



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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Gov. Blagojevich announces nearly \$2.8 million to help seniors and residents with disabilities remain independent in their own homes

Includes double state funding for Home Modification Program to \$2.3 million; Additional \$500,000 federal grant to help seniors stay independent

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today announced nearly \$2.8 million in grants to help Illinois seniors and residents with disabilities live independently in their own homes and communities. Funding for the Home Modification Program has more than doubled from last year to \$2.3 million and will help approximately 140 low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities across Illinois afford home accessibility improvements. The Governor also announced that Illinois will receive nearly half a million dollars in new federal funding to provide seniors with more affordable choices to enable them to remain living independently in their homes and communities. The Nursing Home Diversion Modernization (NHDM) Grants Program will serve 300 individuals in an 18 month pilot project, and increase the flexibility of service options for all Illinois seniors.

“Seniors and people with disabilities should be able to stay in their own homes and communities and live safely and independently. This funding will help them make basic, but necessary, home improvements so that they can remain living in their own homes and avoid having to move to nursing homes or other institutions,” said Gov. Blagojevich.

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), as part of the state’s comprehensive housing plan initiatives, will allocate the \$2.3 million in grants to 12 non-profit organizations and public agencies around the state to administer the Program locally. 139 senior residents and people with disabilities statewide are expected to be helped.

The 2007 Home Modification Program grant recipients are:

Grantee	Service Area	Amount Funded	Estimated number of residents to be helped
Ramp Up Foundation	Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties	\$320,000	16
Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago	Cook, DuPage, Lake, and Will counties	\$220,000	11
City of Kankakee Community Development Agency	Kankakee County	\$165,000	11
City of Joliet	City of Joliet	\$180,000	9
Will County Center for Community Concerns	Will County - excluding City of Joliet	\$140,000	7
Western Illinois Regional Council	Warren, Henderson counties	\$180,000	12
Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials	Adams, Brown, Pike, Schuyler counties	\$210,000	14
City of Springfield	City of Springfield	\$240,000	16
St. Clair County	St. Clair County - excluding the cities of East St. Louis, O'Fallon and Scott Air Force Base.	\$150,000	10
Western Egyptian Economic Opportunity Council	Jackson, Monroe, Perry, Randolph counties	\$165,000	11
B.C.M.W. Community Services	Bond, Clinton, Marion, Washington, Jefferson counties	\$180,000	12
Wabash Area Development Inc.	Edwards, Gallatin, Hamilton, Saline, Wabash, Wayne, White counties	\$150,000	10
	TOTAL:	\$2,300,000	139

“Gov. Blagojevich announced last year the Home Modification Program with \$1 million in funding. As a result, we received approximately \$4 million in applications, proving that there is a real need to help these two underserved groups. While Illinois already has a number of programs to prevent premature nursing home placement for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, these do not specifically address home modification needs. This is why we believe the Home Modification Program was met with such a positive response, which led to the Program receiving more than double funding for this year,” said DeShana L. Forney, IHDA Executive Director.

“My 16-year-old granddaughter, Anna, has had to be bed bathed for years now because it became too hard for me to lift her into the bathtub on my own,” said Kay Boughers, a resident in Salem, Illinois who received a \$12,500 grant from B.C.M.W. Community Services from last year’s funding. “We heard that the Governor was giving out these grants and we were so happy to have received one. Thanks to the grant I was able to install a shower rail and ramp, and widen the doorways in our home to make it easier to cope with the demands of caring for a child with cerebral palsy. It has made a world of difference.”

Each eligible household can receive a maximum of between \$15,000 to \$25,000 as a five-year forgivable loan to spend on modifications that address accessibility or health and safety concerns. The funds are expected to be available in early 2008.

To qualify for the program, households must have at least one family member with a disability or a senior over the age of 60. Household incomes must not exceed 50 percent of the area median income based on household size. For a family of four living in Cook, DuPage, Lake, Kane, McHenry and Will counties, this limit is \$37,000, while the same size family in Sangamon County can not earn more than \$32,450.

An additional goal of the program was to coordinate housing resources with other service programs for the elderly and persons living with disabilities. Therefore, applicants must be able to document the need for the home modifications. Eligible households have to be referred to the administering groups from agencies funded by the Department on Aging or Department of Human Services and will be awarded on a first come, first served basis. Residents who wish to apply for the grants should contact the agency serving their area for more details.

The Governor also announced that Illinois is among 12 states to receive a grant from the Administration on Aging (AOA) to further efforts to assist at-risk individuals avoid unnecessary nursing home placement. The NHDM Grants Program will enable states to use existing Older Americans Act (OAA) and state general revenue funds in a more flexible manner to make a greater range of home and community based support options available.

“The Illinois Department on Aging is very pleased to be awarded this grant, and looks forward to participating with the Administration on Aging to implement consumer direction in assisting older persons in living in the community,” said Charles D. Johnson, Director, IDoA. “This new funding continues the Governor’s efforts to reform long term care and develop programs to prevent premature nursing home placement.”

The Illinois program for the NHDM grant will initially offer consumer direction of personal care services in four regions of the state: Kankakee, Decatur, Peoria, and the East St. Louis area. This program builds on the efforts of the Illinois My Choices/Cash and Counseling demonstration program, that allows seniors to take their monthly service allowance usually devoted to homemaker or adult day services and either hire their own worker, or purchase other services. It will also replicate successful initiatives that allow families to purchase short-term respite care. By the end of the 18 month grant period, IDoA will offer consumer direction statewide to people who are eligible for its Community Care Program (CCP).

CCP provides home and community-based services to frail elderly age 60 and older who meet nursing home eligibility requirements. During the 2007 fiscal year, the CCP provided services to more than 60,500 seniors thereby successfully diverting or delaying those individuals from

nursing home placement. Programs offered through CCP include homemaker services, adult day services, and emergency home response services. Additional services, such as respite, home delivered meals, and services that support caregivers for older adults are provided through Area Agencies on Aging and their local networks of service providers. Each year, more than 800,000 elderly Illinois residents receive services in their homes and communities.

The NHDM grant compliments the grant awarded to Illinois for the MFP initiative. In May, Gov. Blagojevich announced Illinois will receive more than \$55.7 million in enhanced federal matching funds through the MFP initiative over the next five years to support people currently living in nursing facilities to transition back to their homes and communities. In addition to the federal award, the state also committed \$23.8 million in increased spending over the five year period to expand home and community based services.

For more information about the NHDM grant, CCP and other services for seniors, contact your local Area Agency on Aging or call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (1-888-206-1327 TTY).

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