

SENATE THIRD READING

SB 352 (Reyes)

As Amended September 02, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires eligible area agencies on aging (AAAs) and independent living centers (ILCs) that provide transportation and evacuation services to individuals with access and functional needs (AFN) during a state of emergency to be prioritized for state assistance as prescribed.

It further requires Aging and Disability Resource Connection programs (ADRCs) 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 using existing resources.

Major Provisions**COMMENTS***BACKGROUND*

Population data: California's aging population is growing faster than any other age group. By 2030, over 25% of the population in California will be 60 and older.¹

California is projected to be one of the fastest growing States in the nation in total population. In 2016, California comprised 12% of the nation's population² and is expected to grow 30% by the year 2060 (an increase of 11.7 million people.³ In California, the population aged 60 years and over is expected to grow more than three times as fast as the total population and this growth will vary by region.

The population over age 60 will have an overall increase of 166% during the period from 2010 to 2060. More than half the counties will have over a 100% increase in this age group. Nearly half of these counties will have growth rates of over 150%. These counties are located throughout the central and southern areas of the State. The influence of the 60 and over age group on California is expected to emerge most strongly between 2010 to 2030.³

The population over age 85 will increase at an even a faster rate than those over 60 years of age, having an overall increase of 489% during the period from 2010 to 2060. Counties can expect to experience even higher growth rates after 2020. In particular, the influence of the 85 and over age group on California will emerge most strongly between 2030 to 2040 as the first of the baby boomers reach 85 years of age.³

Area Agencies on Aging: The California Department of Aging (CDA) administers programs serving older adults through contracts with local agencies in 33 locations across the state which

¹ <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/projections/>

² <https://factfinder.census.gov>

³ <http://www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Projections>

provide a wide array of services on a community level to seniors and adults with disabilities. AAAs are designated to address the needs and concerns of older adults at the regional and local level. 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. While California is home to 58 counties, not all counties have a stand-alone AAA. Some AAAs represent multiple counties to serve the region.

Independent Living Centers: According to the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)⁴, an ILC is a consumer-controlled, community-based, nonresidential private nonprofit agency that is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with a range of disabilities. Each center offers five core services that are mandated by the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, including cross-disability peer support, independent living skill development, advocacy and systems advocacy, information and referrals, assistive technology services and transition services. California added two core services: personal assistance services and housing.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers/Connections: In 2003, the federal Administration for Community Living and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services established a joint funding opportunity through the ADRC initiative.⁵ This initiative was designed to provide visible and trusted sources of information, one-on-one counseling, and streamlined access to long-term services and supports (LTSS).

In 2015, CDA established the ADRC and an advisory committee to engage stakeholders in identifying and implementing strategies to strengthen, sustain, and expand ADRC services throughout the state. The committee is the primary advisor to the CDA in the ongoing development and implementation of the state's ADRCs. Committee members include representatives from the CDA, Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), DOR and the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as representatives of providers and advocates in the LTSS community. California's ADRC program was codified by AB 1200 (Cervantes, Chapter 618, Statutes of 2017).

CDA contracts with local area agencies on aging and independent living centers, which coordinate a variety of supportive services to seniors and adults with disabilities. Not all area agencies on aging provide ADRC services. Anyone, regardless of age, income, or disability, may receive ADRC services.

ADRC services may include:

- 1) *Enhanced information and referral services*, such as comprehensive resource information, follow-ups, and "warm hand-off" referrals.
- 2) *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.

⁴ Independent Living - CA Department of Rehabilitation

⁵ Administration for Community Living National Study of Aging and Disability Resource Centers

- 3) *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.
- 4) *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.

State Emergency Plan (SEP): California Government Code Section 8650 establishes the SEP. The SEP is the primary plan for the California Emergency Support Functions (CA-ESFs). Emergency support functions are intended to provide a planning framework for local, tribal, state, and federal governments, as well as the private sector. This framework enables these entities to work together to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of emergencies regardless of the cause, size, location, or complexity.

As part of its response-support role, in coordination with other CA-ESFs and the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) within California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), the CA-ESF 6 will support the mass care community in addressing individuals with disabilities, older adults, and others with AFN.

