

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON AGING

SENIOR CENTER STAKEHOLDER FORUM

STRONG TODAY, STRONGER TOMORROW

PROCEEDINGS

FEBRUARY 4, 2009



Made possible by a grant from the Archstone Foundation

TITLE PAGE

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April 15, 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the California Commission on Aging's Senior Center Initiative, the CCoA along with the Congress of California Seniors and the Triple-A Council of California hosted a Forum on stakeholders' visions for the future of senior centers. The one-day Forum was designed to allow senior center directors and other stakeholders from across the state to gather together to share information and engage in discussion about the future roles and needs of senior centers, as well as to identify the policy implications of that discussion. The Forum provided attendees with outstanding informational presentations from two prominent leaders in the senior center field, an introduction to the new Chair of the Assembly Aging and Long Term Care Committee, and opportunities for networking. The participants also had the opportunity to break out into work groups to share their ideas for vision, policy and practices in ten interest areas.

Despite the fears of the economic downturn and the pending California budget deficit, the Forum was very successful with participants attending in large numbers, representing a wide array of leaders, change agents, and committed individuals dedicated to moving forward with the topics raised by the forum and defining the future direction of senior centers. The inspirational speakers added credibility and momentum to the ultimate goal of the Forum and the enthusiasm of the attendees was palpable and as one attendee stated, it "clearly felt historic." (See Appendix A for more participant comments on the Forum).

This report attempts to capture the enthusiasm and creative vision of the Forum Stakeholders. The topics for discussion in the ten Forum work groups were developed by the Senior Center Initiative Advisory Panel and included the following:

- ❖ Towards A New Vision for California's Centers,
- ❖ New Models for the Future,
- ❖ Transitioning to Attract Boomers,
- ❖ Involving Strategic Partnerships,
- ❖ Changing Attitudes & Perceptions
- ❖ Setting a Policy Agenda,
- ❖ Honoring Community Diversity,
- ❖ Changing Images & Delivering A New Message,
- ❖ Civic Engagement & Volunteers, and
- ❖ Resource Enhancement.

The discussion of each of these important topics is summarized in the body of the report, which provides more detail on each topic. However, there were several re-occurring themes across the topics and this executive summary attempts to summarize and highlight the crosscutting themes generated by the Forum Stakeholders, including leadership, goals, community participation, funding, programming, partnerships, and message.

LEADERSHIP, POLICY & GOVERNANCE

Several of the Forum activities examined the relevant state and local policies that come to play in the operation of centers. Such policies can be driven by money, legislation or senior centers' "will to change." Since many center activities are driven by state and local policies, Stakeholders identified specific advocacy and policy strategies centers can implement to enhance their future operations. However, Stakeholders also identified several specific actions that centers can implement to begin forming their own future. Stakeholders' visions for the future will require senior centers to review and strengthen their leadership and governance practices to implement changes in operational

structures, such as new approaches to service delivery, incorporating volunteers into the operations, developing new mechanisms to enhance community involvement, and diversifying funding streams.

Senior Center leaders will have to adapt and develop a new agenda to promote and sustain the quality of life needs for an increasingly diverse community of seniors. In addition, senior center leaders will need to identify ways to assist seniors advocate for their need, to educate policy makers and to legitimize the role of senior centers. The participants also emphasized the importance of centers having open and transparent operations, maintaining good governance, keeping accurate records, requiring accountability and being creative.

GOALS

According to Stakeholders, one of the most important roles senior center leaders must perform is the creation of focused priorities to maximize limited resources in order to meet the increasingly diverse community needs. Seniors needs include several dimensions of well-being, including physical, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and vocational. Senior centers will want to work with their community to define its goals around such terms as quality of life, independence and self-direction, cultural diversity, successful aging, dignity, and informed choices.

Part of creating the vision for senior centers includes defining its community in order to engage and be responsive to the community's needs. The goal is to create a vision from the ground up to assure community buy-in. Forum participants identified specific ideas of how to be more responsive to the needs of increasing diverse multi-cultural, intergenerational, and socio-economically communities.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Forum participants developed several forward-looking vision statements for how centers can be more attractive and relevant to a new generation of older adults. California will lead the nation toward the intersection of an aging population and a more diverse population. Accepting and responding to diverse clients may require centers to realign their Boards, staff, mission and practices in order to answer the question of how centers will age, adapt and evolve in their community. Forum participants explored ways centers can reinvent themselves to meet new and changing needs.

Centers will be required to examine their facilities, communications, programs and staff to determine if they are inviting, compassionate, easily accessible, and valuing of all members of the community. Techniques to ensure community participation include surveying members who do not attend the center, have one-on-one conversations with participants, and talk to other nonprofits and businesses to determine their perspective on the center. Fully understanding the needs of the community will help better determine the center's role in meeting those needs and increasing participation. This will include gentle education for existing participants and others about changes and why certain programs are not possible.

FUNDING

In order to achieve their goals, senior centers require adequate resources. Several of the Forum activities focused on long-term resource enhancement and cultivation of an entrepreneurial spirit to boost senior center sustainability. The groups discussed broadening the resource base by building collaborative partnerships. As government funding shifts, centers will have to search broadly for funding and stronger supports to keep centers in the forefront of service delivery. To ensure future viability, many Stakeholders advocated for increased self-sufficiency and more entrepreneurial perspective. Senior centers will increasingly have to diversify their funding to include government, donation, fee and grant sources. Forum participants also recommended reducing expenditures through "greening" opportunities that save resources by reducing, reusing, and recycling.

PROGRAMMING

While the specific program of every center will reflect the goals, community needs and available funding, Stakeholders identified specific ideas for ensuring that successive cohorts of older adults continue to benefit from center programming. The discussions were mindful of the current constituent group of senior center participants while at the same time energizing strategic thinking about what must be done to ensure that new services are relevant to new generations of participants.

