



Desk Reference: Recognizing and Supporting Native American Caregivers

The National Caregiver Support Collaborative’s (NCSC) Desk Reference: Recognizing and Supporting Caregivers is designed as a tool for Native American Caregiver Support Program (NACSP) and National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) staff to recognize and effectively support older adult family, kin, and tribal caregivers. This resource provides an overview of who Native American family caregivers are, how to identify them, and what supports are available to strengthen caregiving within Native American communities.

Caregiving in Native American Communities

Title VI of the Older Americans Act (OAA) supports nutrition, supportive, and caregiving services for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian peoples, collectively referred to as “Native American.” The National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers defines a caregiver as a family member or other close individual who assists someone with a chronic health condition, disability, or functional limitation, including grandparents raising grandchildren.

However, the term “caregiver” may not always be used or recognized among Native American communities. Instead, caregiving may be viewed as an inherent responsibility, reflecting a holistic view of family where care is shared and family is seen as an integrated unit.



1 in 4 Native American and Alaska Native adults are (family) caregivers.¹



About **90%** of long-term services and supports to elders are provided by Native American and Alaska Native family caregivers.²



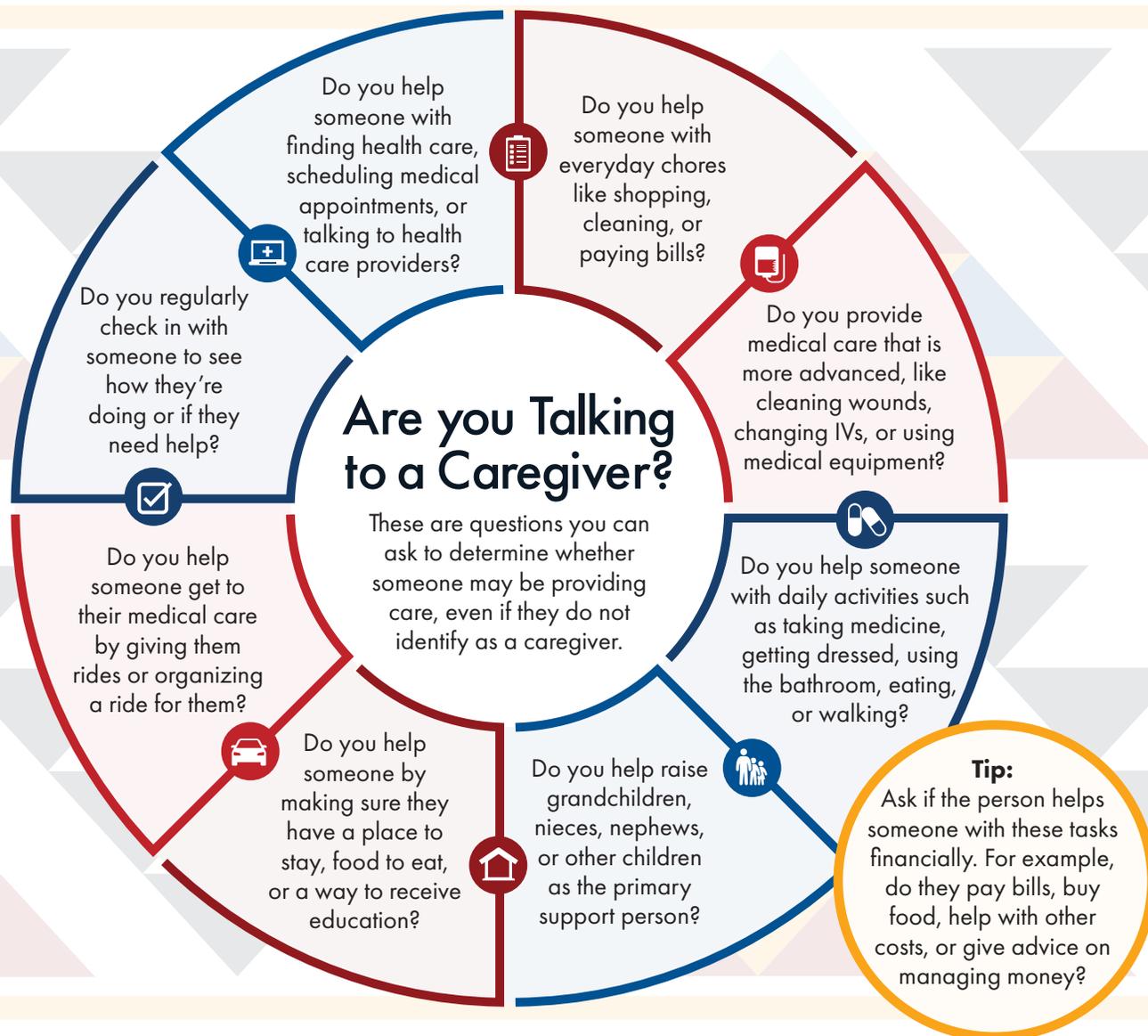
40% of Native American grandparents aged 55 and older who live with grandchildren under age 18 are responsible for meeting their basic needs.³

While caregiving is rewarding and often viewed as a traditional or expected role in Native American communities; it can be associated with mental and emotional stress, physical impact, and financial strain.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, May). [Caregiving Among American Indian/Alaska Native Adults](#).

² National Academy for State Health Policy. (2024, December). [How States and Tribes Can Work Together to Improve Long-Term Services and Supports for American Indian/Alaska Native Elders and their Caregivers](#).

³ U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Public Use Microdata Sample Data (2023).



What Support is Available?

The NACSP (Title VI, Part C) provides support to families caring for older relatives with chronic illness or disability, and grandparents caring for grandchildren. The NFCSP (Title III, Part E) offers caregiver support services that can also be used to support Native American caregivers.

Supports include:

- Information about available services
- Counseling, support groups, and caregiver training in:
 - Health
 - Nutrition
 - Financial literacy
 - Problem-solving and decision-making
- Respite care
- Help accessing services
- Supplemental services (may vary by community and availability, including caregivers living in rural, remote, frontier, and urban regions)

Native American communities may have additional supports beyond the Older Americans Act available to caregivers such as kinship care programs, food assistance programs, etc.

Learn More

Recommended Resources:

- [NCSC Checklist for Caregiver Assessments](#)
- [How States and Tribes Can Work Together to Improve Long-Term Services and Supports for American Indian/Alaska Native Elders and their Caregivers](#)
- [How Relative/Kin Caregivers Can Access Services and Advocate for Native Children in Their Care](#)
- [Supporting Tribal Elders Through the Older Americans Act](#)
- [Social Determinants of Health among Rural American Indians and Alaska Native Populations](#)
- [Title VI Resource Centers](#)

For more information on supporting older adult family, kin, and tribal caregivers, please contact the NCSC by e-mail (caregivercollaborative@acl.hhs.gov).

You may access other resources on the [NCSC website](#).