



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

Division of Aging and Adult Services

Adult Protective Services

State Fiscal Year 2022 Year in Review

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Introduction and Background

Adult Protective Services (APS) Year in Review

The State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 APS Year in Review Report provides a summary of APS accomplishments throughout the year.

Statutory Authority

In 1980, the Arizona Legislature enacted the APS Act to protect vulnerable adults 18 years of age or older from abuse, neglect, and exploitation (Arizona Revised Statutes [A.R.S.] §§ 46-451 through 46-474). A vulnerable adult is defined as an individual age 18 and older, who is unable to protect themselves due to a physical or mental impairment (A.R.S. § 46-451[11]), or who a court has deemed incapacitated (A.R.S. § 14-5101[3]).

Guiding Values and Principles

APS Mission: Inspire hope with vulnerable adults by engaging and partnering with the individual, family, and community to ensure their self-determination, safety, independence, and highest quality of life.

APS Vision: Arizona's vulnerable adults thriving free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The Arizona APS Program is a member of the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA), a national non-profit 501(c)(3) with members from all 50 states. NAPSA provides an opportunity for APS Programs to share information, solve problems, and improve vulnerable adult maltreatment response. As a component of their Code of Ethics,¹ NAPSA provides the guiding value of APS Programs, which states: "Every action taken by APS must balance the duty to protect the safety of the vulnerable adult with the adult's right to self-determination."

NAPSA's Principles:

- Adults have the right to be safe;
- Adults retain all their civil and constitutional rights, e.g. the right to live their lives as they wish, manage their own finances, enter into contracts, marry, etc., unless a court adjudicates otherwise;

¹ NAPSA (or APS) Code of Ethics - <https://www.napsa-now.org/about-napsa/code-of-ethics/>

- Adults have the right to make decisions that do not conform with societal norms as long as these decisions do not harm others; and
- Adults have the right to accept or refuse services.

Some Practice Guidelines for APS workers include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Recognize that the interests of the adult are the first concern of any intervention;
- Focus on case planning that maximizes the vulnerable adult's independence and choice to the extent possible based on the adult's capacity;
- Avoid imposing personal values on others; and
- Use the least restrictive services first whenever possible - community-based services rather than institutionally based services.

Structure and Responsibilities

Under the umbrella of the Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES), APS is responsible for receiving reports and investigating allegations of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of a vulnerable adult. APS has the authority to investigate allegations that occur in the home and in facilities. APS cross-reports to other entities with statutory or regulatory authority to investigate, such as the Arizona Department of Health Services, the Long-term Care Ombudsman, law enforcement, and the ADES Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). APS investigators are members of local multi-disciplinary teams that bring various community providers together to best meet the needs of the adult/victim. APS also maintains the APS Registry which contains the name and date of birth of perpetrators of vulnerable adult maltreatment. The APS Registry is available to employers as part of the background check of potential employees; however, employment decisions are at the discretion of the employer.

In order to ensure the best possible outcomes for clients, APS comprises the following functions and programs:

- Central Intake Unit (CIU)—Receives and evaluates reports of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. When a report is accepted for an investigation, the information is referred to the district where the adult/victim resides.
- Field Investigations—Investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults that have been referred from the CIU. This process includes an initial in-person assessment of the current situation and a safety and risk assessment. If the safety assessment concludes the adult/victim is unsafe, the investigator and the adult/victim develop a safety evaluation plan. When the adult/victim has unmet needs, the investigator makes referrals to the

service providers in the community. The investigator continues to investigate the allegations by interviewing the alleged perpetrator, witnesses, and the reporting source. Medical, legal, and financial records can be obtained and analyzed. In non-self-neglect investigations, the investigator, in consultation with the supervisor, determines whether there is sufficient evidence to support that the allegations occurred by the alleged perpetrator. If so, the investigator proposes to substantiate the allegations and submits the investigation to an Appeals Specialist for processing. Some investigations require the work of specialized teams. Specifically:

- Financial Exploitation Unit—Investigates allegations of financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. This work often involves analyzing hundreds to thousands of pages of financial documents.
- Self-neglect Unit—Investigates cases of self-neglect. This unit is responsible for engaging with clients who are unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, and exploitation and who are, due to physical and/or mental impairments, unable to care for themselves.
- Appeals—Coordinates the substantiation process, in partnership with the Office of the Attorney General, which provides the alleged perpetrator due process. If the conclusion is a substantiated finding, the appeals specialist places the perpetrator's name, date of birth and brief summary of the allegations on the APS Registry and provides notice to the alleged perpetrator of the findings of the investigation.
- Quality Assurance (QA)—Conducts QA reviews of both the intake calls and closed investigations. The QA nurse provides consultations and technical assistance to support staff in ensuring quality investigations of alleged victims with medically complex needs.
- Case Review Unit—Reviews investigations submitted for closure to ensure adherence to APS Policy and Procedures. The unit is part of the Continuous Quality Improvement section of APS.

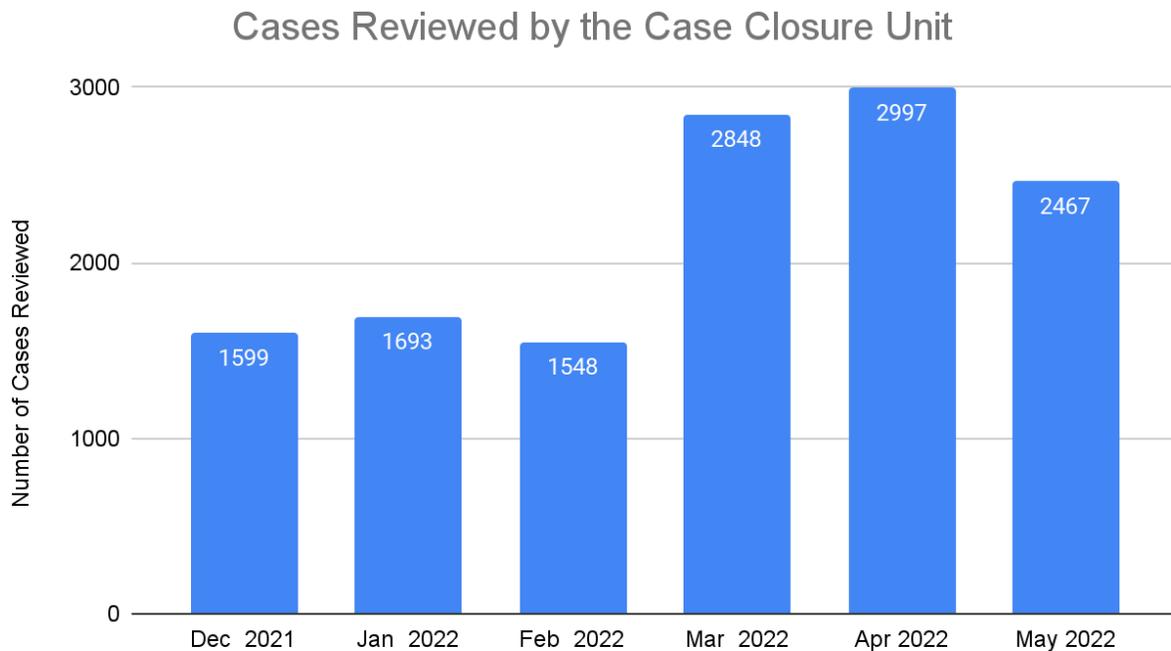
Organizational Changes

Reporting Growth and Additional Investigators

Reporting growth continued in SFY 2022 at 25 percent year over year, which required additional investigators to meet the need. APS brought on 22 new investigators statewide in SFY 2022. APS also partnered with the ADES Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services to launch ADES' first internal apprenticeship program. On March 2, 2022, APS in cooperation with the United States Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship finalized an apprenticeship program for an Investigator 1 position. The apprenticeship is a one-year program consisting of 40 hours per week. As part of the apprenticeship, they will attend the APS Academy, which is an eight week New Investigator Training and Onboarding (NITO) Program. This includes virtual instructor-led training, Computer-Based Training (CBT) and on-the-job training. The on-the-job training and mentoring will continue throughout the apprenticeship. This apprenticeship will be an opportunity for anyone thinking about starting their career and allow them to learn about the role APS plays in protecting Arizona's vulnerable adults.

Case Review Unit

APS created a dedicated Case Review Unit in SFY 2022. This unit is responsible for reviewing cases ready for closure and ensuring all necessary steps are completed during the investigation. This unit allows APS to ensure that cases are closed in an appropriate and timely manner, creates consistency and quality, and alleviates supervisor time, so they can focus on coaching, mentoring and developing staff. Case reviewers are assigned to review cases in units throughout the state. Each month, the assigned units are rotated to ensure a consistent approach to case closure regardless of location. As of June 2022, the unit was composed of nine reviewers and one supervisor. As shown in the graphic below, the Case Review Unit steadily increased its case review capacity.



COVID-19 Policies and Procedures

