



# Ventura County Master Plan for Aging

Older adults now make up over 23% of our population, with the number projected to increase to 30% in the next 9 years. In 2019, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order (N-14-19) calling for the creation of a [Master Plan for Aging](#), which is a blueprint for state government, local government, the private sector, and philanthropy to prepare the State for the coming demographic changes.

The County convened a panel of stakeholders in October 2019 to start the process of talking about the reality and the challenges of growing older in Ventura County and what is needed to make the county more livable. The State issued their Master Plan for Aging in January 2021 and below you will find the goals, strategies, and initiatives for a Ventura County specific master plan.

The County of Ventura is committed to evolving to navigate the unique needs of older adults and people with disabilities in our community. While the focus is on aging, there is an equal focus on optimally aging across the lifespan because a Master Plan for Aging is for everyone in the community. Moreover, we also know that older adults and people with disabilities have common issues, though other challenges are unique.

As the Master Plan for Aging was developed, there was also special focus on areas of import to Ventura County. Those focus areas are diversity, equity, and inclusion. The County has always been cognizant of the diversity in our County, racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically and has made continual refinements in how we provide services and connections to resources to ensure we operate through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. In this, our inaugural Master Plan for Aging, there is a specific focus on setting forth the way the County operationalizes through the lens of inclusivity.

We welcome your comments, feedback, and corrections during the month of October 2021.

Please submit them to [pio.vcaaa@ventura.org](mailto:pio.vcaaa@ventura.org) or take our survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VenturaMasterPlan>

## Goals of the Master Plan 2021 and Beyond



### **Goal 1 – Housing for All Ages and Stages**

We will live where we choose as we age in communities that are age, disability, and dementia friendly and disaster ready



### **Goal 2 – Health Reimagined**

We will have access to the services we need to live at home in our communities and to optimize our health and quality of life



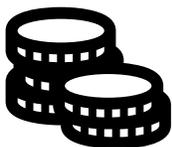
### **Goal 3 – Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation**

We will have lifelong opportunities for work, volunteering, engagement, and leadership and will be protected from isolation, discrimination, abuse, neglect, and exploitation



### **Goal 4 – Caregiving that Works**

We will be prepared for and supported through the rewards and challenges of caring for aging loved ones



### **Goal 5 – Affordable Aging**

We will have economic security for as long as we live



## Goal 1 – Housing for All Ages and Stages

We will live where we choose as we age in communities that are age, disability, and dementia friendly and disaster ready

**Target:** 2000 New Housing Options to Age Well

**Data Indicators:**

- Number of subsidized housing units per 10,000 population, Number of new housing options to age well.
- Percent of adults aged 60 or older who live within a half mile of a park, Percent of adults aged 60 or older who live in communities with less than three acres of parks or open space per 1,000 residents

Ventura County will support and pursue housing for all ages and stages through four strategies:

### 1. More Housing Options



California communities are increasingly developing more affordable housing options to meet the needs of all stages of life for all people, regardless of age, race, income ability, or household size. The production, protection, and preservation of affordable housing, including Accessory Dwelling Units and Residential Care Facilities of all sizes, will support older adults, caregivers, and their families.

Initiatives:

- The county will identify ways to bolster production of more housing options to age well in such as Accessory Dwelling Units that are affordable to support aging well, caregiving, and affordable housing.
- Increase affordable, universal/accessibly designed housing.
- Support and/or facilitate processes for older adults and people with disabilities to have access to safe, affordable housing of their choice.
- Pursue the state assisted living waiver for Ventura County when available to allow more housing choices.
- Support State strategies to increase availability of housing options with “housing for health” strategies – for example, within the anticipated federal planning grant to develop a Medi-Cal Home and Community Based Services Roadmap, include assessments of the availability of services, providers, and residential options and within a new focus on Medicare innovation – to meet need as federally allowable funds are available.
- Support the State efforts to expand the Adult Family Homes model (currently for adults with a developmental disability) to include aging adults, including those with dementia.
- Support efforts to expand Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program.

- Support housing modifications and the fall prevention program to meet growing and changing needs of older adults.
- Support expansion of shared housing models such as Home Share
- Support efforts to expand pet-friendly housing options and affordable pet rental deposits.

