

Ohio's Lifespan Respite Initiative- *Volunteer Respite Expansion* Mini-Grants

In our initial Grant Narrative, we proposed funding and studying one program each of the three different types of respite programs (voucher, volunteer, and emergency) to identify promising/best practices. However, upon further consideration, we decided that this approach would give us the results of **one** type of program in **one** part of the state. We would not be able to call any result a "best practice" that should be replicated, because we would not have anything to compare it to determine its validity as a evidenced-based process.

In addition, sustainability is an ongoing issue for any program. Of the three types of respite (emergency, voucher and volunteer), volunteer respite is the most easily sustainable, once the infrastructure is in place. While emergency and voucher programs need ongoing funds to continue their services, once a stable infrastructure is in place, operating costs for volunteer respite are minimal when compared to the other two respite types.

The Ohio Department of Aging (ODA), a member of the Ohio Respite Coalition, chose to fund a grant opportunity to expand volunteer respite programs in Ohio. The goal of the funding opportunity was to identify replicable models of volunteer respite that can be used to increase awareness of and access to volunteer respite services across the state.

On July 25, 2013, ODA emailed the funding opportunity and evaluation criteria to more than 50 recipients, compiled from leads supplied by Ohio's aging network, the Ohio Respite Coalition and the Ohio State Program Director for the Ohio National Senior Service Corps. Proposals were due back to ODA by August 15, 2013.

The grant proposal was to award a total of \$60,000 for up to five successful applicants who agreed to develop and expand their volunteer respite programs. In light of the amount of money each organization would receive, only organizations that currently offered volunteer respite programs were eligible for this funding opportunity.

ODA received five proposals. The evaluation team eliminated one applicant from consideration because it did not meet the criteria. The evaluation team returned the remaining proposals to the organizations for clarification and additional information. After receiving sufficient clarification, the organizations were notified of their awards on September 9, 2013 and received funding in October 2013.

Of the four organizations awarded funds, two are Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), one is a faith-based organization and one is a service of a senior center. Three are grouped in Ohio's northwest and one is in Ohio's southern area.

