

## California Commission on Aging 2018 – 2020 Operations Plan Final Report

The California Commission on Aging Operations Plan for 2018-2020 identified the Commission's top policy priorities for the three-year period. Those priority areas include elimination of older adult poverty, fighting elder abuse, increasing access to healthcare and social supports, and increasing opportunities to live and receive services in the community. The California Commission on Aging (CCoA) both initiated and partnered in efforts to address these priorities through the CCoA's statutory responsibilities, which include advocacy, advising, and dissemination of information.

CCoA gathers input and studies older adult concerns through scheduling meeting presentations by experts in priority topic areas, by participating in fact-finding activities, and conducting independent literature reviews. The Commission uses the information gleaned through these efforts to develop priorities for each of our statutory activities.

### ***Highlights of CCoA's work during the Operational Plan period include:***

- Participation in the Governor's Master Plan for Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Task Force activities and development of detailed recommendations in eight policy areas.
- Advocating for policies and programmatic solutions to address older adult poverty.
- Close collaboration with advocacy partners to present a united voice before the Legislature and Administration to successfully prevent devastating budget cuts in 2020 and to strengthen and enhance the aging services network.
- CCoA's work at the State and Federal levels enabled the Commission to bring former ACL Administrator Kathy Greenlee to advise Legislative and Administration officials on long-term care financing issues and service integration.
- Advocating for policies that reject ageism and promote equity in service provision, program funding, and in public discourse.
- CCoA's newsletter provides updates and important information to older adults and service providers across the state, e.g., emerging issues, current research, and state and federal concerns. Publications from CCoA's policy-focused events provide insights and recommendations.

*Steps taken toward meeting CCoA's goals and the status of each are outlined in the following brief.*

### **ADVOCACY GOAL I: Advocate on issues affecting *older adults in California*, particularly those with policy and regulatory implications that can be positively influenced by legislative action.**

The participation of Commissioners and staff in the Governor's Master Plan for Aging (MPA) and Alzheimer's Disease Task Force activities gave CCoA new insights into national and local innovations in priority areas. Through the work of the MPA Stakeholder Advisory Committee, the CCoA assisted in development of recommendations on service integration, livable communities, equity, and workforce issues. Participation in the MPA Long-Term Services and

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Supports (LTSS) Subcommittee framed the Commission's priorities around greater access to home and community based services and supports, LTSS financing, and a more-navigable system of services.

The close tracking of all MPA activities enabled the Commission to develop and submit its own detailed MPA Stakeholder recommendations in priority areas including Family Caregiving, State Leadership, Senior Centers, Group Living, LTSS Financing and Workforce.

The Commission took multiple approaches to address the priority of ending poverty. CCoA supported and advocated for legislation and programmatic changes to strengthen access to economic supports such as higher supplemental Social Security Insurance/Supplemental Security Payments (SSI/SSP), restoration of the annual SSI/SSP cost-of-living increase, access to SNAP benefits for SSI/SSP beneficiaries, increased supports for family caregivers, expanded Paid Family and Medical Leave, and Unemployment Insurance benefits for family member IHSS providers. A statewide policy forum on elder economic security resulted in CCoA's publication of a policy paper outlining forum findings and recommendations.

CCoA tracks State and Federal legislation and budget proposals in all policy areas for potential impacts on older adults. CCoA actively supports initiatives that make meaningful improvements to the system and work to amend or voice concerns regarding those that don't. During the 2018-2020 plan period, the Commission took positions on more than 100 pieces of State legislation, testifying at policy hearings and submitting position letters. CCoA also submitted correspondence to Congress on federal legislation affecting family caregivers, Medicaid, the Older Americans Act, Social Security and the Farm Bill. The Commission additionally filed formal comments on proposed regulatory changes to the Affordable Care Act Health Care Rights Rule, the Federal Public Charge Rule, changes to the method for calculating the Federal Poverty Level, SNAP regulations and changes to HUD's Equality Rule.

### **ADVOCACY GOAL II: Cultivate and expand support base by advancing issues that affect *all* older adults.**

As the state's principle advocate for older adults, staying connected to the network of aging and disability advocates and providers is key to the Commission's work. To achieve this, CCoA typically coordinates meeting venues and agendas with Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state. This has continued with the shift to virtual online meetings in 2020, giving the Commission the means to continue meeting with partners in distant parts of the state.

CCoA's strong partnerships with organizations such as AARP, the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), and the California Elder Justice Coalition (CEJC) enabled CCoA to play a pivotal role in policy initiatives. CCoA's co-sponsorship of legislation creating the California Task Force on Family Caregiving and participation in the task force hosted by the University of Southern California, resulted in the release of recommendations to the state for increased service and support for informal caregivers. Partnering with CWDA and CEJC, CCoA helped to create the Home Safe Grant Program, providing resources to counties to prevent homelessness in at-risk elder abuse victims.

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CCoA has added its name and support to a number of important collaborative efforts, lending the Commission's expertise and credibility to those activities. CCoA is a founding member of the California Collaborative for Long-Term Services and Supports (CCLTSS), the California Aging and Disability Alliance, and is a member of the Aging and Disability Resource Connection Advisory Committee, the California Elder Justice Coalition and the Silence Equals Violence Coalition. These efforts extend the Commission's reach into new communities, helping to build our understanding of issues faced by our partners working in the field. Additionally, Commission staff attend and present at state and national conferences and participate regularly in webinars and learning opportunities hosted by partner organizations.

### **ADVOCACY GOAL III: Work to assure continuation of the statewide network of health, financial and social supports and services for older adults.**

The CCoA's joint advocacy efforts with partners have created a strong and cohesive voice to support increased funding for aging programs in recent years and, conversely, to stave off devastating budget cuts in the 2020-2021 budget cycle. Working through the CCLTSS, members have shared goals and concerns, coordinated advocacy efforts, and provided outreach to regional partners to join in the advocacy work. The CCLTSS provides a venue for sharing project innovations and opportunities as well.

### **ADVISORY GOAL I: Advise the Governor, state legislators, government officials and stakeholders on policies and programs that affect older adults.**

The Commission's legislative advocacy work is a primary means of advising policymakers on the impacts of proposed policy changes under consideration. CCoA sponsors and advocates for passage of policy improvements to the aging network and works to analyze and respond to legislative and budget proposals affecting older adults across the state system, ranging from housing and transportation to healthcare and retirement.

CCoA holds regular legislative receptions at the State Capitol to introduce the Commission to members of the Legislature and to raise awareness of priority issues.

CCoA advocates directly with the Administration and state officials on issues of concern. CCoA coordinated meetings between the Administration, legislative leadership, and the former federal Assistant Secretary for Aging to discuss current efforts around long-term care (LTC) financing and the Obama Administration's efforts around LTC financing through the CLASS Act.

### **ADVISORY GOAL II: Contribute to development and implementation of national and state endeavors to positively reframe conversations around ageism and highlight opportunities for our increasing older adult population -- the "longevity dividend."**

CCoA participated in the FrameWorks Institute initiative to "reframe" the common narrative around aging. CCoA has worked to advance and amplify messages that promote new approaches to aging services and reject ageism in the community, in the workplace, and in state

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policies and programming. CCoA has highlighted the impacts of ageism and discrimination that increase health disparities, economic insecurity, and service inequities.

CCoA supports the Age-Friendly Cities movement, has worked to prevent the implementation of ageist Crisis Care Guidelines proposed by the Department of Public Health, and to ensure inclusion of older adult representation on the state's Mental Health Advisory Committee. CCoA's forum, *Hollywood Takes: On Aging*, provided CCoA an opportunity to bring together influencers from USC's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative and Norman Lear Center, and the Milken Center for the Future of Aging to examine efforts to improve the television and film industry portrayal of older adults.

### **ADVISORY GOAL III: Ensure the *State Plan on Aging* reflects emerging and critical issues affecting older adults.**

In 2021 CCoA will work with the California Department of Aging to engage in development and monitoring of the State Plan on Aging (SPA). CCoA will work to assure that recommendations acquired from meeting presenters, Commission research, and Operations Plan priorities are considered in SPA development.

### **INFORMATION DISSEMINATION GOAL I: Educate older adults, the public, policymakers and key stakeholders.**

CCoA publishes and distributes the online newsletter *AgeWatch* to inform the public of emerging issues and opportunities. Received by over 650 subscribers, the newsletter addresses emerging issues, current research, and state and federal concerns.

CCoA is working to redesign and update the Commission's website, adding new information to the home page and an Advocacy tab to highlight the Commission's advocacy efforts.

The CCoA website features summaries and publications from CCoA's special events as well as regular meetings. The Commission's Elder Economic Forum and the resulting report, *Solving the Economic Security Gap for California's Older Adults*, are highlighted on the Initiatives page, along with an ADA accessible video from the 2019 event.

### **INFORMATION DISSEMINATION GOAL II: Contribute to efforts to improve the media's coverage of aging and older adults to address ageism.**

Highlighting the economic and societal benefits of an aging population are a primary goal of the 2018-2020 Operations Plan. CCoA works to apply a solution-oriented approach to the popular discourse around aging, moving away from more alarmist terms like "tsunami" and "crisis." CCoA's "Hollywood Takes: on Aging" roundtable and associated activities helped to focus attention on the work being done by experts in the field to improve the media's representation of older adults and their worth.

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**INFORMATION DISSEMINATION GOAL III: Monitor, assess and report on current attitudes, actions and needs of older adults.**

The purpose of CCoA's meeting agenda topics and advocacy work is to gather information and promote new ideas gleaned from older adults and service providers on emerging issues and trends.