

# ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES ACTION PLAN

MARCH 2020

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) Adult Protective Services (APS) Program has the authority to receive and assess reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. An individual, age 18 or older, is eligible for adult protective services if they are believed to be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation due to a physical or mental impairment or a court has deemed them incapacitated and there is an allegation of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or exploitation.

In February 2019, Governor Douglas A. Ducey issued Arizona Executive Order 2019-03 Relating to Enhanced Protections for Individuals with Disabilities. The Executive Order directed the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), and DES to convene a task force to make recommendations to protect and improve care for individuals with disabilities. The [Abuse & Neglect Prevention Task Force](#), comprised of individuals with disabilities, their families, advocacy organizations and relevant state agency staff, submitted 30 recommendations to the Governor on November 1, 2019.

The Arizona House of Representatives also convened a study committee, the Ad Hoc Committee on Abuse and Neglect of Vulnerable Adults, to review and identify best practices for the reporting and investigative processes to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults. The study committee met over the summer and fall of 2019 and developed a set of [recommendations](#) to address the safety of vulnerable adults in Arizona.

During the Arizona 2019 Legislative Session, four significant pieces of legislation were signed into law addressing APS - removing the need for a pattern to establish neglect, allowing for multi-disciplinary teams, expanding the definition of financial exploitation, expanding the duty to report mandate to supervisors, and requiring APS Registry checks by those contracted with the DES Division of Developmental Disabilities. Twenty-five bills have been introduced during the 2020 Legislative Session addressing vulnerable individuals. Major proposed changes include an expansion of the definition of abuse to include emotional abuse and an increase in the funding to support the increased APS caseload for investigations and services.

APS seeks to continue strengthening community collaborations with stakeholders. On January 23, 2020, DES and the ADHS held a stakeholder meeting to engage vulnerable individuals, their families, and the organizations that support them to develop a vision for the future and identify existing gaps. Over 160 individuals participated. The group reviewed current process improvement activities, developed draft strategies and proposed actions to support the development of a Breakthrough Plan for APS.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Goals to improve the adult protective services system in Arizona:**

- Streamline resources for investigations and substantiation
- Improve reporting quality
- Increase awareness of and access to community resources
- Leverage data sharing opportunities

**Recommendations** created through collaborative meetings with stakeholder groups to address the above goals include the following:

1. Establish a Social Services Rapid Response Team to quickly identify any needs for services or resources in response to reports of self-neglect.
2. Identify cross-training opportunities among state agencies.
3. Implement initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of APS staff.
4. Develop and implement outreach for providers, stakeholders, and community partners on entire investigation, substantiation, and service referral process. Develop a client education model for reporting sources and the general public.
5. Implement a 24/7 hotline option with a defined triage process to streamline reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation to Arizona's vulnerable adults to APS while maintaining current service referral resources.
6. Create a public facing data dashboard of current APS reports and investigations.
7. Identify legislative recommendations that impact the system to improve reporting, streamline requirements, and ensure safety of vulnerable adults.
8. Establish a Vulnerable Adult Portal as an entry point for statewide resources that also hosts a community connection platform to support coordination of live local resources.
9. Implement a short term solution for registry accessibility. Determine the feasibility and resources required to create a centralized registry and background check system as a statewide public resource on a platform that provides notifications on changes to eligibility to the employer.

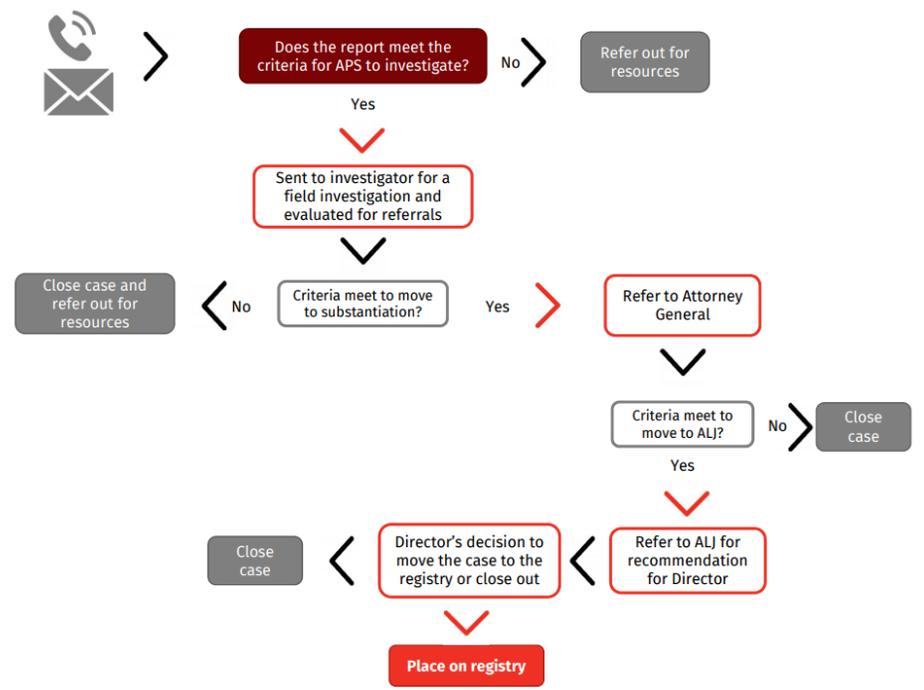
# Adult Protective Services

## Arizona Response

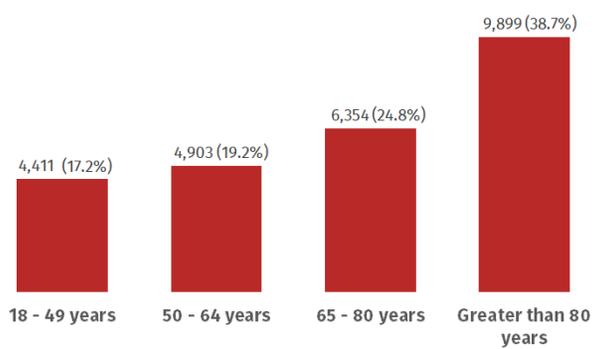
Throughout fiscal year 2019 and 2020 the case report load has continued to increase. From July 2018 to November 2019 there was a **87% increase** in monthly caseload.



