in caregivers’ availability to follow the same work schedule pattern as their employers. As employers’ start times vary according to their workplaces, so do the live-in caregivers’ morning schedules. When both employers work at an industrial site the average start time for live-in caregivers is 6:21 am, and becomes later when just one employer works out at site (7:00 am) or both employers work in town (7:35 am) (Chart 5.11).<sup>18</sup> These differences are statistically significant (Table 5.1).

<sup>18</sup> The same type of analysis for live-in caregivers’ finish work time is not statistically significant and is not reproduced here.



**Chart 5.11: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers' average start times by employers' work location, 2014**



Source: survey Q30 Where does your primary/principal employer work? Q33 Where does your second employer work? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start? / (n=44).

It is worth noting that when just one employer works out at site, live-in caregivers' start times are the least variable (standard deviation of just .78 hours versus 1.42 and 1.39) (Table 5.1). This could be because in such cases the second employer is working part-time or not working in paid work, but further research is needed.

**Table 5.1: One-way ANOVA test results for Fort McMurray live-in caregivers' average start time by employers' work location, 2014**

Groups	Number of live-in caregivers	Standard deviation
Both employers work at an industrial site	14	1.42
One employer works at an industrial site	22	0.78
Both employers work in town (Fort McMurray urban service area)	8	1.39

Sum of squares equals to 8.229, df equals to 2, p equals to 0.05 (p<0.05, then statistically significant).

Source: survey Q30 Where does your primary/principal employer work? / Q33 Where does your second employer work? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start? / (n=44)

These results confirm that live-in caregivers' availability is especially important for employers who work at oil sands industrial sites. Due to distances from town out to site, which are compounded by heavy traffic, residents of Fort McMurray face the highest average commuting time in the country at 38 minutes (Statistics Canada 2011b). In this way, live-in caregivers provide the flexibility for employers to leave for work early in the morning, especially in a context where licensed out-of home child care options before 7 am are almost nonexistent. As

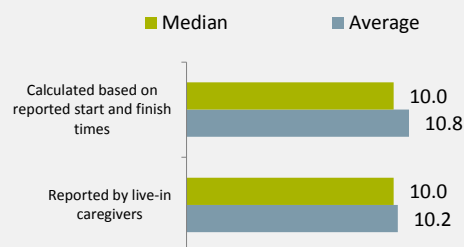
we found in our qualitative research, caregivers also provide peace of mind that children are being cared for when traffic jams delay their parents' return home.

## Long Shifts

### Daily basis

Further evidence of the flexibility and availability of live-in caregivers is found in the number of hours they work each day. The survey revealed that live-in caregivers work approximately 10 hours on an average workday (Chart 5.12). The average number of work hours per day directly reported by survey respondents (10.2 hours) is slightly lower than the number of hours worked when calculated according to reported start and finish times (10.8 hours). Such a discrepancy might result from the fact that start and finish times for the workday are usually set into the schedule ahead of time, while the number of hours actually worked tends to vary and is a best estimate on the part of the respondent.

**Chart 5.12: Number of hours worked per day on Fort McMurray live-in caregivers' average work day, 2014**



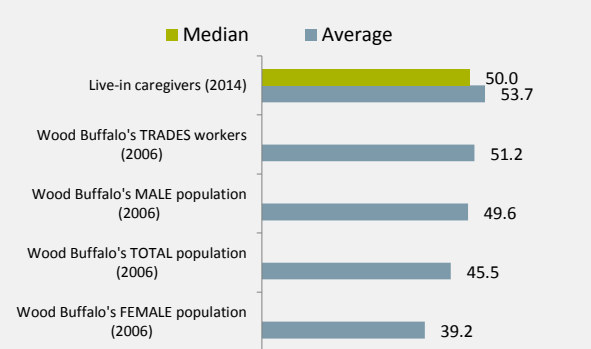
Source: survey Q24 On an average work day, how many hours do you work? (n=49 for reported answered and n=56 for calculated value based on start and finish times).

As indicated (Chart 5.12), half of the sample works 10 hours (median value) or more per day.

### Weekly basis

On a weekly basis, live-in caregivers work 53.7 hours on average (median is 50 hours), while the average for the full-time working population of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, most of whom reside in Fort McMurray, is 45.5 hours a week (Chart 5.13).

**Chart 5.13: Number of hours Fort McMurray live-in caregivers work per week on average compared to local populations, 2014**

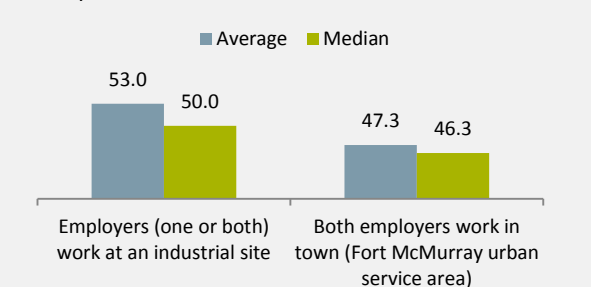


Sources: survey, calculated based on reported usual start and finish times on an average work day. Trades workers refer to all occupations under the 2006 NOC category "H Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations." For data on the population of Wood Buffalo, see (Statistics Canada 2006); community profiles from the 2011 National Household Survey do not present hours worked per week. For trades workers, see (Statistics Canada 2008).

Fort McMurray live-in caregivers work longer hours per week than trades workers in the region, who, according to the latest statistics available, have the longest workweek in the country (Chart 5.13).

The average number of hours worked on a weekly basis varies significantly (Chart 5.14) depending on the work locations of a live-in caregiver's employers (see Chart 5.14 with t-test results in Table 5.2). Live-in caregivers whose employers (one or both) work at an industrial site work on average 53 hours per week, while their counterparts whose employers work in town work 47.3 hours on a weekly basis (Chart 5.14). This can be explained by long commuting times and other characteristics of oil industry work schedules that keep employees away from home for longer periods.

**Chart 5.14: Average and median number of hours Fort McMurray live-in caregivers work per week grouped by employers' work location, 2014**



Source: survey Q30 Where does your primary/principal employer work? / Q33 Where does your second employer work? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start / finish? (n=44).

**Table 5.2: Independent t-test results for number of hours Fort McMurray live-in caregivers work per week grouped by employers' work location, 2014**

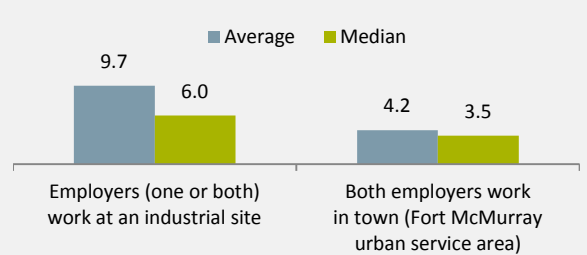
Groups	Number of live-in caregivers	Standard deviation
Employers (one or both) work at an industrial site	36	9.17
Both employers work in town (Fort McMurray urban service area)	8	4.25

Equal variance not assumed; df equals 23.888 and p value equals to 0.01 ( $p \leq 0.05$ , then statistically significant).

