

Kern County Commission On Aging

Judy Snyder, Chairperson
5357 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93309
(661) 868-1054; (661) 868-1001 FAX



REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Ben Austin Senior Center
1751 McKee Road, Bakersfield, CA 93307
and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

The flag salute was completed, and a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

*(*Chairperson, **Vice Chairperson, *** Parliamentarian, ****Secretary)*

Commission Members Present:

In Person – Sonia Dhillon, Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, Anabel Griffin, Norma Jackson, **Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, ****Jeremy Oliver (non-voting), Yolanda Prado, Christie Ray, Miguel Salazar, and *Judy Snyder

Virtually – ***Susan Bodnar, Julie Juarez-Ceja

Excused Absences: Doris Duquette, Anthony Estrada

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator
Julie Baca – Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

GUESTS:

In Person: Fran G., Julie Machado, Joyce A., Charlene Olivio, Juan Hernandez Garcia, Cecil Langston, Sheila Roth

Virtually: Chad Acker, Sara Swertfager

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Resignation received from Commissioner Brown effective 10/22/2025.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

- Commissioner Jackson thanked the Ben Austin Senior Center staff for the great lunch.
- Commissioner Hernandez shared that she recently got married and her last name was changed to "Griffin".
- Commissioner Bodnar thanked the Commissioner for selecting her to represent the COA at the C4A Conference. Also, thanks given to Aging and Adult Services for covering the conference expenses.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion made to approve October 20, 2025, Regular Commission on Aging meeting minutes with amendment to pages 11 & 12.
Motion: Lemucchi; **Second:** Gomez; **Abstention:** Griffin, Juarez-Ceja, Ray, Dhillon;
Objection: None.
Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF 2026 COA REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE:** Meeting schedule was approved as presented.
Motion: Gomez; **Second:** Prado; **Abstention:** None; **Objection:** None.
Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Daisy Neri

Daisy Neri could not attend but provided a report that was read by Chair Snyder. The following are changes to Medi-Cal that will take place starting January 1, 2026:

WHO AFFECTED:

Medi-Cal members and applicants whose eligibility is based on age (65+), disability (physical, mental, or developmental), or long-term care needs.

KEY INFORMATION:

- The asset limit is \$130,000 for one person. Each additional household member adds

\$65,000 to the asset limit, up to 10 members per household.

- Assets include bank accounts, cash, and anything over one home and one vehicle.
- Some assets don't count, like the home you live in, one vehicle, household items, and certain savings, like retirement accounts.
- If you are already a Medi-Cal member, assets will be reviewed at your annual renewal. Income rules are not changing.

BEN AUSTIN SENIOR CENTER – Julie Baca

Julie Baca reported that the Ben Austin Senior Center has a regular attendance of 10 seniors who come in daily to have lunch. There are 50 seniors who are registered to have lunch there monthly. The meals are delivered fresh daily as they are prepared at the Richard Prado Senior Center kitchen. These regular attendees are also the volunteers who were recognized here today. They help with setting up the activities that take place there such as: Exercise class every Monday morning at 10:30am with a Program Technician from Aging and Adult's SNAP, BUNCO every 2nd and 3rd Monday after lunch, and BINGO every Thursday after lunch. In between those activities, they like to play cards.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Isaac Preston

Not in attendance. No report.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Jose Lopez reported they are busier than ever. Though the government shut down didn't impact them directly, all the benefits that they were advocating did see a slowdown in application processing times, which, if anyone's familiar with VA, are already long. With the government coming back into business, hopefully some changes will impact those wait times. They got their volunteer pilot program off the ground. They have three volunteers now, and two iPad tablets. They are traveling all over Bakersfield to different senior centers, assisted living facilities, and any events where they might be able to find our senior populations to try to help spread the word about the Veterans Services Department and that they're here to help. They don't charge for their services. With current limitations on Volunteers driving county vehicles, has led to challenges of getting to other cities in the county. Currently looking for some form of partnership between other county departments who have drivers going out to other cities to help spread the word. Jose is looking forward to working with the Board of Supervisors to find additional solutions.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Sara Swerffager, SPHN

Sara attended virtually and gave the following report:

Vaccination Updates:

- No new vaccination recommendations. Seasonal Flu and COVID vaccines continue to be routinely recommended. Two doses of COVID vaccine six months apart are recommended for adults 65 and older. RSV continues to be recommended once in a lifetime for adults 75+ years of age and high-risk individuals 50-74 years.

