



Caregiver Assessment Profile: Washington

About This Series: The National Caregiver Support Collaborative (NCSC) examined caregiver assessments nationwide to identify common characteristics and elements, including assessment types, modalities, and domains. The NCSC's Caregiver Assessment Profiles feature current evidence-based, evidence-informed, and innovative assessments designed to support family, kin, and tribal caregivers. The purpose of this series is to inform states, aging networks, and tribal networks about promising practices for developing and conducting caregiver assessments. Each profile provides an overview of an assessment, highlighting key components; follow-up, evaluation, and training processes; and funding sources. Additional Caregiver Assessment Profiles in this series can be accessed on the [NCSC website](#).

Assessment Overview

Washington uses the [Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral \(TCARE\)](#) tool, a proprietary, commercial platform that health plans, insurers, employers, and government agencies can purchase. The tool includes two components: an initial screening and a comprehensive caregiver assessment. Assessors enter assessment results into the GetCare platform, part of Washington's [Community Living Connections \(CLC\)](#) system, a statewide network that supports a seamless handoff process to ensure caregivers receive the support they need. While TCARE is a proprietary tool, this profile also highlights Washington's broader caregiver assessment practices, which other states and organizations can adapt to suit their own contexts and systems.

Unpaid family caregivers may complete the initial screening through a phone call with an area agency on aging (AAA) staff or independently by downloading the form from the [Washington State Department of Social and Health Services website](#). If the caregiver is eligible for services under Washington's National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP), the assessor reviews the initial screening with the caregiver and conducts the full assessment to gather detailed information about the caregiver's needs. The assessor guides the caregiver through each step of the process and uses the results to create a personalized care plan. Assessors then review and adjust the plan regularly to meet the caregiver's evolving needs.

Washington uses TCARE in two Medicaid 1115 waiver-funded programs: Medicaid Alternative Care (MAC) and Tailored Supports for Older Adults (TSOA). The state uses the screening and full assessment to determine eligibility for different levels of service, following criteria in the state's [Long Term Care Manual](#) and in the Washington Administrative Code for [MAC](#) and [TSOA](#). Additionally, Washington also offers an evidence-informed assessment through the Washington State Kinship Program Services, which supports grandfamilies and kinship caregivers raising children.¹

Assessment Modalities	Modality Option for WA Assessment?
In-Person	Yes
Phone	Yes
Virtual with Video	Yes

¹ Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. (n.d.). [Washington State Kinship Program Services](#).

Assessment Type Spectrum	Properties: Available Evidence and Use	WA Assessment Type?
Evidence-Based	- Proven effective through rigorous evaluation - Published results and inclusive of resources for public use - Used in other settings with fidelity to the original model	Yes
Evidence-Informed	- Found effective through evaluation or adapted from evidence-based model - Includes guidance to carry out activities - Translated at least once in one or more sites	No
Innovative	- May be effective, with some outcome data, but not yet evaluated - Limited guidance to carry out activities - Not yet translated in a different site or population	No

Key Assessment Components

- Evidence-based assessment:** Researchers at the University of Wisconsin developed TCARE, and its impact on caregiver depression and burden appears in evaluations published in [peer-reviewed journals](#). Washington's Aging and Long-Term Support Administration has collected more than 10 years of [TCARE data](#) and uses it to improve programs and advocate for NFCSP funding. In 2014, the state analyzed the data and found that TCARE reduced caregiver burden and shortened delays in nursing home placements.
- Access and outreach through the No Wrong Door system:** Caregivers access support through CLC, Washington's No Wrong Door system, which connects caregivers, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to services and supports. Caregivers can learn about the NFCSP by visiting [local branches of state offices](#) or attending community outreach events. Many AAAs within the CLC system also partner with first responders and hospitals to raise early awareness of available services and supports.
- Person-centered approach:** Assessors receive training to deliver the full TCARE assessment and guide caregivers through the process. Typically, assessors meet with caregivers for two one-hour sessions.² During the first meeting, the assessor conducts the assessment to understand the caregiver's situation, including their responsibilities, sense of identity as a caregiver, and needs as caregivers. In the second meeting, they review the results of the TCARE assessment and recommended services with the caregiver, drawing on insights gathered during the initial assessment of the caregiver's needs, values, and preferences. Assessors then continue care planning through follow-up and rescreening.
- Data-based recommendations:** Assessors use assessment data to generate scores on outcome measures, such as caregiver burden, depression, intentions, and identity discrepancy. These scores guide personalized service recommendations based on the caregiver's location, needs, and available supports. The system generates a real-time electronic care plan that reflects the caregiver's personal values, identity, and goals, helping them manage caregiving responsibilities while maintaining their own well-being.
- Regular care plan review:** Assessors review the individualized care plan every six months and adjust to accommodate changes in the caregiver's situation. They also record their own observations to inform future support planning.
- Language Accessibility:** TCARE offers translations of both the screening and full assessment in 10 languages, including recent additions in Amharic and French.

² Administration for Community Living. (n.d.). [Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral](#).

Assessment Domains ³	Domain Included in WA Assessment?
Background on the caregiver and the caregiving situation	Yes
Caregiver's perception of care recipient's health and functional status	Yes
Health and well-being of the caregiver	Yes
Consequences of caregiving on the caregiver	Yes
Resources to support the caregiver and care recipient	Yes
Care-provision requirements (skills, abilities, knowledge, confidence, competencies)	Yes
Caregiver's values and preferences with respect to everyday living and care provision	Yes

Follow-Up and Evaluation

Assessors readminister the screening at least every six months and complete a reassessment every 12 months. The state [evaluates outcomes from Washington's NFCSP, MAC, and TSOA programs](#) using data from TCARE.

Staff Training

Washington provides assessors access to assessments, data, and a help library for TCARE through the GetCare reporting system. The state provides internal presentations and training sessions, and TCARE offers [public online guidance](#) on administering TCARE. Staff who complete the required training and earn a TCARE assessor license serve as caregiver specialists and can conduct the full assessment. Trained AAA staff who do not hold a TCARE assessor license may conduct only the initial screening.

Funding Source

The assessment tool leverages state and federal funds through the Older Americans Act, Medicaid, and other sources.

Learn More

[Washington Demonstrates Cost Savings and Improved Outcomes from Supporting Family Caregivers](#)

Contact:

For more information on state caregiver assessments, please contact the NCSC by e-mail (caregivercollaborative@acl.hhs.gov).

³ According to the [Family Caregiver Alliance](#), experts in serving caregivers and researchers who focus on assessment point to these seven categories of information (i.e., domains) to include in a caregiver assessment.