

# Respite Voucher Program Policies & Procedures



2014-2015

## Parent Policy Handbook

**Note: Policies and procedures may change  
as additional program needs are identified.**

Please keep these policies for your information

## **RESPITE...The Gift of Time**

“Respite” refers to short term, temporary care provided to individuals with special needs to allow their families to take a break from the daily routine of care giving. This in turn, can help prevent abuse and neglect, and support the family unit (US/GAO. September 1990).

### **The Northern Nevada R.A.V.E. Family Foundation~Respite Voucher Program**

The Northern Nevada R.A.V.E. Family Foundation (NNRFF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that operates out of Sparks, Nevada. The NNRFF began providing respite care for families caring for children with special needs in 1995. At the present, the NNRFF is a non-profit organization that solicits state, community, and private donations to ensure continuation of the program. ***RAVE is an acronym for Respite And Volunteer Experiences. The mission of the NNRFF is to improve the well-being of Nevada families by providing respite to those caring for young and adult children with special needs. The NNRFF accomplishes this by training youth volunteers to care for these special children and by providing vouchers for families to choose appropriate respite options.***

Respite comes in various forms and occurs in many settings. It can take place in the family's home, the home of another, or in a community setting, such as a church, childcare center and camp programs. The family might choose to hire their own respite provider or merely exchange duties with another family who has a child with special needs. Respite can range from a few hours a day to a week or more. Where respite occurs and the length of time required depends on the needs of the child and family. It is usually scheduled and temporary; however, sometimes emergency care is needed.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

The Respite Voucher Program provides funds in the form of reimbursement vouchers to families to assist in obtaining respite care for a child who has a disability, chronic illness, is in foster or adoptive care and has disabilities, ***children and youth with special healthcare needs***, or grandparents raising their grandchildren with special needs or disabilities.

#### **Definition of Children/Youth with Special Healthcare Needs:**

*Those children who are 0-17 years old and who have, or are at an increased risk for chronic physical, development, behavioral, or emotional conditions that require health and related services beyond those typically needed by children in the state.*

For a family to qualify, the individual must meet one of the disabling criteria on the application, provide proof of the individual's disability, and reside in one of the rural counties of Nevada or Washoe County, excluding Clark County. Due to limited number of spaces, all completed applications will be reviewed for eligibility and then processed based upon the time they are received. Applications must be mailed to NNRFF/Respite Voucher Program, P. O. Box 2072 Sparks, NV. 89432.

Applications are reviewed and applicants are notified if they meet the criteria to receive vouchers through the Respite Voucher Program. If the application is received, but not complete, the application will be returned to the applicant and will not be approved until all information and proper documentation is received.

### **USE OF VOUCHER**

After you have completed the application and have been approved for respite, you will be given numbered vouchers. **Please use the vouchers in order.**

Vouchers should be turned in monthly.

- Payment to the provider is negotiable between the parent and the provider. Note: reimbursement will not exceed \$10.00 per hour.
  - Please notify the NNRFF should you need to hire a medical professional to meet the needs of the disabled receiving respite care. An hourly rate will be determined based on the experience needed to care for the individual.

- If respite is provided overnight or on the weekend (24 hours or more), the voucher rates cannot exceed \$50.00 per day.
- **Families receive a maximum of \$625 a year per family not per child, even if there is more than one child in the household with a disability or special need.**
- Complete vouchers after each respite session (you can use one voucher for up to three sessions).
- The voucher needs to indicate the actual date, for example: (7/13/13), hours respite occurred (2:30pm to 4:30pm), amount charged per hour (\$10 per hour), total number of hours (2 hours), total amount due for each session (ex. \$20). **Each respite session must be signed by the respite provider.**
- **If this information is not complete on the voucher, the voucher will be returned for completion. The voucher will not be paid until all information on the voucher is complete.**

## **PROCEDURE**

1. Parent/guardian makes arrangements with respite provider.
2. The parent/guardian completes the information on the voucher after respite has been received.
3. Provider signs the voucher.
4. Parent pays provider.
5. Parent signs the voucher.
6. It is the parent's responsibility to assure the respite information is accurate and complete prior to submission of the voucher.
7. Parent submits voucher to the NNRFF for payment.
8. Parent is reimbursed when payment is received. \*Financial arrangement is made between the parent and provider.\*
9. The payment will be mailed to the parent/guardian address. The voucher must be signed by the respite provider and the parent for the voucher to be processed.

- Payments are made to the families, and the families are responsible for paying the provider. Funds received are to be used only for reimbursing parent/caregiver for respite services received.

### **Misuse or failure to pay a provider will result in loss of program benefits.**

- Parents/guardians are responsible for all costs above the maximum amount authorized, which is \$10 dollars per hour. **This \$10 dollars per hour is for one child or more.**
- Families approved to use respite funds through the Respite Voucher Program are subject to random audits to ensure that funds are used for respite within the appropriate guidelines.

