STATEMENT ON THE 2021-22 CALIFORNIA BUDGET

“This $36 per month increase will make it easier for me to meet my medical and nutritional needs. I wish to thank my God and the Governor for this help. A full restoration will help me to not worry on a daily basis. I have extra SNAP for now [because of the Emergency Allotments due to the pandemic], but when it goes I will need additional funds.”
- Judy Jackson, SSI recipient, Berkeley

CA4SSI, a coalition of advocates, SSI/SSP recipients, and more than 200 organizations across the state, advocates to provide sufficient funding to California’s older adults and people living with disabilities so that they can reach economic self-sufficiency, rise above the poverty level, and live with dignity.

Today, we celebrate the Governor and Legislature’s inclusion of SSI/SSP recipients in the 2021-22 budget. The CA4SSI coalition, especially older adults and seniors with disabilities who depend on the program, feels valued and heard.

We are very pleased to see the 2021-22 California Budget includes an increase in the SSP grant by approximately $36 per month for individuals and $92 per month for couples beginning in January 2022. This will reverse half of the devastating cuts made more than a decade ago during the Great Recession. We are further relieved to see the intention to reverse the remaining 50 percent of the cuts in the 2023-24 budget year. These grant increases will make meaningful progress toward the bold, powerful vision in the Master Plan for Aging (MPA) and other efforts to invest in Californians who are aging and/or living with disabilities.

CA4SSI applauds Governor Newsom and the Legislature. Thank you to the Governor for proposing the first significant SSP increase in his May Revise, and thank you for doing even more in this final budget agreement. The Recession era grant cuts plunged older adults and people with disabilities into intolerable hardship and poverty. We are grateful to see that the budget acknowledges these hardships.

Thank you to the Legislature, particularly Senator Nancy Skinner, Assemblymember Phil Ting, Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman, Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula, Pro Tem Toni Atkins and Speaker Anthony Rendon for your leadership and unwavering support for the past several years to restore the SSP grant.

We also thank the Governor and Legislature for including funding to prevent the dramatic caseload loss in the CalFresh Expansion Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) program so families do not face a lifetime of lost food just from missed paperwork.

We are encouraged by a restoration to 2009 SSI/SSP grant levels, however we will still have more to do for the grants to reach above Federal Poverty Level (FPL). While this budget will raise grant amounts, it will still be only 95% of FPL for an individual and even lower when factoring in likely 2022 FPLs. To meet the survival needs of people on SSI – disproportionately women and people of color – we must increase the grants at a faster rate in the upcoming budget years.
We look forward to working with the Governor and Legislature to meet the MPA’s “Affording Aging” goal of ensuring economic security as long as we live. To do so, we must raise the SSI/SSP grant to a level that matches the cost of living in California by reaching the Elder Economic Index, the established metric to provide a dignified life. Restoring the value of the SSP and lifting all seniors out of poverty must remain a priority.