

Stipends for Non-Professional Care and Respite

AFCSP and NFCSP Guidance and Example

POLICY CHANGES

In the past, the State of Wisconsin limited family caregiver support program payments to in-home provider agencies, family members, and friends. In response to social distancing advisories, the needs of individuals with dementia and reports that some families are reluctant to invite outsiders into the home of older adults at-risk of contracting COVID-19, the Wisconsin Office on Aging has made the following changes to policy.

Effective until Dec. 31, 2023:

- **Primary caregivers** have been added to the list of individuals who may receive a non-professional stipend for time spent providing in-home care and support services to eligible AFCSP and NFCSP recipients.
- The 112 hrs. annual limit on temporary respite for Title III-E (NFCSP) participants has been suspended. Respite hours may be approved as needed to meet caregiver needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Non-professional stipend rates are set by each local agency. The rate should be less than hiring a professional agency, but may be higher than the minimum wage. In the past, stipends have generally ranged between \$10 and \$15 per hour.

Stipend hours may be paid to any family caregiver whose care recipient meets AFCSP or NFCSP eligibility. Stipend hours must be pre-approved by county and tribal program coordinators and be based on results of the required caregiver needs assessment. All AFCSP and NFCSP caregivers are eligible to receive stipends but if funding is low, first priority should be given to low-income individuals and to primary caregivers who have been laid-off, furloughed or have lost a job. Stipends should be limited to a small circle of individuals for each care recipient to limit the risk of COVID-19 exposure.

If a family caregiver chooses an in-home care or respite provider that is not affiliated with a licensed agency, the family is responsible for evaluating the qualifications of the person who will receive the stipend. Conducting background checks is highly encouraged, and AFCSP or NFCSP funds can be used to cover the cost of background checks. No person with a known

history of perpetrating physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse may receive an NFCSP or AFCSP stipend.

Any policy for paying a non-professional stipend must be applied equally to all program participants.

(See Page 3 for a sample policy that agencies may adopt.)

SAMPLE POLICY

Stipends for care provided or household tasks performed by a family member or other non-professional provider shall be paid at a rate of \$_____ per hour. The caregiver must log the number of hours worked, provide a detailed description of care or services provided, and include receipts for any expenses related to providing care for the qualified grandchild/relative, older adult or person with dementia.

Documentation submitted must be verified by the primary family caregiver and the county or tribal caregiver support program manager. The family is responsible for making arrangements and for all legal implications associated with choosing a provider. The county or tribal agency does not assume the role of an employer when informal caregivers are recruited by the family.

Time spent performing the following tasks may be eligible for an hourly stipend using NFCSP or AFCSP when pre-approved by the county caregiver program coordinator:

- Bathing and grooming
- Meal preparation and feeding
- Household chores, such as cleaning and doing laundry
- Grocery shopping and other errands
- Lawn care and home maintenance
- Transportation to and from doctor appointments, scheduling appointments, or participating in appointments by phone or internet
- Managing banking, household bills, and other financial transactions
- Emergency preparation and planning for oneself or the care recipient
- Purchasing technology, caregiver training or internet services needed to maintain connections with medical and other care providers, friends and family members while adhering to social distancing guidelines
- Medication management and coordination with qualified health care professionals, including pharmacists
- Grandparents and relative caregiver supports
- Any other activity currently reimbursable under the program