
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Becker, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: SB 1261
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Heather Hopkins
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Aging and Disability Resource Connection program

SUMMARY

This bill provides that the California Department of Aging (CDA) shall not revoke the designation of an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) solely due to the revocation of a designation, suspension, or temporary inability of either the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) or the Independent Living Center (ILC) partner to serve in its operator role. Provides that in those circumstances the AAA or the ILC may continue to operate the ADRC independently during a transition period, as specified.

ABSTRACT

Existing Law:

- 1) Establishes an ADRC program to provide information to consumers and their families on available long-term services and supports programs and to assist older adults, caregivers, and persons with disabilities in accessing long-term services and support programs at the local level through Aging and Disability Resource Connection programs operated jointly by AAAs and ILCs. (*Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] 9120*)
- 2) Provides that AAAs and ILCs shall be the core local partners in developing ADRC programs. Requires CDA to assist interested and qualified AAAs and ILCs in completing an application to be designated as an ADRC program. (*WIC 9120*)
- 3) Provides that an ADRC program operated by an AAA and an ILC shall provide all the following:
 - a. Enhanced information and referral services and other assistance at hours that are convenient for the public.
 - b. Options counseling concerning available long-term services and supports programs and public and private benefits programs.
 - c. Short-term service coordination.

- d. Transition services from hospitals to home and from skilled nursing facilities to the community. *(WIC 9120)*
- 4) Provides that an ADRC program operated by an AAA and an ILC shall do both of the following:
 - a. Provide services within the geographic area served.
 - b. Provide information to the public about the services provided by the program. *(WIC 9120)*
- 5) Provides that CDA, in consultation with the ADRC Advisory Committee within CDA, shall develop the core model of Aging and Disability Resource Connection best practices. These best practices shall be implemented by July 1, 2022, by all Aging and Disability Resource Connection programs operated by area agencies on aging and ILCs. To the extent feasible, the best practices shall be considered in the development and continued updating of the master plan on aging. In the development of these best practices, the department and advisory committee shall consider, at a minimum, the following practices:
 - a. A person-centered counseling process.
 - b. Public outreach and coordination with key referral sources, including, but not limited to, caregiver resource centers, the medical centers of the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, acute care systems, local 211 programs, local multipurpose senior service programs, Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), adult day care services, and long-term services and supports providers.
 - c. A formal follow-up procedure to ensure that services for which a person received a referral were received and methods for correcting the service provision, if needed.
 - d. A model for the best ways for area agencies on aging and ILCs to share necessary data and client information.
 - e. A model for the collection and reporting of data to the CDA, which shall include, but not be limited to, the demographic information for each individual counseled, the number of consumers served by category of service, and the number of caregivers served. *(WIC 9120)*
- 6) Provides that CDA shall review implementation of the ADRC Infrastructure Grants Program for consideration in developing and updating the best practices model. *(WIC 9120)*

This Bill:

- 1) Provides that CDA shall not revoke the designation of an ADRC program solely due to the revocation of a designation, suspension, or temporary inability of either the AAA or the ILC partner to serve in its operator role.
- 2) Provides that in those circumstances, either the AAA or the ILC may continue to operate the ADRC independently during a transition period of not less than one year and not more than two years, upon agreement of CDA, the Department of Rehabilitation, and the ADRC Advisory Committee, while a new or replacement partner is identified and designated.
- 3) Provides that during this transition period the services provided by the ADRC shall continue without interruption, and joint operation shall be reestablished upon designation of the replacement partner that serves older adults or is a peer-led disability organization.

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill has not yet been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Bill:

According to the author, “Senate Bill 1261 ensures continuation of essential aging and disability services by allowing ADRCs to continue operations even if an AAA or ILC partner can no longer serve in its operator role. In doing so, this bill keeps the doors open, including for ARDCs serving San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties, and ensures no one falls through the cracks during transitions where a new partner must be established.

“Older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers rely on ADRCs as trusted places to turn for help. We cannot allow services to disappear simply because of an administrative transition.”

