

Policy Agenda

The Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County is committed to advancing policy change that improves the lives of older adults in Alameda County. Aging in place, living with dignity, being part of a community, feeling safe, maintaining health and mobility, being able to exercise choice – these are expectations that all of us have as we age. Community-based supportive services are a necessary part of the equation in helping all of us address the challenges of aging and thrive in our communities, now and in the future – a future in which one in five people will be over 65.

SSC's Policy Agenda looks to that future, connecting the dots between policy and people, and addressing the longer-term implications of immediate policy choices that we face today. The Agenda guides our staff, defines the scope for our state and local advocacy work, and clarifies what collaborative actions we can join.

Our Priorities for Action

Advance Economic Security – The economic reality for Alameda County's growing aging population is grave. **SSC must advance solutions that improve access to housing, healthcare, cash assistance, and to nutritious food and other supportive services that bolster economic security and prevent displacement and homelessness.**

- Champion investment in programs and services that older adults need for optimal health, economic stability, and quality of life.
- Work to incorporate seniors' needs in local housing and homeless initiatives, and support bond initiatives and other investments that create service-enriched, deeply affordable and low-income housing, and anti-displacement solutions.
- Champion funding for housing and homeless solutions that address the diverse needs of older adults, including Assisted Living Waiver expansion, housing subsidies including the Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities Housing Stabilization program (SB 37), deeply affordable housing, and case management and assistance programs like APS Home Safe.
- Work to increase funding for programs and solutions that create a financial buffer for low-income older adults, including SSI/SSP, senior employment and other programs.
- Support investment in programs and policies that support unpaid and paid caregivers.
- Support reforms of the Social Services Transportation Improvement Act to address the growing population of older adults.
- Ground advocacy in communications that illuminate the reality of economically insecure older adults, center equity, and connect the dots between people, policy and solutions.

Invest in Services – Population growth, increased acuity levels, and inadequate state and local investment in service capacity are hampering the ability of community-based organizations to focus on prevention. **SSC must champion funding for the broad array of community-based supportive services that meet the needs of Alameda County's diverse aging population.**

- Fight to protect state and local investments in aging services from deficit driven cuts, and build support for state and county investment in community-based services, including:

Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

AGING IS SOMETHING WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON

- o CDA-administered programs such as Case Management, Senior Nutrition, Legal Assistance, Visiting, Family Caregiver Support, Information & Assistance, Senior Centers;
- o Medi-Cal covered services such as Adult Day Health Care, MSSP, IHSS, PACE, optional benefits, dental, and Enhanced Care Management, Community Supports;
- o Other state and local programs such as APS Home Safe, Healthy Brain Initiative, Older Adults Healthy Results, Home Sharing, and Livable/Age-Friendly Communities.
- Advance revenue solutions that will support the diverse service capacity – from prevention and support through crisis intervention – that are necessary to address current and future needs, and that will stem the increase in homelessness among older adults.
- Work to illuminate barriers to access and gaps in capacity and availability of services.
- Inform thoughtful planning for innovation & leveraging in local bond measure allocations.

Invest in CBOs – Community-based organizations advance the public good by serving vulnerable populations and support marginalized communities. But inadequate public funding, inflation, and policies that favor large and for-profit businesses not only limit the growth of community-based organizations, they threaten their sustainability. **SSC must illuminate the issues, identify solutions, and champion the interests of CBOs.**

- Empower, support and mobilize CBOs to increase rates, address barriers and inequities, reduce administrative burden, and improve access to contracting opportunities.
- Support legislation that levels the playing field for nonprofits in contracting, regulation and incentives, and that recognizes nonprofits as the community assets they are.

Transform Systems – Silos, regulations and inequitable frameworks exclude CBOs from opportunities to partner and contract, limit older adults' access to care, and ignore the power of supportive services to improve health outcomes. **SSC must facilitate collaborative solutions and systems change that establishes community-based services as key partners with healthcare.**

- Champion change that increases capacity and access to case management and supportive services countywide for low- and moderate-income seniors alike, addresses systemic inequities that exclude older adults, and address barriers to contracting that exclude CBOs.
 - Facilitate improvements in care coordination across CBOs and health entities to improve access to services and continuity of care.
 - Support design and implementation of an aging services data exchange framework in concert with key stakeholders and health care partners.
 - Bring our aging lens and advocacy to the table to inform implementation of local CalAIM initiatives.
 - Work to align MPA, CalAIM, DxF and other state policy and regulatory initiatives with local priorities and the needs of community-based organizations and older adults.
 - Bring the consumer voice forward to inform and spur person-centered, age-friendly reforms.
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