

Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program Newsletter - Spring 2024



Financial Relief for Family Caregivers

Eligibility

Do you care for a loved one, such as a spouse or parent? Is your care recipient aged 60 or older? If the answer to those questions is YES, then you may be eligible for the Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program, which is now offering one-time stipends for family caregivers.

Use

Family caregivers can use stipends to pay for respite, or products/services that provide you with a break from your caregiving responsibilities. Stipends cap at \$600.

Contact & Enroll:

Call MassOptions at (800) 243-4636.

About the Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program

The Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program connects you with a Caregiver Specialist who provides free information, useful tips and resources, and other means of support to family caregivers. The Caregiver Specialist will help you create a customized care plan for the person you care for.

The program is free for non-paid caregivers or adult family members, age 18+ who care for individuals age 60+ or any individual living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. The program also supports Grandparents and other relatives age 55+ who care for children under the age of 18 or an adult with a disability ages 18-59.

Connect with your local Caregiver Specialist by calling MassOptions at (800) 243-4636.

This program is offered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Mass.gov/Elders
MassOptions: 1-800-243-4636



[Download Flyer](#)

Family Caregiver Stipends Available

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs received federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act to expand access to stipends for family caregivers enrolled in the Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program. Stipends are funds paid to the caregiver to use for respite or the purchase of goods, products, or services that provide the caregiver with a break from their caregiving responsibilities.

To learn more, caregivers can reach out to a caregiver specialist in their community by calling [MassOptions](#) at (800) 243-4636.

Resources for Family Caregivers

[Caring for Someone After a Stroke: What to Expect and Tips to Simplify the Transition](#)

[How to Care for Someone with ALS: What You Should Know](#)

[How to Prepare for a Doctor's Visit: What to Do Before You Arrive](#)

[Preventing Urinary Tract Infections: Signs, Causes, and Tips to Prevent UTIs in Older Adults](#)

[What Are The 5 Gates Of Grief?](#)

[How to Tell if Memory Loss is Normal or an Early Sign of Dementia](#)

[Avoid Caregiver Burnout—4 Ways to](#)

[The Mourner's Bill of Rights](#)

By Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD

Dr. Wolfelt's list is intended to empower individuals to heal and to decide how others can and cannot help. This is not to discourage readers from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones. He argues that those who are grieving have certain "rights" no one should try to take away. Here is a sample of his 10 rights:

1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief: No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell what you should or should not be feeling.

2. You have the right to talk about your grief: Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief. If at times you don't feel like talking, you also have the right to be silent.

3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions: Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for

[Take Care of Yourself](#)

[Tips to Navigate the Healthcare System](#)

[Ride-Hailing App Adds Features Especially for Caregivers](#)

[How Exhausted Caregivers Can Regain Their Momentum](#)

example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.

4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits: Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.

[Read More](#)

Being Prepared

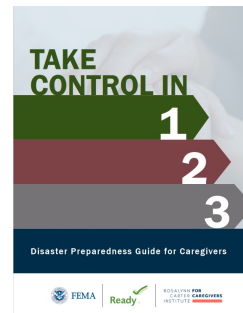
[Preparing for Extreme Heat](#)

Extreme heat can be dangerous, especially for adults aged 65+. A new webpage on Mass.gov provides steps to protect caregivers and their loved ones during hot summer days, including signs and symptoms of heat-related illness, how to get help paying for air conditioning, and how to prepare your home for hot weather.

The webpage provides the following checklist for caregivers as they check in on their older loved one twice a day during extreme heat events:

- What is the indoor and outdoor temperature where they are?
- Are they drinking enough water and taking steps to stay hydrated?
- Do they have access to air conditioning and/or a cool location?
- Do they know where to go if their home is too hot and do they have transportation to a cool location?
- How are they feeling? Do they show any signs of heat stress or heat related illness?

[Visit Website](#)



[Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers](#)

The Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) released a new Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers (see report cover above) that includes action steps, worksheets, and links with information on how to support caregivers' loved ones in an emergency situation. The guide has suggestions on how to make a plan to work with one's support networks, build an emergency kit, and consider things like transportation, medications, and evacuation plans.

[Explore Guide](#)

Catch up on Recent *Caring for the Caregiver* Series Webinars



Caring for the Caregiver: A Webinar Series

Are you looking for information about caregiving? The Executive Office of Elder Affairs hosts a webinar series for family caregivers in partnership with the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. Visit this [new landing page](#) to learn about the series, find past recordings, and

upcoming webinars. Check out a few recent webinars in the series at the links below:

[The Power of Connection as Self-Care for Family Caregivers \(April 2024\)](#)

[Programs that May Assist Families with Medicare Costs \(March 2024\)](#)

[The SHINE Program and Medicare \(January 2024\)](#)

[The Emotional Side of Caregiving \(December 2023\)](#)

Caregiver Media - Books, Podcasts, and Music

[List of Books for Caregivers](#)

[All There Is Podcast](#) in which Anderson Cooper explores the human experience of grief.

