

# Grant Approval Memo



**Grantee:** Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska, Inc.  
**Request Amount:** \$136,085.00  
**Project Title:** Living Better with Dementia  
**Grant Term:** 3/1/2026 to 2/28/2027  
**Fund Source:** FY26 Trust Focus Area Strategy Implementation  
**Trust Staff:** Kelda Barstad

## **Requested Motion:**

*The Program and Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$136,085 authority grant to Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska, Inc. for the Living Better with Dementia grant. These funds will come from the Trust Focus Area Strategy Implementation line of the FY26 budget.*

## **Staff Analysis:**

### **• What does this project do?**

Trust funds will support multiple small projects administered by Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska including: the Forget Me Not Chorus, ArtLinks, caregiver guides, technology improvements, and pre-development remodel planning.

### **• Who is receiving the funds?**

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska (ARA) has a mission to support Alaskans affected by Alzheimer's disease, related dementias and other disabilities to ensure quality of life. They offer care navigation, educational programs and webinars, support groups, memory screenings, individual coaching for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD). ARA administers the ADRD mini-grants for the Trust and operates a Medicaid care coordination program through an affiliate organization. They also offer dementia awareness and outreach to the broader community as well as dementia training for professionals. ARA offers a number of services online that are available to all of Alaska with offices located in Anchorage, MatSu, Fairbanks, and Glennallen.

### **• Why is staff recommending this project?**

Alaska's aging population is growing and, with it, the number of people with ADRD is growing. Service demand is high without the service infrastructure in place to support people with ADRD and their caregivers. ARA is one of the few organizations in Alaska dedicated to serving Trust beneficiaries with ADRD and need additional investment in some of their small projects to keep up with demand. The Forget me Not Chorus and ArtLinks programs connect beneficiaries with creative pursuits to keep them active and engaged with the community. Caregivers will receive support through miniguide references. The agency itself needs additional investment in technology and pre-development assistance for remodeling the space to better accommodate beneficiaries.

### **• Will this be a multi-year project?**

This is a one-time project.

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Area of Focus	Objective	Comments
Area of Focus 7: Services in the Least Restrictive Environment	7.2 Increase access to effective and flexible, person-centered, long-term services and supports in urban and rural areas to avoid institutional placement where inappropriate	

## Trust Focus Area Connection

Budget Area	Strategy	Comments
Housing & Home & Community Based Services	HHCBS - Beneficiaries access effective and flexible person-centered HCBS	

## Project Description (from grant application)

Our project, Living Better with Dementia, addresses the growing number of Alaskans living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) and the intense pressure on the family and friend caregivers who support them. Alaska has the fastest-aging older adult populations in the country, and many Alaskans struggle with isolation, limited dementia-capable services, and a lack of practical, hopeful information about how to live well after a diagnosis. Unpaid caregivers experience high rates of stress, depression, and financial strain, while people living with dementia often lose roles, routines, and community connections.

Primary beneficiary group(s).

The primary Trust beneficiary group served by this project is Alaskans living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). A closely linked and essential secondary group is the unpaid family and friend caregivers, who are at risk for behavioral health challenges due to the prolonged stress of caregiving. A tertiary group includes community members and professionals (e.g., volunteers, senior center staff, health and social service providers) who will gain skills and tools to better support ADRD beneficiaries.

What we will do.

Living Better with Dementia is a coordinated package of creative engagement and education programs, supported by modest technology and space upgrades so they can be delivered consistently and statewide:

- Forget Me Not Chorus (FMNC). Alzheimer's Resource Alaska (ARA) will offer two 9-week chorus sessions where people living with dementia sing side-by-side with their care partners and community volunteers. Each session culminates in a public performance. The budget supports a program manager, outreach/education staff, choral director, accompanist, ASL interpreter, rehearsal and performance space, music licensing, participant supplies (such as lyric books and scarves), and simple food/refreshments to build social time into each gathering. FMNC is designed to reduce isolation, support mood and functioning, and create visible, joyful spaces where ADRD beneficiaries are contributors to community life. Each session is supported

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by a paid choral director, piano accompanist, America Sign Language interpreter, ARA program manager, and ARA outreach and education specialists. Social time is built in before and after rehearsal to allow for vital social engagement and connections to be made. Often, caregivers use this space to ask specific questions and get individualized support and assistance from ARA staff.

