

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Alex Lee, Chair

AB 450 (Carrillo) – As Amended March 13, 2025

SUBJECT: Public social services: support for aging immigrant and undocumented older adults

SUMMARY: Establishes a stakeholder-driven process overseen by the California Department of Aging (CDA) to provide recommendations on supporting aging immigrant and undocumented older adults. Requires CDA to establish a panel tasked with examining affordability and guaranteed basic income, housing, healthcare access, and language barriers. Requires findings and recommendations to be reported to the Legislature and the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) and integrated into the Master Plan for Aging (Master Plan). Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires CDA to oversee a stakeholder process to support the development of findings and recommendations on how to best support undocumented older adults as they age in California.
- 2) Requires CDA, to help inform the stakeholder process, to establish a panel consisting of the following members, appointed to a two-year term:
 - a) Six members appointed by CDA as follows:
 - i) Three members from nonprofit organizations that represent aging or immigrant populations;
 - ii) Three members form clinical or health care space that serve rural and under-resourced communities;
 - b) One member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly with experience in immigrant rights or aging advocacy; and,
 - c) One member appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules with experience in immigrant rights or aging advocacy.
- 3) Requires a member who fails to attend two panel meetings in one calendar year to be deemed removed from the panel, and the appointing power for that member to appoint a new member to fill that vacancy.
- 4) Prohibits panel members from receiving per diem or other similar compensation for serving as a panel member.
- 5) Requires the panel to invite stakeholders and subject matter experts, including clinics, researchers, housing advocates, and nonprofit organizations to participate in the stakeholder process. Permits, as appropriate, the costs of the panel and the stakeholder process to be reduced by in-kind or other contributions from third parties.
- 6) Requires, during the process, representatives from CDA and members of the panel to consider issues including, but not limited to, affordability and guaranteed basic income,

access to social services and housing, and access to health care services, including specialist and language access.

- 7) Requires the first meeting of the stakeholder process to be held no later than 90 days after the funding becomes available for the purposes of these provisions.
- 8) Authorizes CDA to contract with academic research entities to commission expert research and testimony to supplement the stakeholder process and support the development of findings and recommendations.
- 9) Requires the panel, upon completion of the stakeholder process, but by no later than July 1, 2028, to issue findings and recommendations to CDA on the most effective ways to implement policies and programs to support aging immigrant and undocumented older adults in California.
- 10) Requires CDA, on or before December 31, 2028, to present a report including the findings and recommendations provided by the panel under 9) above, to the Legislature.
- 11) Requires CDA to provide any policy recommendations made by the panel under 9) above, to CalHHS to be included in the Master Plan established pursuant to Executive Order No. N-14-19.
- 12) Defines, for the purposes of these provisions, “older adult” to mean an adult 55 years of age or older.
- 13) Requires these provisions to be implemented upon appropriation by the Legislature.
- 14) Sunsets these provisions on January 1, 2029.
- 15) Makes the following findings and declarations: addressing the needs of the aging California population is of utmost importance to ensure older adults in California are able to meet their needs as they age. Ensuring policy is inclusive of immigrant and undocumented older adults in California who have lived, worked, and contributed to California, but as a result of their immigration status are unable to access critical social services intended to assist older adults is important.

EXISTING LAW:

State law:

- 1) Requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to establish the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) to provide assistance for persons who are not eligible for federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits solely due to their immigration status. Requires, when possible, that the income, resources, and deductible expenses of those who receive CFAP benefits to be excluded when calculating CalFresh benefits. (WIC § 18930 *et seq.*)
- 2) Requires CDSS to establish and supervise a county- or county consortia-administered program to provide cash assistance to aged, blind, and disabled legal immigrants who are not

citizens and who successfully complete an application process. Requires CDSS to conduct the evaluations of disability for the program. (WIC § 18937)

- 3) Requires benefits provided under the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) program to be equivalent to the benefits provided under the Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) program. (WIC § 18941)
- 4) Establishes the Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act, which reflects the policy mandates and directives of the federal Older Americans Act of 1965 described in 10) below, and sets forth the state's commitment to older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers served by the programs administered by CDA. (WIC § 9000 *et seq.*)
- 5) Establishes the California Commission on Aging, composed of 18 persons, with a majority of members 60 years of age or older. (WIC § 9200)

Federal law: *Note: For the purposes of referring to federal law accurately, this section uses the term "alien" which is not a term used in the Committee or California, per AB 1096 (Luz Rivas), Chapter 296, Statutes of 2021.*