- To receive any of these vaccines through the Public Health Clinic, please call 661-321-3000 to make an appointment.

Public Health Education and Awareness Campaign - Disease Fighters!

- They highlight Pertussis awareness and prevention this month. Pertussis (also known as whooping cough) is a highly contagious bacterial disease that can be spread by coughing. People with pertussis have severe coughing attacks that can last for months. At first, whooping cough seems like a common cold but gets worse fast. Early symptoms usually include:
 - Runny or stuffed-up nose
 - Low-grade fever (less than 100.4°F) or no fever
 - Mild cough
 - After 1–2 weeks, people may have coughing fits that can last up to 10 weeks.
 - Infants too young for vaccination are at greatest risk for life-threatening cases of pertussis.
 - Adults are recommended to receive one dose of Tdap. Vaccinated people can get pertussis but may not get as sick.
- Please see their website for more information on pertussis:
<https://www.kernpublichealth.com/healthy-community/community/disease-fighters>

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES (BHRS) – Chad Acker

Chad Acker attended virtually and gave the following report:

Propositions 36 & 47:

- Prop 36 established treatment-mandated felonies for some drug offenses.
- Since December 2024, 276 referrals entered Kern's Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment system.
- Kern BHRS received \$8 million in Prop 47 funds to support the *Kern New Beginnings Program*, covering services tied to Prop 36 (evaluations, case management, housing, etc.) for three years.

Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) & Family Resource Center (FRC):

- A new 16-bed youth CSU and Family Resource Center are under construction, funded by a BHCIP Grant.
- Expected completion: Fall 2026.
- Will serve as a hub for youth crisis care and family support.

Expanded Adult Access Sites:

- Adult access and assessment services are expanding across Bakersfield.

- Goal: improve convenience, reduce barriers, and increase engagement in treatment.
- Beginning on October 20, screening and assessment services previously provided only at the Mary K. Shell Access and Assessment Center will now be available at multiple community sites, making it easier for clients to get connected to care.
- The Bakersfield locations are as follows:
 - North – Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic – 661 Roberts Lane
 - Northeast – Northeast Recovery and Wellness Center – 3715 Columbus Street
 - Southeast – Southeast Recovery and Wellness Center – 1600 East Belle Terrace
 - South – Clinica Sierra Vista – 3117 Wilson Road
 - West – West Recovery and Wellness Center – 5121 Stockdale Highway (Suite #275)
 - Central – Clarvida – 2821 H Street
- This change is part of our commitment to improving access and ensuring the highest quality of care for our community. Please note that limited access services will continue to be available at Mary K. Shell

Active RFPs (Requests for Proposal):

- Three RFPs are open for:
 1. Adult & Adolescent Outpatient SUD Services
 2. Adult & Children's Outpatient Specialty Mental Health Services
 3. Youth CSU & Family Resource Center
- Supports service expansion and program updates.

Senate Bill 43 (SB 43):

- Expands "gravely disabled" definition to include severe substance use disorders.
- Kern BHRS has completed 49 of 97 implementation items (50%).
- Full implementation expected by January 1, 2026.
- Trainings for clinical staff to come.

County Integrated Plan:

- Work has begun on the three-year Behavioral Health Services Act plan, due June 30, 2026.
- Will outline how funding is used for mental health and substance use programs.

Media Training:

- Staff completed professional training to improve communication with the public and media.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance. No report.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez appeared in person and gave the following report:

Home Access Grant:

This grant is available to install a wheelchair ramp, grab bars, and walk-in shower for low-income disabled persons. Owner-occupied and rental property are eligible if the property owner agrees to the work. An inspection is completed to determine specific needs, and all work is done by licensed contractors.

