

The California Elder Justice Workgroup

Background & Objectives

The California Elder Justice Workgroup was launched in October 2009 to protect the rights, independence, security, and well being of vulnerable elders in California by improving the response of the legal, long-term care, and protective service systems. Supported by a 15-month grant from the Archstone Foundation, the group's objectives are to:

- Document what has been done to date to prevent and address elder abuse in California, identify unmet needs for services and policy, and recommend promising solutions.
- Create dynamic partnerships among service providers, researchers, advocacy groups, commissions, educators, responders, and policy makers to improve services to vulnerable and abused elders, share practices, and coordinate response systems.
- Create mechanisms and opportunities for information sharing, discussion, problem solving, consensus building, collaboration, and collective advocacy.
- Disseminate information and offer recommendations to service providers, policy makers, program developers, academic institutions, advocacy groups, and foundations to ensure that abuse prevention services and policy meet critical needs and are informed by research and practice experience.
- Provide support and leadership to program and policy development at the state, national, and international levels.

Overarching Values that Guide the Project

- California's abused and vulnerable seniors can be best served through a multifaceted and balanced approach that offers supportive and protective interventions to prevent abuse as well as remedies that ensure justice, relief, and reparations to victims.
- Effectively addressing the complex problem of elder abuse requires that multiple voices be heard. The participation, insights, resources, outlooks, and leadership of diverse stakeholder groups are critical to increasing the state's capacity to protect its vulnerable members.
- Approaches to elder abuse must reflect California's rich diversity.
- Public policy and services must be informed by research and evidence-based practice.

Plan of Action

To achieve these objectives, the Workgroup will carry out the following activities:

- Conduct an environmental scan to identify, review, and evaluate the findings and recommendations of previous advocacy initiatives in California, including hearings, task forces, and planning initiatives. The scan will serve as a basis for future recommendations.
- Conduct structured teleconferences with stakeholders and partners to explore specific areas of need such as reinforcing the civil and criminal justice systems' responses, ensuring that vulnerable elders in the community have access to services that can prevent abuse, improving the screening and monitoring of long-term care workers and facilities, addressing the needs of elders with diminished mental capacity, and creating interventions to mitigate the impact and losses associated with abuse. The group will also explore diverse avenues for affecting needed change.
- Share and exchange information via a Wiki site, newsletter, listserv, and working committees.
- Establish liaisons with diverse stakeholder groups within the state, including advocates for older adults, people with disabilities, domestic violence survivors, crime victims, and caregivers.
- Conduct a two-day statewide summit of invited stakeholders to formulate recommendations regarding the future direction of services and policy for elder abuse and neglect victims in the state.
- Develop a blueprint for a sustained, proactive, and coordinated approach to advocating for services and policy and propose a framework for implementing it.
- Establish liaisons with state and national advocacy organizations to share information and explore potential collaboration.
- Enlist and mobilize a corps of volunteers to assist in raising awareness about abuse, identifying unmet needs and solutions, and keeping partners apprised of developments in the field.

Visit our Wiki site at <http://cejw.pbworks.com/> for the latest updates on our activities.

History

The Workgroup started in 2008 when a small group of service providers participating in the Archstone Foundation's Elder Abuse and Neglect Initiative began meeting to explore how common challenges and needs could be addressed through information sharing, problem solving, and collective advocacy. Group members also identified and responded to opportunities for affecting change.



Accomplishments

Provided testimony to the California Department on Aging (CDA) in the development of its Five Year plan. Recommendations for how CDA can expand its capacity to prevent abuse included encouraging senior centers to develop policies to prevent proprietary or predatory salespersons who pose as objective financial advisors from making presentations, providing training on complex and emergent forms of financial abuse to legal services providers, and encouraging caregiver support programs to screen for high risk situations. The group has offered to provide information and technical assistance to CDA in implementing these measures.