## 2. Accessible Transportation and Community Walkability



Age and disability friendly transportation networks can be strengthened through improved community walkability and expansion of bus and transit stops, transit rider education and subsidies, seamless paratransit across transit district lines, and driver safety education.

### Initiatives:

- Support efforts to establish a coordinated transportation system in Ventura county to include establishing person-centered MOU'S between transit districts to allow paratransit to cross transit district lines to meet rider needs.
- Support adoption of set fares and age limits for older adults across transit providers.
- Promote programs to get older adults to give up their keys.
- Review community walkability scores and Vehicle Miles Traveled data for opportunities to analyze with aging demographics.
- Provide older driver safety education training, including information about transportation options other than driving, to meet needs as funds allow.
- Support door through door transportation options.

## 3. Outdoor and Community Spaces for All Ages



All Californians can benefit from more convenient park access within a ten-minute walk or less, co-location of parks with community centers offering programming for all ages, and incorporation of smart park technologies.

### Initiatives:

- Explore targeting public and private park funds to age and disability friendly activities for all ages, including models such as slow streets, SMART parks, parklets for emerging placemaking, and more.
- Support efforts to co-locate childcare and adult care, youth centers and adult centers along with joint programming, such as arts.
- Establish Ventura County as a Blue Zone (see <https://www.bluezones.com/>).

## 4. Emergency Preparedness and Response



Priority should be given to preparing and planning with and for older adults and people with disabilities, given their higher risk of death or harm due to emergencies and disasters. Improving technologies and communications that address the access and functional needs of residents during disasters can also improve preparedness and response to these growing populations.

Initiatives:

- Improve online emergency tools for older, disabled, and at-risk adults and caregivers, in multiple languages, to meet needs.
- Conduct after-action analyses of COVID-19, including the impact on older, disabled, and at-risk adults, as one way to identify strategies to prevent future pandemic, emergency, and disaster-related deaths and disparities in deaths by age, ability, income, race, language, and other equity measures.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 2 – Health Reimagined</b></p> <p>We will have access to the care and services we need to optimize our health and quality of life and to continue to live where we choose.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Close the Equity Gap in and Increase Life Expectancy</p> <p><b>Data Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of hospitalizations for unintentional falls per 100,000 adults age 65 or older,</li><li>• Percent of adults age 60 or older who experienced psychological distress in the past year</li><li>• Number of adults age 60 or older who died by suicide per 100,000 people</li><li>• Percent of adults age 60 or older who are uninsured</li><li>• Percent of adults age 60 or older who have a usual place to go to when sick or in need of health advice</li><li>• Percent of adults age 65 or older who talked with a health care professional about cognitive decline or memory loss</li><li>• Number of dementia-related deaths per 100,000 adults age 65 or older</li><li>• Percent of emergency department visits by adults age 65 or older, Number of accredited geriatric emergency departments</li><li>• Percent of 30-day all-cause Medicare hospital readmission</li></ul>
---	---

Ventura County will pursue Health Reimagined through four strategies:

**1. Bridging Health Care with Home**



Through innovative partnerships with the federal government, Gold Coast Health Plan and community-based organizations, Ventura County can innovate and test new models of health care delivery that maximize access to services – and, as a result, avoid unnecessary institutionalization.

#### Initiatives:

- The County will expand access to home and community-based services for people receiving Medi-Cal via CalAIM, by implementing "In Lieu of Services" (including: Housing Transition Navigation Services, Housing Deposits, Housing Tenancy and Sustaining Services, Short-term Post Hospitalization Housing, Recuperative Care, Respite, Day Habilitation Programs, Nursing Facility Transition/Diversion to Assisted Living Facilities of Home, Personal Care and Homemaker Services, Home Modifications, Medically Tailored Meals, Sobering Centers, and Asthma Remediation) and "Enhanced Care Management"
- Consider home and community alternatives to short-term nursing home stays for participants in Medi-Cal managed care through utilization of combination of the home health benefit, in lieu of services, and proposed expanded telehealth benefit, including remote patient monitoring.

