

# REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Division on Aging and Adult Services

## NC Project C.A.R.E.

(Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empy)

### Fiduciary Agent

RFA Posted:	Friday, March 1, 2024		
Questions Due:	Wednesday, March 13, 2024 by 4:00pm EST		
Applications Due:	Monday, April 1, 2024 by 4:00pm EST		
Anticipated Notice of Award:	Wednesday, April 10, 2024		
Fiscal Year:	July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025		
Purpose:	NC Project C.A.R.E. (Caregivers Alternative to Running on Empty)		
Award Details:	1 award available, Anticipated funding range \$275,000-\$300,000		
Issuing Agency:	NCDHHS, Division of Aging and Adult Services		
Email Applications and Questions to:	Laura Jane Ward-Strunin	Email:	<a href="mailto:laura.j.ward@dhhs.nc.gov">laura.j.ward@dhhs.nc.gov</a>
Title:	Project C.A.R.E. Director	Phone:	(984) 365-6992

This RFA is for governmental entities to provide information to the NC DHHS Division of Aging and Adult Services. The purpose of this RFA is to select one fiduciary agent responsible for processing respite care vouchers for caregivers of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias (ADRD).

## **Purpose**

The North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) is seeking a fiduciary agent to execute the delivery of the respite voucher payments for the state-funded Project C.A.R.E. (program serving unpaid family caregivers of individuals living with ADRD. Project C.A.R.E. uses the family consultant model to provide 1) information and referral services, 2) individualized care consultation, 3) respite care, and 4) education, training, and community awareness. Partnerships with the North Carolina Area Agencies on Aging and similar community-based organizations enhance the delivery of services and supports to family caregivers.

Eligible caregivers receive respite vouchers valued at \$500 each. The fiduciary agent will be responsible for verifying appropriate reimbursement documentation and systematically processing voucher reimbursement payments to caregivers in a manner that is accurate, timely, and transparent to the DAAS Project C.A.R.E. Director and the regionally based family consultants.

## **Background**

By 2025, the Alzheimer's Association projects an estimated 210,000 North Carolinians will have Alzheimer's disease. In North Carolina, there are approximately 369,000 caregivers providing \$8.1 billion of unpaid care. The main reason caregivers provide care is the desire to keep a family member or friend at home.

Recognizing how important it is to support families caring for an individual living with Alzheimer's disease and/or related dementias, the State of North Carolina through the Division of Aging and Adult Services offers Project C.A.R.E. in all 100 counties. North Carolina is served by six regional Project C.A.R.E. sites, each with one full-time equivalent family consultant. The family consultants collaborate with Family Caregiver Support Program which provides supports to family caregivers of adults age 60 and older or a person with dementia or grandparents raising grandchildren. For more information on Project CARE go to

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/adult-services/project-care>

## **Respite Care Vouchers**

Since 2017, the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) has employed a consumer-directed approach to distribute Project C.A.R.E. respite vouchers. This model requires a fiduciary agent responsible for providing reimbursement to caregivers statewide. Project C.A.R.E. family consultants authorize vouchers in the amount of \$500; caregivers can receive up to \$1,500 (or three vouchers) per fiscal year. Caregivers may receive reimbursements in amounts as low as \$100.

Individuals with dementia are often very uncomfortable with people they do not recognize. There may also be areas in the state where few home care or adult day care agencies exist to meet a family's needs. The consumer-directed voucher model embraces a family-centered system that allows caregivers to choose the best respite care both for their own needs and for those of the person living with dementia.

It is important that the fiduciary agent for these vouchers can work with this model and support it internally and externally. The role of the fiduciary agent is to reimburse the family caregiver, who acts as an employer for the individual or home care agency providing respite care. Since the fiduciary agent itself is not the employer or the employee, the entity is not responsible for issuing an IRS Form 1099.

The respite voucher award letter received by the caregiver includes the following statement which could be subject to change in the future:

If you hire an individual to provide your respite care for the full \$500.00 award and then continue to use the individual for additional respite care that you pay for yourself (or with another voucher), please be aware that certain tax regulations may apply. Depending on your use of your respite provider in a calendar year, there are federal and state tax regulations you may need to consider. Please consult with your tax professional with any questions regarding these requirements. You may refer to *IRS Publication 926: Household Employer's Tax Guide*, which can be found at the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), and to the *North Carolina Income Tax Withholding Tables and Instructions for Employers* located at <https://www.ncdor.gov/documents/income-tax-withholding-tables-and-instructions-employers>.

