

Home and Community-Based Services for Florida's Seniors: Family Elder Caregiver Support Services from Florida's Aging Network¹

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Introduction

This publication is part of the Home and Community-Based Services for Florida's Seniors series, a collection of educational resources designed to inform the public about home and community-based support services available to seniors in Florida.

The Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA) provides a variety of home and community-based services for eligible older Americans (those aged 60 years or older, as defined by the OAA) that are channeled through the Administration on Aging (AoA) and state-level units on aging. In the state of Florida, these services are administered and implemented through Florida's Aging Network, which comprises the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) and a host of 58 nonprofit organizations.

As the older adult population of Florida continues to grow rapidly, it is increasingly important that the state's seniors, their caregivers, other stakeholders, and the general public understand the home and community-based services and protections available through the 58 nonprofits — 11 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and 47 Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) lead agencies — that make up Florida's Aging Network.

Focusing on caregiver support, this publication introduces Florida's implementation of the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP), a federally funded initiative under Title IIIIE of the OAA. This program is designed to help family caregivers continue providing care at home for as long as possible, delaying costly institutional care and improving quality of life for both caregivers and recipients. Florida is home to more than 6.3 million adults aged 60 and older — one of the largest aging populations in the United States (DOEA, 2024a). With a growing number of older adults wishing to remain in their homes and communities as they age, the role of unpaid family and

informal caregivers has never been more critical. This publication outlines the core services available, eligibility guidelines, and ways Florida's Aging Network connects caregivers to support throughout the state.

Understanding the National Family Caregiver Support Program

The NFCSP, administered nationally by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), was established in 2000 to help sustain caregivers and delay institutionalization of older adults (ACL, 2025b). In Florida, the DOEA oversees the distribution of these services through the state's 11 AAAs. These regional agencies coordinate caregiver support services, typically through local nonprofit organizations known as lead agencies (DOEA, 2024b).

Services available through the NFCSP have been shown to significantly reduce caregiver depression, anxiety, and stress, and to help caregivers provide care for longer periods at home (ACL, 2025b). In Florida, these services are offered both directly and through referrals, with flexibility based on family needs and availability.

National Family Caregiver Support Program Services (ACL, 2025b)

Information services: Educating caregivers about available programs, services, and support options in their area.

Access assistance: Helping caregivers locate, understand, and enroll in appropriate services.

Counseling, support groups, and training: Providing emotional support, peer connections, and practical skills to improve caregiving outcomes.

Respite care: Temporary relief from caregiving through in-home care, adult day services, or short-term facility-based care.

Supplemental services: Limited, one-time services such as home modifications, medical supplies, or transportation.



Figure 1. Two people laughing and preparing food.
Credit: © fizkes/Adobe Stock.

Caregiver support services in Florida are primarily funded through Title III-E of the OAA. These services are available to a range of caregivers, with specific eligibility criteria and prioritization guidelines.

General Eligibility (ACL, 2025b)

- Adult family members or informal caregivers caring for individuals aged 60 or older.
- Caregivers of individuals of any age with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias.
- Grandparents or other relatives aged 55 or older who are the primary caregivers of
 - Children under age 18, or
 - Individuals with disabilities.

Service-Specific Eligibility (DOEA, 2023)

- For some services — such as respite care, adult day services, and supplemental services — the care recipient must meet a frailty threshold, meaning
 - They require substantial assistance with at least two activities of daily living, or
 - They have cognitive or mental impairments that require significant supervision.

Priority for Services (DOEA, 2023)

Priority for services is given to:

- Caregivers with the greatest social and economic need, including
 - Low-income older adults
 - Minority populations

- Individuals living in rural areas
- Individuals with limited English proficiency
- Caregivers providing support to individuals with severe disabilities, including children.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program has demonstrated substantial impact in supporting caregivers. In a recent reporting year, more than 700,000 caregivers received assistance through the program. Among these, over 604,000 caregivers accessed nearly six million hours of respite care, providing them with essential temporary relief. Counseling and training were delivered to more than 100,000 caregivers, while access assistance services facilitated more than 1.3 million connections between caregivers and local resources. According to national survey data, 88% of caregivers reported that services helped them become better at providing care. Approximately 74% stated they were able to continue caregiving longer than they otherwise could have, and 62% indicated that, without these supports, the care recipient would likely have required institutionalization (ACL, 2025b).

Conclusion



Figure 2. Grandparents laughing with their smiling grandchild.
Credit: © Monkey Business/Adobe Stock.

In Florida, elder support services also extend to provide support for caregivers. If you are responsible for caring for a senior citizen or are a senior citizen caring for children or individuals with disabilities, these services may benefit you significantly. Contact the Florida Department of Elder Affairs’ Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) for more information about services available near you.

Other Helpful Resources

Adult and Elder Care:

<http://worklife.emory.edu/dependentcare/eldercare/types.html>

AARP: <https://www.aarp.org/>

Healthy Living: Reliable Websites:

<https://doi.org/10.32473/edis-fy102-2016>

Eldercare Locator: <https://eldercare.acl.gov/home>

DOEA Quick Resource Guide:

<https://elderaffairs.org/resources/>

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