COLORADO RESPITE COALITION

A program of easternseals Colorado

Caregiving-Friendly Workplace TOOLKIT
Contents

INTRODUCTION ........................................... 4 – 5

CAREGIVING IN COLORADO .............................. 6 – 7

CAREGIVING IN THE WORKPLACE .................... 8 – 10

HOW DOES CAREGIVING IMPACT YOUR WORKPLACE? 11 – 12

HOW TO GET STARTED .................................. 13 – 15

IDEAS FOR MAKING YOUR WORKPLACE
MORE CAREGIVING-FRIENDLY ..................... 16 – 17

RESOURCES ............................................. 18 – 22
Introduction

Families are continuing to evolve in the United States, and their needs look different than in the past. Caregiving is a growing role that more people find themselves in, often unexpectedly. Many factors contribute to the changing trends in caregiving. People are living longer, which is changing long-term care needs. Families are living further apart than in the past, which can lead to long-distance caregiving. Grandparents or other relatives may be supporting care or become the primary caregiver for young children.

Nearly 17% of American employees provide some type of caregiving to a family member or friend and more than half of those working caregivers are employed full time (Family Caregiving Alliance). Employees have a diverse set of needs and this toolkit provides general tips for helping to support your unique workforce.

Caregiving is a critical issue across the nation, and it is no different in Colorado. According\(^1\) to AARP, more than 43 million Americans provide caregiving support to a family member, friend or neighbor, with at least 584,000 caregivers in Colorado. Additionally, Colorado has the third fastest growth rate of the older adult population in the nation, according to the State Demography Office.\(^2\)

Caregiving can include personal care, financial and medication management, transportation, supporting activities of daily living, and even medical care. In 1999, 13% of working professionals self-identified as a caregiver of an older adult. In 2011, that number rose to 17%\(^3\) Caring for older adults is quickly becoming more of a norm in Colorado, as older adults are among the fastest growing populations in the state.\(^4\) As employers think more about how to integrate family-friendly workplace policies into their organizations, caregiving should be considered.

Creating a family-friendly workplace means supporting employees as they balance their evolving needs while at work, but also in their personal lives. To help Colorado employers
create and maintain policies that support their employees with family-friendly policies, the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment and Executives Partnering to Invest in Children released the Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit in 2017. The toolkit is designed to provide practical strategies for improving workplaces through evidence-informed best practices for supporting the growing diversity of family needs in the workplace to help employers retain and attract high quality employees who feel supported.

Tri-County Health Department, based in the Denver metro area, and its partners actively use the toolkit in their work with employer coalitions to individualize these policies to create safe, healthy and marketable workplaces across industries. After seeing the growing demand for more support for caregivers in the workplace, the Colorado Respite Coalition (a program of Easterseals Colorado) began collaboration with the Tri-County Health Department to provide more tangible tools for local employers by creating a new toolkit—the Caregiving-Friendly Workplace Toolkit.

This guide is designed to work as a subproduct of the Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit. There are many elements of creating a family-friendly workplace, and caregiving is one of them. **For organizations that are facing the impacts of the growing need for family caregiving across the nation and the state, this guide can help provide tips and resources for creating strategies to support employees balancing care and work.**

Traditionally, family-friendly policies have included work options for parental leave and child care, but may have overlooked employees with other long-term care needs, including caring for parents, spouses or children with health challenges. Furthermore, many employees are raising their own children while also providing care for someone else, such as a parent or sibling. Policies and resources for working caregivers are a growing need.

**WHO IS A CAREGIVER?**

Caregivers are any family member, friend, or neighbor that provides regular support to an individual of any age with extensive care needs including disabilities, chronic conditions and physical and behavioral health challenges. Anyone providing care in a foster, adoptive or kinship setting is also considered a caregiver.
need for employers across sectors. This toolkit is a starting point to respond to the need for comprehensive caregiving-friendly workplace policy guidance.

**Caregiving in Colorado**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were nearly 416,000 Coloradans under the age of 65 living with a disability in 2017. Additionally, Colorado has one of the fastest growing populations of older adults in the nation. Unpaid caregivers are the main provider of long-term care services to these individuals. In Colorado alone, AARP estimates there are more than 584,000 caregivers providing support to aging parents, spouses and other relatives and friends.