In order to benefit from any program, it must be attractive to multiple generations of older adults and reflect the community's diversity. With limited resources, programming should focus on documented best practices to promote health, well being and prevention in order to maintain independence for as long as possible. The Baby Boomer generation will introduced new needs for senior centers to address, including lifelong learning, opportunities for meaningful work, retraining and career transitions as more seniors are working until later in life. Also, Baby Boom generation participants will likely need training and support to provide care for their own parents. To this end, Senior Centers should consider becoming one-stop information hubs or connection points to link community members to resources for housing, transportation and other service needs. By being a hub and bringing people together in one place, senior centers can help people to identify common interests which they can pursue on their own with limited facilitation by staff, such as walking, book/movie clubs, education, golf, travel, community activism, relationships, music making, etc.

FACILITIES

Stakeholders explored the form and function that senior centers will take in the future. To achieve goals and reach the target population, centers will need to be functional, attractive, and accessible. The design of future centers will need to serve the populations and programs offered, including areas for nutrition and socialization (coffeehouse, café meal service, special diets, and kitchen facilities), education (computer labs, computer accessible, wireless connections, access to online technology), and physical exercise (swimming, walking trails). The basic elements must include features important to older adults, such as good lights, acoustics and universal design features.

To reach a multi-generational community including seniors who are working later in life, senior centers may have to increase their hours of operation to include evenings and weekends. To be accessible to the people it serves, senior centers should be close to transportation, facilitate door-to-door services, or include adequate parking. Eventually, many seniors will no longer have the ability to access senior centers on their own, so some type of driver/escort program would be beneficial. Finally, Forum participants emphasized that not every senior center activity must be held at the senior center and identification of opportunities for co-location with universities and housing facilities may be possible to meet future needs of the community.

The primary element of the facility is its staff, which must have increased training to meet the expanded needs of the community it serves. In addition, staff must have the tools to perform its duties, including adequate computers, online access, and software. Increasingly the online network also will have an important role, including virtual senior centers, social networking, and online caregiver support. In addition, most senior centers rely heavily on volunteers to perform many of its important functions and run programs, leading Stakeholders to examine ways to meet the Baby Boom generation's needs for civic engagement. A mutually beneficial arrangement for volunteers and senior centers will likely require volunteers to be treated more like contract employees. Centers must think beyond volunteer recruitment strategies and identify ways to build the center's capacity to support and engage volunteers in meaningful experiences, including providing clear volunteer job descriptions, skill requirements and time limits. Finally, a number of policy decisions are required, including incentives, fingerprinting, background checks, bonding for handling money, and insurance coverage.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Forum focused on how senior centers can develop partnerships in order to offer a broader range of services for the community. Centers that have already developed innovative community alliances shared their experiences to help Forum participants identify their own strategic opportunities. To successfully evolve, senior centers can identify opportunities for strategic alliances and collaborative partnerships within their own community to increase visibility, awareness and resources. Senior centers can perform surveys of their community members to identify partners, funders, and referral agencies, including hospitals, employers, banks and businesses. In addition, other non-profits, government agencies and community colleges can be sources of shared resources and regional collaboration. Community colleges are obvious partners for educational courses and can also provide services. A SPCA partnership can provide care for sick senior's pets, provide daily care assistance, adoption, and pet care education.

MESSAGE

The Forum participants reflected on how senior centers are currently perceived in the community and identified appropriate images and messages to invigorate that image. The group also considered how to develop an image of senior centers that is well perceived by the older adult population, the Baby Boom generation and the larger community. Current senior center stereotypes are strongly engrained in the public's mind, so creating new images and messages might be an area where senior centers consider seeking assistance from trained marketing professionals, preferably through a volunteer or partnerships. There are several techniques that all senior centers can begin implementing, such as branding all communications, emphasizing diversity of age and cultures of the community, being a good spokesperson for the center, including social and fun elements in marketing, using active, innovative and varied images, considering modern eye-catching colors and fonts, testing the message with outside people, educating staff and members on the center's message and challenging conventional thinking with the unexpected.

Once the message is developed, forum participants identified several proactive steps senior center advocates can take to communicate their new messages, including making public appearances, accepting speaking engagements, working with others to combine resources, joining professional associations and community boards, and meeting with elected officials.

This brief executive summary of the Forum Stakeholders' visions are more fully detailed in the following report of the Forum's proceedings. The full report provides a rich menu of practical and inspiring details on which to build the strong future of tomorrow's senior centers.

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SENIOR CENTER STAKEHOLDER FORUM

STRONG TODAY STRONGER TOMORROW

INTRODUCTION

As part of the California Commission on Aging's Senior Center Initiative, the CCoA along with the Congress of California Seniors and the Triple-A Council of California agreed to host a Forum on stakeholders' vision for senior centers of the future. The one-day Forum was designed to allow senior center directors and other stakeholders from across the state to gather together to share information and engage in discussion about the future roles and needs of senior centers, as well as to identify the policy implications of that discussion.

FORUM GOALS

There were several outcomes to be realized from a statewide convening of senior center stakeholders, including an opportunity to:

- Learn about national trends and determine their applicability to California.
- Reflect on the changing demographics, statewide funding pressures and attitudes about aging in order to determine what impacts these might have on future senior center programming, management styles, and funding demands.
- Share program models that demonstrate success in meeting changing community demographics, discuss policy issues and recommend changes.
- Affirm that senior centers have and will continue to have an important role to play in the delivery of community-based and long-term care services in California.

The morning agenda provided attendees with informational presentations from two prominent leaders in the senior center field, an introduction to the new Chair of the Assembly Aging and Long Term Care Committee, and opportunities for networking. The afternoon offered attendees the opportunity to share their ideas for vision, policy and practices in ten interest areas. Each attendee attended two workgroup sessions. A "report back" session summarizing each workgroup's findings for the vision for senior centers concluded the day. (See Appendix B for a copy of the Forum Agenda.)

OPENING REMARKS AND KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

The Senior Center Stakeholder Forum “Strong Today, Stronger Tomorrow” was called to order by CCoA Chair Jim Davis who welcomed attendees to this historic event. He recognized several federal and state leaders in aging in attendance, including David Ishida, Regional Administrator, U.S. Administration on Aging; Lynn Daucher, Director, California Department of Aging; and Megan Juring, Assistant Secretary, California Health & Human Services Agency. Mr. Davis gave an appreciative thank you to the generous sponsors of the Forum, without whom the forum would not have been possible (See Appendix C for a complete list). Mr. Davis also recognized the CCoA’s Senior Center Advisory Panel, its Chair, Sharon Monck, and CCoA staff for their five months of hard work in planning for the Forum. In his opening remarks, Mr. Davis recalled several personal stories of his experiences with senior centers across the state to illustrate the depth and variety of the senior centers and the changes and developments that have occurred in senior centers through the years. In concluding his opening remarks, he asked all the attendees to take a moment to think about what they hoped to accomplish by attending the Forum.

