



VENTURA COUNTY MASTER PLAN FOR AGING

County of Ventura

Website: www.ventura.org



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A VENTURA COUNTY FOR ALL AGES

Older adults now make up over 25% of our population, with the number projected to increase to 30% in the next 8 years. In 2019, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order (N-14-19) calling for the creation of a Master Plan for Aging, which is a blueprint for state government, local government, the private sector, and philanthropy to prepare the State for the coming demographic changes.

The County convened a panel of stakeholders in October 2019 to start the process of talking about the reality and the challenges of growing older in Ventura County and what is needed to make the county more livable. The State issued their Master Plan for Aging in January 2021 and below you will find the goals, strategies, and initiatives for a Ventura County specific master plan.

The County of Ventura is committed to evolving to navigate the unique needs of older adults and people with disabilities in our community. While the focus is on aging, there is an equal focus on optimally aging across the lifespan because a Master Plan for Aging is for everyone in the community. Moreover, we also know that older adults and people with disabilities have common issues, though other challenges are unique.

As the Master Plan for Aging was developed, there was also special focus on areas of importance to Ventura County. Those focus areas are diversity, equity, and inclusion. The

“The ability to age well should not be based on luck or any factor outside of your control”

Ramsey Alwin
National Council on
Aging

County has always been cognizant of the diversity in our County, racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically and has made continual refinements in how we provide services and connections to resources to ensure we operate through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In this, our inaugural Master Plan for Aging, there is a specific focus on setting forth the way the County operationalizes through the lens of inclusivity.

The plan's perspective is a 10-year plan that focuses on moving the County towards being age friendly, dementia friendly and disability friendly and is written from the County perspective.

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In preparation for developing a Master Plan for Aging, stakeholder and community involvement and engagement was crucial. In 2018, the County Executive Office held an Older Adults Collaborative meeting of all County departments and agencies that provide service to older adults to start planning.

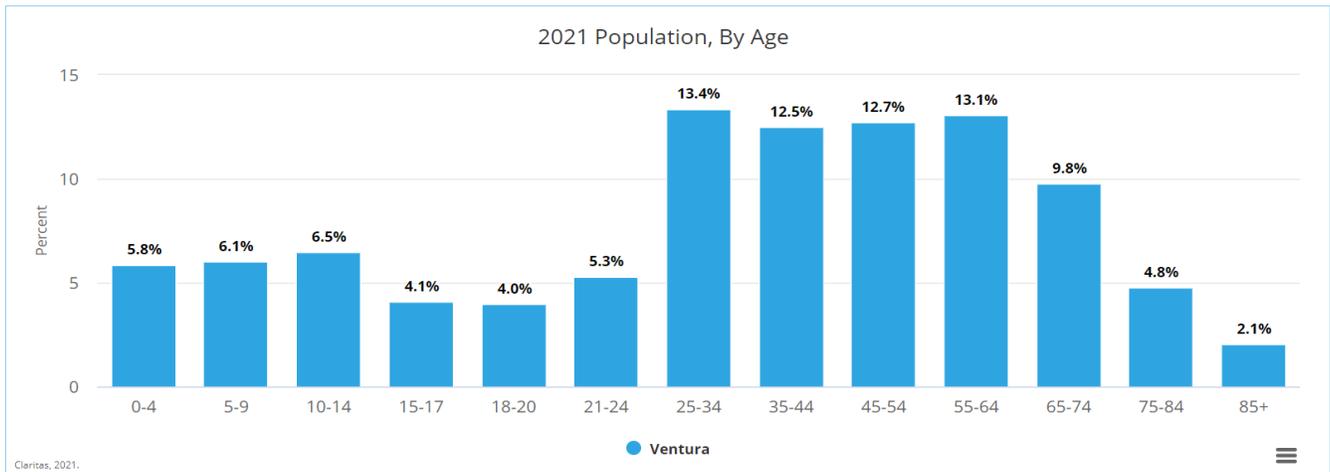
- 2019 - Ventura County Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council Strategic Planning Session
- 2019 - Alzheimer's and Dementia Related Conditions Countywide Focus Groups
- 2019 and 2020 – Town Halls and Listening Sessions in Camarillo and Santa Paula
- 2019 - CA Master Plan for Aging: Ventura County Perspective stakeholder forum
- 2020 – Large community needs assessment released
- 2020 - Targeted discussions with community-based partners
- 2020 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Conversations with minority serving organizations
- 2021 – Release of draft goals and initiatives and request for public comments

DEMOGRAPHICS OF VENTURA COUNTY

In 2021, the overall population of Ventura County was 846,249 people which is comprised of 274,018 households and 202,103 families¹. Children under the age of 18 made up 22.5% of the total population. There are currently 216,313 people over the age of 60 living in the County. Adults over the age of 60, make up 25% of the population. These numbers are important, for as the population of older adults and people with disabilities

¹<http://www.healthmattersinvc.org/index.php?module=Tiles&controller=index&action=display&alias=demopop>

continues to grow, many services will have to be reimaged and/or expanded to meet the sheer need.



Furthermore, of the population of people aged 60 and over:

- 8,650 are non-English speakers
- 117,846 are minorities
- 18,055 have incomes below the federal poverty level
- 28,719 are Medi-Cal eligible
- 5,252 are geographically isolated
- 6,639 are aged 65 or older and SSI/SSP eligible
- 70,155 are older than 75
- 33,260 live alone

