



MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE

VICE CHAIR

**SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: September 30, 2025

01

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**PURSuing A CERTIFIED AGE-FRIENDLY EMPLOYER DESIGNATION FOR THE
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

In 2022, there were more than 1.1 million adults aged 50 and older living in San Diego County, representing over one-third (33.6%) of the total population. By 2029, this number is projected to grow to more than 1.2 million.¹ As our region continues to age, the County of San Diego (County) has an opportunity to advance efforts that ensure its workforce reflects the population it serves.

The Age-Friendly Institute is a national organization dedicated to elevating the voices of older adults and supporting organizations in improving their workplace cultures, products, and services. Its Certified Age-Friendly Employer (CAFE) program is the leading designation for employers committed to being among the best places to work for individuals aged 50 and older. Since its inception, hundreds of companies and organizations across sectors have earned this distinction.

The County has long prioritized investing in an empowered workforce and advancing operational excellence. Adults aged 50 and over currently serve in a wide variety of roles across the County, from public safety and health services to administrative and technical roles, ensuring continuity, stability, and high-quality public service.

With an increasingly aging population, the County has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership by ensuring its workforce reflects the residents it serves. By employing and retaining adults aged 50 and older, the County not only benefits from their depth of experience, institutional knowledge, and mentorship capacity, but also builds trust and strengthens its connection with the community. Pursuing Age-Friendly Employer designation represents a natural next step in further advancing the County's commitment to equity, inclusion, and a workforce that reflects San Diego County residents.

**SUBJECT: PURSUING A CERTIFIED AGE-FRIENDLY EMPLOYER
DESIGNATION FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO (DISTRICTS:
ALL)**

Today's item requests the Chief Administrative Officer pursue a Certified Age-Friendly Employer designation for the County.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

VICE-CHAIR MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to pursue a Certified Age-Friendly Employer designation for the County of San Diego, ensuring our workplace honors the invaluable contributions of older adults and models the inclusivity and diversity of the communities we serve.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

By pursuing Certified Age-Friendly Employer (CAFE) designation, the County of San Diego (County) furthers its foundational commitments to equity, inclusion, and representative governance. This initiative builds upon the County's membership in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, which affirms its dedication to livable, inclusive environments for older adults, and the Aging Roadmap, the region's guiding plan for policies and programs that support older adults equitably. Within the Aging Roadmap, the priority area known as the Silver Economy highlights the importance of equity and inclusion by ensuring that older adults are valued as part of a representative and inclusive workforce.

By intentionally valuing and retaining employees aged 50 and over, the County enhances its connection with a demographic that now comprises over a third of its residents and is projected to continue growing. This designation elevates equitable workforce representation and ensures that older adults are recognized not only as residents but as integral contributors to public service. In alignment with the County's broader *Live Well San Diego* vision and its Strategic Plan commitment to Equity (Health), the CAFE designation represents the next step in applying an age-inclusive equity lens across County employment practices.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Pursuing Certified Age-Friendly Employer designation supports the County of San Diego's (County) long-term sustainability by fostering a stable, experienced, and engaged workforce. By valuing and retaining employees aged 50 and older, the County benefits from institutional knowledge, mentorship capacity, and workforce continuity, which contribute to operational resilience and reduced turnover. This initiative aligns with the County's broader sustainability goals by promoting practices that strengthen the social and organizational foundations necessary for delivering high-quality, sustainable public services to the community.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's recommendation. The actions requested in this item can be implemented using existing appropriations within the Health and Human Services Agency. There will be no change in net general fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

If approved, these recommendations are expected to have a positive impact on the business community. The Age-Friendly Institute reports that employers displaying the "Age-Friendly" seal on their job postings experience an increase in applicant interest compared to employers without

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ALL)**

the designation. By pursuing Certified Age-Friendly Employer status, the County of San Diego can model inclusive employment practices that strengthen its workforce while encouraging similar approaches across the region's business community.

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

In 2022, there were more than 1.1 million adults aged 50 and older living in San Diego County, representing over one-third (33.6%) of the total population. By 2029, this number is projected to grow to more than 1.2 million. This age group is expected to increase by 9.2% between 2022 and 2029 and by an additional 9.4% from 2029 to 2040.¹ As our region continues to age, the County of San Diego (County) has an opportunity to advance efforts that ensure its workforce reflects the population it serves.

The Age-Friendly Institute is a national organization dedicated to elevating the voices of older adults and supporting organizations in improving their workplace cultures, products, and services. Its Certified Age-Friendly Employer (CAFE) program is the leading designation for employers committed to being among the best places to work for individuals aged 50 and older. Since its inception, hundreds of companies and organizations across sectors have earned this distinction including the State of California and, most recently, the City of La Mesa.

In 2016, the County joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, affirming its commitment to creating livable communities for people of all ages. Building on this foundation, the County developed the Aging Roadmap, a comprehensive plan to ensure that the region has policies, programs, and initiatives that equitably support the needs and leverage the contributions of the growing population of older adults in our region. One of the ten priority areas within the Aging Roadmap, the Silver Economy, highlights the importance of equity and inclusion by ensuring that older adults are valued as part of a representative and inclusive workforce. The County has long prioritized investing in an empowered workforce and advancing operational excellence. Of the 20,253 County staff, 29% are over the age of 50. The average tenure of employees aged 50 or over is 58% higher than the overall workforce. Employees aged 50 and over currently serve in a wide variety of roles across the County, from public safety and health services to administrative, technical, and leadership roles, ensuring continuity, stability, and high-quality public service.

A CAFE designation would recognize the County as an organization that values employees based on proficiency, qualifications, and contributions, free from age bias. This designation would provide opportunities to communicate to current and prospective employees, as well as the public, that the County welcomes and supports older adults in the workplace. As part of the certification, the County would be listed on the Age-Friendly Institute's platforms, permitted to display the CAFE seal in recruitment and outreach materials, and gain access to feedback and networking opportunities with peer employers. Certified Age-Friendly Employers also benefit from expanded visibility, including free job postings and a demonstrated increase in applicant interest.

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With an increasingly aging population, the County has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership by ensuring its workforce reflects the residents it serves. By employing and retaining adults aged 50 and older, the County not only benefits from their depth of experience, institutional knowledge, and mentorship capacity, but also builds trust and strengthens its connection with the community. Pursuing Age-Friendly Employer designation represents a natural next step in this continuum. It builds on the County's membership in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities and the Aging Roadmap, further advancing the County's commitment to equity, inclusion, and a workforce that reflects San Diego County residents. To pursue the designation, the County will go through an assessment process with the Age-Friendly Institute to certify the County's policies, programs, and practices are aligned with the CAFE program.

Today's item requests the Chief Administrative Officer pursue a Certified Age-Friendly Employer designation for the County of San Diego.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action aligns with the Equity and Empower Strategic Initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan by committing to equitable opportunities in the workforce for adults aged 50 and older.

Respectfully submitted,



MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A

¹Source: SANDAG, Open Data Portal, Series 15 Regional Forecast - San Diego County (July 2024).

Prepared by: County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services, Community Health Statistics Unit, 2025.