



SENIOR UPDATE  
AREA AGENCY ON AGING  
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON AGING  
4955 FOOTHILL BLVD., SUITE 300  
OAKLAND, CA 94605-1907

April/May/June 2019

# Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Commission on Aging

## Letter from our Director, Jennifer Stephens– Pierre Area Agency on Aging

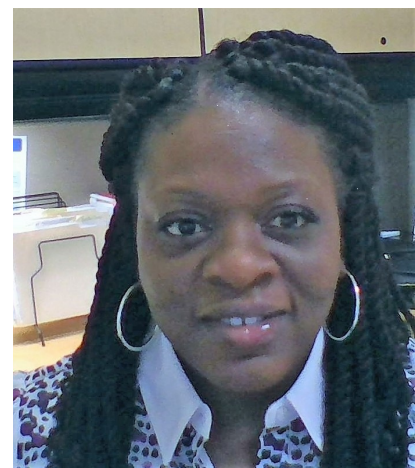
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My name is Jennifer Stephens-Pierre and I am the new Director for the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging (AAA). I have had the pleasure of working with Older Adults for over 20 years and have spent the last ten years as an Adult Protective Supervisor with Alameda County Social Services Agency's various elder justice programs. I have really enjoyed meeting many of you in the various commissions, councils, and providers' meeting over the last couple of months. I appreciate the warm welcomes I received and the tremendous support you have all shown, as I tackle the learning curve of this new world. My goals moving forward are to learn more about each of your programs and to visit each site in hopes of meeting your staff and clients. I had the opportunity to tour St. Mary's Center and SOS Meals on Wheels, and I must say that seeing the sites and services first hand gives me a greater perspective on the importance of the work being done to enhance the lives of Older Adults. Thanks again for your commitment and great service to our Older Adults community throughout Alameda County.

7 See you soon,

Jennifer Stephens-Pierre, M.A.  
Director, Area Agency on Aging  
Alameda County Social Services



## Older Americans Month May 2019: Connect, Create, Contribute Administration for Community Living



Each year, more and more Older Adults are making a positive impact in and around Alameda County. As volunteers, employees, employers, educators, mentors, advocates, and more, they offer insight and experience that benefit the entire community. That's why Older Americans Month (OAM) has been recognizing the contributions of this growing population for 56 years.

Led by the [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) each May, OAM provides resources to help older Americans stay healthy and independent, and resources to help communities support and celebrate their diversity.

This year's OAM theme, *Connect, Create, Contribute*, encourages Older Adults and their communities to:

**Connect** with friends, family, and local services and resources.

**Create** through activities that promote learning, health, and personal enrichment.

**Contribute** time, talent, and life experience to benefit others.

Alameda County will celebrate OAM by promoting ways that community members of *all* ages can take part in helping Older Adults thrive. We encourage you to:

**Connect:** Alameda County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) consumer survey for the 2021-2024 Countywide Plan for Older Adults. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H9LLY6Z>

**Create:** Opportunities for assisting Older Adults in your local neighborhood.

**Contribute:** Your ideas and opinions matter for the Countywide Plan for Older Adults.

Communities that support and recognize older adults are stronger! Join us in strengthening our community – this May and throughout the year. Visit the official [OAM website](https://acl.gov/oam/2019/older-americans-month-2019), <https://acl.gov/oam/2019/older-americans-month-2019> for ideas and inspiration, and follow ACL on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

## **Understanding Long Term Care Options In & Out of the Home**

### **Christine Sevier, Senior Living Advocate**

As a Senior Living Advocate, I find myself extremely troubled by the number of times I have reported unethical behavior and unlicensed facilities to the department of social services' community care licensing division. When placing a loved one you must choose the facility that matches the level of care, comfort and most importantly has good licensing history. Far too often families are rushed and overwhelmed during the care and placement process. Nursing rehabilitation centers may only give families 2-3 days of notice before discharge. At times discharges occur even when the patient is unfit to be home alone. This time constraint can lead to patient and care facility mismatch. Families in this predicament may fail to check facilities licensing history. Sadly, in 2018 the California Long-Term Care Ombudsman (CLTCOA) received 39,346 complaints. Of those complaints 12,822 were coded as elder abuse, gross neglect and exploitation.

One option for care is 24 hour in-home care. The cost ranges from \$25-\$35 per hour. For many families this level of care is unsustainable. A well run, experienced and good licensed board and care facility can be the best option for families and their loved ones. Small, but care driven, six bed facilities can provide a high level of care because of the high patient to caregiver ratio.

