

California Commission on Aging

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GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor

Executive Director
Karol Swartzlander

January 27, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

The California Commission on Aging (CCoA) would like to express our appreciation for your dedication to California's older adult population and your continued commitment toward advancing the goals outlined in the Master Plan for Aging (MPA). The Commission would also like to thank you for the progress made in the last year on workforce development through the Care Economy Workforce Development package.

As the principal advocate for older Californians designated in the Welfare and Institutions Code, CCoA commits our resources and effort toward implementation of MPA components that align with the Commission's priorities. With this responsibility in mind, the Commission offers recommendations focused on workforce development with the transmittal of this letter.

CCoA supports two primary areas of focus for 2023 within workforce development – 1) Opportunities for Older Adults to Work and 2) Geriatric Care Expansion. These two areas are essential for advancing the goals of the MPA. As California endeavors to scale our workforce, it is essential that we capitalize on older adults' ability to contribute meaningful employment as much as we promote the population's potential future need for healthcare and supportive services. As specified in the MPA, CCoA strongly endorses three strategies to improve opportunities for older adults to reenter or remain in the workforce:

1. Improve Messaging and Public Narrative
2. Promote Representation
3. Develop Innovative Ways to Engage Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities

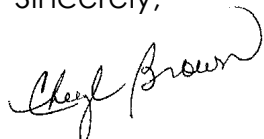
Older adults carry a wealth of experience and wisdom which, if identified and fostered, will serve their communities, promote financial independence,

and lead to longer, more engaged lives. These three strategies are designed to break the stigma around including older adults in the workforce and identify opportunities for older adults to continue to engage as participants in California's economy.

Given the predicted demographic shift, California must address the increasing need for health care and supportive care workers. Identifying the future needs of this population means developing a workforce now that will continue to serve older adults as the population grows. The Commission strongly supports utilizing existing structures in the state to promote employment opportunities in the field of geriatrics and gerontology and related professions (e.g., social workers, behavioral health professionals, etc.), while also expanding programs that have been proven to produce a knowledgeable workforce, e.g., the Song-Brown Healthcare Workforce Training Programs. CCoA recommends leveraging the funding available in the Workforce for a Healthy California for All initiative to create new apprenticeship programs, utilize opportunities for student loan forgiveness, and expand training to underrepresented communities.

CCoA believes the attached recommendations will set the path toward creating a workforce that is prepared for the future. Current prospective opportunities in the field of Aging not only benefit the older adult population but also further the future security of Californians of all ages.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Brown,
Chair, CCoA

Attachment

cc:

Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Kim McCoy Wade, Senior Advisor on Aging, Disability, and Alzheimer's
Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency
Stewart Knox, Acting Labor Secretary, Labor and Workforce Development
Marko Mijic, Undersecretary California Health and Human Services
Darci Delgado, Assistant Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency

Susan DeMarois, Director, California Department of Aging

Elizabeth Landsberg, Director, California Department of Health Care Access and Information

Mareva Brown, Policy Consultant, Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins

Scott Ogus, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Budget Committee
Elizabeth Schmitt, Committee Consultant, Senate Budget Committee
Mary Ader, Policy Consultant, Speaker Anthony Rendon
Andrea Margolis, Committee Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Nicole Vasquez, Committee Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee

California Commission on Aging

Workforce Development Recommendations

Aligned with the California Master Plan for Aging Initiatives

Opportunities to Work (for Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities)

Recommendations:

- 1. Develop and launch an outreach and education campaign to dispel myths about and focus on the value of and need for older adults and individuals with disabilities in the workforce. (#79)**
- 2. Ensure older adult representation (gerontologists, individuals with lived experience, etc.) on the California Workforce Development Board and 45 Local Workforce Development Boards. (#79)**
- 3. Streamline access to employment programs that support older adults. (#84, #85, #86, #87)**
 - a. Help older adults retain current employment (prior to experiencing disability) or re-enter the workforce through training (reskilling, upskilling) and providing assistive technology, devices, and living supports through coordination at the state and local levels: the Senior Community Service Employment Program under the Department of Aging, Breaking Barriers to Employment and High Road Training Partnerships under the California Workforce Development Board and Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Skills Services provided by the Department of Rehabilitation. (#87)
- 4. Partner with CA Workforce Development Board to tailor new pilots for older workers. (#85)**
 - a. Establish an “earn and learn” pilot for retirees and individuals with disabilities to earn pay while training and receiving necessary supportive services, coaching, mentoring, and assistive technology. (#85)
 - b. Target language and apprenticeship services and supports to older refugees. (#87)

- 5. Engage the Community College system to address workforce skilling/reskilling/upskilling needs of older workers and individuals with disabilities. (#87, #92)**
- 6. Incentivize businesses to provide accommodations for older adults and individuals with disabilities. (#84, #86)**
 - a. For example, encourage businesses to provide flexible/part-time work schedules, parking arrangements, and assistive devices, etc. Leverage best practices and lessons-learned from the Department of Rehabilitation's (DOR) EmployABILITY business grants program to help businesses introduce and expand disability-inclusive hiring practices.
- 7. Educate older adults about work opportunities through the California 25x25 Community Health Worker initiative and California Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist opportunity. (#85)**
 - a. Work with program representatives to encourage the hiring of older adults with lived experience in the field of health.

Gerontology and Geriatric Care Expansion

Recommendations:

- 1. Encourage and promote the fields of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and other related fields among students and employers.**
 - a. Partner with University Gerontology and Geriatric departments to expand the number of students entering these fields.
- 2. Support statewide expansion of Geriatric emergency departments (GEDs), which are staffed by geriatric trained nurses, case managers, and physicians, who are uniquely positioned to play a critical role in reducing hospital admissions and readmissions by addressing unmet social and behavioral health needs by connecting patients and their caregivers to needed long-term services and supports. There are currently 57 accredited GEDs in California, with San Diego being the only county in the country to have all eligible emergency departments GED accredited. (#57)**
- 3. Recruit and support individuals from underrepresented regions and backgrounds to create a more diverse, representative, and culturally inclusive workforce. (#113)**
- 4. Expand outreach of direct care employment to emerging refugee and immigrant communities. (#113)**

- 5. Include priority slots for behavioral health professionals pursuing Geriatric/Gerontology specialization for loan forgiveness and stipend programs through Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce, Education and Training (WET) program. (#54)**
- 6. Leverage the Care Economy Workforce Initiative and Workforce for a Healthy California for All Initiative**
 - a. Create new apprenticeship programs to encourage specialties in Geriatrics, Gerontology, and related fields through the \$135 Million going to High Road Training Partnerships. (#54)
 - b. Prioritize geriatric medical students for loan forgiveness through the Song-Brown Family Physician Training Act and other loan forgiveness programs. (#54)
 - c. Leverage \$186 million going to the Social Work Initiative to provide Masters-level scholarships to social workers to incentivize focus on Geriatrics, with a commitment to work in the field for specified period. (#59)
 - d. Expand training of providers from underrepresented communities, especially refugees and recently immigrated, through use of \$130 million from Prop 98 Adult Education. (#54)
 - e. Ensure that the Healthcare Workforce Advancement Fund conducts outreach to older adults. (#85)
 - f. Expand the number of behavioral health specialists focused on the older population through the \$90 million going to the Psychiatric Provider Program. (#58)
- 7. Engage the Community College system to promote education and career pathways in Geriatrics, Gerontology, and related fields and diversity for older adults in health, behavioral health, and social service providers. (#54, #55)**
- 8. Leverage Career Technical Education already offered at community colleges. (#113)**
 - a. Expand direct care training programs with planning grants from the California Career Pathways Trust. Increase the number of healthcare classes offered at community colleges and ensure those classes fulfill General Education requirements. (#113)