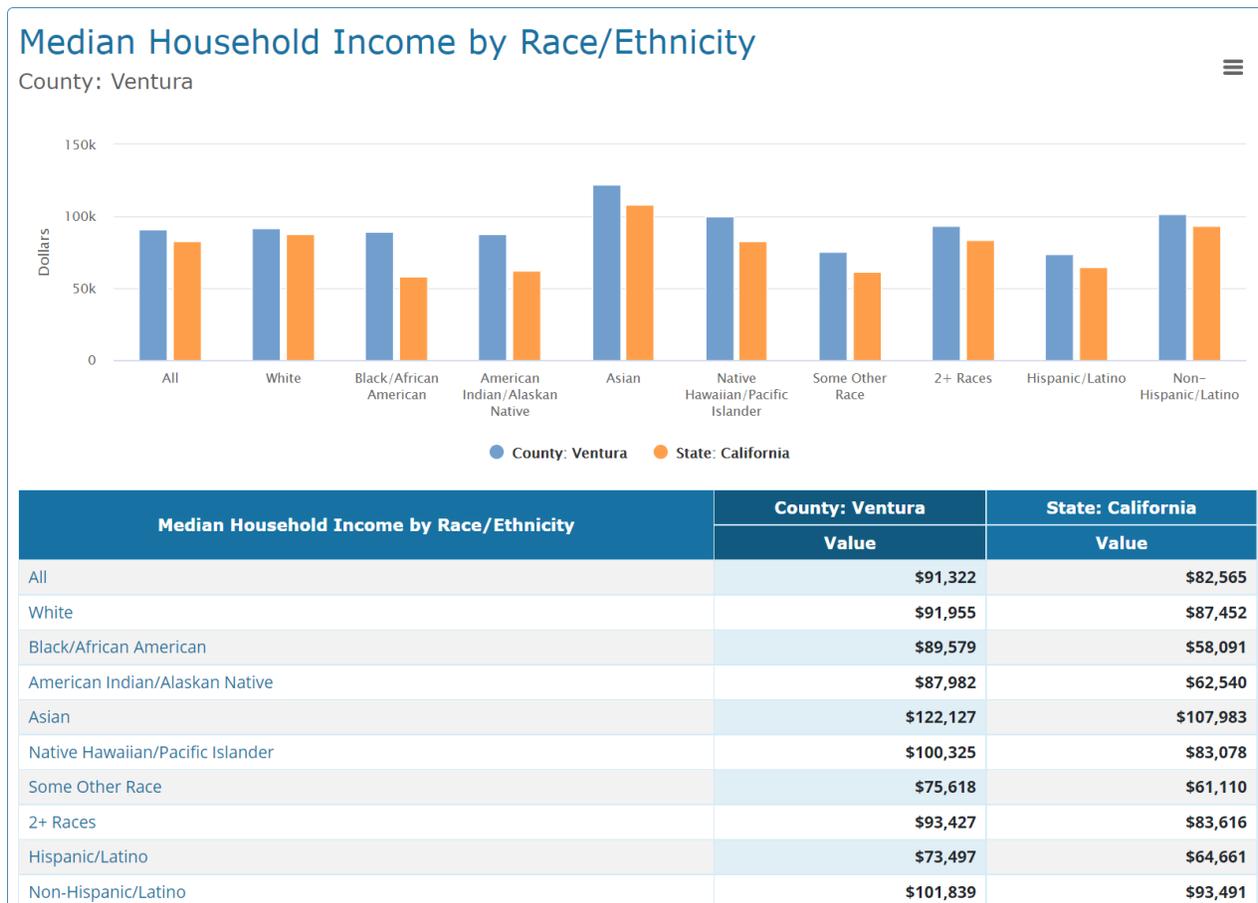
Nationally, in 2019 there were more than 75 million older adults living in the United States (22.9% of the total population).



Our demographics are similar to the state averages but reflect a less diverse and slightly more affluent population. It is important to note that the older population in Ventura County is now the majority minority.

Priority Categories ²	Ventura County N=216,313	State of California N=9,259,582
Minority 60+	54%	61%
Low-income 60+	8%	12%
Medi-Cal eligible 60+	13%	21%
Geographic isolation 60+	2%	5%
SSI/SSP 65+	3%	6%
Population 75+	32%	32%
Lives alone 60+	15%	17%
Non-English-speaking 60+	4%	5%

Although 8% of the older adult population have incomes below the federal poverty level, this number will grow as the County continues to become more diverse. When we look



² Priority categories for older adults under the Federal Older Americans Act. The Area Agency on Aging is required to target services to most in need which includes these 8 categories amongst others.

at median household incomes for all ages, by race and ethnicity, the gaps between the races have future implications for available income during retirement. According to the US Census, 90% of older adults nationally report social security to be their most common form of household income.

“Aging is a universal process throughout the lifespan and health shapes this experience, across physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and functional dimensions. Individuals age in the context of their multiple identities, influenced by our communities of belonging and the challenges and opportunities of our social and political world.”

Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil
UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs

As the population of older adults continues to grow, the number of adults with disabilities will also increase. Nationally, 69 percent of the population 85 and over had at least one type of disability, compared with just 9 percent of the population under the age of 65.³ Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs was the most prevalent disability for all older population groups. Over 15 percent of those

ages 65 to 74 had difficulty with this, along with over a quarter of those ages 75 to 84 and almost half of those 85 and older.

GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN 2022 AND BEYOND

The 5 bold goals of Ventura County’s plan align with the state of California’s Master Plan for Aging’s Five Bold Goals. These goals and the corresponding initiatives are opportunities for our community to collaborate on making Ventura County livable for older adults and people with disabilities. In some cases, the actions are not clearly defined, as the intent is to have a flexible document that will allow the experts in the areas to define what the implementation looks like.

