

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/social-services/commission-on-aging> ~ slocommissiononaging@gmail.com

COA Annual Brainstorming Session June 2023

The Annual Brainstorming session in June 2023 was well attended, and the enthusiasm and participation of all involved was unsurpassed! It was a huge success! Approximately 50 Agency and community members filled the meeting room and after ground rules were explained and instructions provided, the session began.

Participants shouted out ideas and we quickly wrote them on whiteboards and then, as a united group, we organized the data and created nine main areas of needs and concerns for our Seniors. We then spent the second half of the session creating sub-topics under each area of concern on which to focus our 2023-2024 attention, presentations, and communications to the County Supervisors, other Agencies, and community Senior advocates.

Listed below are the critical issues, concerns, and needs for our county's Seniors as expressed by approximately 50 members, guests, multiple agency attendees, and community members who attended and participated in our brainstorming event. The list is ranked in order of importance based on the groups' scoring (#3a and #3b tied):

#1 Housing - Affordable

1. Advocate for Assisted Living Waiver Program to be establish in San Luis Obispo County (currently in 16 other CA counties)
2. Request more Senior-friendly and safe shelters for Senior evictions, homeless, and disaster victims.
3. Increase the matching efforts and advertising for Home share programs.
4. Investigate possibilities for Government incentives/assistance for countywide builders to build Senior-friendly homes:
 - a. Smaller homes, single story
 - b. ADA and elder safety features (grab bars/railings/ramps...)
 - c. Age-friendly neighborhoods (safe/secure/community areas)

#2 Care Management and Support

1. Provide low/no cost – respite care and support groups for family Caregivers.
2. Provide free resources countywide to assist Seniors in navigating all technology-based systems for medical, safety, wellness, support, and entertainment.
3. Provide incentives to encourage more volunteer mentors for aging Veterans to provide companionship, and help Veterans navigate the benefits and healthcare process so they can receive much needed help.
4. Develop Senior centralized care coordination systems and locations countywide – one-stop – with volunteer case manager/peer support.
5. Initiate/develop County or Statewide networked drug/medication interaction warning system/software at pharmacy level. Specialized data to red flag drug interactions conflicts.

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#3a Socialization

1. Add more Adult Day Care Centers (dementia support) throughout the county.
2. Increase recruiting efforts and provide incentives for more Senior-friendly Volunteers countywide!
3. Provide free/low-cost Senior-friendly companionship for early-stage dementia Seniors, aging Veterans, isolated, and homebound Seniors.
4. Provide free Senior shuttles for transportation to and from events, fun day trips, Senior fitness centers/programs, and Senior centers.
5. Create countywide teams and education for Senior suicide recognition indicators, loneliness, intervention and long term prevention.

#3b Education to Easily Navigate Resources (including Analog access)

1. Build/create/install Senior-friendly dedicated, accessible (including analog) resource centers/stations/kiosks throughout the county to find resources for:
 - a. Mental Health and first aid
 - b. Dementia ongoing education resources and support
 - c. Financial assistance
 - d. Scams prevention and recovery
2. Provide frequent and countywide Senior accessible End-of-life preparation information and assistance – POLST, Advance Directive, POA, care resources, fiduciary, Trust and Will information.
3. Provide a TV station for Analog Senior-friendly TV Network for entertainment, information, exercise, activities, music, storytelling, connecting with community functions/activities.
4. Advocates – eyes, ears, and voice for Seniors! To help navigate Health system, transportation, paperwork, signing up for services and utilities, travel, etc.

#4 Transportation/Public Access

1. Provide accessible, countywide, affordable, low/no cost, dedicated Senior-friendly/only shuttles with routes making regular daily scheduled rounds to markets, Senior centers, medical complexes, fitness facilities, pharmacies, salons... hop-on-hop-off (well, maybe not hop).
2. Provide easy access to Rural areas for Seniors living out of town countywide.
3. Provide door-to-door pick-up/drop-off with assist for impaired (mobile, sight, hearing, other)
4. Provide Critical Senior-friendly and Dementia care training for all transportation workers, drivers, dispatch, and improved language access

#5 Health and Wellness

1. Provide frequent countywide Senior suicide prevention and ongoing at-risk identifiers and how to help.
2. Provide better/more/reliable back-up systems for medical equipment at home (and in assisted living facilities)
3. Provide free/low-cost Senior-friendly exercise, yoga, walking buddies, meditation, accessible

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music intervention programs, classes, techniques, and prayer groups.

4. Continue to support countywide injury prevention education - falls, violence, traffic safety - utilizing short classes at all Senior venues, assisted living facilities, retirement communities, Senior centers, fitness venues.
5. Provide Nutrition education, information and assistance for Seniors including shopping, preparing, and teaching healthy eating habits at all Senior venues, assisted living facilities, retirement communities, Senior centers, fitness venues.
6. Provide free/low-cost/voucher Mobile hygiene services for:
 - a. Dental cleaning
 - b. Podiatrist
 - c. Haircuts/manicures
 - d. Showers
 - e. Medication prep management (fill pill boxes)
7. Educate Seniors and heighten awareness of alternative holistic solutions; massage, acupuncture, nutrition, topical natural remedies, essential oils, cannabis, whirlpools and circulation stimulation, walking and exercises.
8. Educate and provide free training classes countywide for Senior Self-defense and violation/abuse training options and protocol.

#6 Medical Support

1. Establish additional specialized geriatric doctors, nurses, physician assistants, whole-person care programs,
2. Demand/advocate for more dementia and Senior care education for EMS and medical support staff, hospitals, clinics, assisted living facilities, in-home care, IHSS support, APS field workers.
3. Need more field workers to assist with Medication management, focusing on dosage, interactions, Senior substance abuse/misuse, awareness, identification, intervention, and reporting.
4. Improve medical and mental health education in homeless shelters.

#7 Legal Advocacy – Awareness and Assistance

1. Scam prevention and recovery
2. Trust, Wills, DPOA, Fiduciary
3. Landlord/tenant disputes/guidelines
4. Public guardian system

#8 County/Agency Support Requests

1. Dedicated agency for hoarding assistance – multiple agencies touched but no specialized agency accountability.
2. Provide analog and improved navigation options for non-digital Seniors, and hearing and vision impairment.
3. Vouchers for food, hygiene care, showers, housing
4. Financial support for scam recovery and eliminating personal threats (repeats)

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5. Improved inter-agency communication.
6. Agency accountability and responsibility – ‘no passing the buck.’