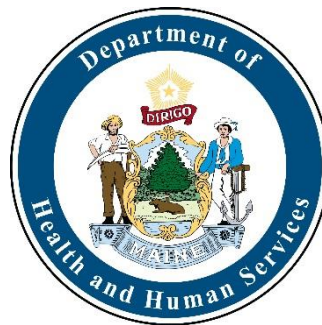


Respite for ME Grants Pilot Program Final Evaluation Report

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Office on Aging and Disability Services (OADS)

02/12/2025



Background and Pilot Goal

- Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan ([P.L. 2021, c. 483](#), Part CC):
 - Department of Health and Human Services to establish Family Caregiver Grant Pilot Program, now known as Respite for ME Grants
- Funds = \$5,866,000 (Part CC = \$5.1 million)
 - Grants = \$4,500,000
 - Administration = \$450,000 + \$766,000 in OADS funding
 - Evaluation = \$150,000 (USM awarded bidder)
- Program Period: October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2024
- **Goal:**
 - To increase the number of families served by the Respite Care Fund, alleviate costs associated with providing in-home care of an adult, provide a family caregiver grant to increase economic security for family caregivers, and examine the needs and preferences of the families served by the Respite Care Fund and the pilot program.

Respite for ME Grants

Full Report can be found on the OADS website:

www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/about-us/data-reports

Highlights

- Family caregivers often experience burdens and financial strain due to caregiving, and respite and other services can alleviate these impacts.
- The Respite for ME Grants pilot program aligned eligibility for respite services with the National Family Caregiver Support Program. It allowed caregivers to identify the services that best meet their support needs.

Respite for ME Grants

Highlights (cont.)

- Maine's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) began enrolling caregivers in the Respite for ME Grants pilot program on October 1, 2022.
- Caregivers were reimbursed up to \$2,000 for approved services in Year 1 of the pilot and \$5,171 in Year 2.
- The AAAs confirmed eligibility and enrollment into the program within two weeks of application.
 - Included implementation of TCARE as the caregiver assessment and care planning protocol identified through [L.R. 2021, c. 50](#) led by the Maine Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.
- Most caregivers began receiving services within one month of enrollment.

Respite for ME Grants

Highlights (cont.)

- After receiving Respite for ME Grants services for 90 days, the proportion of caregivers participating only in Year 2 with...
 - High Relationship burden declined by 7%
 - High Stress scores decreased by 10%
 - High Objective burden declined by 5%
 - Low financial strain increased by 6%
 - High Depression scores decreased by 14%
 - Negative impacts on the ability to work declined by 22%
 - Negative impacts on job performance declined by 9%