PROCLAMATION

Following his remarks, Mr. Davis introduced Lynn Daucher, representing Governor Schwarzenegger and Secretary of Health & Human Services Agency Kimberly Belshé, who announced that the Governor had declared February 2009 as Senior Center Month (See Appendix D for a copy of the proclamation). Director Daucher indicated that the proclamation illustrated the Governor’s support for senior centers. Mr. Davis accepted the proclamation and thanked the Governor, Secretary Belshé and Director Daucher. At the conclusion of the morning session, all attendees were provided with a copy of the proclamation and a prepared press release that attendees could personalize for use with their local media.

OPENING SPEAKER

Mr. Davis introduced Lauri Linder, President of the Aging Services & Activities Section of the California Park and Recreation Society. Ms. Linder pointed out that the California Park & Recreation Society (CPRS) was founded in 1946 to provide recreation and leisure activities, as well as to give community service professionals and interested citizens the knowledge and resources to enhance their leadership role in creating community through people, parks and programs. CPRS is a nonprofit, professional and public interest organization with more than 4,000 members, many of whom attended the Forum. The Aging Services & Activities Section provides support, education and development to professionals responsible for services and activities for older adults. Ms. Linder introduced opening speaker Christine Beatty, Director of the Madison Senior Center in Wisconsin and former Chairperson of the National Institute of Senior Centers.

CHRISTINE BEATTY - SENIOR CENTERS: REMARKABLE MODELS

Ms. Beatty began her presentation by proclaiming that the California’s Senior Center Stakeholder Forum event was a model for the nation. Senior Centers have a long, proud history of service to seniors and the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) was formed as a part of National Council on Aging (NCOA) in 1970 to assist senior centers in that role. Today, there are more than 15,000 senior centers serving over 10 million people, which Ms. Beatty pointed out is about the same as the number of McDonalds and Wal-Marts combined. Ms Beatty highlighted the three primary premises of senior centers: aging is a normal process, people need connections with peers for encouragement and support, and older adults have the right to self direction. Ms. Beatty’s comments

highlighted several remarkable senior center models across the country, including Monroe, Michigan; North Shore, Illinois; Madison, Wisconsin; Charleston, South Carolina; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Rochester, Michigan. In conclusion, Ms. Beatty outlined a recipe for senior center success as illustrated by the remarkable senior center models presented: interact with your community, engage and mobilize those 50+, provide leadership for change and growth, and have patience and perseverance. A copy of Ms. Beatty's presentation slides is available at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/senior/>.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The introduction of the keynote speaker was provided by Jane Kibbey, President, California Association of Senior Service Centers (CASSC). CASSC is a statewide, professional organization for senior center leaders that provides networking and career development with an Annual Conference in Asilomar on the Monterey Peninsula. CASSC also affords its members an opportunity to affect change in their local agencies and to advocate for legislative action. CASSC works to advance the quality of standards and professional competency of senior service center directors and leaders while encouraging new partnerships with private, public, corporate, government and social service agencies which provide support services to senior citizens. Ms. Kibbey introduced keynote speaker Dr. Manoj Pardasani, Professor of Social Work at Fordham University, who is renowned for his groundbreaking research on senior centers.

MANOJ PARDASANI, PHD - SENIOR CENTERS: FORGING A NEW PATH

The focus of Dr. Pardasani's presentation was on his three senior center studies: characteristics of participants, innovative strategies, and public policy practices. Dr. Pardasani presented a brief history of senior centers and an overview of the aging demographics. Some of the challenges facing senior centers include continuing to serve the current participants effectively while trying to engage non-participating older adults, engaging the Baby Boom generation, re-conceptualizing participation in the new era of increased consumer choices, competing with other community options and alternatives available to seniors, battling social stigma, developing strategic partnerships and collaborating with other service providers, and redesigning and rebuilding of modern facilities.

Dr. Pardasani presented an overview of his research looking at senior center participants compared to non-participants. According to his research, senior center participants are more likely to be women, Caucasian, single or widowed, without disabilities and over age 75. He found no differences in the level of income between participants and non-participants at senior centers. Seniors with higher levels of education and current work or care-giving responsibilities were less likely to attend senior centers. Some of the most common senior center programs included meals, recreational and health promotion programs, transportation and home-based services. The most important and significant reasons for participation were socialization (friendship, companionship, fellowship, etc), meal programs, and recreation. When asked about why they did not attend, seniors indicated a lack of interest, access or transportation, need, or programs of need. Dr. Pardasani indicated that senior centers will have to address these issues in the future to grow senior center participation.

In a second study, Dr. Pardasani examined creative programming being conducted by senior centers. Innovative strategies being implemented include creating large, modern fitness centers with state-of-the-art equipment, creating an outdoor space for programming, renting out space for a fee, and creating a gallery space to display member art. In addition, multi-generational programming is an innovative strategy of interest to the Baby Boom generation. To capitalize on this interest, senior centers should consider hosting intergenerational programs such as "National Issues" forums, adopt-a-class programs with local schools, student pen pal programs, local high school student community service programs, community gardening projects, and holiday parties and carnivals. Other ideas

include partnering with local hospital and pharmacies for health promotion, providing fitness centers and computer classes, creating an “Active Wellness Center,” visual arts programs, bridge tournaments, cultural programming (opera, theater, writing, pastels, painting), college courses in collaboration with a community college, “outrageous adventures” that promotes outdoor activities such as hiking, skiing, etc., and after-hours and late evening programs.