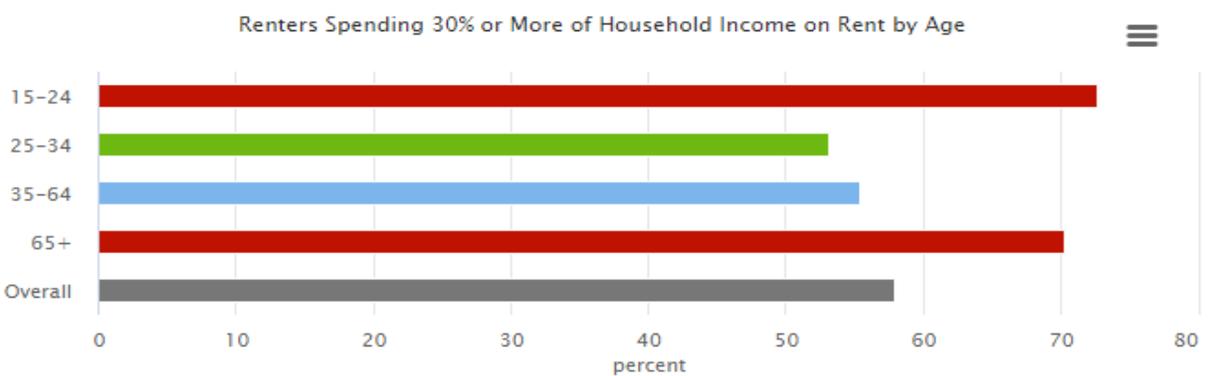


Goal 1 – Housing for all Ages and stages

We will live where we choose as we age in communities that are age, disability, and dementia friendly and disaster ready

³ [A Snapshot of the Fast-Growing U.S. Older Population \(census.gov\)](https://www.census.gov)

Older adults need housing options that meet their changing needs as they age. Extremely high housing costs in Ventura County versus the rest of the United States makes having housing options critical as people age. Generally, the large house an older adult purchased to raise a family in no longer suits their needs as they age. However, the lack of affordable options keeps them there. The average monthly rental in Ventura County is \$2,006 a month versus \$1,112 average US rental⁴



Older Adults that rent are most at risk as rents raise, retirement savings diminish and their income remains fixed. 70% of older adults aged 65 and over that rent are spending more than 30% of their income on rent⁵.

Ventura County will support and pursue housing for all ages and stages through four strategies:

1. More Housing Options



California communities are increasingly developing more affordable housing options to meet the needs of all stages of life for all people, regardless of age, race, income ability, or household size. The production, protection, and preservation of affordable housing, including Accessory Dwelling Units and Residential Care Facilities of all sizes, will support older adults, caregivers, and their families.

Initiatives:

⁴<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Housing%20Cost,%20United%20States&tid=ACSST1Y2019.S2503>

⁵ <http://www.healthmattersinvc.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=393&localeId=293>

- The county will identify ways to bolster production of more housing options to age well in, such as Accessory Dwelling Units.
- Support increasing affordable, universal/accessible design housing.
- To support and/or facilitate processes for older adults and people with disabilities to have access to safe, affordable housing of their choice.
- Pursue the state assisted living waiver for Ventura County, when available, to allow more housing choices.
- Support State strategies to increase availability of housing options with “housing for health” strategies – for example, within the anticipated federal planning grant to develop a Medi-Cal Home and Community Based Services Roadmap, include assessments of the availability of services, providers, and residential options and within a new focus on Medicare innovation – to meet need, as federally allowable funds are available.
- Support the State efforts to expand the Adult Family Homes model (currently for adults with a developmental disability) to include aging adults, including those with dementia.
- Support efforts to expand Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program.
- Support housing modifications for older adults and the fall prevention program to meet growing and changing needs.
- Support expansion of shared housing models such as Home Share.
- Support efforts to expand pet-friendly housing options and affordable pet rental deposits.



2. Accessible Transportation and Community Walkability



Age and disability friendly transportation networks can be strengthened through improved community walkability and expansion of bus and transit stops, transit rider education and subsidies, seamless paratransit across transit district lines, and driver safety education.

Initiatives:

- Support efforts to establish a coordinated transportation system in Ventura county to include establishing person-centered MOU'S between transit districts to allow paratransit to cross transit district lines to meet rider needs.
- Support adoption of set fares and age limits for older adults across transit providers.
- Support programs that support older adults that can no longer drive.
- Review community walkability scores and Vehicle Miles Traveled data for opportunities to analyze with aging demographics.
- Provide older driver safety education training, including information about transportation options other than driving, to meet needs as funds allow.
- Support door through door transportation options.



3. Outdoor and Community Spaces for All Ages



All Californians can benefit from more convenient park access within a ten-minute walk or less, co-location of parks with community centers offering programming for all ages, and incorporation of smart park technologies.

Initiatives:

- Explore targeting public and private park funds to age and disability friendly activities for all ages, including models such as slow streets, SMART parks, parklets for emerging placemaking, and more.
- Support efforts to co-locate childcare and adult care, youth centers and adult centers along with joint programming, such as arts.
- Support efforts to enhance security measures such as cameras, lighting, etc.
- Establish Ventura County as a Blue Zone (see www.bluezonn.es.com).



4. Emergency Preparedness and Response



Preparation and planning with and for older adults and people with disabilities is important to prioritize, given the higher risk of death or harm due to emergencies and disasters. Improving technologies and communications that address the access and functional needs of residents during disasters can also improve preparedness and response to these growing populations.

Initiatives:

- Improve online emergency website for older, disabled, and at-risk adults and caregivers, in multiple languages, to meet needs to include information on creating emergency plans.
- Strengthen Office of Emergency Services disaster planning for older adults and people with disabilities to include involvement with CERT.
- Conduct after-action analyses of COVID-19, including the impact on older, disabled, and at-risk adults, as one way to identify strategies to prevent future pandemic, emergency, and disaster-related deaths and disparities in deaths by age, ability, income, race, language, and other equity measures.



Goal 2 – Health Reimagined

We will have access to the services we need to live at home in our communities and to optimize our health and quality of life.