- Art Links Guest Artist Program. This is an enhancement in quality and engagement to our already popular Art Links program which provides therapeutic art classes on an ongoing basis statewide. This grant would specifically fund 12 guest artists (visual arts, music, storytelling, movement, etc.) to lead dementia-friendly creative workshops with people living with dementia and their care partners. Funds support an education specialist, communications support, art supplies, artist stipends, and an artist coordinator. Participant artwork and stories will be featured in "Living Better with Dementia" collateral, to honor participants and reduce stigma in the broader community. A First Friday event showcasing the work of guest artists, primary and secondary beneficiaries will also be held.
- ABCs of Dementia and caregiver and risk reduction mini-guides. ARA will offer three ABCs of Dementia education series in partnership with community sites statewide, potentially with a virtual option. ABCs of Dementia provides practical, accessible information on understanding dementia, communication strategies, behavioral symptoms, planning for the future, and caregiver self-care. The budget supports an education specialist, space rental (as needed), supplies, and promotional materials. ARA will also create, print, and distribute at least 3,000 copies each of two pocket-sized guides: the Pocket Caregiver Guide and Worried and Wondering booklet, which offer quick, plain-language tips and information for families who are just beginning to worry about memory loss and those who are in a caregiving role. Finding and navigating information on ADRD can be overwhelming, and time is often limited for those facing a new concern, diagnosis, or caregiving role. These guides help reduce barriers by delivering vital information, practical tips, and key resources in a clear and accessible format.
- Technology and space improvements. To sustain and expand these offerings, the project includes basic technology upgrades (laptops/tablets and a color printer). These investments will allow us to support hybrid (in-person + virtual) participation, develop and print high-quality instructional and promotional materials in-house. Additionally, we have a great need to rethink our Anchorage office space, which is owned outright by ARA. This location serves as a central hub where clients, caregivers, and community members attend programs, receive memory screenings, meet with care navigators, or simply stop in seeking help for themselves or a loved one. Our current Anchorage facility is not ADA compliant, and clients frequently struggle to access restroom facilities without assistance. We strive to create a more welcoming, dementia-friendly environment for all who enter our doors; our current office layout makes this a challenge. Previous improvements, made with assistance from the AMHTA, helped support better external signage and improved accessibility to our lobby and front entrance. Funds from this grant would be used to start a pre-development plan to reimagine what our offices could look like, offer accessible facilities and set help to set the standard for a dementia-friendly space.

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## Target population and geographic area.

The project targets adults living with ADRD and their family/friend caregivers across Alaska, with a focus on communities served by ARA's staffed offices and partner sites (Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Copper Center) and outreach to additional communities through focused rural outreach and education both in person and virtually. Forget Me Not Chorus and Art Links activities will primarily be offered in community-based settings such as senior centers and community halls, with intentional outreach to older adults who are socially isolated or have limited access to structured activities and socialization. The ABCs of Dementia series and mini-guides will reach those with ADRD, caregivers, healthcare and social service providers, and community members statewide through on-site sessions, virtual offerings, and distribution of material by our outreach team to the general community, partner agencies, Tribal and other healthcare partners, libraries, senior and community centers.

## Expected outcomes.

Over the grant period, we expect to:

- Engage Trust ADRD beneficiaries and their caregivers in FMNC and Art Links activities, with participants reporting increased joy, a stronger sense of belonging, and meaningful opportunities to contribute.
- Reach Trust ADRD beneficiaries, caregivers and community members through ABCs of Dementia classes, with participants demonstrating increased knowledge about dementia, communication strategies, risk reduction, and available resources.
- Distribute at least 6,000 pocket guides statewide, giving individuals with ADRD, families, caregivers and front-line providers quick, practical tools to respond to dementia-related changes earlier and more effectively.
- Reduce caregiver isolation and stress for participants, as measured through brief pre/post questionnaires (e.g., self-reported confidence in caregiving skills, knowledge of where to seek help, and perceived social support).
- Improve ARA's capacity to deliver high-quality, dementia-friendly creative engagement and education both in person and virtually through upgraded equipment and program space.

Ultimately, our intended impact is that more Alaskans living with dementia remain safely in their homes and communities; supported with rich social connections and informed and confident caregivers, delaying or preventing crises and higher-cost interventions.

## Community support.

This project is rooted in strong community partnerships and in-kind support. Senior centers and community venues (including sites such as the Anchorage Senior Activity Center) provide rehearsal and performance space, set-up assistance, and refreshments for FMNC events. Local choral directors, accompanists, and community volunteers are committed to participating as musical leaders and "chorus buddies". The Art Links Guest Artist Program relies on collaborations with local artists and cultural organizations, who are eager to share their skills in dementia-friendly formats. Health and social service providers have requested more accessible dementia education and simple handouts they can give to families at the point of diagnosis, informing the design of the ABCs of Dementia series and the two mini-guides. Additionally, private donors and community supporters have helped seed these

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efforts, demonstrating broad interest in approaches that emphasize living well with dementia, not just managing decline.

