



Gray Matters



Area 1 Agency on Aging Observance of the National Day of Mourning for Jimmy Carter

BY KATIE PARRISH, SOCIAL SERVICES MANAGER

President Biden declared Thursday January 9th as a national day of mourning for Jimmy Carter. A1AA recognized this day as a holiday and offices were closed to the public.

Jimmy Carter was the 39th President of the United States and passed away on December 29th. While this is not considered a national holiday, A1AA has chosen to honor Jimmy Carter's contributions and legacy. He received the National Medal of Freedom in 1999 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for his efforts to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, advance democracy and human rights, and promote economic and social development.

Additionally, his dedication to Habitat for Humanity and other social service organizations nationwide has left a lasting impact on communities.

Join Us for the 2025 Elder Rights Summit June 11th & 12th!

BY ANDREA BRUHNKE, LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN MANAGER

Save the date for the upcoming Elder Rights Summit in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, hosted by the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties! This event will take place on June 11th and 12th at the Sequoia Conference Center in Eureka.

This summit will bring together professionals, advocates, and community members to address critical issues affecting older adults, including elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn from expert presentations, panelists, and network with leaders in the field.



Newsletter Highlights

AREA 1 AGENCY ON AGING OBSERVANCE OF NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING FOR JIMMY CARTER

JOIN US FOR THE 2025 ELDER RIGHTS SUMMIT JUNE 11TH & 12TH!

IS AI CALLING YOU? WATCH OUT FOR THE FLEX CARD SCAM

HEADS UP! FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICES AVAILABLE!

ADVOCATE FOR YOUR HEALTH

SEVEN STEPS TO EARTHQUAKE SAFETY

HOMELESSNESS: ACTIONS TO HELP BETTER ADDRESS OLDER ADULTS' HOUSING AND HEALTH NEEDS

SAVE THE DATE! HOMESHARE INFORMATION SESSION



SENIOR PLANET
FROM AARP

Senior Planet National Toll-Free Hotline

Senior Planet has a hotline for technology assistance! Calling **888-713-3495** will connect you with a technology trainer for guidance when it comes to operating your tablet or smartphone. It's staffed with Senior Planet's live staff from **6 am to 5 pm Pacific Time Monday through Friday**. The hotline staff can provide support in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. For Mandarin, leave a voice message and staff will return your call.

Featured organizations include California Health Advocates, Legal Services of Northern California, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, Humboldt County Adult Protective Services, the Humboldt County Public Guardian, Arcata House Partnership, the Yurok Tribe, Justice in Aging, California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, and the California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association, with more to come.

Registration will open in March, but we are currently accepting proposals for presentations to share your expertise and innovative solutions.

Want to support this important event? Sponsorship and tabling opportunities are still available. Showcase your organization's commitment to elder rights while connecting with an audience of professionals and community members dedicated to making a difference.

For more information, to submit a proposal or sponsor this event, contact us at **707-269-1330**, visit our website, or email ombudsman@a1aa.org.

Join us in creating a community where every older adult is valued, respected, and empowered.

Is AI Calling You? Watch Out for the Flex Card Scam

FROM CAHEALTHADVOCATES.ORG

Is AI calling you?

We've received reports of a new phone scam using artificial intelligence (AI) to inform you (in a cheerful voice) about some "amazing news". In this scam, an AI bot shares "new Medicare laws" that make you "eligible to receive a flex card, a food card, a reduction in your medical bills AND a \$180 cash back reward every month! All at no cost to you!"

Does this sound too good to be true? **That's because it is and it's a scam.**

Remember that:

- Medicare, or any other government entity like Social Security, will never call out of the blue and ask for your Medicare or Social Security number.
- Medicare is not offering flex cards, food cards, or any \$180 cash back benefits.
- If you are suspicious about a call, hang up immediately. If you can get the caller's name and/or organization, write it down to report it.
- Never give out your Medicare number, Social Security number, or personal information to anyone who contacts you through unsolicited calls, texts, or emails.
- Sign up for the [National Do Not Call Registry](#).
- If you come across any suspected Medicare phone scams or other healthcare fraud, report it to our [California Senior Medicare Patrol \(SMP\)](#) at **1-855-613-7080**.





Heads Up! Free Tax Preparation Services Available!

Eligibility: Individuals and families in Humboldt County with an annual income less than \$73,000. The service is designed for basic tax returns and excludes returns involving rental property or digital currency, farms and returns with “married filing separately” status.

When: Feb. 6 through April 15, 2025, by appointment only

Contact: [707-443-9747](tel:707-443-9747), x1241 for the following locations

- Humboldt Senior Resource Center (1910 California St.) on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Salvation Army (2123 Tydd St.) on Saturdays.
- Willow Creek
- Southern Humboldt
- Rio Dell
- McKinleyville

Fortuna location and contact: [707-726-9203](tel:707-726-9203)

- *Fortuna Senior Center* on Mondays throughout tax season

Donate your Time! Volunteer with Us!

