



February 4, 2022

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

Honorable Members
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

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

Honorable Members
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

From: Cathy Senderling-McDonald, Executive Director, CWDA
Scarlet Hughes, Executive Director, California State Association of Public Administrators/Guardians/Conservators
Karol Swartzlander, Executive Director, California Commission on Aging
Lisa Nerenberg, Executive Director, California Elder Justice Coalition

RE: ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS) TRAINING PROGRAM

The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), California State Association of Public Administrators, Guardians and Conservators, California Commission on Aging, and California Elder Justice Coalition request your support for \$4.6 General Fund (GF) annually to continue and increase support for the Adult Protective Services (APS) training program and infrastructure to ensure that the APS workforce remains prepared to meet the needs of California's growing aging and disabled populations.

Background

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) provides support to county APS agencies through the statewide training program. Significant investments into the APS training system only recently began, with initial one-time funding of \$3 million GF provided in 2016 that was spent over three years and another \$5.75 million in one-time GF provided in 2019 to be spent over three years. Unfortunately, this latest round of funding is set to expire on June 30, 2022, and continued funding was not included in the Governor's proposed budget for 2022-23.

Maintaining and building upon the existing APS Training Program is critical given the life-saving and complex nature of serving abused and neglected adults and persons with disabilities. A robust training system is a key strategy in addressing workforce challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff to deliver services, and in achieving positive outcomes for those served. A 2018 CWDA survey found that 29 percent of county APS workers have fewer than two years of experience in the field, and 2017 data shows that 57 percent of APS workers had a Masters in Social Work. The APS Training Program has increased knowledge and skills and promoted standardization of practice for social workers of varying levels of experience and education.

The population of older adults and adults with disabilities continues to increase, and in California the demand for APS services continues to rise. California's 60-and-over population is expected to grow to 10.8 million people by 2030, and the population is growing racially and ethnically more diverse. In response to the State's Master Plan on Aging (MPA), the 2021-22 Budget Act expanded the APS Program to serve older adults ages 60 and above (changed from 65 years of age) and included funding to build capacity to provide longer-term case management to assist clients with more severe needs. The 2021-22 Budget Act also included a significant expansion of the APS Home Safe Program, which means that APS staff are also assisting clients who are facing additional challenges of homelessness.

County APS agencies also collaborate with, and rely upon, county public administrators/guardians/conservators (PA/PG/PC) who provide services to individuals who are no longer able to act in their own best interest, resist undue influence, or are gravely disabled as a result of a psychiatric or cognitive disorder.

Investments in APS Training are Critical to Maintain

A state investment of \$4.6 million GF on an annual basis (\$4.1 million GF for APS training, and \$500,000 for PA/PG/PC training) is critical to ensuring that the APS and PA/PG/PC workforce is equipped to protect vulnerable older and dependent adults experiencing abuse and neglect. When matched to federal Title XIX funds, this would equal an annual budget of \$9.2 million total funds. This funding is slightly higher than prior years to address the addition of new staff to the APS program. This investment will also ensure that all new APS staff (including new social workers, supervisors, and other new staff as a result of the recent APS expansion) will receive foundational, core training. It also ensures that for all APS staff, they will receive:

- o New, advanced training to address emerging trends and legislative mandates;
- o Support through simulation training and coaching to supervisors; and
- o Education and support to meet the specific and unique needs of older adults and adults with disabilities who are victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation

This proposal also supports training to PA/PG/PC workers. County APS staff work closely with PA/PG/PC on behalf of victims of abuse or neglect who have diminished capacity for decision-making. At times, the PA/PG/PC staff will join APS staff in joint investigations and collaboration

between both programs improves the likelihood of safe outcomes for elder and dependent adults. State law mandates that the PA/PG/PC receive 40 hours of training every four years, yet there is no dedicated funding to support this requirement.

Continued results of the increased and ongoing investment in training include:

- o Improved effectiveness of social workers in delivering services to victims;
- o Protection of assets to enable victims to remain in their home and out of nursing homes;
- o Reduced hospitalizations and emergency room visits;
- o Increased assets that are protected and can be used for the care of the elder or dependent adult;
- Support of workforce retention, which further leads to improved service quality and improved outcomes.

If state funding is not continued, the training program will end. California must continue to build on the state's investment in the County APS and PA/PG/PC training program so that a vulnerable elderly and dependent adult population are provided consistent, effective care and services.

Thank you for your consideration of 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
Kelsey Castillo, 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
Marisa Shea, Senate Human Services Committee
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