The average number of overtime hours worked on a weekly basis also shows a statistically significant relationship with the work locations of live-in caregivers' employers (Chart 5.15 with t-test results in Table 5.3). Live-in caregivers whose employers (one or both) work at an industrial site work an average of 9.7 overtime hours per week, while their counterparts whose employers work in town work an average of 4.2

overtime hours per week (Chart 5.15). This also can be explained by long commuting times, long working hours (including employers' overtime hours) and other characteristics of the oil industry workforce.

**Chart 5.15: Average and median number of overtime hours Fort McMurray live-in caregivers work per week grouped by employers' work location, 2014**



Source: survey Q30 Where does your primary/principal employer work? / Q33 Where does your second employer work? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start / finish? (n=41).

**Table 5.3: Independent t-test results for number of overtime hours Fort McMurray live-in caregivers work per week grouped by employers' work location, 2014**

Groups	Number of live-in caregivers	Standard deviation
Employers (one or both) work at an industrial site	34	8.96
Both employers work in town (Fort McMurray urban area)	7	3.74

Equal variance not assumed; df equals 22.798 and p value equals to 0.01 ( $p \leq 0.05$ , then statistically significant).

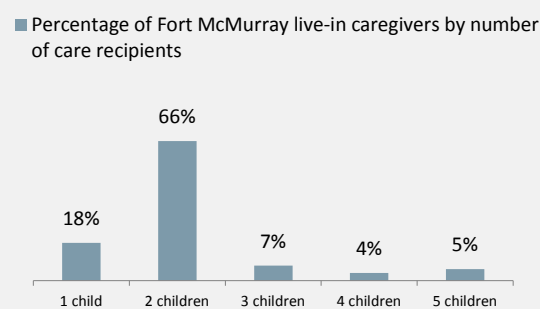
Source: survey Q30 Where does your primary/principal employer work? / Q33 Where does your second employer work? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually finish? (n=41).

In general, the oil sands industrial zone functions through a system of hyper work intensity that relies in turn on a whole set of auxiliary support services from logistics and transportations to hospitality and general services. In many ways, live-in caregivers help to make this system sustainable—especially in the absence of other forms of affordable, flexible child care—by bridging or even absorbing its time gaps and pressures. They assume household responsibilities, including cooking for the family, light duty cleaning, and general household maintenance tasks (discussed in detail below), while their employers are on the move to and from work. They wake up very early, so their employers can get to work on time or even get some rest while commuting back and forth to site on the bus. And by working long and irregular hours themselves, live-in caregivers absorb some of the pressures of long and irregular hours experienced by other workers in the oil sands economy.

## Financial and Social Efficiencies for Employers

The live-in caregivers who participated in the survey reside in households comprised of four family members on average—two adults and two children (Chart 5.16)—although 16 percent of the sample cares for three or more children (Chart 5.16).

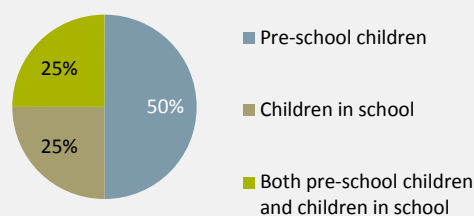
**Chart 5.16: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by number of care recipients, 2014**



Source: survey Q37 How many people are you responsible to care for? (n=56).

Half of the respondents care for pre-school children only, one quarter of them care for school-age children only, and one quarter care for children in both categories (Chart 5.17).

**Chart 5.17: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by care recipient profile, 2014**



Source: survey Q38 Who do you care for? Please, check all that apply (n=56).

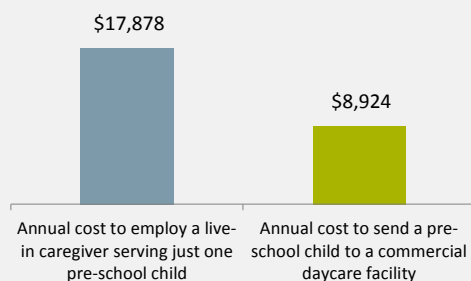
That more than half of the children in their care are pre-school age suggests that live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray are being hired as a direct alternative to formal paid child care services (i.e., day homes and licensed day cares). In this way they help make up significantly for the shortage of child care services in the region, offering families not only flexible services but also a relatively low cost option.

## Advantages over Licensed Child Care Centres

Hiring a live-in caregiver to care exclusively for one child will usually cost more to an employer than sending the child to a licensed child care centre (Chart 5.18) or to after school care, assuming a spot can be found. However, that is the only scenario where hiring a live-in caregiver is more costly. Overall, live-in caregivers represent to families with young children a

substantial economic advantage over commercial child care services for three main reasons: a) the LCP operates under the logic of an economy of scale; b) the live-in caregiver-child ratio is considerably lower under the LCP; and c) the live-in caregiver's scope of care and duties is much broader than that provided by child care centres. Assuming an average annual cost of \$8,924<sup>19</sup> per child for licensed out of home pre-school child care, the employment of a live-in caregiver to care for one child would cost more to parents on an average annual basis, that is, \$17,878 (Chart 5.18).

**Chart 5.18: Cost comparison simulation between live-in caregivers and licensed child care centres for parents with just one pre-school age child (Canadian dollars), 2014**



Note: The live-in caregiver cost was assessed using the following information: average numbers for regular hours of work (43 hours per week) and overtime (10.4 per week) as calculated through this survey; Alberta's 2013/2014 live-in caregiver gross wage (\$10.19 per hour), overtime rule (more than 44 hours per week), overtime rate (1.5 time employee's regular wage), and vacation pay (4 per cent a year); and the actual number of pre-school children cared for by the 56 live-in caregivers interviewed. Room and board were also deducted from the live-in caregiver cost assuming that employers are deducting these costs from live-in caregivers' paycheques. This cost simulation accounts for tax deductions for child care expenses made to caregivers providing child care services and to licensed child care centres (Canada Revenue Agency 2014). These calculations do not consider subsidies provided to low-income families for children attending licensed child care centres.