Home Improvement Loan:

This loan can help to replace air conditioner, heater, roof, electrical, plumbing, windows, insulation, floors, and paint. It's available to low-income owner-occupied single-family residence. It is a no interest, deferred payment loan due and payable in full when the owner no longer occupies the property.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Jessica Carrillo

Jessica Carrillo was not in attendance but submitted the following report that was read by Jeremy Oliver:

Staff from ILC attended this year's C4A conference, where they networked with various ILCs, AAAs, and other agencies that share their determination and passion for enhancing the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) mission, where their goal is to make ADRC services known Statewide.

ILC has been hosting several training sessions focused on emergency preparedness. These sessions aim to educate individuals with disabilities and their caregivers about emergency preparedness and what to do in case of an emergency. Their next class will be on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at the Kern River Valley Senior Center, located at 6401 Lake Isabella Blvd., Lake Isabella, CA 93240. If you would like to RSVP, call them at 661-325-1063.

They are still seeking lightly used or new durable medical equipment (DME) items, including power scooters, manual and electric wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility aids.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Kayla Pinkston

Kayla Pinkston was not in attendance but submitted a report about their Kern County Victim Services Unit (VSU) & Family Justice Centers. Jeremy Oliver read the following report:

- Victim Services Unit located at 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
 - Phone number 661-868-5960 or online
 - District Attorney Advocates can assist all victims of crime through the criminal justice process
 - Court accompaniment
 - Case Updates
 - California Victims of Crime Compensation application assistance
 - Prosecution & Law Enforcement Accompaniment
 - Victim Impact Statements and Restitution
- Family Justice Center also located at 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
 - Phone number: 661-868-5950 or online
 - Walk ins– 8am to 4pm
 - Assists Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking
 - Partners include:
 - Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance (GBLA)
 - Open Door Network
 - Kern County Department of Human Services
 - Kern County Child Support (kiosk)
 - Kern County Behavioral Health
- South Family Justice Center - 12022 Main St, Lamont CA 93241
 - Phone number: Lamont- 661-868-5820 or online

All programs have access to language lines and bilingual staff

STAFF PRESENTATIONS - AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

The federal government reopened following Congress' passage of a funding bill on Wednesday. The package includes a continuing resolution that expires January 30, 2026, as well as full-year appropriations for the Department of Agriculture, Veterans Affairs, and Congressional operations. Full Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits should resume in all states and be in place through September 2026, even if another

shutdown occurs. The package funds the Older Americans Act, the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act and other aging programs through January 30, 2026.

The package does not include extension of Affordable Care Act (ACA) enhanced premium tax credits (ePTCs). As AARP reports, 92% of older adults ages 50 to 64 enrolled in Marketplace coverage are projected to pay higher premiums in 2026 if the ePTCs are not extended.

The Social Security Administration recently announced a 2.8% increase for the 2026 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

STATE

The State is awaiting full assessment of federal impacts, but we can anticipate many changes due to implementation of HR 1. The California Department of Aging(CDA) is moving forward with making changes in connection with the passage of SB-1249 Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act. Impacts will be on Area Agencies on Aging structures, boundaries and most significantly funding formulas. Please be sure to look for any presentations related to new funding formulas under the Interstate Funding Formula (IFF) as they are changing the categories that are used to allocate funding to all Area Agencies on Aging. We are also awaiting state budget projections.

DEPARTMENT

The department continues to monitor all changes at federal and state levels. Additionally, the department is preparing for the upcoming Winter Recess which will mean the department is closed effectively from December 24, 2025, to January 2, 2026. Meals will cover the dates we are closed for home delivered clients and Conservatorship and Adult Protective Services (APS) programs will be operational throughout the leave.

It's Open enrollment now until December 7, 2025, for Medicare recipients. Staff are working on comparisons to assist anyone who may have questions related to their Medicare. As a reminder, if you are dual covered by Medi-Cal and Medicare you can make changes outside the open enrollment period.

APS has been allocated additional Home Safe funding allowing the program to continue. This funding allows APS clients to access services to prevent or resolve issues of homelessness.

