



California's Senior Centers

Preparing for the Boomer Wave



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Introduction



The Overview

Senior centers are a California idea.

In the early years of the twentieth century, a group of senior citizens in Palo Alto, California acquired a facility dedicated to meetings and activities for seniors in their community. It was an idea before its time, when few seniors retired from their work and when most leisure time was spent with family, and the center eventually closed. However, another center in Los Angeles, St. Barnabas Senior Services, celebrated 100 years of continuous service as a non-profit organization in 2010.

The idea of a publicly sponsored community senior center began decades later in 1943 after social workers in the welfare department of the City of New York recognized the isolation of older people with whom they worked. They convinced the city to create the Hudson Community Center where seniors could gather to pursue social, physical and intellectual activities...to expand their interests, develop their talents and link to essential services.

It was an idea that took hold across the country so that today there are some 15,000 senior centers in all fifty states.

From the 1950s on, communities across California developed or acquired facilities designed to encourage senior socialization and to serve as portals to essential senior services in the community. In 1984, the State of California authorized a \$50 million Senior Center Bond Act to support new construction and remodeling projects at centers throughout California. While funds from that bond were used up years ago, even in a time of economic constraints like today, local governments and non-profits are expanding or building new centers to support community needs and to prepare for the wave of newly aging seniors in the coming decades.

In 2008, the Congress of California Seniors (CCS) created the first on-line directory of senior centers in California. The directory replaced a decade-old hardcopy booklet with mailing addresses of several hundred senior centers. The CCS web directory tallied some 725 centers in 57 of California's 58 counties. It provides public access to essential information and contacts for each center.

In 2009, CCS joined in collaboration with the California Commission on Aging and senior center association members to conduct a survey of the state's senior centers. The survey was the latest part of a joint initiative of the two lead organizations which included the new website directory, a literature review about senior centers, a statewide conference, and participation in several regional conferences focused on senior centers.

This report summarizes the results of this senior center survey. A description of the research design is provided in Appendix 1 and a copy of the lengthy survey questionnaire is presented in Appendix 3.

The Congress of California Seniors thanks the staff of the Commission on Aging, the members of the Advisory Committee, and – most of all – the staffs of the 400+ senior centers who took the time to describe themselves, to think about what their needs are, and to imagine with us what the future of California senior centers could be.

The report is organized into seven sections which mirror the areas of inquiry in the survey. The first several sections are descriptive to give policy makers a clear picture of California's senior centers at the end of the decade. The final four sections describe areas of need and suggest ways that the state could promote better community services and facilities for millions of people who will spend their golden years in the Golden State.

I. Recommendations for Policymakers: Access and Maintenance

Neglect of our senior centers is neglect of our senior citizens. Twenty years after passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, state and local officials have a responsibility to make sure that public facilities...especially those serving older and potentially disabled persons...comply with law. Public agencies should guarantee the public that hazards do not exist, health and safety standards are always being complied with, and that tax dollars are being wisely spent by maintaining public buildings.

- ***The state should enact legislation calling on local governments to direct building inspectors to do regular facility site reviews of public and non-profit senior centers.***
- ***Reviews of ADA compliance and compliance with health and safety standards should be reported to the public and posted at facilities.***
- ***Centers should create plans of compliance and incorporate ADA compliance into their future projects.***
- ***State funds should be made available to fund repairs to allow access, and to insure abatement of toxic substances, if present.***
- ***As soon as state and local finances stabilize, the state should assist local governments and non-profit senior centers to make facility improvements to make them better for present and future seniors.***

II. Recommendations for Policymakers: Technology

Advancing senior centers into the forefront of technology is a fruitful area for future state action. The state should consider ways to encourage development of technology capacity at senior centers as a way to help close the digital divide confronting older Californians.

Among the actions to promote technology are:

- ***Funding demonstration programs to make senior centers into cyber centers;***

- *Leveraging state oversight of telecommunications companies to promote assistance for centers to be wired and wireless facilities;*
- *Promoting the development of education and outreach to seniors via the broadband network capacity of senior centers;*
- *Using centers to train underserved California seniors in using computers and gaining knowledge of software;*
- *Building on our new health networks by using senior centers as locations for remote checkups, screenings, and virtual health/wellness training;*
- *Promoting intergenerational training and mentoring by drawing tech-savvy younger people to centers to help bring seniors into the high tech age.*

III. Recommendations for Policymakers: Energy Utilization

Like all community facilities, whether public or non-profit, senior centers will need to invest in appropriate energy-saving technology in the years ahead. State and local governments should lead the way in promoting energy efficiency and green design. Doing so has the added benefit of building a viable green energy economy in California. As funds become available, the state should invest in energy modifications for senior centers.

- *The state should encourage local governments and/or energy companies to conduct up-to-date energy audits of all senior centers, both publicly supported and non-profit facilities.*
- *Communities and non-profit facilities should develop energy update plans to identify priorities and the level of investment needed to make senior centers green centers.*
- *The state should work with regulated investor-owned and municipal electricity providers to promote investment in energy modifications for senior centers.*
- *When state and local finances stabilize, energy retrofitting and modification of senior centers should be high on a list of future public infrastructure investments.*

IV. Recommendations for Policymakers: Ready for Emergencies or Disasters

Senior centers, both public and non-profit, represent a potentially valuable resource to California communities faced with disasters or emergencies. Like churches, schools and other facilities, senior centers should be brought into play to help communities cope. They can be especially important for seniors who are regular visitors or those who live alone and need a welcoming shelter.

- *Senior centers should become connected with law enforcement and emergency responders in every California community.*
- *Communities should be called upon to assess what needs to be put in place to enable centers to serve in times of disaster or emergency.*
- *Since few communities' emergency personnel have rosters of seniors and persons with disabilities who live alone or may be at risk, senior centers should work with other aging service providers to fill that role where they are not already doing so.*

About the Centers



The Overview

In 2009, there were 727 senior centers in California serving tens of thousands of people every day, Monday through Friday. The seniors they serve are as diverse as the state's population. The centers have different governance structures and models of programming. Most offer a variety of programs and services but some focus on a single activity such as nutrition. They provide service using different combinations of paid staff and volunteers. They rely on a variety of funding sources and have very different budgets. Some are old and some are new.

All the centers reflect a dedication to make life better for the seniors they serve.

- The senior centers surveyed have been in existence for an average of 25 years.
- One-half of responding centers were non-profit organizations (a higher percent than for the total number of centers statewide).
- Centers have been able to benefit from strong volunteer involvement, with a median of 4,000 volunteer hours per year.
- Average staff at the centers is 8.75 paid employees.
- Nearly half (48%) have been forced to lay off staff because of budget constraints.
- More than one in five centers feared they may be forced to close because of the economic downturn and budget cuts.

The Findings

The senior centers that responded to the survey had been providing services from just a few months to as many as 100 years. The average years of service is 25.5 years and the median is 26.0 years. Just over half of the centers had been open between 21 and 50 years. Responding centers were primarily nonprofit agencies (50.3%), which is more than typical statewide. The second most common business structure was city government at 38.7%, followed by county government at 7.5%. Three percent of the respondents were operated by special districts, combinations of city and county governments, tribal governments, senior clubs, and a school.

The centers were primarily multipurpose senior centers (83.4%), followed by centers that provide nutrition programs or a combination of specialized programs such as socialization, exercise, or education programs (10.8%).

Responding senior centers had an average of 8.75 paid employees (median four employees) and a range between no paid employees and 180 paid employees. Centers indicated having between no volunteers and 1,200 volunteers, with a mean of 73.5 volunteers and a median of 30 volunteers. Nearly half of responding centers have fewer than 40 volunteers. The annual number of volunteer hours donated to these centers ranged between none and 500,000 hours, with a mean of 10,323.9 hours and a median of 4,000 hours. Approximately 30% of these centers have over 5,000 hours donated by their volunteers annually.

A summary of key facts about the 398 responding senior centers is shown below.