### Exponential Savings for Families with More than One Child

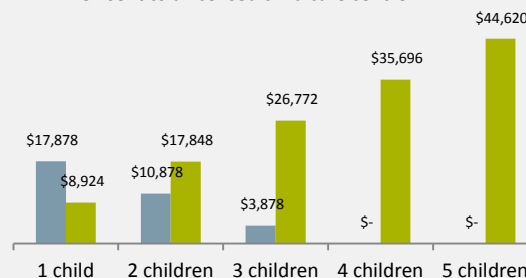
The basic cost comparison above (Chart 5.18) does not, however, account for the fact that the LCP is characterized by an economy of scale (where the cost of overall service decreases with

<sup>19</sup> This number is the average price charged by the YMCA day care operations (Birchwood and Thickwood) in Fort McMurray (\$15,924 per year) minus tax deductions for child care services (\$7,000 per year). As our survey did not inquire the age of care recipients (only school level), we firstly calculated the average price of each location for the three categories of care recipients, infants (12 to 18 months), toddlers (19 months to five years of age), and kinder (four to six years of age), and then obtained the overall average between the two YMCA locations.

an increase in scale).<sup>20</sup> Savings for families with more than one pre-school child go up exponentially (Chart 5.19). As the following chart demonstrates, families with two pre-school children, which is the most frequent pattern in the sample studied (30 percent of the live-in caregivers, Table 5.4), can save \$6,970 a year (\$17,848 less \$10,878) in child care costs if they hire a live-in caregiver (Chart 5.19).

**Chart 5.19: Annual cost (Canadian dollars) per number of pre-school age children in Fort McMurray families by type of care, 2014**

■ Annual daycare cost by number of pre-school children when cared for by a live-in caregiver  
 ■ Annual daycare cost by number of pre-school children when sent to a licensed child care centre



Note: To calculate tax returns for child care services, we applied the median individual before tax income for Wood Buffalo at \$68,644 per year (Statistics Canada 2013a). We chose to use the median income instead of the average income (\$87,878 per year) to prevent distortions caused by outliers. See note on Chart 5.35 for details on this calculation.

**Table 5.4: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by recipient profile (number of children and age), 2014**

Number of children	Pre-school age	School age	Pre-school and school age
1 child	14%	4%	-
2 children	30%	14%	21%
3 children	2%	4%	2%
4 children	2%	-	2%
5 children	2%	4%	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>

Source: survey Q37 How many people are you responsible to care for (n=56) / Q38 Who do you care for? Please, check all that apply (n=56).

It is important to highlight that child care costs are completely offset by child care allowances processed through tax returns when families have more than four children being cared for by a live-in caregiver (Chart 5.19). Four percent of the live-in caregivers in our survey provide care in families fitting this profile (Table 5.4).

<sup>20</sup> It is also the case that unlike licensed child care centres, rules for the LCP have no provision on the number of care recipients per caregiver.

## Individual Time and Attention for Children

According to the Alberta Child Care Licensing Act (2008), license holders must abide by minimum staff-to-child ratios (Table 5.5). The ratio found in our survey of one live-in caregiver for every two children is smaller than the strictest licensing ratio (for infants under 12 months of age). The quantity of individual time and attention provided by live-in caregivers is thus potentially higher than in licensed care centres.

**Table 5.5: Minimum staff-to-child ratios required by Alberta Child Care Licensing, 2008**

Age of children	Ratio
Infants less than 12 months	1:3
Infants 12 months to less than 19 months	1:4
19 months to less than 3 years	1:6
3 years to less than 4.5 years	1:8
4.5 years and older	1:10

Note: ratios for when children are awake; the ratios for when they are sleeping is larger (more children per caregiver).  
Source: Alberta Child Care Licensing Act (2008).

## Monetary Savings from Broad and Varied Scope of Duties

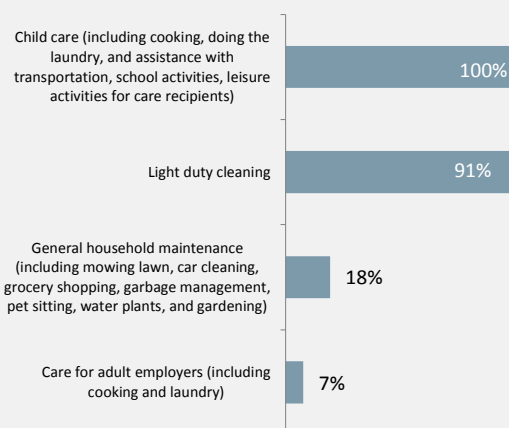
The cost simulation presented above does not account for yet another important factor: the live-in caregiver’s scope of care and duties is much broader and more flexible than that provided by out-of-home child care options. This begins with their primary responsibilities, which entail not only play and educational activities but also daily maintenance activities such as bathing, feeding, dressing, transporting, and doing laundry for children in their care. Caring for children of different ages and with different developmental needs, including school-age children, results in an even more intense and diversified work routine that might include cooking to please different tastes, doing extra laundry, transporting the children to the bus stop or to school, and providing extra-curricular activities. In addition to direct child-related activities, almost all of the respondents (91 percent) also report responsibility for light housecleaning (Chart 5.20), which seems to be a default practice and tacit agreement in this market.

**“the live-in caregiver’s scope of care and duties is much broader and more flexible than that provided by out-of-home child care options”**

When analyzed together, these activities represent high value-added services that would be very expensive if contracted separately. The comparison between hourly wages of live-in caregivers and light duty cleaning personnel thus highlights another quantitative dimension of the savings generated for families hiring live-in caregivers. While live-in caregivers make \$10.20 per hour (as of September 1, 2014), the hourly wage of light duty cleaners in Fort McMurray (working in town or at work camps) varies from \$16 to \$18 according to offers posted in November 2014 on Job Bank, the official job website of the federal government.

**Chart 5.20: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by duties performed, 2014**

■ Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by duty performed



Source: survey Q39 Please, list below all activities that are part of your work routine (n=56).

A remarkable 18 percent of those surveyed (Chart 5.20) also regularly conduct activities related to the general maintenance of the household that are outside of the approved scope for live-in caregivers. Those activities include mowing the lawn, cleaning the car, shopping for groceries, watching pets, and gardening. There are also those (7 percent of the sample) who cook and do laundry for their employers, not just the children.

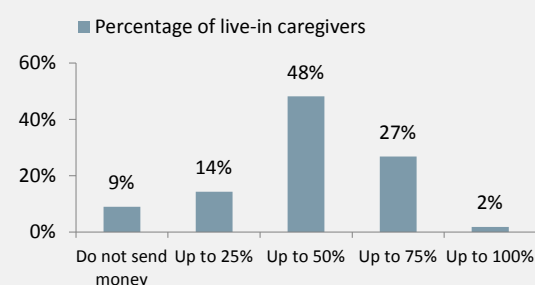
The actual scope of work performed by live-in caregivers confirms that employers can save much more than indicated in the basic calculations (Charts 5.18 and 5.19 above) by hiring a live-in caregiver, even when only their core activities of child care and light cleaning are considered.

