



SONOMA COUNTY AGING & DISABILITY COMMISSION

Commission Meeting



Location:	Carnelian Conference Room, 3725 Westwind Blvd. Santa Rosa 95403
Date:	Wednesday, April 15, 2026
Time:	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Public Zoom Link:	https://zoom.us/j/97845062226?pwd=2LdD46H2bzPmbir6F7FFerP9E563Aj.1
Meeting Details:	Phone Number: 1 (669) – 444 – 9171 Meeting ID: 943 1192 7709 Passcode: 768493

Mission: The Aging & Disability Commission gives voice to the diverse needs of Sonoma County's older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers.

Agenda

- 1:00 **1. Welcome and Commission Member Introductions** Helman
Commission Members, whether in person or virtually, will introduce themselves. Member introductions will include their Name, City of Residence, District (1-5), and Supervisor's Name.
- Members participating virtually will need to disclose if there is anyone over the age of 18 in the room with them.*
- Members of the public will have the opportunity to introduce themselves during Public Comment.*
- 1:02 **2. Approval of the 03.18.2026 Commission Meeting Minutes** Helman
The Commission will review the meeting minutes and may approve them as presented or with modifications.
- 1:03 **3. Public Comment and Commission Member Open Forum**
 The public may address the Commission on any items on the agenda and on matters within the Commission's jurisdiction. The Committee cannot take action on non-agenda items. Public comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.
- In-person attendees who wish to speak may indicate their request to speak during this time. When recognized by the Chair, please state your name and begin your comments.

- Virtual participants who wish to speak must use the “Raise Hand” feature located within Zoom. When it is your turn to speak, the host will unmute your microphone and prompt you to speak. Please state your name and begin your comments

1:06	4. Commission Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Commission Member Application – Action <i>The Executive Committee has nominated Michael Margett (District 4) for election to the Commission. Election requires a majority vote of the Commission members present and voting.</i> • Commission-Elected Seat Renewal - Action <i>The Commission will consider and take action on the renewal of Jaime Peñaherrera.</i> 	Helman
1:10	5. Peer Counselor Discussion <i>The Commission will discuss changes in Peer Counselor services in Sonoma County.</i>	Beards & Edwards
1:15	6. Legislative Representatives <i>The Commission will hear from invited legislative representatives to respond to questions from the Commission.</i>	Helman
1:45	7. Chair Updates <i>The Chair will provide updates for the Commission to review and discuss.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Member Update • June Planning Day Update • Officer Elections in June 	Helman
1:50	8. Director and Staff Updates: Director Update(s): <i>The AAA Director will provide updates on relevant matters for the Commission, including recent developments or upcoming events.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Budget • State Budget • SB1249 Staff Update(s): <i>The AAA Program Manager will provide updates on relevant matters for the Commission, including recent developments or upcoming events.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs Assessment – Equity MPA Team 	Dunaway & Souza-Milner
2:00	**BREAK**	
2:05	9. Parkinson’s Society of Sonoma County Presentation <i>Presentation from the Parkinson’s Society.</i>	Helman

- 2:25 **10. Recruitment Membership Task Update** Helman
Discussion on the progress of the Recruitment Member Task.
- 2:30 **11. Board of Supervisors Meeting – Spring 2026** Helman
Spring 2026: Meetings with the Supervisors should be completed by May 2026
- 2:40 **12. Standing & Ad Hoc Committee Report** Helman
Standing and Ad Hoc Committee Members will provide updates on their activities, progress on assigned tasks, and recommendations or actions for the Commission.
- Ad Hoc Committee:
 - No Wrong Door Ad Hoc - **Action**
Prioritize work plan activities so the plan can be discussed and approved by the Commission.
Lead: Suzanne Edwards
Due: April 9, 2026
 - Research Report Topic #2 (New) - **Action**
Potentially research and summarize issues related to nutrition programs for older adults and adults with disabilities.
Lead: Diane Spain
Due: June 4, 2026
- 3:00 **13. Adjourn** Helman

Attachments:

Minutes (03.18.2026), Letter of Recommendation to Senior Advocacy Services, Commission Member Application - Confidential, BHSA Advocacy Sample Comment, BHSA Advocacy Cover Letter, Remote Attendance Procedures, April 2026 Legislative Representative Questions, and Ad Hoc Committee Proposal - New

Written Reports:

None

Supplemental materials related to an agenda item are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Adult & Aging Office, 3725 Westwind Blvd., Suite 101, Santa Rosa. All listed times are approximate and subject to change. Agenda items are scheduled for consideration by the Commission, which may or may not choose to act. Breaks may be called at the discretion of the Chair. If you need any accommodation to effectively participate, please contact aaa@schsd.org

or (707) 565-5238 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. To receive the AAA Newsletter: AAA@SonomaCounty-HSD.gov.