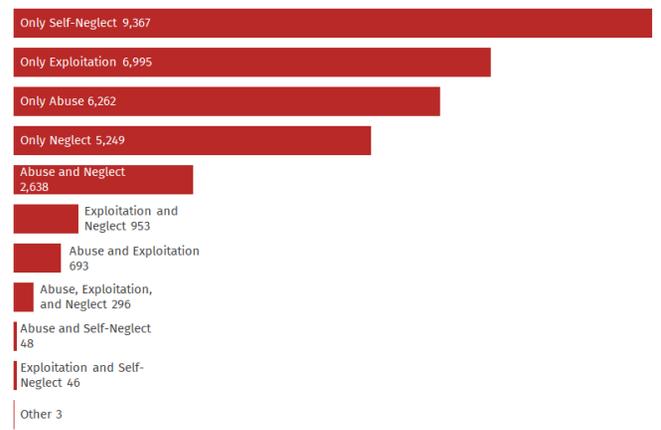
## APS Investigation Process



**25,597** reported clients from July 1, 2018 – December 1, 2019



The most common allegations that are reported to APS are self-neglect followed by exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Although less frequent some reports have multiple categories.



**Total Reported Allegations**  
N=30,035

**Verified or Substantiated Cases**  
N=3,537

**Substantiated Cases**  
N=408

# Recommendations

Goal	Recommendations	Performance Measures
<b>Streamline resources for investigations and substantiation</b>	Establish a Social Services Rapid Response Team to quickly identify any needs for services or resources in response to reports of self-neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By September 30, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> <li>• Number of self neglect reports received per month</li> <li>• Number of Social Service Rapid Response Team clients served per month</li> <li>• Number and type of referrals/services provided per month</li> <li>• Number of days to initial contact</li> <li>• Number of days to closeout</li> </ul>
	Identify cross-training opportunities among state agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By October 30, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> <li>• Number of state agency employees completing trainings expanded for their roles</li> </ul>
	Implement initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of APS staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By June 30, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> <li>• Caseload ratio</li> <li>• Turnover rate</li> </ul>
<b>Improve reporting quality</b>	Develop and implement outreach for providers, stakeholders, and community partners on entire investigation, substantiation, and service referral process  Develop a client education model for reporters and the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By November 30, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> </ul>
	Implement a 24/7 hotline option with a defined triage process to streamline reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation to Arizona’s vulnerable adults to APS while maintaining current service referral resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By September 30, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> <li>• Number of clicks on information and referral website per month</li> <li>• Number of calls for each communication type per month</li> </ul>
	Create a public facing data dashboard of current APS reports and investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By December 31, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> </ul>
	Identify legislative recommendations that impact the system to improve reporting, streamline requirements, and ensure safety of vulnerable adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By December 31, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> <li>• By June 30, 2021, legislation is passed that contains 100% of high impact priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Increase awareness of and access to community resources</b>	Establish a Vulnerable Adult Portal as an entry point for statewide resources that also hosts a community connection platform to support coordination of live local resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By July 31, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> </ul>
<b>Leverage data sharing opportunities</b>	Implement a short term solution for registry accessibility. Determine the feasibility and resources required to create a centralized registry and background check system as a statewide public resource on a platform that provides notifications on changes to eligibility to the employer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By December 31, 2020, complete 100% of action items on time</li> </ul>

# SOCIAL WORK RESPONSE

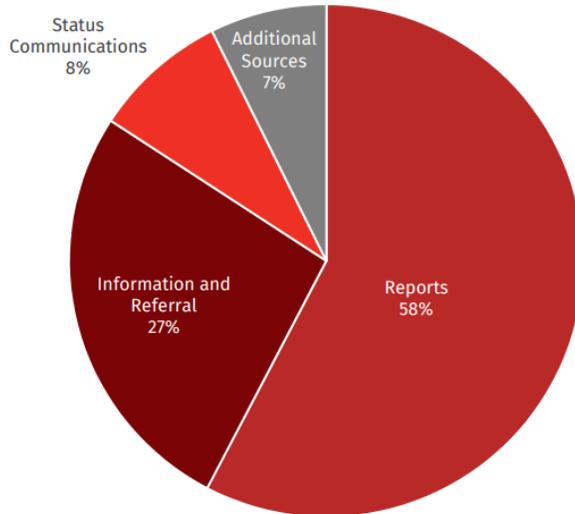
## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Social Work Response

**BACKGROUND & GAP:** Arizona’s Adult Protective Service (APS) triages limited resources to respond to high priority reports of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or self-neglect. During an investigation, the health and safety of the vulnerable adult is the priority, and individuals may be referred for services or provided resources to ensure their needs are met.

The final outcome of an investigation can result in a substantiation when the final determination that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult has occurred based on a preponderance of evidence collected. If the investigation is substantiated and identified a known perpetrator, that perpetrator may be placed on the state’s abuse, exploitation and neglect registries. However, in the case of self-neglect, an allegation may be verified, but the individual will not be placed on the registry.

Without a dedicated social services response to triage reports of self-neglect, APS’ limited program investigation resources are unable to focus on reports of alleged abuse, neglect and exploitation.

**TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA:** During fiscal years 2019 and 2020, there was a monthly average of 2,800 calls answered and 990 online reports filed. Of the communications, 34% are from callers who need additional resources or referrals.

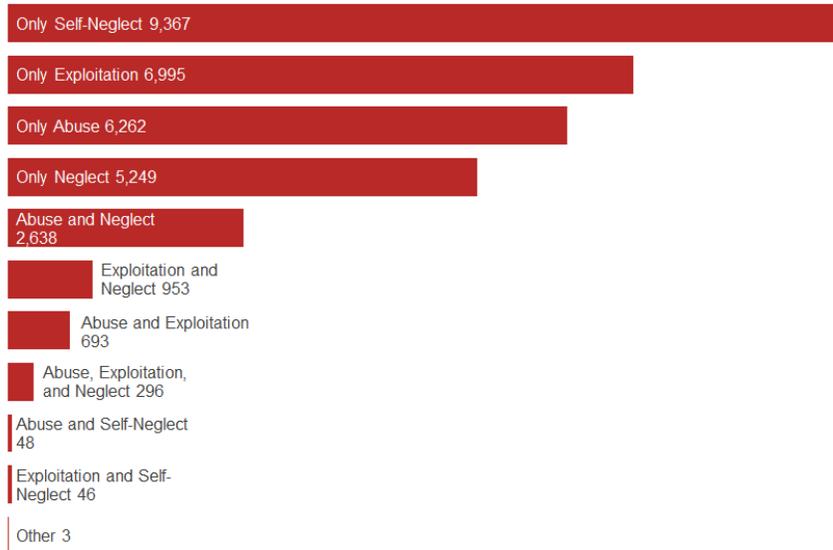


The Central Intake Unit handles a variety of communications including:

- Callers reporting abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect
- Status updates for current reports

# SOCIAL WORK RESPONSE

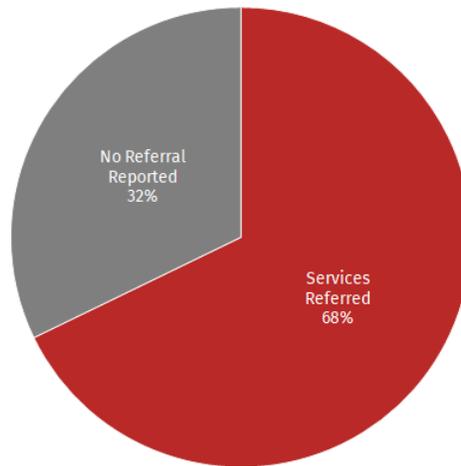
The most common allegation reported to APS is self-neglect, accounting for approximately 29% of all reports.



In these cases, APS is unable to substantiate any alleged perpetrator and the vulnerable adult likely needs referrals for services to assist them in meeting their needs.

Over 17,000 of the clients with reports to APS received documented services including:

- Behavioral Health
- Caregiver Services
- Financial Services
- Housing Services
- Legal/Protective Services
- Food Assistance



# SOCIAL WORK RESPONSE

PROPOSAL: Establish a Social Services Rapid Response Team to quickly identify any needs for services or resources in response to reports of self-neglect.

## ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By March 31, 2020: Establish standard work for Social Work Response Team, including:
  - Number and make up of response team
  - Timeframes for contact and follow-up
  - Pathways to refer to investigations team, if neglect, abuse or exploitation is suspected
- By March 31, 2020: Develop a statewide list of available resources and referrals for services.
  - Incorporating the use of the gap assessment and the care portal
- By March 31, 2020: Establish social work job classification
- By May 31, 2020: Implement Standard Work in metropolitan areas
- By September 30, 2020: Implement Standard Work statewide

## AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security

## METRICS:

- By September 30, 2020: 100% of action items will be completed on time
- Number of self-neglect reports received per month
- Number of Social Service Rapid Response Team clients served per month
- Number and type of referrals/services provided per month
- Number of days to initial contact
- Number of days to closeout

# CROSS-TRAINING AMONG STATE AGENCIES

## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Cross-training Among State Agencies

BACKGROUND & GAP: APS is charged with investigating reports of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect. Within the larger Arizona adult protective services system, multiple state agencies may be involved at various points of investigation and substantiation. It is important for state agencies to understand the investigative authorities and responsibilities, overlap and collaborative opportunities among those agencies to ensure efficient and streamlined processes.

Requirements of APS' workers set by [A.R.S. § 46-452](#) include receiving reports of abused, exploited, or neglected vulnerable adults, making an evaluation to determine service needs, and offering adults in need of protective services as appropriate in view of the evaluation. In addition, an APS investigator works with the courts and public fiduciaries to file petitions as necessary for the appointment of a permanent or temporary guardian or conservator.

The [Arizona Attorney General's Office](#) receives recommendations for substantiation, reviews evidence, and provides guidance on whether to pursue substantiating the allegation.

The [ADHS Division of Public Health Licensing Services](#) licenses and regulates medical healthcare facilities, residential healthcare facilities, and long term care facilities. Additionally, ADHS inspects group homes for individuals living with a developmental disability. ADHS adopts rules to establish minimum standards and requirements for the construction, modification, and licensure of health care institutions necessary to ensure the public health, safety, and welfare. ADHS receives and responds to facility self-reports and public complaints about suspected violations by a healthcare facility.

The Arizona Department of Economic Security's [Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) (DDD) provides case management and home and community based services to members who are eligible for Arizona Long Term Care Services - Developmental Disabilities (ALTCS-DD). DDD contracts with health plans and home and community based providers. DDD monitors providers and completes investigations when an incident indicates a potential quality of care complaint. DDD receives and responds to provider self-reports and public complaints about incidents, this includes health and safety checks and provision of services and supports to address concerns.