## Induced Contributions to the Local Economy

Concern that participants in the LCP send a large share of their income to families back home (rather than spend it in the local economy) misses several important points. First, live-in caregivers usually send only a portion of their wages overseas; the remainder is spent in Canada, boosting the local economy. Second, in the context of an increasingly mobile and globalized workforce (the oil sands being a notable example), the investment and remittance of incomes in multiple places is commonplace for many types of workers and citizens in Canada, making the distinction between local and other forms of investment somewhat misleading. Third, to the extent that such a distinction can be maintained, the amount of money sent overseas by live-in caregivers is smaller than the savings they represent to their employers and thus to the local economy. The money employers save on child care by hiring a live-in caregiver is reverted to the local, regional, or national economies as families re-direct these funds to house payments and improvements, groceries, consumer goods, leisure, etc.

As would be expected, the group of live-in caregivers investigated does send money overseas. Approximately half of them send up to 50 percent of their wages back home to help their families (Chart 5.21).

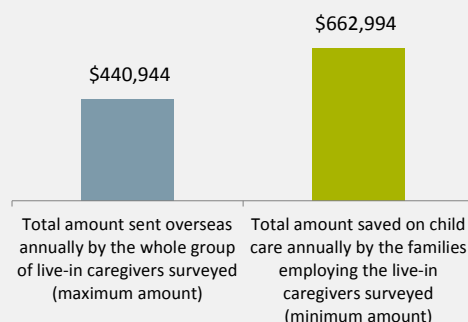
**Chart 5.21: Percentage of live-in caregivers by percentage of monthly income sent overseas, 2014**



Source: survey Q49 What percentage of your monthly income do you save on average to send back to your country? (n=56).

However, the total amount remitted overseas annually by our respondents is equal to just two-thirds (Chart 5.22) of the total annual value they create for their employers when we consider the previously discussed economy of scale, (i.e., the number and age of care recipients, excluding cost savings from other duties performed).

**Chart 5.22: Savings to Fort McMurray employers of live-in caregivers versus remittances sent overseas by caregivers, 2014**



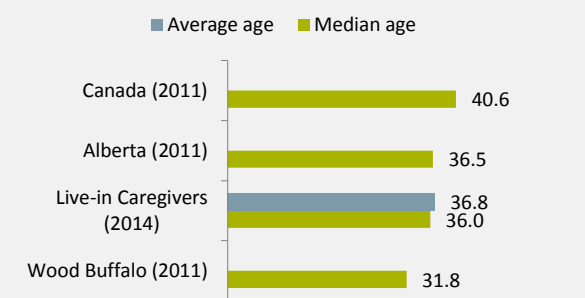
Note: These values were calculated based on the data collected; numbers were weighted by percentage sent overseas and number of pre-school children cared for by the survey sample. This cost simulation accounts for tax deductions for child care expenses made to caregivers providing child care services and licensed child care centres (Canada Revenue Agency 2014). To calculate tax returns for child care services, we applied the median individual before tax income for Wood Buffalo at \$68,644 per year (Statistics Canada 2013a). In addition, The calculation takes into consideration the economy of scale live-in caregivers bring to their employers. It also considers an annual base net income of \$15,889 (after deduction such as taxes, and room and board). Such a base net income also accounts for the paid annual leave. Taxes refer to federal withholding, provincial withholding, Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, and account for approximately 30 percent of the monthly wage.

## Potential Economic and Social Contributions of Live-in Caregivers

Live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray are a relatively young group. Although the median age (36.0 years) of the survey participants is higher than the local population (31.8), it is still lower than the provincial and national median age

(40.6) (Chart 5.23). Thus, considering the reported median and average age values and assuming a retirement age of 66<sup>21</sup>, live-in caregivers potentially have 25 years of active work life through which they can contribute to the local and national economies.

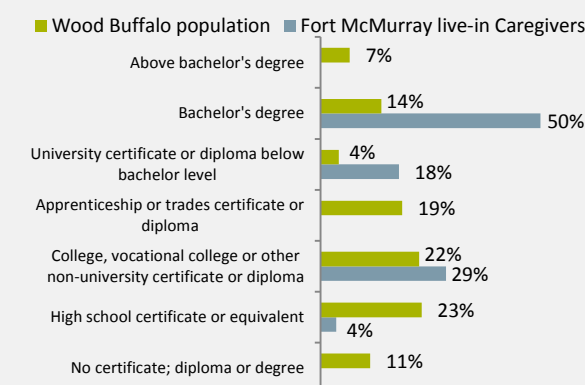
**Chart 5.23: Age of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers compared to general populations, 2014**



Source: Calculated based on survey Q6 Your year of birth? (n=56); for information on Canada, Alberta, and Wood Buffalo's population, see: (Statistics Canada 2012a).

Live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray are also highly qualified. The group under study is technically more educated and skilled than the local population of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Among live-in caregivers, 96 percent have some kind of post-secondary education and 50 percent have bachelor's degrees (Chart 5.24), while among the local population 66 percent have post-secondary credentials and 21 percent have bachelor's degrees (Chart 5.24).

**Chart 5.24: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers' educational attainment compared to the Wood Buffalo population, 2014**

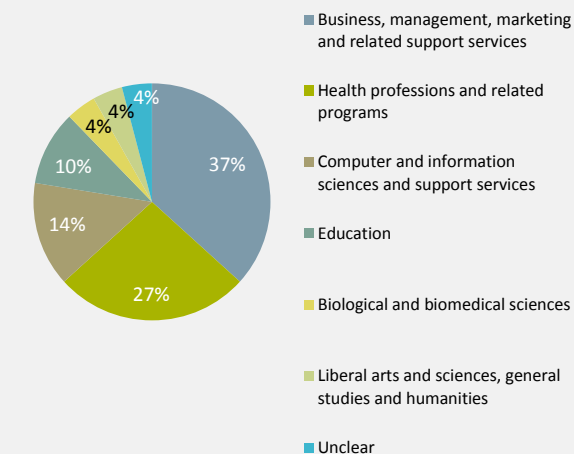


Source: survey Q9 What is your highest level of educational attainment? (n=56); For data on the Wood Buffalo population, see the 2011 National Household Survey (Statistics Canada 2013c). Percentages do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada reports that the average 50-year-old can expect to retire in 16 years (Carrière and Galarneau 2012).

Business management, health, and computer sciences are the main areas of educational attainment among live-in caregivers in the survey (Chart 5.25).

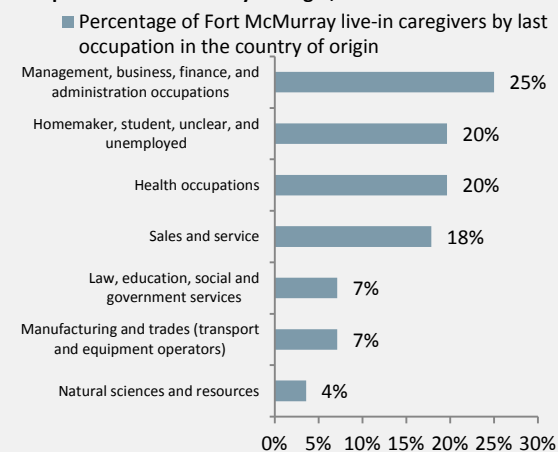
**Chart 5.25: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by field of study (participants with post-secondary only), 2014**



Source: survey Q10 In what field did you obtain your highest diploma / certificate / degree? (n=51).