Aging & Disability Commission Members:

Chair: Jenny Helman

Vice Chair: Robin Thompson

Secretary: Deanna Shaat

Former Chair: Diane Spain

Parliamentarian: Trayce Beards

Commission: Rick Baum, Suzanne Edwards, Terry Kelley, Jaime Peñaherrera, Alain Serkissian, Priyanka Varma, Heather Hannan-Kramer, Pam Law

AAA Director: Paul Dunaway

AAA Program Manager: Cody Souza-Milner

Upcoming Events:

- Executive Meeting: Tuesday, May 12, 2026, from 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
- Commission Meeting: Wednesday, May 20, 2026, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- Commission Planning Day has moved to June 17, 2026 from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- North County Senior Resource Fair: June 7, 2026, from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
 - At Huerta Gym, Windsor
- African Soul Festival: August 29, 2026, from 11:00 to 5:00PM
 - 475 City Center Drive, Rohnert Park

Upcoming ADRU Table Events:

- None at this time



Sonoma County Aging & Disability Commission Meeting



Minutes

Wednesday, March 18th, 2026 | 1:00PM-3:00PM

Carnelian Conference Room, 3725 Westwind Blvd. Santa Rosa 95403

In-person Attendance: Deanna Shaat, Robin Thompson, Suzanne Edwards, Jenny Helman, Rick Baum, Priyanka Varma, Jaime Penaherrera, Alain Serkissian, Terry Kelley, Trayce Beards, Pam Law (*voted in as Member during session*)

Virtual Attendance: Heather Hanna-Kramer, Priyanka Varma

Absent: Eddie Estrada, Diane Spain

Staff Attendance: Paul Dunaway, Cody Souza-Milner, Cassandra Denson (Zoom), Joni Huntsperger

1. Welcome & Commission Member Introductions (Helman) (1:00PM)

2. New Commission Member Application – Action

Motion: Nominate Pam Law for a seat on the Commission.

1st Motion: Robin Thompson | 2nd Motion: Deanna Shaat | Vote Result: Passed

3. Public Hearing - FY 2024 – 2028 Area Plan Update: Year 2 FY 25/26 (Souza-Milner)

Presentation and Fact Sheet Handout were provided to the Commission and the Public.

- Reviewed the current 4-Year plan focus areas.
- Reviewed the first 2 years of progress with the Area Plan and the programs that were offered.
- Reviewed the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 funding of programs.
 - Shared types of funding sources.
 - Discussed the changes in available funding.
 - Sunset of Cal Fresh Healthy Living Grant September 2025.
 - Sunset of Older Californians Act Supportive Services- *Aging Better Sonoma County*, *Disaster Preparedness programs are discontinued.*
 - Older Americans Act Reductions- *FallProof and SAIL programs discontinued, Alzheimer's Day and Adult Day programs reduced.*
 - New Pilot Program starting in Sonoma Valley- *Eric Larson selected as consultant.*
- Area Plan Public Comment
 - Cody Souza- Milner took notes on any questions/topics that needed follow-up.



Sonoma County Aging & Disability Commission Meeting



4. Approval of the 2.18.2026 Commission Meeting Minutes (Helman)

- Approved as Written.

5. Public Comment and Commission Member Open Forum

Introductions of public participants who wish to be recognized.

Krista Barnett-Nelson, Senior Advocacy Services: Presented upcoming initiatives.

Jamie Escoubas, Council on Aging: Shared upcoming events. Announced their team won the Non-Profit of Excellence Award. Shared about the Cloverdale congregate dining pilot program.

Mary Flett, California Senior Legislature: Discussed the current challenge of funding in California. Shared information regarding CSL's initiatives.

BREAK

6. Chair Updates (Helman)

Marge Ling Nominations Update

- The Executive Committee is discussing a new process for selecting a candidate next year.
- The Executive Comm. also determined a nominee for this year.

Change Planning Day Date:

- June 17th 2026, 9:00AM-2:00PM
- Regular Commission meeting for August.

7. Director Updates (Dunaway)

County Budget Update

- Budget has been submitted, will be approved in June.
- No staffing cuts proposed.

State Budget Update

- The May revised state budget is unknown.
- C4A budget requesting permanent funding for Nutrition and budget requests for programs related to SB 1249, which could include ADRC funding.



