



CWDA
Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of *All* Californians

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To: The Honorable Richard Pan
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

Honorable Members
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

RE: ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES – HOME SAFE

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) respectfully requests your support to provide \$10 million State General Fund to establish Home Safe, a homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing demonstration grant program for victims of elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect. This proposed one-time augmentation would allow 10 participating counties to demonstrate over three years how providing short-term housing crisis intervention can help reduce the incidence and risk of homelessness among California's older adults.

Each year, California receives about 150,000 unduplicated reports of elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect, and the number is rising as the population ages. Many of these victims are at risk of losing their housing as a direct result of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Some are targeted by abusers due to equity in their homes; others suffer such severe neglect that their homes are in disrepair. Once their home is lost, these elderly victims and persons with severe disabilities face poor prospects of finding other affordable housing on their limited, fixed incomes. The results can be unnecessary institutionalization into nursing home care or homelessness, both of which are most costly to taxpayers.

Preventing the loss of housing is critical. However, APS programs have limited, if any, resources to prevent homelessness or rehouse victims. Absent such resources, the consequences for the elderly and adults with disabilities can be dire. Emerging research shows that adults who become homeless later in life have significant health declines once losing their housing, dying at a rate four to five times greater than the general population. The result is costly: Older homeless adults are more than twice as likely to visit hospital emergency rooms than those with stable housing. Older homeless adults are at higher risk of chronic health problems—such as diabetes, lung disease, cognitive impairment, and difficulty with mobility—at earlier ages than those who are housed. For many APS clients, these chronic conditions are coupled with the acute physical and emotional wounds of abuse and

neglect. The situation can quickly deteriorate to the point of needing institutional care in nursing home settings, at much higher cost to taxpayers, or worse—homelessness.

The dire consequences of homelessness, lack of available affordable housing for seniors and persons with disabilities, and limited fixed incomes of APS victims necessitate a prevention focus to serve this population. A one-time \$10 million General Fund investment in Home Safe would allow 10 participating counties or groups of counties to demonstrate over three years how providing short-term housing crisis intervention can help reduce the risk of homelessness and future incidents of elder abuse and neglect among California's older adults. Home Safe would build on existing best practices to prevent eviction and maintain victims safely in their own homes by intervening to stabilize their housing so they may benefit from APS services. County APS programs would leverage and provide linkages to services including short-term rental and utility assistance, heavy cleaning, immediate mental health treatment, and intensive case management to ensure clients can maintain their homes.

The goals of APS are to foster and protect the economic, social, and personal well-being of victims of elder and dependent adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The APS program, with housing stability services, supports these goals while ensuring compliance with federal requirements under the Olmstead Act to maintain persons with disabilities in their homes and communities. Home Safe builds on proven and promising practices so that seniors and persons with disabilities who are served by APS can recover from abuse and rebuild their lives in the safety of their own homes.

For these reasons, we urge your support for a one-time augmentation of \$10 million General Fund to help victims of elder abuse and neglect remain safely in their own homes.

cc: Jennifer Troia, Office of the President Pro Tempore
Craig Cornett, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Theresa Pena, Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3
Anthony Archie, Consultant, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
Luan Huynh, Office of Senator Holly Mitchell
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Kristin Shelton, HHS, Department of Finance
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Attachment: Adult Protective Services – Home Safe Fact Sheet