Now more than ever before children are being born to two working parents. When parents are caregiving, sometimes for both their children and older family members, and trying to balance employment, it can create a strain on the family unit. Neuroscience and behavioral health research confirms that the foundation for future relationships, mental and physical health, and the capacity to learn and thrive begins before birth and is influenced strongly during the first five years of life. It is important that parents have the opportunity to be engaged in their child’s first years of life in order to build solid brain architecture for their children. This foundation enables children to prosper and grow up to be contributing adults. Caregiving support policies promote parental resilience and involved parenting and strengthens families.

Caregivers take on many roles and each situation is different. Depending on the needs of the person they are caring for, caregivers may support personal care needs, financial management, appointment coordination, patient advocacy and housekeeping. When you add all of the roles in after a long day of work, it’s easy to understand how little time most caregivers have left for their own needs.
Many caregivers receive little or no formal support, because they do not know what resources are available, they are hesitant to bring in outside help or the financial burden is too high. This is especially challenging when considering how long caregiving may be needed for a chronic condition. The average duration of caregiving is 4 years, with varying levels of intensity and changing needs.\textsuperscript{12} Furthermore, many caregivers are juggling the demands of their personal lives while also working outside of the home.\textsuperscript{13} The average number of hours of care per week varies anywhere from a handful to nearly a second full time job. Imagine leaving the office after a long day or week of work knowing that you have to go home and switch into caregiving mode. For most caregivers, there is little time left for other necessities, especially their own self-care. Caregiving requires flexibility as things rarely go as planned. As more and more Americans are facing the challenges of caregiving, we must work together to find ways to support employees in the workplace.

Caregiving has a direct impact on employees, employers, and the workforce as a whole. It is paramount for employers to adopt caregiving-friendly workplace policies that can support the growing trend of working people caring for loved ones with extensive care needs. There are economic and personal impacts of caregiving that should be considered by employers. Caregiving impacts an organization’s bottom line in a variety of ways included reduced productivity, increased time off, absenteeism, employee burnout and training and replacement costs.
Caregiving in the Workplace

THE PEOPLE

Caregivers are individuals who provide support for a family member or friend with a disability or health challenge. They may live with the person they are caring for, or may even be providing support long-distance. A caregiver may be a parent caring for a child with autism, an adult supporting an aging parent with memory conditions, or a spouse caring for their partner with a chronic illness, for example.

Caregiver roles range greatly. Caregivers may provide personal care support such as bathing and dressing, help managing finances and transportation needs, medication management, and other activities of daily living. Caregiving responsibilities can extend to providing medical care and using complex equipment. Every caregiving situation is unique, but the impact and need for additional support is a common thread.

Caregivers may be found within all ages, races, and identities. While caregivers cross demographics, many people do not identify as a caregiver. It is common for people to refer to themselves in terms of other roles, such as a parent or spouse, before claiming the role of caregiver. This is due to a growing need for awareness, so that caregivers can self-identify in their caregiving roles and then get connected to appropriate resources.

If you have not yet experienced caregiving in your family, you likely will at some point in time. In fact, most Americans will either become or need a caregiver at some point in their lifetime.17

“There are only four kinds of people in the world:

Those who have been caregivers,
Those who are currently caregivers,
Those who will be caregivers,
And those who will need caregivers.”

ROSALYNN CARTER

U.S. BUSINESSES LOSE BETWEEN $17.1 & $33 BILLION ANNUALLY because of lost productivity of working caregivers18
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT TO EMPLOYERS

Annually, U.S. businesses lose up to $33 billion due to lost productivity of employees who are caregiving.\textsuperscript{20}

The estimated average additional health cost to employers is 8% more for employees providing care to older adults.\textsuperscript{21} This is because caregivers are at a higher risk for long-term medical problems such as heart disease, hypertension, obesity and stroke.\textsuperscript{22}

Seventy percent of American professionals report "work-related challenges" while balancing work and home life, which negatively impacts productivity and presenteeism.\textsuperscript{23}

39\% of caregivers leave their job to have more time to provide care.\textsuperscript{19}

34\% of caregivers leave because their workplace does not provide enough flexibility.
Caregiving has an economic impact on employers and industries, through the ways the role directly and indirectly affects employees. Working caregivers commonly report choosing early retirement, not accepting promotions, cutting hours to part time or leaving the workforce entirely as a result of their caregiving responsibilities.24

“As the population ages, as more single mothers care for their children, and in a very tight labor market, employers need to wake up: Supporting the caregiving needs of their employees isn’t only a nice perk, it may be critical to maintaining a productive workforce in the 21st century.”