- 6) Establishes the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), covering aspects related to immigration, naturalization, deportation, and citizenship. (8 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 1101 *et seq.*)
- 7) Establishes SNAP pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1964. (7 U.S.C. § 2011 *et seq.*)
- 8) Establishes the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation (PRWOR) Act of 1996, restricting eligibility of aliens for many federal benefit programs, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, SSI, Medicaid, and SNAP, except for "qualified aliens." (Title IV of Public Law 104-193)
- 9) Authorizes a state to provide that an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States (U.S.) is eligible for any state or local public benefit for which such alien would otherwise be ineligible only through the enactment of a state law after August 22, 1996, which affirmatively provides for such eligibility. (8 U.S.C § 1621(d))
- 10) Establishes the Older Americans Act, declaring that, in keeping with the traditional American concept of the inherent dignity of the individual in our democratic society, the older people of our Nation are entitled to, and it is the joint and several duty and responsibility of the governments of the U.S., of the several States and their political subdivisions, and of Indian tribes to assist our older people to secure equal opportunity to the full and free enjoyment of the following objectives:
 - a) An adequate income in retirement in accordance with the American standard of living;
 - b) The best possible physical and mental health which science can make available and without regard to economic status;
 - c) Obtaining and maintaining suitable housing, independently selected, designed and located with reference to special needs and available at costs which older citizens can afford;

- d) Full restoration services for those who require institutional care, and a comprehensive array of community-based, long-term care services adequate to appropriately sustain older people in their communities and in their homes, including support to family members and other persons providing voluntary care to older individuals needing long-term care services;
- e) Opportunity for employment with no discriminatory personnel practices because of age;
- f) Retirement in health, honor, dignity—after years of contribution to the economy;
- g) Participating in, and contributing to, meaningful activity within the widest range of civic, cultural, education and training and recreational opportunities;
- h) Efficient community services, including access to low-cost transportation, which provide a choice in supported living arrangements and social assistance in a coordinated manner and which are readily available when needed, with emphasis on maintaining a continuum of care for vulnerable older individuals;
- i) Immediate benefit from proven research knowledge which can sustain and improve health and happiness; and,
- j) Freedom, independence, and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing their own lives, full participation in the planning and operation of community-based services and programs provided for their benefit, and protection against abuse, neglect, and exploitation. (42 U.S.C. 3001 *et seq.*)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, this bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

COMMENTS:

Background: *Immigrants* with legal standing in the U.S., both temporary and permanent, are those who have been granted permission to live and work in the country by obtaining a visa or obtaining other legal statuses, such as legal permanent residency (LPR), being granted asylum, admitted as a refugee, a parolee, or conditional entrant, among others. Once in the country, these immigrants are entitled to certain rights and protections under the law, including access to government benefits and services, such as healthcare, education, and public social services. As of 2023, the California Budget and Policy Center reports that over 11 million immigrants, defined as foreign-born individuals, reside in California, making up 28% of the state population. According to the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), the vast majority of immigrants in California are documented residents, meaning they have legal authorization to reside in the U.S. In 2022, 83% of documented immigrants were either naturalized citizens or had other legal statuses, such as visa holders and LPR.

Undocumented immigrants are individuals who enter or reside in a country without legal authorization. These individuals often fear deportation and lack access to basic rights and protections afforded to legal residents. The Migration Policy Institute analyzed 2019 data from the U.S. Census Bureau and found there are over 2.7 million undocumented immigrants in California, with about 293,000 over 55 years of age and 856,000 who have lived in the U.S. for 20 years or more.

Nationally, undocumented immigrants contributed \$96.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes, with \$59.4 billion paid to the federal government and the remaining \$37.3 billion to state and local governments. Despite undocumented Californians contributing \$8.5 billion in state and local taxes in 2022, they may be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in the workplace and elsewhere, and they typically face significant barriers to accessing government services. A national 2024 report by the Institution on Taxation and Economic Policy highlighted that for every 1 million undocumented immigrants who reside in the country, public services receive \$8.9 billion in additional tax revenue. Nationally, providing access to work authorization to all current undocumented immigrants would increase their tax contributions by \$40.2 billion annually, to \$136.9 billion. More than a third of the tax dollars paid by undocumented immigrants are toward payroll taxes dedicated to funding programs, like Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance—that undocumented workers are barred from accessing. In the same PPIC report, it was noted that in 2022, there were 1.8 million undocumented immigrants in California, which represented 4.6% of the total population.

