



The Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging 2025 to 2030

Transforming the Experience of Aging & Disability
in Santa Barbara County





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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

To Community Members of Santa Barbara County:

The County of Santa Barbara is home to a vibrant and growing population of older adults who enrich and strengthen our communities through their lived experience, wisdom, leadership, and service. A dramatic shift is underway, in which individuals aged 60 and older will comprise 25% of the Santa Barbara County population by 2030.

This demographic transformation is particularly significant in Santa Barbara County, where the older adult population is diverse and geographically spread across both rural and urban areas, often facing unique challenges in accessing affordable housing, transportation, healthcare, and caregiver support. Many seniors in our region live on fixed incomes in one of the most expensive housing markets in the state, and rural communities from Cuyama to the Santa Ynez Valley face transportation barriers that limit access to essential services. The impact of climate change and natural disasters, such as wildfires and flooding, further increases vulnerability for our aging population.

To address these challenges and build on the strengths of our community, we are proud to present the Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging—a visionary roadmap designed to ensure that our County is a place where people of all ages and abilities can thrive. The plan embraces age and disability-friendly design and reflects our collective commitment to creating environments that promote independence, dignity, and well-being for all residents.

This plan, endorsed by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, was developed through the leadership of the Santa Barbara County Adult and Aging Network in partnership with community organizations, local residents, and elected officials. It focuses on six priority areas critical to aging well:

- Communication and information
- Housing options
- Transportation choices
- Access to health and community services
- Caregiver supports
- Being just, inclusive, and resilient

The Master Plan for Aging is more than a policy document—it is a community call to action. It is your plan. We invite you to read it, engage with it, and help shape its implementation. Your voice and involvement are essential to creating a future where everyone in Santa Barbara County can age with health, safety, and happiness. To learn more and stay connected, visit <http://www.sbcaan.org>.

Sincerely,

Joan Hartmann
Co-chair, Adult & Aging Network
Third District Supervisor
County of Santa Barbara

Roy Lee
Co-chair, Adult & Aging Network
First District Supervisor
County of Santa Barba

Introduction

In January 2021, California released the Master Plan for Aging (MPA), a statewide blueprint for aging across the lifespan. The MPA envisions a California for all ages and abilities, addressing the needs of older adults, younger generations with longer life expectancies, caregivers, and people with disabilities. The MPA has Five Bold Goals, which are Housing for All Ages & Stages, Health Reimagined, Inclusion & Equity – Not Isolation, Caregiving that Works, and Affordable Aging. This comprehensive plan includes 23 strategies and 100's of initiatives that are regularly evaluated and updated over time. It represents an investment of 9.5 billion dollars which is already benefiting Santa Barbara County (SBC) by providing new and expanded resources.

The Santa Barbara County Adult & Aging Network (AAN) was created in 1999 as an advisory body to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors on issues relating to older adults and people with disabilities. The AAN was formed to coordinate existing services and strategically determine priority needs and concerns for older adults and adults with disabilities in the areas of human services, health, education, safety, and community access. It includes representatives from many public and private agencies working collaboratively to improve lives and promote communities that are age and disability friendly. With the release of the MPA in 2021, AAN began efforts aligned with the Five Bold Goals, focusing on the Caregiving and Housing goals.



Recognizing the need for localized efforts, the California Department of Aging (CDA) provided over \$4 million dollars in Local Aging and Disability Action Plan (LADAP) grants. In July 2023, Access Central Coast (ACC), formerly Independent Living Resource Center, was honored to receive 1 of 20 LADAP grants. ACC and AAN worked in partnership to hire a Project Coordinator and to launch a 2-year effort to create The Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging (SBC MPA), a community-based strategic plan, anchored in local data and the experiences of local people, to guide actions from 2025 to 2030.

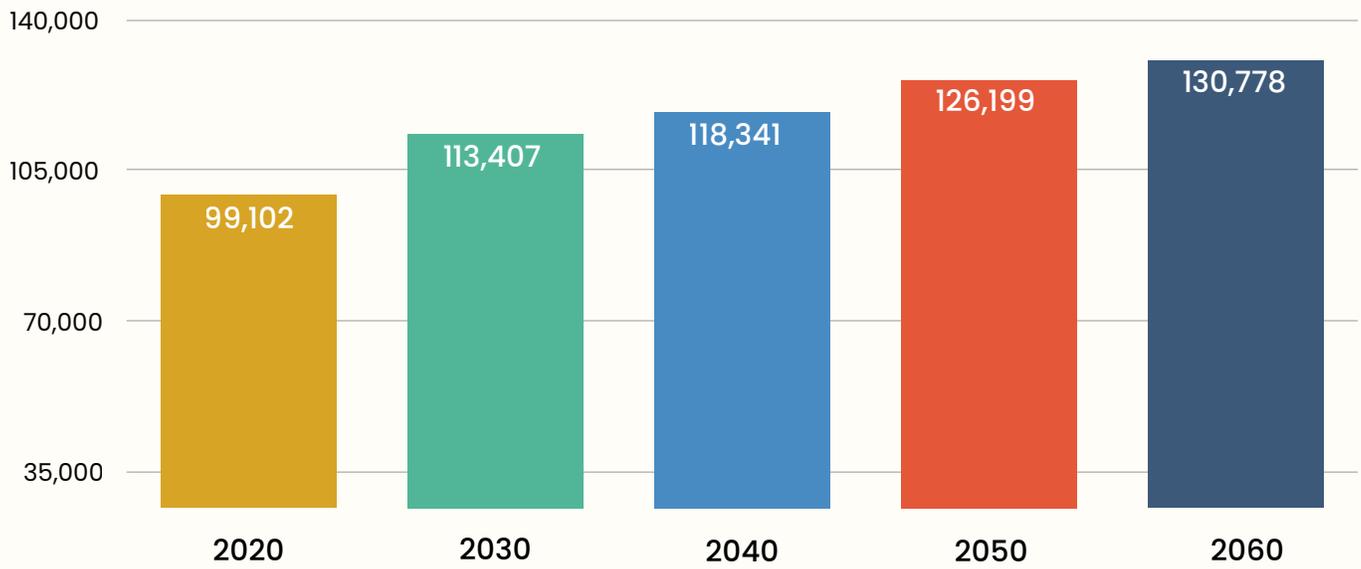
Community Profile

SBC is often portrayed as the “American Riviera”, a beautiful place with pleasant weather and healthy, happy people. This idyllic image does not reflect the diversity of the area or the many individuals who find it challenging to live here. In the Community Assessment for the Local Plan, participants were asked about their experience living in SBC. Their answers exemplify the contrasts, as shown in the image below.