Together, these elements form a coherent, beneficiary-centered initiative that uses music, art, outreach, education, and practical tools to help Alaskans living with ADRD and their caregivers truly live better with dementia.

### **Performance Measures (developed by the Trust)**

How much did you do?

- a. Total number (#) of unduplicated primary Trust beneficiaries served by all programs during the grant reporting period.
- b. Total number (#) of unduplicated secondary (caregivers) Trust beneficiaries served by all programs during the grant reporting period.
- c. Number (#) of primary Trust beneficiaries participating in the project across all three programs (FMNC, Art Links, ABCs of Dementia), broken down by program.
- d. Number (#) of copies of the Pocket Caregiver Guide distributed during the grant reporting period.
- e. Number (#) of copies of the Worried and Wondering booklet distributed during the grant reporting period.

How well did you do it?

- a. Provide a narrative describing the timeline, activities, successes, challenges, and lessons learned for each component (programmatic, capital equipment purchases, pre-development plan for space improvements) during the reporting period. Please include an electronic copy of the two pocket-sized guides, as well as any pre-development materials (such as architecture renderings) developed during the grant term.
- b. For each of the three programs (FMNC, Art Links, ABCs of Dementia), the number (#) and percentage (%) of participants (primary and secondary Trust beneficiaries) who felt a stronger sense of belonging and support as a result of participating in the program.
- c. For the ABCs of Dementia program: The number (#) and percentage (%) of participants who felt they increased their knowledge about dementia, communication strategies, risk reduction, and resources available in the community.

Is anyone better off>

- a. Number (#) and percentage (%) of caregivers who felt their participation in the program helped to reduce stress and feelings of isolation.
- b. Number (#) and percentage (%) of participants who felt
- c. Four statements from participants (primary beneficiaries or caregivers) describing the impact that the program(s) have had on their quality of life or caregiving experience.

### **Sustainability (from grant application)**

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Yes, Living Better with Dementia is designed to continue after Trust funding ends. Trust support will underwrite many one-time and start-up costs; curriculum development and refinement, initial guest artist stipends, development of content and first print runs of the two pocket guides, and technology/space upgrades so the Forget Me Not Chorus, Art Links, and ABCs of Dementia classes can be carried forward within Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska's ongoing education and community engagement programs. The grant also includes \$10,000 for a pre-development plan to make ARA's Anchorage office more dementia-friendly and fully handicapped accessible. This planning work is a one-time investment that will position ARA to pursue future capital funding and phased improvements, ensuring our primary program hub is safe, welcoming, and usable for Trust beneficiaries with cognitive and mobility challenges.

After the grant period, core project elements will be sustained through a braided funding model:

- ARA's operating budget (supported by state grants and various contracts, fee-for-service work, Medicaid billing, and annual fundraising) will cover staff time for education specialists and basic program coordination.
- We will work with community partners such as senior centers who may provide in-kind space, promotion, and local volunteers, as they did for the ABCs of Dementia series at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center and Wasilla Area Serving Seniors (WASI); interest from the Chugiak, Fairbanks and Palmer senior centers to host future series demonstrates strong ongoing demand and partner commitment. We also hope to offer a virtual class so that Alaskans statewide can access the same resources.
- Civic groups and local funders (e.g., Rotary clubs, community foundations, arts funders, and corporate sponsors) will be approached for annual investments to support guest artist stipends, music licensing, materials and other expenses, building on the previously successful Rotary-funded ABCs of Dementia project that has already proven attractive to community funders and highly valued by participants. Both the Anchorage Senior Activity Center and WASI are interested in offering the program again.
- Individual and corporate donors and small events tied to chorus performances and art showcases such as First Friday events will help underwrite refreshments, supplies, and future guide reprints.
- For the Anchorage office improvements, the Trust-funded pre-development plan will be used to leverage additional support from capital grant makers, accessibility-focused funders, and individual donors, so the physical upgrades can be completed without adding ongoing operating strain.

Because the Trust grant will pay for durable equipment (e.g., laptops/tablets, color printer), initial development/printing of materials, and the one-time pre-development planning for a dementia-friendly, accessible office, ARA's future costs are primarily staff time and modest program expenses. Those are realistic to sustain through this combination of ongoing operating funds, community partner in-kind support, and diversified community fundraising, allowing the project's impacts to continue and grow beyond the Trust's one-time investment.