## **2. Health Care as We Age**



Ventura County can lead California in pursuing strategies to increase access across the spectrum of health care services to improve access and care options.

#### Initiatives:

- Assess opportunities to modernize enrollment process for Medicare Savings programs
- Support palliative care to improve patient outcomes and support patient and family choices for care.
- Identify ways to promote care wishes – such as Advanced Planning Directives and Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment – for all ages.
- Support geriatrics component of the Ventura County family residency program
- Support efforts to include geriatric training in new community paramedic initiative
- Support expansion of geriatric emergency department certifications
- Assess opportunities for advance practice providers trained in geriatrics to fill gaps in geriatrics and primary care
- Invest in community case management and care coordination to improve health outcomes and reduce cost of health care and promote independence in the community.
- Create sustainable funding for expanded community-based services to decrease unnecessary health care utilization, reduce cost, and extend time that one could stay in the community.

### 3. Lifelong Healthy Aging



By fostering healthy environments beginning at birth, expanding access to prevention programs, and developing culturally competent public health educational tools and services, Ventura County can reduce some of the greatest and most inequitable health disparities

#### Initiatives:

- Build in older adult focus to existing Behavioral Health Suicide Prevention Programs.
- Support the Warm Line for older adults to address isolation and loneliness needs.
- Support Public Health and public education tools, with culturally competent and equity-targeted approaches, that promote brain health and address other healthy aging priorities (e.g., physical activity, nutrition, tobacco, oral health, mental health, substance abuse, and trauma).

### 4. Dementia in Focus



Ventura County will provide opportunities to prevent cognitive impairment and improving the lives of residents living with dementia through comprehensive and coordinated strategies on brain health awareness, public information portals and hotlines and support services.

#### Initiatives:

- Support the expansion of Dementia Friendly Ventura County initiatives.
- Provide long term case management for older adults and people with disabilities that have Alzheimer's and Related Dementias, to include supporting individuals that live alone.
- Promote screening, diagnosis, and care planning by health care providers for patients and families with Alzheimer's and Related Dementias, through health care provider and direct caregiver training opportunities.
- Assistance with cost of Adult Day Services, in-home care, and Assisted Living/nursing home care due to the need for increased care over a longer period.
- Provide more comprehensive, in depth training for caregiver support.
- Provide LGBTQ training for inclusivity.



### **Goal 3 – Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation**

We will have lifelong opportunities for work, volunteering, engagement, and leadership and will be protected from isolation, discrimination, abuse, neglect, and exploitation

**Target:** Keep increasing life satisfaction as we age.

**Data Indicators:**

- Percent of adults age 60 or older who said people in their community are willing to help each other.
- Percent of older adults with Internet access at home
- Percent of adults age 60 or older who reported having done volunteer work or community service in the past year that they had not been paid for.
- Number of confirmed allegations of abuse and of self-neglect among Adult Protective Services (APS) clients aged 65 or older, Percent of APS clients aged 65 or older for whom a prior report was filed within the past 12 months.

Ventura County will support and pursue inclusion and equity, not isolation through six strategies:

#### **1. Inclusion and Equity in Aging**



As a racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse County, Ventura will lead in combatting ageism, ableism, racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, and all prejudices; and will expand opportunities for all older adults and people with disabilities to be economically, civically, and socially engaged, without experiencing discrimination or bias. Ventura's aging and disability leaders, providers, and partners are committed to becoming increasingly culturally responsive through strategies including trainings data collection, and public campaigns.

Initiatives:

- Continue to expand culturally and linguistically competent communications to older adults, people with disabilities, and families.
- Utilize private partnerships and existing funds to implement anti-ageism and equity campaign ("California for All Ages") with public, employers, including equity by age, race, ethnicity, language, citizenship status, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, family status, disability, dementia/cognitive status, and income.

## 2. Closing the Digital Divide



Ventura County will close the digital divide by increasing access to the internet and digital devices to improve the ability of older adults and people with disabilities to connect to family and friends, health care providers, and to access additional support.

