

RCW 74.39A.035 Expansion of nutrition services through the meals on wheels program. (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of social and health services must develop a program to expand nutrition services through the meals on wheels program.

(a) At least sixty-five percent of the moneys may be distributed according to formulae to existing providers of meals on wheels programs to expand the number of people served.

(b) Up to twenty-five percent of the moneys may be distributed by a competitive grant process to expand the meals on wheels program into areas not presently being served.

(c) Up to five percent of the moneys may be used by the department administration, monitoring of the grants, and providing technical assistance to existing and new meals on wheels providers.

(2) The department must develop criteria for awarding grants under subsection (1)(b) of this section. The criteria must include, but is not limited to:

(a) Expanding service in areas with the greatest need to assist low-income homebound seniors who are unable to prepare food for themselves and lack a caregiver that prepares meals;

(b) Expanding services in areas where senior citizens have limited access to community support services and facilities; and

(c) Geographic diversity within the state and between rural and urban areas.

(3) None of the grant moneys awarded under subsection (1)(b) of this section may be used to supplant existing funds the provider receives for the meals on wheels program. [2017 c 287 s 2.]

Findings—2017 c 287: "The legislature finds that:

(1) Washingtonians sixty-five years of age and older will nearly double in the next twenty-five years, from twelve percent of our population in 2015 to almost twenty-two percent of our population in 2040. Younger people with disabilities will also require supportive long-term care services.

(2) The long-term care system should support autonomy and self-determination. Furthermore, the long-term care system should promote personal planning and savings combined with public support, when needed.

(3) Whenever possible, the long-term care system should utilize evidence-based practices to improve the general health of Washingtonians over their lifetime[s] and reduce related health care and long-term care costs.

(4) Nutrition programs, such as the meals on wheels program, are a low-cost method of helping seniors remain independent." [2017 c 287 s 1.]