

Lifespan Respite Care Program Enhancement Grant

PROJECT SUMMARY

Grantee Organization: Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging (TDDA)

State: Tennessee

Project Period: September 30, 2025 to September 29, 2028

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Project Overview:

The Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging (TDDA)—formed in July 2024 through the merger of the Tennessee Commission on Aging & Disability and the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities—has a mission to empower, support, and enhance the lives of people with disabilities and older Tennesseans by promoting independence, inclusion, and the pursuit of lifelong health. The Tennessee Caregiver Coalition (TCC) has a long-standing partnership with DDA, collaborating on multiple statewide initiatives to expand and improve respite care services.

This initiative represents another joint effort between DDA and TCC to leverage our combined expertise, networks, and resources to strengthen Tennessee's Lifespan Respite Care System and address unmet caregiver needs across the state. DDA and the TCC seek to strengthen Tennessee's statewide Lifespan Respite Care system by expanding access, quality, and coordination of respite services for family caregivers of all ages, disabilities, and chronic conditions.

The **goal** is to reduce caregiver burden by improving the availability, accessibility, and quality of respite services; to address statewide workforce shortages; and to ensure equitable access to respite across diverse and underserved populations.

Project objectives: 1) expand the respite care workforce; 2) increase respite access for caregivers; 3) expand volunteer-based respite options; and 4) strengthen statewide coordination and partnerships.

Proposed interventions: implement National Respite Care Provider Training via Talent LMS, including launching a statewide digital Respite Care Registry (website and app) modeled after the University of Nebraska system; expand TCC's pilot volunteer group respite program for children with disabilities and add services for older adults; add general respite vouchers to address the current caregiver waitlist; and expand the TCC's Emergency Respite Voucher Program.

Outcomes and Products:

Anticipated outcomes: 1) increased number of trained respite providers statewide; 2) improved caregiver access to qualified respite providers through a centralized registry; 3) reduction in wait times for respite vouchers; 4) expanded volunteer-based respite options for multiple populations; and 5) strengthened partnerships across disability, aging, and caregiver networks.

Expected products: statewide Respite Care Registry (web and mobile app); comprehensive online training platform for paid and volunteer respite providers; expanded general and emergency voucher availability; and operational volunteer group respite programs serving both children and older adults.



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