Unfortunately I reported another facility to the department of social services last week for operating without licensing. Some facilities can operate without a Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE) license when residents are completely independent. If residents are dependent on facilities for assisted living, assistance with medication, bathing, or other personal care needs, a license is required. There is a big difference between independent living, assisted living, continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) and residential care for elderly facilities. Independent living does not offer care and requires no license. Assisted living requires RCFE licensing. CCRCs provide a continuum of care under an array of licensing. While it's impossible for facilities to have an impeccable record, we can identify facilities with repeated citations and complaints thus pointing to poor management and oversight.

My name is Christine Sevier, I am a senior living advocate with Creating New Hope. We provide older adults with complementary advocacy, education, placement, and community resources. Our advocates are RCFE Administrators. We personally tour facilities to ensure health and safety standards are in line with Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Federal, and State regulations. We are advocates who share unbiased insights and recommendations. We match older adults with appropriate care communities you can feel good about.

## **Social Security Helps People Like You**

### **Sarah Kim-Lee, Social Security Regional Public Affairs Specialist**

Part of what makes our nation unique is our diversity. Social Security touches the lives of nearly all Americans; so, we're accustomed to serving a diverse population. Online, our People Like Me pages help inform the many different people we help. From people with disabilities to students and military veterans — Social Security is here for you.

These pages are easy to share with friends and family or on social media. Here are just a few that might speak to you or someone you love.

Do you know someone who is just starting their career? Now is the best time for them to start preparing for retirement. The sooner we begin to save, the more we'll have when we reach retirement age. Share this page with a young worker you know. [www.socialsecurity.gov/people/earlycareer](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/people/earlycareer)

We proudly serve wounded warriors and veterans. They faced sacrifices to preserve the freedoms Americans treasure. Many of them do not know they might be entitled to benefits. Share our resources with them to make sure they are getting the benefits they deserve. [www.socialsecurity.gov/people/veterans](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/people/veterans)

Social Security plays an important role in providing economic security for women. Nearly 55 percent of the people receiving Social Security benefits are women. Women face greater economic challenges in retirement. First, women tend to live longer than men. A woman who is 65 years old today can expect to live, on average, until about 87, while a 65-year-old man can expect to live, on average, until about 84. Second, women often have lower lifetime earnings than men, which usually means lower benefits. And, third, women may reach retirement with smaller pensions and other assets than men. Share this page with someone who needs this information and may need help planning for their golden years.

[www.socialsecurity.gov/people/women](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/people/women)

## **Alameda County Long Term Care Ombudsman**

### **William Fasanya, OMBUDSMAN Field Manager**

The Alameda County Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is looking for volunteers. If you are passionate about advocating for residents of long-term care facilities, are observant, reliable, and can use your interpersonal skills to help resolve issues, you may want to consider joining the Ombudsman team.

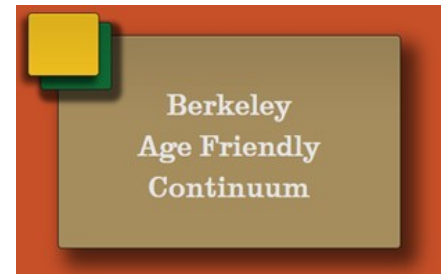
You and other volunteers will participate in a 36 hour volunteer training program and then spend a few hours a week helping people in need by responding to and investigating complaints.

For more information, please contact Andrea Hall at [ombuds@acgov.org](mailto:ombuds@acgov.org), or Phone (510) 383-5170.

**Upcoming training dates to be determined for September 2019.**

## Berkeley Continuum GATEWAY Program Now Open!

Barbara Williams, Gateway Program Manager



**GATEWAY** is a peer-based, prevention and early intervention program for Berkeley residents age 65 and older developed by the Berkeley Age Friendly Continuum. Gateway offers free home visits to help plan for healthy aging. Through a one-time home visit, Gateway Planners work with older adults to actively plan for a positive aging experience and offer coaching to maximize independence and options, anticipate challenges, and prevent avoidable illness, injury, and high medical costs.

In a one-time personal and confidential home visit, the Gateway Planner will work with an individual or couple to identify their wants, needs and challenges now and for their next stages of aging – no matter where they are today. The Planner will offer ideas and information, as well as referrals and linkages to existing resources in the community. Resources may range from social connections to personal/home care needs to transportation services, to home delivery of food to fall prevention ideas and an array of programs that support a spectrum of income levels.

Gateway provides a comprehensive binder of ideas and resources that leave individuals in charge. The binder reviews eight domains including: home and community, financial & housing stability, safety, home environment, health & community resources, food, transportation, and technology.

Participants are having a great experience!

*“You took my hand, and you showed me the road. That’s all I needed.”*

*“You’ve given me the push I needed to be accountable to myself.”*

Let Gateway help you or a loved one plan those next steps for a positive aging experience!

