

# Caregiver Resources

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*To help answer the questions you may have about being a caregiver, or to help you provide support for a caregiver, below are a few of the most frequently asked questions.*

**1. I take care of my aging parent and I may need to be available to provide care during work hours. What do I do if I need to be away from work to care for my aging parent?**

The State of Ohio provides a number of different leave benefits that you may be able to use in this situation. State employees who need to be out of the workplace to care for someone may be eligible to use one or more of the following paid leave options: sick leave, vacation leave, personal leave, compensatory time off and donated leave. Your eligibility for any of these types of leave plans will be based on your specific caregiver situation and job duties. Your human resources representative or your supervisor can help you determine the paid leave options for which you are eligible.

There also are unpaid leave options that you may be able to use independently or in conjunction with other paid leave options, including leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), unpaid leaves of absence or participation in voluntary cost savings programs. You also can ask your human resources representative or supervisor about these options.

**2. What are my options if I only have to be away from work on certain days of the week or during certain times?**

Utilizing accrued leave, an alternative work schedule, or flex time may be some of the options available to you. Talk to your supervisor and/or your agency's human resources representative to learn what options available to you. Make sure you have supervisory approval prior to using leave or changing your schedule.

**3. Being a caregiver can be stressful and overwhelming at times. Is there someone I can talk to about how to cope with being a caregiver?**

The Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP) is available to assist you with the many aspects of coping with being a caregiver. OEAP is an intake, information, counseling referral and support service for state employees and their family members and has representatives available to assist you. For more information, visit the OEAP website. Contact OEAP by email at [oeap@das.ohio.gov](mailto:oeap@das.ohio.gov), or call OEAP at 1-614-644-8545 or 1-800-221-6327.

**4. Is there any way to connect with other people who are experiencing a similar situation as a caregiver that I am.**

There are variety of support organizations that allow caregivers to connect. The Family Caregiver Alliance has online caregiver groups that allows you to connect with others in similar situations. For more information, visit the Family Caregiver Alliance website.

Depending on your work location, there also may be other options such as brown bag lunches where you could connect with other state employee caregivers and obtain resources about being a caregiver.

**5. Are my leave benefits different dependent on whether I am a bargaining unit or exempt employee?**

Bargaining unit and exempt employees are eligible to receive leave benefits. However, the leave benefits may be slightly different between bargaining unit and exempt employees, and may even be different between bargaining units. To determine the leave benefits available to you, please contact your supervisor and/or your agency's human resources representative.

**6. Who should I talk to in my agency about balancing my role as a caregiver and my responsibilities at work?**

Talking to you agency human resources representative or your supervisor is a good place to start. He or she can help you determine what leave benefits you are eligible for and share helpful resources. If you would like to talk with someone outside of your agency about your caregiver situation, you could contact the Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP). OEAP can help get you in contact with outside resources relating to being a caregiver. For more information, visit the OEAP website. Contact OEAP by email at [oeap@das.ohio.gov](mailto:oeap@das.ohio.gov), or call OEAP at 1-614-644-8545 or 1-800-221-6327.

**7. When I talk to my human resources representative or my supervisor, do I have to provide details about my loved one's health situation?**

No, you do not have to provide details of your loved one's situation to your supervisor; however, any information you would feel comfortable sharing may help him or her better understand your situation so he or she could offer additional guidance and support. If you are pursuing coverage under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), you may need to submit documentation to your agency's human resources office prior to being approved.

**8. Where can I go for additional information regarding caring for my loved one?**

There are a number of state agencies that have resources and information available. Refer to the Resources tab and the Support Organizations tab on this website for links to helpful resources.

**9. I am the sole caregiver for my loved one. Are there services available such as adult care providers that I can work with when I am not available or if I need a break?**

There are organizations that provide adult care services. The information on the Resources tab on this website provides links to organizations based on some common caregiver needs. For aging adults, your area agency on aging can connect you with services. You can call toll-free 1-866-243-5678 to be connected to the agency serving your community.

If you are enrolled in a Dependent Care Spending Account, you may use funds set aside for certain expenses associated with dependent care. For more information about Dependent Care Spending Accounts, visit the Flexible Spending Accounts website or WageWorks.