



Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

P: (831) 454-2772 F: (831) 454-2411 TTY/TDD 711

commissions@santacruzcountyca.gov

www.sccseniors.org

Notice of Public Meeting and Agenda

DATE Tuesday, August 19, 2025
TIME: 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM
LOCATION: United Way of Santa Cruz County
4450 Capitola Road, Ste 106, Capitola, CA 95010

As a courtesy to those who are affected, kindly attend the meeting **scent-free** and **smoke-free**.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Agenda Review
2. Approval of *June 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes*
3. Public Comment
Any member of the public may address the Commission for a period not to exceed 3 minutes on any issue within the jurisdiction of the Commission not on the agenda.
4. New and Continuing Business/Action Items:
 - 4.1. Assisted Living Waiver Program Overview – Alicia Morales, *Social Services Director*
 - 4.2. Consider Assisted Living Waiver Program Advocacy
5. District Reports
 - 5.1. District 1
 - 5.2. District 2
 - 5.3. District 3
 - 5.4. District 4
 - 5.5. District 5
6. Senior Legislature Report
7. Staff Report
8. Correspondence
9. Emerging Matters and Commissioner Announcements
10. Adjournment

Next Regular Meeting: October 21, 2025 at 12:30 PM United Way, Capitola CA 95010

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. If you are a person with a disability and require assistance to participate in the meeting, please contact (831) 454-2772 TTY/TDD:711 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements.



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Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, June 17, 2025

TIME: 12:30 PM

LOCATION: United Way, 4450 Capitola Road, Ste 106, Capitola CA 95010

PRESENT: Dena Taylor (*1st District*), Suzanne Doty (*Chair - 1st District*), Antonio Rivas (*2nd District*), Lois Sones (*3rd District*), Katie Limas (*Vice Chair - 4th District*), Carol Childers (*5th District*), Roger Wapner (*5th District*)

EXCUSED: Mark Johannessen (*2nd District*), Alicia Rodriguez (*3rd District*),

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Kaite McGrew (*Commissions Manager*)

GUESTS: No members of the public were present.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Agenda Review

Meeting convened at 12:31 PM.

Commission welcomed new District 5 Commissioner Wapner.

2. Motion to Approve April 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve minutes

Motion/Second: Taylor/Childers

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment:

4. New Business/Action Items:

4.1. Senior Resource Fair Report

Doty and Taylor shared additional detail on the upcoming Mid-County Senior Center's *Senior Resource Fair*. Staff will draft and print Commission fliers for distribution at the event.

4.2. Assisted Living Waiver Program Implementation Update

Staff reported scheduling Alicia Morales (Human Services Department Social Services Division Director) to share her insights on why Santa Cruz County is not currently part of this program, the barriers to meeting the eligibility criteria, and how the Commission can most effectively advocate for the County's inclusion.

Sones arrived.

4. District Reports

5.1. District 1

Taylor reported attending a webinar on senior homelessness hosted by Justice in Aging. She will share the presentation slides. Commissioners are invited to attend the August Commission on Disabilities meeting, where representatives from METRO Paracruz and ADARides will present on the new eligibility screening process for Paracruz. Doty had no report.

5.2. District 2

Rivas reported that the Watsonville Senior Center recently hosted a well-attended Seniors Resource Fair, featuring over 20 vendors and a variety of entertainment. At a recent Watsonville City Council meeting, funding for Meals on Wheels—originally proposed to be cut—was instead increased, following strong advocacy from Councilmembers Parker and Dutra. After considerable discussion, their efforts were instrumental in reversing the proposed reduction and securing continued support for this vital safety net service.

5.3. District 3

Sones expressed concern about Federal budget proposals currently under debate including deep cuts to Medicaid that could significantly impact programs and services for vulnerable seniors. The Commission will monitor this issue closely and consider advocating individually in opposition. In light of upcoming federal budget deadlines, staff shared potential individual advocacy opportunities for Commissioners, such as contacting their District Supervisors, distributing information from the Justice in Aging website within their communities, and sending personal letters to their legislators. Commissioners will provide updates on their efforts at the August meeting.

5.4. District 4: No report

5.5. District 5:

Childers reported that Meals on Wheels and Elderday are distributing emergency backpacks provided by the Seniors Council. In addition, the Regional Transportation Commission has launched a countywide bike purchase incentive program, “Go Bike!”, with informational fliers being included in meal deliveries. The senior lunch program is currently active at the Live Oak, London Nelson, Watsonville (administered by the City of Watsonville), and Ben Lomond Senior Centers, offering both meals and educational presentations for adults aged 60 and older. Wapner also shared more about his professional background, his interest in seniors issues at hand, and his connections within the community.

6. Senior Legislature Report

Rivas provided an update on the status of the California Senior Legislature’s proposed bills, noting that the California Legislature has formally taken up two of them: SB-239 (formerly SP-4) and SB-508, which addresses telehealth licensing exceptions for out-of-state physicians. Staff will revise the Commission’s letter to the Board of Supervisors in support of SP-4 to reflect its updated bill number, SB-239, and any status updates.

7. Staff Report: No Report

8. Correspondence: None

9. Emerging Matters and Commissioner Announcements:

Rivas announced that a federal judge has temporarily blocked the Trump administration's cuts to AmeriCorps, ordering the reinstatement of grant funding and member positions in states that sued over the cuts. Doty requested that staff invite a representative from the District Attorney’s fraud division to speak to the Commission about recent scams targeting seniors.

10. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by: Kaite McGrew, *Commissions Manager*

The **Assisted Living Waiver (ALW)** is a Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver program that allows eligible individuals who require a nursing home level of care to receive care in **assisted living settings** or **public subsidized housing with services**, rather than in institutional facilities. The goal is to **support aging in place** and increase access to less restrictive, more community-integrated living options for seniors and people with disabilities.

It's available in **certain states** (like California), and specific program features vary by state, but generally:

Key Features of the Assisted Living Waiver

- **Eligibility:** Must be eligible for Medi-Cal (or Medicaid in other states) and meet nursing facility level of care.
- **Services Covered:** Includes personal care assistance, medication management, housekeeping, transportation, meal prep, and 24-hour oversight.
- **Settings:** Licensed assisted living facilities, public housing with supportive services, or Adult Residential Facilities.
- **Goal:** Prevent or delay institutionalization by offering more dignified and community-centered care.

In **California**, the **Assisted Living Waiver (ALW)** is **not available in all counties**. Counties **must be approved by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)** to participate. In other words, **counties don't automatically have access** just because they're in California — and **they don't opt in at will**, but rather the **state expands the waiver to specific counties** when it chooses to increase the program's reach.

As of April 2025, **Santa Cruz County is not included in California's Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) program**. The ALW is currently available in 15 counties, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma .

The **California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)** determines which counties participate in the Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) program. Counties do not automatically opt in; instead, DHCS expands the program based on the specific criteria and strategic considerations below:

Criteria for County Selection

While DHCS has not publicly detailed all selection criteria, several key factors influence a county's inclusion:

1. **Provider Readiness:** The presence of licensed **Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs)** or **Adult Residential Facilities (ARFs)** willing to participate in the ALW program is crucial. These facilities must meet specific licensing and operational standards to qualify. [Cal DHCS+1](#)[Cal DHCS+1](#)
2. **Care Coordination Infrastructure:** Availability of **Care Coordination Agencies (CCAs)** is essential. CCAs are responsible for developing and implementing individualized service plans for ALW participants. [Cal DHCS+3](#)[Cal DHCS+3](#)[Cal DHCS+3](#)
3. **Demonstrated Need:** Counties with a significant population of **Medi-Cal beneficiaries requiring nursing facility level care** but preferring community-based alternatives are prioritized.
4. **Geographic Equity:** Efforts are made to ensure **regional balance**, expanding the program to underserved areas across northern, central, and southern California. [Legislative Information](#)
5. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Active involvement and support from local stakeholders, including healthcare providers, community organizations, and county officials, can influence DHCS's decision to expand the program to a particular county.

Next Steps for the Seniors Commission

To effectively advocate for the inclusion of Santa Cruz County in the ALW program, the Commission will need to discover what criteria elements are potentially precluding the County from having already being included.

Step 1: Gather data on each of the criteria elements above

Step 2: Invite County Human Services Department to present on the data collected and any efforts by the County that are already underway.

Step 3: Determine what the advocacy priorities are as informed by HSD and the data.

Step 4: Advocate for support from the Board of Supervisors on those priorities.



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August 11, 2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
 701 Ocean Street, Fifth Floor Room 500
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

The Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission respectfully requests that the Board of Supervisors express support for SB-239, a California Senior Legislature (CSL) proposal brought forward for consideration this year in the California Legislature. This measure responds directly to the needs of older adults across the state and would be particularly impactful for residents of Santa Cruz County.

SB-239: Ralph M. Brown Act Teleconferencing

SB-239 would make permanent the option for members of county-based Advisory Councils, Committees, Commissions, and their attendant Work Groups, Committees, and Subcommittees—established for aging and disability issues—to participate remotely without requiring members of the public to be physically present at the remote location, provided that public access to the meeting is still ensured.

For Santa Cruz County, this change is especially important. Many seniors and people with disabilities face significant barriers to in-person participation due to:

- Transportation challenges in rural and geographically dispersed areas;
- Financial constraints that make travel difficult; and
- Mobility and health limitations that can make leaving home a hardship or even a health risk.

By allowing residents to engage from home, SB-239 promotes equitable access and representation, aligning with the County's efforts to strengthen civic participation for older adults, caregivers, and people with disabilities. While the bill is currently in the Inactive File, strong support could help reactivate it this year or make it a priority next session. The Seniors Commission urges the Board to send a letter of support to state legislators, reaffirming Santa Cruz County's commitment to inclusive public decision-making. We thank the Board for its continued dedication to our senior community.

Respectfully,

Suzanne Doty
 Suzanne Doty

Commission Chair, Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission

Katie Limas
 Katie Limas

Commission Vice Chair, Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission



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Scheduled Meetings

Unless otherwise specified, regularly scheduled Seniors Commission meetings are generally held as follows:

DAY: Third (3rd) Tuesday
MONTH: Every other month (February, April, June, August, October, and December)
TIME: 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM
LOCATION: **United Way of Santa Cruz County***
4450 Capitola Road, Ste 106, Capitola, CA 95010

* Unless noted otherwise below

Changes to the schedule, including special meetings, changes of location, or meeting cancellations, will be listed on the website at www.sccseniors.org as soon as information becomes available.

2025 Meeting Dates		
DATE	TIME	LOCATION
February 18, 2025	12:30 – 2:30 PM	United Way
April 15, 2025	12:30 – 2:30 PM	United Way
June 17, 2025	12:30 – 2:30 PM	United Way
August 19, 2025	12:30 – 2:30 PM	United Way
October 21, 2025	12:30 – 2:30 PM	United Way
December 16, 2025	12:30 – 2:30 PM	United Way

Public Participation

- Please check the meeting agenda to learn details about how to participate in the commission meeting.
- If you need special accommodations, please call 454-2935 or TDD: 711 (California Relay Service) at least 48 hours before the meeting.