

Alaska Commission on Aging

Senior In-Home Services

DHSS Division of Senior & Disabilities Services, Senior Community-Based Grants Component

Recommended FY2016 Budget Increase: \$350,000

FY2015 Base Funding: \$2,917,265 GF



RECOMMENDATION: Senior In-Home Services senior grant program focuses on the needs of the aging individual and provides one of the few safety net programs for vulnerable seniors who need assistance with maintaining their health and ability to live independently at home but do not qualify for waiver services, Personal Care Assistance, or are waiting for their eligibility to be determined. Senior In-Home Services for seniors age 60 years and older include care coordination, chore/homemaker services, supplemental supports (such as eye glasses, hearing aids, & other items that may not be covered by Medicare) in addition to respite for their family caregivers. Without access to appropriate in-home supports, elderly Alaskans recovering from hospital stays related to hip injuries, surgeries and illness are at risk for delayed recovery or relapse that can result in hospital and nursing home admission. The Division of Senior and Disabilities Services reports **97 seniors on a statewide waitlist** for Senior In-Home Services based on grantee feedback (December 2014). Chore and respite services are in greatest demand. Older Alaskans living in rural areas have limited or no access to these services. This small critical investment recommended for Senior In-Home Services will address the waitlist and help seniors preserve their improved health status at a fraction of the cost of institutional care.

WHY DO WE NEED SENIOR IN-HOME SERVICES?

- Senior In-Home Services provide inexpensive alternative services to hospitals and nursing homes that assist seniors with the maintenance of their health and well-being to prevent/postpone the need for higher cost care.
- Senior In-Home Services help seniors successfully manage a care transition from the hospital or nursing home back home to the community as well as assist older persons who were on the Medicaid waiver but no longer qualify for services due to health improvements.
- Without additional funds for Senior In-Home Services, there may be continued growth on the waitlist and an increased number of older people at risk for skilled nursing care.
- Senior In-Home Services addresses the Department of Health and Social Services objectives to increase the number of vulnerable Alaskans who live safely in their communities (Objective 1.2.2) and in the least restrictive environment (Objective 1.2.3).

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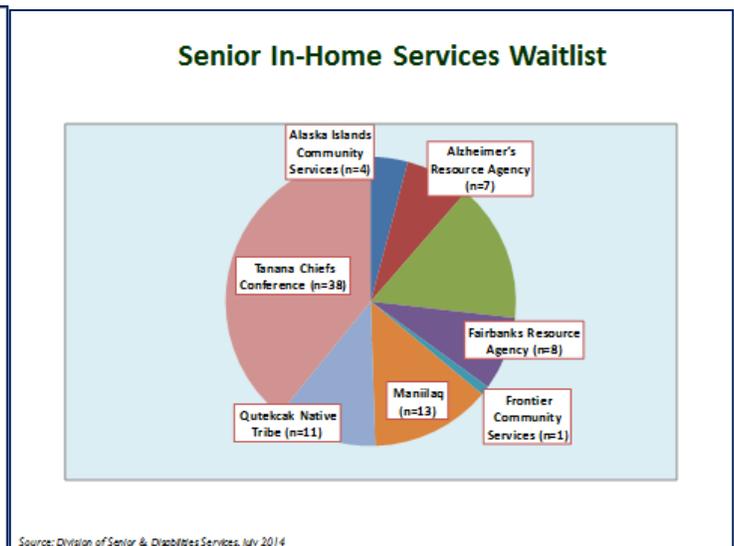
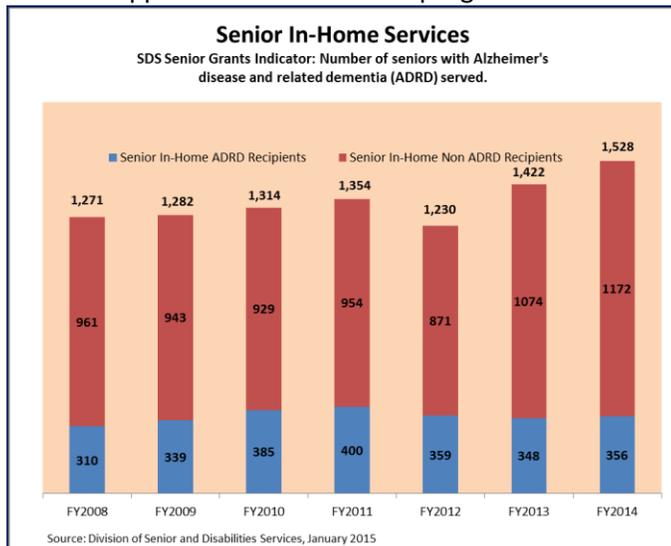
Ensuring the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans and assisting them through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation to lead useful and meaningful lives.

SENIORS SERVED IN FY2013 BY SENIOR IN-HOME SERVICES

- In FY2013, this program served 1,422 seniors (unduplicated count), of which 348 (25%) have Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia, through 15 provider agencies. Eight of the Senior In-Home provider agencies are reporting waitlists for services. (Please see left chart below.)
- Seniors contribute to the cost of Senior-In home Services through a sliding fee scale. In FY2013, this program received approximately \$100,000 from senior contributions statewide and is projected to receive a similar amount from FY2016 senior contributions (Senior and Disabilities Services Senior Grants Unit, 2014).

WHY ARE ADDITIONAL FUNDS NEEDED?

- The statewide waitlist of 97 seniors for Senior In-Home Services is attributed to the increase in the senior population at a rate of 6% annually. Chore and respite services are in greatest demand. The “oldest old” (persons age 85 years and older) is one of the fastest growing age cohorts of the senior population who are most at risk for physical disabilities, dementia, and other chronic health conditions who would benefit from these services.
- While Senior In-Home Services is serving a growing number of seniors (an increase of 192 seniors based on FY12 comparisons), this program is serving a lower percentage of the senior population (1.2% of the senior population in FY13 compared to 1.4% in FY12) and seniors with dementia (7.9% in FY08 compared to 5.8% in FY13). (Please see right chart below.)
- Senior and Disabilities Services projects that the requested \$350,000 increased funding will be sufficient to serve 70 additional seniors at an annual cost of \$5,000 per recipient. The amount of time seniors spend on the Senior In-Home Services waitlist fluctuates if they are not able to receive services when requested. As people age, they may either pass away or need the services of a nursing home.
- Senior In-Home Services provide appropriate, low cost in-home supports that help seniors enjoy the highest quality of life possible and live safely for a longer time in the community in the least restrictive environment, close to family and friends which is where most seniors desire to be.
- Long-term care is expensive – averaging \$66,000 per resident for assisted living and \$240,000 for nursing home care (Genworth Financial 2014). Senior In-Home Services support seniors in their recovery from hospital stays, persons transitioning from nursing home residency back to the community, and older Alaskans who received waiver services but are no longer qualified due to material improvement in their health status and require supports to maintain their progress.



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