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### Who We Serve (from grant application)

The Living Better with Dementia project serves Alaskans who are experiencing Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, one of the Trust's named beneficiary groups. However, while not tracked separately, many participants also live with co-occurring conditions such as mental illness, traumatic brain injury, or substance use disorders, which aligning this work further with the Trust's broader beneficiary population.

Through individualized dementia care navigation, evidence-informed education, and practical skill-building, this project helps beneficiaries and their care partners better understand the disease, plan for changing needs, and access community-based supports. Expected benefits for Trust beneficiaries include improved safety and stability at home, reduced behavioral health crises and avoidable emergency department use, increased engagement in meaningful daily activities, and greater confidence and reduced stress for care partners, which in turn can help delay or prevent premature institutional placement.

By emphasizing early identification, proactive planning, and connection to home and community-based services, Living Better with Dementia supports the Trust's mandate to improve quality of life for beneficiaries and contributes to prevention and early intervention efforts for Alaskans at risk of becoming Trust beneficiaries.

### Estimated Numbers of Beneficiaries Served Experiencing (from grant application)

Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementias:	175
Secondary Beneficiaries (family members or caregivers providing support to primary beneficiaries):	300

### Project Budget (from grant application)

Personnel Services Costs	\$33,200.00
Personnel Services Costs (Other Sources)	\$5,000.00
Personnel Services Narrative	Trust funds will support ARA staff time to plan, deliver, and evaluate the project, including the Program Manager for Forget Me Not Chorus, Outreach/Education staff support, Education Specialists for the ABCs of Dementia series and Art Links program, and limited Communications staff time for project-related outreach, publicity and materials. Additional personnel costs will be supported by Atwood Foundation grant.

Space or Facilities Costs	\$6,260.00
Space or Facilities Costs (Other Sources)	\$6,000.00

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Space or Facilities Narrative	Trust funds will cover most facility costs for one session of the Forget Me Not Chorus rehearsals and performance and at least two in person ABCs of Dementia sessions held at community sites and senior centers. Community partners and funders (such as the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, Atwood Foundation, Anchorage South Rotary, WASI) will contribute in-kind room rental and set-up support valued at approximately \$6000.
Supplies Costs	\$23,400.00
Supplies Costs (Other Sources)	\$23,400.00
Supplies Narrative	Trust funds will support program supplies including music rights and purchased music, participant materials (e.g., lyric books, scarves, art supplies), printing of programs and promotional materials, sound/lighting/décor needs, food and beverages for rehearsals and events, participant handouts, and printing/mailing for outreach. Senior center partners will contribute a small portion of refreshments in-kind, valued at approximately \$250 and AARP sponsors one session per year for FMNC food and beverages. Individual donors also contribute to offset some of these expenses. A grant for \$25,000 has also been submitted to ConocoPhillips to help support community-based programs like Art Link and FMNC.
Equipment Costs	\$13,900.00
Equipment Costs (Other Sources)	\$25,000.00
Equipment Narrative	Trust funds will purchase a color printer to be used by Communications Director increasing our capacity to print flyers, programs, and other collateral materials in-house. Thus, reducing expenses long-term. Grant will also purchase laptops/tablets for staff use. ARA is applying for an additional technology support grant of \$25,000 from Mat Su Health Foundation.
Other Costs	\$59,325.00
Other Costs (Other Sources)	\$10,000.00
Other Costs Narrative	Trust funds in this category will support contracted and external project-related services, including choral director, accompanist, ASL interpreter, artist stipends and artist coordination, collateral and content creation/design, printing and shipping of the two pocket guides, IT set-up for new technology, and production of additional promotional/collateral materials. This category also includes the \$10,000 pre-development plan to make ARA's Anchorage office dementia-friendly and handicapped accessible, as well as project administrative/indirect costs associated with managing

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and supporting the initiative. Additional funding will come from individual and corporate donors, Atwood Foundation, Mat Su Health Foundation and other funders.

### **Other Funding Sources (from grant application)**

South Anchorage Rotary Club--secured	\$2,000.00
Atwood Foundation--secured	\$10,000.00
ConocoPhillips--Pending	\$25,000.00
Mat Su Health Foundation--pending	\$50,000.00
Jackie and John Brunton Foundation--secured	\$15,000.00
GCI--pending	\$5,000.00
<b>Total Leveraged Funds</b>	<b>\$107,000.00</b>