HOWARD GLECKMAN, FORBES25

Caregiving duties typically do not stop between business hours. Imagine using paid time off to attend appointments with a loved one, squeezing errands into your lunch break or trying to balance talking with your mom’s doctor at your desk while also preparing for your next meeting. Some employees may be staying in the workforce so they can pay for services for their loved ones. This can even be for a professional to provide care while they head into the office, especially in circumstances where their loved one requires 24/7 care.

These things may seem doable in the short term, but for many families, this is the norm for months, or even years. As employees “burn the candle at both ends”, burnout, both in their work and personal lives, is a real concern. Some of the chronic, long-term stressors of caregiving can be addressed by employers establishing caregiving-friendly workplace policies.

There are economic incentives for employers to adopt policies that support employees facing the challenges of caregiving. Caregivers bring value and experience to the workplace, and employers must adapt policy to maintain a quality, engaged workforce. Financially, it is in the best interest of employers to retain quality staff compared to recruiting and training new team members. Retention may be achieved by offering more resources, benefits and supports. Becoming caregiving-friendly is a positive choice for the bottom line.
How Does Caregiving Impact Your Workplace?

Whether or not your organization is directly feeling the impact of caregiving, it is likely making an impact. Employees who are also caregiving may not be vocal about their needs, but they are likely showing some of the signs of the challenges of managing it all.

Estimates range on exactly how much caregiving costs employers nationally each year, but the consensus is that it is significant and often goes unnoticed at first. When broken down, the costs can come from decreased productivity, turnover and replacement, increased health care premiums, increased days needed for paid or unpaid leave or even early retirement. Although it can be tricky to quantify the exact costs to your workplace, they are likely occurring and it is important to consider all of the factors.

The economic impacts of caregiving do not mean that individuals caring for a loved one are bad employees, or a drain on resources. They simply need policies and workplace environments that are supportive of their lifestyle and daily demands. Increasing the caregiving-friendliness of the workplace is essential to aiding these employees in performing their best, at work and at home.

61% of caregivers experience at least one change related to work due to caregiving. This may include reducing hours, taking a leave of absence, a warning or disciplinary action regarding performance or attendance or others.

- Arrive to their place of work late/leave early/take time off (49%)
- Take a leave of absence, short or long-term (15%)
- Reduce their work hours or change roles (14%)
- Turn down a promotion (5%)
- Retire early (4%)
- Receive a warning or disciplinary action about performance or attendance (7%)
- Lose job benefits (3%)
- Leave the workforce entirely (6%)
Is Your Workplace Caregiving-Friendly?

So how do you determine if your workplace is caregiving-friendly? It is common for managers and executives to be unaware of an employee’s caregiving roles unless an urgent situation arises. It is understandable that it may be uncomfortable for an employee to share a glimpse into their personal lives at work, and they may not know how to bring up their concerns about the impact on their work performance. Becoming caregiving-friendly does not need to mean finding solutions for everyone. The first step is to learn more about your employees needs and decide what steps are appropriate within your organization and culture.
How to Get Started

CURRENT RESOURCES

The best place to start is to consider what resources and elements of your work culture are available to support caregivers. Do you have flexible work hours or the option to work remotely? Are employees aware of how to access the Family Medical Leave Act benefits if they need to take extensive time off of work? Consider all elements you currently have, small and large, that may benefit caregivers. Then ask yourself, how many of our employees are actively aware of these benefits, and utilizing them?

Review the list of AARP's eight tips to support caregivers as a starting point to evaluate the level of caregiving-friendliness of your workplace at https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/life-balance/info-2017/ways-to-support-working-caregivers-lh.html

Additionally, consider the average age of your employees. Do you have many staff with young families? What about employees who may be balancing their own families with the needs of other aging relatives? Although the ultimate goal is to create a workplace that supports all families as their needs evolve, you can start by looking at what the biggest needs are now. In the next step, you’ll learn more about how to better understand employees needs and determine appropriate actions.

If you need to take a step back and consider how family-friendly your workplace is, reach out to Health Links and complete their Health Workplace Assessment online at https://www.healthlinkscertified.org/.

