

**Division of Senior and Disabilities Services**  
**Respite Care Standards**  
**July 2002**

All grantees funded to provide respite services through a Division of Senior and Disabilities Services grant award shall meet the minimum standards as stated in this document.

**Definition**

Respite services provide substitute care for disabled adults to provide intermittent or temporary relief to a primary caregiver, usually a family member. Respite services funded by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS) target persons of any age with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia and persons 60 years of age and older, with physical disabilities or mental health issues, who are at risk of institutional placement. Both the primary caregiver and the care recipient are considered clients of the program and benefit from the services. Services may be provided on either a planned or emergency basis in a variety of settings such as in the family or caregiver's home, the respite worker's home, a licensed adult foster home, residential care facility, hospital or nursing facility.

**Goals**

Respite service programs in Alaska provide support, relief, and education to families and other caregivers, as well as promote the optimum level of independence and functioning of disabled persons over the age of 60, or persons of any age with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia's.

**Service Eligibility**

Grant funded respite services may be provided to the following:

- persons of any age with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia's
- physically or mentally disabled persons over the age of 60
- adults 18 years of age or older with similar disabilities and service needs to older Alaskans when the provision of care to such persons does not diminish services to primary groups of persons being served
- caregivers for the above categories

Priority shall be given to clients living alone, with an elderly spouse, or with an adult child or other unpaid caregiver.

Persons with the following conditions may NOT be appropriate for respite services:

- medical conditions that require constant monitoring
- actively infected with a communicable disease
- emotional or behavioral disorders that include destructive or abusive behavior
- active alcoholism or drug addiction
- too independent to benefit from respite
- other conditions that create an unsafe environment for either the client or the respite provider

### **Allocation of Hours and Priority of Service**

1. Due to current funding sources, DSDS grantees shall target respite services to persons with ADRD or mental health issues, over clients with physical disabilities or impairments. Grantees may implement allocation formulas that support the intent of these funding streams.
2. Amount of service— DSDS funded respite services may be provided up to 40 hours per month, plus one week per year of 24-hour care, to persons living alone, with family and friends, or other unpaid caregivers. Persons living alone are eligible for services so long as a primary caregiver has been identified and will benefit from the provision of respite services.
3. Coordination and referrals to adult day services, when available and appropriate, shall be made to all DSDS funded respite clients.
4. Grantees may authorize respite services in excess of 40 hours per month under the following conditions:
  - Care recipient is homebound
  - Care recipient is unable to attend an adult day program, either due to program availability, program eligibility, or client choice
  - Notification is made to the DSDS Home & Community Based Services Associate Coordinator on a case by case basis when the 40 hour per month standard has been exceeded.

Justification for providing respite in excess of 40 hours per month shall be noted in the client case file.

### Placement of a respite care worker

The following should be accomplished, with the involvement of the person who completed the client assessment when appropriate, prior to placement of a respite worker in the client's home:

- A. The respite worker should be informed about the client's daily routine, including the client's strengths and weaknesses, special assistance requirements, activities the client enjoys doing, etc.
- B. The primary caregiver should demonstrate any unique or special assistance procedures the respite worker may need to perform in the caregiver's absence.
- C. The primary caregiver should explain situations which may result in an emergency, including a clarification of what might happen, the appropriate response, and who the respite worker should contact in an emergency.
- D. The primary caregiver shall show the respite care worker the fire exit plan for the home, the location of the first aid kit in the home, explain special instructions/restrictions on the operation of household appliances, etc.

### **Respite Activities**

Services and activities. Each program shall:

1. Allow for occasional overnight care for clients.
2. Provide services that meet the particular client's need(s). Involve the client, family, caregiver, and other appropriate professionals in the assessment, development of the plan for service, daily activities, and discharge of clients whose needs can no longer be met by the program.
3. Involve family members in the selection of a respite worker, to the greatest extent possible.
4. Routinely assess client satisfaction.
5. Activities that occur during respite care must assist the client to maintain their level of independence necessary to remain living at home. In addition, respite care provides assistance and relief to the primary caregiver by allowing the primary caregiver to continue maintaining the dependent adult at home. Respite care activities may include:
  - cooking or preparing simple meals for the client;

- providing social, leisure, or educational activities as defined in an individual care plan, including brief outings (2-4 hours), either in small groups or one-on-one;
- Providing assistance with activities of daily living (light bathing, eating, dressing, self-administration of medications, toileting, housekeeping, meal preparation, transportation, shopping, etc.) as necessary during the period of respite.
- Performing brief errands and chores outside the recipient's residence, without the care recipient coming along.
- Grantees choosing to provide transportation, as part of respite services, shall ensure that only drivers with a valid Alaska license operate the vehicle being used to provide transportation services. The vehicle must be covered by comprehensive automobile liability insurance in at least the minimum required by law.

While respite care workers may provide the above tasks during the provision of respite, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of respite care. Unless qualified and authorized by the grantee as a "Universal Worker", respite care workers are not the primary source of chore, personal or health care, or transportation services for the care recipient.