In his third study, Dr. Pardasani asked senior center directors about their policy activities. His results indicated that the most important policy issues impacting senior center participants and organizations were (in descending order of importance): funding issues related to services and facilities affecting the older adults, lack of accessible and affordable transportation, healthcare issues, Medicare and health insurance costs, OAA funding, affordable housing, concerns over Social Security, long-term care and home-based care availability. Some of the most common personal and organizational reasons identified for not engaging in public policy advocacy were lack of knowledge or awareness, lack of experience and training in advocacy practice, and lack of financial and resource support to devote time or manpower to advocacy. Other important reasons that were identified by respondents were lack of time, competing priorities and political pressures from other funders or the senior center board.

In conclusion, Dr. Pardasani encouraged senior center staff members to join together to advocate for their important policy issues and to actively collaborate and advocate for future innovations that will create more responsive, accountable, creative and passionate senior centers.

To close the morning session, Chairperson Davis introduced Sandra Fitzpatrick, CCoA Executive Director, who provided a brief history of the development of the Senior Center Forum over the past eight months. Ms. Fitzpatrick informed attendees about valuable resources available to attendees, including an Executive Summary of the *Senior Center Literature Review: Reflecting & Responding To Community Needs*. Ms. Fitzpatrick informed attendees about the upcoming CCoA Senior Center Initiative survey on senior center infrastructure and encouraged attendee participation. Also, she instructed attendees about the afternoon agenda when attendees would break up into work groups to apply the information from the opening and keynote speakers in combination with their experiences to develop a new vision for tomorrow’s strong senior centers. The results were reported back in the concluding session of the Forum.

GUEST SPEAKER

Upon reconvening the Forum over lunch, CCoA Chair Davis introduced fellow CCoA member Sharon Monck who served as Chair of the Senior Center Initiative. Chair Monck reviewed the goals of the Forum, introduced the members of the Advisory Panel and the facilitators of the afternoon’s workgroups. Finally, she thanked the generous partners and sponsors. Ms. Monck concluded her remarks by introducing Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal, Chairperson, Assembly Aging & Long-Term Care Committee.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BONNIE LOWENTHAL

Assembly Member Lowenthal opened her remarks by recognizing the Forum as an historic gathering to advance the role of senior centers and indicating that she was honored to be there to meet and learn from the attendees. She outlined her expectation for her new role as Chairperson of the Assembly Aging & Long-Term Care Committee. A regular at a senior center in Long Beach, Lowenthal called for more community support for senior centers as the need for their services has increased while state and federal resources have decreased. It has been many years since California has invested in senior centers, yet many from the Baby Boom generation have a long list of expectations. According to Assembly Member Lowenthal, the changes required to update senior centers to meet growing and changing needs will not be easy and will require talent, determination

and good ideas. Forum attendees are the people to come together to make these changes. She further emphasized the common thread among seniors is a desire to grow old and age in place and senior centers help families, neighborhoods and communities to achieve their goals. Despite their desire to age in place, Lowenthal pointed out that the current home care system is a confusing array of services, programs, limits, and restrictions. In addition, the seniors who want to remain in their homes are at increasing risk of eviction and foreclosure with the downturn in the economy, the housing crisis, and limited places to turn for assistance. Lowenthal concluded by stating that the future of aging and long-term care services depends on strengthening the link between health and social services, including increased transportation to get seniors to helpful services and expanded senior center participation across the community. She pointed out that the next bond initiative for senior centers does not have to be age specific, but she encouraged looking for other sources of revenue. Lowenthal warned that Californians are skeptical of bond measures, but advocates and seniors can work together for broad senior center support.

WORK GROUPS

The 275 attendees participated in two Work Group Tracks. Within each Track attendees chose to participate in one of 5 different work groups. Group size in each Work Group ranged from 35 – 45 attendees (two sessions were subdivided into two smaller groups to ensure attendee participation). Each Work Group had a facilitator to capture and summarize the voices and ideas of the attendees. Within a “free flow” of ideas, each Work Group discussion focused on three topic areas: vision, policy and practice of “senior centers of the future.” Each Work Group also had a recorder who documented the ideas onto butcher paper and prepared the vision statements onto the Report Out Worksheet. Each Work Group was 70 minutes in length.

Below are the title and purpose of each Work Group, including the names of the facilitators and recorders. Following each Work Group description is the final vision statement and a summary of the groups’ meeting notes.

1.1 TOWARDS A NEW VISION FOR CALIFORNIA’S CENTERS

Purpose: This Work Group was intended to provide forward-looking recommendations for centers to be attractive and relevant to a new generation of older adults. Participants explored ways centers can reinvent themselves to meet new and changing needs.

Facilitators: Jill Jackson Ledford, MSW, Vice President, Health Promotion, Center for Healthy Aging, National Council on Aging and Andrew Scharlach, PhD, Professor of Social Welfare and Director, Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services, UC Berkeley

Recorders: Audrey Ralph-Calder, Recreation Coordinator, City of Vacaville Community Services Department and Joyce Hayes, MS, RD, Executive Director, Humboldt Senior Resource Center

1.1A Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall be committed to being the premier choice for the educational, cultural, artistic, social, and wellness opportunities of the senior community by providing community-driven facilities, programs and experiences.

1.1B Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the Future shall be welcoming places where people of various ages and cultures have the opportunity to participate in and take leadership roles in developing meaningful programs and services responsive to their diverse needs and interests.

Meeting Notes, Groups A&B

The group identified a number of features for the new senior center of the future. The group further categorized its visions into six categories: administrative, program, off-site, environment/facility, daycare, and policies. Because of the size of this Work Group, two vision statements were created.

