

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 1897

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Establishing a rural mobility grant program.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Billig, Johnson, Clibborn, Armstrong, Liias, Takko, Walsh, Blake, Dunshee, Rolfes, Van De Wege, Lytton, Fitzgibbon and Ormsby).

**House Committee on Transportation**  
**Senate Committee on Transportation**

### **Background:**

The Rural Mobility Grant Program (Program) was established in the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in 1993. The Program was significantly expanded in 2003, and the 2009-2011 State Omnibus Transportation Appropriations Act contained a total of \$17 million divided equally between competitive grants, for providers of rural mobility service in areas not served or underserved by transit agencies, and formula grants for transit systems serving small cities and rural areas, which must be distributed in a manner similar to past disparity equalization programs.

According to the WSDOT, the purpose of the competitive portion of the Program is to establish, preserve, and improve rural public transportation. Funding in the Program is prioritized for services in rural counties, which are defined as counties without an urbanized area, as defined by the 2000 census. The following types of organizations are eligible for competitive grant funding:

- rural public transit agencies;
- nonprofit organizations;
- private for-profit transportation service providers;
- tribal governments; and
- other general or local governments.

### **Summary:**

The Rural Mobility Grant Program Account (Account) is established, and the State Treasurer is required to transfer \$2.5 million every quarter to the Account from the Multimodal

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Transportation Account. The earnings attributable to the funds in the Account are required to be received by that Account.

The Rural Mobility Grant Program (Program) is established in statute, with the designated purpose of aiding small cities and rural areas. Fifty percent of the money appropriated for the Program must go to noncompetitive grants for transit systems serving small cities and rural areas in a manner similar to past disparity equalization programs. The other 50 percent of the money appropriated for the Program must go to competitive grants to providers of rural mobility services in areas underserved by transit agencies. The WSDOT is required to provide an annual report to the Transportation committees of the Legislature on the status of grant projects funded by the Program, and may establish an advisory committee to assist with the Program.

The WSDOT is required to implement a pilot project during the 2011-2013 fiscal biennium to provide enhanced transit opportunities to agricultural workers through the establishment of vanpool programs. The pilot project must, at a minimum, provide appropriate vehicles, insurance, and maintenance and may charge a fee, as determined by the WSDOT, to riders.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	97	1
Senate	49	0

**Effective:** July 22, 2011