

---

---

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5395*****AN ACT CONCERNING AGING IN PLACE.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes up to \$5 million in general obligation bonds for a program to provide grants to help income-eligible seniors and adults with disabilities modify their homes so they may age in place (i.e., stay in their own home or community setting of their choice regardless of age or disability). It appropriates \$1 million from the General Fund to the Aging Commission for FY 15 to establish a matching grant program for municipalities and nonprofit organizations involved in implementing livable community initiatives, such as accessible housing and community and social services, designed to allow aging in place. The municipalities and nonprofit organizations must match 50% of the grant. The funds available under both programs may be spent only for grants and administrative costs.

The bill requires the Aging and Social Services (DSS) departments to hold quarterly meetings with nutrition service and food security stakeholders to develop recommendations on the Elderly Nutrition Program, which uses state and federal funds to provide free meals to seniors and their spouses at home and a congregate locations. The recommendations must (1) address complexities in nutrition services' administrative processes; (2) establish quality control benchmarks; and (3) help move toward greater quality, efficiency, and transparency in the program. Stakeholders must include area agencies on aging, access agencies, the Aging Commission, nutrition providers, representatives of food security programs and contractors, nutrition host site representatives, and consumers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

**AGING IN PLACE**

Beginning July 1, 2014, the bill authorizes the rehabilitation services commissioner to establish and administer a program to provide grants to eligible people to modify their homes and acquire assistive technology devices necessary to allow them to live independently in a home setting. An eligible person is anyone age 65 and older and anyone (presumably an adult) with a disability (1) who is at risk of losing the ability to live independently at home without the modifications or devices, in the judgment of an assistive technology professional rehabilitation engineer or a certified aging-in-place specialist, and (2) whose income does not exceed 400% of the federal poverty level (i.e., for FY 14 \$3,890 per month and \$46,680 per year for an individual and \$6,597 per month and \$79,160 per year for a family of three).

The bill authorizes up to \$5 million in bonds for the program.

#### **LIVABLE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM**

PA 13-109 required the Aging Commission to establish a “Livable Communities” initiative to serve as a (1) forum for best practices and (2) resource clearinghouse to help municipal and state leaders design livable communities that allow residents to age in place. The bill appropriates \$1 million from the General Fund to the commission in FY 15 to establish a matching grant program as part of the initiative.

The program must provide assistance to municipalities and nonprofit organizations engaged in initiatives designed to allow seniors and people under age 65 with disabilities to age in place and remain in a home setting of their choice in a livable community. By January 1, 2015, the bill requires the commission to recognize communities that have implemented such initiatives.

Livable community initiatives include:

1. affordable and accessible housing,
2. community and social services,
3. planning and zoning regulations that permit homesharing and

accessory apartments for the target population,

4. walkability, and
5. transportation-related infrastructure that provides ease of access to elderly persons and people with disabilities.

***Fund Disbursement***

A municipality or nonprofit organization applying for grants must provide a 50% match. The commission must disburse the funds in amounts not exceeding \$100,000 such that no one region of the state receives a disproportionate amount, provided municipalities from throughout the state apply. In considering applications from the same geographical region of the state that equally satisfy eligibility criteria, the commission must give priority to applications from municipalities in which the percentage of the people age 65 and older and with disabilities exceeds the percentage in the state, as defined in the most recent federal decennial census or the estimate the Office of Policy and Management provides in the fifth year after each decennial census.

***Recipient Data-Reporting Responsibilities***

A municipality or nonprofit organization, receiving a grant, must annually submit to the commission, on commission forms, the following data on programs funded by the grants:

1. number of seniors and people with disabilities approved,
2. number of home accessory apartments or shared homes approved,
3. number and type of transportation services or options added,
4. number and type of community and social services added or expanded,
5. a budget detailing municipal expenditures on such programs, and
6. any other information the commission determines necessary.

**BACKGROUND**

***Elderly Nutrition Program***

Pursuant to federal law, DSS operates elderly nutrition projects that provide nutritionally sound meals to people age 60 and older and their spouses. Programs must provide one meal per day, five days a week. These meals are either offered at congregate sites, known as “senior community cafes,” or delivered to the homes of people too frail to come to the congregate locations or cook for themselves. Disabled people living in housing facilities that are congregate meal sites can also receive meals. The meals are free, although voluntary contributions are encouraged. Both federal and state funds are used to pay the program costs.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Aging Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/11/2014)