6. Initiate the following procedure for administration and management of clients' medications:
  - A. Under no circumstances shall staff administer a client's medications, unless the staff person is a licensed or certified professional whose scope of practice includes the ability to administer medications, such as a RN.
  - B. When respite is provided in a setting other than the client's primary residence, the client shall bring and take his or her own medications. Medications may be kept for clients during the time he or she is present at a site other than the client's own home. Documentation of each client's medication(s) and arrangements for administration shall be maintained in the client's file.

Staff may supervise client's self-administration of medication by:

- 1) reminding residents to take medication
  - 2) opening bottle caps for clients
  - 3) opening prepackaged medication for clients
  - 4) reading the medication labels to residents
  - 5) observing clients while they take medication
  - 6) checking the self-administered dosage against the label of the container
  - 7) reassuring clients that they have obtained and are taking the dosage as prescribed, and
  - 8) directing or guiding the hand of a legally competent client who is administering his or her own medications.
- C. Medications shall be kept in containers in which they were dispensed from the pharmacy that are clearly labeled with the client's name, name and strength of the medication, and the dosage and instructions for administration. Exceptions to this may occur if the family packages only the client's medications required for the day or a week at a time. Under these circumstances, the client's name, medication(s) name, time, and amount of dosage must be written on the packet.
- D. In out-of-home respite, clients shall keep their medications on themselves, if possible, otherwise their medications shall be placed in a safe, locked place.
7. Respite care workers should receive training appropriate to the needs of the individual being cared for. When relevant, family members and caregivers should be used as trainers. Respite workers should be knowledgeable in dealing with medical and household emergencies. All workers shall successfully complete and maintain CPR certification. With proper documentation regarding Advanced Directives, workers and agencies shall respect the wishes of the care recipient.
  8. When respite workers identify the need for other services, this information should be communicated to appropriate personnel to assist in accessing any desired services.
  9. The grantee shall establish cooperative relationships with other community agencies to coordinate services.
  10. A list shall be maintained for persons waiting to receive respite care services.

**Staffing Standards**

1. Each staff member shall be competent, ethical, and qualified for the position held. Staff shall hold personal information about participants in strict confidence and shall treat all participants with respect and dignity.

2. Individual Respite Care Worker Standards

Each individual providing respite care as an employee or contractor shall meet the following standards:

<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>
1. Be at least 18 years of age.	If age is in question, the individual shall provide proof of age (birth certificate, driver’s license).
2. Be free of communicable diseases and other conditions that would pose a substantial safety or health risk to care recipients.	The individual shall provide a statement attesting to his/her status relative to this standard. Grantees may require medical verification of employee’s health status.
3. Possess the ability to follow directions and keep simple records, where required, of tasks being performed.	Demonstrated ability.
4. Have the ability to perform tasks/activities of the service to be provided.	Competency-based testing; formal training or education; documented previous applicable experience; written documentation of performance provided by previous employers or supervisors.
5. Be a responsible, mature individual of reputable character who exercises sound judgment and displays the capacity to provide good care for clients	Competency-based testing; formal training or education; documented previous applicable experience; written documentation of performance provided by previous employers or supervisors.
6. Possess the ability to communicate with the recipient to whom s/he is assigned, and with his or her supervisor.	Demonstrated ability.

<p>7. Not have been convicted in any jurisdiction for abuse, neglect, or any other crime that would pose a safety or health risk to the client.</p>	<p>Employees shall submit to fingerprint analysis, provide personal and professional references, and provide a statement attesting to his/her status relative to this standard. Respite workers must meet the same criteria of criminal background checks as those outlined in Alaska Statutes and regulations pertaining to assisted living homes (AS 47.33.100 and 7 AAC 75.215)</p>
---	--

3. Person(s) responsible for the client assessment, development of a care plan, client monitoring, reassessment and discharge plan must be a nurse, social worker, mental health worker, or a care coordinator employed by or on subcontract with a care coordination agency.
4. The grantee shall maintain a system for periodic review and revision of all job descriptions.
5. The grantee's personnel system shall comply with all applicable laws, statutes, regulations, and equal employment opportunity mandates.
6. The grantee shall provide timely orientation to employees that transmits the agency values, philosophy, and mission.
7. The grantee shall inform staff of all laws, policies, procedures, and individual reporting responsibilities regarding client abuse, neglect and mistreatment, prior to actual service delivery.
8. The grantee shall periodically assess the need for specific staff training programs.
9. The grantee shall have an evaluation system that:
  - provides performance appraisal and feedback to the employee and an opportunity for employee feedback to the agency and
  - adheres to reasonably established timeliness for performance appraisal.
10. The grantee shall assure that relatives of the care recipient be allowed to provide reimbursable respite care only if they live in a separate residence and only if there is another primary caregiver.