### Initiatives:

- Support efforts to expand Broadband throughout the county including underserved areas.
- In collaboration with the Ventura County Library System, the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging will use existing funds to distribute personal technology to older adults and people with disabilities.
- Develop a plan to launch digital literacy support for older adults and for providers.

## 3. Opportunities to Work



Scaling flexible work and education models, including virtual options, and preventing age discrimination in the workplace, can increase the inclusion of older adults and people with disabilities and harness their talent, professionalism, knowledge, and expertise.

### Initiatives:

- Consistent with the goals of the Future of Work Commission, explore ways to promote flexible work models, especially as people age, experience disability, or formally retire
- Provide job training and apprenticeship opportunities to older adults and people with disabilities.
- Provide assistive technology equipment and devices available to workers with disabilities, to meet need and advance equity, within existing resources.
- Provide re-entry services to older adults that increase employment and engagement, to meet their needs and advance equity within existing resources.
- Increase long term care specialty service workers to support older adults and people with disabilities to live well in the community.

## 4. Opportunities to Volunteer and Engage Across Generations



Volunteer programs can intentionally and effectively recruit, support and connect adults of all ages through community-based organizations, schools, libraries and more.

### Initiatives:

- Promote and adapt "village models" for older adult volunteerism and services.
- Support the Elder Story Project, in partnership with libraries and aging services, and engage the diversity of Ventura County older adults.

- Assess older adults' engagement in lifelong learning at Aging services, Adult Schools, and Community Colleges, including online, continually improving cultural competency and languages.
- Scope opportunity for new intergenerational volunteerism partnerships in schools, with philanthropic partners.

## 5. Protection from Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation



Ventura County will strengthen its prevention and response to elder abuse, neglect, exploitation and fraud with person centered, data driven and culturally competent approaches.

### Initiatives:

- Support the efforts of the Financial Abuse Specialist Team to target financial fraud and abuse.
- In conjunction with the District Attorney's Office, establish a countywide elder abuse awareness initiative.
- Supports the efforts of the Family Justice Center and increase the capacity to support older adults and people with disabilities that are victims of crime.
- Support the efforts of the medical examiner and the Elder Death review team.
- Support the Long-Term Care Ombudsmen and Adult Protective Services and efforts to prevent and address abuse and neglect in long-term care facilities.

## 6. Ventura County Leadership and Visibility of Aging Services



Strategies to advance Ventura County's leadership include supporting information, assistance, and resource connection portals such as the Aging and Disability Resource Center to provide education, awareness, and seamless access to services.

### Initiatives:

- Revisit the name and scope of services provided by the Area Agency on Aging
- Begin process for Ventura County become an AARP-Certified Age-Friendly county.
- Provide information and support to older adults including information on how the various systems work and how to access services
- Provide countywide leadership and collaboration around aging services
- The County of Ventura and the Area Agency on Aging will strengthen its no wrong door system of services including increasing collaboration with community-based organizations to include faith-based organizations to disseminate resources and facilitate connection to services. This includes streamlining systems to be centralized, navigable, user-friendly, and cross linked, providing access to information, resources, services and programs at the state, regional and local level.

- Develop an action plan for change that will maximize resources, community wide services, and coordination of interdisciplinary expertise via a pro-active infrastructure and organizational culture.
- To close the communication and resource information gap, by establishing additional, formal collaborative, supportive, county wide agreements with county non-profit and for-profit organizations serving older adults and people with disabilities.

	<p><b>Goal 4 – Caregiving that Works</b></p> <p>We will be prepared for and supported through the rewards and challenges of caring for aging loved ones</p> <p><b>Target: increasing supports to caregivers</b></p> <p><b>Data Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of adults who provided help in the past year to a family member or friend who has a serious or chronic illness or disability</li> <li>• Number of paid caregivers per 1,000 adults age 65 or older</li> <li>• Percent of Medicare primary care visits delivered via telehealth</li> </ul>
---	---

Ventura County will support caregivers through two strategies:

### 1. Family and Friends Caregiving Support

 Family caregivers need supports – such as paid family leave, multilingual training resources, virtual care options, and respite – so that the role remains rewarding and caregivers can maintain health, well-being, and income while caring for a loved one. Given that lower-income women, particularly women of color, disproportionately provide family caregiving, resources and support should be tailored and prioritized accordingly.