Having access to care and the services necessary to age in place in the community are critical. To age well people, need access to health care as well as the ability to live in a healthy community where supports are available. For many, these supportive services are unaffordable for many, particularly middle-income individuals with Medicare only. In Ventura County, for those 18+ who self-identify as having difficulties with concentration, remembering, or making decisions; dressing or bathing; and/or running errands only 9% reported as having their needs completely met, 48% reported mostly, 35.2% somewhat and 6.9% as not at all⁶. The consequences of not having care needs met resulted in adverse consequences including the following⁷:

- 64.8% stayed home due to difficulty going out on their own
- 32.3% went without groceries or personal care items due to shopping difficulty
- 20% made a mistake in taking medications due to difficulty keeping track of them

Ventura County will pursue Health Reimagined through four strategies:

1. Bridging Health Care with Home

⁶ <https://letsgethealthy.ca.gov/mpa-data-dashboard-for-aging/health-reimagined/>

⁷ <https://letsgethealthy.ca.gov/mpa-data-dashboard-for-aging/health-reimagined/>



Through innovative partnerships with the federal government, Gold Coast Health Plan and community-based organizations, Ventura County can innovate and test new models of health care delivery that maximize access to services – and, as a result, avoid unnecessary institutionalization

Initiatives:

- The County will expand access to home and community-based services for people receiving Medi-Cal via CalAIM, by implementing community supports (including: Housing Transition Navigation Services, Housing Deposits, Housing Tenancy and Sustaining Services, Short-term Post Hospitalization Housing, Recuperative Care, Respite, Day Habilitation Programs, Nursing Facility Transition/Diversion to Assisted Living Facilities of Home, Personal Care and Homemaker Services, Home Modifications, Medically Tailored Meals, Sobering Centers, and Asthma Remediation) and "Enhanced Care Management"
- Consider home and community alternatives to short-term nursing home stays for participants in Medi-Cal managed care through utilization of combination of the home health benefit, in lieu of services, and proposed expanded telehealth benefit, including remote patient monitoring.

2. Health Care as We Age



Ventura County can lead California in pursuing strategies to increase access across the spectrum of health care services to improve access and care options.

Initiatives:

- Assess opportunities to modernize enrollment process for Medicare Savings programs
- Support palliative care to improve patient outcomes and support patient and family choices for care.
- Identify ways to promote care wishes – such as Advanced Planning Directives and Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment – for all ages.
- Support geriatrics component of the Ventura County family residency program
- Support efforts to include geriatric training in new community paramedic initiative
- Support expansion of geriatric emergency department certifications
- Assess opportunities for advance practice providers trained in geriatrics to fill gaps in geriatrics and primary care

- Invest in community case management and care coordination to improve health outcomes and reduce cost of health care and promote independence in the community.
- Create sustainable funding for expanded community-based services to decrease unnecessary health care utilization, reduce cost, and extend time that one could stay in the community.

3. Lifelong Healthy Aging



By fostering healthy environments beginning at birth, expanding access to prevention programs, and developing culturally competent public health educational tools and services, Ventura County can reduce some of the greatest and most inequitable health disparities

Initiatives:

- Build in older adult focus to existing Behavioral Health Suicide Prevention Programs.
- Support the Warm Line for older adults to address isolation and loneliness needs.
- Support Public Health and public education tools, with culturally competent and equity-targeted approaches, that promote brain health and address other healthy aging priorities (e.g., physical activity, nutrition, tobacco, oral health, mental health, substance abuse, and trauma).

4. Dementia in Focus



Ventura County will provide opportunities to prevent cognitive impairment and improving the lives of residents living with dementia through comprehensive and coordinated strategies on brain health awareness, public information portals and hotlines and support services.

Initiatives:

- Support efforts to expand efforts of Dementia Friendly Ventura County.
- Provide long term case management for older adults and people with disabilities that have Alzheimer's and Related Dementias, to include supporting individuals that live alone.
- Promote screening, diagnosis, and care planning by health care providers for patients and families with Alzheimer's and Related Dementias, through training model of health care providers, and direct caregiver training opportunities
- Assistance with cost of Adult Day Services, in-home care, and Assisted Living/nursing home care due to the need for increased care over a longer period.
- Provide more comprehensive, in-depth training for caregiver support.
- Provide LGBTQ training for inclusivity.

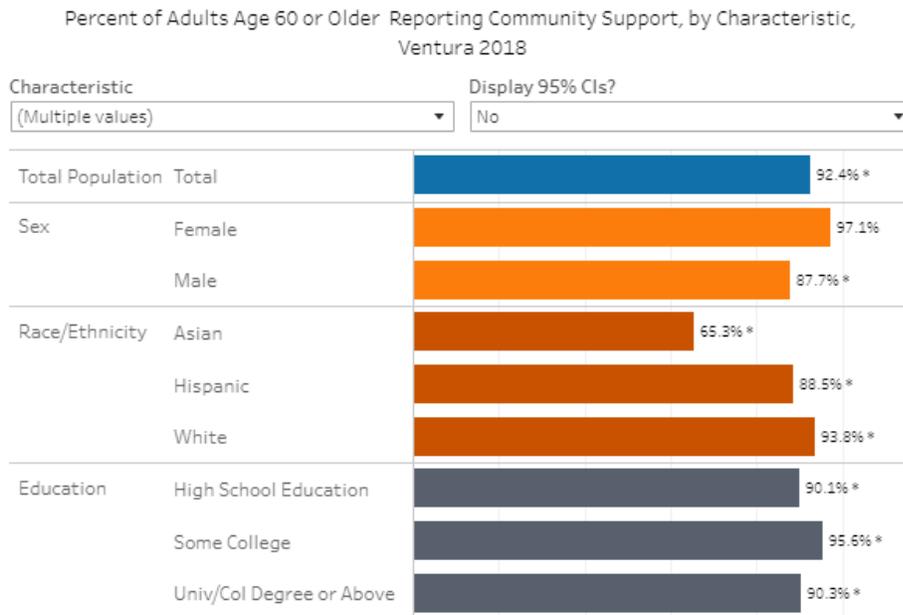


Goal 3 – Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation

We will have lifelong opportunities for work, volunteering, engagement, and leadership and will be protected from isolation, discrimination, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Being engaged and having a sense of belonging is critical for people of all ages, especially older adults. This can come from working, volunteering, civic engagement, taking or teaching classes, having a circle of friends, family involvement, etc.

Many older adults want to or need to keep working. Over the last five years, people over the age of the 55 accounted for 29 percent of all new employment. Yet, age discrimination is still an issue, with two thirds of older adults seeking employment reporting it as a challenge to finding work.

