

# **CONTRA COSTA COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING ANNUAL REPORT**

**JANUARY 2023 – DECEMBER 2023**



## **CONTACT:**

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<i>Annual Report Table of Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
President’s Report / Executive Summary	3
<i>Committee Reports</i>	
Planning	5
Membership / Nominating	7
<i>Workgroup Reports</i>	
Housing	8
Health	9
Legislative Advocacy	10
Transportation	11
Technology	13

The Advisory Council on Aging (ACOA) had another active year, despite the challenges posed by the end of the state of emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the mandated return to in-person meetings with limited zoom opportunities, the ACOA lost many members. Currently we have 26 active members compared to 36 active members as of December 2022. Vacant seats include the senior nutrition seat and eight city seats in Lafayette, Moraga, Pittsburg, San Pablo, San Ramon and Walnut Creek with seats in Brentwood and Pinole pending EHSD and Board of Supervisors approval. Applications received for the five vacant member-at-large seats will be filled shortly, pending approval by the ACOA, EHSD, and the Board of Supervisors.

The ACOA Legislative workgroup crafted and introduced California Senior Legislature (CSL) SP6, The Brown Act Teleconferencing Revision Proposal, to allow older adults, caregivers, people with disabilities, and the poor to work remotely with advisory councils, commissions, committees, and their attendant workgroups. The proposal was voted #2 out of the top 10 CSL legislative proposals.

The ACOA continues to be represented on the Implementation of the Master Plan for Aging in Contra Costa Together (IMPACCT) Stakeholders Committee.

***Key activities for each of our Committees and Workgroups are highlighted below:***

- The Planning committee supported the AAA RFP process, serving on several proposal review panels. To develop the Area Plan 2024-2028, the Planning committee and AAA staff conducted local focus groups to understand unmet needs for older adults in areas that are underserved and most economically and socially isolated. The Planning committee analyzed both the State survey results and local focus group outcomes to develop goals for the Area Plan 2024-2028.
- The Membership committee continued recruitment efforts to increase diversity in the ACOA as well as assist in finding applicants for vacancies on the council.
- The Housing workgroup continued their education objectives with monthly presentations on innovative and important housing resources as well as creating a “No Place to Call Home” infographic, utilizing current housing and income statistics to describe conditions that impact older adults.
- The Health workgroup developed a brochure titled “Aging in Place in Contra Costa County.” This brochure is intended to assist all county seniors in planning and determining the appropriate location to age, safely and successfully in Contra Costa County.

- The Legislative workgroup continued tracking Assembly and Senate bills dealing with issues of importance to seniors and informing all workgroups of bills important for them. A critical activity for the Legislative workgroup was authoring SP6, a California Senior Legislature proposal to address the Brown Act and teleconferencing.
- The Transportation workgroup provided advocacy on accessible transportation for senior and disabled adults through state legislation that supports, preserves, and encourages senior mobility programs.
- The Technology workgroup supported the AAA in the execution of technology programming grants and inspired and launched CoCoElders411.net, an unaffiliated resource site for County residents.
- The creation of the Senior Nutrition workgroup was consented to by the ACOA on October 18, 2023, and the workgroup will begin activities in 2024.

### ***Training/Certifications***

Members of the ACOA are required to complete three training courses upon appointment and every two years thereafter. The training courses are the Brown Act & Better Government Ordinance, Ethics for Local Government Officials, and Implicit Bias Training Course.

### ***Recommendations***

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- Fund Senior Services – allocate the resources necessary to fund senior services as Contra Costa County moves forward with implementing the Master Plan for Aging (MPA).
- Support Brown Act Teleconferencing Revision – advocate and support the movement of CSL SP6 to a senate or assembly bill to allow older adults, caregivers, people with disabilities, and the poor to work remotely with ADVISORY councils, commissions, committees, and their attendant workgroups.

It has been my honor to serve as President of the ACOA this past year. I look forward to continual service in the years ahead.

### ***Jill Kleiner***

Executive Committee Chair  
Advisory Council on Aging President

**Planning Committee Roster**

- Michelle Berman (Chair)
- Swamini Bagpai
- Debbie Card
- James Donnelly
- Kevin Donovan
- Jody Iorns
- Jill Kleiner
- Gerald Richards
- Michael Wener
- Dennis Yee

EHSD staff members Ana Bagtas, Glenda Pacha, Frank Latham, Jennifer Gomes-Figueira, and Jenny Lam strongly supported the Committee throughout 2023.

**Committee’s Role**

The Committee has three primary roles:

- To work with the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) staff to develop and provide an ongoing review of the state-required Area Plan every four years for Contra Costa County.
- To participate in the RFP review process of contractors each fiscal year who apply for funding to support the delivery of the providers direct services specific to older persons, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers.
- To support the AAA in monitoring of contractors.

Additionally, the Committee provides support to the AAA as requested.

**Accomplishments**

- This year’s focus was on fulfilling our evolving roles within the AAA. The Committee provided a thorough and ongoing review of the updated Area Plan Update 2022-2023 while providing opportunities for each workgroup to update the status of their objectives as needed.
- Per state compliance requirements, several Committee members underwent orientation to participate in the contractor Request for Proposal (“RFP”) responses for (Title III D, Title III E, Measure X).
- In June, the committee worked with AAA staff to develop a workplan and timeline for the preparation of Area Plan 2024-2028. This includes developing methods to collect qualitative information from older and disabled community members and their families about their needs through Focus Group meetings, concentrating in areas that are underserved and with groups that are most economically and socially isolated.
- Distilled and analyzed the State survey results and local focus group outcomes to develop Area Plan 2024-2028 goals.

**2024 Work Plan**

- By March 5, 2024, the Planning Committee will provide a draft of the 2024-2028 Area Plan for Executive Committee approval.
- The Committee will support the AAA with Request for Proposal (“RFP”) processes.

- The Committee will support the AAA with the annual Contractor Monitoring process.

***Michelle Berman***

Planning Committee, Chair

**Membership Committee Roster (Includes Nominating Committee Roster)**

• Swamini Bajpai	District II	Nominating Committee
• Michelle Berman	District III	Membership Committee
• Debbie Card	District V	Nominating Committee
• Jim Donnelly	District II	Membership Committee
• Candace Evans	District II	Membership Committee
• Rudy Fernandez	District III	Membership Committee
• Carol Kehoe	District I	Membership/Nominating Committee
• Jill Kleiner (Chair)	District II	Membership Committee
• George Lee	District V	Membership Committee
• Brian O’Toole	District IV	Nominating Committee
• Michael Rigsby	District III	Nominating Committee
• Terri Tobey	District II	Membership Committee

**Committee’s Role**

To recruit and select Contra Costa County residents to serve as members on the Advisory Council on Aging. Conduct ten monthly meetings per year to review membership requirements, attendance, and recruitment activities. Form Nominating committee to prepare slate of 2023 officer candidates for consideration. Assign and maintain list of mentors for new members.

**Accomplishments**

The year was challenging with the return to in-person meetings March 1<sup>st</sup> following the end of the Covid state of emergency. Higher than normal resignations occurred due to personal reasons, moving out of Contra Costa County, and one member passed away. With quorum determined based on the number of available seats (40) and with a high number of vacancies, it was difficult to meet quorum for all general council meetings.

This year the Membership Committee received eleven applications and conducted eight interviews for Member-at-large (MAL) seats. The Committee updated the applicant interview questions to clarify membership duties. District 1 of Contra Costa County is now better represented; however, Districts 3 and 5 need additional members. Vacancies include five MAL, six local/city seats (Lafayette, Moraga, Pittsburg, San Pablo, San Ramon and Walnut Creek), and nutrition representative.

**2024 Work Plan**

- Recruit to fill MAL vacancies and support local/city seat recruitment activities.
- Promote meeting attendance to ensure a quorum to transact council’s business.
- Track and address membership requirements, report to the Executive Committee and general membership.
- Invite city representatives of open ACOA city positions to attend ACOA meetings.

**Jill Kleiner**

Membership Committee Chair



**Housing Workgroup Roster**

Kevin Donovan (Co-Chair)  
James Donnelly  
Marilyn Fowler  
Victoria Snyder (Contra Costa Senior Legal Services)  
AAA staff support: Nhang Luong (Information & Assistance Program)  
Logan Robertson (Front Porch)

Uche Uwahemu (Co-Chair, Center for Elders' Independence)  
Michael Rigsby  
Mike Awadalla  
Gerald Richards  
Michelle Hayes  
Caitlin Sly (Meals on Wheels Diablo Region)  
Caroline Miller (Health, Housing and Homeless Services)

**Workgroup's Role:**

The Workgroup has two primary roles:

1. Provide a forum for the discussion of affordable housing and homelessness issues.
2. Advocate for actions that promote affordable housing and support the homeless.

**Accomplishments**

2023's Workgroup focus was on providing a venue for the discussion of current housing trends, challenges impacting housing availability and affordability as well as the ongoing issue of homelessness. Additionally, the Workgroup provided advocacy for pending state legislation and provided materials to improve community awareness of the challenges facing low-income seniors and the disabled.

The Workgroup created the "No Place to Call Home" infographic which utilizes current housing and income statistics which describe conditions that impact seniors. A related slide deck is being prepared to assist ACOA city appointed members in their presentations to city council and planning committees and other public gatherings. Created letters of support for two legislative actions designed to increase the amount of affordable housing in the County.

Workgroup meetings became a venue for housing focused groups and county staff as ten groups presented slide decks which presented issues impacting housing affordability, availability and homelessness.

**2024 Work Plan**

Continue providing a venue for nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies to advocate for programs and policies impacting housing for seniors and the disabled. Participate in the development of the MPA IMPACCT Committee's local playbook and its housing goals and strategies. Increase County awareness of the issues impacting affordable housing and homelessness and how the County can potentially use Measure X funding to possibly mitigate these issues.

**Kevin Donovan**

Housing Workgroup Co-Chair

**Uche Uwahemu**

Housing Workgroup Co-Chair

**Health Workgroup Roster**

- Marty Aufhauser
- Michelle Berman
- Jennifer Doran (Chair)
- Candace Evans
- Susan Frederick (ACOA Emeritus)
- Brian O’Toole
- Sara Shafiabady
- Caitlin Sly (MOWDR)
- Terri Tobey
- Michael Wener
- Dennis Yee

The Workgroup’s hybrid meetings and activities required the support of EHSD staff Glenda Pacha, Jenny Lam, and Jennifer Gomes-Figueira.

**Workgroup’s Role**

Review current and health-related programs and systems (physical, mental, and long-term care) that affect older adults who are residents of Contra Costa County. Advocate for and educate about quality, suitability, accessibility of these programs and systems.

**Accomplishments**

- Developed and approved a brochure to be used by consumers entitled “Aging in Place in Contra Costa County.” The brochure is intended to assist all county seniors in planning and determining the appropriate location to age, safely and successfully in Contra Costa County.
- Coordinated with Meals on Wheels Diablo Region (MOWDR) and assisted in provision of two Elder Financial Abuse presentations by the Contra Costa Elder Abuse Program to Senior Centers located in low service areas in East and West Contra Costa County.
- One member volunteered to review and score a health-related contract proposal.
- Continued hosting a speaker from the community to address specific health issues/services at each meeting.
- Continued with provision of updates by members on specific health topics at each meeting.

**2024 Work Plan**

- Assist with development of 2024-2028 Area Plan.
- Distribute Health Workgroup brochures to the public and agencies.
- Assist with implementation of the senior nutrition program being transferred from Contra Costa Health Department oversight to the AAA.
- Assist with implementation of the Master Plan for Aging goals as requested.

**Jennifer Doran**

Health Workgroup Chair

**Legislative Workgroup Roster**

- Candace Evans
- Shirley Krohn (Chair)
- Steve Lipson
- Lorna Van Ackeren

**Workgroup's Role**

- Review legislation and legislative issues that are important to older adults and people with disabilities in Contra Costa County.
- Develop letters of support/opposition concerning proposed and potential legislation.
- Identify potential legislative ideas for consideration by the California Senior Legislature (CSL).

**Accomplishments**

- Crafted and introduced CSL's SP6, The Brown Act Teleconferencing Revision Proposal, to allow older adults, caregivers, people with disabilities, and the poor to work remotely with advisory councils, commissions, committees, and their attendant workgroups. The proposal was voted #2 out of the top 10 CSL legislative proposals.
- Workgroup members wrote letters supporting additional CSL proposals in areas including health, housing, and transportation.
- Briefed new members on the process for reviewing bills and on the legislative website where they can subscribe to a bill by number, to keep up to date on bill progress in order to report to members.

**2024 Work Plan**

- Ongoing support and promotion of CA Senior Legislature's SP6 with the goal of seeing it sponsored and subsequently enacted into law.
- The development of additional legislative proposals for promotion by the CSL.
- Educational outreach to all ACOA Workgroups to increase legislative ideas and advocacy throughout the ACOA.
- Additional outreach to nonprofits and service organizations that address the needs of older adults and people with disabilities.
- Continue to meet from January through July to coincide with State Legislative schedule.

**Shirley Krohn**

Legislative Advocacy Workgroup Chair

### **Transportation Workgroup Roster**

- Mike Awadalla
- John Cunningham (Contra Costa Dept. of Conservation & Development)
- Jim Donnelly (Chair)
- Rashida Kamara (Contra Costa Transportation Authority)
- Shirley Krohn
- Kathryn Monroy (Concord Senior Center)
- Rosa Noya (County Connection)
- Joanna Pallock (WCC Transportation Authority)
- Deanna Perry (ECC Transit Authority)
- Drennen Shelton (Bay Area Metro)
- Debbie Toth (Choice in Aging)
- Elaine Welch (Mobility Matters)
- Kate Wiley (Orinda Seniors Around Town)

### **Workgroup's Role**

To address transportation barriers and gaps in service experienced by Contra Costa older adults through education, advocacy and the promotion of effective coordination of services and mobility management that enhances the autonomy and independence of older adults in Contra Costa County.

### **Accomplishments**

2023 Presentations from:

- Senior Driver Ombudsman Program- Jerrod Sieberg, DMV
- Accessible Transportation Bill (AB 540)- John Cunningham- CCDC&D
- Danville Accessible Transportation Survey- Jim Donnelly
- Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan- John Cunningham- CCDC&D
- County Connection Travel Training- Sarah Birdwell, Independent Living Resource Center
- Update on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Transformation Action Plan related to Paratransit- Drennen Shelton, MTC
- Aalborg Denmark All Electric Regional Bus Service- Jim Donnelly

Provided advocacy for:

- Accessible Transportation Bill (AB 540)
- Mobility Management in Contra Costa City-based transportation programs
  - Increased volunteerism in senior transportation
  - Legislation that supports, preserves, and encourages senior mobility.
- Attended community meetings and trainings that provided information on the Master Plan for Aging, CCTA and Regional Transportation Organizations.
- Participated in the Paratransit Coordinating Council, DACLAC, and the Task Force for the Implementation of the Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan.
- Supported further development of the Master Plan for Aging.
- Provided updates of services for older adults in need of transportation services.

**2024 Work Plan**

- Develop Pandemic lessons learned review for Contra Costa Accessible Transportation Services.
- Investigate trends in senior transportation services and provide ongoing updates to CC County residents.
- Schedule six presentations in 2024 from transportation service providers and educators in Contra Costa County.
- Participate in the Paratransit Coordinating Council, Disability and Aging Community Living Advisory Committee (DACLAC), Accessible Transportation Task Force, and Regional Transportation Organization meetings.
- Participate in Master Plan for Aging local implementation, ensuring senior transportation and people with disabilities' issues are addressed.
- Participate in CCC's Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan implementation.
- Perform outreach to new and former members of SMAC.

**Jim Donnelly**

Transportation Workgroup Chair

**Technology Workgroup Roster**

- Cate Burkhardt
- Jim Donnelly
- Candace Evans
- Jill Kleiner
- George Lee
- Steve Lipson (Chair)
- Justin Lola (Center for Elders Independence)
- Erin Partridge
- Penny Reed
- Sam Sakai-Miller

EHSD staff members Ana Bagtas, Jenny Lam, and Glenda Pacha provided strong support to the workgroup throughout 2023.

**Workgroup's Role**

To support the Advisory Council on Aging (ACOA) by identifying and recommending ways to improve access and use of technologies for individual members and the community-at-large.

**Workgroup Activities**

- Regular Monthly Meetings
- CCC Representatives: Bay Area Digital Inclusion Coalition
- Speakers/Educational Presentations
- ACOA Website Recommendations Edits/Updates/Additions
- Inspired and facilitated the launch of CoCoElders411.net an unaffiliated resource site for County residents.
- Supported the AAA in the execution of technology programming grants.
- With the Legislative Workgroup, continue to address the issue of the Brown Act and teleconferencing on the ability to achieve quorums.
- Monitored AI (Artificial Intelligence) technologies and their impact on older adults.

**Accomplishments**

In 2023, the Technology Workgroup participated in the Bay Area Digital Inclusion Coalition; provided recommendations to the ACOA website, supported the launch of CoCoElders411.net an unaffiliated resource site for County residents; supported the AAA in the execution of technology programming grants; authored SP 6, a California Senior Legislature proposal to address the issue of the Brown Act and teleconferencing; and monitored AI (Artificial Intelligence) technologies and their impact on older adults; and advised the AAA in the implementation of federal, state, and local technology funding programs including Digital Connections, CHAT, Access to Technology and Measure X.

**2024 Work Plan**

- Continue to support CoCoElders411.net as a resource for older adults.
- Create new technology-centric proposals for the California Senior Legislature.
- Continue to provide recommendations to Area Agency on Aging regarding technology-related funding.

- Continue to monitor AI issues as they relate to older adults and the disabled.
- Identify and support new programming that addresses goal 3 of the Master Plan for Aging local Playbook, Inclusion & Equity, and Not Isolation.

***Steve Lipson***

Technology Workgroup Chair