

Lifespan Respite Care Program Enhancement Grant

PROJECT SUMMARY

Grantee Organization: Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

State: Massachusetts

Project Period: July 1, 2021 to August 31, 2026

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Project Overview:

The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will utilize the extensive knowledge and experience gained from the Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition (MLRC) to strengthen collaborations and partnerships within Massachusetts. DDS will incorporate lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance training, increase cultural representation in the respite workforce, and target underserved populations across the lifespan, with an emphasis on addressing those families most impacted by COVID-19.

The **goal** of this project is to enhance Massachusetts state systems and capacities to deliver respite care and related services to family caregivers of adults or children with disabilities.

Project objectives: 1) advance the collaboration between Massachusetts state programs that provide respite and the Aging Disability Resource Consortia (ADRC); 2) develop and test an academic credit-based respite care program, titled Campus to Community at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; and 3) develop and disseminate an academic respite framework to replicate the Campus to Community program across Massachusetts institutions of higher education.

Proposed interventions: build upon and enhance existing programs that exhibit family-centered, sustainable best practices; expand the UMA Campus to Community program to other community colleges and universities; expand MLRC membership to identify existing peer worker and respite volunteer programs; continue outreach and cross training to ADRC Options Counselors and other related partners; continue Accessing Respite for Massachusetts Family Caregivers (CARE) online training for care coordinators and case managers; develop and test 14-week post-secondary training

for students entering vocational or academic health professions programs; create an academic respite framework to serve as a tool for other colleges and universities seeking to replicate the MLRC-UMA model; continue collaboration with Rewarding Work, a statewide Respite Directory; and improve ongoing messaging to improve coordination of respite referrals and expanded respite service delivery.

Outcomes and Products:

Anticipated outcomes: 1) improved respite referrals and data tracking through the state's centralized MassOptions program; 2) increased access to respite through the Campus to Community academic program, and 3) increased awareness of family caregiver respite needs.

Expected products: academic credit-based respite framework, *Campus to Community*, for replication across Massachusetts institutions of higher education; and enhancements to the MassOptions website and MassOptions and ADRC specialists' respite referral process to improve access to respite services.