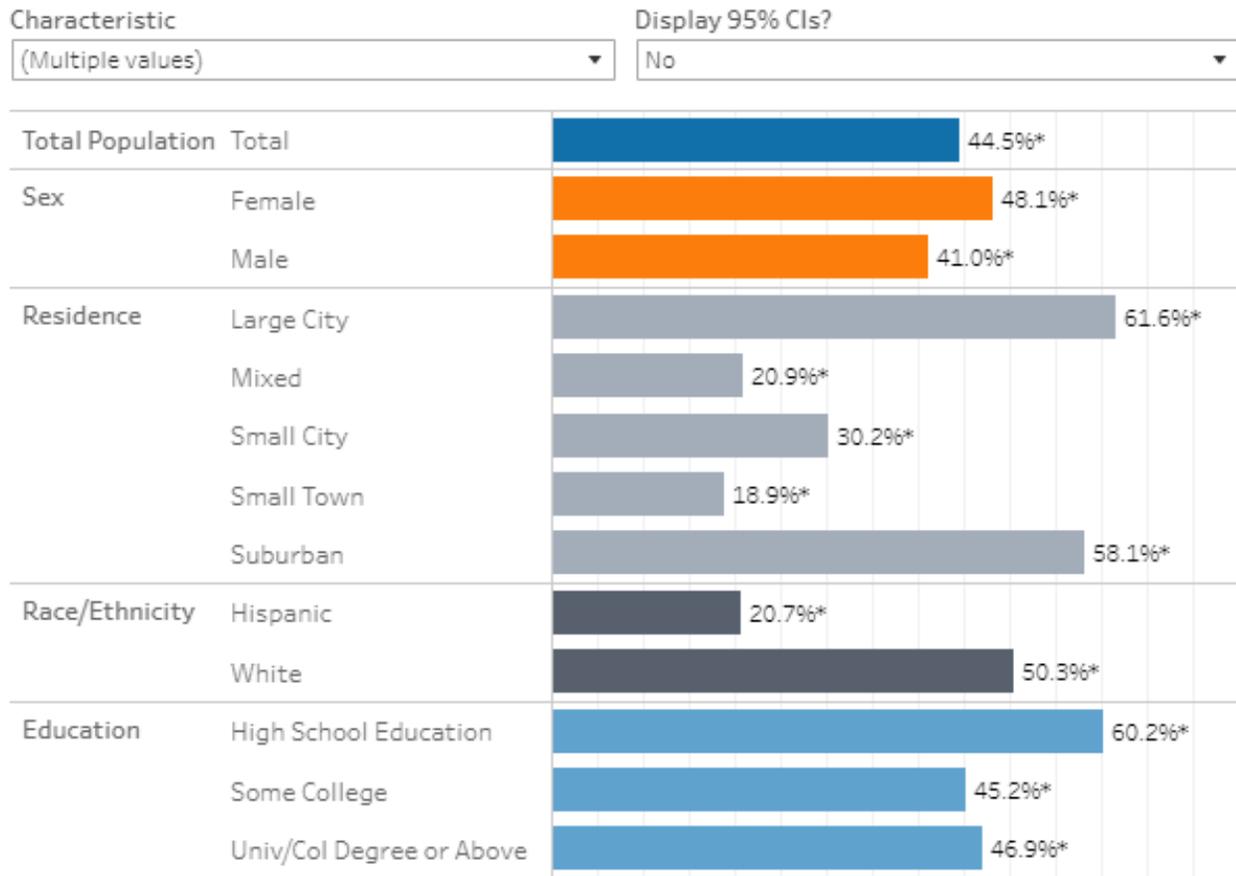


Measuring life satisfaction, there are noticeable differences between races, location, and education. There is a significant drop from 50.3% of White individual's reporting a life satisfaction of 8 or above compared to only 20.7% of Hispanics⁸

⁸ <https://letsgethealthy.ca.gov/mpa-data-dashboard-for-aging/inclusion-and-equity-not-isolation/>

When we look at reported sense of community support from gender and race, there is a significant drop off from Hispanics and white to Asians (65.3%)

Percent of Adults Age 60 or Older Reporting Life Satisfaction of 8 or above, Ventura 2018



Ventura County will support and pursue inclusion and equity, not isolation through six strategies:

1. Inclusion and Equity in Aging



As a racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse County, Ventura will lead in combatting ageism, ableism, racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, and all prejudices and in expanding opportunities for all older adults and people with disabilities to be economically, civically, and socially engaged, without experiencing discrimination or bias. Ventura’s aging and disability leaders, providers, and partners are committed to becoming increasingly culturally

responsive through strategies including trainings data collection, and public campaigns.

Initiatives:

- Continue to expand culturally and linguistically competent communications to older adults, people with disabilities, and families.
- Utilize private partnerships and existing funds to implement anti-ageism and equity campaign ("California for All Ages") with public, employers, including equity by age, race, ethnicity, language, citizenship status, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, family status, disability, dementia/cognitive status, and income.



2. Closing the Digital Divide



Ventura County will close the digital divide by increasing access to the internet and digital devices to improve the ability of older adults and people with disabilities to connect to family and friends, health care providers, and to access additional support.

Initiatives:

- Support efforts to expand Broadband throughout the county including underserved areas.
- In collaboration with the Ventura County Library System, the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging will use existing funds to distribute personal technology to older adults and people with disabilities.
- Develop a plan to launch digital literacy support for older adults and for providers.

3. Opportunities to Work



Scaling flexible work and education models, including virtual options, and preventing age discrimination in the workplace, can increase the inclusion of older adults and people with disabilities and harness their talent, professionalism, knowledge, and expertise.

Initiatives:

- Consistent with the goals of the Future of Work Commission, explore ways to promote flexible work models, especially as people age, experience disability, or formally retire
- Provide job training and apprenticeship opportunities to older adults and people with disabilities.
- Provide assistive technology equipment and devices available to workers with disabilities, to meet need and advance equity, within existing resources.
- Provide re-entry services to older adults that increase employment and engagement and address inequity, to meet need and advance equity, within existing resources.
- Increase long term care specialty service workers to support older adults and people with disabilities to live well in the community.



