

## Blackfeet Eagle Shield Senior Center

“We incorporate spirituality into our caregiver trainings. For Indian people, our spirituality is part of us. There is no separation between the spiritual and physical.

– Carrie Bearchief-Evans, Director, Blackfeet Eagle Shield Senior Center

### Program Description

The Blackfeet Eagle Shield Senior Center provides caregiver support to tribal members living on the Blackfeet Reservation through their Native American Elder Family Caregiver Support Program. The program provides support for tribal members caring for elders and for elders caring for grandchildren. Services include support groups, training sessions, a resource directory, training manuals, health information, and a book and video library.

### Successful Strategies

The Blackfeet Eagle Shields Senior Center successfully provides caregiver support services through careful consideration of the tribe’s needs. Staff utilize persistent communication and follow-up with caregivers to build trust and ensure they receive necessary services. Staff obtain comprehensive training that teaches them how to identify signs of caregiver distress and incorporates tribal values, language, and spirituality.

### Partnership

The Center works with various nonprofit organizations and local agencies to provide assistance with medical benefits enrollment, respite care, and caregiver trainings. Partnership organizations and agencies include:

- AARP
- Area Agency on Aging
- Montana Lifespan Respite

**Operated by:** Blackfeet Nation

**Location:** Browning, MT

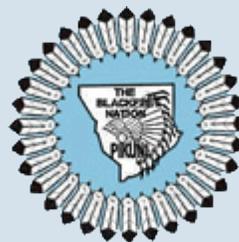
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**Website:**

<https://www.nrcnaa.org/service-locator/center/120>

**Community:** The Eagle Shield Center’s Native American Elder Family Caregiver Support Program is a tribally operated program that provides caregiver support services to tribal members living on the Blackfeet Reservation through Title VI, Part C.



### Cultural Considerations

The Eagle Shields Center incorporates Blackfeet traditional values, spirituality, and language into its caregiver training programs. These training programs include:

- The training guide and curriculum designed for grandparents raising grandchildren called *The Healing Journey for Grandparents*.
- Caregiver trainings conducted in the Blackfeet language, including Blackfeet sign language.

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“It takes a while to build trust with the caregiver or the elders before they’ll actually begin to accept and receive the services and the resources that we have here... I think that other agencies need to be aware of that.”

– Carrie Bearchief-Evans, Director,  
Eagle Shield Senior Center

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### Funding

The program receives funding for caregiver support services through a Title VI, Part C grant. It also receives a small amount of funding from the tribe.

### Future Considerations

The program is currently working on its own tribal Medicaid waiver. Staff would like to create a manual to help guide other tribes through the Montana Medicaid waiver process. They hope that the Medicaid waiver program will help the program expand its services, including caregiver support services, to their community.

### Lessons Learned

Program staff advise other caregiver support programs to get involved in their communities and network with them and other potential partners. Networking has helped the Center establish important partnerships with nonprofit organizations and local agencies. The Center also stresses the importance of hiring staff who have experience working with elders.