



Master Plan for Aging Recommendations from CARA

Goal #4: Economic Security and Safety. We will have economic security and be safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and natural disasters and emergencies throughout our lives.

Objective 4.1: Californians will be economically secure throughout our life span with access to food, housing, and income as we age.

Recommendations: The MPA should advocate to increase the base grant for Californians on SSI by raising the monthly grant \$100 per month per person, and reinstate the State COLA for SSI recipients.

Description:

- Californians on SSI live at 87% of the State's poverty level. They are unable to pay for basic necessities like housing, food, transportation and health care.
- California used to supplement the federal SSI payment due to the high cost of living in the State. In 2008, the Governor cut the states' share of SSI, as part of a budget saving strategy due to the recession that plagued our state and country. Since that time, California's economy has recovered, but the state portion of SSI was never reinstated, nor was the State COLA, which was also cut. Yet the state has experienced budget surpluses in the billions of dollars, over the last several years, but the lowest income, most vulnerable population has not benefitted from the states robust economic health. Much of the surplus has been set aside in a rainy day fund.
- For the last several years, legislation has been introduced in the state legislature to bring the base grant to poverty levels. This legislation has passed both houses of the legislature, with bi-partisan support, only to be stopped by the budget process and never making it to the Governor's desk.
- California has the resources to bring our SSI recipients up to the poverty level. By providing this basic income, and then adjusting it annually by reinstating the COLA, it will greatly help these low income, frail and vulnerable members of our state meet their basic needs and provide much needed income security.
- The state has been spending billions of dollars each year to address the problems that this lack of funding creates – like increased homelessness (the fastest growing part of the homeless population are those over 50 years of age), more resources for social services, emergency health services, and other public services.
- It is time to provide some income security to all SSI recipients in California.

Target population and Numbers: SSI recipients in California (about 1.3 million seniors and people with disabilities).

Evidence: Study after study shows that providing stable income that helps individuals meet their basic needs helps reduce the cost to the public and provides a sense of independence and security.

Indicators: Health outcomes improve when people have resources to fill their prescriptions, have access to food and shelter, as well as a sense of dignity and independence.

Potential cost: The LAO estimates that this will cost California approximately \$1 billion per year.

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