

Caregiver Respite Cheat Sheet

A Resource Guide for the Overloaded Caregiver with MS

1. NATIONAL SEARCH TOOLS (Start Here)

These tools find the boots on the ground in your own zip code.

The Eldercare Locator

Connects you to your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA). These offices hold the actual grant money and vouchers in your city.

1-800-677-1116 | eldercare.acl.gov — Ask for: Your local Area Agency on Aging

ARCH National Respite Locator

The primary national database for finding respite providers, state coalitions, and voucher programs.

archrespite.org/locator | 703-256-2084

2. HOW TO PAY FOR YOUR BACKUP SUPPORT

National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP)

The most common path. In 2026, federal funding increased to \$209 million. Money goes to your local AAA for respite care, medical supplies, and home modifications.

Cost: Often free or sliding scale | Contact: Eldercare Locator 1-800-677-1116

Lifespan Respite Vouchers

Reauthorized February 6, 2026 through 2030. State vouchers of \$300-\$1,000 to hire a professional or, in some states, a trusted friend or neighbor. These are grants. You do not pay them back.

Apply: archrespite.org/locator to find your state program

Medicare GUIDE Model

For those caring for a parent with dementia or Alzheimer's. Medicare reimburses up to \$2,500/year specifically for caregiver respite.

Cost: Covered by Medicare | Ask your parent's doctor if they are a GUIDE participant | medicare.gov

VA Caregiver Support

For those caring for a Veteran. Up to 30 days of respite per year at no cost, in-home or at a VA facility.

1-855-260-3274 | caregiver.va.gov

HFC (Hilarity for Charity) Recharge Grants

50-100 hours of free professional in-home care for families facing Alzheimer's or dementia.

wearehfc.org/grants

3. YOUR STATE'S RESOURCES (Florida Example)

Every state has its own programs. Below is Florida as an example of what to look for. Use the ARCH Locator or your local AAA to find your state's equivalent.

Project RELIEF (Florida)

Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families. In-home respite for those caring for frail seniors.

1-800-96-ELDER (35337)

Florida SMMC Long-Term Care Waiver

Pays for professional respite in the home for qualifying caregivers.

Ask your local AAA about the Long-Term Care Waiver

4. THE HIDDEN 2026 RESOURCE

State Workforce Registries

A new 2026 initiative in many states. Allows you to hire pre-vetted neighbors or friends as your respite worker using state funds.

How to find it: Ask your local AAA if your state uses a Self-Directed Care model or a Workforce Registry

5. WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU CALL

The words "**burnout**" and "**system failure**" trigger prioritization processes at many agencies. Use them.

"I am a family caregiver living with Multiple Sclerosis. I am the primary support for my loved one, but my own system is redlining. I am looking for Respite Care vouchers or grant-funded support to prevent a total caregiver burnout and system failure."

This is not welfare. This is grid management.

You are the Main Grid. If you go offline, the whole household goes dark. Using a voucher or grant to bring in a backup worker is not a handout. It is preventing a total system failure. Apply without guilt. Without hesitation.

Stay brave. Stay managed.

You cannot manage the system if the operator is offline. Prioritize your maintenance.