Category	# (%) Survey Respondents
Number of Years Providing Services to Seniors: Range of years 0 to 101	Average 25.5 years
0-10 years	44 (11.1%)
11-20 years	95 (23.9%)
21-50 years	200 (50.3%)
Over 50 years	13 (3.3%)
Unknown/Don't Know or No Response	46 (11.6%)
Center's Classification:	
Nonprofit Agency	200 (50.3%)
City Government	154 (38.7%)
County Government	30 (7.5%)
Other	12 (3.0%)
For-Profit Business	2 (0.5%)
No Response	0 (0%)
Number of Paid Employees Range 0 to 180 employees	Average 8.75 employees
None	25 (6.3%)
1-5 employees	203 (51.0%)
6-10 employees	82 (20.6%)
11-25 employees	48 (12.1%)
Over 25 employees	27 (6.8%)
No Response	13 (3.3%)
Number of Volunteers: Range 0 to 1,200 volunteers	Average 73.5 volunteers
No volunteers	10 (2.5%)
1-10 volunteers	90 (22.6%)
11-40 volunteers	107 (26.9%)
41-100 volunteers	81 (20.4%)
Over 100 volunteers	81 (20.4%)
Unknown/Don't Know or No Response	29 (7.3%)
Annual Number of Volunteer Hours: Range 0 to 500,000 volunteer hours	Average 10,323.9 volunteer hours
None – 500 hours	46 (11.6%)
501 – 1,000 hours	23 (5.8%)
1,001 – 5,000 hours	102 (25.6%)
5,001 – 10,000 hours	49 (12.3%)
Over 10,000 hours	78 (19.6%)
Unknown/Don't Know or No Response	100 (25.2%)

Senior centers participating in the survey have a variety of funding sources. Nearly all centers had more than one funding source and most centers had three or more funding sources. Below is the list of the funding sources and the percent of centers who indicated receiving some funding from the source:

City government	58.0%
Individual donations or gifts	57.3%
Participant or activity fees	47.5%
Foundations or grants	42.0%
County government	34.9%
State government	27.9%
Building rental fees	27.6%
Federal government	26.1%
Other	20.1%

Those respondents that selected the “Other” category for funding were able to write in that other funding source. Funding sources that did not fit into the categories provided included: fundraisers (including sponsors at events), thrift stores, bingo, account interest, agency reserves, local tribal funds, property taxes, local casinos, service clubs, and redevelopment funds.

Senior centers have annual operating budgets ranging from under \$1,000 to \$54,000,000, with an average budget of \$1,009,845. Forty-five percent of centers had an annual budget of \$500,000 or less, and approximately 25% of centers had a budget over \$500,000, while the remaining 30% of respondents did not respond to the question or did not know their annual budget.

Respondents were asked about their center’s budget changes over the past five years when compared to costs and demands for services. Just over a quarter indicated an increase, 26.9% indicated they had kept pace, 42.5% indicated a decline, and 5.3% did not respond to the question. Forty-eight percent of respondents have had to lay off staff or reduce key services over the past five years.

Ninety respondents (22.6%) indicated their centers are in danger of being closed. Many respondents indicated reasons that their center might close. The primary reason was decreased funding (86 respondents or 21.6%). Ten respondents (2.5%) indicated that deferred maintenance was the primary reason for possible center closure. Other reasons indicated by 26 respondents (6.6%) included: city/state budget, current economy/donations down, unstable/uncertain funding, and potential building demolition.

A summary of this information is shown on the next page.

Category	# (%) Survey Respondents
Center's Annual Operating Budget: Range \$0 to \$54,000,000	Average \$1,009,845
\$0 - \$1,000	3 (0.8%)
\$1, 1 - \$50,000	35 (8.8%)
\$50,001 - \$200,000	63 (15.8%)
\$200,001 – \$500,000	78 (19.6%)
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	62 (15.6%)
Over \$1,000,000	38 (9.5%)
Unknown/Don't Know or No Response	119 (29.9%)
Center's Budget change compared to costs and demands for services over past 5 years:	
Increased	101 (25.4%)
Kept pace	107 (26.9%)
Declined	169 (42.5%)
No Response	21 (5.3%)
Lay off staff or reduce key services over past 5 years:	
Yes	191 (48.0%)
No	192 (48.2%)
No Response	15 (3.8%)
Center in danger of being closed:	
Yes	90 (22.6%)
No	279 (70.1%)
Possibly/Don't know or No Response	29 (7.4%)

Programming and Capacity



The Overview

Senior centers are moving in new directions. Not only is the aging population they serve on the verge of a boom, it is becoming much more diverse. And the traditional image of a center as a recreation facility is changing into that of a service and informational center, and a broader community resource.

Recent national reports have described new directions for senior centers and several models are emerging. These include (1) centers for lifelong learning; (2) wellness and health coordination centers; (3) community centers with more inclusive programming for all ages; and (4) centers focused on a continuum of care linked to information, access, and services for those aging in the community. Our research found examples of each of these new models in California.

Most centers, however, focused on traditional services. As is true nationally, centers tend to draw the “older old” but see the need to re-focus on the younger boomer population.

- Services in most senior centers tend to fall into five categories: socialization, information and referral, meal programs, fitness and wellness, and education.
- Nearly half of centers offer health insurance counseling (HICAP) and legal services.
- Fewer than one-third of centers charge for services or encourage donations.
- Ninety percent of centers provide services to people over 75.
- Centers tend to provide service to low- or middle-income seniors.
- More than 25% of centers have waiting lists for the services they provide.
- Two-thirds of centers expressed a need for additional space to serve the emerging baby boom population.
- More than half (56.5%) do not have adequate land for expansion.
- More than half believe they need a different kind of facility to meet changing interests and demands.
- Most senior centers (58%) have seen their participation increase over the past five years.

The Findings

Our research asked respondents to check off services provided at each facility from a list of 15 common services which we provided. These are summarized below:

Type of Services Provided at each Facility:	# (%) Survey Respondents
Activities/Socialization	395 (95.0%)
Information & Referral/Assistance	357 (85.8%)
Meal Programs	353 (84.9%)
Fitness/Exercise/Wellness Classes	336 (80.8%)
Education/Instruction	301 (72.4%)

HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program)	230 (55.3%)
Legal Services	192 (46.2%)
Other (specified below)	140 (33.7%)
Caregiver Support or Training	124 (29.8%)
Language/ESL Classes	113 (27.2%)
Case Management (inc. MSSP, Linkages, etc.)	109 (26.2%)
Job Training	56 (13.5%)
Adult Day Care (social)	48 (11.5%)
Adult Day Health Care	18 (4.3%)

These services tended to fall into four distinct levels of frequency. Seventy-five to ninety percent of centers offer socialization activities, information and referral, meals, fitness/wellness classes, and education. Around half offer HICAP and legal assistance. Between one-quarter and one-third provide caregiver support, language classes or case management. A few others offer job training, Adult Day Care or Adult Day Health Care programs.

Other services that were volunteered include:

- Trips/travel/tours/fieldtrips/excursions
- Food distribution/Brown Bag/commodities
- Health fair/clinics/flu shots
- Citizenship assistance
- Translation services
- Transportation/shuttles/paratransit
- Support groups/counseling
- Tax preparation assistance
- Home repair/modification

Twenty-six percent of facilities have waiting lists for their services. Most of these keep separate waiting lists for each program and have multiple programs with waiting lists. The programs with waiting lists and the number of facilities that indicated the programs are as follows:

- Educational classes, including computer, ESL, and memory classes (25 respondents)
- Field trips/excursions/travel (23 respondents)
- Home delivered meals (22 respondents)
- Legal services (16 respondents)
- Case management, including: Linkages and MSSP (10 respondents)
- Social, special, and holiday events (9 respondents)
- Congregate meals (8 respondents)
- Exercise, fitness, and dancing classes (7 respondents)
- Food supplements: commodities, Brown Bag, emergency food, food boxes, etc. (7 respondents)
- HICAP (6 respondents)
- Transportation (6 respondents)
- Activities and socialization programs (5 respondents)
- Computer lab use (3 respondents)
- Counseling and mental health programs (3 respondents)
- Defensive driving or DMV services (3 respondents)
- Respite services (3 respondents)

- Senior housing, including affordable and low-income (3 respondents)
- Tax assistance (3 respondents)
- Cooking classes/demonstrations (2 respondents)
- Fall prevention or balance and mobility programs (2 respondents)
- In-home services (2 respondents)
- Minor home repairs (2 respondents)
- Senior Companion program (2 respondents)
- Sports activities/leagues (2 respondents)

These programs had one respondent each: job training, financial services, utility assistance, lifeline program, volunteer program, podiatry services, and Social Security assistance.

Thirty-one percent of centers indicated having an annual or monthly membership fee. A number of the senior center respondents indicated that they charged fees for their services or donations were encouraged but not required. A small percentage indicated several of these service fee options.

Responses are summarized below.