Furthermore, most of the survey participants have work experience in their country of origin in occupations considered relatively prestigious or skilled (Chart 5.26). For instance, 63 percent have worked in management, business and finance, natural sciences, law, education, health, or trades (Chart 5.26).<sup>22</sup>

**Chart 5.26: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by last occupation in their country of origin, 2014**

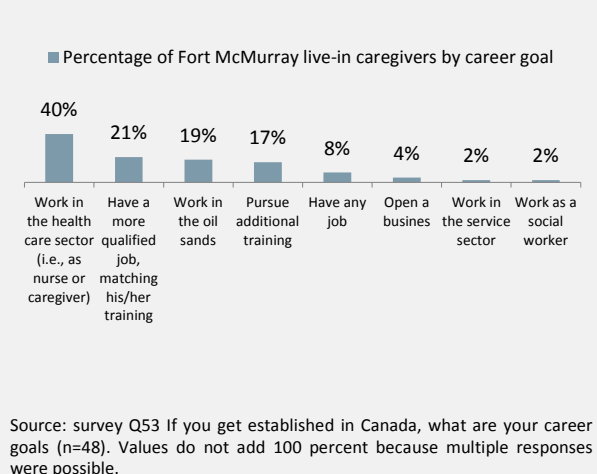


Source: survey Q11 What was your last occupation in your country of origin before you left to work overseas? (n=56). Percentages do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

<sup>22</sup> While it is possible there was something of a self-selection bias among those who opted to fill out the survey, these findings are in fact aligned with other studies of the skills and work experiences live-in caregivers bring with them to Canada (Pittman 2012).

In open-ended questions regarding their career goals, the vast majority of respondents reported plans to pursue jobs that were commensurate with their professional skills or for which they would pursue further training (such as working directly in the oil sands industry). This indicates that live-in caregivers feel they can offer a lot to Canada. Many of them, 40 percent, desire to work in the health care sector as nurses or caregivers, both high-demand occupations in Alberta (Chart 5.27).

**Chart 5.27: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by aspired career pathways in Canada, 2014**



The high educational profile of live-in caregivers provides an important counterpoint to the vulnerability or dependence sometimes ascribed

to them. Indeed, data from the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) show that live-in caregivers have the highest incidence of employment earnings and the lowest use of social assistance among all immigrants in the first to fifth years after landing in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012c). These are remarkable findings given the barriers caregivers have faced in transitioning out of the LCP after fulfilling the requirements of the program (GATES 2014). It suggests the need for research on how live-in caregivers are *made* vulnerable through the string of institutional barriers and obstacles they face in attempts to construct a life in Canada.

## Conclusion

Fort McMurray live-in caregivers make substantial social and economic contributions to their employers and communities. They not only save money for their employers but also allow them to move to Fort McMurray, work in the in the oil sands economy, and access the highest wage levels available in the country. From this perspective, live-in caregivers working in Fort McMurray are a fundamental piece of one of the core economic regions of Canada.



## Section Six

### Challenges of Working as a Live-in Caregiver in Fort McMurray

#### Highlights

- Fort McMurray live-in caregivers face a number of workplace challenges. Eleven percent report discrimination by employers, while 48 percent report being underpaid. These problems stem in part from a feature of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program as a whole, which directly bonds the worker's status to a single employer.
- Twenty-five per cent of those surveyed have changed employers during the tenure of their LCP employment period. Reasons for changing employers demonstrate the impacts of occupational dependence on the employer under the LMIA: career or family change on the part of the employer was the most common reason, while illegal or bad working conditions was the second most important reason for such a change.
- The inflexibility of their legal status as workers increases the precariousness of live-in caregivers when waiting for an LMIA re-application to be processed. Thirty-eight percent of those who changed employers waited more than three months to get an LMIA, a period during which they are not allowed to work in Canada.
- Increasing wages, expediting bureaucratic procedures that directly affect their lives (e.g., processing of LMIA and permanent residence), and improving screening of employers are the main suggestions Fort McMurray live-in caregivers offer for improving the caregiving stream of the TFWP.

Among the barriers and obstacles Fort McMurray live-in caregivers face in Canada, they highlight long permanent residence processing times (approximately two years), low salary levels, impediments to pursuing training, weak screening and monitoring of employers, and the multiple steps required to bring accompanying family members. These institutional obstacles make for a long and arduous pathway to citizenship while also compromising their ability to further contribute to Canadian society.

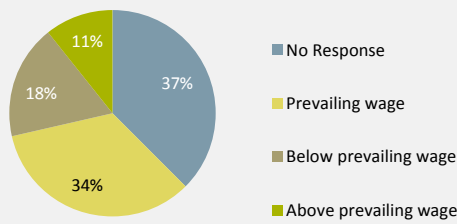
#### Workplace Problems and Their Impacts on Live-in Caregivers

Among the top experiences and perceptions of Fort McMurray, 11 percent of the interviewees report disrespect or discrimination by employers (Chart 1.5, Section One). This finding is related to a notable problem within the caregiving stream of the TFWP, that is, workplace violations.

#### Underpayment for Hours Worked

Underpayment is one serious violation. Some 18 percent of respondents reported receiving less than the Alberta prevailing gross hourly wage (\$10.19, the 2013/2014 prevailing wage, used as threshold) (Chart 6.1). The high non-response rate (37 percent) to our question about hourly wage suggests some participants were not comfortable disclosing, and thus that a higher percentage of people could be underpaid than directly reported (Chart 6.1).

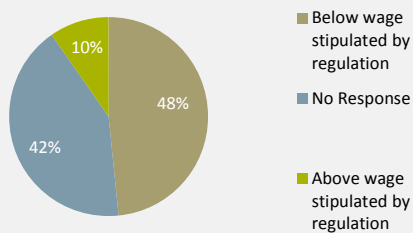
**Chart 6.1: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers' gross hourly wage in comparison to Alberta regulations, 2014**



Source: survey Q40 What is your gross hourly wage? (n=56)

Wages for overtime also present a problem. A large percentage of the survey participants (42 percent) did not respond to the question about overtime wages, but an even larger percentage (48 percent) reported receiving less than the prevailing overtime wage in Alberta (simulation based on regulated overtime wage of 1.5 times the live-in caregiver gross hourly wage, or \$15.30 an hour) (Chart 6.2) (Employment and Social Development Canada 2014i).

