



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY  
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# News Release

Timothy Jeffries, Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **DES Hires New Adult Protective Services Caseworkers to Protect Against Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation**

**PHOENIX** – DES Director Tim Jeffries today announced significant progress regarding the hiring of staff within Adult Protective Services (APS), which has resulted in a more deliberate assessment and increased engagement of APS cases. Dedicated resources and increased transparency have led to the continued protection of vulnerable adults.

APS staff assess reported incidents of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of vulnerable adults. Part of the process includes evaluating the need for protective services or other support services. Over the past five years, the number of APS reports has grown by 79 percent. To provide the most responsive and thorough assessment, the State's APS caseload goal is 40 urban and 30 rural cases per investigator. However, the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015 year to date average, currently stands at 180 urban and 75 rural cases each.

"Protecting the most vulnerable individuals in our society is one of our highest priorities," said Director Jeffries. "We are intensely focused on ensuring our Adult Protective Services are nothing less than exceptional. Cases are in various stages of investigation with the objective of ensuring vulnerable adults are safe from harm. With public interaction and support, together we can raise awareness of those who seek to harm individuals who cannot protect themselves."

"All adults, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, deserve protection to live their lives free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In order for APS professionals to successfully accomplish this mission, it is paramount to keep the caseload numbers at a realistic level," said newly appointed Assistant Director of Aging and Adult Services Lynn Larson. "This situation requires more financial and staff resources, along with effective community services."

Governor Doug Ducey and members of the Arizona legislature agree that APS caseworkers needed more support. To address this need for additional staff, \$1.0M was added to the SFY 2015 budget to better manage caseload growth. The SFY 2016 budget also includes \$1.2M to support additional caseload growth. The hiring process is nearly complete for the next fiscal year, with 96 of 108 senior investigator positions filled, 16 of 18 entry-level investigators hired, and 34 of 40 contractors on board.

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