- **Make a Difference:** Provide vital transportation services to those in need, helping them access medical care and other essential services.
- **Build Connections:** Meet and form friendships with a diverse group of individuals, both drivers and passengers.
- **Flexible Commitment:** Choose your own schedule and enjoy the flexibility that suits your lifestyle.
- **Mileage Reimbursement:** Receive compensation for your travel expenses.



Robert Ziemer of McKinleyville has been volunteering since 2019. He says, “I have spare time and enjoy taking a break from my routine to meet new, interesting people. The A1AA Volunteer Driver Program fills an important niche, providing a unique opportunity to help those who can’t drive and have limited support.”



Planned Giving: Required Minimum Distributions

If you are drawing down from a retirement account, you can contribute the RMD, required minimum distribution, directly to Area 1 Agency on Aging and receive a tax break whether or not you itemize. We can also accept stock transfers.



ADVOCATE FOR YOUR HEALTH

HOW TO SPEAK WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER AS AN OLDER ADULT

PROVIDER SAYS:

It's normal to feel depressed (or another health concern) at your age.

So, what is the health concern? (Healthcare provider ignores the patient and speaks only to the accompanying friend/relative/spouse).

That pain is to be expected at your age.

Sweetie, let's take off our jacket so we can take your blood pressure.

PATIENT RESPONDS:

I know many people my age, and they aren't all experiencing this. Can you please help me find answers?

You can speak directly to me instead. My friend/relative/spouse is here to support and I will let them know if I need their input.

I realize certain conditions can develop with age, but I'd like to continue doing what matters to me. What are my options?

Thank you for the sentiment, but I prefer being called Linda.

Do these sound familiar? Words make a difference. Ageism, even with positive intent, diminishes our health and wellbeing, taking years off our lives.

Learn more about age-friendly healthcare at:
changingthenarrativeco.org/age-friendly-healthcare/



Seven Steps to Earthquake Safety



Follow the Seven Steps to Earthquake Safety to be prepared to survive and recover.
Learn more at EarthquakeCountry.org/sevensteps.

PREPARE

1 Secure your space by identifying hazards and securing moveable items.



2 Plan to be safe by creating your emergency plan and deciding how you will communicate.



3 Organize emergency supplies in convenient locations.



4 Minimize financial hardship by organizing important documents, strengthening your property, and considering insurance coverage.



SURVIVE

5 Drop, Cover, and Hold On or other recommended actions (if you feel shaking or get an alert).



6 Improve safety after earthquakes by evacuating if necessary, helping the injured, and preventing further injuries or damage.



RECOVER

7 Reconnect and Restore daily life by reuniting with others, repairing damage, and rebuilding community.



Homelessness: Actions to Help Better Address Older Adults' Housing and Health Needs

US GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

What the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Found

About 138,000 older adults (aged 55 and older) experienced homelessness on a single night in 2023, according to Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates. These adults often have needs that can be particularly challenging to address, according to 45 homelessness service providers and other stakeholders GAO spoke with.

- **Housing needs.** In addition to affordable housing, older adults often need housing with accessibility features. Providers described challenges finding accessible housing within the already limited supply of affordable housing.
- **Health needs.** Older adults often have mobility limitations, functional impairments (e.g., incontinence), or chronic conditions. These can be challenging to address in shelters, such as those with bunk beds or bathrooms with limited accessibility features (see figure). Some shelters GAO visited modified their spaces or services to accommodate these needs, while others cited resource constraints. Additionally, older adults transitioning into housing may need home and community-based services, such as home health care and personal care. Providers described challenges connecting older adults to such services, such as limited availability of providers.

Some stakeholders also said older adults belonging to certain racial, ethnic, or other groups can encounter additional barriers when accessing homelessness assistance programs. For example, they said members of some racial or ethnic groups may experience unfair treatment, an unwelcoming environment, or cultural insensitivity. Some providers reported taking steps to promote more equitable provision of services in their programs.

Some agencies have taken steps to address the needs of older adults experiencing homelessness, but collaboration practices of a key effort could be enhanced. Specifically, the interagency Housing and Services Resource Center, led by the Department of Health and Human Services, provides information and technical assistance on the housing and health needs of older adults experiencing homelessness. The center has generally incorporated six of GAO's eight leading practices for effective interagency collaboration. However, it has not yet clearly defined short- and long-term outcomes or collected and used related performance information to assess progress. Doing so would better ensure that the center is achieving its goals.

Why GAO Did This Study

High levels of homelessness, the aging U.S. population, and rising housing costs have raised concerns among researchers that a growing number of older adults could experience homelessness.

GAO was asked to review homelessness among older adults. This report examines the needs of older adults experiencing homelessness and barriers to addressing those needs. It also examines federal actions to address older-adult homelessness.

In nine communities selected for diversity of geography and population density, GAO conducted nongeneralizable interviews with 45 service providers and other stakeholders and 34 older adults with experiences of homelessness. In addition, GAO reviewed agency documents and interviewed federal agency officials.