Aging Californians

California is projected to be home to 10.8 million people age 60 and older by 2030. This is nearly twice as many people age 60 and older as there were in 2010. Additionally, by 2030 one out of every four Californians will be older adults. The state is making efforts to meet the needs of this growing population. In January 2021, the Newsom Administration published its Master Plan for Aging, which is intended to be a ten-year blueprint for state government, local government, the private sector, and philanthropy to prepare the state for the coming demographic changes and “continue California’s leadership in aging, disability, and equity.” The five goals of the Master Plan are: housing for all ages and stages; health reimaged; inclusion and equity, not isolation; caregiving that works; and affording aging.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)

The CDA administers programs serving older adults through contracts with local agencies in 33 locations across the state which provide a wide array of services on a community level to seniors and adults with disabilities. Each county is required to have an AAA to ensure all communities have access to local aging programs and provide information and services for older adults. Some Area Agencies on Aging serve multiple counties at once. AAAs are contracted by the CDA to operate within a Planning and Service Area (PSA), the PSA can include multiple counties. For example, PSA 2 serves Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou and Trinity counties. These AAAs provide a wide array of services on a community level to adults age 60 and over. AAA programs often include long-term care ombudsman services, nutrition services, caregiver support and respite, Medicare counseling, legal referrals, transportation, and case management.

Independent Living Center

ILCs are private, nonprofit organizations that provide specified services to individuals with disabilities to assist those individuals in their attempts to live fuller and freer lives outside institutions. The centers are disability-led organizations that support people of all ages and all types of disabilities. Their core services include information and referrals, peer support, independent living skills training, individual and systems advocacy, and transition services. ILCs are not residential facilities; they are community-based hubs for resources and connection. The California Department of Rehabilitation is responsible and has the authority to encourage the planning, development, and funding of ILCs.

Aging and Disability Resource Connections (ADRC)

Many communities currently have multiple agencies administering long-term services and supports and have complex, fragmented, and often duplicative intake, assessment, and eligibility functions. ADRCs are intended to act as a single coordinated system of information and access for people seeking long-term services and support. The “No Wrong Door” system aims to lower the barriers that older Californians, people with disabilities, caregivers, and families face accessing the information and assistance needed to age well. ADRCs are partnerships between AAAs and ILCs. The establishment of a statewide ADRC program was a key recommendation from the Master Plan for Aging stakeholder committee.

Anyone, regardless of age, income, or disability, may receive ADRC services. ADRC services may include: enhanced information and referral services, such as comprehensive resource information, follow-ups, and “warm hand-off” referrals; options counseling, such as assisting in identifying goals and needs through person-centered counseling and coordinating access to public and private-funded long-term services and supports in the community; short-term service coordination, including expedited access to services and supports for individuals at risk of institutionalization, generally for 90 days or less, until a longer-term plan is in place and transition services for people who are currently in a hospital, nursing facility, or other institution and wishes to receive long-term services and supports at home or in a community-based setting.

Through existing local ADRC programs, older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, and families in some communities can connect to and access multiple services in their community with a single phone call, online contact, and/or walk-in. With this person-centered care model, individuals initially meet with an ADRC navigator who seeks an individual’s needs, goals, and

preferences and offers a choice of available options. The navigator/specialist then refers the individual to local programs in their area through warm handoffs and schedules regular follow-up sessions. The ADRC program enables older adults and people with disabilities to navigate and access aging and other programs that already exist in their communities, receive assistance understanding the service options, and have a person-centered professional customize a service plan specifically to meet their needs, goals, and preferences based on initial intake and ongoing follow-up sessions. The ADRC network is growing statewide. Currently, California has 27 ADRCs that serve 30 counties. In Fiscal Year 2024-25 there were 248,298 unduplicated ADRC consumers served across all 30 counties.

ADRCs at Risk in Central Coast

An ADRC functions as a partnership between an AAA and an ILC. Under existing law, if either the AAA or ILC is unable to continue that partnership, the ADRC can no longer function.

Planning Service Area 17, serving Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties and Planning Service Area 18, serving Ventura County, have faced threats of their ADRCs closing because of the AAA being unable to continue the partnership.