Sonoma County Aging & Disability Commission Meeting



Federal Budget Update

- No updates.

Additional Updates:

- Chief Consultant for the Assembly on Aging and Long-Term Care, Liz Fuller, toured Sonoma County programs funded by AAA contracts with Cody Souza-Milner.

8. Written Report Discussion (Helman)

- Sonoma Seniors Today Article on Jenny Helman.
- Becoming Independent Report
- TACC Report
- Behavioral Health Services Act Report
- Master Plan for Aging Updates

9. Recruitment Membership Task Update (Helman)

- Discussed responses and lack of responses from individuals and organizations.
- Discussed meetings with Christ Church United Methodist, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and the California Indian Museum & Cultural Center.

10. Board of Supervisors Meeting – Spring 2026

Spring 2026: Meetings with the Supervisors should be completed by May 2026.

Meeting Updates:

- District 1: Just completed meeting for Fall and need to work towards scheduling the Spring meeting.
- District 2: No response
- District 3: Meeting Scheduled for May 7th.
- District 4: No response- Reaching out to the 3 candidates that are running for seats instead.
- District 5: Meeting Scheduled for April 6th.
- Submit report ideas and feedback to Jenny Helman.

11. Standing & Ad Hoc Committee Reports (Helman)

Standing Committee: No Wrong Door

The Committee will provide an update on the progress of the work.

Interim Chair: Suzanne Edwards

Vice Chair: Priyanka Varma



Sonoma County Aging & Disability Commission Meeting



- Met on February 24th.
- Elected Priyanka Varma as Vice Chair.
- Committee worked on the NWD Committee Work Plan.
- Focus topics on the plan were:
 - Connection
 - Educating the Community and Sharing Information
 - Data Collection and Advocacy

Ad Hoc Committee:

- Website Design - **Action**
Ad Hoc group to develop recommendations for updates to the Commission webpage to make it more welcoming, informative, and simple to navigate.
Lead: Jaime Peñaherrera
Due: March 4, 2026

Motion: Accept the recommendations of the Website Design Committee
1st Motion: Suzanne Edwards | 2nd Motion: Deanna Shaat | Vote Result: Passed

- FY 26/27 Area Plan Objectives - **Action**
Ad Hoc group to develop recommendation for FY 2026-27 objectives in the Area Plan – Year 2 Update.
Lead: Deanna Shaat
Due: March 4, 2026

Motion: Approve the F2026-2027 Area Plan Goals and Objectives.
1st Motion: Tracye Bears | 2nd Motion: Deanna Shaat | Vote Result: Passed

- Community Convening Topics #2
Develop a Panel for a local Senior Expo
Lead: Eddie Estrada
Due: April 15, 2026
 - *Update: DSLC is not partnering for a panel during the Expo. Eddie Estrada is going to meet with DSLC next week to discuss other options.*
- Legislative Ad Hoc (New) – **Action**
Coming up with questions for the Legislative Representatives
Lead: Robin Thompson
Due: March 30, 2026

Motion: Stand up a Legislative Ad Hoc.
1st Motion: Deanna Shaat | 2nd Motion: Rick Baum | Vote Result: Passed

- Interested members: Rick Baum, Eric Larson, Pam Law, Deanna Shaat



Sonoma County Aging & Disability Commission Meeting



- No Wrong Door Ad Hoc (New) – **Action**
Prioritize work plan activities so the plan can be discussed and approved by the Commission.
Lead: TBD
Due: April 9th, 2026

Motion: Stand up a No Wrong Door Ad Hoc Committee.

1st Motion: Rick Baum | 2nd Motion: Robin Thompson | Vote Result: Passed

- Interested Participants: Eric Larson, Susan Edwards, Priyanka Varma, Jenny Helman, Trayce Beards
- First Meeting: Thursday next week (Zoom)

12. Adjourn (Helman)(2:56PM)

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To submit items for the AAA Newsletter, or to receive the AAA Newsletter: AAA@schsd.org

Upcoming Events:

- Executive Meeting: Tuesday, April 7, 2026, from 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
- Commission Meeting: Wednesday, April 15, 2026, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- California Senior Legislature Applications Due March 31, 2026
 - To be sworn in during the October 2026 Annual Legislative Session
- Legislative Representatives to be invited to the April 2026 Commission Meeting
- North County Senior Resource Fair: June 7, 2026, from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
 - At Huerta Gym, Windsor
- African Soul Festival: August 29, 2026, from 11:00 to 5:00PM
 - 475 City Center Drive, Rohnert Park

Upcoming ADRU Table Events:

