# ~ Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program ~
# Frequently Asked Questions



## What is the Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program?

The *Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program* provides reimbursement to Primary Family Caregivers for the cost of temporary, short-term respite care provided to individuals of any age with a disability or chronic condition (children and adults, including elderly persons). The *Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program* is funded through a federal grant awarded to the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) from the federal Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging -- Administration for Community Living.

Individuals eligible to apply for voucher funding through the *Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program* include Virginia caregivers of children or adults who reside in the same household as the Care Recipient. Voucher funding is limited to a total of $400 per family. Voucher funding will continue until July 31, 2016 or when funds are expended. Please continue to read below for frequently asked questions about the *Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program*.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is Respite?** Respite is well-deserved time off. The Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2006 defines respite care as "planned or emergency care provided to a child or adult with a special need in order to provide temporary relief to the family caregiver of that child or adult."
2. **Who is the Primary Family Caregiver?** The Primary Family Caregiver is the family member or other adult providing ongoing unpaid care for an adult or child with a disability.
3. **Who is the Care Recipient or Disabled Family Member?** The Care Recipient or Disabled Family Member can be a person of any age with any type(s) of disability or chronic condition.
4. **Who is the Respite Provider?** The respite provider is an individual or agency selected by a family or caregiver to provide respite to an individual with special needs.
5. **Where can Respite Services be Provided?** Respite Services can be provided in: the family home; the home of a neighbor, friend, or family member; adult day centers; respite centers; residential care facilities; group homes; recreational settings; community based programs; hospitals; etc.
6. **What are Types of Respite?** Types of respite vary and include: skilled or unskilled care; the use of formal providers who are hired and trained by an agency; or informal providers that are available through parent or caregiver cooperatives, churches, or family and friends.
7. **Will DARS arrange the Respite Care?** DARS does not provide or arrange for respite care. This DARS program is participant directed. YOU are responsible for selecting, hiring, training, and paying a respite care provider of your choice, at a time that is convenient for you and your loved one. You may also use a community respite program (e.g., weekend respite program, therapeutic summer camp, adult day program). Respite and caregiver resources are available on the *Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program* website at http://www.vadars.org and on the Virginia Navigator website at www.virginianavigator.org.
8. **What is Participant Directed Respite?** Participant directed respite is when family caregivers can employ and train formal or informal respite care providers using vouchers.
9. **Can I hire a Respite Provider who Lives in my Home or is Under 18?** If you choose to select a respite care provider yourself, the individual selected to provide the respite care ***MUST be at least 18 years old and cannot be someone who currently resides in your home.*** You are also responsible for negotiating the rate of pay with the respite care provider you select.
10. **Can I use my Current Respite Provider?** If the family currently receives respite services, funds cannot be used to replace current funding for respite/daycare or to pay for respite just to allow the caregiver to work. Funding

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must be used to provide services that allow the caregiver to take a break from caregiving duties: it must go "above and beyond" what is currently being received.

11. **Can I use the Reimbursement for Different Care Services/Days?** The $400 does not have to be used all at once; it can be spread over several periods of respite care.
12. **Is there a Deadline to Use the Funding?** The $400 must be used within 90 days, after approval of application and reimbursement requests must be submitted to DARS no later than 30 days after services are received.
13. **What are the Qualifications of the Program?** Requirements are as follows: The family caregiver and care recipient must reside full time in the same residence, within the commonwealth of Virginia; if the family currently receives respite or other care, funds cannot be used to replace current funding for respite/daycare; funds cannot be used so the family caregiver can work; 1 page documentation of disability must be submitted with the application.
14. **What is the $400 for?** Funding must be used to provide services that allow the caregiver to take a break from caregiving duties.
15. **When will I know if my Application has been approved?** If you are eligible for the Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program and funds are still available, you will be contacted within four weeks to confirm your approval.
16. **When will I receive the reimbursement?** It can take up to 30 days from the date your Reimbursement Form is received by DARS to get your reimbursement check from the Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program. This is in accordance with Virginia's Prompt Payment Act.
    **PLEASE NOTE:** If you have an existing government debt, you may not receive your entire refund.
17. **Will the Check be sent to the Respite Provider?** Reimbursement checks will be made payable to you, the primary caregiver, and not to the respite care provider! YOU are responsible for payment to your respite care provider. The reimbursement check will be mailed to the address you indicate on the ***Reimbursement Form***.
18. **Can I pay the Respite Provider more than $400?** The DARS *Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program* will send a check to you, the Primary Family Caregiver, to reimburse you for payment you have made to the selected respite care provider, not to exceed $400/household. You will be reimbursed only for actual expenses that are documented and submitted to DARS. You may pay more than the voucher amount you requested from DARS, but YOU will be responsible for making up the difference between the amount approved through the *Lifespan Respite Voucher Program* and what you have agreed to pay the provider.
19. **What if I have Multiple Disabled Family Members Living in my Home?** Even if you have more than one person in your home who will receive respite services, the maximum amount for reimbursement is $400 per family.
20. **Can I use this Program if I have Medicaid or Medicare?** You will not be disqualified for this program if you receive Medicaid or Medicare. We encourage individuals to seek out other resources for help with their disabled family member. Use of respite services allows the family caregiver to provide better care for longer periods of time if needed.
21. **If I Receive Respite Services through Another Program, am I Still Eligible?** You will not be disqualified for this program if you receive respite services through another program. We encourage individuals to seek out other resources for help with their disabled family member. Use of respite services allows the family caregiver to provide better care for longer periods of time if needed. If the family currently receives respite services, funds cannot be used to replace current funding for respite/daycare or to pay for respite just to allow the caregiver to work. Funding must be used to provide services that allow the caregiver to take a break from caregiving duties: it must go "above and beyond" what is currently being received.
22. **Does the *W-9 Form* mean that I have to pay taxes on the money I receive?** The reimbursement check will be mailed to the address you indicate on the W-9 Form. The W-9 Form is required by the Commonwealth in order to issue the reimbursement check; it is not sent to the IRS or any other entity for tax purposes.

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If you have questions about the ***Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program***, you can contact Liz Havenner at our toll free number at 800-552-3402 or at 804-662-7671 or e-mail at Liz.Havenner@dars.virginia.gov

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