DETERMINE EMPLOYEE NEEDS

Before diving in head first, you should start to evaluate what your employees want and need. You can start by asking some simple questions. When talking with employees, make sure you are reaching all departments and levels of employment—what works for a part time employee may be quite different than someone working full time.

Consider an all-staff survey, and ask people to anonymously share if they are supporting someone in their life. This can include a child with special needs, a spouse, a parent, a sibling, neighbor, friend, etc. Simply asking, “Are you a caregiver” may not be enough as often times, caregivers may identify more as a daughter caring for her mother, or a father raising his child. Digging into the impact that caregiving takes on the workplace, and determining what needs your employees have, can guide your next steps.
However you move forward, be sensitive to how different caregiving looks across different families, languages and cultures. Even the word “caregiver” may not be well perceived, and in some cultures taking care of family is just the expectation. Additionally, employees may not feel comfortable sharing their caregiving situation and it takes time to build a more open workplace culture.

Here are some sample questions to help determine the impact of caregiving in your workplace:

- Do you provide care to another person (family member, friend, neighbor, etc.) that has a disability or special health care need? Care can include personal care, medical tasks, and supporting activities of daily living.
- Which organization policies and benefits have you accessed in the past? (Paid leave, FMLA, maternal paid leave, parental paid leave, paid sick days, etc.)
- What benefits and resources would be beneficial for you? (i.e. more flexible work hours, ability to work remotely, lunch and learns, resource fairs, etc.)
- If you need more information about a benefit or resource for either yourself or a family member, do you know where to go for information and assistance?
- How well is information regarding paid leave and family support shared with employees?
- What is your satisfaction level with the amount of paid leave and support your agency offers?
- How many times in the last month have you had to adjust your work hours (leave early, come in late, request time off) to care for another individual with health care challenges?
- Have you ever passed on a promotion or reduced your work hours due to the level of care you are providing to another person?
- Rate your work-life balance on a scale of 1-5.
- What would make the biggest positive difference in your role as a working caregiver?
- Is there a quiet space available to make personal phone calls in private?
- Are you aware of other employees that are providing care to a loved one?
- Are you interested in joining a family caregiving support group at work?
- Do you feel comfortable talking about your caregiving role at work? If no, why not?
- If you are, or anticipate, providing care for a loved one, what resources would be helpful for you?

Again, it may not be feasible to tackle all needs at one time, and that is okay. If the majority of responses about needed resources focus on one age group, or a specific issue such as information about dementia, that’s a great starting point.
FORM A COMMITTEE

Making your workplace more family-friendly and caregiving-friendly takes time and should be a collaborative process. If you already have a committee that works on workplace culture, health and safety or other issues, consider how caregiving efforts might be added. Perhaps you can form a subcommittee, or create a separate group. Then determine who needs to have an active role. Including management helps show buy-in from the top. Representatives from across the organization should also be included. Encourage staff across levels to participate. Employees do not require a leadership title to lead or participate on a committee. Find champions across your organization and empower them. If you can find someone providing care in their own lives, that’s even better!

Utilizing what you have learned from the previous steps, it is time to determine the team’s goals. What does your organization want to address to help make your workplace more caregiving-friendly? What is the value of doing so—for your management, your individual employees and the overall organization? What are the barriers you may face along the way, and what does the long-term picture look like? It is crucial to stop and think through all of these questions before you move any further. If you are struggling, consider reaching out to another organization that can provide advising sessions or other employers who have gone through the process previously.

DETERMINE NEXT STEPS

Becoming more caregiving-friendly can be simple and does not need to mean reinventing the wheel. Please visit the resource section at the end of this toolkit for ideas that might work well in your organization. With your team, discuss the options that might be a good fit for your workplace. There is no perfect recipe to help an organization become more caregiving-friendly. Rather, there are a variety of tools available to help employers to determine the best options for their culture, structure and employees’ needs.

Talking about how to become more family and caregiving-friendly can become overwhelming without breaking down specific ideas and gaps to address. You don’t have to take everything on at once. In fact, it’s best to start small and evaluate progress along the way by checking in with employees.

