

The Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County represents 43 community-based organizations that have built trusted relationships with at-risk older adults throughout the county, helping them address complex medical, emotional and mobility challenges and mitigate gaps in resources and access to coverage.

# Older adults are in crisis

**“The changes in the health and mental health of older adults clients has been dramatic. Individuals are coming in sicker and sadder. Being isolated has been detrimental to their well being.”**

“Elders in residential care facilities are still isolated, and they are languishing.”

“The seniors we work with are so much more fragile now than a year ago.”

**“Referrals from EMS and Hospitals to local CBOs are up dramatically, and continuing to rise.”**

“It’s so hard to get medical transportation covered even for seniors who are injured. They are afraid of getting a huge bill so many delay or forgo medical care.”

**“For un-housed seniors, the challenges are daunting. Shelters are not safe environments for people with complex needs. Many elders opted out of hotel rooms so they could retain supports they had in the encampment.”**

**“Elders don’t have the money to pay their rent, and the high stress and anxiety is exacerbating medical conditions and leading to strokes and other acute crises.”**

*“A recent lottery for an 82 unit low-income senior housing had 4,000 applicants.”*

**“The lack of case management available to community-dwelling seniors, especially now during a time of so much change, is very concerning. Without it, the process of accessing all these benefits and food and housing can be almost impossible.”**

*“Family caregivers have kept so many older adults stable, but families are in crisis as a result of work obligations, unemployment, childcare or school, and are unable to provide for a loved one with complex needs. It’s not that they are bad, they just need support.”*

# CBOs are in crisis

- The pandemic has destabilized the network of gero-expert organizations:
  - Decreases in revenue, increased costs and gaps in public funding
  - Delayed and short term emergency funding
  - Baseline funding that does not pay full cost or account for the true number of people needing services
  - Complex contracting processes that waste precious resources and exclude small and grass roots organizations serving marginalized communities
  - Emergency response uses capacity that could be used to collaborate and build a better system

# Older Adult Rescue Recommendations

- ❑ **Establish an Older Adult Priority Area within the County's ARPA Spending Plan - \$33.15 million** (see next slides for details)
- ❑ Leverage the innovation, collaborations and system improvements already in place by building capacity to meet needs of older adults destabilized by the pandemic
- ❑ Intentional focus on equity, and enabling participation and capacity-building of small CBOs from marginalized communities
- ❑ Build it back better, and to last
- ❑ Take advantage of opportunities to bring gero-expertise to other community recovery initiatives through collaboration and partnership

# Leverage what works

- ❑ **Increase service capacity of gero-expert case management programs** administered through the AAA to help older adults struggling to recover from the destabilizing impacts of the pandemic - \$6 million
- ❑ **Increase capacity of Visiting programs so they can reach and support more older people in residential care facilities and in the community**, including providing digital support to enable communication, tele-health, socialization and learning opportunities - \$3 million
- ❑ **Increase capacity in key AAA-administered supportive services** that have not benefited from recent state increases in funding – including senior centers, respite, adult day care and legal services - \$4.5 million

- **Ensure food security for all older adults** by creating a local response fund to augment state and federal funding for food and meals and address gaps caused by increased costs, sunsetting emergency funds, and continuing or growing needs evidenced by wait lists - \$10 million
- **Support education and outreach to underserved communities of seniors** using Fremont's model of training Community Ambassadors from diverse communities to keep older adults safe from COVID, connect them to vaccine boosters, and help them navigate services - \$3 million

# Stabilize and innovate

- ❑ **Provide workforce stabilization grants to CBOs** that are struggling to maintain staffing in order to serve increased needs - \$6 million
- ❑ **Implement a workforce development initiative** in the County to provide specialized training for serving elders, particularly those with cognitive impairment and/or behavioral health issues (de-escalation techniques, redirection, assessing for cognitive vs. medical issue).
- ❑ **Provide Behavioral health and behavioral management training** for senior centers and public interfacing with older adults.



# Build a system that works and will last

- ❑ **SSC Technical Support Center** to develop the technical and business capacity of CBOs to successfully contract, partner and coordinate County's Community Health Record (CHR), AAA/No Wrong Door and CalAIM - \$400,000
- ❑ **Innovation grants for CBOs to develop technical and business infrastructure** to participate in County's Community Health Record and AAA/No Wrong Door and to contract with CalAIM Plans to provide geriatric expert SDoH services to underserved communities - \$250,000

# QUESTIONS?

Wendy Peterson, [wendy@seniorservicescoalition.org](mailto:wendy@seniorservicescoalition.org)