**To learn more or to schedule a visit, call Barbara Williams, MSW Program Manager at 510-559-0036.**

<https://www.berkeleycontinuum.org> . The Continuum is a project of Ashby Village and is funded by: Kaiser Permanente Community Benefits, City of Berkeley, The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, Sutter/Alta Bates Medical Center.

## Changes in CalFresh (Food Stamps)

Mary Louise Zernicke, Senior Nutritionist, Area Agency on Aging

### Changes in CalFresh (Food Stamps) Rules for Older Adults and Disabled Individuals Receiving SSI/SSP Benefits

Did you know that in Alameda County almost 50,000 older adults and people with disabilities live on an SSI/SSP benefit amount of about \$940 each month?

And did you know that these folks are currently ineligible for CalFresh benefits, formally known as Food Stamps?

But there is some good news on the horizon!!

For the first time EVER in California, hundreds of thousands of older adults and people with disabilities who receive SSI/SSP benefits will be able to apply for CalFresh food benefits **beginning June 1, 2019**. This historic change, once implemented, will increase nutrition and health and reduce hunger and poverty among California's older adults and people with disabilities. California will finally join the rest of the nation in providing CalFresh benefits to low income older adults and people with disabilities.

With this new law, households that currently receive CalFresh and also include SSI/SSP individuals will continue to receive their benefits. There will be no change or reduction in the SSI/SSP benefit amount.

### **What is CalFresh?**

CalFresh was formally known as Food Stamps. CalFresh (aka Food Stamp) benefits are now provided via an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which works just like a normal debit card. Because the EBT card looks and works just like a debit card, no one in the grocery line knows whether it is an EBT card or a credit card being used to purchase food.

### **What foods can be purchased with CalFresh?**

Households can use their CalFresh benefits to purchase food products for human consumption, including seeds and plants for use in home gardens to produce food. CalFresh benefits **cannot be** used to buy:

- Alcoholic beverages and tobacco

- Lunch counter items or food to be eaten in the store

- Vitamins and medicines

- Pet food

- Any non-food items such as soaps, paper products, and household supplies.

### **How much will I receive in CalFresh benefits?**

In Alameda County, the average benefit amount is approximately \$140. Households that pay out of pocket for medical expenses may be eligible for a deduction, which could increase the household's CalFresh benefit amount.





## Changes in CalFresh (Food Stamps)

### How will it work?

First, individuals receiving SSI/SSP will be eligible for CalFresh June 1, 2019. Starting in May, eligible SSI/SSP people can complete the CalFresh application but will not receive CalFresh benefits before June 1, 2019. They can call a county Social Services office to request an application be mailed. They do not need to come in to an office to apply. They can also apply online, at <https://www.mybenefitscalwin.org/> or <https://www.getcalfresh.org/>

Once an individual has applied for CalFresh, an interview appointment is required. The interview appointment can be completed over the phone. They will need to verify ID, income and expenses. *It is critical that the individual applying for CalFresh follow up with their application within 30 days.*

Alameda County hopes to have outreach materials available soon. Whether you are potentially eligible, or know someone who receives SSI/SSP, or you work with SSI/SSP clients, it is easy to complete the application process and could mean \$140 in CalFresh benefits for eligible SSI/SSP clients. It is equivalent to an additional 15% in income for people who need it most.



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## Senior Information

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### We're On The Web!

[http://www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/elders\\_and\\_disabled\\_adults/aaa.cfm](http://www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/elders_and_disabled_adults/aaa.cfm)

**Senior Update Editorial Board: Helen Buckholz, Donna Ireland, Sarah Kim-Lee, Delbert Walker, Jose Villafior**

### Dates to Remember:

**Income Tax Due Date**– April 15

**Easter**– April 21

**Earth Day**– April 22

**Mother's Day**– May 12

**Area Agency on Aging Roundtable**– May 19

**Memorial Day**– May 27

**World Elder Abuse Awareness**– June 15

**Father's Day**– June 16

**First Day of Summer**– June 21

### Upcoming Meetings:

**ACA Meeting**– April 8, 2019

**ACA Meeting**– May 13, 2019

**ACA Meeting**– June 10, 2019

Alameda County Social Services Agency

Are you 55 years of age or older AND Live in Alameda County?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES...

**WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Alameda County Area Agency on Aging is conducting a consumer survey in preparation of the 2021-2024 Countywide Plan for Older Adults.

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is conducting a survey for Older Adults. This survey is to help gain perspective on what community components are important for the development of the Countywide Plan for Older Adults. The information collected will be used to shape future programs and services.

If you are age 55 and older AND reside in Alameda County, please take a few minutes to fill out the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HD7W82M>