

# Contra Costa Senior Policy Platform

## Policy Platform 2020

*September 2016*

### OVERVIEW

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The Contra Costa Senior Policy Platform (CCSPP) is a collaborative effort of senior service providers, healthcare agencies, advocates, public agencies and concerned individuals committed to ensuring that Contra Costa County's aging community (residents aged 65 and older) can age with dignity and receive the services and support they deserve.

In addition to the many service and support needs that aging community members living in Contra Costa County exhibit today, this need is expected to grow exponentially in the near future. By 2030, the number of community residents aged 65 and over living in Contra Costa County will grow by more than 90%. Today aging residents represent just 13% of the County population. By 2030, they will represent 27% of all Contra Costa County residents.

To pro-actively address this need, the Contra Costa Senior Policy Platform (CCSPP) has articulated a Policy Platform 2020 with specific local priorities and strategic steps to propel Contra Costa County investments and initiatives to support aging with dignity. The platform addresses four priorities:

1. **EVALUATE.** Support research that describes and assesses local service needs and gaps impacting aging residents and that proposes specific and actionable local strategies to address these needs.
2. **CONVENE.** Strengthen service delivery and coordination, including discharge planning and information exchange, by convening community-based service providers, healthcare providers, behavioral health providers, law enforcement, transportation, public guardians and other partners.
3. **EDUCATE.** Actively educate the Board of Supervisors, local city councils and Conference of Mayors, and other elected officials, County agency officials, seniors and family members, and other community leaders about the dramatic increase in the aging population, key unmet service needs and gaps, and the roles that local officials and agencies can play in supporting aging residents.
4. **ADVOCATE.** Conduct coordinated advocacy to promote County and city policies that significantly increase investment into services to support aging with dignity.

## **FOUR-YEAR POLICY PLATFORM**

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### **1) EVALUATE. Support research that describes and assesses local service needs and gaps impacting aging residents and that proposes specific and actionable local strategies to address these needs.**

- Utilize existing data and conduct new studies to evaluate access to long-term services and support for vulnerable aging residents and to make recommendations to increase the number of vulnerable aging residents with affordable access to long-term care, services and supports.
- Using existing data and new evaluations, analyze and articulate the key issues affecting seniors, including: 1) housing affordability and economic stability, 2) transportation, 3) medical service access, 4) senior homelessness and 5) the shortage of skilled caregivers and senior service workforce with the goal of presenting key needs and recommendations to decision-makers.
- Enhance the Area Agency on Aging needs assessment to more effectively describe how many aging residents are receiving services from all providers, including public, non-profit and private providers, and the continuum of care for seniors.

### **2) CONVENE. Strengthen service delivery and coordination, including discharge planning and information exchange, by convening community-based service providers, healthcare providers, behavioral health providers, law enforcement, transportation, public guardians and other partners.**

- Convene a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency workgroup to review best-practices and propose pilot projects that enhance care coordination and reduce care silos. Potential workgroup partners could include funders, community-based service providers, healthcare providers, behavioral health providers, law enforcement, transportation agencies, public guardians and other partners.
- Identify and leverage the work of existing workgroups addressing similar issues by educating and engaging them to collaborate in Policy Platform 2020 and linking Policy Platform 2020 participants to existing efforts in the community.
- Improve the quality of discharge planning by hospitals, nursing homes, community based organizations and County departments by providing training programs, developing practice standards and referral protocols and regularly convene discharge planners and other interested staff to discuss shared challenges and best practices.

- Convene a local workgroup to promote information exchange between community-based service providers, behavioral health providers and healthcare providers with a priority on sharing acute hospital re-admission data.

**3) EDUCATE.** Actively educate the Board of Supervisors, local city councils and Conference of Mayors, and other elected officials, County agency officials, seniors and family members, and other community leaders about the dramatic increase in the aging population, key unmet service needs and gaps, and the roles that local officials and agencies can play in supporting aging residents.

- Create easy to understand fact sheets, report briefs, mapping tools and other resources to educate elected officials and other key stakeholders.
- Complete public presentations and individual visits with governing bodies, individual elected officials and other stakeholder groups.
- Market the effectiveness of current programs to key stakeholders and funders by demonstrating the return on investment of successful programs.

**4) ADVOCATE.** Conduct coordinated advocacy to promote County and city policies that significantly increase investment into services to support aging with dignity.

- Advocate for the Board of Supervisors and all city councils to implement an “aging friendly” policy that ensures that all new policies consider the impact on Contra Costa County seniors and utilize the aging-friendly components/domains defined by the World Health Organization.<sup>1</sup>
- Based on evaluation findings, advocate for new policies and investments related to long-term care, senior housing affordability, medical service access, transportation, isolation and other quality of life issues.
- Facilitate coordinated state-level advocacy by community stakeholders, agencies and elected officials to promote the interests of Contra Costa County aging residents.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, Aging-Friendly Practice. <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/age-friendly-in-practice/>