Do you charge fees for your services?	# (%) Survey Respondents
Yes	114 (27.4%)
No	85 (20.4%)
Donation encouraged but not required	136 (32.7%)
Both Yes & No	5 (1.2%)
Yes, No, & Donation encouraged but not required	7 (1.7%)
Yes & Donation encouraged but not required	41 (9.9%)
No & Donation encouraged but not required	20 (4.8%)

Respondents indicated varying dollar amounts for the assorted fees charged for services ranging from \$1 for meals to \$75 for trips. The primary types of fees that were listed included:

- Activities/programs/classes (including educational and exercise classes)
- Meal programs
- Trips/excursions/tours
- Special events
- Computer classes and lab fees
- Membership fees
- Transportation programs
- Adult Day Health Care and Adult Day Care programs

Our survey asked for demographic information about participants. Many of the centers do not collect demographic information from their participants, therefore not all respondents indicated if they served a certain population. Based on the responses actually received, senior centers served primarily the 75-84 (90.9%) and 65-74 (88.7%) age groups, and slightly fewer served the 85+ (80.5%) and 60-64 (79.1%). The 18-59 age group was served by 42.8% of the centers and 0-17 age group were served by 8.8%.

Eighty-three percent of the centers serve low-income seniors; middle-income seniors were served by 71.4% of centers, and very low-income were served by 64.9% of centers. Just under half of the centers (45.7%) indicated that upper-middle income seniors made up some of their participants.

Ethnicity information was also requested of the respondents: 85.3% indicated serving Caucasians, 75.5% serve Hispanic participants, 63.2% serve Asians, and 57.7% indicated serving African Americans. Native Americans are served by 27.6% of the centers, and other ethnicities were checked by 31.0% of the centers.

The table below indicates a breakdown of demographic characteristics of responding senior center clients. There were a total of 416 facilities/locations that responded to the survey. Approximately 7.5% of respondents skipped these questions because they do not keep track of demographic information.

Demographic Profile of Clients Served by the Senior Centers

Age Groups:	# (%) Survey Respondents
0-17	37 (8.8%)
18-59	178 (42.8%)
60-64	329 (79.1%)
65-74	369 (88.7%)
75-84	378 (90.9%)
85+	33 (80.5%)
Income:	
Very low	270 (64.9%)
Low	344 (82.7%)
Middle	297 (71.4%)
Upper-middle	190 (45.7%)
Ethnicity:	
Caucasian	355 (85.3%)
Hispanic	314 (75.5%)
Asian	263 (63.2%)
African American	240 (57.7%)
Other	129 (31.0%)
Native American	115 (27.6%)
Population Density:	
Urban	192 (46.2%)
Suburban	161 (38.7%)
Rural	135 (32.5%)
Frontier	20 (4.8%)
Gender:	
Male	371 (89.2%)
Female	366 (88.0%)
Transgender	24 (5.8%)
Other:	
Disabled	252 (60.6%)
LGBT	47 (11.3%)
Legal Non-Citizen	108 (26.0%)
Non English Speaking	190 (45.7%)
Undocumented	43 (10.3%)

Respondents were asked about the number of seniors (aged 60 or older) that visit their center each day. Responses ranged up to 4,500 seniors per day, with a mean of 145.5 seniors and a median of 80 seniors per day. Most centers (58.2%) have seen the daily number of seniors increase over the past five years, while 17.3% have seen this number decrease, and 16.8% have not seen a change. The remaining respondents (7.7%) did not respond to the question.

Centers were asked about their capacity in light of senior population projections and a need to change their programming. Nearly two-thirds indicated they anticipate needing additional square footage, while 27.9% did not, and 8.4% declined to respond. Of those that indicated they anticipated needing additional space, 13.9% indicated they would need between 80 and 2,000 sq. ft., 15.4% indicated 2,100 to 9500 sq. ft, 5.0% of respondents anticipated needing between 10,000 and 220,000 sq. ft. Remaining respondents were unsure how many square feet or did not respond. Over a third of centers (36.5%) indicated they had land to allow for building expansion, while 56.5% did not, and 6.9% did not know or declined to respond.

Recognizing the population growth projected in some parts of California, approximately 45% of senior centers anticipate the need for additional centers in their area over the next decade, while 46.9% did not. Twenty-three percent of respondents anticipate one additional center would address this need, while 10.6% indicated two to five additional centers would be needed in their area, and 2.6% indicated seven to fifteen centers would be needed.

Respondents were asked, based on their knowledge, if they anticipated needing a different kind of facility, 54.3% indicated yes, and 34.4% said no. The remaining 11.3% were unsure, did not know, or did not respond. One hundred eight-two respondents indicated different types of facilities/structures they would like to have to accommodate their changing programming needs. These are summarized below.

- Fitness center and exercise rooms (including: gymnasium, weight room with exercise equipment, wellness center, pool tables, yoga room)
- More space or square footage
- Computer lab/facility (including Internet capacity, Internet café)
- Activity/program space (including game rooms, bigger rooms)
- Swimming pool for lap swimming and water aerobics
- Outdoor spaces for activities, sports, and gardening (including trails, horseshoes, tennis, bocce, badminton, basketball, shuffle board)
- Updated dining facilities (including café-style lunch, salad bar, lunch options)
- Classrooms including lecture rooms/halls
- Dance floor/classroom and ballroom
- Meeting rooms and areas
- Art, crafts, ceramics rooms or studios
- Sports facilities (specifically for basketball)
- New senior center facility
- Storage
- Music rooms/classrooms
- Garden areas
- Theater
- Restrooms

Existing Infrastructure



The Overview

Senior centers have provided programs and services in diverse settings, from converted schools and churches to modern state-of-the-art community centers with pools, parking, and spacious meeting capacity. Some operate in multiple locations (though most are housed in a single facility) and there is a new trend towards “senior centers without walls” underway in several communities.

Assessing the adequacy of existing infrastructure to meet a growing senior population was the original impetus for our research survey. Clearly, if we are to meet future needs, the state will need to step forward as it did with the 1984 Senior Center Bond Act.

- While 60% of senior centers own their own facilities, some 37% do not.
- Many senior centers are old, with 40% housed in facilities built before 1980 (and 21% in buildings built before 1960).
- Four in ten were modified from some earlier use.
- More than a quarter (27%) indicate their facility is fully utilized and there is not enough room for current programming.
- Over a third do not have adequate parking for their current participants.
- Fewer than a quarter of centers have regularly scheduled programs in the evening.

The Findings

The research included a number of questions about existing facilities and their utilization. Respondents were asked at how many sites or locations their center provides services. The majority of centers (70.6%) have one site/location where they provide services, while 13.4% have between two and five sites, 6.4% have six to ten sites, and 4.9% have between 11 to 20 sites (usually nutrition sub-sites). The average number of sites is 2.43. Surveys were received on a total of 416 sites for the 398 agencies. A list of the cities, towns, and communities served by these centers is shown in Appendix 2 of the report.

Nearly 60% of the centers own the building where their services are provided, 37.3% do not own their building, and 3.9% did not respond to the question. Almost 40% of buildings were built between 1890 and 1980, 36.8% were built between 1981 and 2009, while nearly a quarter of respondents did not know when their facility had been built.

Age of Facilities

Year Building Was Constructed:	# (%) Survey Respondents
1890 to 1930	34 (8.2%)
1931 to 1960	56 (13.5%)
1961 to 1980	72 (17.3%)
1981 to 2000	17 (28.1%)
2001 to 2009	36 (8.7%)
Unknown/Don't Know or No Response	101 (24.3%)

Just over half of the buildings were originally built to provide services to seniors, while 39.9% were not, and 9.1% of respondents were unsure or did not respond to the question. Nearly half of the buildings had major renovations or additions to the original building, 33.4% of buildings had not, and 16.6% of respondents did not know or did not respond to the question. Of those who indicated what years additions or renovations were constructed, nearly all were after 1984 (and the passage of the Senior Center Bond Act).

Centers were asked about the degree of utilization of their facility. Thirty percent of respondents indicated they fully utilize their facility and have just enough room for their current activities, while 35.3% indicated they fully utilize their facility and have enough room for their current activities, but would need more room for additional activities.

Twenty seven percent of the centers fully utilize their buildings but do not have enough room for current activities, 3.6% have space that is not being used, and 3.1% declined to answer. Outdoor space is available for 56.3% of the responding centers, but 11.3% of those centers do not have enough outdoor space for their current outdoor activities. A complete lack of outdoor space for activities was reported by 38.2% and 5.5% did not answer the question.

Respondents were asked if they had adequate parking. Just over a third have enough parking for current activities, a quarter have enough parking for current activities but not for increased activities, and over a third do not have adequate parking for their current activities. The remaining 3.1% did not reply to the question.

