

FOREWORD

The Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments of 2000 authorized the creation of the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) to help many thousands of family members with the care of their older loved ones.¹ Although caregivers always have been an implicit responsibility of the aging network under the OAA, the NFCSP makes this responsibility explicit and defines it to encompass those family and other caregivers supporting older individuals, as well as grandparents and older relatives caring for children. The NFCSP bestows significant new authority and resources to reach these target populations with support services and make them a priority under the OAA.

Responsibility for implementation of the program rests with the aging network, i.e., the Administration on Aging (AoA), State Units on Aging (SUA), Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs), and service providers (SPs). Intended for the staff of these agencies, this Resource Guide offers practical information to help implement the new program. As a “resource guide”—*not* a handbook of program policies or prescribed procedures—it features examples and resources to stimulate members of the aging network to pursue approaches that afford caregivers flexibility and assistance in meeting caregiver service needs.

AoA drew on a number of resources to compile this Guide, including: 1) a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) comprising researchers and aging network representatives who informed its content; 2) more than 20 issue briefs commissioned from prominent researchers and staff of the aging network; 3) the September 2001 *National Family Caregiver Support Program: From Enactment to Action* Conference during which more than 700 participants shared implementation information; 4) site visits to five states (Maine, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington) for discussions on implementation issues; 5) a listserv to disseminate research-based information and exchange program information among network staff; and 6) an extensive literature review on topics related to caregiving.

Among the Guide’s noteworthy features are:

- A concise narrative with references for further information provided through Web links, footnotes, and appendix materials; and
- Numerous exhibits that highlight examples of implementation approaches and provide program contact information.

This Guide is being directly disseminated to SUAs, AAAs, ITOs, and selected national organizations and will be posted on the NFCSP Web site at <http://www.aoa.gov/carenetwork>. CDs of the document, which have been inserted into the Resource Guide binder, can be used to make additional hard copies of the Guide. SUAs and AAAs are *strongly encouraged* to work together to make copies available to local service providers in their state.

¹ Public Law 106 – 501, November 13, 2000.

This Resource Guide has been developed during the early stages of the NFCSP when program implementation experience is relatively limited. As appropriate, we plan to issue occasional updates of Guide chapters through postings to the NFCSP Web site. With this intention in mind, we welcome your feedback on the usefulness of the Guide and on important program developments that might interest others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For more information about home and community-based programs and services that support the well-being, health and independence of older persons and their caregivers, contact AoA's Center for Communication and Consumer Services at 202-619-7501. The Center directs and coordinates AoA's public information, education and outreach activities concerning our nation's large and growing aging population.