



Louisiana Lifespan RESPITE COALITION

The Lifespan Respite Program, funded by the US Administration for Community Living/Administration on Aging, was established to help states expand, enhance and coordinate respite services. The Louisiana program works to meet these goals by serving family caregivers who assist individuals, families and children with developmental disabilities, other disabilities, mental health, aging or chronic illness.

Louisiana Lifespan Respite is a completely volunteer network to build and strengthen a coordinated approach that ensures respite services are available to all who need them in Louisiana.

Our key components in this effort are:

- Coordination and training among actors
- Community-based and home focus
- Respite Care Services Education
- Serving Caregivers of children or adults
- Improving access
- Identifying and filling service gaps

This project is supported, in part, under a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging, Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. These contents, however, do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

Respite...What a Relief

Respite Care is defined as planned or emergency care provided to an adult or child with special need in order to provide temporary relief to the family caregiver of that adult or child. Respite services may be provided in a variety of settings including a home, adult day care center or residential care facility.

The most important first step in providing relief to a family caregiver is motivating that caregiver to acknowledge their role so they can address their own needs. Caregivers who do not reach out for help are less effective, less likely to stand up for their own welfare and that of their loved one, and more prone to illness.

State of Respite in Louisiana

More than one-third of all Americans take on the heavy burden of family caregiving without admitting the magnitude this role has on every aspect of their lives. Although there is a network of services and resources available to lend a hand, most caregivers go on trying to do too much and not asking for help because the caregiver is unable to verbalize or acknowledge their own needs.

Caregivers:

- 76 percent do not get help from family members
- 45 percent feel isolated
- 62 percent don't get the supports they need to be a caregiver
- Most will be a caregiver for 5 years before reaching out for help

The Lifespan Respite Law

The federal Lifespan Respite Care Act was passed in 2006, though state created Lifespan Respite programs have been in existence since 1997. Implementation of the federal law began in 2009 when the U.S. Administration on Aging took on this responsibility. Congress has appropriated approximately \$2.5 million per year for the program, with competitive three-year grants of \$200,000 available to state Aging and Disability Resource Centers.

Examples of Coalitions and State Agencies Working Together to Assure Statewide Systems of Respite Care

The ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center provides technical assistance to state program grantees and the field, in order to develop sustainable, integrated and high-quality respite programs across the lifespan of caregivers and those in need of assistance. ARCH also supports program research, analysis and monitoring to facilitate respite and family caregiver support.

We seek to empower family caregivers through our efforts in order to:

- Help family caregivers know that they are not alone; they are part of a rapidly-growing, very large group of people who can help, support, and learn from one another;
- Ensure that family caregivers understand that care giving is an additional role that goes over and above their traditional roles as spouse, child, or parent, so it requires additional support and planning
- Help family caregivers become more effective problem solvers and motivate them to actively participate in improving their situation

For more information contact Tammy LeBlanc, at (225) 219-0223 or tammy.leblanc@la.gov