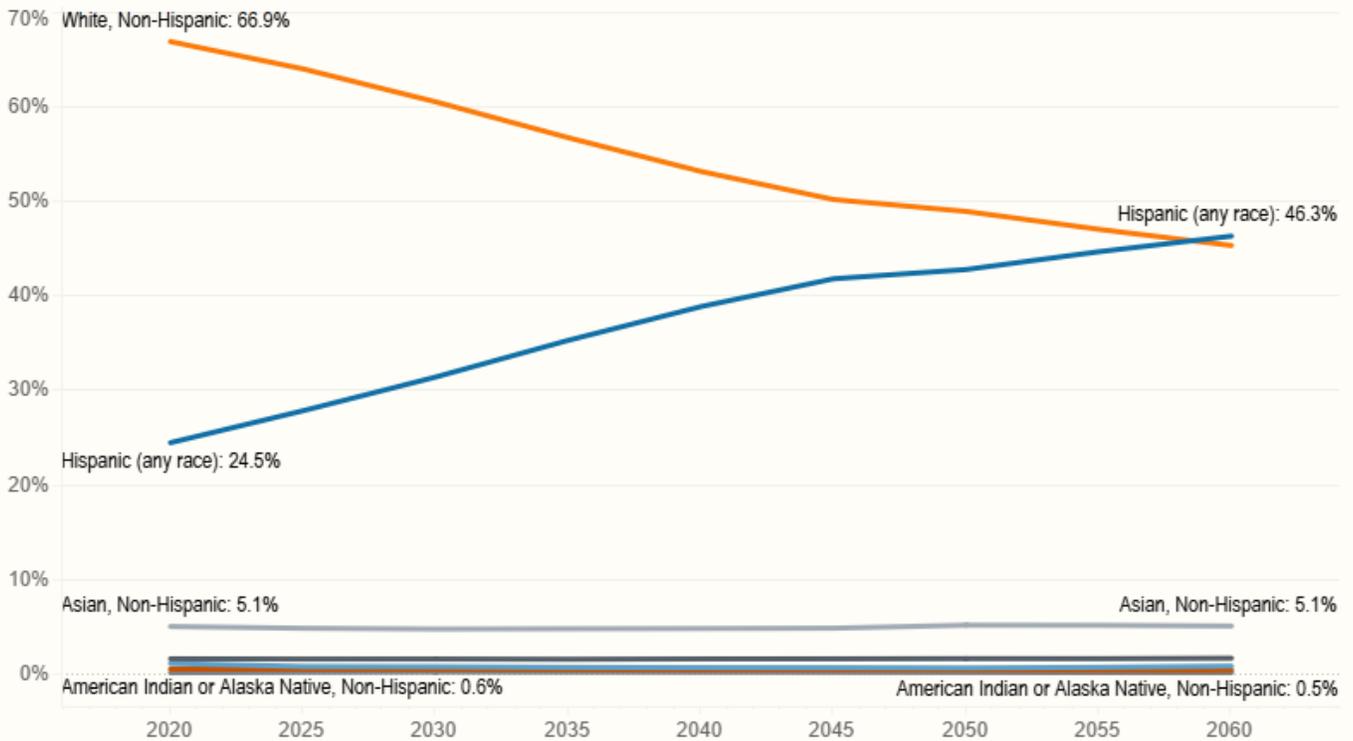


In addition to the Community Assessment, the local community profile has been informed by the data-rich publication, “Aging Well in Santa Barbara County, created by AAN.” SBC, like California overall, is aging and diversifying. In 2030 residents age 60+ will be 25% of the population. From 2020 to 2060 the number of individuals age 60+ will increase by 32%. The population of older adults varies among SBC communities. Already, Solvang has 38% of its population age 60+ and Carpinteria has 29%, while Guadalupe and Lompoc are relatively young, at 12% and 16% age 60+ respectively. Additionally, by 2060, Hispanic individuals age 60+ will represent the largest portion of older adults at 46%. There will be no single ethnicity or race that makes up 50% of the population.

Santa Barbara County Older Adult Population (Age 60+)

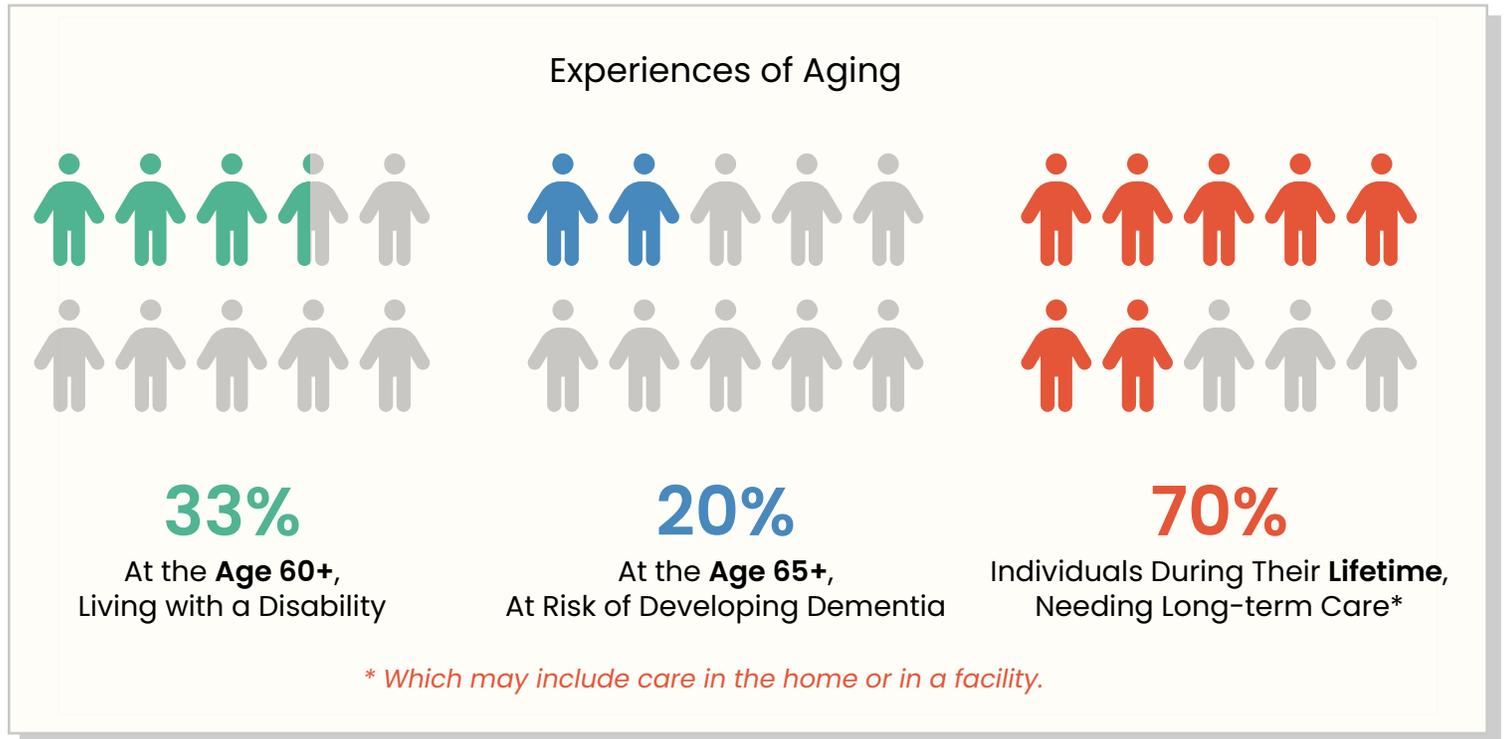


Race/Ethnicity Projections



Aspects that reflect the experience of aging include:

- At age 60+, 33% live with a disability
- At age 65+, 20% are at risk of developing dementia
- Long-term care will be needed by 70% of individuals during their lifetime, which may include care in the home or in a facility



Affordability is extremely challenging in SBC as indicated below:

- Social Security covers less than half of the cost of living
- 10% of adults age 65+ live at or below the Federal Poverty Level
- 25% of adults age 65+ live in economic hardship, defined as below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level

The cost of housing in SBC is a primary factor in being unable to age in place, as follows:

- 55% of older renters and 31% of older homeowners are Housing Cost Burdened, meaning they spend 30% or more of third income on housing.
- SBC ranks 44th of all 58 California counties for most severe cost burden for renters
- Among the homeless population, 33% are age 55+

Cost and access to caregiving is a growing concern:

- In California, a shortage of as many as 3.2 million care providers is expected by 2030
- In SBC the median cost of in-home care is 183% and the median cost of nursing home care is 395% of the annual cost of living, estimated at \$46,198 for age 65+ in SBC
- In SBC nearly 33% of all adults are unpaid family caregivers and 25% of family caregivers are seniors caring for other seniors
- The living wage for SBC is \$32.11/hour for one person with no dependents, while caregiver wages are far below that at \$16 - \$26/hour for private pay and \$18.17/hour for the In-Home Supportive Services program

Although there are challenges in aging, these individuals also bring vibrancy, diversity, wisdom, experience, leadership, and service. Their role is vital in shaping a more just, inclusive, and resilient community.



