



March 1, 2021

Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman, Chair
Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Sub. No. 3

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



Re: Reduce Senior Homelessness: Expand and Enhance the Adult Protective Services (APS) Program

Dear Senator Talamantes Eggman and Assemblymember Arambula,

On behalf of the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), Justice in Aging, the California Elder Justice Coalition, the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California, the California Association of Public Authorities (CAPA), and the California State Association of PA/PG/PC, we respectfully urge the Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittees to provide \$100 million SGF ongoing to expand and enhance the Adult Protective Services (APS) program and to make the Home Safe program permanent to meet the growing needs of older adults who are victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This population is growing fast as are cases with increasingly complex needs, including those who are homeless or cognitively impaired, and the current pandemic and housing crisis have put this population at further risk. The funding request includes several components:

- Provide long-term case management, including for those who are homeless and have cognitive impairments, and allow APS to serve highly vulnerable adults aged 60-65 (\$70 million in the budget year and ongoing).
- Build upon the APS Home Safe Program to include additional counties and allow the program to assist those who have become homeless or who need longer-term housing supports (\$30 million SGF in the budget year and ongoing).



APS currently serves individuals over 65 and dependent adults ages 18-64 who are disabled, who are unable to meet their own needs or are victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Law enforcement, doctors, and other mandated reporters and the community rely on APS services to protect older and dependent adults from further abuse. APS is an effective program, responding to 206,668 reports of abuse in 2019-20, which represents a 61.3 percent increase in reports since 2011-12.

As you may be aware, the older adult population in California is rapidly growing. By 2030, one in five Californians will be age 65 or older.ⁱ Between 2018 and 2025, an estimated 29.2% of those over 65 are projected to have Alzheimer's.ⁱⁱ The number of older adults in California with disabilities will increase from 1 million in 2015 to nearly 3 million in 2060.ⁱⁱⁱ Additionally, California's aging population is also an increasingly homeless population. According to Dr. Margot Kushel, Director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations, nearly 50 percent of homeless individuals are over age 50, and half of those older adults became homeless after age 50. The research is also clear that racism, ageism, and sexism persist for older adults. For example, Black Californians are more than five times more likely to become homeless than their white counterparts.^{iv} According to the Governor's Master Plan for Aging, one of the greatest threats to full inclusion for all ages is elder abuse, and specifically mentions assessing the age of people served by APS and expanding Home Safe^v.

The APS program as currently designed and funded could not have anticipated the widespread severity of the housing crisis, the dramatic demographic changes that California is undergoing, nor the current public health pandemic that greatly exacerbates these two issues. County APS programs are struggling to keep up with the growth in reports and are not currently resourced to serve the increasing number of victims with complex needs who require more intensive case management to remain safe in their homes and communities. The requested \$100 million would grow the APS program to meet the needs of a larger, more diverse population with more frequent complex cases that involve individuals with cognitive impairments or issues such as homelessness.

Our Coalition of agencies regularly partner with, and rely upon, the services of the APS Program to protect vulnerable older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation. It is critical that the APS Program ramps up to provide the critical safety net services to prevent undesired outcomes, including premature death and unnecessary hospitalizations or placement into institutional settings like nursing homes, which all are more costly to individuals and to society.

With its long and successful history of serving these particularly vulnerable individuals, the APS Program is uniquely positioned and stands ready to provide enhanced services and linkages to supports with an increase in funding. Given the significant growth the state is seeing in its older adult population and a corresponding growth in senior homelessness, coupled with the pandemic, it is imperative to give attention to the complex needs of vulnerable older adults now so that the system is set up to

prevent older adults who are victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation from further trauma and crisis. The highest mortality rate for the virus is people over the age of 65^{vi}. By funding this request, the state will be strengthening resources for the most vulnerable older adults and begin to tackle the issue of senior homelessness. For these reasons, we urge your support for this request.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Cathy Senderling-McDonald, Executive Director
County Welfare Directors Association of California

Karen Keeslar, Executive Director
California Association of Public Authorities

Justin Garrett, Legislative Representative
California State Association of Counties

Lisa Nerenberg, Executive Director
California Elder Justice Coalition

Kevin Prindiville, Executive Director
Justice in Aging

Grace Ferguson, Executive Director
Urban Counties Caucus

Scarlet Hughes, Executive Director
California State Association of Public Administrators, Public Guardians, Public Conservators

Attachment: Fact Sheet

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

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

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
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