



RCAW
Respite Care Association
of Wisconsin

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State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) awarded 3-year Federal Lifespan Respite Grant totaling \$664,271.

Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW) lead partner agency.

Appleton, WI: October 7, 2020, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL), Administration on Aging (AoA), awarded the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services a three-year grant of \$635,495 PLUS an additional supplement of \$28,776. The grant assists eligible state agencies in further implementing requirements of the Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2006 (The Act - P.L.109-442) by focusing on expanding and enhancing respite care services to family caregivers across the lifespan; improving the statewide dissemination and coordination of respite care, and providing, supplementing, or improving access and quality of respite care services to family caregivers, thereby reducing family caregiver strain. The supplemental award will focus on supporting family caregivers directly impacted by COVID-19.

“RCAW is looking forward to expanding its program offerings to address the workforce shortage of respite care providers in Wisconsin,” says Lisa Schneider, RCAW’s Executive Director. “Respite plays a critical part in caring for a family member who is sick, aging, or disabled. Seeking support and maintaining your health is key to managing your role as a caregiver; it’s not selfish to need time to yourself!”

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services, in partnership with Respite Care Association of Wisconsin and other key partners including UW Madison School of Nursing and UW Oshkosh Center for Community Development, Engagement and Training (CCDET), will build a sustainable system, increasing the reach of respite programs statewide, expanding on existing programs started in 2010. This three-year project, the Wisconsin Lifespan Respite System, aims to expand and strengthen the availability and accessibility of free, high-quality, person-centered respite services to all caregivers, regardless of age, race/ethnicity, or special needs of the care recipient.

“We are excited for the opportunity to collaborate with the Respite Care Association of Wisconsin to develop a sustainable system for assessing the ongoing respite needs across the State” says Dr. Kim Whitmore, Assistant Professor, UW-Madison School of Nursing. “Building this important infrastructure will help us better support family caregivers and promote access to high quality respite services.”

In Wisconsin, it is estimated that there are 578,000 caregivers who provide more than 538 million hours of unpaid care valued at over \$7 billion each year.¹ Over 85,000 people with disabilities and older adults in Wisconsin rely on home and community-based services (HCBS), such as personal care, home health care, and respite, to stay in their homes and out of expensive Medicaid-funded institutions.² Respite care continues to be one of the highest requested supports.

The State of Wisconsin last received funding from the Lifespan Respite Care Program: State Program Enhancement Grants in 2013.

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¹ https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/ltc/2019/wisconsin-caregiving-survey-care-act.doi.10.26419-2Fres.00259.091.pdf

² http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SurvivalCoalition_PressRelease_COVID2_042120_FINAL.pdf