### **Program Standards**

1. Each program shall conduct and maintain the following in a client case file:
  - A. A list of emergency contacts and a written agreement with the client or family regarding arrangements for emergency care and ambulance transportation
  - B. An assessment of the clients' needs relevant to the provision of respite services (client includes both the person being cared for and the caregiver(s))
  - C. A plan of service which meets the needs of the individual and provides the maximum number of service hours per month to be provided and periodic notations monitoring of the clients' status
  - D. Reassessment of the clients' needs and service which should be done at least semi-annually or more often, as needed, when client situation changes
  - E. A discharge plan which includes the clients' status, recommendations for continuing care, referrals to community services agencies, and necessary follow-up when the client leaves the program

### **Out-of-Home Standards**

1. In a respite worker's home. If a respite care worker's home will be used for more than an occasional visit by the client, the worker must submit a written statement that their home meets the following standards:
  - A. The home shall be clean and maintained in a sanitary condition.
  - B. The home shall have adequate heating, ventilation, and lighting.
  - C. The home shall be equipped with at least one smoke detector per floor used by the client and a minimum of one fire extinguisher per home.
  - D. The home shall have a safe drinking water supply.
  - E. Each client shall have a comfortable and clean place to rest or sleep.
  - F. Potential hazards such as guns, medicines, etc. shall not be accessible to the client.
  - G. If at all possible, the home shall have a method for communication, such as a CB

radio or telephone.

H. The home shall have a first aid kit.

2. Facility-based respite care. Facility-based respite is that care provided in an assisted living facility, residential care facility, hospital or nursing facility licensed by the state, or an adult day program. Facilities providing respite care services are required to follow applicable licensing and certification rules.

### **Administrative Standards**

1. Grantees shall have a method to assure client and family input on matters pertaining to administration of program activities, including an established grievance procedure.
2. Grantees shall have an organizational staffing chart that shows the lines of authority and communication channels.
3. Grantees shall have an established grievance process. Information about the grievance process shall be provided to the client/caregiver at the onset of services.
4. Grantees shall establish a sliding fee schedule based on the full cost of service. Waivers or reductions in fees may be given with demonstrated hardship based on the client and/or caregivers. Private insurance or eligibility for other relevant benefits must be explored, and when available, the full cost of service must be charged.
5. A program director shall be appointed and given full authority and responsibility to plan, staff, and manage the provision of services according to an individual's respite care plan.
6. Personnel Policies and Practices. Each employee shall receive:
  - A. A copy of his/her job description that specifies:
    - Qualifications for the job;
    - Duties and/or responsibilities;
    - Title of supervisor; and
    - Salary range and benefits
  - B. Recruitment, hiring, performance and evaluation procedures, probation and dismissal procedures
  - C. Employee benefits (leave policies, promotion opportunities, etc.)
  - D. Grievance procedures
7. The grantee shall maintain administrative records that include personnel, fiscal, statistical, regulations, etc.
8. The grantee shall comply with federal and state laws and regulations safeguarding client information. Disclosure may be required in circumstances that involve a court order, under program monitoring by an authorized government agency, or in the case of a protective service investigation under AS 47.24.
9. The grantee shall maintain a participant record system that includes, but is not limited to:

- A. A written policy on the confidentiality and protection of records which states the use and conditions for removal of records, conditions for release of information and client authorization for release of information not otherwise authorized by law.
  - B. A written policy providing for the retention and storage of records as required for audit purposes (3 years; 2001) and in the event the program discontinues operation.
  - C. Maintenance of records on the premises in a manner that is confidentially secure.
10. The grantee shall assure accessibility of services to persons with disabilities.

### **Administrative Standards 11 - 14**

#### *Apply to Government and Nonprofit Agencies Only*

- 11. A formal governing body shall have full legal authority and responsibility for the operation of the agency.
- 12. Board meetings shall abide by rules set forth in the Open Meeting Act (AS 44.62.310).
- 13. The grantee shall have established policies and procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest. Should a member of the governing body have a conflict of interest, the agency shall show evidence of procedures that document the disclosure of the conflict and removal of the conflict or a determination that the conflict is not material.
- 14. If the grantee receives a grant for these services from the State of Alaska, the State of Alaska shall be named as additional insured for liability insurance of any kind. The State of Alaska, its officers, agents, and employees shall be indemnified, held harmless, and defended from all liability, including costs and expenses, for all actions or claims resulting from injuries or damages sustained by any person or property arising directly or indirectly as a result of any error, omission, or negligent act of the provider, provider's subcontractors, or anyone directly or indirectly employed by them in the performance of this grant project.

### **Program Evaluation**

Each respite services program shall conduct an internal evaluation, at least annually, of its operation and services. A written report of the evaluation must be kept on file. The evaluation shall include:

- 1. Involvement of the governing body, and to the extent considered appropriate by the governing body, the program director, staff, clients, families/caregivers, advisory body, and other relevant agencies/organizations.
- 2. Review of the performance of the program director and all staff.

3. Review of the extent to which the program assisted clients and their families and caregivers.
4. Measurement of the achievement of goals and objectives.
5. Assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the program.
6. Assessment of the relationship of the program to the rest of the community service network.
7. Recommendations for improvement, corrective action of problem areas, and future program directions.

**Standard Alternatives**

Agencies may seek a waiver from specific requirements under these standards by submitting a written request to DSDS specifying what standard would be waived and describing how the grantee proposes to meet the intent of the standard before implementing the proposed alternative. DSDS will inform the grantee of approval or disapproval of the proposed alternative.