



CWDA

Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of *All* Californians

JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

January 27, 2021

To: The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

Honorable Members
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

Honorable Members
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

From: Cathy Senderling-McDonald, CWDA Executive Director
Kevin Prindiville, Justice in Aging Executive Director

**RE: REDUCE SENIOR HOMELESSNESS: EXPAND AND
ENHANCE ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (EARLY
ACTION REQUEST)**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) and Justice in Aging respectfully request the Legislature take early action due to the pandemic to augment and expand the Adult Protective Services (APS) Program to meet the growing needs of older adults who are victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We respectfully request \$25 million GF in the current year and \$100 million ongoing for the APS and Home Safe Program. This population is growing fast, as are cases with increasingly complex needs, including those who are homeless or cognitively impaired. The dual crises of housing and the COVID-19 pandemic on APS clients make this request even more urgent.

APS Demand Continues to Increase: The APS Program currently serves individuals over 65 and dependent adults ages 18-64. Demand is growing as communities increasingly rely upon APS to address the complex needs of older adults. For many victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation, APS social workers are able to ensure the safety of victims through very limited and short-term services. But in order for the APS Program to meet the needs of the growing and diverse older adult population – and the increasing number of our clients who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness – the program will need additional state investment to support those who require longer-term and more intensive assistance in order to remain safe in their homes and communities.

The APS Program was established in California as a statewide 24/7 emergency response program in 1998 (AB 2199, Chapter 946). In California and nationally, APS programs are largely supported through state funds, since there is no ongoing funding at the federal level to operate these programs. Even with modest growth funding through Realignment and recent targeted state investments in training and the Home Safe Program, county APS programs are struggling to keep up with the growth in reports that mirrors the growth in the older adult population. For example, APS responded to 190,715 reports of abuse in 2017-18, which represents a 58 percent increase in reports since 2011-12.

Housing Crisis Among Older Adults: The original program design did not contemplate the sheer number of older adults with complex issues who would need its services, nor the magnitude of the housing and public health crises that California now faces. By 2030, one in five Californians will be age 65 or older.ⁱ Between 2018 and 2025, an estimated 29.2 percent of those over 65 are projected to have Alzheimer's disease.ⁱⁱ The number of older adults in California with disabilities will increase from one million in 2015 to nearly three million in 2060.ⁱⁱⁱ Additionally, California's aging population is also increasingly homeless. According to Dr. Margot Kushel, Director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations, approximately 50 percent of homeless individuals are over age 50, and half of those became homeless after age 50.

The APS Response to 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 to living safely and securely as they age. For example, Black Californians are more than five times more likely to become homeless than their white counterparts.^{iv} Systemic racism and housing discrimination policies have contributed to this problem. About 6.5% of Californians identify as Black or African American, but they account for nearly 40% of the state's homeless.^v A disproportionate share of Black women aged 60 years and older are poor or near poor. According to the Governor's Master Plan for Aging, one of the greatest threats to full inclusion for all ages is elder abuse.^{vi}

The Pandemic Impact: The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted already vulnerable older adults. The highest mortality rate for the virus is people over the age of 65.^{vii} Social isolation due to the pandemic compounds this risk, as well as the risk for other health and mental health issues.^{viii} For those that are experiencing homelessness, the risk of contracting COVID-19 are even more elevated.^{ix} And the era of economic uncertainty the pandemic has ushered in puts older adults, many living in poverty and on fixed incomes, further at risk of losing their housing.

The Proposal: We are pleased to have Assemblymember Arambula champion the joint efforts of CWDA and Justice in Aging to secure additional funding and programmatic changes to the APS program. Specifically, the bill and this related funding request include the following components:

- **Expand APS to serve more vulnerable older adults (\$25 million in the current year, \$70 million GF in the budget year and ongoing).** This includes lowering the age of “older adult” from 65 to age 60 to align with the federal Older Americans Act programs and assist older adults at an earlier age, and allowing for longer-term case management and services for complex abuse situations.
- **Build Upon the APS Home Safe Program (\$30 million GF in the budget year and on-going).** This proposal would make permanent and expand the pilot program operating successfully in 25 counties and permit Home Safe to both prevent homelessness as well as assist those who have become homeless and are a victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Starting in the budget year, we propose to add \$15 million GF (without county match) to the state’s original investment of \$15 million GF with a \$15 million county match, for a program total of \$45 million (\$30 million GF) ongoing.

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 aging and racial equity and justice. The Governor’s recently published Master Plan for Aging^x acknowledges the diversity of California and the need to address existing disparities and recognizes the importance both the APS program and the Home Safe program in this space. 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 older adults are given the resources needed to weather the COVID-19 pandemic and worsening housing crisis in California.

For these reasons, we urge your support for this request.

cc: Chris Woods, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
 Mareva Brown, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
 Jason Sisney, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly
 Gail Gronert, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly
 Renita Polk, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3
 Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Committee on Budget Subcommittee No. 1
 Rebecca Hamilton, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
 Joe Shinstock, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
 Eric Dietz, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
 David Stammerjohan, Office of Senator Talamantes-Eggman
 Ana Melendez, Office of Assemblymember Arambula
 Jessica Bartholow, Office of Senator Nancy Skinner
 Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst’s Office
 Richard Figueroa, Office of the Governor
 Tam Ma, Office of the Governor
 Marko Mijic, Health and Human Services Agency
 Paula Villescaz, Health and Human Services Agency
 Kim Johnson, California Department of Social Services
 Jennifer Troia, California Department of Social Services
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 Robert Smith, California Department of Social Services
 Adam Dorsey, HHS, Department of Finance
 Jennifer Lopez, HHS, Department of Finance
 Justin Garrett, California Association of Counties
 County Caucus

ⁱ <https://www.ppic.org/publication/planning-for-californias-growing-senior-population/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.alz.org/media/Documents/california-alzheimers-facts-figures-2018.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2016/3509/disability-long-term-outlook-112816.pdf>

^{iv} National Low-Income Housing Coalition, *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes:2020*. Washington DC, available at, <https://nlihc.org/gap>.

^v <https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2019/10/black-people-disproportionately-homeless-in-california/>

^{vi} Governor’s Master Plan on Aging (2021) <https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/>

^{vii} https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-paper_clean-636pm.pdf

^{viii} <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>

^{ix} <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/covid19-homelessness-older-adults-and-black-californians-face-severe-health-risks/>

^x Governor’s Master Plan on Aging (2021) <https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/>