#### Initiatives:

- Support State efforts to promote state paid family leave benefits to older Californians, people with disabilities, and family caregivers.
- Support respite care and initiatives to provide financial support for family caregiver. It is common for families trying to “do right” by their family member to wipe out savings before their loved one can qualify for Medi-Care or Medi-Cal.
- Support the three Family Caregiver Centers in Ventura County, including La Buena Vida.

- Address financial impact on family/friend and caregivers (lost wages, decreased retirement savings, use of own money for person needing care).
- Currently resources/supports are fragmented and limited. Clients and Caregivers want more resources and better connections to those resources. Ideally, they would like a central location/agency that accurately assesses needs in a comprehensive manner and help educate the caregiver and develop plans (case management) for the loved one.

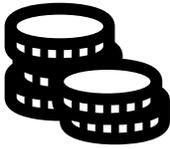
## 2. Virtual Care Expansion



Support efforts to expand telehealth access to health care incorporating lessons from COVID-19 and including virtual communication, remote patient monitoring, provider education, beneficiary education, family caregivers, and language access considerations, within existing resources. Consider opportunities to access personal and home technologies that promote healthyaging, to meet need and advance health equity, as funds are available.

### Initiatives:

- Identify innovative models and solutions to enhance telehealth access for people of all ages, races, and ethnicities, in alignment with State Broadband Council's new Strategy per August 2020 Executive Order, within existing resources.
- Expand telehealth access to multiple Medi-Cal delivery systems, incorporating lessons from COVID-19 and including virtual communication, remote patient monitoring, provider education, beneficiary education, family caregivers, and language access considerations, within existing resources.
- Consider opportunities to access personal and home technologies that promotes healthyaging, to meet need and advance health equity, as funds are available.



## Goal 5 – Affordable Aging

We will have economic security for as long as we live

**Target:** Close the Equity Gap in and Increase Elder Economic Security

**Data Indicators:**

- Percent of adults aged 60 or older who are experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness
- Percent of adults aged 60 or older who have access to workplace retirement benefits
- Percent of basic cost of living covered by SSI/SSP for older adults age 65 or older living alone or as a couple; Percent of low-income older adults age 60 or older who are food insecure and who are enrolled in CalFresh

Ventura County will support affordable aging through three strategies:

### 1. End Homelessness for Older Adults



Ventura County will support opportunities to invest in innovative solutions to prevent older adult homelessness, reduce barriers to accessing housing programs and services, and promote the transition of those experiencing homelessness to affordable and accessible housing models, with supportive services.

Initiatives:

- Building on the success of Homekey, further develop the network of housing needed to end homelessness, prevent older and other at-risk individuals from falling into homelessness, and provide expanded supports at housing placements.
- Support expansion of older homelessness programs, such as HomeSafe (APS) and Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP/SSI), to meet needs as funds allow.
- Support the State's efforts assess IHSS plus Housing models.

### 2. Income Security as We Age



Ventura County will support the State's efforts in pursuing partnerships to assess and strengthen individual savings, employer-based retirement, and Social Security and to expand employment opportunities and economic security at all ages.

Initiatives:

- Support the State's efforts to advocate for new federal Administration to assess Social Security gaps for California's diverse workforce, including caregivers, farmworkers, and more.

**3. Protection from Poverty & Hunger**



The Federal/State safety net for older adults and people with disabilities, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP), has not kept up with poverty levels. The hunger and nutritional needs of older Californians require greater assessment and coordination to provide affordable and culturally appropriate foods through CalFresh (SNAP), food banks, meal delivery at home, congregate meals, and medically tailored meals, among others.

Initiatives:

- Building on the lessons of Covid, develop innovative and cost-effective ways to support older adults that are food insecure and/or at nutritional risk to include home delivery and congregate dining options.
- Provide medically tailored meals through Cal-Aim and through Medicare plans
- Support Food Share's efforts to provide senior food box program (Commodity Supplemental Food Program)
- Continue to streamline older and disabled adult enrollment, renewal, and online shopping in CalFresh, as allowable.