

# Lifespan Respite Care Program



Lifespan Respite Grantee Lead Agency: **Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)**

Funding Period: September 1, 2018 to August 30, 2022

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Primary Goal: **Provide sustainable respite services and related supports that are easily accessible to and affordable for family caregivers of children or adults with special needs.**

Key Performance Measures	Notable Achievements
<p>The grantee evaluated progress on the four objectives stated below over six month implementation phases. The Executive Committee to the grant met weekly and revised the work plan as needed (particularly important during the pandemic). The grantee collected: numerical and demographic data on caregivers and recipients using the state respite voucher program; the health or disability status of care recipients; hours of care provided; employment status of caregivers; and ease of receiving financial assistance for respite. The grantee also collected data using surveys and interviews as part of ongoing program evaluation. Caregivers reported being better able to support loved ones; maintain their own mental, emotional, and physical health; hold down stable work; and contribute to their communities in other meaningful ways.</p>	<p>After surveying the landscape of respite services in Montana, the grantee identified significant unmet need for respite among Montana caregivers. Barriers to respite utilization included restrictive income, resource, or categorical eligibility criteria. Locating a quality, accessible respite provider they trusted was also a barrier for caregivers. To address these barriers and serve family caregivers, Montana launched the Lifespan Respite Voucher program, a self-directed program that allows caregivers to hire someone they already know and trust to spend time with their loved one and provide the primary caregiver with time away from caregiving. Vouchers used totaled 1,214 during the reporting period.</p>

Key Objectives, Activities and Outcomes	Coalition, ADRC and Community Partners
<p><b>Objective 1. Offer training to family caregivers and potential respite providers.</b></p> <p><b>Notable Partners, Activities, and Performance Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The grantee partnered with Montana State University Extension Office and the Montana Geriatric Institute to offer <i>Powerful Tools for Caregivers</i> train-the-trainer sessions across the state to support localized in-person training options.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eighteen persons received training.</li> <li>The grantee also provided training for 96 individuals who work for the Area Agency on Aging as ADRC information assistants and/or SHIP Counselors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The grantee created a series of respite provider education and recruitment events that could be designed and offered regionally.</li> </ul>	<p><b>State and Community Partners</b></p> <p>In addition to those ongoing partnerships noted under each objective, the grantee coordinated with the Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) Caregiver Support Committee to discuss potential training available to expand statewide respite providers, and the grantee attended all ADRD Workgroup meetings. The grant Project Manager served on the ADRD executive committee and co-</p>

- A planning event brought together 24 coalition members and teams from multiple cities from around the state to Helena to learn about lifespan respite resources available for caregivers and respite providers.
- Each team began creating plans for localized events in their region designed to educate the public about the Lifespan Respite program and recruit and train respite providers.

### **Objective 2: Develop a registry of trained providers utilizing the ADRC Resource Directory.**

#### **Notable Partners and Expansion Activities**

- The grantee developed protocol for adding trained respite providers to the ADRC Resource Directory, and in preparation for the new website and database, the old website was evaluated by the coalition and edits were made to streamline use.
- During the funding period, a new data collection system was established and updates are ongoing.
  - The system integrates four different databases the Office on Aging uses, tracks 34 different services, collects a variety of demographic information, makes entering and updating information easier, standardizes language for entering data, and provides the ability to group and view information for different demographics in order to provide a better picture of who is receiving respite.
  - As resources are identified, they are periodically added to the directory according to a maintenance schedule.

### **Objective 3: Support outreach efforts to best educate caregivers and providers about Lifespan Respite.**

#### **Notable Partnerships and Outreach Activities**

- The grantee developed six new PSAs to help recruit respite providers and inform the public about respite.
- The PSAs showed respite providers talking about their experiences caring for an individual. Additional PSAs were intended to educate caregivers and referral sources about the voucher program.
  - PSAs resulted in additional referrals from professionals who reported seeing the TV ad or hearing the radio ad.
- The grantee developed respite commercials for two TV shows per year with Aging Horizons film staff. The grantee also participated in a Healthy Living Program that was filmed and aired. The program shared information about respite needs and the Lifespan Respite voucher program – what it is, how to access it, and the importance of respite.
- The grantee redesigned outreach materials including a Lifespan Respite Voucher Referral Packet, making the referral process clearer and easier to use for referral sources.
- The grantee produced a new Respite Provider recruitment brochure, application, and background check form to find and recruit interested individuals to become respite providers and register on the ADRC database.

### **Objective 4: Continue education efforts of policy decision makers to secure funding for the Lifespan Respite Program.**

#### **Notable Performance Measures**

- The grantee met with key Montana House of Representatives members who, through personal experience with the need for respite, valued respite services. House members

chaired the caregiver subcommittee. The grantee worked with the broad faith-based community to recruit volunteers to complete training available on the respite registry and to gain representation from faith-based organizations on the Lifespan Respite Coalition.

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

Early in the grant cycle, the grantee paid particular attention to reorganizing the Coalition's committee structure, determining how and where the Coalition could support the Lifespan Respite Program, and assigning tasks from the work plan. The Lifespan Respite Coalition met quarterly to discuss educational activities, maximize training opportunities, suggest updates to the website and data systems, weigh in on the sustainability strategy, and develop the "Building a Better Network for Lifespan Respite" events.

The grantee also worked to diversify the Lifespan Respite Coalition as a statewide advisory body made up of representatives that could speak to the needs of caregivers, care recipients and respite providers; advise development of additional caregiver supports and public messaging; help with recruitment of respite providers; refer caregivers to the voucher program; and plan for the long-term sustainability of Lifespan Respite infrastructure in the state.

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

Data collection related to Montana's registry of trained respite providers (Objective 2) used Capstone, the primary database for the AAA network in Montana. Transition to this system and ongoing work towards integration provided the opportunity to reach out to the AAAs and their partners to promote Lifespan Respite.

offered suggestions, including gathering a range of data on the benefits of respite and additional needs of the population using respite, which could be used in designing potential legislation moving forward. They also recommended speaking with decision makers in health and human services to get a handle on current and expected funding and to discuss the potential to unify respite programs currently offered through multiple state programs that vary in accessibility and efficiency.

- The grantee followed committee work in the Montana Legislature related to respite and weighed in at relevant hearings over the course of the grant.
- The grantee met with an Administrator for Montana’s DPHHS to discuss the potential of developing a plan to fund respite through the budget. Talking points to utilize with decision makers were developed and the partnership was enhanced. The administrator has since been attending coalition meetings.
- The grantee compiled data on respite use across the state in order to better understand patterns of use, and to inform planning and conversations with decision makers.
- The grantee held a focus group with coalition members on potential respite models and interventions they could see being effective, and began interviewing caregivers to learn about the benefits of lifespan respite in Montana and potential ways to improve the Lifespan Respite program.
  - As part of that interview, caregivers were asked if they would be willing to write or testify to the legislature to build a bench of people willing to speak to the value and utility of the program.

#### Program Flexibilities and Supports Introduced in Response to Covid-19

- Realizing that the COVID-19 pandemic created a significant need to pivot the respite program in every way, the Executive Committee met weekly and revised the Lifespan Respite work plan with assigned task leaders.
  - The grantee shifted focus during the pandemic toward online promotion and training. Given that Montana is a large and rural state, it became obvious that developing online resources was essential – pandemic or not – , and that those new resources would contribute to program sustainability.
  - The grantee initiated two new programs to support caregivers and recipients. The first distributed personal protective equipment, and the second distributed personal care items (robotic pets, weighted blankets, tablets, play materials and puzzles, for example) that provided respite by giving comfort, easing loneliness, or engaging care recipients.



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