[BrainStorm Podcast](#) with Dr. Brent Forester: *The Complexity of Dementia Care and the Importance of a Holistic Approach*

[Musical Moments with Harmony in Dementia](#)

[Music as Medicine for Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia: Music Intervention May Increase Communication](#)

Examples of How to Use Music to Help a Loved One With Dementia:

- **Play music from your loved one's teenage years or early 20s.** Music from this time in their lives can help encourage recall of long-term memory.
- **Work with a trained music therapist.** A music therapist can help your family determine what type of music to play so your loved one feels safe and not anxious, which types of instruments your love one enjoys hearing, where, when, and how to play music, etc.

In their Own Words: Caregiver Stories

[Son Uses TikTok to Humanize Dementia Caregiving](#)

More than a million people follow Dan Salinger's journey as he and his brother split full-time caregiving duties for their dad.

[Millennial Put Life on Hold to Care for Family](#)

Carri Brown dropped everything to care for her grandfather and mother. Despite the sacrifices she made, Brown is grateful for her caregiving experience.

[Comedian Finds Humor, Purpose in Caring for His Parents](#)

Jesus Trejo has lived a unique double life: by day, a caregiver to immigrant parents; by night, a stand-up comedian who has performed on "The Tonight Show."

[Caring for Dad Cost This 60-Year-Old Her Job](#)

After Ayda Beltre's dad developed congestive heart failure, she moved him into her home and made sacrifices to be his full-time caregiver.



Age- and Dementia-Friendly Listening Sessions

Massachusetts is working to update its age- and dementia-friendly action plan and needs your help! Age- and dementia-friendly communities are cities and towns that have

made specific advances to become more inclusive and supportive of older adults, as well as their families and care partners. Age- and dementia-friendly communities find ways to increase opportunities for people to thrive, contribute, and continue to share their insights and knowledge as we grow older.

We want to hear your ideas on how to make the Commonwealth more age- and dementia-friendly! The [2019 action plan](#) serves as the state's multi-year strategy to make the Commonwealth more age- and dementia-friendly. It's time to update the plan, and this year, **Massachusetts is working to refresh the plan to guide the state's age- and dementia-friendly actions for the next 5-10 years. We want to hear your thoughts on what should be included.**

Please join us at one of the upcoming community listening sessions to tell us about your priorities, how you have contributed to your communities' efforts to support positive aging, and what large actions or policies you think will support people to age well in our communities in the future.

[Explore Listening Session Dates](#)

Can't make one of the sessions? You can also provide [your thoughts and comments here](#)

Research & Policy

[Care.com Released the 2024 "Future of Benefits" Report](#)

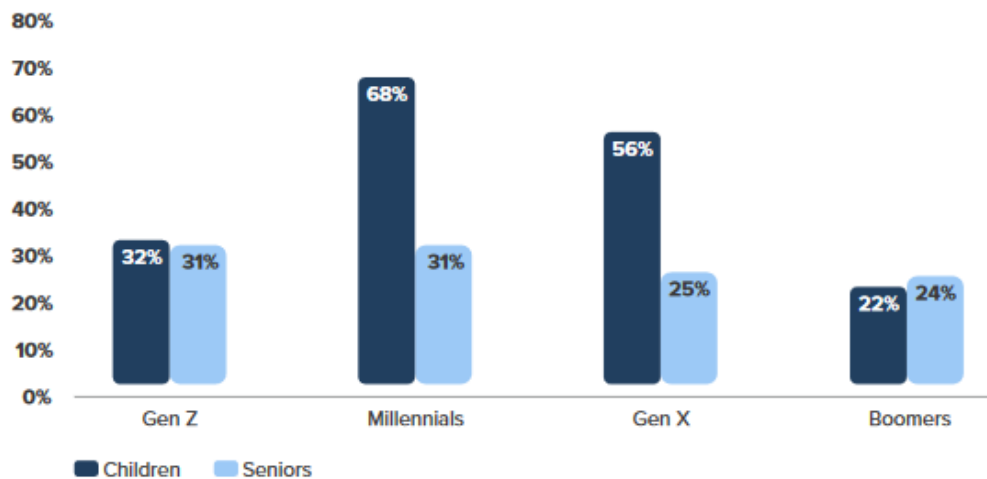
Care.com released their 4th annual Future of Benefits report, which includes findings from their survey of 620 Human Resources leaders and 1,000 employees in the United States across multiple industries.