Nearly all centers indicated being open Monday through Friday with an average of 7.5 hours of public access, and a median of 8.0 hours. On Mondays through Fridays, centers are open up to eighteen. A third of centers are open eight hours a day. Fewer centers are open on Saturday and Sunday. 23.1% of all responding centers are open for part of the day. Few centers (13.7%) of all respondents are open on Sundays. Approximately one quarter of the centers indicated they offer regular senior programs in the evening.

Access and Maintenance



The Overview

The Americans with Disabilities Act which became law in 1990 changed forever the physical and programmatic barriers confronting people with disabilities, including many seniors. Since some senior centers were built before the Act (or are older buildings adapted for senior center use after the Act), some centers have had to make sure they complied with the law and how it has been applied to public-use facilities.

Further, since the significant expansion of home and community-based services beginning in the 1990s (especially In-Home Support Services or IHSS), many seniors who might have been consigned to an institutional setting in the past are now able to live at home or in their communities. By the tens of thousands, these seniors can now access the activities and services of senior centers. Many are disabled or more frail than past center visitors.

Centers are also faced with heightened public awareness of fire safety standards and building toxicity issues. The research sought information about access and health/safety issues in senior centers.

We also sought information about maintenance of facilities and whether there has been any deferral of major maintenance because of funding constraints.

- About three-fourths of centers have more than one ADA compliant entrance.
- Twenty years after the passage of ADA, 3% of centers are not accessible, and 17.5% have only one accessible entrance (which could be a safety hazard in an emergency).
- More than one in four centers (25.7%) do not recall ever having had an ADA compliance inspection.
- While 9 in 10 centers have some accessible bathroom facilities, 20% have only one or none.
- Only a third of senior centers have been tested for the presence of asbestos.
- One-third of centers have been checked for the presence of lead paint, and 30% have had testing done to determine the presence of mold in their buildings.
- One in three centers have areas without smoke detectors and more than one-third have no fire sprinkler systems.
- Nearly 80% of respondents do not know how many years may be left on a roof warranty, and nearly half do not know when their roof was installed.
- One in five centers reports that major maintenance has been deferred and another 24% report minor maintenance deferrals.
- Eight percent of centers report building safety issues as a result of deferred maintenance.
- Senior centers offered an extensive list of improvements they would like to see if funds became available to approve their facilities.

The Findings

The survey asked more than 20 questions regarding disability access, health and safety issues, and maintenance problems at centers.

This section covers the senior centers' accessibility and maintenance issues. ADA accessible entrances are available in 93.5% of the senior centers and 91.1% of centers have ADA-accessible bathrooms. Building parking lots are considered accessible in 89.4% of the locations.

ADA Accessibility of Buildings and Parking Lots

Does your building have ADA-accessible entrances?	# (%) Survey Respondents
Yes, multiple	316 (76.0%)
Yes, one	73 (17.5%)
No	12 (2.9%)
Unknown/Don't Know or No Response	14 (3.5%)
Does your building have ADA-Accessible bathrooms?	
Yes, multiple	313 (75.2%)
Yes, one	66 (15.9%)
No	23 (5.5%)
Unknown/Don't Know or No Response	14 (3.5%)
Is your building's parking lot ADA-accessible?	
Yes	372 (89.4%)
No	26 (6.3%)
No Response	18 (4.3%)

Only half (51.7%) of the centers have had an ADA compliance inspection, while 25.7% have not; 22.6% were unsure or declined to answer. Of the 416 facilities, 37 had their inspection within the past three years, 11 facilities had their inspection between 2000 and 2005, and three had their ADA compliance inspection in the 1990s.

Respondents were asked how senior participants get to their facilities. The seniors' mode of transportation is listed below with the number of centers who have some seniors that utilize that mode:

Drive themselves	390 (93.8%)
Center's van	117 (28.1%)
Family and/or friends	340 (81.7%)
Outside facility van	112 (26.9%)
Public transportation	321 (77.2%)
Other	116 (27.9%)

Other methods of transportation utilized by center participants included walking, riding their bike, using a scooter, and riding in a taxi or paratransit vehicle.

Nearly all senior centers (95.7%) indicated their building was fire safety code compliant, while 1.7% indicated they were not, and 2.6% declined to respond. Seventy-two percent indicated they had smoke detectors in all areas of the center, while 20.9% replied they did not, and 6.9% were unsure or did not answer. Seven of the facilities have between one and five areas without smoke detectors, one with ten areas, and another with 25 areas; the remaining 407 facilities did not indicate the number of areas without smoke detectors.

Only 20.4% of center locations have carbon monoxide emission detectors, while 62.3% indicated they do not, and 17.3% did not know or did not answer the question. Over half of the buildings (55.8%) have a fire sprinkler system, 37.0% do not, those that were unsure or did not answer comprised 7.2%.

Respondents were asked about hazardous materials in their buildings and if they had been tested for asbestos, lead paint, and mold. The following table details their responses.

Testing Done on Buildings for Hazardous Materials

Asbestos:	# (%) Survey Respondents
Yes	122 (29.3%)
Yes, but only remodeled areas	27 (6.5%)
No	56 (13.5%)
Don't know	169 (40.6%)
No Response	42 (10.1%)
Lead Paint:	
Yes	116 (27.9%)
Yes, but only remodeled areas	18 (4.3%)
No	58 (13.9%)
Don't know	180 (43.2%)
No Response	44 (10.6%)
Mold:	
Yes	108 (26.0%)
Yes, but only remodeled areas	18 (4.3%)
No	65 (15.6%)
Don't know	185 (44.5%)
No Response	40 (9.6%)
Other Materials:	
Yes	21 (5.0%)
Yes, but only remodeled areas	6 (1.4%)
No	42 (10.1%)
Don't know	147 (35.3%)
No Response	200 (48.1%)

Although 6.4% indicated their building had been tested for other hazardous materials, no one listed another material in the space provided.

Maintenance

Many respondents (48.1%) did not know when the roof of their building was installed or did not answer the question. Two percent had the roof installed between 1950 and 1979, 17.3% had the roof installed between 1980 and 1999, and the remaining 32.7% had their roof installed within the past nine years. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents did not know how many years were left on the

roof warranty or did not answer the question, while 8.7% have between zero and four years remaining on the warranty, 2.6% have between five and ten years, and 9.6% have over 15 years remaining.

Major deferred maintenance on buildings was indicated by 20.7% of respondents, 23.8% indicated having minor deferred maintenance, and 41.1% indicated they did not have deferred maintenance. The remaining 14.5% declined to answer or did not know.

Nearly eight percent indicated there are safety issues with the buildings as a result of deferred maintenance. These safety issues included: “roof leaks or needs replacing; exterior stairs hazardous; loose tiles in walkways; ceiling is sagging; windows do not function properly; not ADA compliant; parking lot is a walking hazard; termite rot; tree roots breaking up path or parking lot; and mold problems.”

Respondents were invited to give an opened-ended response to the following question: “If you were able to receive a significant amount of money to improve your center, especially to make your facility better for present and future seniors, what would you spend it on?”

Most respondents were interested in:

- Creating new activity or meeting room space (including classes)
- Exercise or fitness rooms and equipment (including gymnasium, dance, aerobics, and fitness areas)
- Computers and computer labs
- Building renovations and modernizations
- Technology, communications, and infrastructure
- Kitchen remodel, expansion or creation of a new one
- Kitchen refrigerator, freezer & equipment
- Transportation (including vehicle purchase/replacement)
- Deferred maintenance (including painting, roof and flooring repairs/replacements, and general building maintenance)
- Building expansion to meet need for larger space
- Parking space increase including disabled parking spaces
- Furniture, including chairs, tables, and sofas
- Programming, services, and instructors/staff
- Swimming pool (for laps, water aerobics, water therapy)
- Upgrade and increase number of bathrooms
- Window replacement (insulated/double pane)
- Dining area upgrade
- Heating and cooling systems
- Alternative energy, solar, and green energy
- Outdoor activities and sports (including bocce ball court, basketball fitness track, walking area, and furniture)
- ADA upgrades and access/compliance
- Automatic door openers
- Lighting
- Storage space

Recommendations

Neglect of our senior centers is neglect of our senior citizens. Twenty years after passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, state and local officials have a responsibility to make sure that public facilities...especially those serving older and potentially disabled persons...comply with law. Public agencies should guarantee the public that hazards do not exist, health and safety standards are always being complied with, and that tax dollars are being wisely spent by maintaining public buildings.

