

California Department of Aging

Family Caregiver Support Program Narrative

Program / Element / Component – 30.10

Description

The intent of the Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) is to help minimize the negative emotional, physical, and financial consequences of unpaid family caregiving through readily accessible access to multifaceted systems of support services. Preventing the collapse of these fragile family support networks and loss of unpaid care can help high-risk individuals avoid long-term care facility placement and spending down to the level of Medi Cal eligibility.

The California Department of Aging contracts with 33 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) throughout the state to advocate for seniors and their caregivers and help them access the services offered through the OAA. Each AAA is responsible for service delivery in a designated Planning and Service Area (PSA). FCSP services may be provided directly by AAA staff or through subcontracts with community service providers.

The federal FCSP award is intended for use as a catalyst in generating capacity to ensure provision of comprehensive, coordinated, multifaceted systems of support services for unpaid family caregivers of older adults and for grandparents or other older relatives with primary caregiving responsibilities for a child. The FCSP services are to be provided in a flexible and timely manner and shall include:

- Service Information that provides the public and individuals with information about FCSP and other caregiver support resources and services. Public Information involves disseminating publications, conducting media campaigns, and maintaining electronic information systems. Community education is offered to large groups of caregivers, potential caregivers, and those who may provide them with assistance.
- Access Assistance that involves opportunities for individual one-to-one contact through either service provider-initiated Outreach to identify caregivers and encourage their use of support services, or through caregivers contacting Information and Assistance programs for help.
- Support Services that provide caregivers various avenues to seek advice and guidance related to their caregiving responsibilities from qualified counselors or peers in order to make better care-related decisions and better cope with problems or unique situations as they arise. Support services include Caregiver Assessment to explore caregiving options; Counseling (including therapy for stress, depression, and loss); Support Groups for sharing experiences and ideas to ease stress and enhance decision making; Training to help caregivers acquire

the skills necessary to perform their caregiving duties; and Case Management for those caregivers experiencing diminished capacities due to being overwhelmed or having limited abilities.

In addition, the following services are available only to a grandparent/older relative caregiver of a child, or to a family caregiver of an older care receiver (60 years of age or older) that has been determined to be functionally impaired due to having two or more limitations in activities of daily living or a cognitive impairment requiring substantial supervision:

- Temporary Respite Care provides brief periods of relief or rest from caregiving responsibilities. It is provided temporarily to caregivers on an intermittent, occasional, or emergency basis in a timely manner that responds to the individual needs and preferences of the caregivers and their care receivers. Respite can be provided in the form of In-Home Supervision, Homemaker Assistance, In-Home Personal Care, Home Chores, and Out-of-Home Day or Overnight Care.
- Supplemental Services support and strengthen the care provided by unpaid caregivers. Services include: Assistive Devices or Home Modifications that facilitate and enhance the caregiving role; Caregiving Services Registry that matches care workers with caregivers willing to utilize personal resources; Legal Assistance or Financial Consultation provided to the caregiver with technical needs associated with caregiving; Emergency Cash or Material Aid; Congregate or Home-Delivered Meals to an otherwise ineligible or low-priority caregiver and his or her care receiver (including a child); Transportation of a caregiver to fulfill caregiving responsibilities; and Care Receiver Placement in an extended care facility when the caregiver is no longer able or willing to meet caregiving responsibilities.

Benefits

FCSP services can diminish caregiver burden, permit caregivers to remain in the workforce, and prevent or delay more costly unwanted institutional placement (and spending down to Medi-Cal). Information about the caregiving role and available resources empowers those facing (or who will face) a challenging long-term care situation. Proactive outreach and service access assistance are vital to preserving and promoting unpaid family support networks for high-risk individuals. FCSP support services help caregivers cope with stress, depression, multiple personal demands, and competing priorities. Well-trained family caregivers are less likely to rely on more costly, formal supports. The availability of emergency or intermittent respite enables an unpaid caregiver to provide care by giving them a break when is needed. Limited supplemental services address unique needs that threaten the caregiver's ability to provide care.

Eligibility

A **family caregiver** must be an adult (18 years of age or older) family member or another individual (e.g., friend or neighbor) who is willing to be an informal (i.e., unpaid) provider of in-home or community care to a care receiver. *Priority shall be given to family caregivers who are older individuals (60 years of age or older) with greatest social need and greatest economic need (with particular attention to low-income). When serving caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease or related disorders, priority shall be given to those caring for older individuals (60 years of age or older).*

A **care receiver** must be an older individual (60 years of age or older) or an individual of any age with Alzheimer's disease or related disorder with neurological and organic brain dysfunction.

A **grandparent**, step-grandparent, or other older individual who is a relative caregiver must be 55 years of age or older; related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption; living with the child; and the primary caregiver through a legal or informal arrangement because the biological or adoptive parents are unable or unwilling to serve as the primary caregiver. *Priority shall be given to those caring for children with severe disabilities.*

A child either must be not more than 18 years of age or an individual of any age with a disability. However, older "parents" of a child of any age with a disability are not eligible to receive FCSP services.

Voluntary **contributions** are welcomed, but there is no obligation to contribute to the cost of a service. FCSP services shall not be denied to any caregiver who does not contribute to the cost of a service.

Access

Information on FCSP and how to request advice and assistance can be obtained by calling the statewide toll free line at **1-800-510-2020**, or the local AAA listed in the blue bordered pages of the Community Services Section of the telephone book under Senior Information and Referral or access the California Department of Aging website at www.aging.ca.gov.

Background

The Family Caregiver Support Program was established under the OAA Amendments of 2000, Title III, Part E. The costs of FCSP support services provided to grandparents or other older relatives with primary caregiving responsibilities for a child not more than 18 years of age shall not exceed ten percent of the total FCSP costs.

The OAA amendments of 2006 expanded client eligibility for FCSP support services, refocused service priorities, and required AAAs to make use of trained volunteers to expand the provision of FCSP services.