The report reveals that the need for care benefits spans generations, industries, and role. Employees across all generations have care needs that take away from their ability to work, and caregiving benefits are needed to help employers attract and retain a multi-generational workforce and improve employee productivity. The four key findings of the report included:

1. Family care benefits are key to meeting employers' business objectives and the family needs and career goals of workers.
2. All four generations in the workforce agree upon at least one thing: the need for care support.
3. Now more than ever, workers are looking to their employer to help manage the financial burden of caregiving.
4. Enhanced care benefits are key to a successful work arrangement whether return-to-office (RTO), hybrid or fully remote.



Caregiving demands by generation



[Explore Care.com Report](#)

New Report: [Transplant Caregiving in the U.S.: A Call for System Change](#)

This report highlights the experiences of an often-unseen community of family caregivers—those who provide care for someone waiting to receive an organ, stem cell, or bone marrow transplant, or who have received these life saving procedures.

In 2022, over 40,000 transplants were performed in the U.S. In most of these cases, a caregiver was required to provide support and care throughout the transplant process. Even with this requirement, we have a limited understanding of the experiences of transplant caregivers. Based on insights from subject matter experts and family caregivers, the National Alliance for Caregiving's latest report documents the challenges family caregivers face in transplant care and outlines recommendations.

[Explore Report](#)

Upcoming Webinars and Free Virtual Events

[LGBTQIA2S+ The Gay Experience and Dementia – Navigating the System](#)

June 11, 5:00 PM

[RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council Meeting](#)

June 13, 12:30 PM

[Sleep Hygiene: Tips for a Better Night's Rest](#)

June 18, 12:00 PM

[Let's Get Away, Together \(Weekly Series\)](#)

Every Tuesday from June 18th – August 6th

June 18, 4:00 PM

[Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Brain Aging: What's New in 2024?](#)

June 18, 5:30 PM

[Movement to Support Your Brain and Body](#)

June 25, 12:00 PM

[Unique Needs & Silver Linings: Thriving in the "Sandwich Generation" Workshop](#)

June 25, 8:30 PM

The Family Caregiver Support Program Fact Sheet is available on [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) in the following languages:

[Arabic](#)
[Chinese](#)
[English](#)
[Haitian Creole](#)
[Khmer](#)
[Portuguese](#)
[Russian](#)
[Spanish](#)
[Ukrainian](#)

MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Am I a family caregiver?

- If you **care** for a **loved one** who is an older adult, or has a disability or illness, you are a family caregiver.
- The **care** could include helping with finances, grocery shopping, transporting, cleaning, or cooking.
- You could be caring for a spouse, parent, grandparent, adult child, grandchild, friend, or neighbor.



Do I need family caregiver support?

- Caregiving can be rewarding and fulfilling, but can also take an emotional, physical, and financial toll.
- For example, providing care can lead to fatigue, stress, worry, missed work, and time spent away from family, friends, or hobbies.



What is the Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program?

- The Family Caregiver Support Program provides **free support services** to **eligible** caregivers.
- The program is administered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and provided by your local Aging Services Access Point (ASAP). ASAPs are regional non-profits dedicated to aging services.



Who is eligible for the Family Caregiver Support Program?

- You are **eligible** if you are an adult who is...
 - caring for an older adult (60 years of age or older)
 - caring for an individual living with dementia (e.g. Alzheimer's disease)
 - age 55 or older caring for a child under age 18
 - age 55 or older caring for someone with a disability



MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

How can the Family Caregiver Support Program help me?
Family Caregiver Specialists can, at no cost to you, facilitate...

Access

- Refer you to services and resources in your community

Counseling and training

- Advise you one-on-one
- Help you plan for care wherever your loved one lives
- Organize caregiver support groups
- Run workshops and training
- Provide educational materials

Respite care

- Relieve you temporarily from your caregiving responsibilities so you can get the rest and respite you need

How do I connect with the Family Caregiver Support Program?



Call MassOptions at 844-422-6277 from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Mon - Fri
Someone will connect you with a Family Caregiver Specialist at your local Aging Services Access Point!

 [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov)

Visit [Mass.gov/family-caregiver-support-program](https://www.mass.gov/family-caregiver-support-program) for more on:

Eligibility for Family Caregiver Support Program	Caregiver help and information	Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
Caregiving information for workplaces	Training and technology for families caring for individuals living with dementia	EOEA newsletter for caregiver specialists

Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program | [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov)

To submit content for this e-communication, please email Molly Evans at Molly.R.Evans@mass.gov.