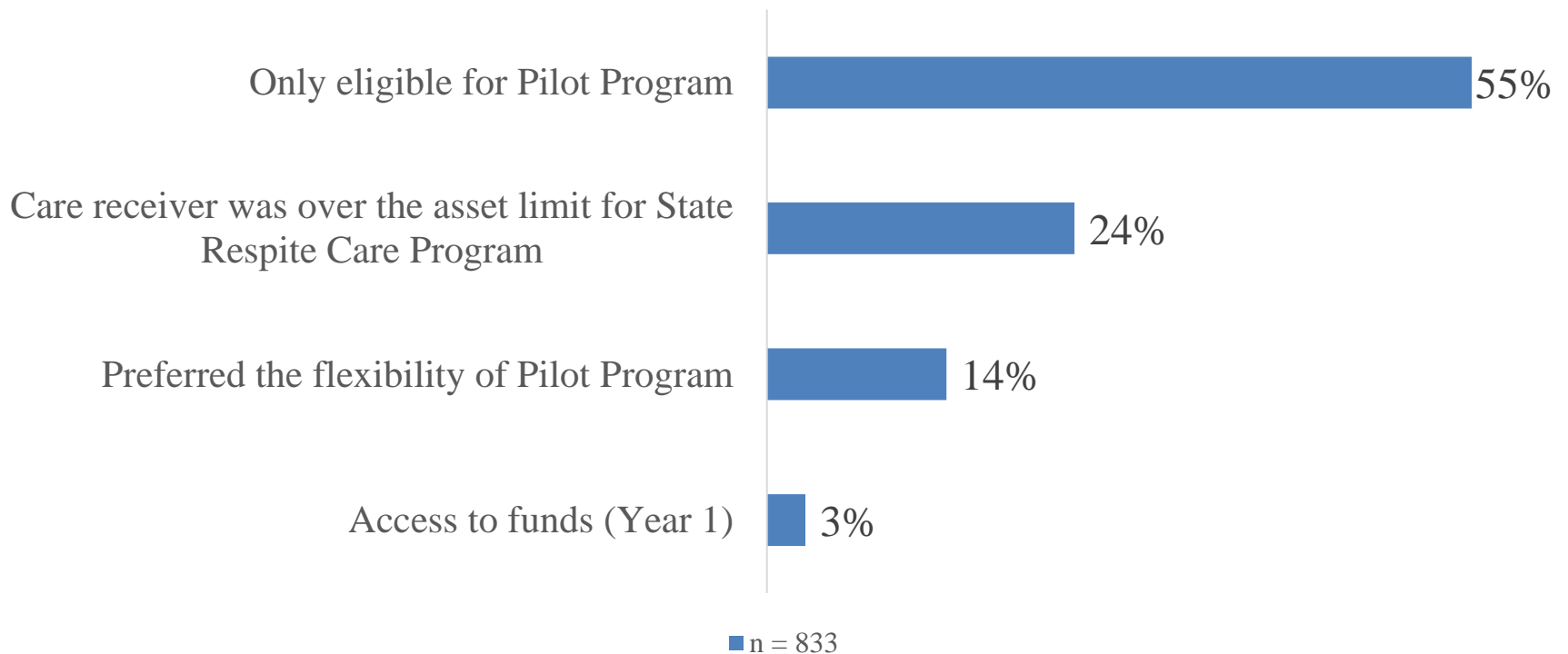
Respite for ME Grants

Highlights (cont.)

- Although there were improvements, measures of caregiver burden and stress remained at medium or high levels throughout the pilot for most caregivers. This finding is not unique to the pilot and can be found in other studies on caregiver burden and stress over time.
- Caregivers said the services reimbursed by the program eased their financial worries and helped them be better caregivers for their loved ones.

Why Respite for ME Grants?

Comparing Pilot Program to State Respite Care Program



Respite for ME Grants: By the Numbers

	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Family Caregivers Served	406*	712*	872*
Direct Grants Expenditures	\$543,516	\$2,833,585	\$3,377,101
AAA Admin Expenditures	\$445,750	\$443,125	\$888,875

* Unduplicated

Respite for ME Grants: By the Numbers

Year 1 and Year 2 Combined (10/01/2022 to 09/30/2024)

Service	Persons Served*	Units Served	Expenditures
Respite Care	450	56,428 hours	\$1,270,286
Assistive Technology	413	1,508 items	\$637,611
Chore Services	355	10,174 hours	\$451,212
Home Mods/Repairs	207	811 items	\$404,180
Self-Care	278	2,521 hours	\$269,544
Self-Care Items	111	305	\$89,077

*Duplicated

Two-thirds of Respite for ME Grants participants in Year 1 and 70% in Year 2 used services other than Respite, Assistive Technology/Devices, and Home Modifications.

Respite for ME Grants

Caregiver Characteristics

- Average age was 65 years old
- 76% identified as Women, 24% as Male
- 97.1% identified as White, 1.6% as non-White
- 96.6% as Straight or Heterosexual, 1.5% identified as Gay or Lesbian,
- 20% had annual household income under \$25,000, and another 52% had incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000
- 25% had a high school diploma/GED-level of education
- 75% were married or had domestic partners
- 34% had fair or poor health status
- 41% were working at some level
- 15% had care recipients who had behavioral issues

Respite for ME Grants: Feedback

Respite for ME Grants Program caregivers said the grants...

- Helped alleviate financial stress and worry
- Improved their ability to work by helping them purchase respite services
- Allowed them to attend to their own mental and physical health needs
- Enabled them to better care for their loved ones

Respite for ME Grants: Feedback

Caregiver from Eastern Maine

“I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me to get this grant. I have learned so much about things I can do to help my mom and myself from your agency and [Maine] CITE. The things I have purchased have been so helpful, particularly the large-scale digital clock and the Echo show. I’ve been able to drop in on my mom using the Echo show when she has been unable to make her phone work. There is a bit of learning curve, but Mom actually called me using it yesterday, and she was so proud of herself. Being able to check on her using the Echo show has saved me so much time, stress and worry already. I also took my mom to a local adult daycare. I was quite anxious taking her there, I did not know how she would feel about the entire situation. It was such an incredibly positive experience for her, she came home glowing. I really did not know how much she would benefit from being in a friendly, supportive environment away from home. There is no way I could afford to take her there without this grant, so I would never have known it would benefit both of us. I am hoping that you all understand how much good your work does... I will never forget how you gave me help when I felt hopeless. Thank you again.”

Respite for ME Grants: Feedback

Caregiver from Western Maine

“I want to thank you for all your help with the R4ME program. I have been recently enrolled and the amount of stress relief it has already provided me has been tremendous. I consider myself at a young age for caregiving, and the amount of financial stress I have, has been somewhat relieved with this program. I would like to be working, but as a caregiver this is unrealistic at this time. I want to keep my husband home as long as possible, and this program has allowed me with options. Trying to figure out my future (financially), how to navigate doctors’ appointments and to keep him home safely, this program has been so beneficial already. Thank you!!”

Respite for ME Grants: Feedback

Care Recipient from Southern Maine

“Just a word of support and many thanks to your program for caregivers. It has enabled us to pay for the help we so desperately need and allowed my husband to pursue his love of playing the organ at a local church. He now can enjoy a little time away from me and know I am being well cared for. He has been my sole caregiver since my stroke 4-1/2 years ago. He has devoted himself to my care day and night. It has been quite a burden for him to keep up with everything inside and out! We can't say enough good things about Becky H. She has gone out of her way many times to insure we understand everything and helped us in every way possible. It's so nice to know someone actually cares! Thank you again for this wonderful program! Keep up the good work.”