The [Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System](#) (AHCCCS) may be involved in investigating incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation as well as for quality of care concerns for an AHCCCS member.

The [Arizona Corporation Commission](#) may receive notifications from a broker dealer or investment advisor when financial exploitation of an eligible adult who is either 65 years of age or older or a vulnerable adult may have occurred, may have been attempted, or is being attempted. Through a statewide partnership, APS and ACC will conduct joint interviews with

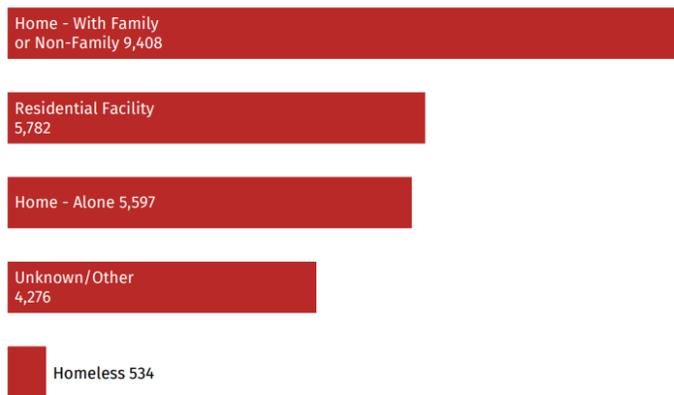
# CROSS-TRAINING AMONG STATE AGENCIES

victims of financial exploitation. This effort will allow for streamlined interviews, reduced duplication, and ensure the most efficient use of resources.

TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA: Approximately 22% of reported APS clients have a reported current living situation of a residential facility. During fiscal year 2019 and 2020, the majority of reporters include medical service providers, followed by social service providers, family members, and caregiver/resident managers.

**25,597**

reported clients from July 1, 2018 – December 1, 2019



## Current Living Situation

In response to Executive Order 2019-03, DES, AHCCCS and ADHS staff initiated a matrix to identify and assess existing training and education curricula. This matrix will identify the curricula by the intended audience. The Task Force also developed an [Incident Process Flow](#) to inform partners of the various possible steps when an incident occurs.

# CROSS-TRAINING AMONG STATE AGENCIES

PROPOSAL: Identify cross-training opportunities among state agencies.

## ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By September 30, 2020: Identify existing gaps in training among various roles of state agencies involved in serving vulnerable adults
  - By April 30, 2020: Expand current matrix to identify existing training available within state agencies regarding recognizing abuse, neglect, and exploitation, trauma-informed recovery, to expand to appropriate roles at other agencies
  - By May 31, 2020: Complete data match of APS reports and licensed healthcare facilities to identify trends and opportunities for focus
  - By June 30, 2020: Conduct work shadowing between APS central intake unit, APS investigators, and ADHS Licensing surveyors to understand roles.
  - By July 31, 2020: Evaluate feasibility of embedding APS investigators into ADHS Healthcare Facilities Licensing to streamline response to reports for vulnerable adults at a licensed facility
  - By September 30, 2020: Evaluate feasibility of cross-training ADHS licensing surveyors and APS investigators for reports at licensed healthcare facilities
- By October 30, 2020: Identify opportunities for state agencies to share data and investigation and complaint information relevant to streamline processes
  - By May 31, 2020: Complete a review of data captured during investigation of reports and facility complaints
  - By July 31, 2020: Compile a data crosswalk to identify overlap and similar points of information gathering

## AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Arizona Attorney General's Office
- Arizona Corporation Commission

## METRICS:

- By October 30, 2020: 100% of action items will be completed on time
- Number of state agency employees completing trainings expanded for their roles

# APS RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: APS Recruitment and Retention

BACKGROUND & GAP: APS works in partnership with law enforcement, the Attorney General's Office, Administrative Law Judges, other agencies and community-based service providers to assist in facilitating services and supports that help protect vulnerable adults and help them live as independently as possible. Due to the critical nature of vulnerable adults and the time-sensitive need to address and resolve issues related to their health and safety, the need to hire a qualified workforce is central to the ability to deliver services.

The [National Adult Protective Services Association](#) (NAPSA) recommends caseloads purely focused on investigations similar to the model currently utilized by APS to be targeted at 15.7 cases per investigator<sup>1</sup>. Historically, APS experiences natural caseload growth of 13% in line with the older adult population growth. However, recent caseload growth has reached 26%. The total caseload volume has grown in January 2020 to 4,090 cases resulting in caseloads of 37 cases per investigator.

According to the [Administration for Community Living's](#) 2016 National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State Adult Protective Services Systems report<sup>2</sup> (page 14), APS worker caseload varied from 0-25 per worker (13 states) to 100+ per worker (4 states). In the majority of states reported (21), the caseload per worker was 26-50. The important efforts to increase community awareness of the need to protect vulnerable adults and to report incidents of abuse neglect and exploitation is evident in the case load growth.

TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA: APS investigative units consist of one unit supervisor supported by eight investigators and one case aide. The current classification of APS Investigator positions are in the Human Services Specialist (HSS) series. These positions are responsible for case investigation and addressing the health and safety of vulnerable adults. The investigator series includes three levels of investigator positions with the salary for an Investigator 1 at \$33,280 and the salary for an Investigator 3 responsible for investigation of the most complex cases is \$40,414.

The turnover rate for APS is currently 20%, while the turnover rate for APS employees under a year is double that at 42%. Turnover directly impacts the number of trained/tenured investigators that can effectively manage targeted caseloads. Currently, 45% of APS investigators have less than 2 years of experience. APS employee exit survey data shows the "factors that had a significant influence on the decision to leave your current position" top two results: 59% selected "compensation not competitive" and 46% selected "lack of career advancement/opportunity".

