



RCAW

Respite Care Association
of Wisconsin

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The Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW) secured a three-year Federal Grant to Strengthen Key Programs, But State Support Remains Crucial.

Additional state funding is needed to sustain long-term growth and sustainability in Wisconsin's Lifespan Respite Programs.

To increase the availability of trained respite providers in communities nationwide, ACL has awarded a new \$1.25 million Lifespan Respite Special Projects grant to the Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW). With this three-year project, RCAW will enhance, improve, and streamline the ACL-funded National Respite Care Provider Training (NRCPT) to reach a broader audience on a national level. In support of ACL's commitment to strengthening the direct care workforce, RCAW, and its partners will also undertake various activities to develop, test, implement, and promote innovative approaches to respite care, especially for populations that lack access to these services.

RCAW, in collaboration with the ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center (ARCH) and the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP), field-tested a competency-based online respite provider training curriculum for entry-level respite providers in 10 pilot states, which ultimately became the NRCPT. RCAW and the collaborating partners developed the training curriculum, helped advance a newly developed recruitment campaign among the pilot sites, and worked with ARCH and an evaluation consultant to monitor the effectiveness and reach of the training and marketing strategies. "I am thrilled that RCAW successfully secured this one-time special projects grant!! This is a significant achievement and a testament to our hard work, dedication, and collaboration to advancing our mission at RCAW and improving the lives of those we serve," said RCAW Executive Director Lisa Schneider. "However, I want to take this opportunity to clarify an important point: while this new grant may give the impression that we are well-resourced, it is essential to understand that this does not diminish the ongoing need for increased State General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funding," Lisa stated. She further added, "A significant amount of this federal grant will be to contract with RCAW's national partners to carry out the activities related to the National Respite Care Provider Training program. The funds cannot be used to support RCAW's high demand, core direct respite programs that benefit Wisconsin's family caregivers."

Federal Grants Help, But Gaps Remain

RCAW reports three key reasons why leveraging an increase in State GPR funds is critical to its mission and Wisconsin's Lifespan Respite Programs: State GPR funds are the backbone of these federal awards, the federal funds are restricted and time-limited, and RCAW relies on contracted subject matter experts.

"RCAW wants to achieve a base level of \$500,000 in State GPR funds annually to help ensure the stability of our high-demand core operations and programs that serve Wisconsin family caregivers in need of respite," said Lisa Schneider.

A Call for State Investment in Our Future

The success of programs funded by federal grants highlights the critical need for complementary state funding. While federal resources are invaluable, they cannot replace the stable and flexible support State GPR funding provides. "We urge state leaders to recognize the tremendous value that increased GPR funding could bring to these initiatives," said Lisa Schneider. "By investing in RCAW, the state can help us continue addressing gaps in existing programs, particularly for family caregivers who often fall through the cracks. Our Caregiver Respite Grant Program has been running for six years, and the number of family caregivers served each year has grown by an average of 38% annually."

Please contact RCAW for more information about the federal grants or to learn how you can support increased state funding.

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About the organization: RCAW's mission is to promote, support, and expand quality statewide respite care across the lifespan—We Make Respite Happen!

According to AARP, 580,000 family caregivers in Wisconsin provide a staggering \$540 million in unpaid family care, with an estimated economic value of \$ 16.97 per hour and a total Wisconsin value of \$9.2 billion. This figure underscores the immense economic impact of their selfless work on our society, making their contribution immeasurable.¹

Respite care provides temporary relief for caregivers of individuals with chronic illness, disabilities, or aging-related conditions, allowing them to take breaks from the demanding responsibilities of caregiving. It is not just a convenience service—it is a critical component of a healthy, functioning healthcare system with far-reaching impacts on the well-being of caregivers and care recipients.

Respite care is a critical public health intervention that supports mental health, reduces abuse and neglect, prevents hospitalization, and improves care outcomes.

¹ <https://states.aarp.org/wisconsin/wi-valuing>