This bill would require CDA to oversee a stakeholder process and establish a panel to issue findings and recommendations to CDA on the most effective ways to implement policies and programs for undocumented adults 55 years of age and older.

Social Safety Net for Immigrants. Safety net programs substantially lower poverty levels, but federal eligibility rules often exclude undocumented immigrants, who have the highest poverty rates in the state (27%). California has established one of the most comprehensive social safety nets in the U.S. for immigrants, including those without legal status. Through a combination of state-funded programs, legislative initiatives, and community partnerships, California aims to ensure that all residents have access to essential services, regardless of immigration status. A number of these programs include, but are not limited to:

- *California Food Assistance Program* provides state-funded nutritional assistance to certain noncitizens ineligible for federal SNAP benefits. Established after the 1996 PRWOR Act restricted SNAP eligibility for many lawfully present noncitizens, CFAP serves groups such as legal permanent residents not meeting the five-year residency or work history requirements, parolees, conditional entrants, and battered or abused noncitizens. CFAP mirrors the CalFresh system, using electronic benefits transfer for distribution. Although undocumented immigrants currently cannot access CFAP, California plans to extend eligibility to all adults who are 55 years of age and older, regardless of immigration status, starting in 2027. For the 2024-25 fiscal year, CFAP served approximately 28,900 households at a total cost of around \$130 million, with households receiving an estimated average monthly benefit of \$372;
- *Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants* is a state-funded program designed to support aged, blind, or disabled noncitizens who cannot receive federal SSI/SSP due to immigration status. Established after federal restrictions in 1996 disqualified many noncitizens from SSI/SSP, CAPI provides monthly financial aid to qualified immigrants who meet specific criteria: 65 years of age or older, blind or disabled; California residency; financial eligibility requirements; and, immigration status as their sole barrier to federal assistance. As of January 2024, individuals received \$1,153.94 and couples received \$1,978.83 monthly, serving about 14,000 legal residents. CAPI applicants must demonstrate SSI/SSP ineligibility solely based on immigration status, often deterring undocumented individuals due to concerns about revealing sensitive personal information; and,

- *Medi-Cal*, the state's Medicaid program, provides comprehensive health care coverage to low-income individuals, including children, seniors, and adults with disabilities. In 2024, California expanded eligibility to all low-income adults, regardless of immigration status, making California the first state to offer health coverage to all eligible undocumented adults. According to PPIC, the initiative is expected to reduce poverty among noncitizens by up to 2.9%, benefiting approximately 125,000 individuals.

A recent poll commissioned by the California Community Foundation reveals strong public support among Californians for providing immigrants access to critical safety net services. Specifically, 59% of voters support guaranteeing low-income Californians access to healthcare, food assistance, worker benefits, and tax credits regardless of immigration status. Support rises even higher for these programs, with significant majorities backing healthcare access (68%), food assistance (64%), workers benefits (60%), and tax credits (58%). Additionally, Californians overwhelmingly support comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship (82%) and oppose mass deportations (60%), highlighting the broad and deep commitment to immigrant inclusion across the state.

Master Plan on Aging. The Master Plan was established by Governor Newsom under Executive Order No. N-14-19, initiated in June 2019. The Master Plan is a comprehensive, long-term strategic framework aimed at ensuring California communities can adequately meet the evolving needs of an increasingly older population. As California anticipates a significant demographic shift, with a rapidly growing population of individuals 60 years of age and older, the Master Plan serves as the state's roadmap for creating age-friendly environments, accessible healthcare, financial security, and robust community support by 2030.

The Master Plan is structured around five central goals:

- *Housing for All Ages and Stages* seeks to ensure Californians can age in place within communities that are age-friendly, accessible, and resilient against climate-related and other disasters. Efforts under this goal prioritize expanding affordable housing, promoting assisted living and other supportive residential care options, and increasing resources to prevent homelessness among older adults;
- *Health Reimagined* commits California to transforming healthcare systems to be more inclusive, affordable, and community-focused. Initiatives like CalAIM expand home- and community-based care services, integrating behavioral health support and promoting preventive care models. The goal emphasizes equitable health outcomes and improved access to healthcare, including comprehensive support for individuals transitioning from institutional care back into their communities;
- *Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation* reflects California's dedication to fostering community engagement, social connection, and protection against discrimination and abuse. Under this pillar, the state actively promotes lifelong opportunities for volunteering, employment, education, and leadership. Initiatives are tailored to meet the needs of historically marginalized groups, addressing inequities faced by LGBTQIA+ seniors, and improving digital access to reduce social isolation among older Californians;
- *Caregiving that Works* acknowledges the essential role caregivers play in supporting aging loved ones. California leads national efforts to strengthen support systems for both paid

direct care professionals and family caregivers. This goal encompasses initiatives such as targeted caregiver training, workforce incentives, and enhanced policies enabling greater access to paid family leave, thereby improving the quality of life for caregivers and recipients alike; and,