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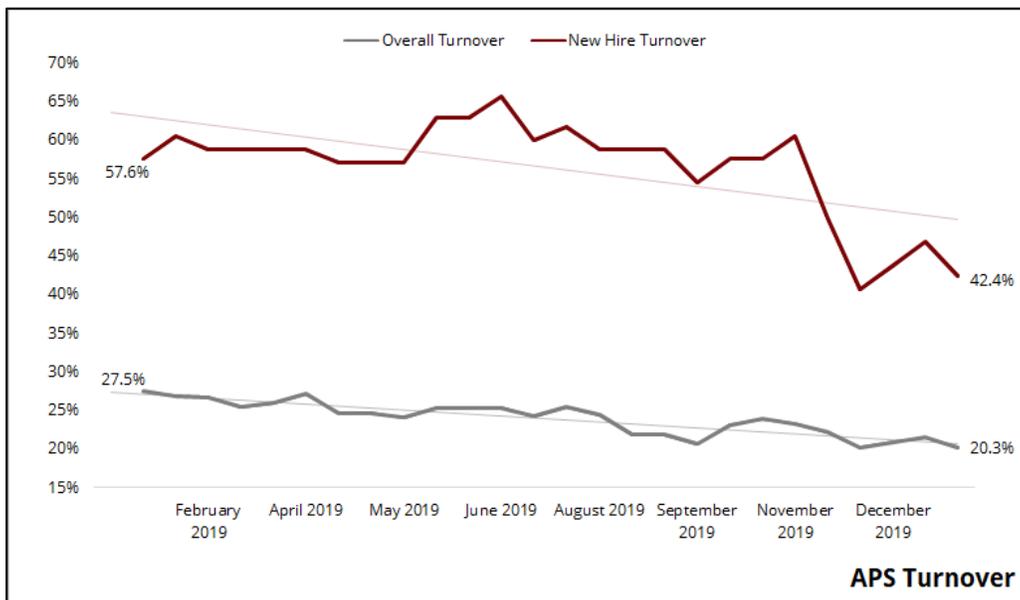
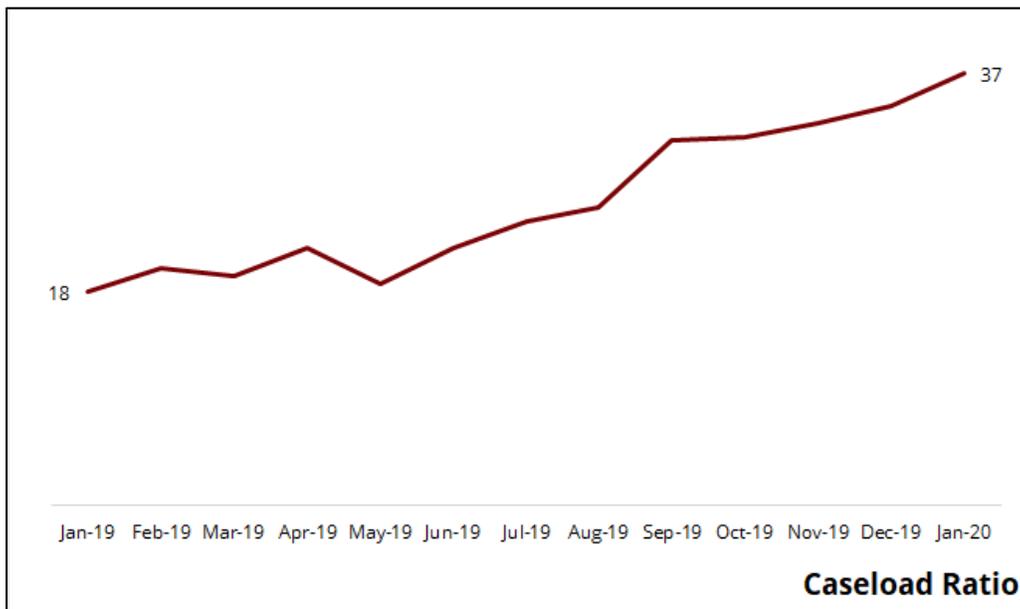
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.napsa-now.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/TA-Brief-Caseload-Management-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/APS-Guidelines-Document-2017.pdf>

# APS RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Another critical position within APS is the Customer Service Representative (CSR). This position is responsible for making decisions as to whether or not an APS report meets statutory criteria to investigate and for those reports that do, assign a priority level based on health and safety. This series includes three levels with the salary for a CSR1 at \$31,283 and the salary for a CRS2 at \$33,134. The average CSR position remains open for 124 days, impacted by failed background checks and candidates opting for higher paying offers.

The impact of increased caseload growth, tenure of APS workers and increased turnover rate of these positions, and the need for more competitive salaries has directly impacted the available resources needed to manage, timely investigate and close cases.



# APS RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

APS Unit	Grade	Position	Current Salary
Field Staff	12	Case Aide	\$29,869
	14	Investigator 1	\$33,280
	17	Investigator 2	\$36,920
	18	Investigator 3	\$40,414
	19	Unit Supervisor	\$46,197
Central Intake Unit (Hotline)	13	CSR 1	\$31,283
	15	CSR 2	\$33,134
	16	CSR 3	\$34,174
	18	Unit Supervisor	\$46,197

PROPOSAL: Implement initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of APS staff.

## ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By March 31, 2020: Combine Central Intake hotline positions with the investigator positions to allow cross training and alleviate field investigator burnout
- By June 30, 2020: Develop and implement a work plan to get to pure investigation caseload ratios to 25
  - By May 31, 2020: Implement workgroup to identify need for specialized units with additional specific training/background to support high need mental health, sexual assault, and individuals with developmental disabilities
  - By April 30, 2020: Implement workgroup on recruitment strategy that includes relationship building with local universities and internship programs
- By June 30, 2020: Develop and begin implementation of an APS Culture Plan to enhance APS' ability to attract, develop, and retain workforce

## AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Administration

## METRICS:

- By June 30, 2020: 100% of action items will be completed on time
- Caseload ratio
- Turnover rate

# OUTREACH & EDUCATION

## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Outreach and Education

BACKGROUND & GAP: APS operates under specific statutory authority in [Arizona Revised Statutes Title 46](#) Chapter 4 “Adult Protective Services”. The definitions of vulnerable adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation as well as the hearing process and mandatory reporter duties are outlined in statute and are different than criminal statute. APS works collaboratively with many external parties that include the public, law enforcement and first responders, Attorney General, multiple state and local agencies, medical professionals, financial professionals, public fiduciaries, oversight committees, and community partners amongst others. The network that ultimately serves to protect vulnerable adults in Arizona is complicated by the sheer number of parties involved but also the various required steps to place a perpetrator on the APS Registry.

Stakeholder feedback highlights a lack of understanding of the APS process as well as the resources available to support vulnerable adults.

TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA: The Executive Order 2019-03 Abuse & Neglect Prevention Task Force recommended that Arizona should commit to creating a statewide culture of abuse, neglect, and exploitation prevention. A public awareness campaign, developed collaboratively by the Governor’s Office, state agencies, and community stakeholders, should include, but not be limited to, these key messages:

- Arizona values and protects vulnerable individuals.
- Arizona is committed to recognizing signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Arizona encourages all parties to report concerns.
- Arizona supports the provision of information about how to make a report, whistleblower protections, and the process and timeline after a report is made.
- Arizona supports the provision of information about the principles and benefits of trauma-informed care and compassionate care.
- Arizona supports the provision of information about accessing trusted resources for information and support.

The Task Force additionally recommended that Arizona build on previous efforts and implement a system-wide trauma-informed approach, with attention to the special needs of vulnerable individuals and their families, including support when families interact with clinicians, law enforcement, and other professionals. Arizona should support efforts to build and enhance community-based sexual assault services that utilize a trauma-informed approach and address the specific needs of vulnerable adults and their families. Services should be available to all survivors of sexual assault throughout the lifespan and include crisis lines and support groups for survivors of different ages, genders, and backgrounds; sexual assault specific legal and medical advocacy; and counseling by therapists with specialized training in addressing sexual trauma.

# OUTREACH & EDUCATION

PROPOSAL: Develop and implement outreach for providers, stakeholders, and community partners on entire investigation, substantiation, and service referral process. Develop a client education model for reporting sources and the general public.

## ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By March 31, 2020: Review state agency and community partner websites determine to the need for adding enhanced reporting information and links
- By June 30, 2020: Establish workgroup to determine what additional, non-print resources are needed and methods for distribution to assist stakeholders
- By October 31, 2020: Meet with leaders of mandatory reporter groups to develop education on requirements and investigation process
- By November 30, 2020: Finalize and implement Vulnerable Adult Protocol and determine how to implement statewide

## AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- APS stakeholders

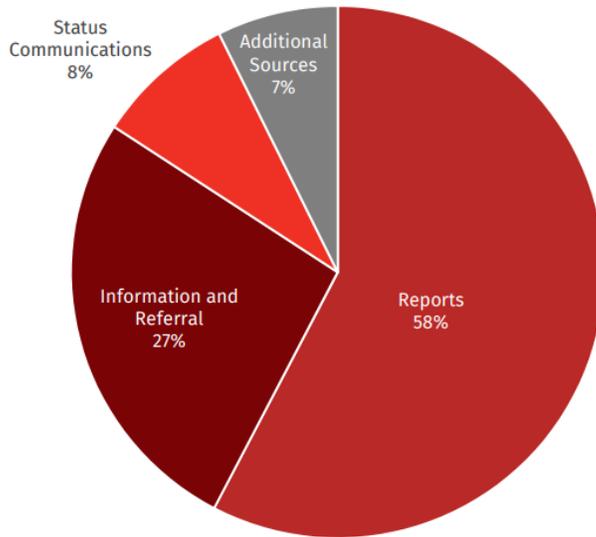
## METRICS:

- By November 30, 2020: 100% of action items will be completed on time

# REPORTING & SERVICE REFERRAL CALL TRIAGE

## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Reporting and Service Referral Call Triage

**BACKGROUND & GAP:** During fiscal years 2019 and 2020, there was a monthly average of 2,800 calls answered and 990 online reports processed by the Central Intake Unit. Of the communications, 27% are from callers who need additional resources or referrals.



The Central Intake Unit handles a variety of communications including:

- Callers reporting abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect
- Status updates for current reports

By appropriately triaging and directing callers to the correct place at the start of the call, APS can streamline the customer experience while reducing the total volume of calls to the Central Intake Unit.

**TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA:** Stakeholders have voiced concern that, unlike the Department of Child Safety’s hotline, there is not staff available 24 hours a day to take reports of neglect, abuse, and exploitation. While online reporting is available through the online reporting tool 24 hours a day, someone can only reach a live individual at the Central Intake Unit while it is staffed. The Central Intake Unit is staffed Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm and weekends and holidays from 10 am to 6 pm.

# REPORTING & SERVICE REFERRAL CALL TRIAGE

PROPOSAL: Implement a 24/7 hotline option with a defined triage process to streamline reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation to Arizona's vulnerable adults to APS while maintaining current service referral resources.

## ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By March 31, 2020: Develop a workgroup to identify potential solutions for triaging and streamlining the customer experience
- By April 15, 2020: Meet with the Department of Child Safety leadership to discuss combining the Adult Protective Services call center with the Child Safety Call center
- By May 31, 2020: Redesign website to provide up to date information and links to referral services
- By June 30, 2020: Meet with 2-1-1 to identify opportunities for partnering
- By September 30, 2020: Implement new triage system for APS

## AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Child Safety
- Arizona Department of Health Services

## METRICS:

- By September 30, 2020: 100% of action items will be completed on time
- Number of clicks on information and referral website per month
- Number of calls for each communication type per month

# DATA DASHBOARD

## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Data Dashboard

**BACKGROUND & GAP:** Currently, APS metrics related to the program, including basic demographic information, case type or status, and average times, are released through a static annual report. Although the report provides valuable details regarding programmatic actions, data is presented at a single point of time and is delayed by a significant period.

**TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA:** Metrics associated with APS may be used to further define program needs and gaps. In order to get this data back to program staff, as well as public stakeholders, the development of an interactive dashboard will provide more up-to-date information. Furthermore, the interactive dashboard will include term definitions and resources available to stakeholders, providing an additional avenue of access for public users.

**PROPOSAL:** Create a public facing data dashboard of current APS reports and investigations.

### ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By March 31, 2020: Develop and publish a public facing data dashboard using 2019 fiscal year data, including metrics from the Stakeholder meeting and APS annual report, on the DES website updated on a monthly basis
- By October 31, 2020: Develop and implement an APS data warehouse that stores historical data for analysis
- By December 31, 2020, establish a real-time connection with the APS database and automatically update metrics within the dashboard on a monthly basis

### AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Health Services

### METRICS:

- By December 31, 2020: 100% of action items will be completed on time

# LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Legislative Recommendations

BACKGROUND & GAP: Title 46, Chapter 4 of the Arizona Revised Statutes outlines the DES authorities, responsibilities and requirements for the Adult Protective Services Program. [Title 6, Chapter 8 of the Arizona Administrative Code](#) describes how DES implements and operationalizes those authorities and requirements.

TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA: Per state law, APS only has the authority to investigate allegations that involve maltreatment (abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation) of a vulnerable adult. All reports meeting the statutory definitions of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult are investigated. The APS intake staff makes a determination using a national best practice structured decision-making tool to determine if a case is accepted as a report of maltreatment and requires an investigation.

Once an APS investigator recommends a report be substantiated, the case is referred to the Attorney General's Office to determine substantiation. If the Attorney General's Office agrees the report should be substantiated, the alleged person being investigated will be given a notice about their due process rights, including their right to a hearing by an Administrative Law Judge. The Administrative Law Judge makes a recommendation to the DES Director, who can then accept, modify or reject the recommendation. If the Director ultimately decides the allegation is substantiated, the individual will be placed on the Adult Protective Services Registry.

The National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State Adult Protective Services Systems<sup>3</sup> report completed a comparison of the states' administrative system practices and requirements. In 2018, the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) released a report<sup>4</sup> indicating that only 26 states maintained an Adult Abuse Registry, with a wide variety of approaches. By reviewing and updating this information, to include current state registry and reporting requirements, recommendations can be made to improve reporting and the investigative process and ensure the safety of vulnerable adults.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/APS-Guidelines-Document-2017.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.napsa-now.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/APS-Abuse-Registry-Report.pdf>

# LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL: Identify legislative recommendations that impact the system to improve reporting, streamline requirements, and ensure safety of vulnerable adults.

## ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By April 30, 2020: Complete a 50 state review on Adult Protective Services Systems and Requirements
- By May 31, 2020: Convene the Legislative Recommendations Workgroup to design an ideal APS System, including:
  - Reviewing Title 46, Chapter 4 and corresponding Arizona Administrative Code to identify necessary changes
  - Making legislative recommendations to achieve ideal state
  - Identify high impact priorities
- By August 31, 2020: Draft recommendations developed
- By September 15, 2020: Work with legislative council
- By October 31, 2020: Identify bill sponsors
- By November 30, 2020: Work with stakeholders to gather feedback/ideas
- By December 31, 2020: Develop draft legislation
- By June 30, 2021: Work bills through the legislative process

## AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Child Safety
- Arizona Department of Health Services

## METRICS:

- By December 31, 2020: 100% of action items will be completed on time
- By June 30, 2021, legislation is passed that contains 100% of high impact priorities

# COMMUNITY CONNECTION PLATFORM

## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Community Connection Platform

**BACKGROUND & GAP:** There are multiple partners involved when it comes to supporting a vulnerable adult, whether through reporting maltreatment or obtaining access to community resources. Currently, 68% of APS cases are referred for services that span from basic needs supports like food assistance and housing to longer term behavioral health, caregiving, legal and financial supports.

Vulnerable adults need access to the services offered to ensure they are in a safe and supported environment. The available community resources differ based on region which makes it complicated to identify and secure necessary help. Some regions are restricted by the providers available in the area to deliver the service. There is no statewide resource that hosts all community resources by local/regional area. There is a lack of data and understanding on what resources are constrained.

