



AREA AGENCY ON AGING
San Benito & Santa Cruz Counties

FOSTER GRANDPARENT/SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM
Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara & Santa Cruz Counties

PROJECT SCOUT
Tax Counseling Assistance

AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CONNECTION
Navigating the San Benito County Senior & Disability Services Network

2024 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SENIOR FACT SHEET

Population Changes

- Seniors are the fastest growing age group in California and the United States.
 - The 60+ population has grown by over 40% since 2010 in California
 - The population of Californians aged 0-59 has increased less than 1% since 2010
- **The 65-84 population has grown faster (80.9%) in Santa Cruz Co. than anywhere else in California since 2010¹**
- 12,604 of the County's 74,495 seniors are eligible for Medi-Cal
- The over-60 Medi-Cal Eligible population grew 261% since 2011
- 1,000 Californians are turning 65 every day for the next decade

Senior Services Funding and the Cost of Long-Term Care

- The average cost of a nursing home in California is over \$115,000 per year
- Pre-COVID funding for local Older Americans Act programs increased 10% in 35 yrs.
- U.S. Inflation since 1984-85 is over 160%
- Baseline Funding for the AAA has 32% of the buying power that it had 40 years ago.
- Meals on Wheels, Tax Counseling for the Elderly, Elderday Care Center, & Ombudsman Nursing/Residential Care Protection all received funding cuts in the 2022 CORE process

Senior Loneliness & Isolation has been a national crisis BEFORE COVID-19

- Being isolated has the health impact of smoking 15 cigarettes per day
- Senior isolation increases Medicare costs by about \$7 billion per year nationwide
- 13,985 Santa Cruz County older adults live alone (1 in 5).
- Lonely seniors have a 45% increase in their risk of death
- COVID is estimated to have tripled the senior isolation crisis

Seniors and COVID-19

- 65% of ICU beds have been occupied by individuals 61+
- 85% of deaths were individuals aged 61+

Homeless Seniors

- There are twice as many homeless people over age 50 as there are under the age of 25²
- In the 55+ population, homelessness is identified as a trigger for Mental Health Issues

¹ 2020 U.S. Census Results

² Previous Santa Cruz County Homeless Census (current census did not collect this information)