



# Informing California's Master Plan for Aging

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The California Association of Area Agencies on Aging

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# California Association of Area Agencies on Aging



The California Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) is a not-for-profit organization representing California's 33 area agencies on aging whose core mission is to protect the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities to live independently as long as possible with dignity and choice. In support of the master plan of aging an in keeping with the core values of C4A -*Choice, Dignity, Diversity, Inclusiveness and Independence*

The C4A works on policy initiatives that benefit older persons, including making transportation and meals available to older adults and helping family caregivers find supports and services. Collectively the 33 agencies are known as the area agency on aging network. Across California this network coordinates, administers and implements a wide range of programs and supports. Yet their efforts to meet the needs of consumers has faced challenges in recent years, including program eliminations during California's recession, fund reductions/stagnant funds at the time consumer demand is increasing and the seeming lack of focused attention by state decision makers.

In 2015 C4A undertook a strategic planning session to develop a response to these challenges. *Vision 2025: Sustainable Aging Services* reiterated C4A's core mission, which is to "protect the rights of older adults and persons with disabilities to live as independently as possible for as long as possible with dignity and choice."

The effectiveness of the network rests with their individual efforts in each of the 33 planning and service areas. While the current service array is mostly prescribed by federal funding, the network has long supported local flexibility, authority in responding to local need, and designing paradigms that reflect the uniqueness, diversity and preferences in a given community.

The C4A's core mission, successful partnerships, state-wide provision of information, resources, services and supports and an "on the ground" connection to consumers is unparalleled in the state. The C4A is uniquely positioned to add the association's expertise and experiences to inform California's Master Plan process. The C4A is pleased that Clay Kempf, Area Agency on Aging Director representing Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties was selected to be a member of the Master Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

## The Value of the Area Agency on Aging Network

The thirty-three (33) Area Agencies of Aging are tasked to provide comprehensive social and supportive services that support older adults to age in place. California is projected to be one of the fastest growing States in the nation in total population.

In 2016, California comprised 12 percent of the nation's population<sup>1</sup> and is expected to grow 30 percent by the year 2060 (an increase of 11.7 million people). In California, the population aged 60 years and over is expected to grow more than three times as fast as the total population and this growth will vary by region.

The population over age 60 will have an overall increase of 166 percent during the period from 2010 to 2060. More than half the counties will have over a 100 percent increase in this age group. Twenty-four of these counties will have growth rates of over 150 percent. These counties are located throughout the central and southern areas of the State. The influence of the 60 and over age group on California is expected to emerge most strongly between 2010 to 2030.

The population over age 85 will increase at even a faster rate than those over 60 years of age, having an overall increase of 489 percent during the period from 2010 to 2060.

Of the State's 58 counties, 55 will have increases of more than 150 percent, 45 will have increases of more than 200 percent, and 36 will have over a 300 percent increase in the number of persons aged 85 and older. Counties can expect to experience even higher growth rates after 2020. In particular, the influence of the 85 and over age group on California will emerge most strongly between 2030 to 2040 as the first of the baby boomers reach 85 years of age.

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## C4A Principles

The C4A requests that the Master Plan be built upon and inclusive of the following nine principles:

1. The right of individuals to age in place by choosing how to live, where to live, and the right to receive person-centered services.
2. The right of Californians to expect a coordinated, comprehensive, and efficient long-term services and supports system, not one that is fragmented at the state, regional and local levels.
3. The right to easily access services based on need, not the age of the consumer.
4. The right to an easily accessible continuum of information, care, services and supports with equal access and availability throughout the state.
5. The right to access a service system based on self-determination that is responsive to the total needs of the person, including the individual's mental, physical, social and health needs (i.e. the "no wrong door" approach).

6. The right to secure and maintain accessible and affordable housing.
7. The right of caregivers to be offered services and supports, particularly for those families impacted by Alzheimer's and other dementias.
8. The right of older adults and persons with disabilities to be seen as contributing, engaged, constructive members of the community and the right of those who are marginalized and/or vulnerable to receive appropriate protections and supports.
9. Recognition of geographic diversity and community uniqueness by ensuring community-based organizations are resourced at an appropriate level, so information and services are accessible and equally distributed throughout the state.
10. Creating social and physical environments that promote good health by meeting the daily needs of older adults that reduce food insecurity, promote economic justice, housing, transportation, and social and physical environments so that older adults can age in place.