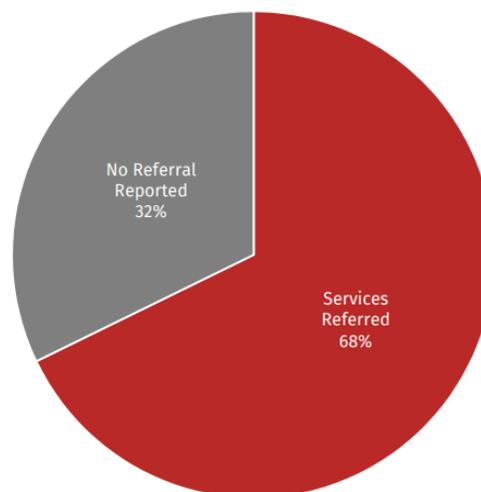
**TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA:** Agencies involved in allegations of maltreatment (potential list of available resources to report information on site):

- Arizona Department of Economic Security/Division of Aging and Adult Services
- Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Public Health Licensing Services
- AHCCCS/Arizona Long Term Care System -- Elderly and Physically Disabled
- Arizona Department of Economic Security/Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Arizona Attorney General's Office/Task Force Against Senior Abuse (TASA)
- Arizona Department of Administration/Independent Oversight Committees
- Arizona Corporation Commission

Communities are also looking for opportunities to help. Currently there is no platform for those in need to request community support similar to the Department of Child Safety Care Portal. The vulnerable adult needs for community support range from furniture, meal delivery, companionship, transportation, yardwork, or simple housekeeping.

Over 17,000 of the clients with reports to APS received documented services including:

- Behavioral Health
- Caregiver Services
- Financial Services
- Housing Services
- Legal/Protective Services
- Food Assistance



# COMMUNITY CONNECTION PLATFORM

PROPOSAL: Establish a Vulnerable Adult Portal as an entry point for statewide resources that also hosts a community connection platform to support coordination of live local resources.

## ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By March 31, 2020: Initiate workgroup to design Vulnerable Adult portal with user friendly access to system supports: from state, local, and community resources
- By March 31, 2020: Gather lists and links to host on the portal and conduct a gap analysis of existing community resources available statewide for vulnerable adults
- By June 30, 2020: Establish a community connection platform to host/match vulnerable adult needs with volunteers/donors in the community
- By July 31, 2020: Market the portal to educate public on resource

## AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security/Adult Protective Services
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Arizona Attorney General's Office
- Independent Oversight Committee
- Arizona Corporation Commission

## METRICS:

- By July 31, 2020: 100% of action items will be completed on time

# DATA SHARING OPPORTUNITIES

## RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Data Sharing Opportunities

**BACKGROUND & GAP:** The APS substantiation process is multifaceted and requires coordination among many partners. When substantiating the allegation(s) of maltreatment (abuse, neglect or exploitation), the case goes through an appeal process until a final determination is made. If a preponderance of the evidence shows the maltreatment more likely happened than not the perpetrator’s information is added to the Arizona’s Adult Protective Services Registry. The APS Registry contains the name and date of birth of the person determined to have maltreated a vulnerable adult, the nature of the allegation made and the date and description of the disposition of the allegation.

**TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA:** There are over 1,500 names on the APS registry currently. Over 300 entries were added over the last two fiscal years. If the perpetrator’s name was placed on the APS Registry prior to July 3, 2015, their name remains on the registry for ten years. Due to statutory changes, if their name was placed on the registry after July 3, 2015, the name appears for a period of 25 years.

During fiscal year 2019 and 2020, there were **327 registry entries** made in the abuse, exploitation, and neglect registries.

	<b>Abuse</b>	<b>Exploitation</b>	<b>Neglect</b>
<b>Declined</b>	1	1	4
<b>Dismissed</b>	4	2	1
<b>No Registry Case</b>	29	23	10
<b>Pending Registry</b>	17	25	6
<b>Registered</b>	106	179	42

The purpose of the APS Registry is to prevent vulnerable adults and children from being victimized by individuals who have been found, through an APS investigation and due process, to have abused, neglected or exploited a vulnerable adult. Employers are encouraged to review the registry when deciding whether to employ a person to provide care for vulnerable populations. The decision to hire a person listed on the APS Registry is solely up to the employer.

In August of 2019, a new law went into effect mandating a check of the APS Registry for individuals employed or seeking employment in a position that provides direct services to children or vulnerable adults through employment with DES or through contracts with DES to provide services to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Additionally, the

# DATA SHARING OPPORTUNITIES

law change allowed DES to use information in the APS Registry to conduct a background check for individuals seeking employment with DES or a DES contractor in a position that provides direct services to children or vulnerable adults. DES implemented this permissive statute as a requirement through policy. The APS Registry is updated weekly and is available to the public online through the APS website or by written request.

Currently DES has both PDF and Excel versions of the APS Registry on the Department of Economic Security [website](#), though the public and many provider agencies are not always aware of the existence of the APS Registry or its location. Provider agencies can be required to search multiple databases (CPS/APS Registries, DPS Fingerprint Clearance Cards, etc.). Development of a central registry to streamline information and ensure timely coordination would improve use by the public and partners and better protect vulnerable adults.

The [AZ Care Check](#) includes a searchable database containing information about deficiencies found against licensed facilities and providers by ADHS.

PROPOSAL: Implement a short term solution for registry accessibility. Determine the feasibility and resources required to create a centralized registry and background check system as a statewide public resource on a platform that provides notifications on changes to eligibility to the employer.

## ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE:

- By April 1, 2020: Identify central repository stakeholders
- By April 30, 2020: Perform a gap analysis to identify data sharing opportunities among system partners to reduce duplication and increase access to pertinent information
- By July 31, 2020: Integrate APS registry into AZ Care Check for improved use by public and partners
- By November 30, 2020: Hold seven monthly meetings (May-November) to discuss how to integrate multiple existing registries including the technology necessary to streamline information and ensure timely coordination for the responsible entity
- By December 1, 2020: Analyze data and determine feasibility for integration
- By December 31, 2020: Issue final recommendations

## AGENCIES IMPACTED:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona Department of Child Safety
- Arizona Department of Public Safety
- Agency Providers

## METRICS:

- By December 31, 2020, 100% of action items will be completed on time