

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | February 3, 2020

Human Services offers grant funding to grow in-home care services in rural ND; nursing facilities and other community entities are invited to apply

BISMARCK, N.D. – One strength of rural communities is that people care for and look out for each other. This community value, coupled with the courage to try new solutions for meeting community needs, may help North Dakota address the shortage of the direct care workforce in rural areas.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services wants to leverage those qualities to improve access to in-home care in rural areas for Medicaid recipients and others who need personal care and other support to remain living at home and in their communities. The agency is inviting nursing facilities and other local entities to apply for small start-up grants to help them expand services and enroll as qualified service provider agencies to provide in-home care in rural areas.

“The research shows that people want to remain living independently at home, as long as possible, and they can - with help. However, many people we serve do not have family members living close, so they need affordable, paid care,” said Nancy Nikolas Maier, director of the department’s Aging Services Division. “We want to work with entrepreneurial individuals and organizations to strengthen caregiving services in rural areas. These innovation grants are intended for both rural nursing facilities that may have extra staffing capacity and community organizations and individuals who aspire to support quality care in people’s homes in rural areas by starting or expanding a qualified service provider agency.”

The agency set aside \$50,000 in funding for entities serving rural areas. Providers in urban areas could also apply if they hire staff located in rural areas to provide in-home care to rural residents.

Maier said grant funding is limited to \$10,000 per grant recipient and can be used for costs associated with staff recruitment and retention, employee background checks, and training and professional development. Funds can also be used for compensation costs not paid by Medicaid or state funds, costs to establish an agency office, and other start-up or expansion needs, such as promotional materials and community outreach informing rural residents that in-home care services are available through the qualified service provider agency.

Participating qualified service provider agencies must provide Medicaid State Plan personal care services and other home and community-based services listed in North Dakota’s Medicaid waiver.

Details, including the short two-page application, are available online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/providers.html. Applications are due by Feb. 29, 2020.

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