ARROWHEAD AREA AGENCY ON AGING

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**



**FOR QUALIFIED APPLICANTS TO**

PROVIDE CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES

TO OLDER ADULTS

**2026 OLDER AMERICANS ACT TITLE III-E**

**CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES FUNDING**

May 2025

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2026 Older Americans Act Title III E Caregiver Support Services Funding

#  I. Background and Purpose

The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission’s (ARDC) Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging (AAAA) has been designated by the Minnesota Board on Aging to administer Older Americans Act funds in the seven county Arrowhead region of northeast Minnesota – including Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis Counties. In partnership with public and private organizations, the ARDC’s AAAA seeks to help older adults age successfully by developing and coordinating community care options, advocating for aging issues, maximizing service effectiveness and linking people with information.

The goal of Title III-E of the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965, as amended, is to develop an integrated system of flexible services at the community level that will strengthen the supports available to family caregivers. These support services should be designed to increase caregiver confidence and capacity to provide care, reduce caregiver burden, and extend the time care can be provided at home.

With funding from Title III-E of the OAA, the AAAA is seeking proposals from public and private non-profit organizations and units of government interested in developing, continuing or expanding services that maintain older adult’s independence and safety in their community. For-profit organizations are granted funds only after dispensation of a waiver from the Minnesota Board on Aging.

The accepted proposal will become a binding part of grant award agreement and the applicant will be monitored to ensure compliance with the proposal.

This is a solicitation for applications and is not to be construed as an offer, a guarantee, or promise that the services or goods referred to herein will be funded by the AAAA.

#  II. Use of Funding and Grant Information

The ARDC AAAA seeks to fund projects interested in providing support services to family members and other individuals (neighbors or friends) who are providing in-home and community care for:

frail older adults aged 60 and older;

persons with Alzheimer’s and other memory loss, regardless of age; and in some instances, persons aged 19 -59, with disabilities (additional explanation found on page 4 of this RFP).

### Priority Funding.

The following types of services will be given the highest priority for funding:

### Individual or Family Caregiver Counseling

* + **Respite Care**
1. Other Fundable Services
* Support Groups
* Caregiver Training and Education
* Information Services
* Supplemental Services

When providing services with Older Americans Act Title III-E funding, **applicants must follow service definitions and units of service.**

### PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Caregiver support services must be designed to:

increase caregiver confidence and capacity to provide care reduce caregiver burden

extend time care can be provided at home

The ARDC AAAA will fund caregiver support services operating within the geographic boundaries of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis Counties.

Funding amount to be determined. Older Americans Act Title III-E funds is available for caregiver support programs in the seven-county region. In the event funding availability changes, AAAA may amend any funding award to reflect such changes. Such amendment to increase or decrease the dollar value of the grant shall be at the sole discretion of AAAA.

Funds will be available January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026 with a possible option to renew for two additional years, based on successful performance and available funds.

Applicants will be required to contribute twenty five percent (25%) of the project’s total cost. The applicant’s contribution must be from non-federal sources and can be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

Projects should make the best use of existing resources by incorporating the “informal network” into the service design, using volunteers and other available local resources as appropriate; leveraging local support from local municipalities, foundations, school districts, civic groups, fundraising, etc. to increase funds available and create stronger local ownership of the programs coordinating and complementing the existing formal service network – public, non-profit and for-profit. **It is expected that organizations will coordinate service with other providers in order to avoid duplication of services.**

Title III-E Older Americans Act funds may not be used to supplant other federal or non- federal support of a service program in place prior to the Title III-E allocation. This applies to both the federal share and matching share of the project for the entire award period.

**III. Eligible and Target Population**

### ELIGIBLE POPULATION

Projects funded under this Request for Proposal must use Title III-E funds to serve caregivers who meet one or both of the following eligibility criteria:

1. *Caregivers of Older Adult Age 60 and Older* ***or*** *Caregivers of Person with Dementia of Any Age* - Eligible caregivers under this category are any adult family member or other individual (i.e. friend or neighbor) who is an informal provider of in-home and community care to a frail individual age 60 and older, *or* to an individual with Alzheimer’s disease (or related disorder with neurological and organic brain dysfunction) regardless of age of the person with the disease. These caregivers do not need to live with the care receiver to be eligible for service.