### **Communication with Caregivers and Referrals**

In addition to fiscal duties, a successful fiduciary agent must be responsive and attuned to the complex needs of the special population (unpaid family caregivers of people living with dementia) served by Project C.A.R.E. The fiduciary agent must be prepared to communicate with patience, compassion, and timely responses to inquiries from family caregivers. The family caregivers served by Project C.A.R.E. are often in high-stress situations and require additional assistance with expediting their required respite voucher documentation. It is expected that the fiduciary agent make appropriate referrals to host agencies (Family Consultants) and other agencies as needed.

It is also necessary to maintain open, professional communication with Family Consultants, evidenced by proactive and timely responses to and for assistance on behalf of family caregivers.

Additionally the fiscal agent is expected to refer inquiries for assistance with caregiving for people living with dementia to the appropriate Family Consultant as needed.

### **Performance Measures**

The following performance measures will be captured and reported to the Department of Health and Human Services for Project CARE:

- 1) The fiduciary agent must have sufficient cash flow to administer respite care vouchers with reimbursement from the NC Department of Health and Human Services monthly. The NC Division on Aging and Adult Services must receive requests for reimbursements no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month for the preceding month.
- 2) The fiduciary agent must process reimbursement payments to caregivers within five (5) business days following receipt of a reimbursement request. The process includes verifying appropriate documentation (completed and signed provider agreement and record of respite services forms), processing the reimbursement, entering data in the shared voucher management workbook, and mailing the voucher reimbursement through the US Postal Service.
- 3) For data management and monitoring purposes, the fiduciary agent, the Project C.A.R.E. family consultants, and the DAAS Project C.A.R.E. Director will maintain a current caregiver payment record. This record must be an on-demand, shared document using technology that enables all users to view current activity and enter information into one main workbook. The fiduciary agent will have access to the shared workbook before any vouchers are

awarded. It is the responsibility of the fiduciary agent to make sure this workbook is accessible, accurate and current. The data captured includes caregiver and care recipient information, voucher award and expiration dates, awarded voucher amounts, and caregiver reimbursement data, including the date on which the reimbursement request was received/approved, the date the check was mailed, the amount requested, the amount paid, the type of respite provided, and the remaining balance.

- 4) The fiduciary agent must maintain a communication log highlighting the person making the inquiry, the agency/person they are referred to, communication method, and any relevant notes about the referral.

## **Performance Standards**

The Contractor will use a consistent and reliable process to meet the performance standards stated in this contract, which comprise the following:

1. Accurately reviewing and recording caregiver reimbursement requests and maintaining the reimbursement documentation for individual caregivers.
2. Maintaining a standard protocol for processing reimbursement requests within five (5) business days from the time of receipt to the date on which the check was mailed via USPS.
3. Maintaining or archiving records for five years.
4. Maintaining a communication log of caregiver inquiries.

## **Monitoring/Quality Assurance**

The Division will perform the following monitoring activities to ensure the terms of this contract are met:

1. Annual fiscal compliance monitoring, which includes reviewing the accuracy and timeliness of payments to caregivers based on the completed required documentation received by the fiduciary agent.
2. Reviewing internal processing systems.
3. Reviewing contractor reimbursement requests on a monthly basis.
4. Reviewing communication log at least quarterly.

## **Reimbursement**

The fiduciary agent will receive 8% above the value of the voucher reimbursement amount. For example, for a reimbursement to the caregiver in the amount of \$500, the agent receives a total of \$540 (\$500 for the voucher and \$40 to the agent).

The fiduciary agent will submit a monthly Contract Reimbursement Form (CRF) certified by an organization official along with supporting expense documentation (copy of Project C.A.R.E. report/worksheet) to the State Project C.A.R.E. Director, Service Operations Section, with the Division of Aging and Adult Services each month by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Electronic reimbursement will be made after the reimbursement request has been reviewed, approved, and processed by DHHS. The contractor may submit semi-monthly reimbursement requests when a high number of caregiver reimbursement requests are received. The contractor must submit its final invoice for the month of June 2025 by no later than Thursday, July 10, 2025.

## **Funding**

Funds available for respite care vouchers are estimated to be between \$275,000 and \$300,000, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. There is one award available for the Project C.A.R.E. fiscal agent. In 2023, Project CARE awarded 464 respite vouchers. No vouchers are awarded after June 1, 2025, as final caregiver reimbursement requests are due to the fiduciary agent by June 15, 2025.