



CWDA



May 29, 2014

To: The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee

The Honorable Mark Leno, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Honorable Members, Budget Conference Committee

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director, CWDA
Sandi Fitzpatrick, Director, California Commission on Aging
Lisa Nerenberg, California Elder Justice Coalition

RE: Adult Protective Services: Training and Program Support (Item 5180-151-0001)—SUPPORT ASSEMBLY VERSION

Our coalition of elder justice organizations including the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), California Elder Justice Coalition, California Commission on Aging and many other organizations (see attached) urge your support for the budget action adopted by the Assembly which provides \$1.25 million General Fund to increase statewide training of Adult Protective Services (APS) program staff, and \$150,000 General Fund to support a full-time staffing position in the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide leadership and support to county APS programs. The funding will increase capacity in county APS programs to protect and serve vulnerable seniors and dependent adult victims of abuse and neglect.

California's APS programs provide 24/7 emergency response to reports of abuse and neglect of elders and dependent adults. Critical staff functions include conducting in-person investigations, coordinating with local law enforcement and other agencies for investigations and linkage to services, and individualized case management to enable elders and dependent adults to remain safely in their homes and communities. The APS program is pivotal to the elder and dependent adult justice network, which crosses multiple systems to protect and serve victims of abuse and neglect, including law enforcement, legal aid programs, the judiciary, long-term care services, and many others.

The APS program was primarily a state-funded program until 2011, when the program was realigned and counties now have the 100 percent fiscal responsibility for the program. However, CDSS retained program oversight and regulatory and policy making responsibilities for the program. This included responsibility for funding and supporting the statewide training of APS workers in order to ensure consistency. Unfortunately, the statewide training program is underfunded and woefully inadequate to meet the current and future needs of APS programs. Currently, only \$154,000 (General Fund) is allocated to CDSS to support statewide training. This funding has not been increased for the past nine years, despite the fact that APS cases statewide have risen by 35 percent between 2001 and 2013.

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Nationally, the passage of the Elder Justice Act calls for the creation of a structure for administering national and state elder justice programs. In addition, California's population of seniors is expected to double between 1990 and 2020, and the oldest demographic, those 85 and older, will grow by 143 percent by 2020. State leadership, and partnership with the counties and broader elder justice network, is needed to ensure that APS programs can rise to this challenge and effectively and consistently serve this population. To meet these increasing demands, there is a tremendous need for leadership within CDSS to work with federal, state and county agencies and other stakeholders to promote coordination, quality assurance, and best practices in APS. For this reason we request that the Legislature allocate funds for a staff person within CDSS and dedicated to the APS program. This position would engage with county APS and other elder and dependent adult justice stakeholders to develop policies and guidelines that support local APS programs in meeting existing mandates, respond to opportunities to build APS infrastructure and expand resources, and promote optimal outcomes for seniors and dependent adults.

We believe this proposal provides a modest yet critical investment to support the continued growth of the APS program. For these reasons, we support your efforts for additional funding to build a strong training infrastructure as well as state capacity within CDSS to work in partnership with elder justice stakeholders to promote an effective and responsive APS system.

We thank you for your consideration of this proposal to invest in the State's infrastructure to build capacity in the elder and dependent adult justice system.

Attachments: Coalition Support List
APS Fact Sheets: Training and State Staffing

cc: The Honorable Mariko Yamada, California State Assembly
Jackie Wong, Office of President Pro Tem Steinberg
Gail Gronert, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Chris Woods, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Samantha Lui, Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, Sub.3
Chantele Denny, Republican Consultant, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Julie Souliere, Assembly Republican Fiscal Consultant
Mike Wilkening, Health and Human Services Agency
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Mark Newton, Deputy Legislative Analyst, Health & Human Services, LAO
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County Caucus