**Chart 6.2: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers' overtime gross hourly wage relative to Alberta regulations, 2014**

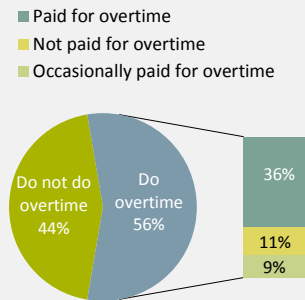


Source: survey Q46 What is your gross hourly wage when you are paid for overtime? (n=31).

Non-payment of overtime wages occurs as well, with 20 percent of respondents reporting that they are not paid or are only occasionally paid for their overtime hours (Chart 6.3).

Such violations become more urgent when we consider that most live-in caregivers put in overtime hours. Fifty-six percent of our sample reported working overtime (Chart 6.3).

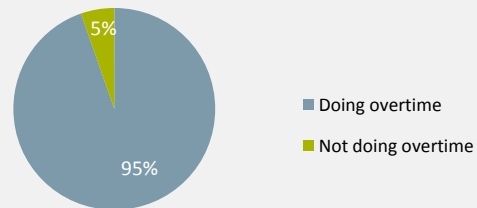
**Chart 6.3: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers reporting overtime hours and payment for overtime hours, 2014**



Source: survey Q43 Do you work overtime? (n=56) / Q45 Are you paid for your overtime hours? (n=31).

However, calculations based on the reported start and finish times of work show that 95 percent of the sample works overtime (Chart 6.4). This finding suggests that the survey respondents may have under-reported working overtime, let alone the number of overtime hours worked.

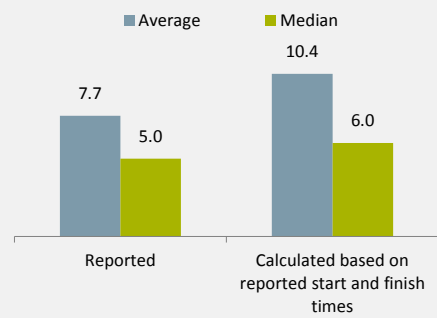
**Chart 6.4: Calculated percentage of Fort McMurray caregivers doing overtime (calculated based on reported start and finish work time), 2014**



Source: survey Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually finish? (n=56).

Live-in caregivers reported working an average of 7.7 overtime hours per week (Chart 6.5). However, our calculations based on start and finish times indicate that they might actually work 10.4 overtime hours a week on average (Chart 6.5). In short, the actual percentage of work devoted to overtime hours is most likely higher than reported.

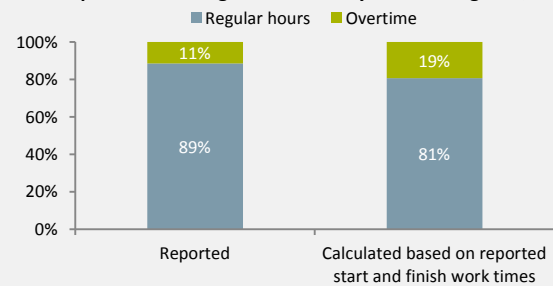
**Chart 6.5: Number of overtime hours Fort McMurray live-in caregivers work per week on average, 2014**



Source: survey Q44 How many hours do you work overtime per week on average? (n=27) / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually finish? (n=56).

Thus, while live-in caregivers' reported overtime accounts for 11 percent of their total workweek, calculations based on start and finish times place it at 19 percent (Chart 6.6).

**Chart 6.6: Share of overtime and regular hours on total time worked per week among Fort McMurray live-in caregivers, 2014**



Source: survey Q44 How many hours do you work overtime per week on average? (n=27) / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually start? / Q25 On an average work day, what time do you usually finish? (n=56).

Even when exceeding 48 hours a week, overtime is not illegal when addressed by the employment agreement. The problem lies in an employer's failure to pay for overtime hours, and in the detrimental effects of excessive overtime in an intensive work situation.

Such a situation is extremely problematic considering that live-in caregivers' lives are largely delimited to the scope of an employer's household, which tends to weaken social networks and to limit the time and resources needed to address workplace protection. In the context of Fort McMurray, this situation was worsened by the closing of the local branch of Legal Aid Alberta in July 2014. In addition, we found in our focus groups and interviews that because live-in caregivers' status in Canada and

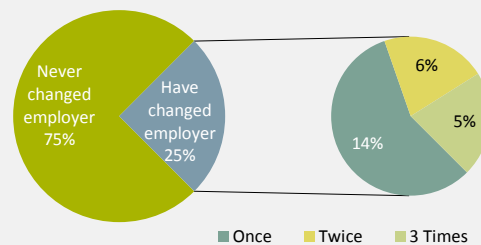
path to permanent residence is tied to their employers, they avoid "causing problems" or raising concerns with employers that might cause conflict.<sup>23</sup> In some extreme cases, live-in caregivers reported that employers had threatened to report alleged misconduct on the part of the caregiver to pre-empt caregivers reporting on employer workplace violations.

Live-in caregivers are often aware of their options and rights regarding employment conditions. However, as with other foreign workers whose status is so closely tied to an employer, live-in caregivers report preferring to accept the "rules of the game" in order to keep their jobs, save money for the future, and navigate as smoothly as possible towards achieving permanent residence and settling in Canada. This reality can combine with ethnic or national stereotypes to make participants in the LCP *appear* as a naturally nurturing and "docile" workforce (Foner 2009, Stiell and England 1997).

## Challenges around Changing Employers

The conditions of the LCP, especially a work status that relies on a single employer, make changing employment very difficult. Among the live-in caregivers participating in this research, 25 percent had changed employers and 11 percent had changed employers more than once (Chart 6.7).

**Chart 6.7: Fort McMurray live-in caregivers' changes of employer, 2014**

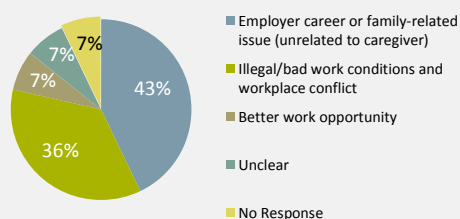


Source: survey Q19 Have you changed employers while working in Canada? (n=56) / Q20 How many times have you changed employers as a live-in caregiver in Canada? (n=14).

<sup>23</sup> Employers' actions can complicate caregivers' lives in various ways, for example, by delaying the paperwork necessary to prove the employment relationship or by deciding to terminate the employment relationship.

Career or family change on the part of the employer was the most common reason for live-in caregivers having to change employers (Chart 6.8). Illegal or bad working conditions were the second most important reason for such a change (Chart 6.8). Often, the root cause of a workplace violation or breach of contract is related to poor employer screening and lack of enforcement of LCP regulations (Valiani 2009).

**Chart 6.8: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by reason for changing employer, 2014**



Source: survey Q21 Why have you changed your employer as a live-in caregiver in Canada? (n=14).