- ***The state should enact legislation calling on local governments to direct building inspectors to do regular facility site reviews of public and non-profit senior centers.***
- ***Reviews of ADA compliance and compliance with health and safety standards should be reported to the public and posted at facilities.***
- ***Centers should create plans of compliance and incorporate ADA compliance into their future projects.***
- ***State funds should be made available to fund repairs to allow access, and to insure abatement of toxic substances if present.***
- ***As soon as state and local finances stabilize, the state should assist local governments and non-profit senior centers to make facility improvements to make them better for present and future seniors.***

Technology



The Overview

Technology has the potential to revolutionize what it means to be old. Being connected means seniors can overcome physical isolation in rural areas, it can make up for inadequate public transportation in urban communities, and it can compensate for restricted individual mobility. It can allow elderly people to remain in virtual contact with busy or distant family members, friends and service providers. Recent research by the Public Policy Institute of California, however, indicates that seniors are often on the wrong side of the digital divide and have been the slowest part of society to embrace the new electronic connectivity. The divide is even wider among minority seniors.

Like the population they serve, California's senior centers have been slow to embrace the technology which has revolutionized communication in the past few decades.

- While most centers (65%) are wired for the Internet, one in five is not (19%), and more than 60% are not wireless "hot spots."
- Fewer than half communicate with participants or the larger community through emails or text messages.
- Fewer than one in five (18%) can send out announcements or emergency alerts.
- Only half of the centers offer classes in computer use or basic software.
- Six in ten could not offer on-line instruction, workshops or training.
- Just half have standard cable television access and only 40% have a relationship with a local cable public access channel.
- Fully three-fourths have no capacity to do video broadcasting via the Internet.
- Nearly ninety percent (87.5%) of senior centers do not sponsor social networking among their participants or in their local senior communities.

The Findings

Our research focused on computer availability, age and adequacy of equipment, Internet access and capacity, how computers were used by and for visitors to the center, and how technology connected the centers to their communities.

Respondents were asked about their center's telecommunications equipment. Over half of the centers (55.0%) indicated they had sufficient computers for their staff and volunteers, while 40.1% did not. Respondents indicated they had up to 120 computers, depending upon the size of their

organization. The average number of computers per center is 7.1 and 55.3% of centers have four or fewer computers.

The range of age of the computers varied dramatically, from the newest computer in an agency between one month old and 20 years old, with an average age of 2.6 years. Two-thirds of the agencies' newest computer is less than 2.5 years old. The oldest computer a center indicated was 27 years old (!) with a range of the oldest computers between one month and 17 years old, and an average of 6.1 years. The oldest computer for two-thirds of the centers is five or more years old.

Laptop computers are not common among the respondent centers; 54.8% indicated they did not have one, 21.6% indicated having between one and four, and 2.4% indicated having between five and 18 laptops. The remaining 20.9% did not respond to the question. Desktop computers are considerably more common with only 3.1% indicating no desktop computers and 25.2% choosing not to respond. The range in the number of desktop computers was between zero and 116, with an average of 7.3 computers per center. Over a third of the centers have between one and four desktop computers, 20.9% have five to ten, and the remaining 14.2% are spread between 11 and 116 computers.

The research examined Internet access and capacity as well. Nearly two thirds (65.4%) of centers indicated they had Internet access to all of their computers, 15.6% had Internet access to most, 7.9% of centers did not have Internet access to any of their computers, and the remaining percent of respondents declined to answer the question.

Types of Internet access varied with 43.0% indicating DSL, 20.2% cable or broadband, 2.9% using dial up, and 7.0% indicated other type. The other types consisted of: a city government's mainframe/MIS/ network, fiber optics, T-1 line, Wi-Fi, and wireless. Most centers (65.4%) are wired for the Internet, 11.8% are partially wired and 18.8% indicated they are not wired at all for the Internet. Centers were asked if they were a Wi-Fi hot spot (wireless), 16.3% indicated their entire center was a hot spot, 15.9% have part of their center set up, and 62.0% of centers are not wireless at all.

Most centers (49.3%) are not communicating with their seniors/participants via email or text messages. 16.3% are doing so, 29.6% indicated limited email contact, and 4.8% did not respond to the question. Eighteen percent of the centers indicated they can send out announcements or emergency alerts via the Internet, while 23.6% checked "no," and the remaining 58.4% did not respond.

Over half of the centers (53.1%) indicated they have computers available for seniors to use. Of the 216 centers who indicated the number of computers they have available for senior use, nearly half have between one and five computers, about 40% have between six and 15, while less than ten percent have between 16 and 48. Over half of the centers with computers for seniors use indicated they do not have enough computers. Most of these computers have access to the Internet with only 15.6% indicating they do not. Many of the seniors who use the centers computers use them for email or Internet. Respondents estimated that 32.9% of these seniors spend 81-100 percent of their time for email or Internet, 12.3% spend 51-80 percent on email/Internet, 15.6% spend 20-50 percent on the email/Internet and about 29.1% spend less than 20% of the computer time on the email/Internet. The remaining ten percent of centers were unsure how much time their seniors spent on the Internet or sending emails. Half of the respondents indicated they offer free Internet access to participants at their center.

Centers were asked if they can provide video broadcasting via the Internet; 12.3% indicated they could, 75.2% checked they could not, and 12.5% did not know or did not answer the question. Only

a quarter of centers can offer online workshops, instruction, or training, while 63.5% indicated they could not, and 11.3% did not respond to the question. Electronic social networking communities are sponsored by 4.8% of the centers, 87.5% checked they did not, and 7.7% did not know or did not answer. Only half of the centers (50.7%) have cable TV access in their center. Forty percent of centers have a relationship with their local cable public access channel.

Nearly half of centers (49.0%) provide computer classes to seniors in computer use and standard software instruction. Centers that have computer classes estimated they average between one and 500 participants per week with an overall average of 26 weekly participants per week per center. Types of computer classes were written about by 150 respondents. A summary of those types of classes are:

- Internet and email (including learning to surf the web, using Google, and sending/receiving emails)
- General computer classes
- Microsoft office programs (including instruction in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint)
- Basic and beginning computer classes
- Photo editing and Photoshop
- Tutors including appointment and one-on-one instruction
- Classes specific to Macintosh/Apple and PC computers
- Classes on eBay
- Advanced computer skills classes
- Daily and weekly classes
- Volunteer, paid and adult education teachers
- Word processing classes, and
- Having an Internet café

Recommendations

Advancing senior centers into the forefront of technology is a fruitful area for future state action. The state should consider ways to encourage development of technology capacity at senior centers as a way to help close the digital divide confronting older Californians. Among the actions to consider are:

- ***Funding demonstration programs to make senior centers into cyber centers;***
- ***Leveraging state oversight of telecommunications companies to promote assistance for centers to be wired and wireless facilities;***
- ***Promoting the development of education and outreach to seniors via the broadband network capacity of senior centers;***
- ***Using centers to train underserved California seniors in using computers and gaining knowledge of software;***
- ***Building on our new health networks by using senior centers as locations for remote checkups, screenings, and virtual health/wellness training;***
- ***Promoting intergenerational training and mentoring by drawing tech-savvy younger people to centers to help bring seniors into the high tech age.***

Going Green: Energy Utilization



The Overview

Like other community facilities, senior centers are certain to have a green future, as buildings are modified to conserve energy and adapted to accommodate new energy technologies. With hundreds of buildings in nearly every community in California, centers should be a focus of energy retrofitting to save future operating costs and to reduce the environmental strain of high energy demand. Most facilities were designed when energy utilization did not influence site location, design or materials, so adaptation is the key to lowering consumption.

- Only 30% of senior centers recall having a facility energy audit in the past decade.
- One in six centers reports having the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system replaced since 1980 (thirty years).
- One in five centers has a computerized HVAC system.
- Energy saving windows have been installed throughout fewer than 25% of senior centers.
- Energy producing solar panels cover the energy needs of fewer than two percent of senior centers.

The Findings

Our research included more than a dozen questions about energy utilization and retrofitting to reduce energy consumption or use current technologies.

Respondents indicated when they had their most recent energy audit, with 29.9% having had one within the past ten years (nearly all of those within the past four years), the remaining 70.1% were unsure or did not answer the question. Eight percent considered their center an energy savings “green” building, 55.8% did not, 29.3% did not know and 6.5% did not respond.

Respondents were asked about their sources of energy. The percentage of respondents who checked the specific sources are listed below:

Electricity	92.3%
Gas	68.3%
Propane	7.7%
Solar	2.6%
Geothermal	0.2%
Other	1.0%

Other sources included: passive solar skylights, emergency generators (and one operates a co-generation plant).