Explored discrepancies in how Adult Protective Services units across the state and nationally define eligibility. The group's findings have been presented at state and national conferences to stimulate discussion about the need for greater clarity and uniformity in APS response.

Developed "Mental Health Service Needs of Vulnerable Elders: A Fact Sheet" to assist advocates access California Proposition 63 funds. Proposition 63 (now known as the Mental Health Services Act) imposed a 1% income tax on personal income in excess of \$1 million to support county mental health programs. Program developers around the state have used the Fact Sheet in developing funding proposals.

Collaborated with the Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse and Neglect at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) to explore salient issues identified by projects supported by the Archstone Foundation Elder Abuse and Neglect Initiative. Topics discussed included:

- The need for greater protections in the state's long term-care network;
- Emerging forms of fraud and financial abuse;
- Problems related to the state's mandatory reporting and response system;
- The need for more conservators and alternatives to conservatorship.

Get Involved!

The Workgroup is looking for individuals with experience and expertise in a broad range of disciplines, including students and retirees, to assist in this groundbreaking project.

Volunteers are needed to:

- Facilitate communication among stakeholder groups including commissions, advocacy groups, coalitions, and professional associations that address the needs of elders, people with disabilities, domestic violence survivors, caregivers, long term care consumers, and others.
- Join sub-groups to develop strategies to address specific areas of need.
- Research and write short articles or content for the California Elder Justice Workgroup Wiki site and other communication vehicles.
- Raise awareness among policy makers and key stakeholders about elder abuse and developments in the field.
- Identify unmet needs and solutions by assisting with surveys, focus groups, and interviews with key stakeholders.
- Share elder abuse service and prevention practices and innovations in your communities.

If you would like to get involved, contact us at calejworkgroup@gmail.com



About Us

The California Elder Justice Workgroup is administered by the Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse and Neglect at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). For more information about the Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse and Neglect at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), please visit <http://www.centeronelderabuse.org/>

Project Leadership

- ❖ Lisa Nerenberg, Workgroup Chair
- ❖ Krista Brown, Communications Coordinator
- ❖ Mary Counihan, Community Liaison
- ❖ Mary Twomey, Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse and Neglect Liaison

Steering Committee Members

- ❖ Krista Brown, APS Training Project Coordinator, Bay Area Academy, San Francisco State University
- ❖ Mary Counihan, MSW, Consultant
- ❖ Molly Davis, Director, Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, WISE & Healthy Aging
- ❖ Lori Delagrammatikas, MSW, Coordinator, Project MASTER, Academy for Professional Excellence, San Diego State University
- ❖ Laura Giles, MSG, Program Officer, Archstone Foundation
- ❖ Heidi Li, JD, Managing Attorney, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach
- ❖ Adria Navarro, LCSW, Research Assistant/Doctoral Candidate, Davis School of Gerontology, University of Southern California
- ❖ Lisa Nerenberg, MSW, MPH, Consultant
- ❖ Terri Restelli-Deits, MSW, Planner, Area Agency on Aging Serving Napa-Solano
- ❖ Shawna Reeves, MSW, Program Coordinator, Fair Lending Project for Seniors, Council on Aging Silicon Valley
- ❖ Mary Twomey, MSW, Co-Director, Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse and Neglect,

The Archstone Foundation Elder Abuse and Neglect Initiative

In January 2006, the Foundation launched the Elder Abuse and Neglect Initiative, a five-year, \$8 million dollar investment in improving the quality and coordination of elder abuse and neglect services in California.

The Initiative is divided into two major phases, Phase I (2006-2007) and Phase II (2008-2010). Eighteen projects were approved as part of Phase II of the Initiative. The Workgroup works closely with the other EANI projects. For more information about the Elder Abuse and Neglect Initiative, visit the Archstone Foundation's Website at www.archstone.org.

Contact Information

For more information or to get involved, contact the Workgroup at calejworkgroup@gmail.com or visit our Wiki site at <http://cejw.pbworks.com>.

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