



SENIOR CARE WORKFORCE INNOVATION GRANT FUND

Background:

Workforce shortages remain one of the biggest challenges to the delivery of long-term care in Minnesota. Despite the passage of increases to nursing facilities and the raising of the caps for elderly waiver in the 2015 session, nursing facilities and home and community based services settings continue to struggle with recruitment and retention issues. In 2015, the nursing home RN turnover rate statewide was 64%, up from 47% in 2014. The 2015 turnover rate for nursing assistants and trained medical assistants was at 65%, up from 51% in 2014. Nursing facilities have vacancies across the state of 2900 open positions. The overwhelming reason for open positions in nursing facilities was a lack of applicants—a 2015 survey response showed that 70% of nursing facility vacancies were attributed in part to a lack of applicants for open positions. Housing with services also report staff stability challenges with a 50% turnover rate in LPNs and a 54% turnover rate for home health aides.

Nursing facilities are being forced to deny admissions because of staff vacancies. This, in turn, leads to placement in facilities outside of the community and away from family and loved ones. The senior population is continuing to grow—60,000 Minnesotans will turn 65 each year through the year 2030. By 2020, seniors will outnumber children in the classroom for the first time. Families, communities and policy makers need to look at new ways to increase the workforce to help care for our growing senior population.

Proposal:

The Long-Term Care Imperative proposes the creation of a senior care workforce innovation grant fund. This competitive grant program will fund pilots of new programs or expansions of existing successful programs that can help expand the pool of paid care givers to work in the older adult services sector. Funds will be prioritized to target employment of underserved populations, such as new Americans, persons receiving government assistance, persons with disabilities, “encore” career seniors, single parents and/or veterans.