

Practical Considerations When Starting a New Program and for Experienced Voucher Program Providers

Are you thinking about starting a voucher respite program? Are you a seasoned veteran in implementing a program, but still have questions? The Respite Voucher Learning Collaborative will provide peer leadership to explore the many issues you should consider before getting started as well as those that may have emerged for you in your current program.

Caregivers and care recipients – Who to serve?

1. How do you decide which populations of caregivers and care recipients to serve?
2. How do you decide what the eligibility criteria for caregivers and care recipients will be? Income? Age? Disability?
3. How do you determine funding priority – a needs assessment, first come first served, or other method?
4. What should the income and resource requirements be?
5. Should we verify income and disability? What kind of assurances should we accept as given by applicant and what requires stronger verification? How should we verify income and condition of the care recipient?

What type of voucher program do we want?

1. Should we reimburse family caregivers or providers or both depending on the situation? (Discuss pros and cons of both from seasoned programs)
2. Should we reimburse only licensed agencies or can families select anyone?
3. If we are offering vouchers directly to family caregivers, do we reimburse them or provide vouchers up front and let them pay providers directly?
4. For seasoned voucher programs: To gain the greatest amount of flexibility in your voucher program - what did you do to gain it? What did you sacrifice to get it?

What type of respite providers will we allow?

1. Does your state already have regulations for vetting or training of providers that you will have to meet?
2. Will training of respite providers be required? If so, how will providers be trained?
3. Should we require criminal background checks? If so, in what circumstances is someone approved or denied?
4. Can respite providers be relatives or live in the same home?
5. Should we have a minimum age for respite providers?

6. What other provider qualifications are necessary?
7. What type of agreement or contract is necessary with providers? What is essential to include?
8. How will you maintain working relationships with providers and foster positive feedback loops?

What administrative issues need to be addressed? What data collection processes and measures should we use?

1. Do we need a policy and procedures manual? If so, what is included?
2. How will we keep track of voucher use, expenses and other administrative data? What other kind of data should we collect? Are there digital tools or software that can help organize and track information?
3. Should we collect outcome data? What type of outcome data should we collect? Why are outcome data important?
4. Do we need to budget for staff to administer vouchers and provide case management to family caregivers seeking respite? How much?
5. What type of staff training is necessary to effectively administer respite vouchers?
6. Are there strategies for streamlining the administrative processes to issue vouchers in a timely manner?

What are the liability, fraud prevention and tax issues?

1. What do states currently do to address liability concerns? Does your state already have requirements that you will have to meet?
2. How will we prevent fraud? How do we reduce process demands, streamline procedures, avoid bottlenecks - and still keep checks in place?
3. What are the tax implications for the family caregiver? For the provider?
4. If the family caregiver is the employer, is the respite provider an independent consultant or an employee? What are the tax implications of each?