APS investigations followed the COVID-19 Pandemic policies and procedures implemented when Governor Ducey issued his Declaration of Emergency and Executive order related to the COVID-19 Pandemic on March 11, 2020. On March 30, 2022, Governor Ducey ended the Declaration of Emergency related to the pandemic. On April 26, 2022, APS fully returned to providing in-person contact during APS investigations.

APS Action Plan Implementation

In response to Arizona Executive Order 2019-03 issued by Governor Ducey relating to enhanced protections for individuals with disabilities, the Abuse and Neglect Task Force, and the House Ad Hoc Committee on Abuse and Neglect of Vulnerable Adults, APS convened stakeholders and developed the APS Action Plan,² released in March of SFY 2020. The Action Plan outlined strategies and actions to strengthen the Arizona APS Program.

APS has continued Action Plan recommendation implementation, and made significant strides in addressing the following recommendations in SFY 2022.

² APS Dashboard - <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/adult-protective-services-aps/aps-documents>

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

APS incorporated the NAPSA training modules on self-neglect into the New Investigator Training curriculum that will deploy in SFY 2023 to ensure that all new investigators receive this comprehensive training. This expanded the training to those investigators not solely assigned to self-neglect casework.

Implement initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of APS staff.

APS continued to recruit quality staff dedicated to positive outcomes for clients, increasing the number of field investigators from 161 to 183 in total. Additional state funding was secured for SFY 2023 to support ongoing growth and competitive salaries.

The Build the Bench project focused on providing current field supervisors with the tools and training to evaluate their teams through a 9-box model. This model is widely used to provide a holistic assessment of current staff performance and future potential to help determine career path and identify high performers. The continued increase in reports, and subsequent need to recruit new investigators and supervisors, requires the current teams to invest in their potential leaders and create a bench of individuals who are prepared to promote into leadership positions.

APS expanded the use of Tableau dashboards for leaders to easily monitor key indicators through daily data updates. Leaders were trained and additional listening sessions were held to identify the need for increased data-informed decision making and accountability. Daily meetings were established to discuss the flow of data from the district level down to the individual investigator level. Performance expectations are incorporated visually and discussed timely. Development of an investigator level dashboard was completed and is set to roll out in SFY 2023.

The APS Training Academy was established with the main coursework of NITO, which spans 275 hours of training over eight weeks. Through the support of an Administration for Community Living (ACL) training grant, over two years of development was finalized in a comprehensive program for new investigators to be better prepared for the fieldwork through CBT, virtual instructor led training, on-the-job training modules, and dedicated training supervisors with APS background and expertise to lead them. The coursework is set to launch in SFY 2023.

