**Key Messages for 2022 Budget Request for Supportive Services**

The proposal from Alameda County and the Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County requests $32.25 million in one-time General Fund investment over three years to build statewide local assistance capacity of two key Supportive Services programs, specifically Case Management and Visiting.

These programs are powerfully effective at improving health outcomes and preventing crises. They often represent lifelines for older people who are economically insecure or isolated. They address the stressors that can destabilize an individual or a family and lead to displacement and homelessness.

Funding for these programs has been flat for more than a dozen year, with no state funding since 2008, and investment is now urgently needed. The requested funding will protect these vital services from further erosion and begin to build capacity to adequately serve older Californians.

This request is a solid bridge to the Master Plan for Aging because it will stabilize two Older Americans Act/CDA services that are part of the foundation for the Master Plan. This stable foundation will enable MPA solutions to leverage the powerful impact of community-based services.

**Talking Points**

Since 2008 the population of older Californians age 65+ has grown by over 36% to 7.18 million.[[1]](#footnote-1) Over the next 10 years it will grow by another 60% - and older people will represent more than 20% of the California population. The fastest growing cohort is people over age 85.

As the aging population has grown, it has also become poorer. 49% of Californians over 65 are living below 200% of federal supplemental poverty level,[[2]](#endnote-1) and this is what is driving the increasing numbers of older people who are housing insecure and food insecure.

Economic insecurity of older adult households in California increases with age. Just when seniors are most likely to have serious health/physical/cognitive impairment, they are least able to afford the supportive interventions that will keep them stable. Without supports, an illness, relationship loss, isolation, cognitive decline, or other stressors can destabilize them, putting them at high risk for repeat hospitalizations, housing loss and homelessness.

Community-based Supportive Services address the stressors, focusing their high-touch approach on issues common to later life stages.

* Case Management supports people with complex issues who need more than information and assistance. Case Management works towards solutions that complement medical care, connect clients with public and community-based services, and build or reconnect networks of friends and family.
* Visiting programs keep isolated people connected to community, building friendships and promoting learning, laughter and interactive discussion, thus reducing feelings of isolation, anxiety and loneliness.

California has provided zero funding for these programs for a dozen years; they exist because of federal funding that has remained mostly flat. This has constrained local efforts to grow capacity to meet the needs of our growing aging population, but it amounts to annual reductions as the costs of doing business rise.

While some local governments have stepped up to augment growing funding gaps, local funding is not enough to increase capacity to meet the need. In fact, the number of Californians served by the Case Management and Visiting programs dropped from 17,129 in 2011 to 14,191 in 2019.

1. California Department of Finance Population Projections by Age 2010-2060 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Federal Supplemental Poverty Level. Kaiser Family Foundation “Poverty Among Seniors”, June 2018. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)