Administrative changes to administrative structures including:

- Functional board
- Possible third party management of services
- Self-sustaining without government funding
- Responsive to community demand

Program - the group identified the following features for the new vision of programming:

- Multi-cultural, intergenerational, and diverse socioeconomic characteristics
- Lifelong learning opportunities, with programming at different functional levels, some small informal programs and quality instructors, including Car-Fit classes and older driver's training
- Wellness program, nutrition, spiritual
- Opportunities for meaningful work, retraining and career transitions
- One-stop shop/linkages (concierge) with continuing of care until the end of life, including connection point for housing needs, transportation (e.g. Santa Monica ITN)
- Training center for caregivers that include incentives for families to seek support
- Dementia/Alzheimer's disease care, Adult Day Care or multi-generational care

Off-site - increasingly, senior centers may "offsite" some of their programs through:

- Partnerships with possible referral agencies, including hospitals, employers, banks
- Linkages with businesses for visibility, awareness and resources
- Share resources, create regional collaborative
- Virtual senior center, social networking, online caregiver support, online activity
- Volunteer community ambassadors and opportunities to volunteer
- Outreach programs for homebound

Environment/facility of the future will:

- Co-locate with universities or housing
- Be designed to facilitate cultural activities and a place to connectivity
- Emphasize physical activities, e.g. swimming, walking trails
- Feature coffeeshop, café meal service, special diets, functional kitchen
- Be accessible and close to transportation, e.g. door to door, easy access, adequate parking
- Have expanded hours, including weekends and nights
- Feature computer labs, computer accessible, wireless connections, access to online technology, create database of members' needs and volunteer resources
- Have good lighting, good acoustics, and a clean, homey inviting atmosphere

Policies - Senior centers and/or policy makers will have to make changes to support the new vision:

- Eliminate categorical funding, government red tape
- Stronger advocates across all levels of seniors needs
- Obtain buy-in from grassroots community groups on changes
- Be entrepreneurial
- Make it easy for members & partners to join
- Be connective, inviting, compassionate, accessible, inclusive, outreaching
- Identify purpose for serving the community and be driven by that purpose

What will make it happen:

- Take out "senior," "frail," and "elderly" for an image change
- Improved communication
- Marketing programs

- Help seniors, advocate for their needs
- Support from AOA to create vision and fund
- Local coordination of resources

1.2 NEW MODELS FOR THE FUTURE

Purpose: This Work Group explored the form and function senior centers will take in the future. The session looked at the range of options available to centers, including intergenerational models and the concept of “Centers Without Walls.” The Work Group addressed the questions: “Will services be delivered under the auspices of one agency, or will a consortium be the solution to offering a broad and relevant range of services?”

Facilitator: Marian Last, LMFT, CPC, Community & Senior Services Manager, Jack Crippen Senior Center

Recorder: Trula M. LaCalle, PhD, Executive Director, California Association of Public Authorities for In-Home Supportive Services

Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall promote, encourage and inspire the health, creativity and well-being of the mature community.

Meeting Notes

General Vision:

- Become self-sustaining destination centers that serve a blended community in partnership with a multitude of agencies.
- Provide health and wellness program as the essential components of successful aging programs
- Promote, encourage and inspire the health, creativity and well being of the mature community
- Provide a modern, spacious and appealing center and appropriately name that center
- Provide training center to enhance the physical, mental and spiritual well-being
- Move from congregate meals to café/dining center

Practice:

- Self-supporting
- Health and wellness to help seniors remain independent
- Trained staff
- Adequate resources
- Collaborations: private/public
- Image breaker/branding
- Breadth of services

Policy:

- No wrong door
- No one turned away
- Meet all needs, all levels
- Openness and transparency
- Self-governing
- Sustainable
- Strategic alliances and collaborative partnerships

Vision:

- Self-sustaining
- Quality of life
- Culturally diverse
- Successful aging (strategies)

1.3 TRANSITIONING TO ATTRACT BOOMERS

Purpose: This Work Group developed recommendations to ensure that successive cohorts of older adults continue to benefit from center programming. Research shows that many seniors who use centers today are the same older adults who participated when the centers first opened their doors twenty years ago. The discussion was mindful of the current constituent group while at the same time energizing center leadership to think strategically about what must be done to ensure that new generations come through the doors.

Facilitator: Manoj Pardasani, PhD, Professor, Fordham University

Recorder: Bob Petty, PhD, Director of Community Education, Alliance on Aging

Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall attract members of the Baby Boom generation, by being dynamic community centers that will draw in multiple generations of older adults by offering multifaceted programs.

Meeting Notes

The group answered the following questions to help determine the how to transition senior centers to attract members of the Baby Boom generation: What are senior centers? Whom do we serve? What do we believe?

Senior centers are....

- Attractive to multiple generations of older adults
- Educational and recreational facilities
- Accessible with multi-faceted programs and services
- Dynamic community group
- One-stop places for all generations 50+
- Vital and central parts of the community

We serve...

- 50+ and their families
- Multiple generations
- Community
- Baby Boom generation and beyond

We believe in ...

- Quality of life includes mind, body, and spirit
- Independence and self-determination
- Dignity
- Informed choices
- Information
- Socialization/interaction
- Life stages

Senior Centers offer holistic well-being through...

Fun, fitness, health, socialization, education, golf, culinary classes, Wii, travel discussion, trip information, photos, travel, book/movie clubs, community activism, brain fitness, lectures, relationships, grief support, speed dating, job/volunteer training, music making, etc.

1.4 INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Purpose: This Work Group encouraged an expanded definition of partnerships to carry centers toward a stronger and more sustainable role in the community. Some centers are already forging ahead with innovative community alliances to meet current needs and projected growth. Sharing their experiences and thinking creatively, workshop attendees identified strategic opportunities to build successful centers of the future.

Facilitator: Donna Phillips, Vice President, National Council on Aging

Recorder: Carol Sewell, Program Analyst, California Commission on Aging

Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall be fully engaged in partnerships involving multiple sectors in the community serving a diverse range of older adults.

Meeting Notes

Senior Centers can develop strategic partnerships that will be mutually beneficial and sustainable. Strategic partnerships will increasingly be developed in order to allow senior centers to meet and fulfill the high expectations of the Baby Boom generation. In general, these partnerships can include either resources or services and they can often feature community collaborations.

For example, NCOA has established a national partnership with CVS pharmacies that includes senior center programming and a range of health information classes. CVS funds or staffs programs and provides awards for exemplary senior center health programming. For more information see the NCOA website (www.ncoa.com).

The following are some “rules” to consider when establishing strategic partnerships:

- Partnership endorsement works in both directions
- Be selective in programming
- Partnership may not include money
- Have a vision for the future, since most partnerships will not last forever
- Numerous partnerships may not include business partners, e.g.
 - Community colleges are obvious partners for educational courses
 - SPCA partnership cares for sick senior’s pets, provides daily care assistance, adoption, and pet care education
 - Rural collaborative between two counties, the state and tribes
- Advertise through direct and targeted marketing
- Keep records
- Require accountability
- Be creative
- Survey participants for business connections

The goal of strategic partnership is to expand programs that help to achieve services and programs so seniors they can become fully engaged in universal, family-oriented activities. Finally, partnerships must be fully vetted to win seniors’ trust. Partnerships within Area Agencies on Aging service providers are proven program connections.