In February 2022, Arizona APS was recognized and asked to participate in a panel discussion on APS strategies for retention and recruitment by the United

States Department of Health and Human Services, ACL - Technical Assistance Resource Center. The recognition focused on the innovation of the Case Closure Review Unit. The creation of this unit allows supervisors who had previously spent considerable time reviewing and closing cases to focus on mentoring, coaching, and directing their investigators.

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

APS continued its efforts to increase awareness and understanding of vulnerable adult maltreatment through education and community engagement. The development and launch of “Recognizing and Reporting Maltreatment” was completed in SFY 2022. This training is available to the public [online as a CBT](#) or through the ADES Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) Outreach Team that provides in-person presentations. At the end of SFY 2022, more than 200 people had taken the training. The online training and the included presentation material became a valuable tool for organizations, agencies, and anyone with a concern for and/or contact with a vulnerable adult, but especially for mandatory reporters.

The Community Outreach Coordinator and various APS subject matter experts provided more than 20 APS Awareness and Understanding presentations to stakeholders, community partners, and organizations, including fire departments, non-profits, hospices, long-term care providers, and fiduciaries. The link to the online training is always shared with attendees as another resource in addition to the presentation.

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

To improve transparency and provide the public with the highest quality information, APS implemented several improvements to the [Data Dashboard](#). This web-based tool allows a viewer to quickly review and sort timely information concerning allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, alleged perpetrators, investigator caseload, and more. Using the dashboard, a viewer can access high-level, state-wide information and drill down to note geographic, demographic, and other specifics. In February 2022, APS added the ability to sort specifically for data concerning members of DDD. APS also maintains internal data dashboards for staff use to ensure accountability throughout the organization and facilitate decision-making.

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

In 2019, the House Ad Hoc Committee on Abuse and Neglect of Vulnerable Adults made multiple recommendations aimed at preventing instances of abuse and neglect, and in 2022, the Arizona State Legislature implemented two of these recommendations: funding an independent audit of the APS system and establishing a statutory definition of emotional abuse, which was added to A.R.S. § 46-451.

APS continues to work with other state agencies to foster system-wide efficiencies, improvements, and innovations in addressing incidents of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The Arizona Department of Health Services, Arizona Attorney General's Office, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, the Long Term Care Ombudsman, the Arizona Corporation Commission, and APS formed a State Agency Collaborative to address abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This group meets quarterly to review processes, identify barriers, expand cross-reporting opportunities, and assess any impacts from Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Task Force recommendations that are related to state agency collaboration.

Accomplishments and Innovations

APS Case Management and Data System Replacement

In SFY 2018, ACL awarded APS a grant to enhance its use of data and technology. The data and technology grant was used to replace the Arizona APS System (AZAPSS), an outdated and antiquated internally-developed system that had been in use for more than ten years. The new system, myAPS, launched in September 2021.

With the implementation of myAPS, leadership and staff now have increased data flexibility and visibility. The system tracks the changes that are made to case files for historical data clarity. Additionally, myAPS reduced redundancies associated with AZAPSS by allowing the Central Intake customer service representatives to directly enter report information into the system instead of typing the information into a template and then transferring the information into the database. The new system has provided investigators with a streamlined process to more quickly and accurately enter safety and risk assessments, correspondence to investigation participants, and other standardized documentation.

CIU Resource Guide

ADES strives to provide a “world-class customer experience.”³ To that end, CIU implemented a Resource Guide that enables customer service representatives to efficiently provide callers with high-quality information. Oftentimes, individuals who call CIU to report abuse and neglect also need vital information related to the care of a vulnerable adult. For example, an individual who calls to report self-neglect might also benefit from contact information for their local food bank or their local area agency on aging. Using the Resource Guide, a customer service representative can provide the caller with location-appropriate contact information for the services that best meet their needs. Additionally, the Resource Guide provides cross-reporting information for other states and tribes.