Planning Service Area 17

On December 16, 2025, the CDA Issued a “Notice of Intent to Revoke the AAA Designation of Central Coast Commission for Seniors.” The notice wrote, in part “On November 11, 2025, the AAA informed CDA it does not have sufficient funds to continue operations after December 31, 2025. Therefore, CDA anticipates that the AAA will be unable to continue to serve the aging population with various critical services after December 31, 2025, posing an immediate threat to the safety, health, and/or welfare of the individuals being served.” The CDA was scheduled to hold a public hearing on February 2 of this year to “gather testimony, opinions, and information from all interested parties, including the general public, about the revocation of AAA designation of Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens... revocation is being initiated due to concerns regarding the AAA’s conduct, including but not limited to its failure to comply with the requirements of the Older Americans Act and fiscal mismanagement.”

On January 28, 2026, Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens notified CDA of its decision to voluntarily withdraw its AAA designation. The public hearing scheduled for February 2 was canceled because of this voluntary withdrawal. CDA has administratively continued the contract for the ADRC and the process for designating a new AAA in PSA 17 remains ongoing.

In communications with the legislature, CDA stated “CDA is actively coordinating with local partners to support continuity and stability for older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, and residents of long-term care facilities in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties and is keeping community members at the forefront as the department assesses next steps consistent with state and federal requirements. Services in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties are expected to continue for the duration of any transition.”

Planning Service Area 18

In Ventura County, the County's Human Services Agency runs the AAA. On September 29, 2025, the County of Ventura AAA advised CDA that it no longer intended to provide services as a AAA effective July 1, 2026. On March 3, 2026, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors voted that the Human Services Agency is best positioned to continue administering the AAA through June 2027. The Human Services Agency is now exploring opportunities to expand community-led efforts while ensuring the core services of the AAA are still being offered.

Related/Prior Legislation:

SB 837 (Reyes, 2025) requires ADRC programs to provide disaster and emergency preparedness training specifically designed to help older adults and people with disabilities prepare for emergencies and ensure their safety before, during, and after natural disasters and other emergency events. This bill is currently pending in the Assembly.

AB 1069 (Bains, Chapter 445, Statutes of 2025) requires as part of disaster planning and response, an AAA, ILC, or an ADRC program to have access to an emergency shelter to ensure older adults and persons with disabilities receive continuous services and necessary support.

SB 1249 (Roth, Chapter 337, Statutes of 2024) Updated and revised legislative findings and declarations within the Mello Granlund Older Californians Act relating to California's significant demographic shift towards an older and more diverse population and declares intent to reform functions relating to area agencies on aging.

SB 453 (Hurtado, Chapter 850, Statutes of 2019) This bill, among other things, requires CDA to develop a core model of best practices for the ADRC program.

AB 1200 (Cervantes, Chapter 618, Statutes of 2017) This bill established the ADRC program to provide information to consumers and their families on available long-term services and supports programs, and to assist older adults, caregivers, and persons with disabilities in accessing long-term services and supports programs at the local level.

COMMENTS

California's ADRC programs have proven to be effective, popular resources for older adults and people with disabilities. Their "no wrong door" approach ensures people seeking resources and services are properly connected with them. In 2024 alone, ADRCs served almost 170,000 older adults and people with disabilities. Recent experiences in PSA 17 and PSA 18 on the central coast have highlighted the potential risks to ADRCs if an AAA or ILC is not able to perform their half of the partnership to sustain an ADRC. To maintain ADRCs in such a scenario, and to protect the continuing good work they do, this bill provides a framework for continued operation when either an AAA or ILC is either unable or unwilling to continue the partnership.

POSITIONS

Support:

California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (Co-Sponsor)
Alzheimer's Association
California Association of Area Agencies on Aging
California Coalition on Family Caregiving
California Senior Legislature
City of Santa Paula
County of Santa Barbara
Independent Living Resource Center
Marin Center for Independent Living
Placer Independent Resource Services
Resources for Independent Living
Service Center for Independent Life

Oppose:

None received

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