OR

1. *Grandparent or Other Older Relative Caregivers (Age 55+) Caring for Person Age 19-59 with One or More Disabilities*- This category of eligibility includes caregivers, age 55+, who are a grandparent or relative caregiver of an individual with one or more disability1 age 19 to 59. These caregivers can be a grandparent, step-grandparent, or a relative of the individual by blood, marriage or adoption. The caregiver must also meet the following additional criteria.
	1. Live with the individual;
	2. Is the primary caregiver of the individual because the biological or adoptive parents are unable or unwilling to serve as the primary caregiver of the individual; and
	3. Has a legal relationship to the individual, such as guardianship.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY

1 The term disability means a disability attributable to mental and physical impairments that results in substantial functional limitation in 1 or more of the following areas: self care; receptive and expressive language, learning , mobility, self direction, capacity for independent living cognitive functioning, economic self –sufficiency and emotional adjustment.

For programs proposing to serve caregivers under category A. above, **when providing respite services**, the care receiver must be determined to be “frail” in accordance with the following conditions. The individual must be:

1. Unable to perform two or more activities of daily living without substantial human assistance (including verbal cueing or supervision); or
2. Due to cognitive or other mental impairments, requires substantial supervision because the individual behaves in a manner that poses a health and safety hazard to the individual or another individual.

### TARGET POPULATIONS

If selected, successful applicants must agree to target their services and give highest priority to the following caregivers:

Caregivers who are older individuals with the greatest social and economic need with particular attention to low-income minorities.

Caregivers who are caring for care recipients who are older individuals with the greatest social and economic need who are not yet eligible for the Elderly Waiver and Alternative Care programs, with particular attention to low-income minorities.

Caregivers who provide care for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders with neurological or organic brain dysfunction regardless of age of the person with the disease.

Grandparents or older individuals who are relative caregivers (excluding parents) who are 55 years or older and providing care for individuals with disabilities (adults age 19 years of age or more).

**IV. Cost Sharing and Voluntary Contributions**

### COST SHARING

In March 2011, the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) approved the updated Title III policy regarding cost sharing and voluntary contributions. This policy extends cost sharing to include all allowable Title III funded services. In accordance with Section 325

(a) of the OAA, Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) shall assure the maintenance and self- sufficiency of services by using cost sharing.

Cost sharing is required for all Title III-E services except for Information Services. State and federal cost share policies require that Title III projects implement policies and procedures designed to request cost sharing from program participant.

For those services for which cost sharing is required, the updated Minnesota Board on Aging’s Policies state that the *recommended* level of cost sharing is 50%. For those individuals unable to cost-share at the 50% level, a sliding fee scale—based solely on gross income levels and the cost of delivering services shall be used to determine the

level of cost sharing.

### Each grantee must identify a service fee (based on a defined unit of service) as the basis for the sliding fee schedule.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fee as a % of Cost of Service | % 2025\*Federal Poverty Guidelines | Monthly Income for person aged 60+ living alone | Monthly Income for person aged 60+ living with spouse | Cost Share amount (based on SAMPLEfee of $100 per unit of service) |
| 0 | Up to 100% of Poverty | Under $1,304 | Under $1,526 | Voluntary Contribution |
| 10% | 101% to 150% | $1,305 - $1,956 | $1,763 - $2,644 | $10 |
| 25% | 151% to 200% | $1,957 - $2,608 | $2,645 - $3,525 | $25 |
| 50% | 201% to 250% | $2,607 - $3,260 | $3,526 - $4,405 | $50 |
| 100% | 251 and above% | $3,260+ | $4,406+ | $100 |

Other policies related to cost sharing are as follows:

* Variations to the sliding fee scale that comply with the intent of the policy and encourage financial contributions by users are allowed. Scales that vary from the AAAA-provided scale must be approved by the AAAA prior to implementation.
* The grantee shall publish the sliding fee scale as part of its materials given to prospective clients. The grantee shall inform participants of their rights and responsibilities to contribute towards the cost of the service during the client intake process**. The grantee shall submit a copy of the sliding fee scale and related client education and notification materials** to the AAAA within the first month of the grant for review, comment and approval.
* The grantee must protect the privacy and confidentiality of each individual with respect to the declaration or non-declaration of individual income and to any share of costs paid or unpaid by an individual.
* For caregiver services, the participant income level will be based on the self- reported gross income of the care receiver. In the case where the caregiver and the care receiver are married and at least one is 60+ years old, the two-person household income column on the sliding fee scale will be used to determine cost share amounts. Personal assets, savings, and/or other property are not to be considered. Income verification is not allowed. A means test shall not be utilized to determine eligibility for Title III services.
* The grantee may not deny service to any individual unable or unwilling to make a contribution or cost share payment for service.
* All primary sources of payment, including home and community-based Medicaid waiver programs and the Alternative Care Program, should be maximized and used

first for qualifying clients.

* Individuals may be waived from cost sharing participation for extreme hardship on a case-by-case basis via an exemption. Exemption decisions should be documented in client files.
* Co-payment “statements” may be provided to clients but must not carry forward a

balance due amount.