As you begin to implement ideas, make sure you have a plan to communicate them with employees. You may have a great idea, but if employees do not know or understand it, it’s not likely to succeed. Furthermore, consider how to help managers buy in to the culture shift around caregiving. If employees sense that their managers do not support new benefits or policies, they may be hesitant to access them.
Ideas for Making Your Workplace More Caregiving-Friendly

FLEXIBILITY

☐ Flexible work hours (compressed weeks, making up hours outside of normal business day)
☐ Ability to reduce work hours as needed (shift to part time short-term)
☐ Phased retirement planning
☐ Ability to ease back in after coming off short or long term leave
☐ Evaluate flexibility of paid time off – is it clear in policies that employees can use personal time for caregiving needs?
☐ Discuss how employees can donate their time off to colleagues in need
☐ Improve understanding of how to access Family and Medical Leave Act
☐ Flexible work environments—work remotely part of work day/week
☐ Consider investing in tools that make working remotely easier for teams (i.e. video conferencing)
☐ Talk with managers across the organization to determine if making work hours more flexible is a possibility, or what other changes might be possible to increase options for caregivers
☐ If you already offer flexible work schedules and environment find out how many employees utilize them, and what barriers exist if they do not

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

☐ If you utilize an Employee Assistance Plan, talk with them about what additional supports may be available to your employees (consider the health care, financial, social and spiritual needs of your employees and their families)
☐ Evaluate how health insurance plan options support all families (i.e. could more be done to support dependents? Could telehealth benefits be added?)
☐ If you have an all staff presentation about employee benefits, make sure they have the opportunity to ask questions about their family’s needs privately
Flexible spending plans—educate employees on how they can take advantage of these plans for their caregiving needs

Offer a scholarship program for employees to access for medical expenses, caregiving supports, etc.

Provide supports or access to outside resources to help caregivers reintegrate to the workplace after returning from caregiving leave

Facilitate access to case and care management services, as well as legal and financial advisors for long-term caregiving needs

Offer counseling, grief, mental health and/or substance use resources

Share local support groups or think about starting a caregiving group on-site

Find nearby child care and adult day centers and see if you can negotiate a large group discount or partner to better serve your employees

If you share an office with other employers, talk to them about splitting costs for on-site child care, access to resources, etc.

WORKPLACE EDUCATION

Host an annual health and wellness resource fair with local services as vendors

Offer lunch and learn sessions and ask employees for topic ideas

If your organization has a digital platform for sharing resources or trainings, host webinars or post community resource lists

Think outside the box on what resources could be valuable—consider how a local technology group could share digital tools that help caregivers or little known tips from pharmacies about making medication management easier

Include management in trainings to help build broader understanding of employees needs and value of family friendly policies

Communicate these benefits with your current employees, and also highlight them when recruiting new team members. Making your workplace caregiving-friendly will help you stand out! Even if an employee is not currently providing care, it’s great to work somewhere when you know that support is there when the time comes.
Resources Available through Easterseals Colorado

The Colorado Respite Coalition, a program of Easterseals Colorado, strongly believes in supporting caregivers at home, in the community and at work by providing them a short break through respite care. To help support employers as they become more caregiving-friendly, the Colorado Respite Coalition is pleased to offer complimentary one hour advising sessions to any Colorado employer interested in learning how to better support caregivers. Depending on employer location and availability, advising sessions may be offered in person or by video conference.

Additionally, the Colorado Respite Coalition can share ideas regarding lunch and learn topics, speaker series and other ideas for how to increase caregiving supports in your workplace.

TOPICS AVAILABLE FOR SPEAKERS:
- Caregiving support and basic resources
- Respite care
- Nutrition
- Exercise and physical wellness
- Financial and legal aspects of caregiving
- Stress management and self-care
- Compassion fatigue
- Work-life balance
- Therapeutic journaling
- Dementia 101

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYERS:
- Ideas for speakers and trainings (and depending on availability, access to speakers)
- Access to Online Resource Finder for caregivers
- Printed/electronic materials about Colorado caregiving resources
- Tips and tools to make your workplace more caregiving-friendly
- Assistance design caregiving-friendly campaign in your workplace

To learn more, please visit www.ColoradoRespiteCoalition.org
Caregiving-Friendly Workplace Resources