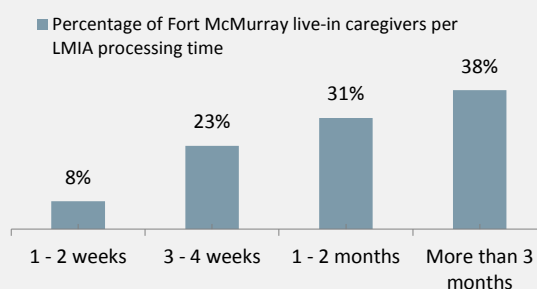
These reasons highlight a key dimension of vulnerability for live-in caregivers, namely that under the rules of the caregiving stream of the TFWP they are not allowed to freely participate in the labour market. Rather, their life chances are institutionally bound to their employers; they are subject to employers' life choices as well as the conditions they provide. If an employer decides they can no longer afford or no longer wants a live-in caregiver, the employment agreement can simply be terminated. In this case, live-in caregivers have to move quickly to find another potential employer who has applied, or can apply, for a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). Live-in caregivers also bear all the costs implied in changing contracts and re-applying for the LMIA, even when the change of employment is out of their hands. The Fort McMurray context, which is marked by high labour turnover rates and the economic ups and downs of a resource economy, can make live-in caregivers working in the region all the more vulnerable to changes in the working lives of their employers.

**“live-in caregivers bear all the costs implied in changing contracts and re-applying for the LMIA, even when the change of employment is out of their hands”**

## LMIA Processing Time when Changing Employers

Changes in employment require re-application for the LMIA (formerly the LMO). Five of the thirteen (38 percent) live-in caregivers surveyed who had to undergo a change in employer waited three or more months for the new LMIA (Chart 6.9).

**Chart 6.9: Percentage of Fort McMurray live-in caregivers by LMIA processing time when changing employers, 2014**



Source: survey Q23 For your most recent LMO [LMIA], how long did it take to get it? (n=13).

The long processing time for LMIAs leaves live-in caregivers in an extremely vulnerable situation. Without income and a place to stay, they need to rely on the limited help of third parties, usually country mates. As their social network is mainly composed of other live-in caregivers in more or less the same situation, live-in caregivers facing emotional and economic distress are left with almost no option except to go back home or to take the first live-in caregiver job that comes along. Qualitative interviews conducted in Fort McMurray demonstrate that live-in caregivers can fall victim to scams when in between jobs, worsening their prospects in the country. For example, the family applying for the LMIA (the potential employer) might take advantage of the situation. As a key informant with extensive experience working with live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray explained:

“Live-in caregivers are not allowed to work while waiting for the LMIA, and they might get deported if CIC finds them doing so. The

reality is that sometimes caregivers do not know about this rule or they are desperate to work to survive while waiting for the approval of the LMIA or work permit. That is the time employers sometimes opt not to pay them. In another words, the abuse happens because caregivers should not have worked in the first place and the employers know it.”

## Permanent Residence Processing Time

The processing time for permanent residence is another problem for live-in caregivers who are in Canada under the rules of the old LCP. The processing time varies according to the principal applicant’s marital status and number of dependants (i.e., spouse and/or children). Single live-in caregivers who have never married and have no dependants included in their applications have a somewhat expedited processing time. Live-in caregivers who are married and have dependants face longer processing time given the complexities of varied family circumstances and the extensive documentation required (e.g., screening of family members for medical and criminal admissibility conducted by the Canadian embassy in the home country, passports, medical check-ups, and child custody papers). A local expert estimated that up to 20 percent of married live-in caregivers face excessive complications with paperwork, waiting “an agonizingly long time in limbo.”

## Suggestions for Improvement Offered by Live-in Caregivers

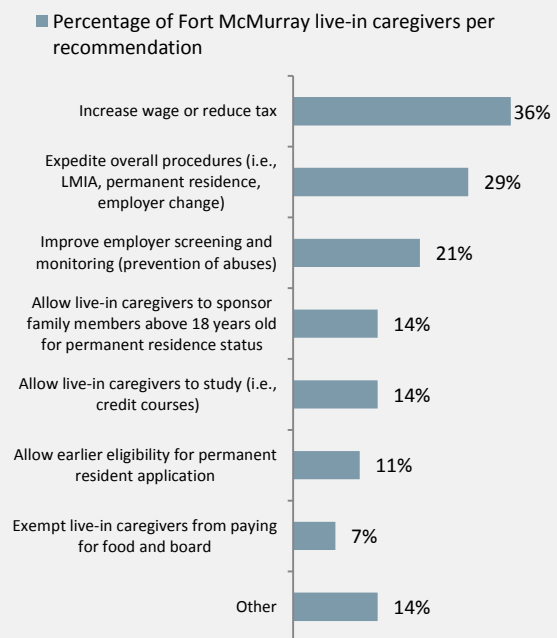
Among suggestions for changes to the LCP offered by live-in caregivers in open-ended survey responses, the need for higher wages or a tax incentive was the top priority (36 percent) (Chart 6.10). Such a recommendation is not surprising given the amount and kind of work

done by live-in caregivers. The second most prominent suggestion was to expedite overall procedures related to the LCP, including time for the LMIA, time to receive permanent residence, and time for family sponsorship (29 percent) (Chart 6.10). As previously discussed, time is an issue, even a factor of vulnerability, for live-in caregivers.

Despite evidence indicating workplace violations (e.g., underpayment, activities outside of scope of work, and excessive deductions), live-in caregivers do not give as high a priority to improving employer screening and monitoring as might be expected (Chart 6.10). This might be explained by the fact that most live-in caregivers see the program as something to get through as best you can—a bridge to “getting your [permanent residence] status and becoming a person,” as one respondent put it.

**“most live-in caregivers see the program as something to get through as best you can—a bridge to ‘getting your [permanent residence] status and becoming a person,’ as one respondent put it”**

**Chart 6.10: Recommendations for Improving the LCP by Fort McMurray live-in caregivers, 2014**



Source: survey Q51 What is your impression of the Live-in Caregiver Program in Canada (n=28). Other: transform the LCP into an open work permit program (3.5 percent); transform the LCP into an immigration program (3.5 percent); reduce cost of procedures (3.5 percent); allow family members to hire live-in caregivers (3.5 percent). Percentages do not add to 100 percent because multiple responses were possible.

## Conclusion

The flexibility and availability of live-in caregivers, although welcomed by employers, spells precariousness and vulnerability for this occupation and social group. While most challenges discussed in this section also apply to live-in caregivers working elsewhere in Canada, Fort McMurray live-in caregivers face workplace violations and policy-imposed obstacles in a social and economic environment that can intensify these challenges. The oil sands work environment is marked by a number of precarities and stressors (work intensity, long work hours, hyper-mobility, prolonged periods of family separation, volatile global oil market conditions, among others) that affect the many men and women that work in it. Live-in caregivers are among those who absorb the social and material costs of work-life balance that follow.