- *Affording Aging* targets economic security, ensuring older adults and individuals with disabilities can meet their basic financial needs throughout their lifespan. Under this pillar, California seeks to enhance retirement savings access through programs like CalSaver, increase basic income supports such as SSI/SSP and CAPI, and provide nutritious food through expanded CalFresh benefits. The goal reinforces economic dignity, enabling Californians to age with financial independence and stability.

An aging population refers to a shift in the distribution of a population toward older ages and is characterized by an increase in the population's mean and median ages, a decline in the proportion of children, and a rise in the proportion of the elderly. This combination of declining fertility rates and increased life expectancy results in more older people than younger people. According to U.S. Census Bureau projections, by the year 2030, about 22% of California's population will be over 60 years of age, a 34% increase from 2012 when that proportion was 16.4%.

This bill aims to address a critical gap within the Master Plan framework by explicitly focusing on the unique challenges faced by aging immigrant and undocumented older adults, a population often excluded from traditional aging services due to immigration status. Recognizing the traditional public assistance programs frequently excluding undocumented populations due to federal restrictions, *this bill* seeks to bridge this gap by establishing a stakeholder process to examine these unique challenges comprehensively that directly aligns with the Master Plan's equity goals—ensuring inclusivity and reducing systemic disparities.

This bill also requires a specialized panel of stakeholders—including representatives from immigrant-focused nonprofit organizations, healthcare professionals working with underserved populations, and advocates skilled in immigrant rights and aging issues—to identify barriers and propose viable solutions to enhance housing stability, economic security, healthcare access, and social inclusion for aging immigrant populations.

Lastly, *this bill* requires recommendations to be formally integrated into the Master Plan, ensuring aging policies explicitly consider immigrant communities.

Author's Statement: According to the Author, "The number of undocumented older adults in California is growing, and amid current federal policies, support for this community is more critical than ever. While undocumented Californians now have access to healthcare through Medi-Cal, many essential services remain out of reach. Barriers to government services limit their ability to retire, support their families, and contribute to their communities.

"[This bill] establishes a task force within the Department of Aging to develop strategies that uplift undocumented older adults. True inclusivity means recognizing and supporting all aging residents, including our immigrant community, so they can age with dignity and justice."

Equity Implications: *This bill* seeks to address longstanding disparities that aging immigrant and undocumented older adults face within California's social safety net. Historically, this

community has been systematically excluded from vital services due to their immigration status, resulting in pronounced economic insecurity, housing instability, limited healthcare access, and increased vulnerability as they age. By explicitly focusing policy development and stakeholder engagement around their specific needs, *this bill* seeks to correct these structural inequities, ensuring that immigrant communities benefit equitably from the Master Plan. Furthermore, by advocating for culturally competent, linguistically accessible, and inclusive health and social services, *this bill* acknowledges the diversity within aging populations, thus advancing racial, economic, and social justice for older immigrants who have long contributed to California's communities and economy.

Policy Considerations: While CDA serves as the state's lead agency on aging-related issues, its primary focus is on planning, advocacy, and coordination of aging services, particularly those funded through federal programs such as the Older Americans Act. However, CDA does not administer core state social safety net programs, such as CFAP and CAPI, nor does it have the expertise in navigating the eligibility systems, benefits delivery, and case management infrastructure that supports vulnerable low-income populations, including aging and older immigrants regardless of immigration status.

Given the nature of this bill, which seeks to explore access to income supports, housing, healthcare, and long-term service for aging and older immigrants regardless of immigration status, CDSS should be formally included in overseeing the stakeholder process and panel. CDSS administers key safety net programs and has the policy and administrative expertise needed to ensure the recommendations developed through this process are operationally feasible and aligned with the broader social services framework.

Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider requiring CDSS to jointly develop and implement the stakeholder process in conjunction with CDA, along with other CDA requirements set forth in this bill, and require CDSS to appoint members to the panel who have experience administering social services.