Double-pane windows are installed in all windows at 24.5% of facilities, while 6.3% have more than half of their windows with double pane, 3.8% have less than half with double pane, 53.8% do not have any double pane windows, and 11.6% did not know or did not respond. Three percent of centers had their double pane windows installed prior to 1990 and 14.1 % have had them installed since then, the remaining 82.9% of respondents were unsure or did not answer the question.

Nearly 43% of senior centers indicated their buildings are adequately weatherized and insulated while 23.3% indicated they are not, 27.6% don't know, and 6.5% did not respond. Solar panels are being used at 14 (3.4%) of the centers but only eight of those centers have sufficient panels to cover their energy needs.

Almost half of the centers use energy saving light bulbs in all of their lights, 28.4% use them in more than half of their lights, 11.1% use them in less than half and 7.9% do not use them at all, the remaining percent did not respond. Other types of energy saving types of lighting are used by 25.2% of the center; this includes natural lighting, skylights, motion sensors, auto on/off switches, times, LCD, and several indicated they turn lights off manually.

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units were first installed for 23.3% of the centers prior to 1990, 12.7% were first installed during the 1990s, and 21.9% were installed within the past nine years, the remaining respondents were unsure or did not indicated a year of first installment. Of the 416 center facilities 1.9% indicated having the HVAC replaced between 1980 and 1999, 14.5% had it replaced in the past nine years and the remaining respondents indicated never, they were unsure, or did not respond. Only 21.2% of the centers have their HVAC system computerized while 12.5% have it partially computerized, 38.9% do not have it computerized at all and the remaining 27.5% were unsure or did not respond.

Recommendations

Like all community facilities, whether public or non-profit, senior centers will need to invest in appropriate energy saving technology in the years ahead. State and local governments should lead the way in promoting energy efficiency and green design. Doing so has the added benefit of building a viable green energy economy in California. As funds become available, the state should invest in energy modifications for senior centers.

- ***The state should encourage local governments and/or energy companies to conduct up-to-date energy audits of all senior centers, both publicly supported and non-profit facilities.***
- ***Communities and non-profit facilities should develop energy update plans to identify priorities and the level of investment needed to make senior centers green centers.***
- ***The state should work with regulated investor-owned and municipal electricity providers to promote investment in energy modifications for senior centers.***
- ***When state and local finances stabilize, energy retrofitting and modification of senior centers should be high on a list of future public infrastructure investments.***

Ready for Emergencies or Disasters



The Overview

California regularly experiences emergencies or disasters...earthquakes, fires, floods, weather extremes...that cause loss of property and loss of life. Different parts of the state may experience some of these emergencies, and a few could experience all of them. Communities and their facilities must be prepared for such eventualities. And, today, public safety threats can create disruptions on the scale of natural disasters.

Senior centers, much like public schools, need to have plans in place. But they can also be places where citizens can seek refuge when their homes are destroyed. They can serve as familiar safe havens for seniors who live alone and are displaced or in harm's way.

Our senior center survey contained specific questions to gauge how well senior centers are equipped to protect their visitors and to serve their communities in time of need.

- More than half of California's senior centers believe they are in an area likely to experience an earthquake.
- While 60% have undergone some kind of earthquake retrofit, one in five have not.
- Three of ten centers are in an area subject to fires.
- One in five centers may be located in a flood plain which may put them at risk.
- Most centers have a disaster or security plan (83%), but 12% do not.
- Forty percent of centers are not equipped to serve as a shelter during a disaster.

The Findings

In addition to questions about health and safety compliance and fire alarms in other sections, centers were asked five questions about preparation for a natural disaster or emergency. Respondents were asked if their centers were in areas that had experienced significant natural disasters.

Types of Natural Disasters Experienced in the Senior Center's Area

Earthquake:	# (%) Survey Respondents
Yes	223 (53.6%)
No	159 (38.2%)
Unsure	19 (4.6%)
No Response	15 (3.6%)

Floods:	
Yes	56 (13.5%)
No	263 (63.2%)
Unsure	40 (9.6%)
No Response	57 (13.7%)
Other:	
Yes	11 (2.6%)
No	131 (31.5%)
Unsure	38 (9.1%)
No Response	236 (56.7%)

Other natural disasters which were volunteered included: excessive heat or cold; snow and ice storms; sand storms; tsunami; volcano; and water shortages.

Respondents were asked if their facility had undergone an earthquake retrofit; 60.3% indicated it had not, 19.7% indicated their building had undergone the retrofit, 8.4% were unsure, and 11.5% declined to answer. Nearly 80% of respondents indicated their facility is not in a flood plain or area that requires federal flood insurance, 7.5% indicated they were, 4.6% did not know if their facility was in a flood area and 8.2% did not answer the question. The vast majority of centers (83.2%) indicated they have a disaster or security preparedness plan for their buildings. Twelve percent did not and 4.7% were unsure or did not answer the question. Over half of the centers (53.4%) are currently set up to be a shelter during a disaster, 40.4% are not, 6.2% did not answer or were unsure. One hundred twenty-two respondents indicated what it would take to make their center available as a shelter in times of disaster; a summary of their responses follows:

- Supplies (including blankets, cots, bedding, equipment, food, water, clothes, aid supplied, and general supplies.)
- Space, rooms, building (many indicated their center being too small or needing improvements to accommodate people)
- Planning, coordination, organization, or a plan (including training, readiness assessment, feasibility assessment)
- Bathrooms including showers
- Permission from local, state, or federal agency
- Assistance from local, state or federal agency
- Housing or shelter
- Generators
- Storage of the emergency supplies
- Kitchen
- Funding
- People/staff/personnel/volunteers
- Sleeping areas
- Cooling center or station
- Laundry facilities
- Transportation
- Medical triage center

Recommendations

Senior centers, both public and non-profit, represent a potentially valuable resource to California communities faced with disasters or emergencies. Like churches, schools and other facilities, senior centers should be brought into play to help communities cope. They can be especially important for seniors who are regular visitors or those who live alone and need a welcoming shelter.

- ***Senior centers should become connected with law enforcement and emergency responders in every California community.***
- ***Communities should be called upon to assess what needs to be put in place to enable centers to serve in times of disaster or emergency.***
- ***Since few communities' emergency personnel have rosters of seniors and persons with disabilities who live alone or may be at risk, senior centers should work with other aging service providers to fill that role where they are not already doing so.***

Appendix 1 Research Design

The California Senior Center Infrastructure Survey was a joint project between the California Commission on Aging and the Congress of California Seniors (CCS), with CCS taking the lead. The organizations undertook the survey to document the infrastructure needs of California's more than 700 senior centers. To create context for the facility/infrastructure information, the survey included information about the operating structure of centers, the services they provide, and the demographics of their clientele.

Design

The design of the survey was created by the staff of the Congress of California Seniors, California Commission on Aging staff, Chris Martinek Consulting, and with active participation from the Senior Center Survey Advisory Panel members. Those members included Kathy Hassett (Deputy Director of the Merced AAA and Merced County Senior Service Center), Joyce Hayes (Executive Director of the Humboldt Senior Resource Center), Jane Kibbey (Coordinator of the Fairfield Senior Center), Laurie Webb (Director of the Amador County Senior Center), Marian Last (Manager of the Jack Crippen Senior Center in El Monte), and Pat Trotter (Retired Director of the Fullerton Senior Multi-Services Center).

Topics covered in the survey were: senior center demographics; building/facility information; current services provided; capacity of the facilities; the centers' preparedness for natural disasters; the centers' telecommunications capacity; facilities' accessibility and maintenance; and energy utilization.

The study consisted of a six-page, paper-based survey mailed out to every senior center across California. The survey included a cover letter, survey questionnaire, and self-addressed stamped return envelope. The cover letter explained what the survey was about, what it was attempting to accomplish, and how respondents were to proceed. Although the survey was not intended to be anonymous, respondents' confidentiality of individual responses was assured. To encourage senior centers to respond, pre-notification emails were sent out to over 400 senior centers. Postcards and email reminder notices were sent to all centers whose physical or email address was known.

Intent

The survey was intended to provide first-hand information on the infrastructure needs of California's senior centers. Additionally, the summary report will be used to gain background and momentum for a Senior Center Bond Initiative. The information gathered was tallied and analyzed by Chris Martinek Consulting.

Distribution

A list of senior centers was created by the Congress of California Seniors and the California Commission on Aging with assistance from the state associations of senior centers and Area Agency on Aging offices. After address corrections, notification of new or additional senior centers, as well as those senior centers that had closed, a total of 774 active senior centers were contacted for this project.