Project Leadership

Lead Staff

ACC served as the fiscal lead, provided the grant-funded position of SBC MPA Project Coordinator, and provided project oversight. SBC Department of Social Services also provided project oversight via the Director of the Adult & Aging Network.

Advisory Committee

Oversight of the planning phase for this project was provided by a high level, diverse advisory committee representing multiple sectors of the community, in a variety of roles. Committee members met monthly from December 2023 through June 2025. They engaged in the development of the Local Plan, gave thoughtful suggestions, assisted with content development, and contributed resources and connections to enhance the success of the project. We are grateful for the participation of each and every member.

Work Groups

The project goals and objectives were developed by 4 work groups, comprised of 50 volunteers, including community members and representatives of public, private, and non-profit agencies. The hard work of these individuals was essential to the development of the Local Plan.





Adult & Aging Network (AAN)

Members of the AAN provided guidance and feedback throughout the project, from the initial release of the MPA in 2021, through the completion of the Local Plan. Several AAN members stepped up to serve on the Advisory Committee and Work Groups. AAN expertise and engagement will carry the Local Plan into the future and will ensure successful implementation.

California Department of Aging (CDA)

The LADAP funding provided by CDA was pivotal in making the SBC MPA a reality. While the AAN has benefited from the collaboration of committed partners and volunteers for over 25 years, the development of a comprehensive strategic plan required the sustained effort of dedicated staff, made possible through LADAP support. This new plan sets a clear direction for the AAN's next 25 years and we are deeply grateful to CDA for making this progress achievable.

Acknowledgments

Please see Project Leadership, Appendix 2, for a list of the individuals who supported this effort along with their affiliations.

Vision, Purpose, & Principles

Vision

The communities of SBC embrace an age and disability friendly design, which provides residents with the support and resources they need to age in place while enjoying optimal health, safety and happiness.

Purpose

The purpose of the Local Plan is to serve as a blueprint for aging across the lifespan, centered on the changing needs of older adults and people with disabilities.

Guiding Principles

- Engage community members and leaders across all sectors.
- Champion diversity by amplifying the voices of underrepresented communities.
- Address the critical concerns of housing, health, caregiving, affordability, and inclusion.
- Anchor the plan in local data and the needs and experiences of local people.
- Collaborate with existing initiatives and resources that are in alignment with the MPA.
- Weave equity, inclusion, and affordability into all aspects of the Local Plan.



Local Plan Development

Local Data

Beginning in fall of 2021, AAN initiated community conversations, and in 2022 they formed an Ad Hoc Committee to examine local data, interview stakeholders, and conduct listening sessions with service providers. A foundational report, “Aging Well in Santa Barbara County,” was published in 2024, providing a snapshot of the challenges facing older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers in the region. This data informed the Local Plan.

Community Assessment

The Community Assessment for SBC MPA was launched to understand the experience of aging in SBC, to learn directly from individuals with lived experience, and to better understand the experience of underserved individuals. The firm of Health & Inclusivity LLC was selected to assist with the assessment as a result of their unique expertise in working with underserved populations, and their staff of bilingual and bicultural professionals.

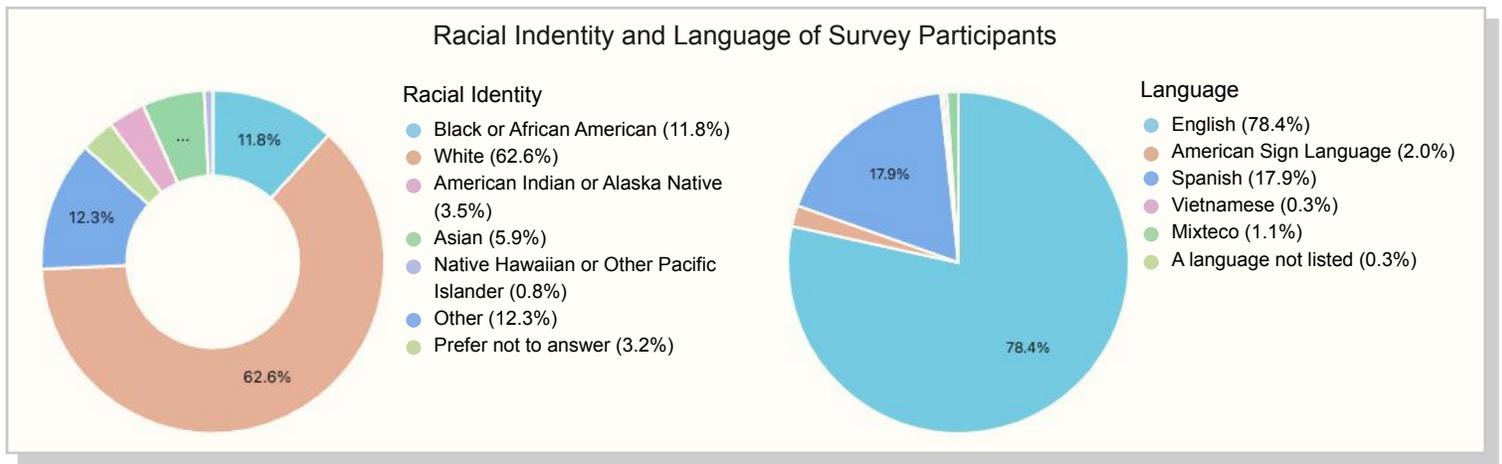
A mixed-methods approach was employed to gather comprehensive findings, combining quantitative data from a survey with qualitative insights from focus groups. To ensure broad participation across SBC in multiple sectors, outreach efforts were coordinated with a wide variety of partners. Participants were compensated for their time and expertise. Data was collected in the preferred language of the participants, taking cultural and accessibility needs into account.

The Community Assessment sought to answer 2 questions:

- What are the lived experiences of aging individuals, adults with disabilities, and caregivers in SBC?
- What are the needs of underserved communities in this context?

The assessment aimed to understand community members’ experiences in the 5 domains of the MPA, including housing, health, affordability, inclusion, and caregiving.

The survey resulted in 393 responses. As is consistent with typical survey response patterns, majorities of the participants identified as White, non-Hispanic, English-speaking, heterosexual, and female.



Because surveys lack cultural congruence with many underserved communities, focus groups were designed and conducted to capture that perspective. The focus groups were held with adults who live with disabilities, Spanish-speakers, Black/African Americans, and caregivers. A total of 38 people participated in 4 focus groups, one for each sub-population.

