
How the Elder Index is Used

The Elder Index is used by a wide range of leaders to help ensure that older Californians have the resources they need to be economically stable.

California Policymakers and other legislative partners use the Elder Index to guide legislation at the federal, state, and local levels:

- In 2009, the **Elder Economic Dignity Act of 2009** ([AB 324](#), Beall) passed in the California State Legislature with bipartisan support but was later vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger. AB 324 would have required state and local agency agencies to use the Elder Index to plan programs and prioritize limited resources more effectively. In 2010, Assemblymember Beall reintroduced a similar bill, [AB 2114](#), which passed the California Assembly.
- State Senator Carol Liu introduced [SB 1084](#), **California Economic Security Task Force Act of 2010**, which would have established a 2-year bipartisan Task Force to develop a comprehensive set of policy recommendations to improve economic security among Californians, as defined by the [Self-Sufficiency Standard](#) and Elder Index.
- At the request of the Senate Budget Committee, the **Legislative Analyst's Office** used the Elder Index to evaluate benefit levels and proposed cuts to the **Supplemental Security Income** program (SSI) in 2008.
- The Elder Index was cited in [AB 2521](#) (2008), **Affordable Housing Bill**, to demonstrate the high housing costs elders face.

Public Agencies & Local Governments use the Elder Index to plan programs and allocate resources for today's seniors and aging baby boomers in their local communities:

- Sixty percent of the **Area Agencies on Aging** in California use the Elder Index in their strategic area plans, in conducting internal and external education about the costs seniors face, and in advocacy efforts to support their programs, according to a recent [survey](#). These local area plans are the focal point of all aging services in a given community.
- The **California Association of Area Agencies on Aging** has endorsed and publicly testified before the state legislature in favor of the Elder Index bills, AB 2114 and AB 324.
- **Area 4 Agency on Aging** uses the Elder Index in their [Assets-Ability Matrix](#), a risk measurement tool to identify the relative risk of dependency that is caused by the combination of physical impairment and economic need.
- **City and County of San Francisco** passed [Ordinance 88-09](#) which establishes a pilot program to use the Elder Index for eligibility in a home and community-based long term care program.
- **San Diego County Board of Supervisors** included the Elder Index in their [Legislative Policy Guidelines](#), demonstrating their support of *any* state or federal legislation involving the Elder Index.
- **County of San Diego Health and Human Services** included the Elder Index in its [San Diego County Senior Health Report](#), which describes the health of its residents and is used to assess a variety of local programs.

- **Sonoma County Board of Supervisors** passed a [resolution](#) in support of AB 324 and endorsed the Elder Index instead of the Federal Poverty Guidelines as a better means to measure economic need.
- **Several Area Agencies on Aging**, have invested funding in the Elder Index and related data, including the City of Los Angeles Department of Aging, County of Los Angeles Community and Senior Services, Alameda County Social Services Department of Adult and Aging Services, and San Diego Department of Aging and Independence Services.

Foundations are increasingly recognizing that realistic and accurate measures of economic need, such as the Elder Index and the [Self-Sufficiency Standard](#), are effective ways to assess the impact of their grant making:

- The **Gary and Mary West Foundation** has adopted the Elder Index to define vulnerable seniors in its aging grantmaking portfolio.
- The **California Community Foundation** encourages its grantees to use the Elder Index in their programming and fund development.
- **United Way of the Bay Area** uses the Self-Sufficiency Standard and Elder Index to measure the impact of their grant making.
- **Many foundations**, including The California Wellness Foundation, The California Endowment, California Community Foundation, National Council on Aging, United Way of the Bay Area, Y & H Soda Foundation, The Health Trust, and UC-Program on Access to Care have invested in the Elder Index and the California Elder Economic Security Initiative.

Direct Service Providers use the Elder Index to help them design, evaluate, and expand programs:

- **ElderHelp of San Diego** uses the Elder Index to determine sliding scale membership costs for their “Concierge Club”, a program providing home care assistance.
- **National Council on Aging’s** Economic Security Initiative tracks older adults’ progress toward the goal of economic stability using the Elder Index.
- **Senior Community Centers** in San Diego uses the Elder Index to quantify to investors the impact of their affordable housing and nutrition programs.
- **Aging Services Collaborative** in Santa Clara County uses the Elder Index in their policy agenda to increase the number of affordable housing units in the county.

Advocates use the Elder Index to more effectively make the case for policy change:

- **Western Center on Law and Poverty, California Association of Food Banks, Alameda County Senior Services Coalition, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles**, and others use the Elder Index to fight budget cuts to senior services.
- **California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)** advocates for the state to adopt the Elder Index through legislation (e.g. AB 324 and AB 2114).
- **The Oakland Institute** advocates using the Elder Index to more accurately identify older populations in need.
- **St. Mary’s Center** advocates that the state and federal government adopt the Elder Index instead of the Federal Poverty Guidelines in determining eligibility for public programs.



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