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## CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON AGING Operations Plan for January 2018 – December 2020

### PREFACE

Each of us desires to age in a manner that is healthy, secure and purposeful. As California's older adult population increases and needs evolve, the California Commission on Aging intends to advance solutions, promote culturally responsive opportunities, and address challenges to ensure longevity is a positive experience for society and individuals, particularly those at-risk of not aging safely.

The Commission was created by statute in 1973. As outlined in California's Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 9200-9205 (the "Older Californians Act"), the primary duty and function of Commissioners (up to 25 appointees) and staff is to "serve as the principal advocate body in the state on behalf of older individuals, including, but not limited to, advisory participation in the consideration of all legislation and regulations made by state and federal departments and agencies relating to programs and services that affect older individuals."

A Commission priority is to help under-resourced and at-risk older adults, whose human and financial resources decline as health issues and other challenges arise. The most critical concerns toward which the Commission will direct its policy efforts are poverty, elder protection, healthcare and community living.

In a broader context, the Commission strives to develop a progressive vision of aging. This transformative approach focuses on initiatives such as *age-friendly* communities, caregiver support, social connectivity, workforce *repurposing* and encore careers, gerontology education and intergenerational relations, among others. Additionally, a goal is to more effectively represent the aging experience and older adult concerns in the media.

Moving forward, the Commission intends to *reframe* the challenges and opportunities of an aging population, and to actively pursue solutions to ensure everyone ages well into the future.

*The California Commission on Aging Operations Plan for January 2018 – December 2020 outlines the application of available resources toward three primary responsibilities: Advocacy, Advisory and Information Dissemination. The three-year plan identifies goals and complementary strategies -- some of which are distinct, others overlapping. Additionally, the plan's purposes are to distinguish and measure the Commission's role as the state-mandated voice for older adults; and to serve as a working blueprint to guide, prioritize and review current activities and new opportunities.*

## 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.**

***Strategies:***

1. Identify key priorities and areas of interest: poverty (including food security, SSI, gender inequities and definition of needs); elder protection (including access to justice, victim services, Adult Protective Services and Long-term Care Ombudsman Program); healthcare (including Medicare, Medi-Cal/Denti-Cal, dementia, long-term supports and services, and behavioral health); and community living (including housing, transportation, caregiving, age-friendly communities and senior/community centers).
2. Concentrate efforts on assisting older adults with economic, social and cultural considerations; and who are at-risk, unsafe, living in rural locations, or otherwise disadvantaged or vulnerable.
3. Evaluate, sponsor and take positions on state legislation, policies and regulations affecting older adults. Participate in hearings and conduct briefings.
4. Evaluate and take positions on federal legislation, policies and regulations affecting older adults.
5. Network with Area Agencies on Aging throughout California and at the federal level to research and address issues of statewide concern.
6. Build coalitions and partnerships with state leaders in government, healthcare, higher education, non-profits, technology, entertainment and media to enhance resources and reach.
7. Produce and distribute surveys, position papers and special reports; and pursue mass media placements of articles, opinion pieces, letters to the editor and public service announcements to help influence state and federal policymakers.
8. Participate in events and policy discussions to gain attention of policymakers, public and media.

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

***Strategies:***

1. Promote issues that likely affect *all* older adults, such as age-advantaged cities, caregiver support, workforce repurposing and encore careers, gerontology/geriatric education, affordable long-term supports and services, Alzheimer's disease research, social connectivity and intergenerational relations.
2. Integrate inclusive perspective on aging experience into advocacy and communications.

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

***Strategies:***

1. Contribute to effectiveness of operations of regional, state and federal advocacy networks.
  2. Advise stakeholders on impact of emerging legislation, policies and regulations.
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## ADVISORY

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

#### ***Strategies:***

1. Identify, assess and advise stakeholders on emerging opportunities and concerns.
2. Inform state legislators and applicable committees on pertinent issues.
3. Invite California Department of Aging director or designee and representatives of other state and federal government agencies to address topical issues at Commission meetings.
4. Provide expertise on aging issues in professional forums concerning government, healthcare, business, education, industry, technology, entertainment, culture, diversity, media and other topics relevant to older adults.
5. Provide administrative support to Triple-A Council of California.

### **GOAL II: Contribute to development and implementation of national and state endeavors to positively “reframe” the challenges and opportunities of the increasing older adult population -- the “longevity dividend.”**

#### ***Strategies:***

1. Participate in initiatives of FrameWorks Institute and its national coalition to “reframe aging” -- as it relates to California’s older adult population.
2. Share new messaging, language, themes and explanatory narratives with stakeholders.

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

#### ***Strategies:***

1. Conduct public hearings on *State Plan on Aging*.
  2. Advise California Department of Aging staff in the preparation of document.
  3. Monitor progress on the *Plan’s* implementation.
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## INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

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

#### ***Strategies:***

1. Publish and distribute *AgeWatch* online newsletter. Explore options to redesign to user-friendly, web-based format. Solicit opinion pieces from Commissioners, authorities and key stakeholders. Solicit and capture new email addresses to increase subscriber base.
2. Routinely update Commission website content; refresh design; and add resourceful links and *AgeWatch* subscription button -- as consistent with state guidelines.
3. Add to the website's "What's New" category a "Perspectives" section to include opinion pieces, event updates and other timely information.
4. Publish and distribute topical special reports, informational cards, position papers and one-sheets, updated Commission brochure and other collateral materials.
5. Pursue opportunities to sponsor or join statewide and local public education initiatives and events.

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

#### ***Strategies:***

1. Attempt to shift the media's discourse toward opportunities and proposed solutions, rather than solely impending demographic crises. Integrate new "reframing aging" messaging, language, themes and explanatory narratives into all applicable communications.
2. Draft and disseminate occasional news advisories on topical and newsworthy Commission activities, and its positions on select policies and programs. Expand database of news media contacts.
3. Track the representation of older adults and aging issues in entertainment and advertising. Review industry news, university programs and related initiatives such as AARP's "Movies for Grownups." Present critiques, when applicable, to professionals in these influential disciplines.

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

#### ***Strategies:***

1. Conduct public hearings on emerging issues.
  2. Convene experts for public presentations, workshops and fact-finding sessions.
  3. Publish and disseminate summation papers on findings and policy recommendations.
  4. Champion emerging issues and opportunities consistent with the Commission's mandate, goals and available resources.
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