

# Adult Protective Services: Your Partner in Combatting Elder Abuse



## WHAT IS ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES?

Adult Protective Services (APS) is a social services program available in every state, serving older adults and adults with disabilities. APS workers respond to reports of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. Contact your local APS program for state-specific information.

## ROLES AND JARGON

APS and law enforcement often work together on elder abuse cases. Both agencies have distinct roles and jargon that when understood facilitate strong working relationships and improve case outcomes.

### APS

1. Civil focus
2. Victim-centered
3. Can cross report to law enforcement
4. Conducts interviews, locates and collects evidence to support a finding of abuse
5. Provides services to victims
6. Uses a lower standard of proof to confirm abuse
7. Jargon:
  - a. Client
  - b. Abuser
  - c. MDT: Multidisciplinary Team
  - d. Physical abuse

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. Criminal focus
2. Perpetrator-centered
3. Can cross report to APS
4. Conducts interviews, locates and collects evidence to make an arrest
5. Holds offenders accountable (arrest)
6. Uses a probable cause requirement to arrest
7. Jargon:
  - a. Victim
  - b. Perpetrator
  - c. MDT: Mobile Data Terminal
  - d. Assault

## WHEN YOU ARE WORKING WITH APS, KEEP IN MIND:

- Older adults and persons with disabilities have the right to refuse APS services.
- APS cases are only opened if they meet state-specific eligibility requirements.
- APS confidentiality rules determine which case details can be shared.
- APS may close an investigation while law enforcement continues its investigation.

## FIND YOUR LOCAL APS AGENCY

[State Resources Map](#)

