

# AGING TODAY

Vol. XXVII, No. 6

PAGE 10

November–December 2006

ISSN: 1043-1284

[www.agingtoday.org](http://www.agingtoday.org)

## CALIFORNIA REPORT OFFERS URBAN STRATEGIES FOR AGING WELL

The “sweeping demographic transformation” that will elevate the population of those 65 or older will place unusual pressures on California cities, according to “Aging Well: New Ideas for an Older California,” a new publication developed by the Center for Civic Partnerships of the Public Health Institute, a nonprofit based in Sacramento, Calif.

California, which has the largest 65-plus population in the United States, will see its older residents more than double, from 3.5 million in 2000 (10.6% of the state’s population) to 8.2 million in 2030 (17.8%). According to Civic Partnerships’ executive director Joan M. Twiss, “Cities and other units of local government, as well as nonprofits and the business sector, need to start planning and allocating resources now to avert more costly remedial measures in the future.”

“Aging Well” includes the following checklist of strategies for communities, adapted here with permission.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- **Appoint a resident commission** to conduct research and develop a multiyear action plan.
- **List volunteer opportunities** in city and community publications, on websites and in other public venues.
- **Develop public and private resources** to promote, recruit, retain and celebrate volunteer work by older adults.
- **Optimize participation in public meetings** through assistive technologies, such as hearing or translation devices.
- **Sponsor meetings** at sites where older adults congregate.
- **Encourage elders’ involvement** in policy development and advocacy.

### TRANSPORTATION

- **Promote safe, alternative transportation methods** beyond the personal automobile, such as bicycling, walking, and neighborhood electric vehicles.
- **Ensure that local transportation services** meet older-adult needs by, for example, linking van and shuttle services with mass transit or providing transportation vouchers.
- **Offer incentives to developers** that incorporate smart-growth principles into community design.
- **Develop infrastructure improvements** (wide sidewalks, benches, good lighting, and increased time limits at crosswalk signals, for example) that support safe use by pedestrians and those with mobility impairments.

### VARIED HOUSING OPTIONS

- **Review state planning documents on housing** to identify gaps between current supply and projected older-adult needs based on income, cultural identity and other population-based factors.
- **Work with lending institutions, the building industry** and others to preserve affordable senior housing.

- **Work with lenders, builders** and others to build mixed-use, affordable senior housing.
- **Support development of barrier-free housing** by endorsing concepts of universal design and visibility.
- **Build community support for affordable senior housing**, such as through informational campaigns and forums.
- **Provide rehabilitation programs** for low-income older-adult households, such as through free installation of safety equipment, as well as community paint and yard-work programs.
- **Cluster city or regional services** in senior housing and naturally occurring retirement communities.
- **Explore housing trusts** and other funding mechanisms to fund affordable senior housing projects.

---

#### EMPLOYMENT

- **List employment and employability resources** for older adults in city and community publications, on websites and in other public venues.
- **Develop policies and incentives to retain and recruit older workers** with flexible or reduced hours, transfer to less demanding roles, training to improve skills, phased retirement, flexible benefits packages and so on.
- **Recognize businesses and organizations** that have policies and practices conducive to older adults remaining in the workforce.

---

#### LIFELONG LEARNING

- **Promote lifelong learning opportunities** and resources in city and community publications, on websites and in other public venues.
- **Support a range of affordable, culturally appropriate** and language-diverse lifelong learning opportunities for older adults, such as recreational, educational, artistic and cultural.
- **Co-locate public facilities** with nonprofits or commercial enterprise to provide easier information access, such as at Internet cafés.
- **Provide access to and training on interactive media technology**—for example, online services—through libraries, community centers, kiosks and other public facilities, as well as through public-private partnerships.
- **Collaborate with public entities** such as schools, colleges and libraries to provide lifelong learning opportunities.

---

#### SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- **Offer an ombudsman program and financial and legal assistance** by supporting and collaborating with public-private partners.
- **In multiple languages and within cultural contexts**, provide information and assist with access to self-care, medical and social services, and end-of-life care.
- **Develop intergenerational facilities and services** at libraries and other municipal services.
- **Ensure easy access to fresh produce** at neighborhood stores, farmers' markets and community gardens.
- **Prevent hunger and malnutrition** through public-private partnerships.
- **Provide recreational opportunities** and physical fitness programs that serve all skill levels and abilities.

The full 14-page “Perspectives on Aging Well” publication is posted online at [www.civicpartnerships.org/publications.htm](http://www.civicpartnerships.org/publications.htm). ❖