The full report can be found here: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106300>

Housing Brief from the California Commission on Aging

SACRAMENTO – The California Commission on Aging (CCoA) has published a new Housing Policy Brief outlining critical recommendations to reduce housing insecurity and homelessness among older adults in California. By integrating housing solutions within a comprehensive continuum of care, CCoA presents policymakers with targeted strategies that accommodate the diverse housing and supportive service needs of older adults.

From 2017 to 2022, the number of adults aged 55-64 who accessed homelessness services increased by over 90%, while the number of adults over 65 increased by over 166% – far outpacing any other age group. 38,028 adults aged 55 and older experienced homelessness

in California in 2023, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's annual Point-in-Time Count. Recognizing the issue's urgency, CCoA identifies safe and affordable housing as a fundamental pillar for the well-being of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

The newly released brief summarizes a longer report titled "**HOUSING THOSE HARDEST HIT: Addressing Older Adult Homelessness.**" The report includes a detailed table featuring seven actionable recommendations to mitigate older adult homelessness across three primary settings: permanent housing, independent housing, and assisted living.

Save the Date!

Homeshare Information Session:



HOMESHARING

Benefits, challenges, formats, how to get started



INTERACTIVE SESSION

Open to questions, comments, testimonials



NO NEED TO SIGN UP

AREA 1
Agency on Aging
**NORTHCOAST
HOMESHARE**

**EUREKA LIBRARY
Meeting Room**
**1313 3rd Street,
Eureka, CA 95501**

Program contact
Julie: 707.442.3763
homeshare@a1aa.org
www.a1aa.org/homesharing

Interested in sharing your home? Learn about benefits and challenges, how to get started, etc. with examples of real situations from over 5 years of local partnerships.

Connect with current and aspiring homesharers, whether they wish to rent a room or have a spare bedroom for rent in their home.

A presentation on homeshare arrangements and the free housemate matching process will be followed by plenty of time for questions.

This is meant to be an interactive, practical informational session. Attend for any length of time. No need to RSVP.

Applications available at the event.

Walk Audit Report for Eureka's 5th and 6th Street Corridor (US-101), October 2024

BY COALITION FOR RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

Executive Summary –

This report reflects the findings from two walk audits held in October 2024. The walk audits were held in the busy 4th and 5th Street/US-101 corridor in Eureka, California. The first walk audit was in the western part of the corridor from Broadway to D Street. The second walk audit was conducted in the eastern part of the corridor from O Street to V Street. Both followed loops of about 1 mile. A total of about 36 people participated in the two walk audits, including local and state agency representatives and members of the public.

Walk audit participants generally found the pedestrian experience in the corridor to be unsafe, unpleasant, and stressful, with many concerns about accessibility for pedestrians with disabilities. Particular concerns about safety and accessibility included crossing 4th and 5th Streets at unsignalized intersections, crossing side streets and driveways at unsignalized intersections, various sidewalk and curb ramp accessibility hazards, high noise levels, and lack of adequate lighting. Participants also noted an often hostile pedestrian land use environment. Walk audit participants also identified several specific locations in particular need of safety improvements. Most notable were the crossings of 5th Street at Broadway and of 4th and 5th Streets at O Street, although several other problem locations were identified.

This report summarizes the input from walk audit participants and provides some potential solutions to address some of the pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort issues identified.

To view the report in its entirety, click [HERE](#).



Results are in from California's first statewide survey about the current and future health and well-being of LGBTQIA+ older adults. The survey focused on seven key quality of life areas, and the report outlines recommendations to address the challenges and opportunities shared by more than 4,000 survey respondents. View the survey results [HERE](#).

[Area 1 Agency on Aging is Hiring!](#)

A1AA is hiring an Aging-in-Place Specialist to support older adults 60+ and/or adults with disability to develop and execute a mutually agreed upon service plan improving the client's ability to safely age in the environment of their choosing. A1AA is seeking a bilingual candidate, fluent in English and Spanish. Details are posted on the A1AA website <https://a1aa.org/about-us/job-opportunities/> and questions can be directed to the Social Services Manager, Katie Parrish kparrish@a1aa.org.

Upcoming Events

WE'LL SEE YOU THERE !

January 2025

01/09

National Day of Mourning

The office will be closed in honor of former President Carter.

01/20

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The office will be closed in observance.

01/21

A1AA Board of Directors Meeting

2:30 PM - 4:00 PM
Check the website events calendar for details!

February 2025

02/03

A1AA Advisory Council Meeting

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
Check the website events calendar for details!

02/17

Presidents' Day

The office will be closed in observance.

02/18

A1AA Board of Directors Meeting

2:30 PM -4:00 PM
Check the website events calendar for details!

March 2025

03/12

Homeshare Meet & Greet

2:00 PM - 4:30 PM
1313 3rd St
Eureka Library



03/18

A1AA Board of Directors Meeting

2:30 PM -4:00 PM
Check the website events calendar for details!

03/31

Cesar Chavez Day

The office will be closed in observance.