For Employers

GUIDES AND TOOLKITS
• AARP 8 Tips for Caregiving Friendly Workplace
• Best Practices in Workplace Eldercare
• Digital Tools and Solutions for Caregivers: An Employer’s Guide
• Employed Family Caregiver Survey
• Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit
• Health Links Family Friendly Workplace Assessment
• Health Links Health and Safety Workplace Assessment
• Implementing the Employed Family Caregiver Survey
• National Caregiving Library: What Employers Can Do
• ReACT Employer Resource Guide
• ReACT Resource List
• Supporting Caregivers in the Workplace: A Practical Guide for Employers
• Tele-Work and Flex Schedules Toolkit

FACT SHEETS
• Caregiving 101
• Family-Friendly Workplace: Blueprint for Success
• The Impact of Alzheimer’s on the Workplace

RESEARCH, STUDIES AND PUBLIC POLICY WORK
• AARP Breaking New Ground
• Caregiving and the Workplace: Employer Benchmarking Survey
• Caregiving in the U.S. 2009
• The Many Faces of Caregiving

For Caregivers

TOOLS AND FACT SHEETS
• 40 Ways to Relax in Under 5 Minutes
• ARCH Respite Network ABC’s of Respite Care: A Guide for Family Caregivers
• Caregiver Wellness Toolkit
• Charting the Life Course toolkit
• Colorado Respite Navigation Guide
• Caregiver Self-Assessment Questionnaire
• Workplace Wellness Check

COLORADO STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCE AGENCIES

Colorado Respite Coalition, a program of Easterseals Colorado The Colorado Respite Coalition (CRC) is a network of community partners who work together to support Colorado families who are caring for individuals of all ages with any special health care needs. The CRC provides respite resources, financial assistance, training and education, and other supports for caregivers throughout the state through collaboration and community partnerships. Explore the Resource Finder to
locate local respite providers, trainings, and other supports.

Learn more: 303.233.1666 x8 or www.ColoradoRespiteCoalition.org

Aging and Disability Resources for Colorado
The Aging and Disability Resources for Colorado (ADRC) provide information and referrals on a variety of long-term services and supports available to adults with disabilities and older adults. Options counselors are available to provide personalized and impartial education and decision support regarding local resources for individuals and their caregivers. This statewide services offers regional locations that serve specific areas.

Learn more: Call that ADRC hotline at 1.844.COL.ADRC (1.844.265.2372) or visit https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/aging-and-disability-resources-colorado

Area Agencies on Aging The Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) serve individuals 60+ and their families and caregivers through federal funding from the Older Americans Act. There are 16 AAAs in Colorado serving specific regions. AAAs provide services to older adults such as case management, transportation, meal services, caregiver support and in-home services, along with connecting people to various community-based services and supports.

Learn more: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/AAA%20Map.pdf

Community-Centered Boards Community Centered Board (CCBs) provide care management to assist individuals in accessing necessary services and supports to meet their needs. CCBs oversee the application process and service management for a number of Medicaid HCBS waivers, which provide an expansion on eligible Medicaid services. CCBs provide eligibility determination, service support and coordination, service plan development, and more. CCBs serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There are 20 CCBs in Colorado serving specific regions.

Learn more: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/community-centered-boards

Single Entry Points Single Entry Points (SEPs) are regional agencies that service individuals receiving certain Medicaid HCBS waivers. SEPs provide waiver application assistance, eligibility and intake assessments, case management, service coordination, and other supports. SEPs provide the majority of services to individuals on Adult HCBS waivers, but also serve the Children with Life Limiting Illness (CLLI) waivers. There are 24 SEPs in Colorado serving specific regions.

Learn more: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/single-entry-point-agencies

2-1-1 2-1-1 is a national service providing information on available community resources for anyone in need. 2-1-1 can connect callers with information and resources on food assistance, housing and shelter, health services, immigration and legal matters, and many other topics. Local resource specialists support those seeking resources over the phone and through virtual communication, and resources can be accessed through the online database.

Learn more: Call 2-1-1 or visit http://211colorado.communityos.org/cms/home
BENEFITS APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

Understanding, applying for, receiving and maintaining federal and state benefits can be challenging. There are some organizations in Colorado that can assist individuals and families in applying for certain public assistance programs.

Certified Application Assistance Sites (CAAS): Can assist with applications for medical and other public assistance benefits. Services and fees vary by organization.

Find your local CAAS: https://apps.colorado.gov/apps/maps/hcpf.map

Colorado Program Eligibility and Application Kit (PEAK): An online, statewide self-service portal that allows customers to apply for benefits and manage their account online.

