

# **SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING**

<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/coa> ~ [slocommissiononaging@gmail.com](mailto:slocommissiononaging@gmail.com)

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors  
Government Building  
1055 Monterey, Room D430  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

**Dear San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors:**

We are pleased to submit the 2024–2025 Report of the San Luis Obispo County Commission on Aging (SLOCOA). In accordance with our mandate, this report details our progress in achieving the San Luis Obispo County Commission on Aging Goals and Priority Issues for 2024–2025.

The San Luis Obispo County Commission on Aging was established in 1984. Our Commissioners serve without compensation and are selected for their knowledge, commitment, and ability to represent the diverse Senior population across the county and its cities. We are also grateful for your continued support in appointing district representatives to the Commission. They are joined by representatives from the Area Agency on Aging, AmeriCorps Seniors (RSVP), the LTC Ombudsman Program, District Attorney Victim Witness, San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department, SLOCOG, and community advocates from numerous agencies.

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**Goal 1: Inform the public of services, events, and activities available to the Senior population; provide a countywide forum for Seniors to voice concerns; and reduce duplicative efforts by identifying services available to the Senior population and encouraging the coordination of activities and services countywide:**

We continue to utilize our Facebook account to share information about SLOCOA activities and to highlight both practical and educational opportunities throughout the county designed to benefit Seniors. As more Baby Boomers reach Senior status, social media such as Facebook has become an increasingly valuable tool for staying informed and connected.

Our email distribution list continues to grow, reaching individuals and agencies interested in our monthly speaker presentations. Presenters and agency participants bring informational materials on Senior services and events, which are distributed to all attendees.

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The Commission also maintains a dedicated email account ([slocommissiononaging@gmail.com](mailto:slocommissiononaging@gmail.com)) through which agencies and the public can request information, ask questions, and share materials relevant to Seniors. Meeting announcements are posted on Facebook and the SLOCOA webpage hosted under the Department of Social Services (DSS) site.

Co-chair Maryanne Zarycka works closely with the DSS IT Team to enhance the SLOCOA website. Improvements include larger, more accessible font sizes; the addition of links to monthly fliers, agendas, minutes, and special reports; and the posting of PowerPoint presentations from guest speakers for public access.

Digital monthly meeting materials are created by Co-chair Zarycka and distributed countywide through the Commission's email network, reaching senior centers, senior living facilities, libraries, newsletters, and agency partners. These materials inform the public about upcoming presenters and topics and ensure that community members have a forum to voice concerns.

The most effective communication continues to occur during our monthly meetings, where Commissioners and guests introduce themselves, share updates, and distribute materials highlighting programs, activities, and issues of interest to Seniors.

Our presenters and panelists consistently provide valuable resources, information, and spirited discussion. Attendance and engagement have been strong, and we have established several recurring annual presentations, including:

- **May (beginning 2026):** Elder Mental Health Awareness Panel and Discussion (Mental Health Awareness Month)
- **June:** COA Brainstorming/Mini-Resource Month
- **July:** Veterans Panel and Discussion
- **September:** Elder Suicide Prevention Panel (Suicide Prevention Month)
- **October:** HICAP Medicare Open Enrollment Updates

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## **Goal 2: Advocate for Seniors on those critical issues with the Board of Supervisors, private and local government sectors, and through partnerships with service organizations as well as in the community:**

The Commission's annual **Brainstorming Meeting**, held on **June 25, 2025**, was an outstanding success. Approximately 35 Commission members and community partners participated, contributing an impressive range of insights, enthusiasm, and collaborative spirit.

Through an organized, interactive process, participants identified six fundamental areas of concern for Seniors in San Luis Obispo County. We then prioritized sub-topics for

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focused attention during the 2025–2026 fiscal year and discussed strategies for continued collaboration with the Board of Supervisors, senior advocates, and partner agencies.

The concerns and needs identified during this session were ranked by importance, with categories #1A and #1B tied for top priority. These priorities will guide our advocacy and outreach efforts in the coming year:

## **#1a. Health and Well-being (includes Medical)**

1. Improve/change SLO county 'rural-urban' status to provide seniors with better care and priority medical attention including:
  - a. timely access to medical appointments to prevent mild health symptoms from developing into critical or life-threatening conditions.
  - b. improved specialty services including geriatric specialist physicians and staff who honor our elders.
  - c. senior hoarding/mental health awareness, attention and focus, and action and funding for clean-up and/or relocation.
  - d. nutrition and hydration education, and weekly monitoring by specialists.
  - e. medication and drug interaction reviews for all seniors, and weekly medication management by qualified providers.
2. Ongoing nutrition/hydration services, education, and specialists for homebound and active seniors.
3. Paid or volunteer medical advocacy support to navigate
  - a. making/changing appointments,
  - b. filling out forms (including digital challenges),
  - c. accompanying seniors during healthcare visits (a 'Medi-Pal').
4. Funding and support for senior centers to provide seminars, classes, and programs related to senior education, information, health, socialization, suicide prevention, and well-being and more.
5. Free classes for senior exercise, core strengthening and fall prevention, increase number of Medicare senior exercise programs in fitness centers and senior centers countywide (like Silver Sneakers).
6. Accessible venues and opportunities for senior companionship; including transportation from central locations (north, mid, south county) to scenic drives, lunches/dinners, group adventures – "Party Bus"!
7. Hoarding Task Force (mobile unit) to address, evaluate, and mitigate severe and harmful senior hoarding cases.
8. More access to healthy food and meals/hydration for homebound seniors – identify isolated seniors and provide senior-friendly monitoring and nutrition/hydration service.

