

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 352 (Reyes)
As Amended September 5, 2025
Majority vote

SUMMARY

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

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 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)¹, 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.² 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

¹ Independent Living - CA Department of Rehabilitation

² Administration for Community Living National Study of Aging and Disability Resource Centers

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.
- 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.

Auditor Report: A 2019 report from the State Auditor, "California Is Not Adequately Prepared to Protect Its Most Vulnerable Residents From Natural Disasters"³ 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.⁴ Consequently, the 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.

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

³ <https://information.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2019-103.pdf>

⁴ <https://wildfiretaskforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/californiawildfireandforestresilienceactionplan.pdf>

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) 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.

- 2) 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, McNerney, 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 Farías, 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

UPDATED

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