Additionally, the bill's current language references "undocumented older adults," which while well-intentioned, may inadvertently reinforce distinctions that could stigmatize or marginalize certain members of the immigrant community and risks overlooking the shared structural barriers faced by all older immigrants—regardless of legal status—when attempting to access healthcare, housing, and long-term support services.

Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider adopting broader, unifying language such as "older and aging immigrants, regardless of immigration status" to center the focus on the population's needs rather than their legal classification.

Proposed Committee Amendments: In order to address the above policy considerations, the Committee proposes the author take the following amendments:

On page 2, in line 2, strike out "California"

On page 2, in line 2, after "population" insert: of California

On page 2, in line 2, strike out "upmost" and insert: utmost

On page 2, in line 3, after "ensure" insert: that

On page 2, in line 5, strike out “ensuring policy is” and insert: it is important that policies be

On page 2, in lines 5 and 6, strike out “immigrant and undocumented older adults in California” and insert: older and aging immigrants, regardless of their immigration status,

On page 2, in line 6, strike out “worked” and insert: worked,

On page 2, in line 7, strike out “As” and insert: who may, as

On page 2, in line 7, strike out “status are” and insert: status, be

On page 2, in line 8, strike out “adults is”, strike out line 8 and insert: adults.

On page 3, in line 2, after “for” insert: Older and

On page 3, in line 2, strike out “Immigrant and Undocumented”, strike out line 3 and insert: Immigrants Regardless of Immigration Status

On page 3, in line 5, strike out “department” and insert: department, in conjunction with the State Department of Social Services,

On page 3, in lines 7 and 8, strike out :undocumented older adults as they age in” and insert: older and aging immigrants, regardless of their immigration status, in

On page 3, in line 9, after “department: insert: and the State Department of Social Services

On page 3, in line 9, after “shall” insert: jointly

On page 3, between lines 19 and 20, insert: (D) Two members appointed by the State Department of Social Services with experience in administering social services,

On page 3, in line 33, after “department” insert: and the State Department of Social Services,

On page 3, in line 34, strike out “panel” and insert: panel,

On page 4, in line 1, after “department” insert: and the State Department of Social Services

On page 4, in line 7, after “department” insert: and the State Department of Social Services

On page 4, in line 8, after “support” insert: older and

On page 4, in line 9, strike out “immigrant and undocumented older adults” and insert: immigrants, regardless of immigration status,

On page 4, in line 10, after “department” insert: and the State Department of Social Services

On page 4, in line 10, after “shall” insert: jointly

On page 4, in line 13, after “department” insert: and the State Department of Social Services

On page 4, in line 13, after “shall” insert: jointly

On page 4, in line 17, strike out ““older adult”” and insert: “older and aging”

Double referral: This bill was previously heard by the Assembly Aging and Long-Term Care Committee on April 22, 2025, and was approved on a 6-1 vote.

RELATED AND PRIOR LEGISLATION:

AB 2415 (Carrillo) of 2024, would have, upon an appropriation, expanded eligibility for the CAPI to all eligible individuals regardless of immigration status, and would have waived the requirement that an applicant must apply and be denied SSI/SSP before being eligible for benefits under CAPI. *AB 2415 was held on the Assembly Committee on Appropriations suspense file.*

AB 1968 (Jackson) of 2024, would have required CDSS to establish a system to automatically enroll in the CalFresh program individuals meeting eligibility requirements of the SSI/SSP, and would have automatically enrolled individuals meeting eligibility requirements for CAPI into CFAP. *AB 1968 was held on the Assembly Committee on Appropriations suspense file.*

SB 85 (Weiner) of 2024, would have allowed state funds, if appropriated, to be used in addition to federal funds for the extension of refugee social services for up to 90 days. *SB 85 was vetoed by Governor Newsom.*

AB 1536 (Carrillo) of 2023, would have, upon appropriation, expanded eligibility for CAPI to all individuals regardless of immigration status; would have deleted obsolete language; would have deleted requirements to apply for SSI/SSP in order to qualify for CAPI. *AB 1536 was vetoed by Governor Newsom.*

AB 1096 (L. Rivas), Chapter 296, Statutes of 2021, struck the offensive and dehumanizing term "alien" used to describe a person who is not a citizen or national of the U.S. where it appears in multiple California code sections, and replaced it with other terms that do not include the word "alien," and makes other nonsubstantive changes.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Autism Society Inland Empire (Sponsor)
Autism Business Association
Autism Heroes
Autism Speaks
California Indian Nations College
California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP)
California State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Easterseals Northern California

Opposition

None on file.

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