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The State of California Announces National Designation as an Age-Friendly State

California becomes the eighth state in the nation to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, a commitment to make the state more livable for people of all ages and abilities

Sacramento, CA – The California Department of Aging (CDA) announced that California has become the eighth state in the nation to be accepted into the [AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities](#), a commitment to make California more livable for people of all ages and abilities. This achievement is a result of the Governor’s 2019 directive to convene a cabinet-level Work Group for Aging, as well as the Master Plan for Aging ([Executive Order N-14-19](#)). Released earlier this year, the Master Plan for Aging outlines five bold goals and twenty-three strategies to build a California for All Ages by 2030. AB 1118 (Blanca Rubio, Chapter 820, Statutes of 2019) directed the Secretary of California’s Health and Human Services Agency to consider applying on behalf of the state to join the age-friendly network as part of the Master Plan for Aging.

“California has the nation’s largest and most diverse aging population. We must tap into those talents and address the critical needs, so all Californians can have healthy and happy older years – especially those at greater risk of isolation, abuse, or homelessness,” said **Governor Gavin Newsom**. “We are committed to creating a California for all ages where everyone has the ability to live and thrive in the community they choose.”

“California has launched a bold ten-year master plan for aging, as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and build back better. This new plan provides an inclusive and equitable framework for transforming aging in this state for individuals, families, and communities,” said **Kim McCoy Wade, Director of the California Department of Aging**. “We look forward to working with AARP to forge partnerships that will create change in every community.”

AARP’s network, an affiliate of the [World Health Organization’s \(WHO\) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program](#), is part of an international campaign to help communities prepare for rapidly aging populations and the parallel trend of urbanization.

“By 2030, 10.8 million Californians will be age 60 or over. That means older adults will make up one quarter of the state’s population, nearly double the number 10 years ago — a growth rate larger than any other age group,” stated **Nancy McPherson, AARP California State Director**. “The cost of being unprepared for this shift is unaffordable and untenable. AARP applauds the State of California for acting to improve livability in the state through the Master Plan for Aging and enrolling the state in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. The state now joins arms with communities around the world to implement innovative strategies that improve livability in communities and involve older residents in the process.”

As a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, California commits to identifying the challenges of its aging population and identifying policy and programmatic solutions that will improve the quality of life for all ages in the community – in collaboration with residents, communities and partners. By enrolling in the AARP network, the state will gain access to national and global research, community networks, planning models and best practices to improve livability for all ages and abilities.

“We are thrilled to join this network of communities, giving us the opportunity to learn from others while also contributing to the network through our own best practices and lessons learned,” said **California Health and Human Services Secretary, Dr. Mark Ghaly**. “California’s Master Plan for Aging is our roadmap to building a California Dream that is inclusive of our older and disabled neighbors.”

“Improving livability, combating ageism, enabling autonomy and supporting healthy aging for all have long been priorities of mine because they are so important to my constituents, and Californians more broadly. I authored AB 1118 because I saw it as being complementary to the Governor’s Master Plan for Aging work, and as an opportunity for California to lead on aging issues by partnering with AARP. I’m hopeful that this partnership, combined with the Master Plan for Aging, will truly help to advance more livable communities that are age and disability-friendly,” said **Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio**.

People of all ages and abilities benefit from the adoption of policies and programs that make neighborhoods walkable, feature safe transportation options, enable access to key services, provide opportunities to participate in community activities, and support housing that is affordable and adaptable. Well-designed, age-friendly communities foster economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of all ages – an important need during the current crisis.

In addition to the state’s enrollment, over 50 California communities, representing over half of the state’s population, are already enrolled in the AARP Network – ranging in size from the Town of Fairfax to Los Angeles County. The addition of California will create synergy with the local jurisdictions and build upon and further advance building age friend communities. Nationwide, over 500 communities, one U.S. territory and now eight states have received the Age-Friendly designation from AARP. See the full list of network members [HERE](#).

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into 'Real Possibilities' by changing the way America defines aging. With staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and promote the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare security, financial security and personal fulfillment. AARP also advocates for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the world's largest circulation magazine, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @aarp and our CEO @JoAnn_Jenkins on Twitter.

Under the umbrella of the California Health and Human Services Agency, the California Department of Aging (CDA) administers programs that serve older adults, adults with disabilities, family caregivers, and residents in long-term care facilities throughout the State. These programs are funded through the federal Older Americans Act, the Older Californians Act, and through the Medi-Cal program. To promote the Department's goal of every Californian having the opportunity to enjoy wellness, longevity and quality of life in strong healthy communities, CDA actively collaborates with many other State departments (and other entities) on transportation, housing and accessibility, emergency preparedness and response, wellness and nutrition, falls and injury prevention, improving services to persons with dementia, reducing fraud and abuse and many other issues. To learn more, visit www.aging.ca.gov.