Learn more: www.colorado.gov/PEAK

Easterseals Colorado Disability Benefits Services (DBS): Provides application assistance for Social Security disability applications, benefits counseling and employment services.

Learn more: Call 303.233.1666 x230 or easterseals.com/co/our-programs/work/disability-benefits-services/

Colorado Crisis Services Colorado Crisis Services is available statewide to any individual experiencing any kind of crisis, including relationship problems, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, bullying, family issues, suicidal thoughts, and more. This program is also available to friends and family of anyone experiencing a crisis to find information, resources and support. The crisis line is operated 24/7 by trained crisis counselors. There are twelve walk-in clinics around the state.

Learn more: 1.844.493.8255 or https://coloradocrisisservices.org/

United States Department of Veteran Affairs

The US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) operates the Veterans Health Administration and the Veterans Benefits Administration. These agencies provide services and supports to veterans, their families and their caregivers. Support options may include healthcare services, pension and financial assistance, caregiver wellness services, and mental health services. Available services vary by region, location, and other eligibility factors.

Learn more: General inquiries to 1.844.MY.VA.311 (1.844.698.2311)

VA Caregiver Support Line: 1.855.260.3274 or caregiver.va.gov/help_landing.asp

County Human Services Departments The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) connects Coloradans to resources and supports for independent living. Services offered by these agencies include resources and supports for children and families, disability services, employment, food and financial assistance, housing assistance, and aging services. County Human Services departments may also offer resources for kinship, foster and adoptive families. Available services vary by county.

Learn more: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/contact-your-county

Network of Care Network of Care is an online resource database, available in certain regions of Colorado. The service directory has information on services regarding caregiving, healthy aging, stress, fitness, and more. Local events, resources, support groups, education tools, and local news can also be found within the program.

Available in Denver, Northwest CO, Boulder County, Larimer County, and the Pikes Peak region

Learn more: http://www.trilogyir.com/
SUPPORT GROUPS AND NETWORKS

Parent 2 Parent of Colorado (P2P): A network of families across Colorado who understand the joys and challenges of parenting children with disabilities and special health care needs. Connecting families to resources, offering encouragement, and providing emotional and informational support.

Learn more: www.p2p-co.org or 1.877.472.7201

Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA): The FCA works to improve the quality of life for family caregivers and the people who receive their care. FCA offers services, education programs, resources, and caregiver connection.

Learn more: https://www.caregiver.org/

Caregiver Action Network (CAN): Caregiver Action Network (CAN): CAN works to improve the quality of life for millions of Americans who care for loved ones facing the challenges of chronic conditions, disabilities, disease and aging. CAN provides education, peer support, and resources for caregivers across the country.

Learn more: https://www.caregiveraction.org/

The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC): The NAC is a non-profit coalition of national organizations focused on advancing family caregiving through research, innovation and advocacy. NAC conducts research, policy analysis, best-practice programs, and increasing public awareness.

Learn more: https://www.caregiving.org/

DISABILITY AND DISEASE SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONS

- Alzheimer’s Association
- American Cancer Society
- The Arc of Colorado
- Autism Society of Colorado
- Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado
- Colorado Deaf Blind Project
- Colorado Health Network
- Easterseals Colorado
- Epilepsy Foundation Colorado
- Huntington’s Disease Society of America Rocky Mountain Chapter
- Multiple Sclerosis Society - CO and Wyoming
- National Alliance on Mental Illness Colorado
- National Organization for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Colorado (NOFAS), Illuminate Colorado
- Parkinson Association of the Rockies
- Personal Assistance Services of Colorado (PASCO)
- Rocky Mountain Down Syndrome Association
- Rocky Mountain Stroke Center
- Spina Bifida Association of Colorado

This list is a good starting place, but does not include all specific health conditions. There are many disability, population and disease specific organizations across Colorado and the nation. Search online for the most appropriate resources for your needs.

COLORADO RESPITE COALITION RESOURCES

Website: www.ColoradoRespiteCoalition.org

- Referrals for respite care and other caregiving resources
- REST Training
- Stress Busting Training Course (for professional and family caregivers)
- Online Resource Finder – Trainings, education, local respite providers and more
- Financial assistance for respite care
- Presentations and trainings
References