4. Opportunities to Volunteer and Engage Across Generations



Volunteer programs can intentionally and effectively recruit, support, and connect adults of all ages through community-based organizations, schools, libraries and more.

Initiatives:

- Promote and adapt "village models" for older adult volunteerism and services.

- Support the Elder Story Project, in partnership with libraries and aging services, and engage the diversity of Ventura County older adults.
- Assess older adults' engagement in lifelong learning at Aging services, Adult Schools, and Community Colleges, including online, continually improving cultural competency and languages.
- Scope opportunity for new intergenerational volunteerism partnerships in schools, with philanthropic partners.



5. Protection from Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation



Ventura County will strengthen its prevention and response to elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, and fraud with person centered, data driven and culturally competent approaches.

Initiatives:

- Support the efforts of the Financial Abuse Specialist Team to target financial fraud and abuse.
- In conjunction with the District Attorney's Office, establish a countywide elder abuse awareness initiative.
- Supports the efforts of the Family Justice Center and increase the capacity to support older adults and people with disabilities that are victims of crime.
- Support the efforts of the medical examiner and the Elder Death review team.
- Support the Long-Term Care Ombudsmen and Adult Protective Services and efforts to prevent and address abuse and neglect in long-term care facilities.

6. Ventura County Leadership and Visibility of Aging Services



Strategies to advance Ventura County's leadership include supporting information, assistance, and resource connection portals such as the Aging and Disability Resource Center to provide education, awareness, and seamless access to services.

Initiatives:

- Revisit the name and scope of services provided by the Area Agency on Aging
- Begin process for Ventura County become an AARP-Certified Age-Friendly county.
- Provide information and support to older adults including information on how the various systems work and how to access services
- Provide countywide leadership and collaboration around aging services
- The County of Ventura and the Area Agency on Aging will strengthen its no wrong door system of services including increasing collaboration with community-based organizations to include faith-based organizations to disseminate resources and facilitate connection to services. This includes streamlining systems to be centralized, navigable, user-friendly, and cross linked, providing access to information, resources, services and programs at the state, regional and local level.
- Develop an action plan for change that will maximize resources, community wide services, and coordination of interdisciplinary expertise via a proactive infrastructure and organizational culture.
- To close the communication and resource information gap, by establishing additional, formal collaborative, supportive, county wide agreements with county non-profit and for-profit organizations serving older adults and people with disabilities.



Goal 4 – Caregiving that Works

We will be prepared for and supported through the rewards and challenges of caring for aging loved ones

According to a California AARP survey, 44% of respondents were current or former caregivers and 51% were likely to be caregivers in the future. Of the duties they helped their family members out with each week:

- 88% helped with household chores
- 86% helped with meal preparation
- 90% provided transportation to appointments
- 90% helped with shopping
- 65% performed complex medical tasks

Although these caregivers believe it is important to help their family as independent as possible, they also face challenges:

“Caregivers of family and friends too often have to choose between their own health and financial needs and caring for a loved one. Caregivers need culturally competent options that not only improve their own health and quality of life, but also those of the person for whom they are caring. Accessible and affordable long-term services and supports, paid family leave, resources and training, and assistance navigating services will improve the lives of millions of caregiving families in California.”

Donna Benton

USC Leonard Davis School of
Gerontology

- 67% use their own money to help
- 68% are emotionally stressed because of the responsibility
- 75% are stressed with balancing caregiving, their job, and their family
- 57% find it hard to get adequate rest

Additionally, in Ventura County in 2020, 73.1% of caregivers reported experiencing financial stress⁹.

Ventura County will support caregivers through two strategies:

1. Family and Friends Caregiving Support



Family caregivers need supports – such as paid family leave, multilingual training resources, virtual care options, and respite – so that the role remains rewarding, and caregivers can maintain health, well-being, and income while caring for a loved one. Given that lower-income women, particularly women of color, disproportionately provide family caregiving, resources and support should be tailored and prioritized accordingly.

Initiatives:

- Support State efforts to promote state paid family leave benefits to older Californians, people with disabilities, and family caregivers.
- Support respite care and initiatives to provide financial support for family caregivers. It is common for families trying to “do right” by their family member to wipe out savings before their loved one can qualify for Medi-Care or Medi-Cal.
- Support the three Family Caregiver Centers in Ventura County, including La Buena Vida.
- Address financial impact on family/friend and caregivers (lost wages, decreased retirement savings, use of own money for person needing care).
- Currently resources/supports are fragmented and limited. Clients and Caregivers want more resources and better connections to those resources. Ideally, they would like a central location/agency that accurately assesses needs in a comprehensive manner and help



⁹ <https://letsgethealthy.ca.gov/mpa-data-dashboard-for-aging/caregiving-that-works/>

educate the caregiver and develop plans (case management) for the loved one.

2. Virtual Care Expansion

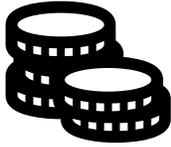


Support efforts to expand telehealth access to health care incorporating lessons from COVID-19 and including virtual communication, remote patient monitoring, provider education, beneficiary education, family caregivers, and language access considerations, within existing resources. Consider opportunities to access personal and home technologies that promote healthy aging, to meet need and advance health equity, as funds are available.

Initiatives:

- Identify innovative models and solutions to enhance telehealth access for people of all ages, races, and ethnicities, in alignment with State Broadband Council's new Strategy per August 2020 Executive Order, within existing resources.
- Expand telehealth access to multiple Medi-Cal delivery systems, incorporating lessons from COVID-19 and including virtual communication, remote patient monitoring, provider education, beneficiary education, family caregivers, and language access considerations, within existing resources.
- Consider opportunities to access personal and home technologies that promotes healthy aging, to meet need and advance health equity, as funds are available.