* The grantee shall have written policies and procedures on how they will implement and administer the cost sharing policy.

### VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Voluntary contributions are still allowed for all Older Americans Act services. Voluntary contributions, however, do not replace the cost sharing policy outlined above. Voluntary contributions shall be used to expand the service for which the contribution was given.

### USE OF CO-PAYMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The grantee shall establish and maintain separate fund codes established through the general ledger for Title III funds provided and income generated by the Project. The funds shall not be co-mingled with funds received under any other agreement. The grantee is responsible for regular deposit of program income. All co-payments and contributions obtained by the project must be used to expand program services.

### PROGRAM INCOME

Program Income, as defined in 45 CFR 74 (or 45 CFR 92), includes, but is not limited to, client donations, cost share revenue and other income received by or due to the contracting organization, as a result of activities wholly or partially supported by funds from the grant. Title III-E funded organizations must report all program income to AAAA.

**V. Agreements**

All applicant agencies must sign an agreement stating they are aware of and intend to comply with a number of federal and state assurances and certification requirements, as listed in the Title III –E application package (i.e., civil rights, rehabilitation act and data privacy compliance). These assurances are to be considered as part of the application and are binding upon the applicant agency and the conduct of the project subsequent to the award of any funds by the Area Agency on Aging.

In addition to the conditions in this Request for Proposal and the assurances that are signed as a part of the application package, grant recipient must also agree to:

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| 1. Notify staff and volunteers that they are not allowed to solicit contributions (exceptprogram income), sell anything to clients, or encourage acceptance in a belief or philosophy by service participant. |
| 2. Give visible recognition to AAAA and the Older Americans Act on all materials made available to the public which are paid for with Older Americans Act funds (e.g. brochures, annual reports, videos and other printed material) with the following phrase, “Funded by the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging as part of the Older Americans Act.” If Older Americans Act Title III-E funds paid for a portion of materials the following phrase may be substituted, “Funded in part by theArrowhead Area Agency on Aging as part of the Older Americans Act.” |
| 3. Provide the organization’s service information on the Minnesota Board on Aging’sonline resource information directory, [MinnesotaHelp.Info](http://www.minnesotahelp.info/public/). |
| 4. Participate in local, regional and state disaster preparedness efforts as appropriate. |
| 5. Have a written policy for reference checks, annual reviews and criminal background checks. |
| 6. Participate in site visits as scheduled by the AAAA or Minnesota Board on Aging. |
| 7. Maintain records of actual program revenues and operating costs for the duration of the grant and five additional years after the grant is closed. |
| 8. Participate in data collection process as required by the AAAA and/or federal and state regulations. |
| 9. The project shall carry and maintain in effect for the duration of the grant, general liability insurance with a limit, at a minimum in aggregate of $1 million, workers compensation, fidelity bonding insurance and other appropriate insurance. Depending on the nature of the service, this limit may be negotiable. |

**VI. Reporting Requirements**

Title III projects are required to complete quarterly financial, service progress reports and monthly NAPIS registration reports (registered services only). Monthly reports are to be submitted to AAAA staff on the 3rd day of the following month. The quarters end on March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31. Quarterly reports are to be submitted to AAAA staff on the 6th day of the next month following the end of the quarter (April 6, July 6, October 6 and January 6). These reports consist of the following components:

* + Financial Report and Request for Payment
	+ Narrative of Quarterly Progress (must include person served and units of service numbers for each service area).

#  VII. Application Process

Organizations interested in applying for Title III-E Older Americans Act funds must submit a complete application at: [https://aaaa.us-](https://aaaa.us-1.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp) [1.smartsimple.com/s\_Login.jsp](https://aaaa.us-1.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp)

 **VIII. Evaluation Criteria**

Each proposal will be reviewed, evaluated and scored based on how it meets the needs of the identified targeted populations in addition to the following information:

* Applicant demonstrates the ability to implement proposed service(s).
* Evidence of a method that provides participants with an opportunity to financially contribute to the costs of the program.
* Proposed service addresses the identified needs of the targeted populations.
* Proposed service design is clear and logical.
* Applicant provides evidence of collaboration or cooperation with other agencies to develop services, maximize resources and to address duplication of services.
* Proposed service outcomes have clearly stated benchmarks that are achievable and measurable.
* Proposed staffing plan is sufficient to support proposed program.
* Project cost is reasonable to implement the program.
* Application is accurate and complete.

Any attempt to influence members of the evaluation committee, AAAA staff, AAAA Advisory Committee on Aging members, or otherwise to affect the outcome of the award shall be grounds for disqualification.

