

Elder Care User Guide

As more and more adult learners enroll in college, it is important to be mindful of their family circumstances and to consider aiding them in caring for elderly family members. Luckily, there are many elder care services available throughout Tennessee to which schools can refer their students! Relaying this information to them can go a long way in providing our students with the added layer of support they need to be successful.

Implementation

The number of seniors in the United States is continuing to expand as the Baby Boomer generation ages into retirement. By 2030, according to The Atlantic¹, it is estimated that 25% of the U.S. population will be seniors. Combining that with the steady increase in college students over the age of 25 means that this is a financial issue for many students and will continue to be for years to come.

Additionally, as nursing homes continue to be very expensive, many low-income college students caring for elderly parents will face the difficult decision to leave their loved ones unaccompanied at home. Like students who have children, going to school and leaving a family member at home who may not be able to take care of themselves is not a decision anyone should have to make. Colleges would do well to facilitate discussions addressing how to aid students caring for elderly family members at home, and should include the TN Adult Day Care eligibility information listed below as well as the resources listed on the bottom right of the page as a reference point for all students:

Eligibility guidelines for Tennessee's Adult Day Care services through the TN Dept. of Human Services include:

- **Residency:** elder care applicants must be legal, Tennessee residents and reside in the county in which the service is provided
- **Age:** Applicants for elder care must be 60 years or older or 18 and over for adults with disabilities
- **Income:** Applicants must have an annual income 125% or below of the federal poverty level (\$15,075/year or less as of 2017)
- **Health Need:** Applicants must require supervision or be unable to manage their daily lives without support

¹ <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/04/who-will-care-for-americas-seniors/391415/>

“Unless the care-giving responsibilities of low-income adults are actively acknowledged and addressed, efforts to improve postsecondary access and completion...are likely to fall short of their full potential for change.”

*(The Institute for Women's Policy Research:
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED556715.d>*

Best Practices

- If your school offers senior care services courses, schools could enlist those students to volunteer in providing elder care services to family members of students in need
- Allow students free rent living in local nursing homes in exchange for therapy, companionship services for elderly residents; could include home visits for those that cannot afford nursing homes as well
- Provide references to elder care services to students during orientation, in resource handouts, syllabi, etc.

Resources

- [Home Instead Senior Care](#)
- [Tennessee Dept. of Human Services: Adult Day Care](#)
- [National Family Caregiver Support Program \(NFCSP\)](#)
- [Elderly Nutrition Services](#)
- [OPTIONS for Community Living Program](#)
- [Caring.com Student Caregiver Scholarship](#)
- [Elder Care Resource Page at Middle Tennessee State University](#)