- None at this time



Human Services Department
COUNTY OF SONOMA

SONOMA COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING

3725 Westwind Blvd., Ste. 101
Santa Rosa, CA 95403



Angela Struckmann
Department Director

Paul Dunaway
Division Director, Adult & Aging

March 19, 2026

Honorable Dawn Addis
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8210
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for FY 2026–27 Budget Request – \$8,325,000 One-Time General Fund for the Healthcare Career Pathway (CNA Workforce Initiative)

Dear Chair Addis,

On behalf of the **Sonoma County AAA** I am writing to express our strong support for the request that **\$8,325,000 in General Fund support be allocated over five years in the FY 2026–27 State Budget** to sustain and expand the Healthcare Career Pathway (HCP) Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Workforce Initiative.

California continues to face a significant shortage of CNAs and entry-level healthcare workers across long-term care, hospital, and residential care settings. These workforce shortages contribute to delayed hospital discharges, limited long-term care capacity, and increasing strain across the healthcare system—particularly as the state’s aging population grows. The California Department of Aging estimates that **one in four Californians will be age 60 or older by 2030**, further increasing the need for a stable direct care workforce.

The Healthcare Career Pathway program is a proven workforce development model designed to recruit, train, and retain individuals with addressable barriers to employment and connect them to stable, living-wage healthcare careers. The program currently operates across Alameda, Contra Costa, Lake, Mendocino, Sonoma, and Kern counties, aligning CNA training cohorts with regional employer demand and workforce projections.

HCP’s success is driven by its comprehensive approach that pairs state-approved CNA training and certification preparation with wraparound supports and 1:1 case management that help participants complete the program and successfully enter the workforce. In addition to covering tuition, textbooks, uniforms, and supplies, these supports include transportation assistance, food resources, childcare and emergency stipends, case management, academic navigation, and direct connections to community resources and employer partners.

The program has demonstrated strong outcomes. As of February 2026, statewide data show:

- **88.3%** program completion rate (program length ranges from 7 to 14 weeks)
- **92.2%** CNA certification pass rate within six months of graduation
- **75.5%** employment within six months of graduation

These results demonstrate that the HCP model successfully expands access to healthcare careers while strengthening California’s direct care workforce pipeline.

As the Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging (AAA), in partnership with the Aging & Disability Commission, we are responsible for planning, funding, and overseeing a coordinated system of services that support older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers. Our work is directly impacted by the availability of the direct care workforce, including Certified Nursing Assistants who play a critical role in long term care, and home and community based services. This program strengthens the pipeline of qualified, culturally responsive caregivers while reducing barriers to employment. An increase in CNAs in our region will result in expanding access to care, improve service quality, and support the independence and well being of our community.

Without continued state investment, pilot funding for the HCP CNA Workforce Initiative provided by the California Department of Health Care Access and Information will sunset on June 30, 2026. Sustained funding will strengthen California's frontline healthcare workforce, expand care capacity across long-term care and hospital systems, and create economic mobility for Californians entering healthcare careers. Continued support will allow the HCP model to maintain training cohorts, sustain employer partnerships, and increase the number of Certified Nursing Assistants entering the workforce in high-need regions.

For these reasons, **the Sonoma County AAA respectfully urges your support of this FY 2026–27 budget request** to sustain and expand the Healthcare Career Pathway CNA Workforce Initiative.

Sincerely,



Paul Dunaway (Mar 19, 2026 17:12:21 PDT)

Paul Dunaway
Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging Director



Jenny Helman (Mar 19, 2026 16:54:52 PDT)

Jenny Helman
Sonoma County Aging & Disability Commission, Chair

Advocacy Alert

County funding is ending for Senior Peer Counseling and Senior Peer Support programs

Effective June 2026, funding has been terminated for the Senior Peer Counseling (SPC) program at West County Community Services and the Senior Peer Support (SPS) program at Council on Aging.

Following the passage of Proposition 1 in 2024, the Mental Health Services Act has transformed into the Behavioral Health Services Act, prioritizing care for severe mental illness and substance use disorders. Sonoma County has issued a draft 2026-2029 Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan, which does not include the SPC or SPS programs.

To voice your support for the Senior Peer Counseling/Support programs:

1. Email comments to BHSA@sonomacounty.gov before Wednesday, May 6, 2026. (A sample email is attached, which you are welcome to customize.)
2. Provide public comment (in person or virtually) at the Behavioral Health Board meeting on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. The agenda and meeting link will be available online before the meeting:
<https://sonomacounty.gov/behavioral-health-board-meeting-may-19-2026>.
3. The integrated plan will be considered by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, June 2, 2026.