The distribution of surveys began in late April 2009. In an effort to have a response rate at or above fifty percent, reminder notices via email and U.S. Postal Services were sent out in mid-May and early June. Phone call reminders were made and email reminders were sent during June, July, and August by Congress of California Seniors staff, California Commission on Aging staff, Area Agency on Aging staff, and Senior Center Initiative Advisory Panel members to centers that had not responded. Surveys were received from late April through September 2009.

Respondents

Three hundred ninety-eight surveys were received. All 398 surveys were completed sufficiently to be considered valid. A response rate of 51.4% was achieved. Surveys were received representing all 57 counties in California with multipurpose senior centers. Nearly all counties had a response rate of forty percent or above. Surveys were entered into a database and analyzed for this report. All surveys received by September 30, 2009 were included in the database analyzed.

Appendix 2 Location of Participating Centers

Each survey respondent was asked to identify the city, town, or community served by their senior center. Of the 398 senior centers, there were surveys filled out for an additional 18 sites, for a total of 418 locations. Several cities towns or communities had more than one survey filled out for the area (the number of multiple sites are noted within parentheses after the location).

Adelanto	Camarillo	Del Ray
Alameda	Campbell	Desert Hot Springs
Alhambra	Campo	Dixon
Altadena	Canoga Park	Doyle
Alturas	Capitola	Dublin
Anaheim	Carlsbad	East Sonoma
Anderson	Carmel	El Dorado Hills
Anderson Park	Carmichael	El Mirage
Antioch	Caruthers	El Monte (2)
Apple Valley	Castro Valley	Elk Grove
Arcadia	Castroville	Emeryville
Atascadero	Cathedral City	Encinitas
Auburn (2)	Chowchilla	Escondido (2)
Avenidas	Chula Vista (2)	Eureka (2)
Azusa	Claremont	Fairfax
Bakersfield (4)	Clear Lake	Fairfield
Baldwin Park	Cloverdale	Fallbrook
Barstow	Clovis	Farmersville
Bell Gardens	Coarsegold	Ferndale
Belmont	Colusa	Firebaugh
Berkeley (3)	Compton	Folsom
Beverly Hills	Concord	Fort Bragg
Bieber	Corning	Fortuna (2)
Big River	Corona	Foster City (2)
Blairsden	Corona Del Mar	Fountain Valley
Blythe	Coronado	Fowler
Boron	Costa Mesa	Fremont
Brentwood	Covelo	Fresno (16)
Bridgeport	Crescent City	Fullerton
Buellton	Culver City	Gardena
Buena Park	Cupertino	Glendale
Buttonwillow	Cypress	Glendora
Cabazon	Daly City	Goleta
Calexico	Danville	Grand Terrace
California City	Davis	Grass Valley
Calimesa	Del Mar	Guerneville

Half Moon Bay
Happy Camp
Hayfork
Hayward
Hercules
Hesperia
Hinkley
Hollister
Huntington Beach
Huron
Indio
Inyokern
Irvine
Jackson
Kaweah
Kerman
Kingsburg
La Mesa
La Puente
La Verne
Lafayette
Laguna
Laguna Hills
Lake Elsinore
Lake Forest
Lake Isabella
Lakeview
Lakewood
Lancaster
Lemoore
Livermore
Lodi (3)
Lone Pine
Long Beach
Loomis
Los Angeles (22)
Los Banos
Los Gatos
Los Molinos
Loyalton
Lucerne
Lucerne Valley
Lynwood
Madera (5)
Magnolia
Manteca

Marin
Mariposa
Marysville
Mendota
Menlo Park (2)
Merced (3)
Middletown
Mission Viejo
Monrovia
Monterey (2)
Moorpark
Morgan Hill
Morro Bay
Murrieta
Napa
Needles
Newark
Newberry Springs
Nipomo
Norco
North Hollywood (2)
Norwalk
Novato
Oakdale
Oakland (9)
Oceano
Oceanside
Ocotillo
Ojai
Ontario
Orange
Orland
Orleans
Oxnard (3)
Pacifica
Palm Desert
Palm Springs
Palmdale
Palo Alto
Panorama City
Paradise
Patterson
Perry Park
Phelan
Pico Rivera
Pinole

Pinon Hills
Placerville
Pleasanton
Poway (2)
Prunedale
Quincy
Rancho Palos Verdes
Rancho Cucamonga
Rancho Hills
Red Bluff
Redding (2)
Redlands (2)
Redondo Beach
Redway
Redwood City (2)
Reedley
Reseda
Ripon
Riverdale
Riverside (4)
Rosamond
Rosemead (2)
Roseville
Sacramento (9)
Salinas
San Andreas
San Bernardino (2)
San Bruno
San Carlos
San Diego (7)
San Fernando Valley
San Francisco (17)
San Jose (4)
San Juan Capistrano
San Marcos
San Mateo
San Pablo
San Pedro
San Rafael
San Ramon
Santa Barbara
Santa Clara
Santa Clarita
Santa Cruz (2)
Santa Monica
Santa Paula

Saratoga
Scotts Valley
Sebastopol
Selma
Shafter
Solvang
Sonora
So. San Francisco (2)
South Lake Tahoe
St. Helena
Stockton (2)
Sun City
Sunland
Susanville (2)
Taft
Tehachapi
Temecula
Temple City
Thousand Oaks
Tollhouse
Tracy
Truckee
Tulare
Twentynine Palms
Ukiah (2)
Union City
Upland
Vacaville
Vallejo (2)
Van Nuys
Venice (3)
Vista
Walnut Creek (2)
Watsonville (2)
Weldon
West Covina
West Hollywood (2)
West Los Angeles
West Sacramento
Westwood (3)
Wheatland
Whittier (2)
Willits
Willows
Wilmington
Woodland

Yorba Linda
Yreka
Yuba City

Appendix 3

California Senior Center Infrastructure Survey Questionnaire

It has been 25 years since the California Senior Center Bond Act of 1984. The Congress of California Seniors, in collaboration with the California Commission on Aging, is working to document the infrastructure needs of California’s senior centers in light of current needs and the growing number of seniors. The results of this survey, we expect, will be used to help justify the need for another state Senior Center Bond Initiative. The survey should take about 20-30 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this survey is very important but voluntary. Although we will know who filled out each survey, we will keep your information confidential. Please feel free to leave any questions blank that you do not wish to answer. However, answering all of the questions will help us prepare a more complete report of the infrastructure needs of California’s senior centers. If you do not know the exact answer to a question, please provide your best estimate. Thank you for your time and patience in participating in this survey. If you have any questions or comments about this survey or if you need assistance completing the survey, please contact Chris Martinek, survey project consultant 707-444-1336, Mike Montgomery at the Congress of California Seniors 800-543-3352, or Carol Sewell at the California Commission on Aging 916-419-7591.

Section A: In this section, we are interested in finding out about your senior center. Please fill out the following information:

Your name & title:	Email:
Senior center name:	Phone number:
Senior center address:	Fax number:

1. How long has your center been providing services to seniors? _____ years
2. How would you classify your center? (choose one) _____ nonprofit agency _____ for-profit business
 _____ city government _____ county government _____ other _____
3. How many paid employees does your center have? _____ total employees _____ FTEs
4. How many volunteers do you have? _____ total volunteers
 On average, how many total hours are volunteered annually? _____
5. What are the center’s funding sources? (please indicate percent for each source)
 _____ Federal government _____ State government _____ County government
 _____ City government _____ individual donations/gifts _____ building/facility rental fees
 _____ participant fees _____ foundations/grants _____ other _____
6. What is your current fiscal year operating budget (from all sources)? _____
7. How has your budget changed compared to costs and demands for services over the past 5 years?
 _____ increased _____ kept pace _____ declined
8. Have you had to lay off staff or reduce key services in the past 5 years? _____ yes _____ no
9. Is your center in danger of being closed? _____ yes _____ no
 If yes, is this due to: (check all that apply) _____ decreased funding _____ deferred maintenance
 _____ demolition _____ other _____

Section B: In this section, we are interested in your center’s building(s).

1. At how many sites/locations does your center provide services? _____ # sites
If your agency has more than one facility/building, please photocopy pages 2-6 and fill them out for each facility. Identify the survey here by city, town or community: _____
2. Does the center own the building where services are provided? _____yes _____no
3. Approximately what year was your building originally constructed? _____
4. Were additions or major renovations made to the original building? ___yes ___no ___don’t know
 If yes, what years were the additions constructed? _____
5. Was the building originally built to provide services to seniors? ___yes ___no ___don’t know

Section C: In this section, we are interested in the current services and capacity of your facility.