Key findings from the survey and the focus groups are as follows:

- **Housing & Affordability:** Although the average satisfaction rating for survey participants was high, underserved individuals reported significantly lower satisfaction. In focus group discussions participants highlighted substantial challenges to aging in place due to the cost of living and cost of housing.
- **Healthcare Experiences:** Survey participants generally rated their healthcare services highly. However, focus group participants shared significant negative experiences, including a lack of diverse personnel, insufficient linguistically and culturally appropriate services, and instances of discrimination and disrespect.
- **Inclusion & Belonging:** Although most survey participants felt welcomed (65%) and connected (54.2%) in their communities, 45.9% reported feeling isolated. Focus group participants felt a strong sense of belonging within their own community, but experienced exclusion and discrimination in the broader SBC. Spanish-speaking participants, in particular, struggled with language barriers in accessing healthcare, deepening their marginalization and isolation.
- **Caregivers** reported experiencing significant levels of stress, with more than 70% rating their stress at a high level. Over 50% indicated that this stress negatively affected their ability to care for others. Additionally, caregivers expressed a strong need for better access to relevant resources, as well as opportunities to build a supportive community and receive emotional support.

Community members in focus groups made specific recommendations. People need:

- One central hub to access to community resources with similar hubs for support, guidance, and advocacy.
- Education on navigating the healthcare system and enhanced awareness of patient rights along with improved cultural and language sensitivity in healthcare.
- Inclusive language across community spaces as well as increased empathy and respect. This need might be addressed by bias-free language training.
- Financial planning that addresses the high cost of living and long-term care. Also needed are expanded levels of care, such as a “stepped” model of care.
- Caregivers need support via opportunities to connect with others, comprehensive services, and a centralized resource center with increased visibility and accessibility.

More details on the Community Assessment and its findings can be found in Appendix #3.

Priorities

Based on the findings of the Community Assessment and the data from the Aging Well in Santa Barbara County report, AAN and the SBC MPA Advisory Committee selected the following priorities:

- Access to Healthcare & Community Services
- Caregiving
- Awareness of Community Resources
- Housing & Homelessness

In addition to the priorities listed above, the work groups who developed the goals and objectives for each priority followed guidelines to:

- Build in advocacy and education throughout the plan
- Incorporate affordability, equity, and inclusion in all strategies
- Keep current of policy developments and current events that impact older adults, people living with disability, and caregivers
- Align with areas of emphasis in local, state, and federal government



Implementation

AAN will oversee a collaborative structure and process for monitoring, directing, and supporting the SBC MPA implementation over the next five years. This work will be accomplished by leveraging SBC health and human services departments to incorporate strategies that address the needs of older adults, people living with disabilities, and caregivers within existing programs and initiatives, while partnering with community-based organizations, and individuals with lived experiences.

Sustainability

With its 25-year history of facilitating projects to address the needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities, AAN is in a strong position to support the MPA implementation. The AAN membership includes a broad network of representatives of public, private and nonprofit agencies. As a result of the SBC MPA process, AAN is expanding to incorporate new partners as well as community members with lived experience.

Current nationwide uncertainty about funding, staffing, and changing politics does cause concern for the sustainability of the project. Steps to assure that the work will continue include crafting the local plan to emphasize achievability and to rely largely on existing partners and staff. Further, the plan strives to align with state-wide initiatives in order to take advantage of possible future opportunities for funding and/or collaboration. Lastly, the plan will be shared with local funders for potential fiscal support and to increase their awareness of the needs of this population and the changing demographics.

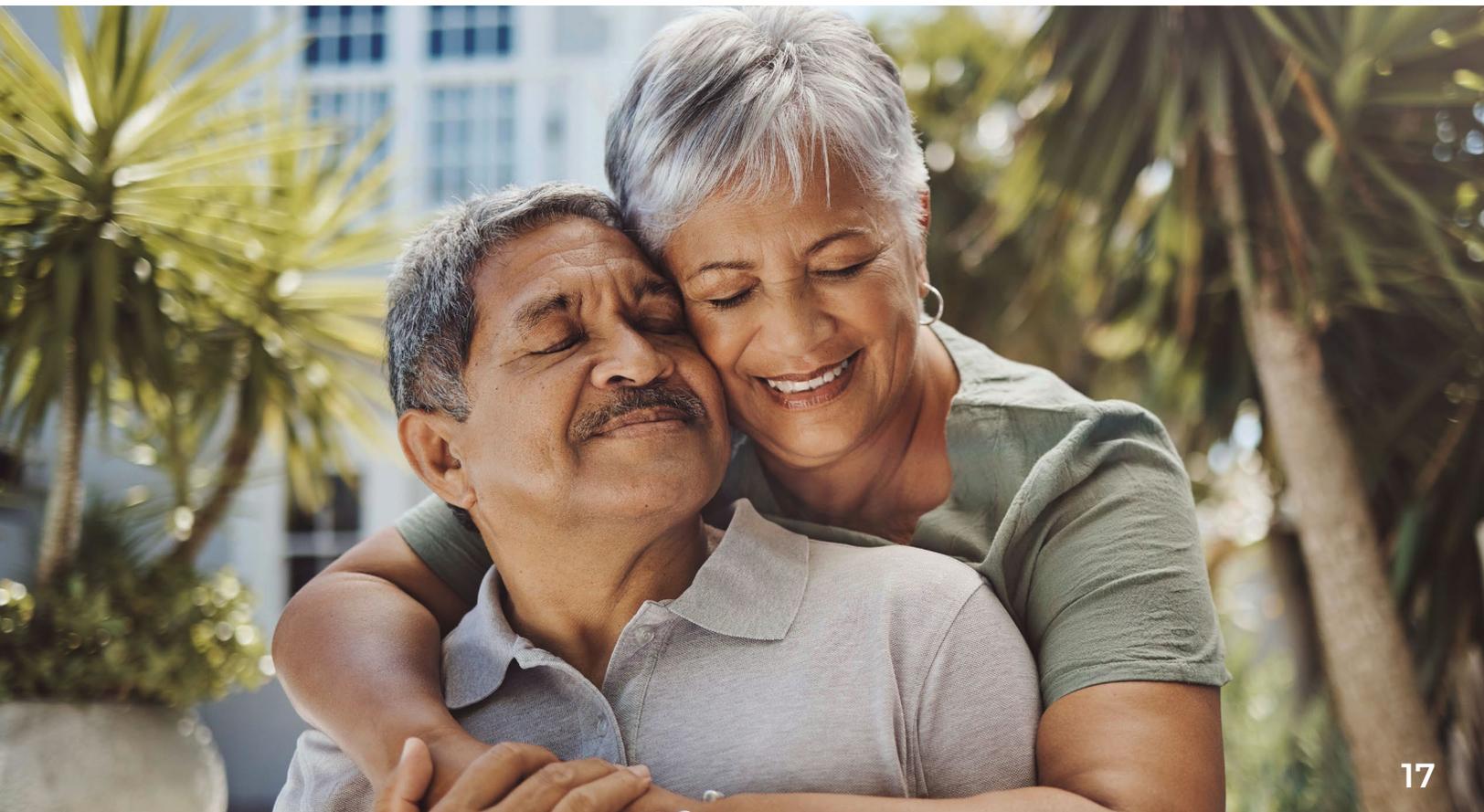
Continuous Improvement

SBC MPA is meant to change and evolve as the needs of the community also change and evolve. There will be a continuous cycle of implementation steps, evaluation of the results of those steps, and revisions based on the results as well as input from community members.

