

Respite Voucher Program

General Guidelines and Procedures

The following are general guidelines that interested Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) may use in developing and administering a Respite Voucher Program in their service region.

I. General Guidelines for Respite Voucher Program Development

A. Availability of Respite Vouchers:

Respite vouchers are awarded based on the availability of funds.

B. Suggested Targeting Guidelines:

- ❖ In accordance with the Older Americans Act, the AAA should give priority to older persons with low incomes, who are members of a minority group, or who reside in rural areas.
- ❖ The AAA should ensure that recipients of respite vouchers are not currently receiving a similar service under another program.

C. Suggested Level of Service:

It is recommended that respite vouchers be made available at \$300 per quarter.

D. Eligible Participants:

- ❖ Grandparents raising grandchildren or other relative as parent (in accordance with requirements of the NFCSP – no more than 10% of an AAA's allocation may be spent on this group for all services; grandparent aged 60+; grandchild aged 18 or younger (priority given to those raising children with developmental disabilities or mental retardation);
- ❖ Spouses caring for a spouse over the age of 60 with dementia or chronic health problems who have deficits in at least two activities of daily living (ADLs);
- ❖ Adult children caring for a parent over the age of 60; or
- ❖ Other adults caring for a relative or friend over the age of 60.

E. How It Works:

Request for Application Packet by Mail:

Caregivers interested in applying for a respite voucher should contact their local AAA and request a respite application packet is mailed to them.

On-line Posting of Application Packet:

AAAs may also elect to post their respite application packet on-line to facilitate caregivers having access to this program.

Respite Application Packet Contents:

At a minimum, the Respite Application Packet should include:

- ❖ A Respite Guide for Families and Providers
- ❖ A Respite Care Program Application.

AAA Developed Review and Approval Process:

AAAs should establish an internal process for reviewing and approving respite voucher applications. Ultimately, relief for caregivers should be provided as soon as possible.

Vouchers Issued Directly to Applicants (Caregivers):

Once approved, vouchers for respite care will be issued by the AAA and sent to the applicant. The applicant may then use the voucher to purchase respite services from a provider of his or her choice.

Minimum Qualifications of Respite Providers:

Providers of respite services must be 18 years of age and can be anyone except immediate family living in the home. The AAA should also make an effort to develop a list of possible providers – both from home health or other service agencies as well as other individuals interested in providing this service. See guidelines below on developing a Respite Provider Registry.

Liability Issues:

Because caregivers are given full freedom to hire the respite provider of their choice, the liability issues reside between the caregiver and the provider – not an AAA.

If, however, AAAs contract with specific agencies for the provision of respite services, and the agency hires the person(s) providing respite services, then both the AAA and provider bear some of the liability.

Provider Payment:

After respite services are provided, the voucher must be completed and signed by both the caregiver and respite service provider and returned to the AAA. The AAA will then send payment to the respite provider.

II. General Guidelines for Respite Provider Registry Development

A. Purpose:

The purpose of the Respite Provider Registry is to provide families needing respite care with information on individuals in their area who are interested in providing this service.

B. Documentation Required From Respite Providers:

In order to be added to the Respite Provider Registry, interested providers must:

1. Complete the Respite Provider Registry Application.
2. Provide reliable references for verification by the AAA and clients.
3. Provide verification of any training(s), certification(s) or license(s).

Once the provider is determined suitable for referral, they are added to the database and their names may be given to callers requesting respite services.

C. How the AAA Staff Should use the Registry:

AAA staff will use the information given by the respite provider to match the needs of the caller with the most appropriate provider. Referrals are based strictly on the needs and location of the person in need of the service. It is up to the family to interview, screen and hire the respite provider they find most suitable, and to negotiate with the provider for the best price for the service (guidelines are included in the Respite Guide).

Disclaimer: With regard to the Respite Voucher Program, the AAA is neither an employment agency nor an employer. Being listed on the registry does not guarantee employment or being contacted for employment.

D. Updating Service and Contact Data:

Once included in the Respite Provider Registry, providers are responsible for notifying the AAA of any address or telephone changes or changes in their service provision.

E. Removal From the Respite Provider Registry:

Providers will be removed from the Respite Provider Registry for the following reasons:

1. Two or more complaints from caregivers that have hired the provider to provide respite care.
2. Conviction of a felony in the areas of abuse, neglect, exploitation of a child or disabled adult or vulnerable older person.
3. Failure to provide the AAA with a current address or telephone number.