

CCoA Policy Priorities for 2024-2025

Policy Priority/Strategy/Action

A. Improve behavioral health services for older adults

1. Ensure older adult representation on state and local advisory bodies.
 - a. Sponsored Legislation: [AB 2207](#) (Reyes) would add older adult representation to six state boards and commissions.
2. Support the development of services for older adults with local behavioral health agencies.
 - a. Advocate to protect the \$50M general allocation to the California Department of Aging.
 - b. Promote behavioral health issues of older adults as an important public policy area and educate about important behavioral health issues, including availability, access, and quality of services for older adults, integration of behavioral health and medical services.
 - c. Collaborate with other organizations, i.e., California Behavioral Health Planning Council, the California Behavioral Health Directors Association, and the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging.
3. Conduct research on behavioral health for older adults, with special emphasis on data gathering, analyses, program review, and policy development for the most vulnerable older adult populations (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, underserved, LGBTQ+).
 - a. Partner with the West Health Institute and Policy Center to leverage data from Geriatric Emergency Departments.
 - b. Secure intern (May-August 2024) to conduct research through the University of San Francisco SF Leo T. McCarthy Fellow Program.
4. Ensure standardized data collection to include older adult behavioral health, inclusive of racial, ethnic, and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data.
 - a. Provide technical support for California's first statewide survey documenting the needs, hopes, and priorities of mid-life and older LGBTQIA+ residents across the state under the auspices of the California Aging and Disability Research Partnership.

B. Increase workforce opportunities for & expand the workforce serving older adults

1. Incentivize businesses to both hire and provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
 - a. Promote the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) EmployABILITY Business Grant program through social media outlets, the AgeWatch newsletter, and presentations.
2. Streamline access to employment programs that support older adults.
 - a. Draft and release a report with recommendations based on the May 2024 CCoA Forum: *Older Adult Workforce*.
 - b. Partner with DOR to target older adults for vocational rehabilitation services.
3. Leverage current workforce initiatives to encourage specialization in geriatrics and gerontology (medical, behavioral health, social services, etc.).

- a. Establish a collaborative relationship with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency.
 - b. Sponsored Legislation: [AB 2207](#) (Reyes) would secure CCoA representation on the California Health Workforce Education and Training Advisory Committee and California Workforce Development Board.
4. Recruit and support individuals from underrepresented regions and backgrounds to create a more diverse, representative workforce.
- a. Initiate development of Lifespan Education curriculum for K-14 grades to: (1) raise awareness about planning for a longer life, promote a positive image of aging, and combat ageism; AND (2) promote diversity-focused pipeline programs beginning with community colleges that lead into aging services, Gerontology, Geriatrics, and health and social professions.

C. Address homelessness & increase housing options for older adults

1. Expand the capacity of residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFEs).
 - a. Sponsored Legislation: [AB 1993](#) (Kalra) would change the six-bed cap to ten or fewer to allow private home RCFEs, when approved by state licensing, to expand the number of individuals they care for while still being considered for “residential use.”
2. Advocate for state funding to support the expansion of local home-sharing programs and remove barriers that impede opportunities for low-income older adults AND statewide shallow subsidies for older adults at risk of homelessness.
 - a. CCoA report: *HOUSING THOSE HARDEST HIT: Addressing Older Adult Homelessness, forthcoming April 2024.*
3. Require cities and counties to account and plan for the need for assisted living in their local housing elements.
 - a. Sponsor new legislation in 2025.

D. Identify innovative solutions to support the health and well-being of all Californians

1. Improve and strengthen aging services in California to serve the needs of an older, more diverse population.
 - a. Sponsored Legislation: [SB 1249](#) (Roth) seeks to modernize and strengthen the state’s aging services system, established fifty years ago, by reforming provisions of the aging services network.
2. Explore possibilities and opportunities for Artificial Intelligence (AI) to benefit older adults, persons with disabilities, caregivers, and providers.
 - a. Conduct research, identify subject matter experts for presentations, and participate in site visits. Develop recommendations.
3. Support the development of communities for healthy aging.
 - a. Draft and release recommendations report based on a May 2025 CCoA Forum: *Communities for Healthy Living.*