Leadership from AAN and the leads from each objective will review progress toward their action items annually in June, or more often as needed. The review should answer 3 questions:

- What metrics in the plan have been met, and what positive impacts have been made to the community?
- What has not been effective and what new concerns exist?
- What changes can be made to improve the success of the plan for the next year?

Annual changes to the plan might include revisions to the goal, objectives, leads, partners, resources, barriers, and metrics.



The Local Plan

Topic 1: Awareness of Community Resources

Concern: The Community Assessment revealed that individuals, across multiple sectors, are very challenged to find and navigate community resources. Awareness of Information and Resource hubs is lacking, and community members expressed a need for a central place to find information and guidance.

Goal: Create and implement an ongoing communication plan to improve awareness and understanding of 211 and the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) as the 2 hubs for community resource information and navigation. Include more specialized hubs as needed.

Objective 1A

Create a simple message, that is culturally and linguistically relevant, to communicate the purpose and way to access Information and Referral services through 211 and ADRC.

Leads & Partners

- 211 (lead)
- Access Central Coast for ADRC (lead)
- Family Service Agency
- Caring Together Santa Barbara County
- SBC BWELL Access Line

Resources

- Adult & Aging Network
- Latino Elder Outreach Network
- Existing communications from partners

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding

Metric

- Message created (Yes / No)

Timeline:

- Short-term

Objective 1B

Share the before-mentioned message on an ongoing basis with stakeholders & service providers.

Leads & Partners

- 211 (lead)
- Access Central Coast for ADRC (lead)
- Adult & Aging Network
- SBC Human Services Departments

Resources

- Health and Community Service Organizations

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding

Metric

- Number of outreach contacts completed (year-over-year)

Timeline:

- Medium-term, ongoing

Objective 1C

Conduct ongoing community outreach that is culturally and linguistically relevant.

Leads & Partners

- 211 (lead)
- Access Central Coast for ADRC (lead)
- Family Service Agency
- Caring Together Santa Barbara County
- SBC BWELL Access Line

Resources

- Family Resource Centers
- Senior Programs
- Promotores de Salud
- Faith based community
- Latino Elder Outreach Network

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding

Metric

- Number of outreach contacts completed (year-over-year)

Timeline:

- Long-term, ongoing

Objective 1D

Engage stakeholders and service providers in maintaining up-to-date 211 listings.

Leads & Partners

- 211 (lead)
- SBC Human Service Departments
- Adult & Aging Network

Resources

- Existing 211 annual review and outreach to providers
- Existing 211 tracking tools

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding

Metric

- Number of 211 active service providers (year-over-year)

Timeline:

- Short-term, annual thereafter

Topic 2: Caregiving

Concern: The Community Assessment revealed that caregivers experience a high degree of stress and are often not aware of services and supports. In addition, local data indicates that a severe shortage of paid caregivers exists and is getting worse, while demand is increasing.

Goal: Caring Together Santa Barbara County (CTSBC) will expand the support it offers to family, friend, and paid caregivers, while also expanding community outreach to increase awareness of the resources.

Objective 2A

Enhance cultural and linguistic relevance of the CTSBC website by integrating Spanish language content from Mi Vida Mi Voz.

Leads & Partners

- CTSBC (lead)
- Hospice of Santa Barbara
- Mi Vida Mi Voz

Resources

- California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (CACHI) grant funding

Possible Barriers

- CACHI funding ends 3/26

Metric

- Project complete (yes / no)
- Number of visits to web page (year-over-year)

Timeline:

- Short-term

Objective 2B

Conduct outreach to increase awareness of resources for caregivers at CTSBC resource web pages in English and Spanish.

Leads & Partners

- CTSBC (lead)
- Promotores de Salud
- Adult & Aging Network
- Community Based Organizations

Resources

- California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (CACHI) grant funding

Possible Barriers

- CACHI funding ends 3/26

Metric (year-over-year)

- Number of service providers trained
- Number of visits to web pages
- Number of outreach contacts

Timeline:

- Medium-term

Objective 2C

Develop caregiver career path information for CTSBC website.

Leads & Partners

- CTSBC (lead)
- Adult & Aging Network
- Home Care and Home Health agencies
- In-Home Supportive Services
- United Domestic Workers
- Santa Barbara City College

Resources

- California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (CACHI) grant funding

Possible Barriers

- CACHI funding ends 3/26

Metric

- Project complete (yes / no)
- Number of visits to web pages (year-over-year)

Timeline:

- Long-term



Topic 3: Housing & Homelessness

Concern: The Community Assessment indicates that the cost and availability of housing is a major concern to residents who fear it may prevent them from remaining in the area. Local data demonstrates that the cost of housing in SBC is among the highest in the state, and many older adults experience Housing Cost Burden, spending > 30% income on housing. In addition, older adults make up 33% of the homeless in our community.

Goal: Incorporate age and disability friendly guidelines into the policies of all planning bodies related to housing & homelessness.

Objective 3A

Update the AAN age & disability friendly housing guide.

Leads & Partners

- Adult & Aging Network (lead)
- City of SB Housing Authority
- SBC Community Services
- SBC Housing Authority
- SBC BWELL

Resources

- Existing guide by Adult & Aging Network
- Housing consultant

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding

Metric

- Guide complete (yes / no)

Timeline:

- Short-term

Objective 3B

Key stakeholders will provide updates to the Adult & Aging Network on:

- Status of housing & homelessness
- Emergency Response Systems
- Home Maintenance & Repair Programs

Leads & Partners

- SBC Community Services (lead)
- Adult & Aging Network
- City of SB Housing Authority
- SBC Housing Authority
- SBC BWELL
- Long-term Care Ombudsman
- CommUnify
- Habitat for Humanity
- CapSLO

Resources

- SBC Continuum of Care
- CenCal Health
- Cottage Health
- Private philanthropy
- Service recipients
- Faith community
- League of Women Voters
- Latino Elder Outreach Network

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding

Metric

- Updates provided (yes / no)

Timeline:

- Medium-term (ongoing)

Objective 3C

Coordinate an education and advocacy committee to address age & disability friendly housing policy in all jurisdictions and housing-related opportunities as they arise.

Leads & Partners

- Adult & Aging Network (lead)
- City of SB Housing Authority
- SBC Community Services
- SBC Housing Authority
- SBC BWELL

Resources

- Newly developed housing guide
- Housing consultant
- Residents with lived expertise

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding

Metric

- Number of jurisdictions, departments or services that adopt a related policy change

Timeline:

- Medium-term (ongoing)

Objective 3D

Explore innovative pathways to expand housing options and opportunities, such as home & room-mate matching programs.

Leads & Partners

- Adult & Aging Network (lead)
- Home Match by Front Porch
- Partners for Housing Solutions

Resources

- Smart Share Housing Solutions
- Individuals with lived expertise

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding
- Risk associated with matching individuals

Metric

- Program created (yes/no)

Timeline:

- Long-term (ongoing)

Topic 4: Access to Health & Community Services

Concern: Without affordable homecare, older adults and people with disabilities may be unable to age in place. The Community Assessment and local data point to gaps in home and community-based care with severe shortages in some areas.

Goal: The Adult & Aging Network will facilitate meetings with content area experts to examine resources, identify gaps, and create solutions that bridge healthcare with home.

