

Dear Mayor Breed and Members of the SF Board of Supervisors,

We are writing to ask you to restore the promise of the Dignity Fund.

The voters of San Francisco overwhelmingly approved [Proposition I, the Dignity Fund, in November 2016](#). It guaranteed funding to expand supportive services to help older adults (60+ years old, 21% of population) and adults with disabilities (18 – 59 years old) age with dignity in the places they call home. It had four key features:



- **Stabilized funding for current services and support** for older adults, veterans, adults with disabilities, and caregivers;
- **Provided additional dedicated dollars to address the unmet** and emerging needs of these communities;
- **Created a comprehensive needs assessment process** to strategically target the dollars for impact and to address inequities;
- **Provided strong oversight** through the establishment of an Oversight and Advisory Committee, in addition to the Department of Disability and Aging Commission

Since FY 2017-18, the Dignity Fund has expanded needed services and supports to older adults and adults with disabilities, including targeted services to communities of color, LGBTQ individuals, and neighborhoods which have historically been left behind. Attached find a summary of the focused, high impact programming that the Dignity Fund made possible.

And Then Came the Pandemic...

Older adults and people with disabilities faced significant negative impact from the COVID-19 pandemic and have been disproportionately affected, becoming literally trapped in their homes for a year. Studies from UCSF and others provided evidence of individuals isolated from family, unable to access regular health care or transportation to medical appointments, increased food insecurity and so much more including the digital divide. Fear about COVID fed by the media, fear of assault among Black, Asian Pacific Islander and other communities, and general uncertainty about the future increased depression and other mental health

problems amongst older adults and people with disabilities, in addition to increased physical health issues.

[View details with infographics by the SF Department of Disability and Aging services](#) that outlines the status of older adults and people with disabilities in San Francisco. For reference, those 60 plus make up 21% of the City's population and a full 10% of residents report a disability, half of whom are under 65. Add to this poverty, the rising cost of living, and that more than 30% live alone. Clearly, things were already tough for so many.

An Opportunity for You!

When the legislation was drafted, both the Mayor's Office and the City Controller insisted on including language that would not require the additional \$3 million if the City's budget had a very significant shortfall. **When the pandemic hit, the budget under development reflected uncertainty about the path ahead and a potential shortfall, so the contribution was suspended.**

However, the City's fortunes greatly improved during the current fiscal year (FY 2020-2021) with an expected \$125.2 million General Fund balance ([Controller's Office 6-month Budget Status Report](#)). Expected allocations from the state and federal government have added to funding streams and will likely continue to offset losses. In the end, **there is no excuse to withhold the promised contributions to the Dignity Fund this year** and there certainly should not be next year.

We need you as our civic leaders to keep the promise of the voter approved Dignity Fund and restore these badly needed funds. Older adults and people with disabilities of all ages have been extremely hard hit by the pandemic and the resulting loss of health, well-being and in some cases, hope, as the pandemic drags on. Those hardest hit particularly include members of communities of color.

This is an opportunity for you to support some of your most vulnerable constituents and ensure continuity of programs & services that enable them to age with Dignity. This is not the time to ignore the promise of the Dignity Fund. Restore the annual \$3 million allocation to the [Department of Disability and Aging Services \(DAS\)](#) which administers the funds and ensures delivery of critical services.

SF Dignity Fund Coalition and supporting organizations