[Sample for public comment – email or verbal]

I am writing in support of the Senior Peer Counseling and Senior Peer Support programs, which were lost in the transition to the Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan.

The Senior Peer Counseling and Senior Peer Support programs provide one-on-one support for older adults through grief, isolation, life transitions, and depression. Last year, 26 trained and supervised volunteers provided 758 sessions to 115 older adults, 80% of whom reported meaningful improvements in their emotional well-being.

We know that older adults face significant behavioral health needs. In a California Department of Aging survey of older adults in 2023, 40% of respondents felt lonely and isolated and 45% felt depressed. The risk of suicide also increases with age. In Sonoma County, suicide among adults ages 75-84 has surged 52%, the highest of any group. Drug overdoses and deaths of older adults have more than tripled in the last 20 years. Rising rates of older adult homelessness further complicate behavioral health treatment.

Sonoma County's Behavioral Health Integrated Plan prioritizes suicide prevention as a key goal and recognizes peer to peer models as "effective strategies for improving access and strengthening trust." Early intervention models like Senior Peer Counseling and Senior Peer Support can have a positive impact on the growing negative statistics of isolation, depression, and suicide of our older adults. We are losing this resource.

Thank you for your attention to this significant need. I hope we can come together as a community and find a creative solution to continued funding for these valuable, cost-effective programs.



Remote Attendance Procedures

Brown Act § 54953

In-person attendance is required at Commission and standing committee meetings unless using an exemption.

Remote attendance exemptions:

1. **Reasonable accommodation** for a member with a qualifying disability, or
2. A **Just Cause** provision:
 - A family caregiving need
 - A contagious illness
 - A need related to physical or mental disability
 - Travel while on official Commission business
 - An immunocompromised family member
 - A physical or family medical emergency
 - Military service obligations

To claim a Just Cause exemption:

- a. **Notify** the meeting Chair, the AAA Program Manager, and aaa@schsd.org at the earliest opportunity (including at the start of a meeting) of the need to participate remotely.
- b. **Provide a general description** of the circumstances (without disclosing any medical diagnosis, disability, or personal information).

Note:

- A separate notification is required for each meeting.
- Just Cause exemptions are limited to two times per member per calendar year.
- The Just Cause provision relied upon by a member is documented in the meeting minutes.

All members attending remotely:

- Must disclose at the start of the meeting whether there are any other adults in the room with them, and if so, the general nature of their relationship.
- Must participate through both audio and video.
- Are counted towards a quorum and have voting authority.



Questions for Legislative Aides

April 15, 2026

What specific steps has your elected official taken to advance issues related to improving the lives of seniors, people with disabilities, and their caregivers?"

Please describe any legislation affecting seniors, people with disabilities, and caregivers where your elected official is an author or lead sponsor. How can the Aging & Disability Commission support these efforts?

How do you coordinate with your colleagues in other legislative bodies on issues of aging and disability (i.e., Congress, State Legislatures, Counties and Cities)?

What are your officials doing to help middle or lower-middle income constituents who may not meet the eligibility requirements for various public programs (based on income, age, health status, etc.) but who nevertheless are facing severe problems in accessing needed services as they age?

How may we as a Commission support the work your officials do to support older adults, their caregivers and those with disabilities?

Contact: Jenny Helman, Chair
707.236.2030



Proposed ad hoc committee Research Report #2 – Nutrition Programs 4/15/26

Ad hoc committee procedures:

- The Commission may establish an ad hoc committee **to complete a specific task within a limited time frame.**
- The number of members must be less than a quorum of the Commission.
- Meetings are exempt from Brown Act requirements, so can be on Zoom or by email.
- Meetings do not require staff support, but staff may be asked for help if needed.

The Executive Committee has proposed establishment of a new ad hoc committee:

Research Report #2 – Nutrition Programs

Background: Commission Objective 6.13:
Members research and summarize topics affecting the dignity, independence, and quality of life of the people they represent.
Measure: 2 Reports (#1 completed Jan 2026, #2 due June 2026).

Specific Task: **Research and summarize issues related to nutrition programs for older adults and adults with disabilities.**

Committee will:

- Gather information from stakeholders.
- Describe the challenges faced by service providers.
- Recommend opportunities for advocacy.
- Write a summary report.

Time Frame: **Submit draft report to Jenny and Cody by June 4, 2026.**

Commission tasks for today:

1. Take a vote on establishing the committee.
2. Ask who is interested in serving on the committee. (Up to 7 members)

Diane has been designated as the Lead of this committee and will contact members to schedule the first meeting.