

Caregiver Support Initiative

“Caregiving has humbled me to be more loving and enabled me to be the best human being that I could, to be able to support and provide the care that I do.”

Tod Sherman cares for his wife, a 100% disabled veteran with PTSD. Faced with extreme stress, Tod had a heart attack while caregiving. Tod served on the Caregiver Support Initiative Steering Committee and helped develop the Washoe Caregivers Guidebook. He advocates caregivers must practice self-care.



Engagement

The Community Foundation began taking ideas for our second initiative in 2015. At the time Grady Tarbutton, Administrator for Washoe County Senior Services, was approaching retirement. He sent us an initiative idea form explaining how Washoe County has provided many programs for seniors, but there was not enough emphasis placed on the needs of family caregivers. Community Foundation staff researched family caregiving and realized the potential for impact. We learned caregivers faced significant physical and mental stress and often went into debt. After hearing staff’s recommendation, the Board adopted the Caregiver Support Initiative in early 2016.

From there, our community engagement work began. We formed a steering committee comprised of family caregivers and service providers. Next, we held two community convenings where unpaid family caregivers – our subject matter experts – shared what they needed.

152 people participated in our community convenings. 89 participants were current or former family caregivers. Caregivers shared their most important needs were:

1. Finding resources
2. Getting information on how to get started as a caregiver

“I hope we create a community where everyone is valued and our elders have needed resources easily available.”

-Family caregiver and community convening participant

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Action

Taking the community's feedback into account, we adopted a vision statement and got to work on developing resources.

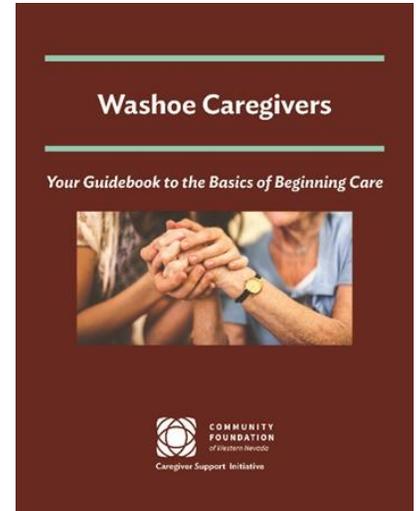
Our vision is for all community caregivers to have easy access to effective resources and support to promote caregiver knowledge, skills, and well-being.

WashoeCaregivers.org

A free database of over 300 community resources, including those that are free and low-cost, for caregivers to seniors in Washoe County. Whether you are looking for information on hospice care, home modification, durable medical equipment, or any other caregiving resource, WashoeCaregivers.org is one stop shop for finding help.

Washoe Caregivers Guidebook

The Washoe Caregivers Guidebook is an instructional manual on how to be a new caregiver and was written by local caregivers and experts. The Washoe Caregivers Guidebook covers information about self-care for the caregiver, legal and financial planning, home safety and modifications, techniques for communicating with health care professionals and more. You can download a copy at <https://washoecaregivers.org/guidebook/>



Steering Committee Members

- AARP Nevada
- Catholic Charities
- Center for Healthy Aging
- Circle of Life Hospice
- Family Caregivers
- Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada
- Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division
- Nevada Department of Veteran's Services
- Northern Nevada Alzheimer's Association
- Renown Health
- Sanford Center for Aging
- Seniors in Service
- St. John's Presbyterian Church
- The Continuum
- Veterans Administration

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Evaluation

“[The Guidebook has] helped me talk with a family member’s direct caregiver in a non-judgmental manner and have something of value to offer.”



Washoe Caregivers Guidebook

- 10,500 Guidebooks distributed to over 100 community locations
- 1,500 Spanish Guidebooks distributed
- 95% found the guidebook easy to understand
- 71.43% plan to take better care of themselves after reading the guidebook
- 99% recommend the guidebook to another caregiver
- 52.38% plan to improve the safety of their home
- 80.95% feel more prepared to communicate with health care professionals
- 57% have a better understanding of advance directives

WashoeCaregivers.org

- 157 monthly visitors on average in 2018
- 94% recommend the website to other caregivers
- 52.94% of caregivers found the resources that made it easier to be a caregiver
- 64.7% found the website easy to use
- 58.8% stated the website decreased the amount of time they spent looking for resources
- 33.3% found that WashoeCaregivers.org reduced stress and allowed them to provide better care to their family member
- 25% found the website had no effect

“WashoeCaregivers.org is great referral resource as a professional working in the field of aging.”
-Geriatric social worker

Limitations

- Only 25 responses collected to date. However, additional surveys will be completed throughout 2019
- Some respondents were already familiar with resources and caregiving topics. For example, about 46% of survey respondents were familiar with Advanced Directives before reading the Guidebook.

Community Conversation on Caregivers in the Workforce



Engagement

The impact caregiving has on the workforce is often ignored. Those who care for a family member at home and have a full-time job are often strained beyond the breaking point. The good news is solutions are available. In Spring 2018, the Community Foundation hosted a community conversation called, “Caregivers in the Workforce: Balancing Life, Work, and Policy.” Experts from Renown Health, the Nevada Caregiver Support Center, Center for Healthy Aging, AARP Nevada, and the Community Development Institute shared ways caregivers can keep up with the demands of work and caregiving.

Action

After the conversation, the Community Foundation drafted a “Caregiver Employee Toolkit,” which outlines policies and practices businesses can implement to benefit their employees who are caregivers. While businesses may question how caregivers support can affect their bottom line, businesses actually benefit from a reduction in turnover and absenteeism and an increase in productivity. Supporting caregivers is good business.

Evaluation

The Caregiver Employee Toolkit will launch in 2019 and the evaluation will be based on how many businesses are reached and how many businesses implement new policies and practices to support their caregiver employees.

Read other stories of Impact at nevadafund.org/impact

To learn more, please visit: <http://nevadafund.org/initiatives/caregiver-support/> and <http://washoecaregivers.org>



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