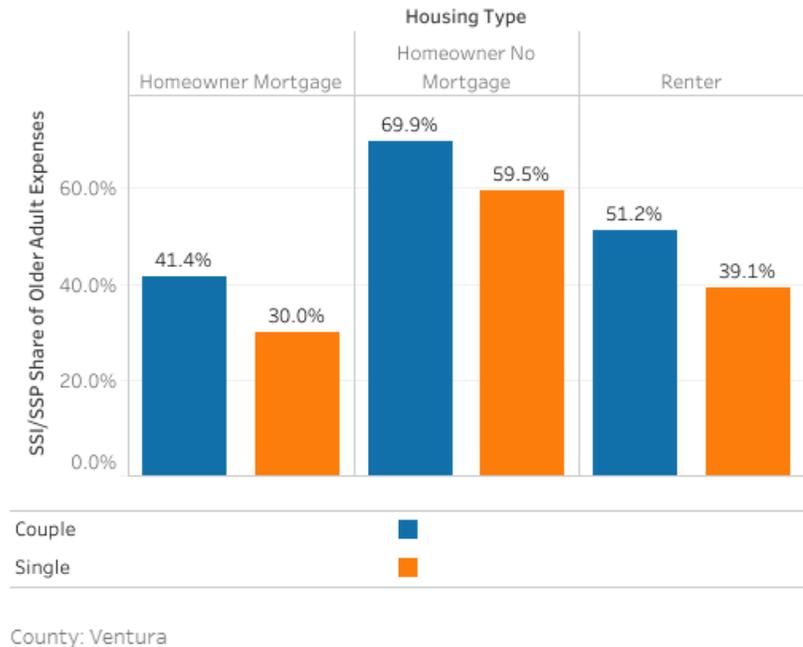




Goal 5 – Affordable Aging

We will have economic security for as long as we live

Being able to afford to age has an impact on one's quality of life and the life choices they can make. For individuals on Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP), the chart on the right shows the basic cost of living covered by SSI/SSP in Ventura County for single adults age 65+ or couples ages 65+ by category; whether they have a home with a mortgage, without a mortgage or rent¹⁰.



Ventura County will support affordable aging through three strategies:

1. End Homelessness for Older Adults



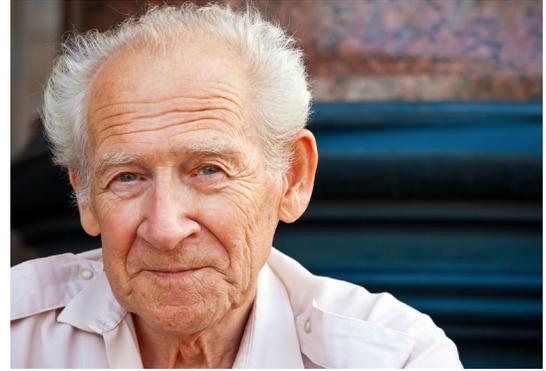
Ventura County will support opportunities to invest in innovative solutions to prevent older adult homelessness, reduce barriers to accessing housing programs and services, and promote the transition of those experiencing homelessness to affordable and accessible housing models, with supportive services.

Initiatives:

- Building on the success of Homekey, further develop the network of housing needed to end homelessness, prevent older and other at-risk individuals from falling into homelessness, and provide expanded supports at housing placements.

¹⁰ <https://letsgethealthy.ca.gov/mpa-data-dashboard-for-aging/affording-aging/>

- Support expansion of older homelessness programs, such as HomeSafe (APS) and Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP/SSI), to meet needs as funds allow.
- Support the State's efforts assess IHSS plus Housing models.



2. Income Security as We Age



Ventura County will support the State's efforts in pursuing partnerships to assess and strengthen individual savings, employer-based retirement, and Social Security and to expand employment opportunities and economic security at all ages.

Initiatives:

- Support the State's efforts to advocate for new federal Administration to assess Social Security gaps for California's diverse workforce, including caregivers, farmworkers, and more.

3. Protection from Poverty & Hunger



The federal/State safety net for older adults and people with disabilities, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP), has not kept up with poverty levels. The hunger and nutritional needs of older Californians need greater assessment and coordination to provide affordable and culturally appropriate foods through CalFresh (SNAP), food banks, meal delivery at home, congregate meals, and medically tailored meals, among others.



Initiatives:

- Building on the lessons of Covid, develop innovative and cost-effective ways to support older adults that are food insecure and/or at nutritional risk to include home delivery and congregate dining options.
- Provide medically tailored meals through Cal-Aim and through Medicare plans

- Support Food Share's efforts to provide senior food box program (Commodity Supplemental Food Program)
- Continue to streamline older and disabled adult enrollment, renewal, and online shopping in CalFresh, as allowable.

GREAT IDEAS

As with any project where public input is sought, the list of great ideas submitted is beyond what could be included in the plan. We have captured the ideas and have them listed here in case any non-profit, for profit, neighborhoods group, etc., wants to take some of these ideas and implement them.

Great Ideas - Goal 1: Housing for all ages & stages

- With telehealth services, include lab draws in the home for the elderly and those with dementia. It is very challenging for patients that do not drive to have their lab work performed and this is an important aspect of patient care.
- Relax requirements for 55+ housing to allow a younger caregiver to live with the person.
- Rent increases tied to social security cost of living increases.
- Build memory care residences and services for low-income individuals
- Increase home ownership options for local older adults looking to remain in their area of Ventura County as they shift from family homes, retire, and downsize into active living environments including over 55 communities and all age new developments. It is important for older adults to be able to sell their family homes and afford to remain in their communities after retirement but before desiring to move into older adult communities and senior living communities. There are many new multi-family developments in progress all over the county, but none are catering specifically to include older adults. Retiring older adults in our county who are looking to downsize and reduce their housing costs are going to LEAVE the county and not be a volunteer resource for our even older adult community in the future if we don't take steps to help them stay here.
- climate change incentive funding should be allocated and used to promote energy efficient and climate friendly energy options along with drought contingency efforts to build sustainable housing for our older and those who are disabled population. In addition, people who already live in their own homes need access to funds to fix/rehabilitate their homes. These rehabilitation projects should also partner with organizations that focus energy efficient and water-saving projects. We need to partner aging systems with climate friendly systems. It would be nice to get brown lands developed, that is, those areas that have vacant land within city limits that do not affect the open spaces should have housing infrastructure. We need to have these places surveyed and zoned for housing. When new developments are built, they need to address multi-generational housing in the individual buildings.

