



Department of
Human Services

**Tennessee
Personal Care Assistance
Program**

2021 Annual Report

**Tennessee Department of Human Services
Division of Rehabilitation Services
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Nashville, TN 37243**



Introduction

Tennessee's Personal Care Assistance Program is established by T.C.A. §§ 71-4-1201 et seq. to provide participant directed personal care assistance services to individuals who experience a significant disability to enable them to enter or maintain remunerative employment. The program is designed for individuals who are employed or are ready for employment (e.g., have a legitimate job offer), but who need personal care assistance ("PCA") to support activities of daily living in order to be successful in their employment efforts. Services are rendered at least five (5) days a week at the times of day which are required by an individual to become physically independent in connection with actual employment.

These services include, but are not limited to:

- Routine bodily functions, personal hygiene, bowel or bladder care;
- Dressing;
- Preparation and consumption of food;
- Moving into, out of, or turning in bed;
- Bathing;
- Ambulation and/or mobility; and
- Any other similar activity of daily living as determined appropriate by the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

To receive the subsidy, individuals must apply and be determined eligible. Individuals who receive a PCA subsidy through the program must be reevaluated at least annually, to determine the continuing need for PCA services and the extent of that need. If an individual is determined to be eligible for a reduced subsidy because of income changes or for fewer hours of subsidized services, the individual may receive a partial subsidy.

FY 2021

State appropriations in the amount of \$165,500.00 were available for fiscal year 2021. During this period, the program was able to utilize 66% of the funding, totaling \$109,250.68, by providing subsidies to eight (8) individuals with disabilities. Two persons ceased participation during fiscal year 2021 due to conditions caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, which is believed to be the basis for less participation than past years. Figure 1 below shows the utilization of the program over the past five years:

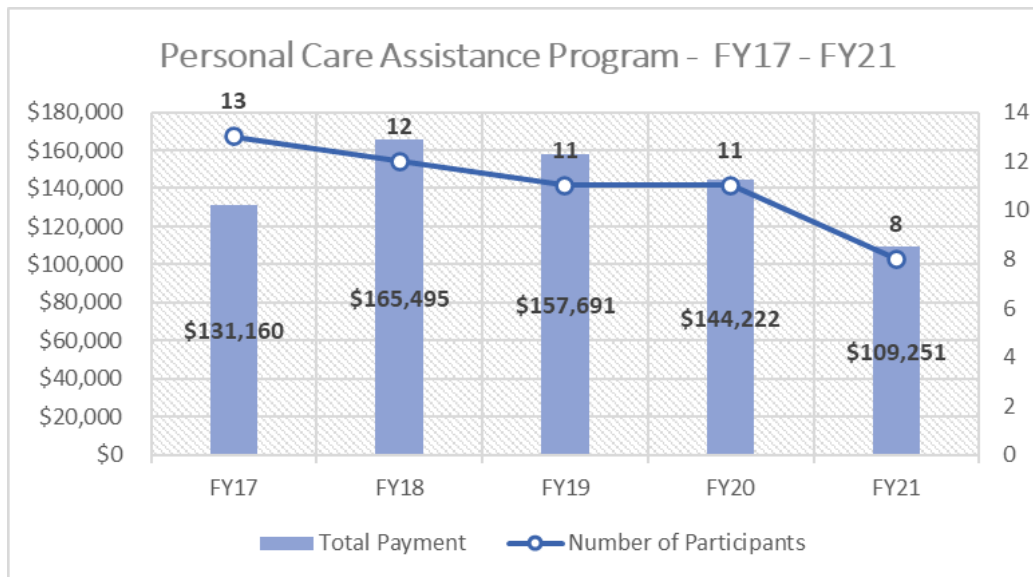


Figure 1

Subsidy amounts vary depending on the financial need of the program participant. The minimum subsidy paid was in the amount of \$82.71 per month. Individuals applying for services are screened for competitive integrated employment at thirty (30) hours or more per week and not receiving any other federal and/or state services. Any significant changes in financial status must be reported by the individual throughout the year. No PCA subsidies were terminated or reduced during fiscal year 2021.

Responsibilities of Individuals Receiving PCA

As a condition of eligibility for receipt of the subsidy, individuals receiving PCA services are responsible for the following:

- Selecting, hiring, training, and supervising their own personal care attendants.
- Preparing and submitting time logs, authorizations, and other paperwork.
- Paying the personal care attendant and accepting full responsibility for the necessary employee withholding of Social Security and Federal income tax from the PCA subsidy.
- Maintaining a financial record of payment.
- Promptly notifying the Division of Rehabilitation Services of any problems or change in the need for PCA services, or change in financial status.

Recruitment

Intake for the Program occurs at any Tennessee Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation field office. The Personal Care Assistance Program's requirements are reviewed with Vocational Rehabilitation staff at regional meetings throughout the year. The Program's recruitment efforts include presenting PCA related information at Centers for Independent Living, Disability Rights of Tennessee, United Cerebral Palsy Association, and other nonprofit organizations. Information about Tennessee's Personal Care Assistance Program is shared with state government agencies which provide services to Tennesseans with disabilities. State agencies include but are not limited to the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disabilities, and the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities. Collaboration amongst agencies has been positive for the Personal Care Assistance Program's outreach efforts. The multiagency collaboration has facilitated the dissemination of information about the program to stakeholder groups through meetings, newsletters, and public-facing websites.

Impact of the Personal Care Assistance Program

The Personal Care Assistance Program supports individuals with significant disabilities in their effort to achieve fulfilling careers in the workforce. The average salary of those participating in the Personal Care Assistance Program is \$64,071.43. The Personal Care Assistance Program enables its participants to interact with and be a part of Tennessee communities and receive the benefits of work. The Program helps to remove the barriers to participating in work and society and contributes towards unlocking the vast potential of Tennesseans with disabilities.