No two disasters are ever the same; yet, virtually all incidents disproportionately affect individuals with AFN (i.e. people with disabilities, older adults, children, limited English proficiency, and transportation disadvantaged). Understanding this harsh reality, in 2008 California established OAFN within the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

The purpose of OAFN is to identify the needs of individuals with disabilities and others with access or functional needs before, during, and after disasters and to integrate them into the State's emergency management systems. OAFN plans for the realities of disasters by integrating access and functional needs into everything CalOES does including partnership development, outreach, training, guidance and providing technical assistance.

[opens in a new window](#)

Auditor Report: A 2019 report from the State Auditor, "California Is Not Adequately Prepared to Protect Its Most Vulnerable Residents From Natural Disasters"⁶ sites the three counties audited had not met the needs of vulnerable populations in their emergency planning. As California recovers from the most devastating fires in our history, we know the data shows older adults and people with disabilities perish in higher numbers during disasters.

As floods, earthquakes and wildfires, as well as other natural disasters continue to plague California from coasts to deserts and north to south, we continue to identify how well we provide services to older adults and people with disabilities.

In recent years, California has experienced an increase in the frequency and severity of wildfires, and experts project that these events will continue to occur more frequently.⁷ Consequently, the

⁶ <https://information.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2019-103.pdf>

⁷ <https://wildfiretaskforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/californiawildfireandforestresilienceactionplan.pdf>

state will likely need to protect its residents more often and from more dangerous natural disasters in the future than it has in the past.

Master Plan for Aging: In January of 2021, the Governor released his Master Plan for Aging (MPA). The MPA prioritizes the health and well-being of older Californians and the need for policies that promote healthy aging. The MPA serves as a 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 work plan laid out in the MPA four years after its release continues to highlight the urgent needs facing California's older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, their families, advocates and the workforce supporting these populations.. In 2025-26, the MPA outlines five bold goals and currently seeks to advance 81 initiatives to build a California for All Ages by 2030. Each initiative features a designated area of focus; to deliver, to analyze and to communicate. It also includes a Data Dashboard on Aging to measure progress.

According to the Author

"The state has long been aware that individuals with disabilities and older adults face a disproportionate risk of death during natural disasters. A 2019 audit by the California State Auditor highlighted the critical gap in emergency management agencies' ability to support these vulnerable populations, revealing a lack of guidelines for assisting these individual in cases of emergency. Recently, wildfires in Southern California claimed the lives of several individuals with disabilities, many of whom were over the age of 70. Despite the longstanding dangers faced by this community, the state has repeatedly failed to take meaningful action."

Arguments in Support

AARP writes in support, "The AARP Disaster Resilience Toolkit states "[a] key to ensuring that older adults are properly served by disaster preparedness and emergency planning is to acknowledge — and address — the gaps that exist between local emergency management teams and the organizations and municipal offices that work with and on behalf of older community members." AARP believes that more integrated disaster planning will help local governments better protect older residents, whether they are living independently or residing in an assisted living or health care facility."

Arguments in Opposition

None.

FISCAL COMMENTS

The Assembly Committee on Appropriations states the following fiscal effect,

- 1) Cal OES, if requested to support implementation, estimates General Fund (GF) costs of up to \$400,000 annually for potential contract and personnel resource needs for the Office of Access and Functional Needs and the California Specialized Training Institute.
- 2) CDA anticipates minor and absorbable costs to provide information on existing emergency preparedness and response tools and resources.

CDA also indicates GF costs of an unknown amount for ADRC programs to provide the disaster and emergency preparedness training required by this bill. The state provides an

annual \$10 million GF appropriation, administered by CDA, to the nearly two dozen designated ADRCs throughout the state. This bill adds additional training requirements on the ADRCs, but does not provide additional funding likely necessary to develop and provide the training.

- 3) DOR anticipates minor and absorbable costs to provide information on existing emergency preparedness and response tools and resources.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, McGuire, McNeerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Limón, Reyes

ASM AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE: 7-0-0

YES: Ellis, Ahrens, Ávila Farias, Arambula, Jeff Gonzalez, Blanca Rubio, Sharp-Collins

ASM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: 7-0-0

YES: Ransom, Hadwick, Arambula, Bains, Bennett, Calderon, DeMaio

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Ahrens, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

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