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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION

H. F. No. 1739

03/11/2015 Authored by Pierson and Zerwas

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to human services; establishing a grant program to provide in-home
1.3 and community services for older adults with vision loss; appropriating money;
1.4 proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256C.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. [256C.07] IN-HOME AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR OLDER
1.7 ADULTS WITH VISION LOSS.

1.8 Subdivision 1. Establishment. The commissioner of human services shall establish
1.9 a program to provide grant funds for in-home and community services for older adults
1.10 with vision loss to allow older adults with vision loss to live independently and age in
1.11 place. Grant funds shall be distributed to community benefit organizations and nonprofit
1.12 organizations using a request for proposals process.

1.13 Subd. 2. Organizations eligible for grant funds. A community benefit
1.14 organization or nonprofit organization seeking grant funds must submit an application to
1.15 the commissioner according to the terms of the request for proposals. To be eligible for
1.16 grant funds, a community benefit organization or nonprofit organization must:

1.17 (1) have a demonstrated history of providing in-home and community services
1.18 to older adults with vision loss;

1.19 (2) have knowledge of the issues and challenges facing older adults living with
1.20 vision loss;

1.21 (3) have the capacity to provide services to older adults in their homes; and

1.22 (4) currently provide the following services:

1.23 (i) referrals to complementary, community-based services to support independence;

2.1 (ii) low vision-specific and blind-specific instruction and techniques to enhance
 2.2 independence;

2.3 (iii) opportunities for blind and visually impaired older adults to reduce isolation and
 2.4 depression by accessing emotional support and participating in activities; and

2.5 (iv) training and education to direct service providers serving the target population
 2.6 described in subdivision 3.

2.7 Subd. 3. **Target population for services.** Persons to be served under this section
 2.8 are blind or visually impaired adults age 65 or older who:

2.9 (1) live in their own homes, senior living settings, or nursing homes;

2.10 (2) need training, emotional support, or access to services to help them maintain
 2.11 independence or reduce depression and isolation;

2.12 (3) require services from providers with the training and experience to serve visually
 2.13 impaired adults; and

2.14 (4) cannot be served effectively by other programs.

2.15 Subd. 4. **Services provided using grant funds.** An organization receiving a
 2.16 grant shall use the grant funds to provide some or all of the following services to older
 2.17 adults with vision loss:

2.18 (1) an in-home needs assessment to determine the services the older adult needs to
 2.19 safely remain in the home and to make referrals to other service organizations as needed;

2.20 (2) an assessment of magnification to determine the magnification needed to help the
 2.21 older adult remain independent;

2.22 (3) an assessment of independent living skills, including the use of technology,
 2.23 to determine the living skills the older adult needs to develop to remain independent
 2.24 or regain independence;

2.25 (4) one-on-one training in the use of magnification devices or other adaptive
 2.26 technologies;

2.27 (5) one-on-one training in adaptive life skills to support independent living;

2.28 (6) one-on-one mobility training to allow safe navigation of the older adult's
 2.29 environment;

2.30 (7) one-on-one peer support to break down barriers of isolation caused by vision loss;

2.31 (8) in-home and in-clinic classes to teach skills to adjust to vision loss; and

2.32 (9) emotional support that addresses the specific issues surrounding vision loss.

2.33 Emotional support may include peer support, facilitated support groups, and individual
 2.34 counseling related to vision loss.

3.1 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION; IN-HOME AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR**
3.2 **OLDER ADULTS WITH VISION LOSS.**

3.3 \$350,000 in fiscal year 2016 and \$450,000 in fiscal year 2017 are appropriated
3.4 from the general fund to the commissioner of human services for a program to provide
3.5 in-home and community services for older adults with vision loss under Minnesota
3.6 Statutes, section 256C.07.