Psychological and Neuropsychological Evaluations

Beginning in February 2022, APS staff were able to refer clients to psychological and neuropsychological providers that travel to the client’s home to complete their evaluation. This allows APS to refer the client to services that best meet their needs and may potentially assist in determining if a guardianship application is appropriate. It is especially beneficial to clients who may not want to leave their homes or clients for whom traveling is difficult.

Scam Awareness Campaign

In November 2021, APS launched a scam awareness campaign using funding from the federal Coronavirus Response and Consolidated Appropriations Act. The campaign used a variety of media sources, including billboards, social media, radio, and print advertising to raise awareness regarding scams that target vulnerable adults. Campaign messaging encouraged audiences to report scams to APS.

From November - December 2021, the campaign ran a Facebook advertisement that made more than 30,000 impressions and was clicked nearly 500 times. Print ads appeared in 46 newspapers statewide for a total of five weeks (see sample of ad). Additionally, APS ran 60 30-second radio spots between November 2021 and January 2022 and displayed five electronic billboards for five weeks in the Phoenix Metro Area.



³ Department of Economic Security, Five Year Strategic Plan SFY 2021-2025 - <https://des.az.gov/documents-center?qt-content-tab=1>

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEADD)

In June 2022, DAAS hosted its 4th annual WEADD Conference. This two-day event included approximately 150 guests, 15 exhibitors, and 22 presenters. Training topics included *Connecting Dementia Expertise to Native American Communities*, *The Impact of Trauma Exposed Professionals*, and *The Right to High-Quality Healthcare*. For the fourth year, APS has participated in the planning and execution, supported staff to attend, and presented *APS 101 - A look at Adult Protective Services* and the *Role of the Quality Assurance Nurse on Challenging and Complex Cases of Abuse and Neglect*. Additionally, APS had an exhibitor table to answer questions and provide materials.

This annual conference has helped connect community members, professionals, and family members to services and supports to help care for Arizona's vulnerable population.

Making a Difference

APS employees worked to improve the lives of Arizona's vulnerable adult population. The following examples illustrate the important work accomplished in SFY 2022:

- APS received a report that an 88-year-old man may have been the victim of exploitation. His friend had transferred the deed of his condominium and the title of his car into her name. APS investigated the alleged victim and other parties, obtained and analyzed financial documents and medical records to assess the alleged victim's vulnerability, and although the man had demonstrated impaired decision-making capacity, determined that no exploitation had occurred because the man's decision-making capacity had diminished after the transfer of the property.

Although this case did not result in a substantiated report of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, the investigator did assess that the man could benefit from a higher level of care for his health/safety. The investigator then worked with the man, his sister, his former parish community, and his caregiver to ensure that the man's needs could be met. This resulted in his receiving regular visits from his former parishioners and going on outings. With this additional support, he could maintain a normal routine while aging. The investigator also provided information on resources he may need in the future.

- A 74-year-old man who lived alone was taken to the hospital following a fall. The fall resulted in the man spending four days stuck on the floor. APS determined that the man was incontinent, unable to shop for himself and had not bathed in

several months. Additionally, the home had no running water and contained dog feces and cobwebs. The investigator worked with social workers at the hospital and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to find a nursing facility that met his needs. Initially, the man did not want to live in the facility suggested by the hospital; however, the investigator facilitated a conversation to ensure that the man's choices were honored. Ultimately, the man was transferred to a VA skilled nursing facility/memory care unit that could meet his needs.