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## **#1b. Housing – Senior Friendly Low Cost, High Accessibility**

1. Housing Developer education, awareness, and mandates to build safe and accessible homes for seniors, at a cost they can afford, (not limited to):
  - a. walk-in showers, grab bars, eliminate glass shower doors (replace with shower curtains), shower-head extensions, and more.
  - b. single level entrance and interior, ramps and rails, easy open/close windows and doors, raised toilet seats and handrail options, and more.
2. Home Modifications for aging in place seniors to remain in their own (paid for) homes (no or low cost- use grants?).
3. More housing opportunities for homeless/low-income seniors; safe and secure, single level, dorm-style, co-op, shared opportunities, volunteer advocates and helpers to promote community supported living.
4. Medi-Cal Waivers and LTC (long term care insurance) assistance for 'board and care' homes, 'assisted living', and 'senior living' communities (to provide more subsidized housing options for secure senior living).
5. Aging in place community support; young volunteers (high school-college- young people clubs-or?) on call for household tasks, changing air filters, light bulbs, smoke detector batteries, yard work, minor maintenance etc.
6. Senior Foster Program - state subsidy for fostering a senior in private homes.

## **#2. Mobility and Transportation**

1. Door-to door reliable round-trip transportation to doctor appointments within SLO County. Low or no cost transportation to major medical facilities appointments outside of SLO County.
2. Lower rates for senior transportation (some county provided programs have recently increased rates). Need more options (including employee training) for safe, affordable, and senior-friendly travel.
3. Free/low-cost hop-on-hop-off vans/buses with low adaptive on/off steps and grab rails, that loop around the (north, mid, south) county daily and cover the county's most popular senior stops like pharmacies, grocery stores, senior centers, medical centers, parks and recreation.
4. Senior Party Buses! Senior Destination Buses! (combat isolation) To bring seniors together and provide companionship opportunities, sightseeing inland county, along the coast, or specific destinations for fun and entertainment (casino, dancing, shows, plays...).
5. More 'SLO Village Movement' model communities, including free in-home services and transport door-to-door. <https://www.slovillage.net/> "SLO Village Movement is a non-profit, membership organization focused on empowering older adults to sustain independence and continue living lives of purpose and promise through social connection, personal growth, community-minded support, and helpful services."

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## **#3. Financial Assistance and Planning**

1. Work with banks to provide complementary monthly financial planning:
  - a. assist senior to set up auto-pay if desired.
  - b. provide budget monitoring help for all seniors.
2. Request county government to advocate for Assisted Living Facility waivers for San Luis Obispo County seniors.  
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ltc/Pages/AssistedLivingWaiver.aspx>
3. Create and send out teams of 'Bankers without Boarders' to visit **countywide** Senior Centers, Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing facilities, Veterans Centers, Churches, and rural/isolated areas to provide complementary financial planning, set-up auto-pay, and budget monitoring monthly.
4. Dedicated grant writers specifically focused on senior needs for aging in place or moving; costs of relocating (sorting, packing, unpacking, organizing, etc.), downsizing, hording maintenance, adaptive devices, safety home modifications (ramps, rails, grab bars, walk-in showers, doorway widening, etc.).

## **#4. Technology – Encouraged, Explained, Educated**

1. Provide one-on-one computer and smart phone training at ALL Countywide senior centers, libraries, assisted living facilities, and Veterans centers. Utilize retired teachers and tech savvy people, request help from high school or college students, public libraries, anyone looking for community service opportunities.
2. Complementary 'life alert' tracking, fall monitoring systems with volunteer person to deliver, set-up, and instruct senior on use and maintenance, and follow-up monthly to check on equipment and senior's well-being.
3. Create easy to follow, step-by-step, senior-friendly, simple educational technology videos that seniors can watch at home, or at Senior Centers, Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing facilities, Veterans Centers, Churches, etc.

## **#5. Education and Communication**

1. Senior One-Stop 'clearing houses (no wrong door' resource centers) where seniors can find answers and help in a 'one stop' visit. One-Stop Centers located in senior centers, community centers, churches, shopping malls/centers, libraries... and portable/mobile pop-up at resource fairs, assisted living, rehabs, retirement communities, and other events throughout the county providing:

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- a. information and assistance (with calls, forms, technology, financial info...),
- b. County services information and explanations of services and benefits
- c. guidance for independent living resources
- d. triage for senior challenges and navigating health, housing and transportation issues
- e. transportation hub for hop-on-hop-off adaptive vans/buses

2. Mobile educational classes and lectures monthly+ and methodically moving throughout the county (north, mid, south) providing support and information on senior needs, i.e.;

- a. scam information/intervention,
- b. how to use 211 if you are hearing impaired
- c. public transportation support
- d. fall prevention class/demo
- e. chronic health condition management
- f. preparing for end-of-life (POLST, Fiduciary, trusts-wills...)
- g. budget/money management
- h. medication education and management

3. Communication education for the young work force on how to effectively speak with seniors in person and on the phones (slow, clear, facing them, mindfulness of hearing and vision issues, patience, and tolerance).

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The Commission will continue to **advocate for, educate, and empower Seniors** throughout the new fiscal year, confident in the steadfast partnership and support of the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors.

Together, we are building a stronger, more informed, and more connected community for our county's older adults. We thank you for your ongoing leadership, collaboration, and commitment to the well-being of San Luis Obispo County's Senior population.

With respect and appreciation,  
**San Luis Obispo County Commission on Aging**

*Maryanne Zarycka*

Maryanne Zarycka  
SLOCOA Co-Chair

*Anita Shower*

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SLOCOA Co-Chair