## C4A Recommendations

Building on the above principles, the C4A recommends that the 2020 person-centered Master Plan for Aging include:

### Creation of a California Department of Community Living

- The creation of a comprehensive standalone California Department of Community Living to streamline and align programmatic and funding streams for aging and disability programs and services that include Older American Act, Older Californians Act, Independent Living Centers, etc.

### Streamline Funding and Realign Programs

- Efforts to address the fragmentation in the state's long-term services and support system by creating the California Department of Community Living, which would streamline and eliminate the current programmatic and funding silos between aging and disability services by improving coordination between state entities serving the same clients to enhance data sharing; and by integrating California's health and long-term care systems.
- Commitments to use the existing area agency on aging network to enhance and promote a service delivery system that is based on an expansive local planning process and decision-making to promote flexibility in program implementation. Recognition of geographic diversity and community uniqueness by ensuring community-based organizations are resourced at an appropriate level, so information and services are accessible and equally distributed throughout the state.

### Expansion of the Aging and Disability Resource Centers

- Intent to fund and expand the Aging & Disability Resource Connection Programs as California's primary vehicle to provide information and referrals, short-term service coordination, person centered options counseling and transition services to all older Californians and adults with disabilities.
- Promote programs and policies that support client autonomy, family caregivers, and community engagement. Among these are California's Aging & Disability Resource Connection Programs that exemplifying the delivery of information and referrals, short-term service coordination, person centered options counseling and transition services to older Californians, adults with disabilities and family caregivers.

### Implementation of a Statewide Data Collection System

- Implementation of a statewide data collection system that would include predictive modeling and methods to capture service needs/inclusion levels of marginalized and underserved populations.

### Address the Need for Services for the Middle Class

- Invest and provide options for middle income older adults through Older Californians Act services.

### Implementation of Statewide Age Friendly Initiative

- Implementation of a statewide Age -Friendly initiative that includes current age friendly models that are currently used by the AAAs.
- Age Friendly California for All and their communities, including by prioritizing interventions to high need communities and populations - such as LGBTQ individuals, those experiencing homelessness (or those at risk of homelessness), and low-income populations - as well as incorporating multi-lingual/multi ethnic services, a gender lens, and other strategies intended to empower traditionally marginalized communities.

### Other Recommendations

- Commitments to support elder and dependent adult abuse prevention efforts at the state and county levels and to realize restitution programs for victims of abuse.
- Invest and enhance the existing caregiver support programs including Title III Family Caregiver Support program to include providing the state match.
- The plan should be respectful of and respond to the unique needs of older adults and adults with disabilities who are experiencing abuse and neglect; cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease; have access and mobility needs; and have experienced lifelong marginalization and discrimination/ such as LGBTQ and ethnic minority populations and those at risk or are experiencing homelessness.
- Provide fall prevention programs through the AAA to prevent primary and

secondary falls and keep people safe in their homes and allow them to live independently for as long as possible.

- Provide employment and training opportunities for older adults.
- Provide long term case management for those individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias to allow them to live in the community with supports for as long as possible. Through AAA's they would be connected to local resources.
- Implementation of a statewide LGBT Advisory Committee to assist with presenting planning and policy recommendations for the inclusion of LGBT older adults living in various geographically diverse areas.
- Implementation of a statewide Older Adult Advisory Committee to assist with presenting planning and policy recommendations for the inclusion of homeless older adults in current funded programs at the state or local level that are currently being funded.

## Conclusion

The Master Plan represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to design a system for an increasing aging population that is more diverse than ever before. The Master Plan paradigm must extend beyond current concepts and methods of support. An age-friendly California will provide locales with a blueprint so that communities will be appropriate, attractive and safe for all ages

For the Master Plan to be declared successful, older adults and people with disabilities, will have access to necessary resources, be empowered to make informed choices, and live and age with dignity.

In addition, the Master Plan objectives need to be actionable, funded and regularly evaluated. The C4A welcomes the opportunity to be part of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and as a participating influencer. The C4A looks forward to continuing a dialogue with the Administration as the process continues.