

A-4 Prioritization of Discretionary Funds:

With the reenactment of the Older Americans Act and its intent to serve the most vulnerable seniors, ALTC first allocates funding to each county in its planning and service area based on a funding formula that includes a base amount and the following factors:

- *Number of square miles*
- *Number of people age 60 and over*
- *Number of people age 60 and over living alone*
- *Number of people age 60 and over with greatest economic need*
- *Number of racial and ethnic minority people age 60 and over*
- *Number of limited English speaking people age 60 and over*
- *Number of people age 60 and over, with difficulty performing activities of daily living*

The allocation to each county is provided through the existing ALTC policy which protects a county’s funding level so that it does not fall below a certain threshold. Over the past twenty years, service purchasing power has declined due to stagnant funding; the impact of sequestration and loss of III-B funding; the demographics reflected in the 2010 census that indicated the number of seniors 60+ years old in PSA 09 had declined (as a share of the total 60+ state population); and, of course, annual inflation. In addition, the intrastate funding formula has not changed to fully measure the impact of PSA 09’s “large rural geography,” ethnic minority needs, service gaps, health care shortages, limited economies of scale and other factors that are not as common in urban areas.

ALTC has a process for distributing the discretionary funds to each of the eight counties. An Advisory Board Priority Setting meeting occurs with the Executive Advisory Council. The Advisory Council receives information on the target population of each program and service delivery reports that include utilization and targeting percentages. They also receive demographic information on their county. Advisory Council members help prioritize the discretionary funds by service, using a uniform process. They also indicate their preferences for strategies in the event that there are additional funds or if there are funding reductions. A Community Planning Forum for the four-year planning process was held prior to the quarterly Executive Advisory Council meeting to ensure all eight counties had representation. Presentations on all services, unmet/undermet needs, and issue areas were presented. Each table of community members, coupled with the Advisory Council, had a chance to contribute their thoughts on challenges and opportunities and to suggest objectives for ALTC for each issue area and service. Service programs, legislative updates, and other issue area presentations are a component of the regular Advisory Council meeting agendas throughout the year, enabling the members to become familiar with the Long Term Services and Support (LTSS) issue areas, legislative challenges, and services. At each Advisory Council meeting there is a State Council on Aging update and a legislative, program and policy direction update. Volunteers attend the Senior Lobby conference along with the Senior Lobby Day, where they hear about LTSS policy issues. All of this information assists Advisory Council members to make funding priorities for programs with the

discretionary funding. ALTC staff members provide information regarding funding and community-based needs. Staff members provide information with regards to the upcoming trends to remain relevant as a service provider. They discuss current legislation and policy as it relates to long term care. Staff members also review the Older Americans Act priorities at the priority setting meetings.

There are other considerations the Advisory Council members consider before helping to prioritize services. Local council members are requested to determine what they would like to see implemented if a onetime funding opportunity arose. They are also to determine how they would approach reductions, should ALTC experience funding cuts. ALTC Administration reviews the Advisory Council's recommendations concerning funding priorities, although ALTC ultimately has the responsibility for the final funding allocations.

Other factors considered by ALTC Administration when setting priorities include policy directions of the State and Federal governments. The governing board of the Council of Governments also offers input. This process includes review and analysis of evidence-based programs, Washington Association of Area Agency on Aging (W4A) white papers, Health Care Authority (HCA) and Department of Social and Health (DSHS) concept papers, innovations and policy initiatives. These assist ALTC to remain relevant and consistent with the direction that health care is taking with the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the role that is being etched out for LTSS.