In-Home Supportive Services is struggling to keep up with incoming referrals and to complete all annual assessments on CFCO cases. In the month of July, 1,548 CFCO cases were overdue out of (18,000 IHSS cases total), the penalty amount assessed as of the end of September is \$275,512.12 (reminder this is only 50% of the cost of the penalty for this year). IHSS staff have been working diligently to reduce the total CFCO overdue cases/month while maintaining existing cases and have brought the total overdue down to 96 cases by the end of October. We continue to have delays in new intakes and reduced response times due to the shift in workloads. Please note we need to make this shift so we do not incur additional costs that could result in loss of staff, which will only cause further delays in responding to the needs of our clients.

The Ombudsman program will be forming a new volunteer class starting in January of 2026.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar

Parliamentarian Bodnar reported the COA Bylaws were passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 21st, Resolution No. 2025-222.

CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – J. Lemucchi, J. Snyder

Vice Chair Lemucchi reported she and Chair Snyder went to Sacramento at the end of October. The CSL members approved of the ten top priorities for proposals that they're working on now. She and Chair Snyder are also working with the Legislative Committee reaching out to the six Assemblymembers and Senate members that they're assigned to meet with, to encourage that they pick up one or all the proposals they voted on in October. They've already met with three and they have a meeting with another this week, and some in November and December. They are still waiting for a response from one Legislator to request a meeting. Chair Snyder commented on how Vice Chair Lemucchi has gone above trying to get responses from Legislators as it's been a real challenge setting up meetings. Some have very little information about CSL so they quickly explain to them about CSL and the ten proposals. The ten proposals were emailed to all Commissioners. If you have any questions about it, please don't hesitate to reach out to them.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Gomez

Commissioner Gomez reported the following:

Recently Reappointed:

None.

New Appointments:

None.

Resignations/Retiring:

1. Gloria Brown – Effective 10/22/2025.

Expired Terms:

1. Yolanda Prado – In Process
2. Sonia Dhillon – In Process
3. Doris Duquette - Pending

Letters to appointing entities requesting reappointment for Commissioner Prado and Commissioner Dhillon. Laura has not received a written request to continue serving from Commissioner Duquette.

Vacancies:

1. District 1 – for term expiring 06/17/2026
2. District 1 - for term expiring 05/04/2027
3. District 2 – for term expiring 06/17/2026
4. District 5 – for term expiring 06/17/2027

New Applications Received:

1. Julie Parsons – Received from Clerk of the Board on 10/24/2025
2. Jami Ward – Received from Clerk of the Board on 10/24/2025

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment Report for November 2025.

Chair Snyder added that she was charged by the COA Executive Committee to contact District 1 office to discuss the vacancies for that district although the meeting was not had she was informed they would be making a couple of appointments to fill the vacancies.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – A. Estrada; E. Linder

Commissioner Linder reported that all Commissioners are invited to help assemble and distribute gifts for Aging and Adult staff for employee recognition. They will gather at Aging and Adult Service on December 10th at 10 a.m. Jeremy will provide snacks. This will be in lieu of the traditional COA Holiday luncheon.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; S. Gomez; J. Lemucchi; Y. Prado; C. Ray; J. Snyder

Chair Snyder reported that the Executive Committee met November 4, 2025. A lot of what was discussed in the meeting was already shared in this meeting (appointments, recruitment, 2026 COA meeting schedules, etc.). She will be looking at and then discussing with the COA Executive Committee and the attendance of Commissioners, as we had some real challenges this year for a lot of reasons. We need to have better attendance. The committee also discussed the status of the COA Handbook. We are waiting to add a couple of items to the handbook.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – A. Hernandez

No report – the next meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2025.

LONG TERM CARE – S. Dhillon; D. Duquette; N. Jackson; C. Ray

No report.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – A. Estrada; D. Duquette; J. Juarez-Ceja; M. Salazar; Y. Prado; J. Snyder

Commissioner Prado reported she, Chair Snyder, and Commissioner Salazar attended Bakersfield Family Medical Group's Senior Health Expo on November 1st. The event was for three hours, and they had approximately 600 people in attendance. They were able to greet a lot of people at the event and are almost out of jar openers due to handing them out to participants. One person she met is interested in serving on the Commission. Overall, it was a good event. Aging and Adult Services also had a table at the event, and they sent many people over to Aging and Adult's table to learn more about the services they offer.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – B. Goodlow; N. Jackson
No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – S. Bodnar; B. Goodlow; A. Hernandez; C. Ray
The Committee provided reports on the following senior centers:

- Commissioner Ray: She met with Connie here at the Ben Austin Senior Center and at the Rasmussen Senior Center. They started doing some classes for their Healthcare Advanced Directives outside of the Commission roles, and so they're going to get active in those senior centers and have that resource available for them.
- Parliamentarian Bodnar: She met with seniors at the Ridgecrest Senior Center last week and they're continuing to try to grow things. They're going to work in conjunction with the hospital to do things like Health Care Advance Directives, and exercise classes. They'll be meeting with the City of Ridgecrest tomorrow to see what direction they want to take it in.
- Commissioner Juarez-Ceja: Alzheimer's Disease Association of Kern County (ADAKC) has implemented providing virtual dementia training. They held their first training last week with participants of the Shafter Senior Center, where they trained 30 individuals in virtual dementia. It gives them the opportunity to get first-hand experience and knowledge of what individuals with Alzheimer's are going through. They will continue to offer classes at senior centers throughout Kern County.
- Commissioner Prado: Aging and Adult Services provides a program called STEPS at the Richard Prado Senior Center. When they're not exercising with the seniors, they're prepping healthier option snacks for the seniors to learn and enjoy.
- Commissioner Goodlow: It was a pleasure to have many seniors represent the Bakersfield Senior Center (BSC) at the new Hard Rock Casino Tejon buffet last Friday. They had possibly 20 veterans, their wives, and children there. It was very nice. The BSC continues to exercise at the center. The weather tends to dictate to the attendance at the center. BSC will be having its First Sunday lunch and buffet. The cost is \$25. This will take place on the first Sunday of every month. All are welcome.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

No report.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – S. Dhillon; S. Gomez

Commissioner Dhillon shared that she attended her first in-person Triple A Council of California (TACC) meeting at the C4A Conference. The two-and-a-half-day conference provided valuable opportunities to network with representatives from various PSA service areas and meet presenters prior to conference sessions. Six breakout sessions were attended, many focused on current challenges facing aging services statewide, including budget constraints. Despite these challenges, the overall message emphasized continued collaboration and persistence. One notable session addressed CalAIM and aging services. While presenters indicated all service areas are receiving full services, Kern County is not currently receiving all available services. Follow-up with presenters and partners is ongoing to address this discrepancy. Additional sessions covered removing barriers to implementing the local Master Plan on Aging and strengthening partnerships among Managed Care Organizations, Area Agencies on Aging, County leadership, and community-based organizations. These partnerships were highlighted as critical to supporting Aging and Adult Services. The experience was informative and beneficial, and she plans to remain actively involved with TACC in 2026. She will send the conference handouts to Laura to send to all Commissioners.

TRANSPORTATION – J. Lemucchi; M. Salazar

Vice-Chair Lemucchi reported that she and Commissioner Salazar recently received the 2026 quarterly meeting schedule. They will be meeting in January, April, July, and October.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION –E. Linder

Commissioner Linder shared that prior to the meeting, the Commission recognized senior nutrition volunteers for their volunteerism. Volunteers will continue to be recognized as they visit different senior centers throughout the county.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- **2026 COA Executive Committee Meeting Schedule** – The Executive Committee meeting schedule for 2026 was reviewed.
- **Centenarian Recognition Program Parliamentarian** – Commissioner Ray shared that she delivered a certificate of recognition to Watson Columbus, 102 years, at Sizzlers. There are pending certificates and celebrations for the following:
 1. Clara Malone, 100 years, at Luigi's on 11/21/2025
 2. Bill Gillspie, 102 years, to be mailed, will be in Berlin on his birthday
 3. Ralph Lopez, 100 years

We had one other, but sadly, she passed before her birthday. If you know of anyone turning 100+ years, please let her know.

NEXT MEETINGS:

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, January 7, 2026 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, January 26, 2026 (Due to County Holiday on the 3rd Monday), at 1:00 p.m. E. Niles Senior Center 6601 Niles Street, Bakersfield, CA 93306 (COA Ex-Officio Members and the public may attend in person or via Zoom. Please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052 for the link to join)

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj