

# Alaska Commission on Aging

## Nutrition, Transportation & Support Services

DHSS Division of Senior & Disabilities Services

Senior Community-Based Grants Component

Recommended FY2015 Budget Increase: \$545,000



**Recommendation:** The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) recommends a \$545,000 increase to the Nutrition, Transportation and Support (NTS) services program, an existing senior grant program administered by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services Senior Grants Unit for multi-year grants to service providers that provide services to older Alaskans. Nutrition, Transportation & Support services offer low-cost solutions that sustain health and independence for older Alaskans by reducing the need for higher cost care and allowing an older person to maintain their independence and remain living safely at home and in the community for as long as possible.

### WHO THIS PROGRAM SERVES:

- All older Alaskans age 60+ targeting those whose health and welfare are at highest risk.
- Older persons who do not qualify for Medicaid Waiver or Personal Care Attendant Services because they do not meet level of care and income requirements but need assistance.
- Older Alaskans who are no longer eligible for Waiver services due to improved health outcomes but still require “stepped down” care to maintain their health status.
- Seniors who are recovering from a hospital stay due to a fall, illness, or surgery.
- Elderly persons transitioning from an assisted living home or nursing facility back home.
- While all seniors are eligible for these services at no cost per federal mandate, seniors freely donate to the cost of these services.

### SENIORS SERVED BY NTS SERVICE TYPE IN FY2013 (Source: Division of Senior and Disabilities Services 2014):

- Congregate Meals served in senior centers, adult day programs, and other group settings (7,759 seniors).
- Home-Delivered Meals include a nutritious meal and welfare check for homebound seniors (3,453 seniors).
- Assisted Transportation provides door-to-door service for seniors unable to use public forms of transportation (1,361 seniors).
- Homemaker Services provide assistance with preparing meals, shopping, & household chores (280 seniors).
- A total of 11,238 seniors (unduplicated count) received Nutrition, Transportation & Support Services.

Alaska Commission on Aging  
P.O. Box 110693 Juneau, Alaska 99811-0693  
Phone: 907-465-3250 / Fax: 907-465-1398

[www.alaskaaging.org](http://www.alaskaaging.org)

*Ensuring the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans and assisting them through planning, advocacy, education and interagency cooperation to lead useful and meaningful lives.*

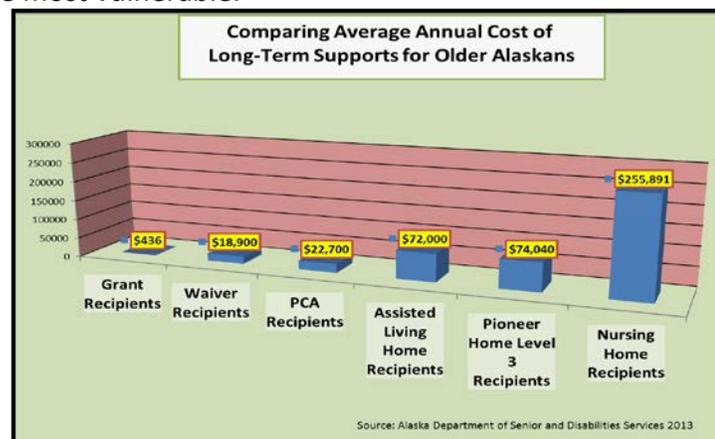
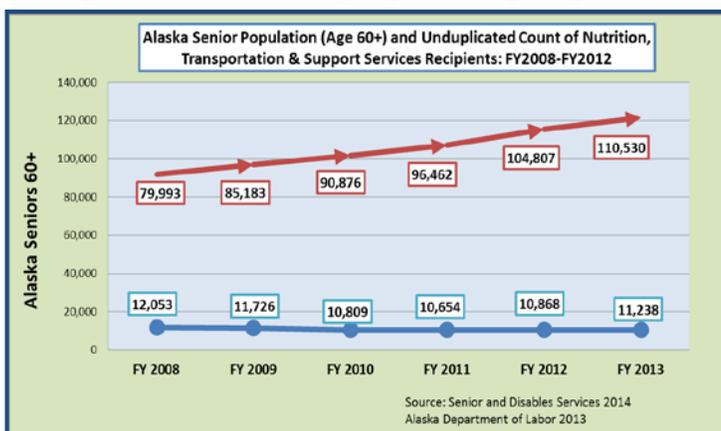
## HOW DO WE KNOW THESE SERVICES HELP OLDER PEOPLE?

- Eighty-five percent of older adults surveyed who received these core services reported that this assistance helped them to remain at home (U.S. Administration on Aging, 2010).
- States that invest more money in core senior services (such as home-delivered meal programs) spend less on higher cost care for their elderly residents. New research has found that for every \$25 states spend on home-delivered meals, there is a 1% reduction in the number of new residents with low-care needs in the nursing home (Health Research & Educational Trust 2013).
- A growing trend towards serving more seniors at higher risk for nursing home admission with Nutrition, Transportation Support Services (comparing FY08 and FY13 NTS Client data, SDS 2014).

## WHY ARE ADDITIONAL FUNDS NEEDED?

- Nutrition, Transportation & Support Services help a growing number of older Alaskans to “age in place” and remain in their homes and communities even as their health and functioning decline. These services target the most vulnerable elderly, many of whom are homebound.
- Fewer older Alaskans receive Nutrition, Transportation & Support Services despite an increasing senior population due to inadequate funding to meet increasing costs. Comparing unduplicated counts for FY08 (12,053 seniors served) and FY13 (11,238 seniors served), there are **815 fewer seniors** receiving services.
- Nutrition, Transportation, & Support Services serve a significant number of older persons at risk for nursing home admission including those of advanced age (4,363), incomes below poverty level (4,476), live alone with limited caregiver support (3,769), and have functional limitations with activities of daily living (1,133 for seniors receiving home-delivered meals and homemaker services).
- These services serve a growing number of older people with early and mid-stage Alzheimer’s disease who might not meet level of care requirements to qualify for Medicaid waiver services.
- Nutrition, Transportation & Support services saves money! Compare the annual cost of senior grant-funded services (\$436 per senior) with higher cost care (Medicaid Waiver @ \$18,900; Personal Care Attendant Services @ \$22,700; and nursing home facilities (\$219,701) (DHSS FY2014 Budget Overview & DHSS Office of Rate Review 2014). These services help seniors maintain (or regain) their health and independence allowing older Alaskans to meaningfully contribute to their families and communities.

**FUNDING GOAL:** Increased funding is needed to increase the number of seniors served to FY08 levels by adding 815 seniors to the program, targeting those who are most vulnerable.



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