This analytical perspective leads to questions regarding how all levels of government (federal and provincial in particular, as important stakeholders of the resource economy) are working to improve and facilitate the overall

life conditions of not only foreign workers in the caregiving stream but of all populations in the oil sands region, in terms of housing, health care, urban infrastructure, transportation networks, prevention of overall workplace violations, and child care supply.

As a crucial facet of ensuring workforce availability, work-life quality, and child and family wellbeing, child care in Fort McMurray deserves higher attention from all levels of government. Families in Fort McMurray are hiring foreign nationals to provide care for their children in large part because of the high cost and insufficient availability of child care services in the region's urban centre. And those caregivers are working under policy-induced conditions that prevent free participation in economic life and that leave their workplaces open to a range of pressures and violations. This makes the government co-responsible for not only ensuring better working conditions for live-in caregivers but also addressing the broader problem of child care efficiently, which, despite the November 2014 reforms to the LCP, remains an important challenge.

## Final Remarks

The socioeconomic footprint of live-in caregivers is more extensive than most realize, and yet the full realization of their contributions, now and into the future, is threatened by multiple challenges and policy barriers unique to their status as foreign workers under the LCP.

The context of the oil sands region, where the sorts of work-family tensions faced by people across Canada are hyper-visible, highlights the benefits that accrue to Canadian families and workers from the labour of live-in caregivers. It also demonstrates that those benefits—including long and flexible hours, the broad scope of tasks provided, and economies of scale—are accrued because the work provided under the LCP is essentially “unfree labour” (Bakan and Stasiulis 2012).

Changes announced in November 2014 remove the “live-in” requirement for foreign nationals working as caregivers in Canada. However, live-in caregivers who are already in the country and plan to apply for permanent residence under the rules of the old LCP cannot move out without risking denial of their application. Furthermore, although the end of the requirement is welcome and might help to mitigate the risk of workplace violations, we share the understanding that the “live-in” factor is just one among many concerns in the structure of the LCP (cf. Spitzer et al. 2002). Yes, it can exacerbate stress, abuse, and the sense of indenture. But just as important to live-in caregivers are quality working conditions, secure wages and benefits, and the freedom to work, unite with families, and use and improve their skills and education in Canada in a timely manner – a situation where their life chances and choices are not tied to one employer and where they are authorized to engage in professional training while working.

The new regulations also cap the number of caregivers who can apply for permanent residence each year, removing Canada’s distinctive position as a country that guaranteed this right to live-in caregivers. The problem with the previous arrangement lay with its administration: inordinately long waiting times for paperwork, the precarious position of being on a temporary work visa while waiting for permanent residence status, and a lack of supports for receiving further training and converting existing skills. Rather than removing these barriers to a smooth transition to settlement in Canada—barriers that contributed to just half of participants in the LCP as a whole actually receiving permanent resident status within two to four years (Valiani 2009)—the radical changes to the LCP announced in November 2014 go in the other direction.

The increasing shift from permanent residence to temporary, employer-driven labour migration spells several problems, given the findings of this report. First, it does little to right the imbalance between employers and live-in caregivers. Second, it undercuts the actual and potential contributions of this well-educated and hardworking workforce. Third, it undermines the strong motivation and recognition that permanent residence provides.

Sustaining the benefits of caregiving programs in Canada and improving the benefits for the live-in caregivers themselves depends on the promotion of more equitable economic and social conditions between employers and live-in caregivers. This begins with recognizing the crucial work they do, despite many challenges, to sustain the daily cycles of work and life in Canada, including at the heart of Alberta’s resource economy.

# Appendix

## Survey Questionnaire

The survey “Live-in Caregivers in Fort McMurray: an Economic Footprint” asked the following 53 questions. For a complete copy of the survey instrument as it was applied (i.e., containing questions, explanatory notes, answer options, and the questionnaire skip logic), please contact the project team at [onthemove@ualberta.ca](mailto:onthemove@ualberta.ca).

\* Non-required questions (all the other questions were mandatory)

★ Questions worded as per the GATES questionnaire (to facilitate analytical comparisons)

🌀 Questions reproduced from the GATES questionnaire

1. Do you agree to participate in this survey?
2. Are you in the Live-in Caregiver Program?
3. Do you work in Fort McMurray or a nearby community?
4. What is your first name?\*
5. Please, provide your personal telephone or email contact\*
6. Your year of birth?
7. What is your country of citizenship?
8. How were you recruited to Canada as a caregiver? ★
9. What is your highest level of educational attainment? ★
10. In what field did you obtain your highest diploma/certificate/degree?
11. What was your last occupation in your country of origin before you left to work overseas? 🌀
12. Have you worked in any other country previously as a live-in caregiver?
13. Please, indicate the countries where you have worked as a live-in caregiver before.
14. How much money did you spend in order to come work in Canada?
15. If you used an agent/recruiter, how much did you pay for it?\*
16. Did you take course(s) on caregiving in preparation to your arrival in Canada?
17. How much did you spend on caregiving course(s)? \*
18. How long have you been in Canada?
19. Have you changed employers while working in Canada?
20. How many times have you changed employers as a live-in caregiver in Canada?
21. Why have you changed your employer as a live-in caregiver in Canada?\*
22. Did you have to re-apply for an LMO?
23. For your most recent LMO, how long did it take to get it?
24. On an average work day, how many hours do you work?
25. On an average work day, what time do you usually start?
26. On an average work day, what time do you usually finish?
27. Do you work on weekends?
28. Does your employer contact you regarding work-related matters outside of work hours?
29. What sort of work does your primary/principal employer do?
30. Where does your primary/principal employer work?
31. How often does your primary/principal employer's work schedule change from week to week?
32. What sort of work does your second employer do?\*
33. Where does your second employer work?\*
34. How often does your second employer's work schedule change from week to week?\*
35. How often does your work schedule change from week to week?
36. How many people live in your employer's house, excluding you?
37. How many people are you responsible to care for?
38. Who do you care for? Please, check all that apply.
39. Please, list below all activities that are part of your work routine.
40. What is your gross hourly wage?
41. How much are you charged for accommodation and food per month?
42. What is your net monthly income?
43. Do you work overtime?
44. How many hours do you work overtime per week on average?
45. Are you paid for your overtime hours?
46. What is your gross hourly wage when you are paid for overtime?
47. What do you do in your free time?
48. Do you send money to your family overseas on a regular basis?
49. What percentage of your monthly income do you save on average to send back to your country?
50. How is your experience of life in Fort McMurray?\*
51. What is your impression of the Live-in Caregiver Program in Canada?
52. Have you or will you apply for PR?
53. If you get established in Canada, what are your career goals?\*



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