1.5 CHANGING ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS

Purpose: This Work Group discussed strategies to encourage people to participate in senior centers. As long as the stereotype exists of centers as places for “old people,” the Baby Boom generation will likely stay away. Participants deliberated on the challenges of helping centers move beyond stereotypes, combating attitudinal biases and instilling new perceptions of centers as attractive and vibrant.

Facilitator: Christine Beatty, Director, Madison Senior Center

Recorder: Barbara Estrada, Public Health Nutritionist, California Department of Aging

Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall encourage participation among the diverse older population by creating a new perception of senior centers

Meeting Notes

The group identified the following strategies to encourage senior center participation that include deliberately moving beyond stereotypes and biases to instill new perceptions:

Practices

- Obtain professional “help” with marketing – preferably a volunteer, or through partnerships
- Maintain an attractive entrance
- Emphasize “our building, your program”
- Increase hours to include evenings and weekends
- Consider senior center driver program - volunteer drivers pick up seniors for the center
- Website connect/newsletter link present on all handouts

Listen to participants, staff, others

- Survey those who do not attend
- One-on-one conversations with participants
- Understand the needs of diverse cultures
- Best practices
- Pay for expertise

Leverage your resources to develop other relationships within the community

- Community colleges – professors and students to teach classes, provide services
- Other non-profits - adult housing communities, offsite programs to attract participants
- Schools - day use for seniors and night use for teens
- Off site programming - programs don’t always have to be at the senior center
- Local newspapers

Combat stereotypes

- Emphasize diversity of age in the aging population
- Be a good spokesperson for senior center
- Use new terminology, such as “senior” or “ 50+”
- Promote healthy, engaged, active people; use words like fun, nurturing, open, accessible
- Change image and make new image part of all “handouts”
- Promote fitness and lifelong learning
- Civic engagement is just one hidden potential, be flexible
- Be the one-stop source of information

Changing Attitudes

- Gently educate existing participants about change; remember change is associated with loss
- Ask for donations for case management
- With more frail seniors at senior centers, consider creating ADHC
- Changing stereotypes is the first step
- Maintaining the independence of seniors involves prevention

2.1 SETTING A POLICY AGENDA

Purpose: This Work Group looked at relevant state and local policies to enhance the continued operation of centers. Policy can be driven by money, legislation or the “will to change.” By opening the discussion to consider new operational structures, setting benchmarks to establish community trust, or identifying new approaches to service delivery, this session set the stage for building vital and diverse solutions reflective of individual communities.

Facilitator: Manoj Pardasani, PhD, Professor, Fordham University

Recorder: Randy Platt, Chief Executive Officer, Community SeniorServ

Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall fully engage in policy advocacy that raises public awareness, increases program legitimacy and gives a level of control over resource allocation decisions.

Meeting Notes

Senior centers need to be actively involved in public policy because it provides the following potential benefits:

- Increased funding
- Legitimize senior centers
- Promote and sustain senior centers’ agenda
- Advocate for needs of seniors
- Protect resources
- Educate policy makers
- Engage constituents
- Increase awareness
- Preserve quality of life for seniors
- Change status quo
- Take control
- Ensure a piece of the pie
- Provides for the public good

The group identified the following strategies for the successful practice of public policy:

- Bullet points – position papers
- Physical appearances where policy is being made
- Relate with staff
- Professional associations
- Join community boards
- Work with Mayor and Council Members

2.2 HONORING COMMUNITY DIVERSITY

Purpose: This Work Group talked creatively and openly about inclusion, acceptance, and program modification in light of the state's growing diversity. In the coming years, California will lead the nation toward the intersection of an aging population and a more diverse population. Accepting and responding to diverse customers may require that centers realign their Boards, staff, mission and practices in order to answer the question of how centers will age, adapt and evolve in their community.

Facilitator: Ed Walsh, MSW, Director, Riverside County Office on Aging

Recorder: Darrik Lam, MSW, Aging Services Program Specialist, U.S. Administration on Aging

Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall be inclusive and respectful of all people in our community, while providing quality services that equally include, celebrate, educate and respect diversity without restriction to language, cultural and functional barriers, sexual orientation and religious differences.

Meeting Notes

The group stated that to honor community diversity, the new vision of senior centers must be systematically inclusive of all groups through:

- promoting acceptance
- valuing differences
- building trust
- providing opportunities to learn
- serving all people equally, including,
 - frail and non-frail
 - rural and urban
 - seniors with functional disabilities
 - different cultures and languages and from all socioeconomic backgrounds

The values necessary to achieve diverse senior center include:

- Inclusion
- Outreach
- Sensitivity to and value of differences
- Flexibility
- Accountability
- Responsive
- Supportive
- Innovative
- Welcoming
- Acknowledging weakness
- Engaging
- Respectful
- Humble

Practice:

- Education
- Reaching out to all
- Offering materials in native language or translation services
- More inclusive policy in all promotional materials
- Program elements will reflect our cultural diversity

2.3 CHANGING IMAGES & DELIVERING A NEW MESSAGE

Purpose: This Work Group explored the relationship between image and message delivery as participants looked for ways to invigorate the image of centers. Perception is everything, and in the world of senior centers, no statement could be more true. The group considered how centers are perceived by the older adult population, the Baby Boom generation and the larger community. Because of the size of this Work Group, two vision statements were created.

Facilitators: Jill Jackson Ledford, MSW, Vice President, Health Promotion, National Council on Aging and Cheryl Phillips, MD, Chief Medical Officer, On Lok, Inc.

Recorders: Kalah Bumba, Project Coordinator, Salinas Senior Center and Julie Cox, Program Manager, Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging

2.3A Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall be seen as vibrant, diverse, and stimulating places.

2.3B Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall be driven by a core belief in personal engagement, passion, diversity, simplicity and the unexpected.

