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# NEWS TODAY

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## Central Coast coalition flexes with times to respond to community needs

"CCCIL is different since COVID," said Judy Cabrera, executive director of the Central Coast Center for Independent Living, or CCCIL. "We expanded our services in response and have kept that ability."

The health crisis was transformational for the organization, which provides support to older adults and people with disabilities in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. CCCIL partners with the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and their networks through the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) in Monterey and San Benito counties. In addition, CCCIL leads the Monterey Bay ADRC Regional Coalition. The Coalition saw a threefold increase in demand for services and — despite shortages due to personal impacts from COVID-19 — their teams met the moment, carrying commensurately larger caseloads. Funding also increased as local government and foundations responded to the clear need for services.

"The help that we were able to provide the community, the impact we had, and assistance we provided were huge," Cabrera said. "A lot of agencies provided assistance, but we were able to provide wraparound services: to help with housing, quarantine, coordinating doctor's visits, transportation. We continued to provide services until we met all their needs."

"Project Roomkey and Project Homekey"— California's initiatives to provide housing to the homeless as part of the state's response to COVID-19 — "were some of the great successes we've had," said Georgina Alvarez, CCCIL's associate director. In collaboration with other area partners, the organization has moved nearly 300 people into permanent housing and continues working to obtain

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**— Judy Cabrera**, Executive Director  
Central Coast Center for Independent Living

housing for others in need. "It's not just placing someone into permanent housing, but also helping them sustain and take care of themselves, such as getting a permanent doctor instead of running to the ER," Alvarez continued.

These housing efforts flourished as area agencies began to see one another as partners instead of competition, as they sometimes had in the past. "A lot of agencies compete for numbers because numbers bring you funding: the more you serve, the more you get," Cabrera said. "So, we've spent time recreating how we do our outreach to say that we're here to partner with you."

"Working as a team, we're now looking to what's a better outcome for a community member," Alvarez added. "It's not about CCCIL getting all the success; it's about building those bridges and keeping programs going."

As the COVID-19 crisis response slows, Cabrera expects the Coalition's housing efforts to continue but anticipates that the focus will return to transitioning services for older adults and people with disabilities, in part through the ADRCs. To support these efforts, CCCIL is working to incorporate elements of California's [Master Plan](#)

for Aging into their programs, with staff attending related events to stay abreast of developments. "[Achieving] the goals of the Master Plan will help us sustain [our services] in the long term," Alvarez said.

The organization also recently received a grant to help youth experiencing homelessness and provide intervention earlier in life. "As part of the youth program, we're providing training to staff about culture, about diversity, about social justice, about LGBTQ [issues]," Alvarez said. A coalition of homelessness providers and a youth advisory board are guiding these efforts, offering a diversity, equity, and inclusion-informed framework of knowledge.

"You need to understand it's not just language and culture, but also what disabilities people have, what trauma they've gone through, because that will also tell us a lot about what's appropriate to say," Alvarez said.

"We're always listening and paying attention to change," Cabrera added. "We've always said we need to be able to change with the times."



### Contact

**Judy Cabrera**  
Executive Director,  
Central Coast Center for Independent Living  
[jcabrera@cccil.org](mailto:jcabrera@cccil.org)

### On the Web

Website: [www.cccil.org](http://www.cccil.org)