

## Valley Seniors Struggling to Make Ends Meet

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By Margaret Carrero

A new report released this week highlights a startling disparity between how much money California seniors make and how much it actually costs them to live -- independently -- in the Golden State.

The study also touts a newly designed measuring tool to better gauge those expenses.

The "Elder Index" was designed two years ago to address the growing needs of California seniors.

Susan Smith with the Insight Center in Oakland co-authored the study because she says, "We and our partners were seeing more and more older adults were struggling to meet their basic needs."

And because most state programs use the Federal Poverty Line of just over \$10,800 to determine eligibility, many were falling through the cracks.

Smith says, "There are these older adults whose income is above the official Federal Poverty Line but below what they really need to cover their basic costs."

In Fresno County for instance, a senior living alone would need more than \$19,400 to cover food, housing, health care and transportation.

Smith adds, "Our seniors deserve better, they have raised us, they have paid into the system, it's time that we give back to them."

The ultimate goal is to encourage state lawmakers to begin using the "Elder Index" to gauge future programs.

The Fresno and Madera area Agencies on Aging are among the 60% of California organizations using the "Elder Index" to better evaluate programs and plan ahead.

 [FULL REPORT](#)

### County Breakdown:

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