Objective 4A

Transportation: Examine data on resources and utilization to determine unmet needs and novel solutions while striving to ensure transportation options for seniors in the region.

Leads & Partners

- Santa Barbara Community Association of Governments (lead)
- Adult & Aging Network
- Santa Barbara MTD
- City of Lompoc Transit
- Santa Maria Regional Transit
- Santa Ynez Valley Transit
- Easy Lift Transportation
- Santa Maria Organization of Transportation Helpers

Resources

- Community Partners in Caring
- Annual Unmet Transit Needs Process
- Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan
- Riders / Users of Transportation Services
- Medical Transportation Services

Possible Barriers

- Limited funding & restriction on use of funding
- Limited capacity
- Stigma, reluctance and lack of knowledge related to use of services

Metric

Transit Authority Survey Results (year-over-year):

- Number of riders
- Number of service denials
- Rider satisfaction

Timeline:

- Medium-term, annually thereafter

Objective 4B

Health Equity: Enhance cultural sensitivity and linguistic supports offered by healthcare professionals and service providers via training.

Leads & Partners

- Adult & Aging Network (lead)
- SBC Health
- Healthcare Employee Training Programs
- Promotores de Salud

Resources

- Access Central Coast
- Herencia Indígena
- Mixtec Health Education Materials
- Latino Elder Outreach Network
- NAACP, North & South County Chapters
- Pacific Pride

Possible Barriers

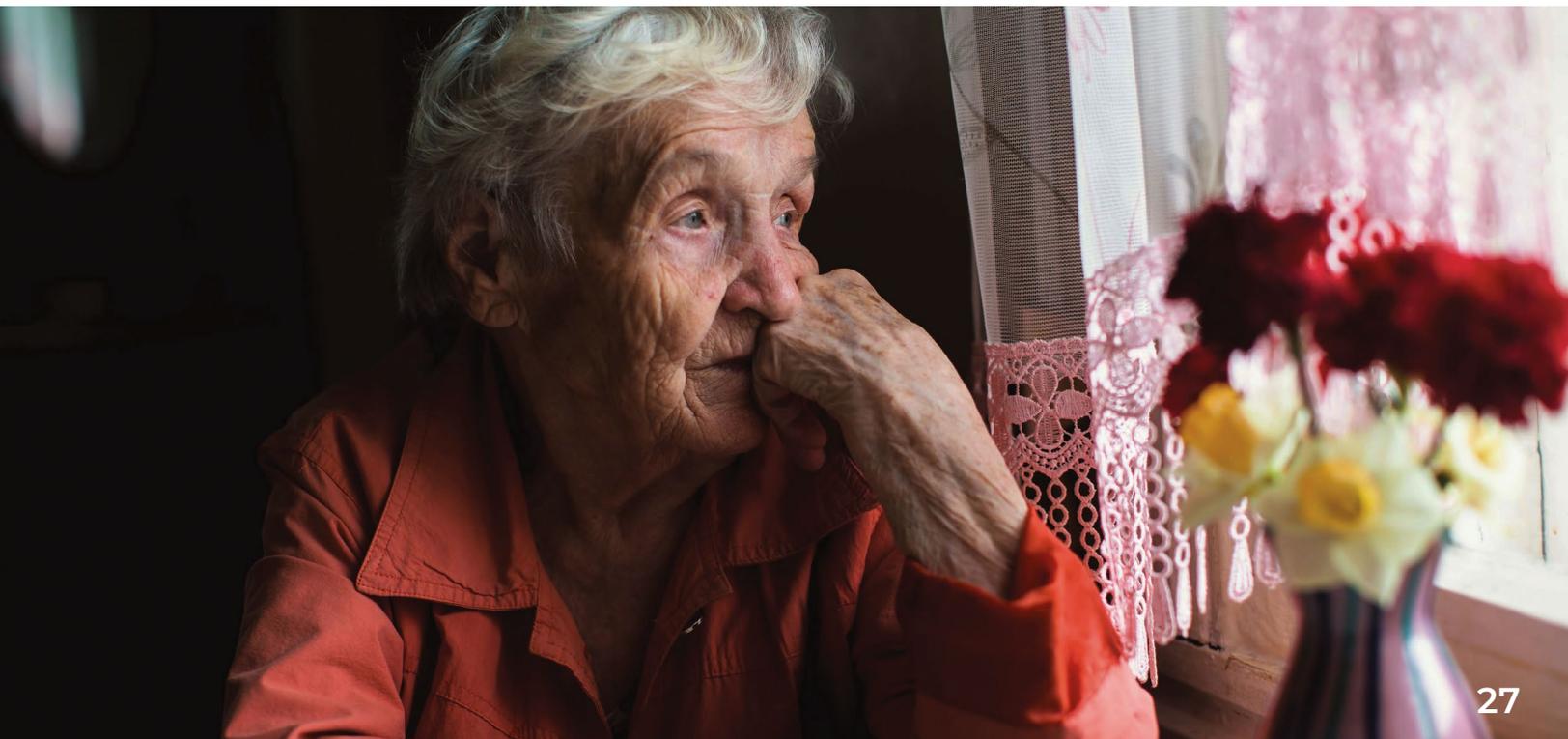
- Limited staffing & funding
- Lack of trust by community members
- Limited literacy and/or health literacy among community members

Metric

- Number of trainings offered
- Number of training attendees
- Number of materials provided

Timeline:

- Medium-term



Objective 4C

Behavioral Health: Enhance understanding of access to resources, including for individuals with Medi-Cal or Medicare, as well as individuals with mild, moderate or severe illness.

Leads & Partners

- SBC BWELL (lead)
- Adult & Aging Network
- Area Agency on Aging
- CenCal Health
- Family Service Agency
- Mental Wellness Center

Resources

- Behavioral Health Service Providers, county-wide
- Recipients of Behavioral Health Services
- Information & Referral Services

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding
- Limited capacity of staff & providers
- Challenges related to neuro-cognitive needs and co-occurring disorders
- Stigma & reluctance to use services

Metric

- Number of older adults served (year-over-year)

Timeline:

- Long-term

Objective 4D

Nutrition: Examine resources and pathways to food, including congregate meals, home delivered meals, medically tailored meals, and groceries.

Leads & Partners

- Lead TBD
- Adult & Aging Network
- FoodBank
- Senior Nutrition Program
- Meals on Wheels
- Private meal providers
- Senior Programs

Resources

- Area Agency on Aging
- CenCal Health
- CalFresh Health Living Program
- Private funders & philanthropy
- Faith community
- Recipients of services

Possible Barriers

- Changes in funding
- Limited capacity
- Stigma / public reluctance to use services

Metric

Year-over-year:

- Number of service providers
- Number of individuals served
- Number of individuals turned away

Timeline:

- Long-term

Objective 4E

Medi-Cal – Explore opportunities to expand access to Medi-Cal funded home and community-based services such as:

- CAPABLE program
- Assisted Living Waiver
- Increase enrollment by emphasizing benefit and decreasing stigma
- Expanded Adult Day Health
- Expanded Multipurpose Senior Services

Leads & Partners

- Adult & Aging Network (lead)
- SBC Health
- SBC Adult Protective Services
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Dignity Health Social Services
- SBC Social Services
- CenCal Health
- Wisdom Center
- Partners in Care Foundation

Resources

- Family Resource Center Advocates
- Community Health Workers
- Senior Programs
- CAPABLE National Center

