§ 464-a. Legislative findings. The legislature hereby finds, determines, and declares that:

1. In rural areas there is a necessity to promote different approaches to human services delivery if programs are to properly address diverse community and individual needs and such unique rural conditions as low population density; a large proportion of elderly persons; the absence of economies of scale; geographic isolation; inadequate transportation; fluctuating service demands; and general lack of suitable alternatives for service delivery.

2. The human services delivery system in rural areas is often fragmented, consisting of isolated providers with limited financial resources and limited information-sharing networks. Many such providers are currently providing identical or similar services to the same clientele in the same area, often without being aware of a possible duplication of effort.

3. A full range of coordinated and integrated human services is vital to the health and well-being of residents of rural areas of the state who are or may in the future be confronted with such intense social problems as domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, migrant health problems, nutritional deficiencies, suicide, hunger, unemployment, lack of suitable shelter, crime, drug and alcohol abuse and poverty.

4. A proper response to intense social problems in some rural areas would be to encourage greater sharing of information and resources among human services providers in such rural areas, thereby enhancing the cost-effectiveness and delivery of services required to address such social problems. Such cooperative undertakings could be accomplished if a program of financial incentives and state-level technical assistance were made available to encourage providers in rural areas to embark upon such cooperative arrangements and networking of the services they provide.