- Add Housing Navigators to help people that need the help locating housing for the older adults.
- Explore the Tiny House Movement. For instance, shipping containers have been refurbished into tiny homes which may be customized and clustered into villages.
- As new transportation and walkability options are developed, advocate for enhanced security measures, such as cameras, lighting, panic buttons, ride-along security guards on public transportation, enhanced community policing, etc. Then, market not only accessibility, but safety!
- Seek out city centers to plant trees – either in the ground or in half barrels placed adjacent to sidewalks – to provide shade for walking, a habitat for birds, and to soften the hardscape.
- Along with trees, consider working with cities to advocate for repaving asphalt streets and parking lots with cool coating that helps lower the temperature of the neighborhood, emulating LA's Cool Streets Program.
- Coordinate with public safety and utility companies to ensure that they are aware of dwellings that house at-risk individuals who need emergency power, water, or evacuation during a disaster.

Great Ideas - Goal 2 – Health Reimagined

- Provide additional respite funding for agencies working with dementia patients and the informal/family caregivers.
- Build a geropsych hospital to keep seniors who are put on a psychiatric hold (5150) rather than having to go to Glendale or Sherman Oaks in Los Angeles.
- Alzheimer's Support groups for the caregivers.
- Develop partnerships with home care agencies, that offer non-medical caregiving services. I feel that caregiving agencies are a large untapped resource for the elderly that are coming home from a hospital stay. Trained caregivers could greatly reduce rehospitalizations and risk.
- Health care as we age: work with Ventura County Behavioral Health to monitor utilization of inpatient, partial hospitalization and outpatient gero-psychiatric services and assess the need to expand capacity in Ventura County.
- Encourage high schools and community colleges to enhance career ladder curricula in the field of direct care, providing certification for students (18 and older) to become home care and home health aides.
- Partner with CDA to obtain funding for a demonstration project that provides scholarships for adults training to become a home care or home health aide at a community college or through a public adult school.
- Provide workshops for communities desiring to develop their own village-to-village, nonprofit organization to support older adults choosing to age in place. The Conejo Valley Village is an excellent model to emulate.
- Hearing aids at reasonable price with affordable payments.
- Dental care: Seniors cannot afford.

- Incontinence needs to be spoken openly about with the public. Day and nighttime problems.
- Fall Prevention Tai chi in every park in Ventura County. Publish in the newspaper AMATEUR of Balance exercises like stick figures demonstrations.
- The creation of Medicare Savings programs would be an excellent beginning.

Great Ideas – Goal 3: Inclusion & Equity, Not Isolation

- Continually improve Health Matters in Ventura County data dashboard.
- In conjunction with the District Attorney's Office and the Human Services Agency, support completion of a countywide protocol to investigate elder and dependent adult abuse.
- Have a regular radio program spot in Spanish that speaks to these issues.
- Include volunteer and training opportunities for middle-age/older adults with disabilities.
- Partner with high schools throughout the county with an invitation for students to earn community service credit by tutoring older adults in technology at community centers and libraries
- Partner with the Ventura County Workforce Development Board to provide workshops for older adult job seekers at County Job Centers (America's Job Centers).
- Need telephone trees developed through each city and the county voting districts and neighborhood councils.
- Mobile home parks create isolation because of safety concerns. Fear of burglary, no money, beginning dementia, can't get to food share to pick up box of food.
- Provide free hearing devices at the movies.
- Turn respite groups into visiting groups.
- Provide funding for free haircuts for older adults that cannot afford them.

Great Ideas - Goal 4 - Caregiving that Works

- Provide additional respite funding for agencies working with dementia patients and the informal/family caregivers. Provide additional supportive services in the community
- Legal/financial planning support so that assets can be properly invested and protected in trusts or other legal vehicles that won't impact benefits eligibility.
- Encourage more professional fiduciary development in our county and link those professionals to potential older adult clients who would benefit from the services that have accountability as opposed to family members being Power of Attorney and other less accountable/reliable planning strategies.
- Overhaul the way non-family caregivers are supported and paid. Retention of current IHSS providers and attraction of new workers needs to be a major part of the plan.

- Provide virtual training to seniors that have digital devices, so they know how to use them for telehealth.
- Support State efforts to establish an LTSS payroll deduction system to help individuals better prepare for long term care expenses.
- Advocate at state level for the allocation of resources to support state scholarships for individuals choosing to study home care or home health aide curricula at community colleges or public adult schools.

Great Ideas - Goal 5 - Affordable Aging

- Provide more supports for middle income older adults who don't qualify for Medi-Cal and other low-income programs but cannot afford to pay for the care they need.
- Increase streamlined referrals and application assistance to alternative housing and food security options if people do not qualify based on income or other requirements.
- Explore options to get homeless individuals with drug and alcohol issues off the streets and into treatment.
- Advocate for more substantial Social Security cost of living increases.
- Provide more services for fieldworkers and their families. Additional wrap around services for elderly and/or retired workers will reduce stress and anxiety over finances.
- Provide resources to address the digital divide. Many older adults are unable to engage online and as a result, they miss access to vital programs and services.
- Assisted Living and Memory Care facilities for mentally ill and poor seniors and funding for this or independent living services at home for this group and funding for this.
- Support, whenever and wherever possible, the need for Medicare to cover non-medical caregiving services.
- The current new housing developments should be including specific numbers of units for not only low income but also older adults to encourage the inclusion of aging adults in our communities. In addition, these earmarked units should be reserved by means of cost controls so that older adults are not competing with working families.
- Address Medi-Cal's maintenance need level with state legislature. Provide comprehensive information to the public that addresses long-term care issues such as Medi-Cal's Spousal Impoverishment Rule. Programs exist but people don't know about them.
- Support a public awareness campaign targeted at older workers regarding California's Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income workers.