#  IX. Selection Process

The AAAA reserves the right to select or reject any proposal. Successful applicants may be asked to further define and/or refine the services proposed. The AAAA may conduct a site visit as part of the review process to verify the applicant’s service capacity.

An evaluation team composed of AAAA Advisory Committee on Aging Review Task Force members, community members and/or outside consultants will review and rate the proposals based on the evaluation factors listed in the application for funding.

Funding recommendations from the evaluation team’s review will be prepared for the AAAA Advisory Committee on Aging. The Committee will review the recommendations and will, in turn, make recommendations for funding to the ARDC Board of Directors. The ARDC Board, at its sole discretion, will select final projects.

Both successful and non-successful applicants will be notified by AAAA. No information shall be made public about applicants until after the agreements are signed. Only

information about successful proposals shall be disclosed. Unsuccessful applicants

have the right to appeal in accordance with AAAA’s Agency Appeal Process.

#  X. Appeal Process

It is the policy of the AAAA to provide unsuccessful applicants with an opportunity to appeal a funding decision made by the AAAA Advisory Committee on Aging. A hearing before the AAAA Executive Committee will be provided to an applicant upon written request received no later than ten (10) days after receipt of notification of the Advisory Committee’s funding decision. Because all proposals are evaluated on the written materials submitted, appeals must be based only on information provided in the applicant’s written proposal and may not include additional information about the applicant organization or its project.

### AAAA Hearing

An applicant wishing to appeal the AAAA decision must submit their request in writing to AAAA’s Director within ten (10) working days from the receipt date of the notice that their proposal will not be funded. The request should state the reason(s) for the appeal. Upon receipt of the written request for a hearing, the Director will set a date for a hearing with AAAA’s Executive Committee. The hearing will be held within thirty (30) days after receipt of the request. All interested parties will be notified in writing of the date, time and place of the hearing.

During the hearing, the applicant should present the reason(s) why they have appealed the Committee’s decision based on relevant information contained in their original proposal, and information about their evaluation scores referenced in the previous section. Upon the conclusion of the hearing, the committee will make its decision and will notify the applicant in writing. The Executive Committee ruling serves as AAAA’s final decision on the matter. The written notice shall include instruction to the applicant of their right to a State Unit Hearing (MBA).

### State Unit Hearing – Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA)

The applicant has the right to request a hearing from the MBA in the event that they are dissatisfied with the AAAA decision. Pursuant to Section 2.15, Provider Hearing Requirements, MBA Operations Manual, the hearing shall consider procedural grounds only and shall not consider issues of merit. The applicant’s request must be in writing and received by MBA within ten (10) working days of the receipt of AAAA’s notice.

#  XI. Proprietary Information

All materials and information submitted become the property of the AAAA, and the proposals of the selected applicants will be considered public information (subject to the Minnesota Government Practices Act, Chapter 13 of the Minnesota Statutes, including Section 13.05, Subd.11), unless specific sections are labeled as proprietary and a bona

fide proprietary reason exists for the protection of that specific information. The entire application will not be considered proprietary as a whole. AAAA will not disclose any material until execution of the Notification of Grant Award, and limits disclosure to the successful proposals or other information required by law

**XII. Proposal Procedure & Timeline**

Organizations interested in applying for Title III-E Older Americans Act Caregiver Support Services funding must submit a completed application, using forms and instructions provided by the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging.

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| Request for Proposals and application packets available onAAAA’s website at.**Apply Here:** <https://aaaa.us-1.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp>  | June 30, 2025 |
| Applicants may consult AAAA staff with questions. If you have ideas for project proposals and would like to discuss them further, contact Rebecca Sash, Director of Area Agency on Aging, at rsash@ardc.org. For technical assistance related to completing the application such as service definitions, units of service, budgeting or application instructions, contact Gina Marsalla at gmarsalla@ardc.org | June 30– Aug 15,2025 |
| Q&A meeting on [Microsoft Teams](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_ZDU2NTkwNGYtNWIyMS00ZmQxLWIyNjgtZDM1MTQ1N2Q5NzQ0%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2252facab2-06d4-431b-a404-3e05f290b402%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2260bd0c35-59e7-4a5e-bcb7-184777791f56%22%7d) [**Click to Join the meeting now**](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_ZDU2NTkwNGYtNWIyMS00ZmQxLWIyNjgtZDM1MTQ1N2Q5NzQ0%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2252facab2-06d4-431b-a404-3e05f290b402%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2260bd0c35-59e7-4a5e-bcb7-184777791f56%22%7d) | July 15th, 2025, at 11:00am-12:00pm |
| Proposals due at AAAA by 4:00 PM CST | August 11, 2025 |
| Applicants will be notified of funding decision | November 2025 |
| Grant Period Begins | January 1, 2026 |