**Vouchers are paid up to \$625 maximum for the 2014-2015 program year.**

## **CHOOSING A RESPITE PROVIDER**

The Northern Nevada R.A.V.E. Family Foundation **does not recommend or maintain a list of respite providers.** Families are responsible for choosing their own provider. **The provider must be 18 or older and not living in the same household.** A family member may provide respite, but they cannot be living in the same household as the child/care recipient who is receiving the respite services. Please notify NNRFF of any special circumstances you may have regarding this policy.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Why use respite?**

Using quality respite can benefit families in the following ways:

- Allows spouses to have more time together;
- Gives parents/caregivers a chance to spend time with their other children and family members;
- Reduces stress on the entire family and increases opportunities to relax together;
- Enables family members to take care of their own needs; and
- Helps the child/care recipient to develop leisure and social skills by meeting and spending time with other people.

Respite is provided to reduce the stress of the caregivers and family members, in order to preserve the family unit.

**Can I use the voucher to offset childcare costs, or pay tuition for childcare or private schools while I go to work?**

No, this funding is for **respite ONLY**; it is not to subsidize childcare while the parent/guardian goes to work. Using the voucher to pay for regular childcare costs or tuition is not allowed under the voucher program. If respite is in a childcare center, it has to be on **a drop in basis only, not scheduled childcare.**

**Who can care for my child?**

The Respite Voucher Program utilizes a parent-choice model. The family can choose who cares for their child. Providers can be neighbors, friends, therapists, and family members who are at least 18 years old and **must live outside of the respite family's household.**

**Can I use the voucher to pay other bills?**

No, only respite services can be purchased with the respite funding.

**Can I give a voucher to a provider before the respite has been provided?**

No, the Respite Voucher Program is only able to reimburse payments for services already provided. Vouchers must be completed and signed by both the parent and respite provider. Vouchers are immediately submitted by the parent/caregiver after the respite has been provided.

**What if I cannot pay for services at the time of receiving the care from my provider?**

Payment is reimbursement to the parent/caregiver. If the parent/caregiver is unable to pay for services, it is the parent's choice to find a provider who is willing to wait for payment. Payment will only be made after services have been completed. Payment is paid directly to the approved parent/caregiver.

**Is the NNRFF, RAVE, Respite Voucher Program, or the State of Nevada the respite providers' employer?**

No, the parent/primary caregiver is the person who hires the provider and employs the respite care provider. **The family employs the provider.** The provider is considered a domestic employee by the family and if the provider is paid more than \$1700 a year, the family is responsible for taking out taxes on that employee. (Refer to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) Publication 926 or talk to your tax advisor.)

**When do I have to send in vouchers after services received?**

**Vouchers must be sent no later than the month after respite has been provided.** If vouchers are held and sent in at the end of each month that will be okay, but if the NNRFF receives vouchers for respite provided in February in May, **those vouchers will not be paid. Vouchers must be received by the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.** For example, a voucher sent in for respite on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, must be received by the NNRFF on or before the 10<sup>th</sup> of April to be paid. Vouchers may be faxed to (775) 356-8357 or mailed to the Respite Voucher Program, P. O. Box 2072 Sparks, NV 89432

**When will vouchers be processed?**

Vouchers are processed on the 15th and 31st of each month. To ensure payment of the vouchers, be sure they are submitted on time. If you have not completed three sessions by the due date, please submit the entire voucher page with or without all sessions completed.

**PARENT/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The caregiver is the person that is providing care for a child on a regular, ongoing basis (usually 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.) The care recipient is the child who qualifies for **respite care services** while the caregiver takes a break. The caregiver/parent has the responsibility of:

- Interviewing possible respite providers;
- Discussing an hourly or daily rate and payment arrangement;
- Selecting and hiring the appropriate respite provider. Parents/caregivers may choose a family member, neighbor, friend or childcare center (for drop in care only). **The family member may not be a spouse or guardian and may not live in the household.** If using a childcare center, the NNRFF will not pay for scheduled child care, it must be drop in care only;

- Asking for and checking references;
- Informing or training the provider of the specific needs of the child;
- Ensure proper payment for the services by keeping track of the number of hours or days of respite used and the total amount claimed against the voucher. It is a good idea to have the provider sign that they have received payment for services provided.
- Ensuring the federal tax guidelines are followed if more than \$1700 is paid to a single provider. For reference information, visit to **www.irs.gov** Publication 926.

### **INITIAL AND END OF PROGRAM YEAR SURVEYS**

The agencies that provide grants to the NNRFF require data from us to show the impact that our organization has on the lives of the families that we serve. Each family is required to complete a Pre-Respite Survey at the beginning of every program year, and to return it with their enrollment application. The family is given another survey at the end of the year, to determine if respite was beneficial for your family and in order to help the Respite Voucher Program improve upon our services. Your feedback is vital to the success of our program! Additionally, please feel free to contact us at any time with your suggestions.

**Funding cannot be carried over from year to year. If you do not use your funding by June 15, 2015 and submit your vouchers prior to June 15, 2015, you will not be reimbursed.**

**Last respite services for 2014/2015 will end on June 15, 2015. *Vouchers received after June 2015 will not be paid as all financial reimbursement must be submitted to the State prior to the end of FY2015.***

**We look forward to meeting your respite needs, and getting to know you and your family. Should you have any questions about your respite funds or the Respite Voucher Program, please call 787-3520 or email the Director of Family Services at [ravefamilies@att.net](mailto:ravefamilies@att.net). We hope to provide you with the break that you deserve!**