

# Lifespan Respite Care Program



Lifespan Respite Grantee Lead Agency: **Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Aging Services (OKDHS AS)**

Funding Period: September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2021

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Primary Goal: **Expand, enhance, and ensure the sustainability of gap-filling respite services to Oklahoma family caregivers across the lifespan and disability spectrum.**

Key Performance Measures	Notable Achievements
<p>Outcomes measured by the grantee included: the extent to which respite vouchers were easily accessible and manageable by caregivers; the success of the partnership with Oklahoma Aging and Disability Resource Consortium/No Wrong Door (OKADRC/NWD) in providing streamlined access to respite resources; increases in public/private partnerships; changes in caregiver health as a result of caregiver initiatives; and the number and type of policy development and events to promote caregiver services and ensure sustainability. Processes documented by the grantee included an on-line searchable database; the productivity of public/private partnerships; and employee caregiver training. Performance outcomes documented included increases in respite support; and pre- and post-respite surveys to determine the effectiveness of Oklahoma’s Lifespan Respite Grant Voucher Program.</p>	<p>The grantee regularly uses the Oklahoma Lifespan Respite Grant Caregiver Needs and Provider Survey to document characteristics of typical Oklahoma caregivers, care recipients, and service providers; services caregivers currently receive; services caregivers indicated they wished they had; and services that providers indicated that caregivers need. This resource, an excellent tool to help the Oklahoma Caregiver Coalition (OCC) partners identify and prioritize the needs of Oklahoma family caregivers, has shown that Oklahoma’s caregivers and providers identified respite as the number one need. Guided by documented service needs and priorities, Oklahoma’s Lifespan Respite Grant Voucher Program provides typical, educational, and emergency vouchers to family caregivers across the lifespan through a creative and diverse service delivery approach.</p>

Key Objectives, Activities and Outcomes	Coalition, ADRC and Community Partners
<p><b>Objective 1. Advance existing lifespan respite services statewide.</b></p> <p><b>Notable Partnerships, Advancement Activities, and Performance Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An annual Oklahoma Caregiver Conference is held each November during National Family Caregiver Month at no charge to caregivers across the state. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each year, approximately 250 family caregivers and 45 vendors with representation across the lifespan attend. All individuals on the program (emcee, keynote, breakout session speakers, and legislators) are or have been family caregivers.</li> <li>▪ Four legislators attended the Caregiver Conferences.</li> <li>▪ A Spanish interpreter provided translation for family caregivers.</li> <li>▪ After attending the conference, more than 95% of Caregiver Conference attendees felt more prepared to start or continue their caregiving role.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>State and Community Partners</b></p> <p>The Oklahoma Caregiver Coalition (OCC) provided the backbone to fulfill grant goals and objectives. Formed to improve the supports and experiences over the lifespan of caregivers through education, advocacy, and access to resources, the OCC included more than 170 public, private, and community partners. Various state partner agencies worked cooperatively and efficiently to develop supports for family caregivers and referred them to the program best suited to serve caregivers’ needs.</p>

- Statewide respite program staff (AARP Oklahoma, SS, VA, DDS, AAA, Foster Care, adult day programs) were invited by various conference/workshop planners, businesses, faith-based organizations, etc. to present information to current or future caregivers to gain knowledge regarding respite services in Oklahoma through Lunch and Learns/Workshops. A panel of speakers provide an abundance of well-produced resources to assist the various needs of caregivers and tools to access respite.
  - These events also generated additional OCC partners, and increased understanding of respite services.
- To address the complex maze of federal, state, local and private service systems grandparents and other relatives raising children frequently encounter, the grantee connected with a representative of Oklahoma's GrandVoices Racial Equity Initiative, which is supported by Generations United. The Initiative's purpose is to improve culturally appropriate supports and services to African and Native American grand families by elevating their voices, perspectives, and expertise to inform and influence policy, practice, and research.
  - Native and African American grandparents raising children gathered at a roundtable event to voice challenges they face in fulfilling their unexpected parenting role.
  - A report on the roundtable summarized key findings, including the need for a Caregiver Resource Center to provide essential supports to keep families together, assist in children's overall wellbeing, and avoid foster care or costly institutionalization.

