AGENCY ON AGING AREA 4

Cultural Connections Spring 2026 | Research Guide & Topics Menu

Research Assignment

1. With a partner, research and present a 30-minute Powerpoint presentation at agency staff meeting during your assigned date. Each student is responsible for presenting 15 minutes.
2. Draft and submit 3 reflection questions for staff to answer 24 hours before your presentation date. Email them to volunteer@agencyonaging4.org. We send out your questions via SurveyMonkey to staff after your presentation. If you would like us to share their responses with you, please follow up via email and we'll send them to you.

Research Tips:

Gather Reliable Sources

Use credible sources such as:

- Academic journals (Google Scholar, JSTOR)
- Government and nonprofit reports (CDC, WHO, AARP)
- Cultural organizations and advocacy groups
- News articles from reputable outlets

Prepare Your Deliverables

- Make sure all text in your presentation is large and readable and practice good color contrast when using background and/or headers.
- Practice launching and moving through each slide in your PowerPoint presentation.
- Don't forget to send your 3 post-presentation survey questions 24 hours before you present.

Tips for Success

- Be respectful and culturally sensitive.
- Use visuals, quotes, and examples to make your presentation engaging.
- Practice your timing and delivery.
- Invite discussion and reflection.

Next, choose your topic and preferred presentation date from the below options, then submit your selection along with your onboarding forms.

Updated: January 30, 2026

AGENCY ON AGING AREA 4

Topic #1: Aging in Rural California | Understanding The SCAN Foundation's latest brief
Presentation Date: March 18, 2026

---

1. Understanding "Rural" in California

- Look up how different agencies define "rural" and how those definitions affect who gets counted.
- Identify how many older adults live in rural California and how that number is expected to change in the coming decades.
- Explore why rural communities are often overlooked in statewide planning.

2. Long-Term Services & Supports (LTSS)

- Investigate the major challenges rural older adults face in accessing LTSS.
- Research common barriers for family caregivers in rural areas.
- Find examples of strategies or programs designed to help people age in place in rural communities.

3. Health Care Access in Rural Regions

- Examine what kinds of health care services are limited or disappearing in rural California.
- Identify factors that make rural health care harder to access (transportation, workforce shortages, digital barriers, etc.).
- Look for policy ideas or local efforts that aim to improve rural health care access.

4. Housing Instability & Rural Homelessness

- Research what "hidden homelessness" means in rural areas.
- Identify the main housing-related challenges older adults face in rural regions.
- Explore proposed solutions for increasing housing stability and affordability.

AGENCY ON AGING AREA 4

Topic #2: Aging Across Economic Classes in California
Presentation Date: April 1, 2026

---

1. Understanding Economic Class & Aging

- How do researchers define “lower-,” “middle-,” and “upper-income” among older adults in California?
- What demographic or economic trends are shaping the future of aging across these groups?
- How do race, ethnicity, and geography intersect with economic class for California’s seniors?

2. Lower-Income Older Adults: Poverty, Housing, and Health

- What factors contribute to the high poverty rate among low-income Californians aged 65+?
- How are housing instability, high rental costs, or homelessness affecting aging in this group?
- What health challenges—physical, cognitive, or mobility-related—show up earlier or more severely for low-income older adults?

3. Middle-Income Older Adults: The “Forgotten” or “Squeezed” Population

- Who are California’s middle-income seniors? why are they often described as being “in the gap”?
- What makes long-term care unaffordable for many middle-income older adults, even if they are not eligible for Medi-Cal?
- How do trends in savings, pensions, or Social Security shape their retirement security or vulnerability?

4. Upper-Income Older Adults: Security, Longevity & Access

- What advantages do upper-income older adults typically have when it comes to health, disability rates, and longevity?
- How does financial security affect their ability to age in place, access in-home care, or choose high-quality assisted living options?
- In what ways does economic privilege shape the experience of aging compared to other groups?

5. Cross-Cutting Trends & Future Outlook

- How do Californians across all income groups feel about aging in place, and what supports or challenges shape that goal?
- Why are more older adults remaining in the labor force beyond age 65, and how does that differ by class?
- How is California’s population of older adults changing racially and ethnically—and what does that mean for equity?

6. Implications for Aging Services, Policy & Equity

- What barriers prevent lower- and middle-income seniors from accessing safe housing, long-term care, or health services?
- How might culturally responsive, economically accessible aging services look different across groups?

AGENCY ON AGING AREA 4

Topic #3: Yuba City, California: The Birthplace of Punjabi-Mexican Culture
Presentation Date: April 8, 2026

1. Historical & Migration Background

- What drew Punjabi immigrants and Mexican families to the Yuba-Sutter region, and during what time periods did they arrive?
- What social, economic, or political conditions shaped the formation of early Punjabi-Mexican families?
- How might this shared history still be reflected in the lives/experiences of older adults in the region today?

2. Cultural Blending Within Families

- What blended traditions (foods, languages, celebrations, or values) can you uncover through research?
- How did growing up in a mixed Punjabi-Mexican household shape identity for earlier generations?
- Which cultural practices seem to have carried across time, especially into the lives of elders?