Meeting Notes Groups A & B

A message is informational and defines who we are for both internal use and the target audience:

- Culturally diverse and understood by large/broad audience
- Create marketing priorities
- Change the name, activities, attitude, and look
- Foster innovation
- Emotional component - inviting, warm, focused
- Keep it simple
- Include social and fun elements
- Active image, innovative, variety
- Consider modern colors and fonts
- Test your message with outside people
- Educate staff on message

A good message:

- Has only 3 message points
- Challenges thinking and is unexpected
- Relates to what target audience is thinking
- Identifies needs and wants
- Reaches family, adult children, non-attending seniors, and community
- Good photos – engaging, diverse, get audience you want

Vision statement should evoke the feelings generated by the following type of words:

Vibrant, opportunity, healthy, positive, knowledgeable, new, energize, active, wise, sense of being, high quality, exciting, warm, welcoming, friendly, independent dynamic, educational, inter-generational, fun, diverse, affordable, stimulating, progressive, attractive, green, enriching, helpful.

Examples of new messages:

The place to go; Stay healthy/stay fit; 50 more healthy years; Young are welcome; Not your parents' center; Something for everybody; Where everyone knows your name; Comes alive @55 or anytime before.

Practice:

Develop creative marketing and work plans, seek out opinions of participants and non-participants, partner with diverse community organizations, analyze referrals and change activities to become more vibrant.

2.4 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & VOLUNTEERS

Purpose: This Work Group strategized how best to capitalize on the volunteer potential within a community. Much has been written about the civic engagement potential of the Baby Boom generation. What responsibilities do centers have to create environments where older adults can remain productive through volunteerism? Working through these issues, participants reviewed successful recruitment strategies for a new group of volunteers while building the center's capacity to support and engage volunteers in meaningful experiences.

Facilitator: Christine Beatty, Director, Madison Senior Center

Recorder: Chris Martinek, MA, Consultant, Chris Martinek Consulting

Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall provide challenging and rewarding opportunities for volunteers of all ages who are qualified, committed, and valued.

Meeting Notes

Strategies to capitalize on volunteer potential:

- Clearly describe job duties and skill requirements to avoid firing volunteers
- Have work ready for volunteers
- Provide meaningful and significant volunteer jobs with titles
- Project volunteer positions "set time," i.e. 2 months
- Volunteers project an agency's image
- Volunteers need to be in communication loop (like employees and board members)
- Volunteers need to have evaluations, feedback and training – like employees.
- Requires recruitment and recognition
- Volunteer incentives may include stipends, 25% off program fees, promotion opportunities
- Match volunteers' skills and talents to jobs
- Utilize high school community service hours
- Learn to say no to inappropriate situations

Policy issues:

- Mileage (taxable), stipends, meals at center
- Fingerprinting, background checks and expenses
- Bonding for handling money
- Provide insurance coverage
- Tokens of appreciation, i.e. gifts

Recruitment Strategies:

- Use local media
- Public Service Announcements
- Advertise at recruitment fairs, job training, unemployment lines, volunteer centers
- Visit businesses, service clubs, Chambers of Commerce, faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations
- Use internet, city web page
- Start a "bring a buddy," "newcomer," or "ask a friend" club
- Hire a corner sign-shaker, distribute flyers, sell t-shirts, car placards, bumper stickers
- Use Info Van
- Hold senior day at grocery store
- Go to local colleges
- Conduct outreach at speaking engagements
- Ask talented/skilled people to volunteer

2.5 RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT

Purpose: This Work Group focused on long-term resource enhancement and cultivation of an entrepreneurial spirit to boost senior center sustainability. The group discussed broadening resource bases by building collaborative partnerships. As government funding shifts, how will centers approach the search for broader funding and stronger supports to keep centers in the forefront of service delivery?

Facilitator: Donna Phillips, Vice President, Member and Network Services, National Council on Aging

Recorder: Randy Pesqueira, Executive Director, City of Huntington Beach Senior Services

Vision Statement: Senior Centers of the future shall assume an entrepreneurial perspective, recognizing the value of multiple partnerships to increase the expansion of opportunities for older adults.

Meeting Notes

NCOA's strategic partnerships were outlined as an example of what senior centers might be able to do in their communities (for more information see (www.ncoa.org), e.g. "Prescription for Better Health.

The group identified activities to increase resources for senior centers, such as technology recycling, support classes; envisioned what the senior center of future would look like with computer labs, cafés, trips and identified who were the businesses in communities.

Identify partners to provide mutual benefits; think of senior centers without walls, such as

- Business partners
- HICAP as trainers
- Colette vacations
- Membership
- Fee based activities

Establish a Vision:

- Entrepreneurship, i.e. purchasing paper making company
- Create new resources
- Recognize value of senior centers
- Diversify funding base
- Increase fundraising
- Greening opportunities

REPORT OUT – VISION STATEMENTS

During the Forum’s final group session each Facilitator or a designee stated one priority vision, along with the applicable policy and practice recommendations developed in the work groups.

1.1A Towards A New Vision for California’s Centers

Senior Centers of the future shall be committed to being the premier choice for the educational, cultural, artistic, social, and wellness opportunities of the senior community by providing community-driven facilities, programs and experiences.

1.1B Towards A New Vision for California’s Centers

Senior Centers of the future shall be welcoming places where people of various ages and cultures have the opportunity to participate in and take leadership roles in developing meaningful programs and services responsive to their diverse needs and interests.

1.2 New Models for the Future?

Senior Centers of the future shall promote, encourage and inspire the health, creativity and well-being of the mature community.

1.3 Transitioning to Attract Boomers

Senior Centers of the future shall attract members of the Baby Boom generation by being dynamic community centers that will draw in multiple generations of older adults by offering multifaceted programs.

1.4 Involving the Community through Strategic Partnerships

Senior Centers of the future shall be fully engaged in partnerships involving multiple sectors in the community while serving a diverse range of older adults.

1.5 Changing Attitudes & Perceptions

Senior Centers of the future shall encourage participation among the diverse older population by creating a new perception of senior centers

2.1 Setting a Policy Agenda

Senior Centers of the future shall fully engage in policy advocacy that raises public awareness, increases program legitimacy and gives a level of control over resource allocation decisions.