1. What services do you provide? (please check all that apply and add as needed)

___ activities/socialization	___ information & referral/assistance
___ adult day care (social)	___ job training
___ adult day health care	___ language/ESL classes
___ caregiver support or training	___ legal services
___ case management (inc. MSSP, Linkages, etc.)	___ meal programs
___ education/instruction	___ other _____
___ fitness/wellness classes	___ other _____
___ HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program)	
2. Are there waiting lists for your services? _____yes _____no
 If yes, which programs have waiting lists? _____

3. Do you charge fees for your services? _____yes _____no _____donation encouraged/not required
 If yes, which programs and how much? _____

4. What age groups do you serve? (please estimate the percent per age group)
 _____0-17 _____18-59 _____60-64 _____65-74 _____75-84 _____85+
5. Do you have any annual or monthly membership fees? _____yes _____no
6. What are the demographics of the seniors you primarily serve? (please estimate the percent per category. Percentages in each category should total 100%, except for “Other”)

Income	Ethnicity	Density	Gender	Other
___ very low	___ African Amer.	___ Urban	___ Male	___ Disabled
___ low	___ Asian	___ Suburban	___ Female	___ LGBT
___ middle	___ Caucasian	___ Rural	___ Transgender	___ Legal non-Citizen
___ upper-middle	___ Hispanic	___ Frontier		___ Non English Speaking
	___ Native Amer.			___ Undocumented
	___ Other			
100% Total	100% Total	100% Total	100% Total	

7. Approximately how many seniors (age 60+) visit your center each day? _____
 Over the past five years, how has this number changed? ___increased ___decreased ___unchanged

8. Is your center's building fully utilized?

- ___yes, we have enough room for current activities.
 ___yes, we have enough room for current activities but would need room for additional activities.
 ___yes, but we do NOT have enough room for current activities.
 ___no, we have space that is not being used.

9. Do you have space for outdoor activities?

- ___yes, we have enough room for current outdoor activities.
 ___yes, but we do NOT have enough room for current outdoor activities.
 ___no

10. How many hours a day would you estimate your center is open for senior use or senior programs?

Monday ___hours Wednesday ___hours Friday ___hours Sunday ___hours
 Tuesday ___hours Thursday ___hours Saturday ___hours

11. Do you have regular senior programs in the evenings? ___yes ___no

12. Based on the projections of the increase in number of seniors over the next 10-20 years in your area, do you anticipate needing more square footage in your building for activities and services?

___yes ___no If yes, approximately how many square feet is needed? _____ sq. ft.

13. Do you have land to allow for building expansion? ___yes ___no

14. Do you anticipate the need for additional center(s) in your area in the next decade?

___yes ___no If yes, how many additional centers? _____

15. Based on your knowledge of changing senior interests and lifestyles, do you anticipate needing different kinds of structures or facilities? ___yes ___no (if yes, please provide examples)

16. Do you have adequate parking? ___yes, enough parking for current activities
 ___yes, for current activities, but NOT for increased activities
 ___no, we currently do not have adequate parking

Section D: In this section, we are interested in your preparedness for natural disasters.

1. Is your center located in an area that has experienced significant natural disasters?

Earthquakes ___yes ___no ___unsure
 Fires ___yes ___no ___unsure
 Floods ___yes ___no ___unsure
 Other ___yes ___no ___unsure Please describe: _____

2. Does your center have a security/disaster preparedness plan for your building? ___yes ___no

3. Is your center currently set up to be a shelter during a disaster? yes no
If no, what would it take to make your center available as a shelter in times of disaster?
-
-

4. Has your facility undergone an earthquake retrofit? yes no

5. Is your center in a flood plain or area that requires federal flood insurance? yes no

Section E: In this section, we are interested in your center's telecommunications.

1. Does your center have sufficient computers for your staff and volunteers? yes no

How many computers do you have for your staff and volunteers? _____

How old is your newest computer? _____ How old is your oldest computer? _____

How many are laptop computers? _____ How many are desktop computers? _____

Do these computers have access to the internet? yes, all yes, most no

If yes, what type of internet access? dial up DSL cable/broadband
other (please describe) _____

2. Is your center wired for the internet? yes partially no

3. Is your center a Wi-Fi hot spot (providing seniors a wireless connection to the internet)?
yes, entire center yes, parts of center no

4. Does your center communicate with seniors/participants via emails, text messages, or other electronic updates?

yes somewhat no

If yes, can you send announcements or emergency alerts via the internet? yes no

5. Are there computers available for your center's seniors to use? yes no

If yes, how many computers are available? _____ Is this enough computers? yes no

Does this include internet access? yes yes, but not all no

6. Of your seniors who use the computers, what percentage use the computers for emails or to get information from the internet? _____

7. Do you offer free internet access? yes no

8. Can you provide video broadcasting via the internet? yes no

9. Can you do online workshops, instruction, or training? yes no

10. Does your center sponsor electronic social networking communities (using Facebook, blogs, or other similar technology)? yes no

11. Do you provide computer classes to senior in computer use and standard software?

yes no If yes, please describe _____

Approximate number of computer class participants per week: _____

12. Do you have cable TV access in your center? yes no

13. Do you have a relationship (or affiliation) with your local cable public access channel?
yes no

Section F: In this section, we are interested in your building's accessibility and maintenance.

1. Does your building have ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines and current building codes) accessible entrances? yes, multiple yes, one no
2. Does your building have ADA accessible bathrooms? yes, multiple yes, one no
3. Is your building's parking lot ADA accessible? yes no
4. Have you had an ADA compliance inspection? yes no, If yes, when? _____
5. Is your building fire safety code compliant yes no
6. Does each area of your center have a smoke detector? yes no, number without _____
7. Does your center have carbon monoxide emission detectors? yes no
8. Does your center have a fire sprinkler system? yes no
9. Has your center been tested for:

Asbestos?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but only remodeled areas	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know
Lead Paint?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but only remodeled areas	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know
Mold?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but only remodeled areas	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know
Other?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but only remodeled areas	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know
10. What year was your roof installed? _____ don't know
How many years is the warranty on your roof? _____ don't know
11. Does your center have deferred maintenance? yes, major ones yes, minor ones no
12. Are there safety issues with your center as a result of deferred maintenance? yes no
If yes, please describe: _____

13. How do seniors get to your facility? (please indicate approximate percentage for each)
drive themselves family/friends public transportation
center's van outside facility van other _____
14. Does your center offer transportation to and from the center for seniors? yes no
If yes, please describe/identify programs: _____

15. Is public transportation available within one block of your center? yes no
16. Would you support a state bond measure for building, renovating, or expanding your center?
yes no not sure
17. Would you support a state bond measure for electronic infrastructure improvements (computers, telecommunications equipment) at your senior center? yes no not sure
18. If you were able to receive a significant amount of money to improve your center, especially to make your facility better for present and future seniors, what would you spend it on?

Section G: In this section, we are interested in finding out about energy utilization.

1. Has your center had an energy audit by a public utility company, energy consultant, or public agency in the past five years? yes no don't know
2. When was your most recent energy audit? _____
3. Is your center an energy saving "green" building? yes no don't know
4. What are your center's sources of energy? electricity gas propane
 solar geo-thermal other _____
5. Does your center have double pane windows? yes, all windows yes, more than half
 yes, less than half yes, less than a quarter no
If yes, what years were the windows installed? _____
6. Is your building adequately weatherized and insulated? yes no don't know
7. Does your center have solar panels? yes no
8. Are the panels sufficient to cover your current energy needs? yes no don't know
9. Does your center use energy saving light bulbs (e.g. fluorescent)?
 yes, all yes, more than half somewhat, less then half no, not at all
10. Does your center use other energy saving types of lighting? yes no
If yes, please describe: _____
11. What year was your HVAC (heating, ventilation, & air conditioning) system first installed? _____
12. When was the HVAC system replaced? never, or year(s) _____
13. Is your HVAC system computerized? yes partially no

Section H: Additional Comments. In this section, we are interested in any additional ideas or comments you might have. We are especially interested to know things about your center which we may have overlooked. Please attach additional paper if you need more room.

Thank you again for helping with this study.

Please return survey by May 15, 2009.

You may use the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope or return the survey to:
Congress of California Seniors, c/o Chris Martinek, Survey Project Consultant
P.O. Box 779, Eureka, CA 95502

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