



CWDA

Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of *All* Californians

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June 5, 2021

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM – EXPAND
AND ENHANCE SERVICES FOR OUR MOST
VULNERABLE ADULTS**

On behalf of the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), and joined by a diverse coalition of co-sponsors and supporters, we respectfully urge your support of the Senate and Assembly Joint State Budget Plan's investment of \$70 million General Fund (on-going) to enhance and expand the Adult Protective Services (APS) program.

Demand Continues to Increase: The APS program currently provides 24/7 response to reports of abuse and neglect for individuals over 65 and dependent adults ages 18-64. Communities rely on APS to address the increasingly complex needs of older adults. For many victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation, APS social workers can protect victims through very limited, short-term services. But to meet the needs of the growing and diverse older adult population, the APS program requires additional state investment to provide longer-term and more intensive assistance. The Legislative plan also reduces the age at which an individual is considered "elder" to 60, to match the programs delivered by Area Agencies on Aging. This will allow greater collaboration at the local level.

In California and nationally, APS programs are largely supported through state funds, since there is no ongoing funding at the federal level. Even with a recent, modest investment of one-time federal funding for APS, county programs are struggling to keep up with the growth in reports that mirrors the growth in the older adult population. Despite growth in 2011 Realignment funding provided for APS, counties cannot keep up with the exponential increase in demand. Counties responded to 206,668 reports of abuse in 2019-20, a 61 percent increase in reports since 2011-12. Continued growth is all but certain.

Equity and Justice Issues: The research is clear that racism, ageism, and sexism persist for older adults and APS can play an important role in supporting people of color and those who identify as LGBTQ+ to age safely and securely. According to your own Master Plan for Aging,

one of the greatest threats to full inclusion for all ages is elder abuse¹. Poverty and social isolation threaten the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable adults. APS programs provide the social services and expertise necessary to support the full, diverse range of older and dependent adults who face adverse outcomes.

The Pandemic Impact: The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted already vulnerable adults. The highest mortality rate for the virus is people over the age of 65. Social isolation due to the pandemic compounds this risk, as well as the risk for other health and mental health issues. For those that are experiencing homelessness, the risk of contracting COVID-19 are even more elevated.

CWDA joins with Assemblymember Arambula, our cosponsors, and a broad coalition of supporters to urge your support for the investment the Legislative plan makes in services for our senior and dependent adult population. This funding would enable counties to hire more social work staff to provide and/or leverage direct services and supports to the adults we serve.

The APS Program has a long and successful history of working with California’s most vulnerable older and dependent adults. Providing APS services, and in particular housing services tailored to this population as Home Safe does, is a matter of both equity and justice for the diverse communities we serve. With the requested resources in this proposal, APS Program will be able to expand to meet the needs of the growing aging population, and to ensure that vulnerable adults are given the resources needed to emerge stronger from COVID-19 pandemic and safely navigate the California’s housing crisis.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Cathy Senderling-McDonald
Executive Director

cc: Ana Matosantos, Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Joey Freeman, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Tam Ma, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Honorable Toni Atkins, Senate President Pro Tempore
Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly
Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #3
Honorable Joaquin Arambula, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee Subcommittee #1
Keely Bosler, Director, Department of Finance
Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency
Kim Johnson, Director, Department of Social Services
Gabriel Petek, Legislative Analyst