2.2 Honoring Community Diversity

Senior Centers of the future shall be inclusive and respectful of all people in our community, while providing quality services that equally include, celebrate, educate and respect diversity without restriction to language, cultural and functional barriers, sexual orientation and religious differences.

2.3A Changing Images & Delivering A New Message

Senior Centers of the future shall be seen as vibrant, diverse, and stimulating places.

2.3B Changing Images & Delivering A New Message

Senior Centers of the future shall be driven by a core belief in personal engagement, passion, diversity, simplicity and the unexpected.

2.4 Civic Engagement & Volunteers

Senior Centers of the future shall provide challenging and rewarding opportunities for volunteers of all ages who are qualified, committed, and valued.

2.5 Resource Enhancement

Senior Centers of the future shall assume an entrepreneurial perspective, recognizing the value of multiple partnerships, to increase the expansion of opportunities for older adults.

APPENDIX A

**COMMENTS RECEIVED ABOUT THE
FEBRUARY 4, 2009
SENIOR CENTER STAKEHOLDER FORUM**

"Thanks a million for a fantastic experience and one of the best organized senior center events I have ever been to." - Manoj Pardasani, PhD, Fordham University

"I thought it was an outstanding day" – Kalah Bumba, Salinas Senior Center

"It was exceptionally well planned and my hopes are that other states will adopt a similar initiative and that we can see positive results across the nation for senior centers and those they serve." – Jill Jackson Ledford, Vice President, National Council on Aging

"Congratulations on your successful event." - Renee Zeimer, City of Walnut Creek

"We had a great group of committed individuals that wanted to move forward with diversity issues... You turned a logistic nightmare into a raving success" - Ed Walsh, Director, Riverside Office on Aging

"Your leadership made participation in this event an honorable delight!!!! Having the inspirational speakers as part of our "menu" added so much credibility and momentum to our ultimate goal." - Marian Last, Jack Crippen Senior Center

"Congratulations to the Commission on the sparkling success of the Senior Center Summit. Only the Commission could bring together such an array of leaders and change agents, and provide a space for "thinking outside the box" about the future directions senior centers must take ..." - Andrew Scharlach, Associate Dean, School of Social Welfare, University of California

"I feel like I was a part of something really big!!!!" Nora Webb, City of Fountain Valley

"You did an outstanding job. CASSC members were so excited. It truly was an outstanding event and people want it to be an annual event." Jane Kibbey, President California Association of Senior Service Centers.

"Congratulations ! It was an amazing event!" Laurie Webb, Amador County Senior Center

"I want to thank you for providing all of us Senior Center folk, out in the field, a fantastic opportunity at yesterday's Senior Center Forum. Please congratulate your team on providing a state of the art, well-organized event. It clearly felt historic." -- Susannah Reinhart, Woodland Senior Center.

"The Forum was incredibly well organized, we were all impressed. California did not seem "poor" or "bankrupt" there were incredible riches present during the day of the Forum -- rich ideas, creativity, commitment and friendship. Thank you for including me." – Donna Phillips, Vice President, National Council on Aging.

"We want to express our appreciation for such an outstanding forum! The program, speakers, venue, logistics, meals and participants were first class. Without a doubt, everyone that came walked away with a wonderful feeling and gained a tremendous amount of materials, ideas, contacts and a wealth of knowledge. We hope you do it again in a year." – Fred Hitchens, Executive Director, Senior L.I.F.E. Center

"It was a wonderful event yesterday. Thank you so much. I met some key folks and exchanged ideas... Great group and great sessions." Sue Horst, City of Daly City

"I wanted to congratulate the CCoA and the Advisory Panel for putting on a well attended and successful event. The format worked well and it allowed all participants the opportunity to share in the "discussion." It truly was an honor for the CPRS Aging Services and Activities Section to be a part of this statewide event... " – Lauri Linder, President, Aging Services and Activities Section.

"The Senior Center Forum was exceptional in every regard and on behalf of senior center directors throughout the state of California we want you to know how wonderful it feels to have the California Commission on Aging in our corner." - Pat Trotter (Fullerton), Cathy Angstadt (Laguna Nigel) and Nora Webb (Fountain Valley).

**CALIFORNIA SENIOR CENTERS
STRONG TODAY
STRONGER TOMORROW**

February 4, 2009

8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza, 300 J Street, Sacramento

8:30 a.m. REGISTRATION OPENS

9:00 a.m. CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST & NETWORKING
Sponsored by: Sutter SeniorCare PACE

9:45 a.m. WELCOME/OPENING REMARKS

James L. Davis, Chair, California Commission on Aging

10:00 a.m. OPENING SPEAKER: CHRISTINE BEATTY
Topic: *Senior Centers: Remarkable Models*

Ms. Beatty is the Director of the Madison Senior Center in Wisconsin and former Chairperson of the National Institute of Senior Centers.

10:30 a.m. KEYNOTE SPEAKER: MANOJ PARDASANI, PhD
Topic: *Senior Centers: Forging A New Path*

Dr. Pardasani, a Professor of Social Work at Fordham University, is renowned for his groundbreaking research on senior centers.

11:30 a.m. BREAK ~

12:00 noon LUNCH - Sponsored by: Kaiser Permanente and Verizon

Guest Speaker: Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal, Chairperson, Assembly Aging & Long-Term Care Committee

1:15 p.m. WORK GROUPS: TRACK 1

2:30 p.m. REFRESHMENT BREAK
Sponsored by: California Association of Senior Service Centers

2:50 p.m. WORK GROUPS: TRACK 2

4:15 p.m. Report Out/Next Steps/Closing

5:00 p.m. Adjournment

APPENDIX C

Forum Sponsors

The Archstone Foundation
Congress of California Seniors
Kaiser Permanente
Sutter (PACE)
Verizon
Eskaton Senior Services and Residences
The Mel & Grace McLean Foundation
California Association of Senior Service Centers
Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County
National Association for Hispanic Elderly
California Association of Health Facilities
Aging Services of California
Alta Manor
ApexCare, Inc.
California Department of Corporations
California Foundation on Aging
California Senior Legislature
Senator Lou Correa

APPENDIX D

Proclamation

