



News Release

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DARS OFFERS TEMPORARY VOUCHER PROGRAM FOR CAREGIVER RESPITE

Caregivers can apply for up to \$400 reimbursement

(RICHMOND, Va.) — Virginia families who care for a loved one with disabilities or chronic conditions can apply for up to \$400 reimbursement for respite care under a limited voucher program from the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

Caregivers who apply to the Lifespan Respite Voucher Program and are approved may qualify for reimbursements up to \$400 to cover costs related to respite care through the program, which is supported by a federal grant of \$117,695. To qualify for consideration, the caregiver must provide full time care to an individual of any age and/or disability who lives with the caregiver in Virginia. The program closes by Aug. 31 or when the funding runs out.

Respite is short-term, temporary relief for those who care for family members, which can help reduce the strain on caregivers so they can continue to provide for their loved ones. In 2013, when DARS first offered a similar program supported by a \$204,000 federal grant, 517 Virginians who provided care to family members, who ranged in age from 1-102, received reimbursement vouchers.

“Everyone at some point is a caregiver or care recipient,” said DARS Commissioner Jim Rothrock. “Those who care for someone, whether young or old, are essential in that person’s life. Respite can help provide support so you can continue to care for your loved one as well as for yourself and others in your family.”

The voucher program is part of the Commonwealth’s efforts to support a statewide network of coordinated caregiver respite services. DARS collaborates with the Virginia Caregiver Coalition, which works to improve the experience of care giving through education, advocacy and access to resources.

Respite for caregivers can be for different periods of time, from a few hours to days or weeks. It can be planned or urgent and services for those in need of care at any age may be provided in a variety of settings, including home, adult day care centers or residential care facilities.

“A respite voucher can provide a wonderful break for a stressed caregiver,” said Sharon Brandau, chairwoman of the Virginia Caregivers Coalition. “Perhaps the parents of a child with cerebral palsy need a weekend away to reconnect for their anniversary, or a daughter caring for her mother who suffers from Alzheimer’s disease could use a day to visit a friend in a neighboring town. We strongly encourage family caregivers to take advantage of this opportunity.”

Examples of respite services for which families can apply for reimbursement include:

- An in-home program, where services are provided in the family’s home or a care provider’s home
- A center-based program, where family caregivers bring the care recipient (e.g., child, adult, or an older individual) to a facility to receive respite care
- A child or adult care center, a summer or weekend camp, or family day care home or adult family home which provides temporary care in addition to regular child or adult care services
- Assisted living or nursing home respite programs

For more information on how to apply, visit DARS’s Division for the Aging website at www.vda.virginia.gov or contact Mary Strawderman toll free at (800) 552-5019 or at mary.strawderman@dars.virginia.gov.

Visit the Virginia Family Caregiver Solution Center at www.virginiannavigator.org/vf/ for additional information on respite and related services available in the Commonwealth.

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The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, in collaboration with community partners, provides and advocates for resources and services to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families. For more information, visit www.vadars.org or follow DARS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vadars or Twitter at @vadars.