- A 65-year-old woman was living alone in unsafe and unsanitary conditions. When the investigator visited her home, the investigator found that her home was littered with trash, and both dog and human feces/urine. The home was also infested with mice, bedbugs, and cockroaches. Additionally, the victim had poor hygiene and evidence of insect bites on her arms and legs. The investigator advocated for this woman and coordinated with local organizations and businesses to develop a plan to address the variety of problems. Multi-disciplinary team meetings were held to coordinate the many moving parts needed to ensure she could live in her home safely moving forward. Through the facilitation of the investigator, the home was treated for the biohazard and rodent/insect infestation. The investigator also secured new items for the home including furniture, appliances, kitchen supplies, food and the medical equipment needed for showering safely. Additionally, the investigator helped the victim access home delivered meals and housekeeping services on an ongoing basis.
- Tribal law enforcement found a 24-year-old man with autism living with his mother on tribal land who was made to live in a garage with no heat, in freezing conditions as a punishment for bad behavior. Additionally, he was eating dog food and sleeping on a mat. The victim and his mother, the alleged perpetrator, were not members of the tribe but living on tribal land. This prompted the need for collaboration between the tribe, APS, law enforcement, and the Arizona Attorney General's office. During the investigation, APS provided for his immediate needs and worked with the Public Fiduciary and the courts to establish temporary guardianship. He was eventually placed in an assisted living facility. The victim's mother was arrested and found guilty of vulnerable adult abuse and unlawful imprisonment. The case was substantiated by APS for neglect and abuse, and the victim's mother was placed on the APS Registry.

Federal Funding

Enhanced Training

To improve program capacity in order to meet the needs of vulnerable adults, APS secured a three-year grant from ACL in SFY 2020 to enhance investigator and supervisor training. In designing the grant, APS implemented enhanced staff training with the intention of better recruitment and retention of investigators and more efficient service delivery to clients. To accomplish this, APS partnered with NAPSA to implement the following training activities:

- Enhanced Investigator Training

APS developed and implemented additional training courses for investigators. These courses offered investigators opportunities to deepen their knowledge and skills in a convenient, virtual setting.

- APS worked with the ADES Office of Professional Development (OPD) to create training specific to working with clients who have intellectual or developmental disabilities and are members of DDD. This mandatory training was made available to staff in December 2021.
- In March 2020, NAPSA piloted the *Supported Decision-Making* module to 20 investigators and provided a Train-the-Trainer to OPD staff in May 2022. OPD trainers are scheduled to deploy this training to investigators and supervisors in SFY 2023.
- *Motivational Interviewing for APS Investigators* was also piloted by NAPSA in April 2022 to 39 investigators. The Train-the-Trainer session will be held in SFY 2023 and then deployed to investigators and supervisors.

- NAPSA Certification

NAPSA certification is a nationally recognized APS core curriculum training comprising of 23 core competency modules identified by NAPSA as information necessary in the practice of APS.⁴ Investigators who had two years of APS investigation experience were eligible to apply to NAPSA for their certification upon completion of all the modules. Eight additional APS investigators began the program in May 2022.

⁴ NAPSA - NAPSA Certificate Program - The National APS Certificate Program - <https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.napsa-now.org/the-napsa-certificate-program/&sa=D&ust=1599849187609000&usg=AFQjCNFxBUX13Jh2rbEJKeyhnh2KnmC18Q>

- Supervisor Training

During SFY 2022, NAPSA and APS piloted six core supervisor training modules. NAPSA provided training to OPD staff so they could deliver the six core supervisor training modules. As of June 2022, 108 APS staff had participated. Supervisors and leaders began participating in these training sessions in July 2022.

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations

In April 2021, ADES received \$2M of emergency funding to support APS during the pandemic. During SFY 2022, APS used the funding to bring on seven new investigators, provide hazard pay to existing investigators and case aids, purchase new vehicles to replace some of the aging fleet, implement electronic faxing for faster receipt of documentation, and conduct a scam awareness campaign (described above).

American Rescue Plan Act

In August 2021, ADES received an additional \$1.9M of emergency funding to support APS during the pandemic. During SFY 2022, APS used the funding to launch the aforementioned Case Review Unit, replace additional aging fleet vehicles, and hire staff to develop and launch internal Tableau dashboards for real-time reporting and decision making by all levels of leadership.

More Information

More information can be found on the APS website at:
<https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/adult-protective-services>.