3. Community Life & Agricultural Roots

- How did Punjabi-Mexican families contribute to local agriculture, farming, or community-building efforts?
- What community institutions (such as gurdwaras, churches, cultural centers, or farms) played a role in bringing people together?
- How might these community ties influence social connection, belonging, or support networks for older adults today?

4. Aging, Family Support & Caregiving Norms

- What caregiving expectations exist in Punjabi culture, Mexican culture, and blended households—and how do these traditions compare?
- How might these expectations shape whether older adults seek or accept outside support or aging-related services?
- What might aging-service providers need to understand about cultural norms to serve blended-heritage elders respectfully?

5. Barriers & Opportunities for Culturally Responsive Services

- What barriers—such as language access, transportation, stigma, or lack of representation—might blended Punjabi-Mexican older adults face?
- What strengths or community assets can you identify that help support elders from this background?
- How might organizations like Agency on Aging Area 4 create more welcoming, inclusive services for culturally blended communities?

AGENCY ON AGING AREA 4

Topic #4: Memory, Family, Identity, and Aging
Presentation Date: April 15, 2026

---

1. Memory & Aging: Why Do Siblings Remember the Same Childhood Differently?

- What does research say about how memory works over the lifespan?
- How do early life stressors, identity development, or cultural expectations shape what people remember?
- Why might siblings have dramatically different interpretations of the same events?

2. LGBTQ+ Identity & Lived Experience Across the Course of a Life

- What unique challenges did LGBTQ+ individuals face when today's older adults were coming of age?
- How might secrecy, stigma, or lack of acceptance have shaped childhood and adulthood memories?
- How do older LGBTQ+ adults describe their experiences in families of origin?

3. Family Dynamics in Later Life

- How common is it for adult siblings to live together as older adults?
- What factors make these arrangements supportive—or sometimes challenging?
- How do unresolved childhood experiences resurface in caregiving or cohabitation in older age?

4. Intersection of Identity & Family Belonging

- How might being heterosexual vs. lesbian shape each sister's sense of belonging, acceptance, or "place" in the family?
- How can identity-based experiences create emotional distance or closeness in sibling relationships?

5. Implications for Aging Services & Support Providers

- What should aging-service professionals understand about LGBTQ+ older adults and family relationships?
- How can providers support families where members have conflicting memories or unresolved tensions?
- What tools (e.g., narrative therapy, family mediation, reminiscence work) can help families bridge memory gaps?

AGENCY ON AGING AREA 4

Topic #5: Aging After Estrangement — Family Breaks, Reconciliation & Reinvention
Presentation Date: April 22, 2026

---

1. Understanding Estrangement in Later Life

- How common is estrangement among older adults, and what forms can it take (parent–child, siblings, extended family)?
- What life events, conflicts, or systemic factors often contribute to family breaks?

2. Emotional & Psychological Dimensions

- How does estrangement impact emotional well-being, self-esteem, or mental health in older adulthood?
- How do grief, anger, relief, or ambiguity shape the lived experience of separation?

3. Reconciliation, Repair & Acceptance

- Under what circumstances do older adults and family members attempt to reconcile?
- What communication approaches, therapeutic tools, or support systems aid in healing fractured relationships?
- When reconciliation isn't possible, how do older adults make meaning and move forward?

4. Chosen Family & Alternative Support Networks

- What role do friends, neighbors, community groups, religious communities, or peer networks play in filling the gap?
- How might LGBTQ+ elders, trauma survivors, immigrants, or caregivers uniquely build "chosen families"?

5. Implications for Aging Services & Community Support

- What challenges do estranged older adults face when navigating care, medical decisions, or emergencies without family advocates?
- How can service providers support elders who lack family connections?
- What does culturally sensitive or trauma-informed practice look like for estranged seniors?

AGENCY ON AGING AREA 4

Topic #6: The Invisible Labor of Caregiving — Unpaid Work Holding Up the Aging System
Presentation Date: April 29, 2026

---

1. Who Are the Unpaid Caregivers?

- What groups tend to provide unpaid caregiving, and how do age, gender, culture, race, and income influence caregiving roles?
- What types of care do unpaid caregivers typically provide (daily living tasks, coordination, emotional support, medical tasks)?

2. Emotional, Physical & Economic Impacts

- How does caregiving affect caregivers' mental health, identity, and emotional well-being?
- In what ways does caregiving influence caregivers' employment, income, or long-term financial security?
- How do stress, burnout, or compassion fatigue show up among unpaid caregivers?

3. Cultural Expectations & Gender Dynamics

- How do cultural norms shape who becomes the caregiver in a family?
- Why is unpaid caregiving disproportionately provided by women across many communities?
- How do cultural values influence how families interpret duty, obligation, and love?

4. Societal Dependence on Unpaid Labor

- How do long-term care systems rely on family members to fill gaps in services and workforce shortages?
- What would happen to state or national care systems if unpaid caregivers were not available?
- What kinds of caregiving tasks are expected to fall on families due to structural or policy limitations?

5. Policy, Equity & Support Solutions

- What programs or supports exist to assist unpaid caregivers (respite care, stipends, training, mental health support)?
- What programs are missing, underfunded, or inaccessible?
- What policy ideas or new models could improve equity and sustainability for unpaid caregivers?