Possible Barriers

- Limited staffing & funding
- Changes in funding & eligibility

Metric

- For each item, completion or expansion of program (Yes / No)

Timeline:

- Long-term

For Future Consideration

Dementia:

- Enhance planning and resources for dementia care

Appendices

Glossary of Abbreviations

211	211 is a quick, comprehensive information and referral system available to all Santa Barbara County residents by dialing 211 or visiting 211SantaBarbaraCounty.org .
ACC	Access Central Coast (formerly Independent Living Resource Center) is an independent living center, consumer-driven and consumer-led, promoting independent living and full access for individuals with disabilities in our communities.
AAN	The Santa Barbara County Adult & Aging Network is an advisory body to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors on issues relating to older adults and people with disabilities. AAN improves the lives of seniors and disabled adults in SBC by facilitating connection, collaboration, education, and advocacy among stakeholders, service providers, and community members.
ADRC	The Aging & Disability Resource Center is a partnership of ACC and Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens to help people find services they need as older adults and/or adults living with disability.
CDA	The California Department of Aging administers programs that serve older adults, adults with disabilities, family caregivers, and residents in long-term care facilities throughout the state.
LADAP	The Local Aging & Disability Action Planning grant program of CDA provided grants to develop local age and disability friendly action plans. These resources are improving livability for people of all ages and abilities and are focused on engagement and equity principles and practices.
MPA	California's Master Plan for Aging is a blueprint for aging across the lifespan providing leadership in aging, disability, and equity.
SBC	Santa Barbara County is located in the Central Coast region of California, encompassing a diverse landscape of coastal mountains, verdant valleys, and a scenic coastline with a population of approximately 450,000 people in an area of 3,789 square miles, including four of the Channel Islands.
SBC MPA	The Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging (also called the Local Plan) is the plan developed to address the local needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers in their desire to age in place, incorporating principles of equity and inclusion.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging. The expertise and efforts of the Advisory Committee, Work Groups, Adult & Aging Network members, and community partners, resulted in a plan that reflects the needs and experiences of local people, and serves as a blueprint for an age and disability friendly community.

Leadership Team

- Barbara Finch, Child & Adult Networks Director, County of Santa Barbara Social Services
- Jennifer Griffin, Executive Director, Access Central Coast
- Margaret Weiss, Master Plan for Aging Project Coordinator, Access Central Coast

Advisory Committee

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- Amelia Grover, Manager of Social Work, Transitional Care Center, Dignity Health
- Angela Oslund, Interim Director, City of Santa Maria Parks & Recreation
- Barbara Finch, Child & Adult Networks Director, Santa Barbara County Social Services
- Brian Weaver, Executive Director, Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens
- Cathy DeCaprio-Wells, Adult Services Manager, Santa Barbara County Social Services
- Christina Hernandez, Council Member, Guadalupe City Council
- Citlaly Santos, Strategic Engagement Director, CenCal Health
- Dinah Lockhart, Community Member
- Eva Avila, Equity Coordinator, Santa Barbara County Public Health
- Hilda Zacarias, Executive Director, Community Partners in Caring
- Jack Mohr, Manager of Equity, Wellness, Prevention and Health Promotion, Santa Barbara County Public Health
- Jennifer Griffin, Executive Director, Access Central Coast
- Joan Hartmann, Third District Supervisor, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
- Joyce Ellen Lippman, Community Member
- Kathryn Westland, Executive Director, Friendship Center

- Kemba Lawrence, Community Services Director, CommUnify
- Lacey Johnston, Chief Impact Officer, FoodBank of Santa Barbara County
- Lisa Brabo, Chief Executive Officer, Family Service Agency
- Marco Quintanar, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Supervisor, Family Service Agency
- Marjie Kirn, Executive Director, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
- Robert Gibson, Union Representative, United Domestic Workers

Work Group Members

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- James Francis, Senior Housing Specialist, Santa Barbara County Housing & Community Services
- Jena Jenkins, AgeWell Program Coordinator, Carpinteria Parks & Recreation
- Jennifer Herrera, Organizer, United Domestic Workers
- Jenny Bruel, HealthCare Program Coordinator, Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness
- Jett Black-Maertz, Homelessness Assistance Programs Manager, Santa Barbara County Housing & Community Services
- John Campanella, Director, Garden Court
- Kathleen Sullivan, Vice President of Post-Acute Care Services, Dignity Health
- Kathryn Westland, Executive Director, Friendship Center
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- Patty Mendoza-Flores, MSSP Supervisor, Partners in Care Foundation
- Renee Cowans, Family Consultant, Coast Caregiver Resource Center
- Robert Gibson, Union Representative, United Domestic Workers
- Shannon Kenny, Founder, Alliloop
- Stacey Murphy, Director of Resident & Supportive Services, Santa Barbara County Housing Authority
- Susannah Fenton, Manager ADRC & Senior Connection, Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens
- Tammy Casiano, Manager, Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness
- Wendy Sims-Moten, Executive Director, First 5 Santa Barbara County Commission

Santa Barbara County Adult & Aging Network

- County of Santa Barbara 3rd District Supervisor Joan Hartmann, Co-chair
- County of Santa Barbara 1st District Supervisor Roy Lee, Co-chair
- Access Central Coast
- Alliloop
- Alzheimer's Association, California Central Coast Chapter
- Caring Together Santa Barbara County
- CenCal Health
- Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens/Area Agency on Aging
- Coast Caregiver Resource Center
- CommUnify
- Community Members
- Community Partners in Caring
- County of Santa Barbara Department of Social Services
- County of Santa Barbara Health Department
- County of Santa Barbara District Attorney
- County of Santa Barbara Public Guardian's Office



- Dignity Health
- Family Service Agency of Santa Barbara County
- Foodbank of Santa Barbara County
- Friendship Center
- Garden Court
- Gray Panthers Santa Barbara Network
- Harry's House
- Hospice of Santa Barbara
- Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara
- Latino Elder Outreach Network
- Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County
- Lompoc Valley Community Healthcare Organization
- Lompoc Valley Haven
- Long Term Care Ombudsman of Santa Barbara County
- NurseCore
- Partners in Care Foundation
- Santa Barbara Public Library
- Santa Maria Wisdom Center
- Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People



Community Partners

Many community partners helped this project to reach underrepresented populations including:

- Access Central Coast
- City of Carpinteria AgeWell
- Central Coast Caregivers Resource Center
- Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center
- Latino Elder Outreach
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Santa Barbara Chapter
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Santa Maria-Lompoc Chapter
- Santa Barbara County Farmworker Resource Center – Proyecto Campesino
- St. George Eastside Community Center

Summary of the Community Assessment for the Santa Barbara Master Plan for Aging

The Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging conducted a Community Assessment in 2024 with support from Health & Inclusivity LLC. The purpose of the study was to better understand the experiences of local people who are older adults, adults living with a disability, and caregivers, with a particular focus on underserved communities. The assessment included a survey and focus groups. Visit the County of Santa Barbara website to view the full report: <https://cosantabarbara.app.box.com/s/ngfm8jjql2feaxtzhj978j0emivjried>

Demographics

As is consistent with typical survey response patterns, majorities of the participants identified as White, non-Hispanic, English-speaking, heterosexual, and female. A total of 393 surveys were collected. Because surveys lack cultural congruence with many underserved communities, the focus groups were designed to capture that perspective and specifically included individuals living with disabilities, Spanish-speakers, Black/African Americans, and caregivers. A total of 39 people participated in the focus groups.