### **Objective 2: Actively collaborate with the Oklahoma Caregiver Coalition (OCC).**

#### **Notable Partnerships and Collaborative Activities**

- On the Road trainings brought caregiving providers (many were OCC partners) together to share resources and services with caregivers and care recipients in strategically placed locations across the state, connecting local resources and caregivers, and bringing providers together to network.
  - Caregivers reported that the best thing about the trainings was that they learned the names and contact information of individuals that could assist them in accessing resources in their communities.

### **Objective 3: Develop policies and strategies to sustain access to respite services.**

#### **Notable Policy and Sustainability Activities**

- The OCC Executive Committee and Respite Subcommittee partners participated in a strategic planning process, referencing ARCH's Sustainability Planning Workbook, to expand and sustain respite services in Oklahoma.
  - One outcome from strategic planning was securing a non-profit entity, WovenLife, as the OCC's fiscal and administrative sponsor — a natural fit as fiscal sponsor for the OCC since they have served as the fiscal agent for the 2013 and 2017 LRGVP.
  - *WovenLife* was also instrumental in managing the fiscal needs of the Oklahoma Caregiver Conference and assisting the OCC in accepting donations to support respite services.
- An Oklahoma State Representative requested an interim study to examine physical and mental health implications and financial costs to unpaid family caregivers.
  - The study examined what kinds of help family caregivers needed, and what was currently available to help family caregivers.
  - Family caregivers, including those with children or parents with special needs, and grandparents raising grandchildren, shared information about their day-to-day caregiving challenges.

#### **State Respite Coalition/Organization Role**

Oklahoma Caregiver Coalition (OCC) meetings provide an opportunity for more than 170 partners to attend quarterly meetings and discuss pressing issues affecting caregivers. Every partner was asked to serve on one of nine subcommittees, creating a forum for partners to individually and collectively share their wealth of knowledge, and encouraging individuals and organizations to share caregiver resources like never before.

#### **Aging and Disability Resource Center Role**

Oklahoma ADRC/No Wrong Door were key and formal partners in providing streamlined access to respite resources. This strong partnership is identified as a key outcome in Oklahoma's Lifespan Respite Grant.

- Caregivers reported that their number one need was respite, and they conveyed the benefits of respite and the savings associated with prevention of costly institutionalization.

#### **Objective 4: Evaluate and disseminate program results.**

##### **Performance Outcomes**

- All grant activities, and additional activities performed as part of the lifespan respite grant, were evaluated according to a written plan with expected outcomes and indicators. Data were collected throughout the funding period through forms and surveys, or documentation of processes. Evaluation results were made available in multiple user-friendly formats.
  - 634 caregivers received Lifespan Respite Grant (LRG) vouchers.
  - Of those using vouchers, 88% of those believed they would not receive respite if the LRG Voucher (LRGV) program was not available.
  - Of those using vouchers, 95% of caregivers used the full voucher amount for respite
  - 97% of caregivers rated their satisfaction with the LRGV program “extremely” or “very” satisfied.
  - 93% of caregivers reported lower levels of stress following the use of LRGV respite services.

##### **Program Flexibilities and Supports Introduced in Response to COVID-19**

- The grantee introduced new flexibilities in the respite voucher program, including increased respite voucher amount; expanded provider eligibility to include someone who lives with the caregiver and care recipient; and lifting of the household income requirement.
- The grantee made Caregiver Care Bags including blankets, water bottles, hand sanitizer, face masks, healthy snacks, adult coloring books available through a socially isolated drive-through pick up station.



For more information, contact ARCH at (703) 256-2084