

Helping States Support Families Caring for an Aging America: Phase II

The number of adults in the United States caring for a family member or friend age 50 or older has increased by more than eight million in the last five years to roughly 41.8 million caregivers. Family caregiving is an activity that spans generations throughout the country—across all racial, ethnic, and cultural identities as well as income and education levels. Because individuals are living longer and are seeking to stay in their homes and communities as opposed to nursing facilities, the need for family caregivers will continue to grow.

Now more than ever, states are actively prioritizing family caregiving. Driven by a growing aging population and, most recently, a global pandemic that has highlighted the dire need to support families struggling to care for high-risk loved ones, states are thinking creatively about how to build capacity and collaborate to expand the reach of these efforts.

In 2018, CHCS launched the *Helping States Support Families Caring for an Aging America* initiative. In its [first phase](#), the initiative supported six states in advancing policy and program changes to support family caregivers and learn from each other during the process. With continued support from The John A. Hartford Foundation, CHCS is convening Phase II of the learning collaborative and selecting a new cohort of states dedicated to creating or building on existing family caregiving policies and programs in their communities.

State Selection

Phase II will include a two-track approach that will bring together up to four “**early innovator**” states that have already taken an innovative approach to family caregiving and are committed to expanding existing programs, such as through more robust data collection or increasing the number of family caregivers served. It will also engage up to three “**new adopter**” states in the early stages of improving family caregiving policies and programs that are ready to build momentum and set a focus. Technical assistance would be tailored to state needs, with opportunities to establish a mentorship relationship between states, and collaborate to foster state learning and advance problem solving and idea exchange.

Interested states will be asked to complete an application for participation and meet the following criteria:

Project Milestones

- Fall 2020**
State recruitment and selection
- January 2021**
Goal setting and action planning
- 2021-2022**
Technical assistance activities and peer learning



- **Obtain buy-in from state leaders** (e.g., Medicaid director, aging director, governor’s staff, state legislator, etc) who are committed to prioritizing family caregiving.
- **Establish a cross-sector project team**, consisting of state agencies and private sector community groups (e.g., Department on Aging, Health and Human Services, Medicaid, AARP, Alzheimer’s Association, family caregiving coalitions, and universities, etc.)
- **Choose an area of focus** from the options below and set goals and milestones:
 - » **Establishing robust data collection strategies** (e.g., family caregiver needs assessments, surveys of program effectiveness)
 - » **Building cross-sector partnerships to better support family caregivers’ needs** (e.g., across aging, housing, transportation, health plans, etc.)
 - » **Connecting aging initiatives and family caregiving programs** through formal linkages to prioritize family caregiving (e.g., states with a taskforce focusing on aging or age-friendly health systems or communities broadly)

In addition, states will need to consider the perspectives of family caregivers in communities of color when setting areas of focus and goals in this project.

Project Activities

Over the next two years, participating states will engage in the following:

- **State action plan development and ongoing assessment** in an effort to refine goals and track progress.
- **Individual and group technical assistance** such as one-on-one or small groups calls; multi-state “learning lab webinars” to present on topics identified as high-priority across states; and virtual state “hang outs” to create space for informal dialogue on a particular topic of focus.
- **Peer-to-peer learning opportunities** where states will be able to share ideas and lessons learned, and benefit from the mentorship relationships across states.

Benefits of State Participation

- Access to a network of leading-edge peers in family caregiving
- A multi-year plan to advance family caregiving in the state
- Tailored and group technical assistance to set goals and advance work
- National dissemination of state work and ability to contribute to the field

For More Information

Applications to join the *Helping States Support Families Caring for an Aging America* initiative are **due December 7, 2020**. To learn more about the collaborative and download an application, visit the project page on CHCS’ website. For more information, please contact Courtney Roman (croman@chcs.org) or Giselle Torralba (gtorralba@chcs.org).

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE STRATEGIES

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is a nonprofit policy center dedicated to improving the health of low-income Americans. It works with state and federal agencies, health plans, providers, and community-based organizations to develop innovative programs that better serve people with complex and high-cost health care needs. For more information, visit www.chcs.org.