Key Findings

Within Santa Barbara County, there are many resources and a beautiful environment, but also many challenges to the ability to age in place. These challenges are especially severe among members of underserved communities who perceive that they are at risk of having to relocate to another place, away from family, friends and existing support networks. The top concerns are:

- Overall cost of living, particularly with regard to housing.
- Lack of adequate and accessible housing options for the various stages of aging.
- Need for centralized community resource information that is easy to find and includes navigation support.
- Need for increased education and support in a variety of topics that pertain to aging, living with disability, and caregiving.
- Inadequate cultural and linguistic sensitivity in many areas, most pronouncedly in healthcare.

The findings above are to be addressed in the SBC MPA.

Specific Findings – Housing & Affordability

- Overall satisfaction among survey participants for their housing arrangements was high, but satisfaction levels were lower among individuals with visible disabilities, Black/African American individuals, renters, and those with Medi-Cal.
- Focus group discussions with underserved communities highlighted substantial challenges in their expectation of being able to age in place.
- Focus groups indicated a need for
 - » financial guidance to address the high cost of living
 - » “stepped care” to access the appropriate level of support for individual circumstances
 - » more affordable and accessible housing options, including for people with disabilities and older adults
 - » support to navigate the complex housing landscape

Specific Findings – Healthcare Experiences

- Survey participants generally rated their healthcare services highly, with the highest ratings coming from individuals without disabilities and those who experienced wait times of only 1 to 3 weeks. However, focus group participants from underserved communities shared significant negative experiences, including a lack of diverse personnel, insufficient linguistically and culturally appropriate services, and instances of discrimination and disrespect. These challenges were reflected in lower healthcare ratings among Medi-Cal recipients, who also had a higher proportion of non-white individuals compared to those with Medicare or private insurance.
- Focus group participants indicated a need for
 - » better information on patient rights, including workshops on navigating the healthcare system and strategies to address negative experiences
 - » spaces where community members can connect with peers, professionals, and advocates for guidance & assistance
 - » centralized spaces to access resources and support
 - » advocates to address the need for equitable and culturally responsive services
 - » training for healthcare providers on inclusive and equitable practices including an element of compliance monitoring for these standards of care
 - » delivery of healthcare services in a manner that is culturally responsive and an increase in diversity among providers



Specific Findings – Inclusion & Belonging

- Although most survey participants felt welcomed (65%) and connected (54.25), 45.9% reported feeling isolated.
- Focus group participants, especially from the underserved groups of Black/African American individuals and individuals with disabilities, felt a strong sense of belonging within their own communities but experienced exclusion and discrimination in the broader Santa Barbara County.
- Spanish-speaking participants, in particular, struggled with language barriers in accessing healthcare, deepening their marginalization and isolation.
- Focus group participants recommended
 - » inclusive language across community spaces to show respect for older adults and underserved communities
 - » bias-free language training for community members and the professionals who work with them
 - » an advocacy center or advocacy groups where an individual could connect with an advocate and seek support and care in navigating challenges
 - » services centered on empathy and respect; individuals wish to be seen as capable and to be treated with dignity

Specific Findings – Caregiver Experiences

- Caregivers reported significant levels of stress, with more than 70% rating their stress at 4 or 5 on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 represents the highest level. Over 50% of the participants indicated stress negatively affected their ability to care for others.
- Caregivers expressed a strong need for better access to relevant resources, as well as opportunities to build a supportive community and receive emotional support.
- Support group participants requested
 - » spaces where caregivers can come together for both practical and emotional support
 - » a centralized resource center that includes guidance, referrals, and navigation assistance.
 - » Improved visibility and accessibility of existing resources

Community Engagement

Community engagement was a core principle in every stage of developing the SBC MPA. From the time the MPA was announced in 2021, AAN engaged in gathering community input and using that information as guidance to begin to address the 5 Bold Goals. Later, with LADAP funding, the Community Assessment successfully reached underserved audiences and not only gathered their ideas, but connected them to SBC MPA for ongoing involvement. Below are some of the important community engagement activities.

Ad hoc committee, 2021: AAN formed an ad hoc committee to study the MPA and to determine aligned actions that can be accomplished in SBC. The committee directed AAN toward caregiving, via the work of the collaborative group, Caring Together Santa Barbara County, and also toward housing, via the Housing Element Update process that was currently in progress.

Virtual Forum, October 22, 2021: AAN and community partners presented an online regional forum for stakeholders, service providers, and community members to learn about the MPA. Organizers sought to hear from older adults and people with disabilities, family members and caregivers, healthcare providers, philanthropists, business owners, faith leaders, community organizers, city/county/state government leaders, and representatives from public and private organizations whose services enhance quality of life for older adults and people with disabilities. Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation were available, along with closed captioning.

Convening, October 12, 2023: AAN and community partners held Santa Barbara County's second Master Plan for Aging event, where progress to-date was shared and the next phase of action planning was launched. The purpose of the event was to activate the collaboration and community engagement needed to transform the experience of aging in Santa Barbara County, while celebrating grants received and the new possibilities they offer. Stimulating speakers, including a panel of individuals with lived experience in aging, caregiving, and disability, moved the audience. Participation was high in breakout sessions designed to capture community input on all aspects of the MPA.

Engaging Elected Officials, March – January 2025: To introduce SBC MPA to elected officials, and to gather their input and support, presentations were made to the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, and 7 of the 8 City Councils in the area. In almost every presentation, elected officials commented that the information provided was eye opening and important to them. These presentations were an initial step toward age and disability friendly policies at all levels of local leadership.

Age-Friendly Guadalupe, May 14, 2024: As a direct result of the presentation of SBC MPA to the City of Guadalupe, the City passed a resolution of “Support for local implementation of the California Master Plan on Aging and for the City to join the AARP network of age-friendly communities.

Focus Groups, September 2024: The focus groups held as part of the SBC MPA Community Assessment effectively connected with four audiences including Black/African Americans, caregivers, individuals living with disability, and Spanish speakers. The participants provided valuable information and stories of their lived experience. Many also agreed to remain connected to the SBC MPA for ongoing involvement.

Listening Sessions, May 2025: Once the action plan for the SBC MPA was developed, two listening sessions were held to gather input from older adults on the goals. In both cases the majority of participants agreed to remain connected to the SBC MPA for ongoing involvement.

Comment Period, June 2025: The community members, service providers, and stakeholders who have been engaged in the SBC MPA were engaged in the final review of the Local Plan to gather comments on the goals and objectives.

References

A Community Assessment for Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging, 1/2025

<https://cosantabarbara.app.box.com/s/ngfm8jjql2feaxtzhj978j0emivjried>

Aging Well in Santa Barbara County, 9/2024

<https://cosantabarbara.app.box.com/s/qkxkde444n7cymt1kwomthzpz3to72k>

Other Resources

AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/>

Master Plan for Aging

<https://mpa.aging.ca.gov>

Master Plan for Aging Local Playbook

<https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/LocalPlaybook>

Master Plan for Aging Data Dashboard

<https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/DashBoard>

Santa Barbara County Adult & Aging Network

<http://www.sbcaan.org/home.html>

The Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging 2025 - 2030

For more information or to get involved with the Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging, please visit www.sbcaan.org or contact Barbara Finch, Children & Adult Network Director, Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services, bfinch@countyofsb.org.

