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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

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*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

Division of Aging and Adult Services

Adult Protective Services

State Fiscal Year 2023 Year in Review

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

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# Introduction and Background

## Adult Protective Services Year in Review

The State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023 Adult Protective Services (APS) Year in Review Report provides information on APS' work and a summary of APS accomplishments throughout the year. Data and statistics can be found online through APS' website at: <https://des.az.gov/APSDData>.

## DES Mission, Vision, and Values and APS Guiding Principles

APS is guided by the Department of Economic Security's (DES) Mission, Vision and Values as well as specific guiding principles that are unique to APS.

### DES Mission

To strengthen individuals, families and communities for a better quality of life.

### DES Vision

A thriving Arizona

### DES Values

**Integrity:** We are honest and transparent and are accountable for our actions and their impacts.

**People First:** We prioritize our staff and the people we serve to achieve the best and most equitable outcomes.

**Respect:** We demonstrate compassion, treat all people with dignity and kindness and embrace diversity.

### APS Guiding Principles:

1. When interests compete, the adult victim is the only person APS is charged to serve.
2. When interests compete, the adult is in charge of decision-making until the adult voluntarily delegates responsibility to another or the court grants responsibility to another.

3. An adult can choose to live in harm or even self-destructively, provided the adult is competent to choose, does not harm others, and commits no crime.
4. In the ideal case, APS applies and seeks to achieve simultaneously and in order of importance, the following principles for the protection of adults:
  - Adults have the right to be safe.
  - Adults retain all of their civil and constitutional rights.
  - Adults have the right to make decisions that do not conform to societal norms as long as these decisions do not harm others.
  - Adults have the right to accept or refuse services.

## Statutory Authority and Responsibility

Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S.), Title 46, Chapter 4 establishes APS and grants APS the authority to investigate the abuse, exploitation, and neglect of vulnerable adults. This statute also provides the specific definitions that APS uses in performing its work.

- Abuse - Intentional infliction of physical harm, injury caused by negligent acts or omissions, unreasonable confinement, sexual abuse or sexual assault, and emotional abuse.
- Exploitation - The illegal or improper use of a vulnerable adult or the vulnerable adult's resources for another's profit or advantage.
- Neglect - The deprivation of food, water, medication, medical services, shelter, supervision, cooling, heating or other services necessary to maintain a vulnerable adult's minimum physical or mental health.
- Vulnerable adult - An individual who is 18 years of age or older and who is unable to protect himself from abuse, neglect or exploitation by others because of a physical or mental impairment. A person who the courts have determined to be incapacitated is also vulnerable.

Statute also establishes the APS Registry. When APS substantiates an allegation of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, the perpetrator's name, date of birth, and information about the incident is placed on a public registry. Information remains on the registry for 25 years. A.R.S. § 46-459 requires the Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES) conduct an APS Registry search for any person who is employed or seeking employment in a position that provides direct services to vulnerable adults or children.

Although not required, other employers should consult the APS Registry when making hiring decisions.

## Arizona and Vulnerable Adults

Arizona's population growth is among the fastest in the nation, ranking fifth in the country from 2010 to 2020 and growing by almost 17 percent in that time period. The aging population, in particular, is one of the fastest growing segments in the United States, with adults 65 and older now making up over 18 percent of Arizona's population.<sup>1</sup> APS investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. While an older adult or individual with a disability is not inherently vulnerable, they may be more likely to have physical or mental challenges that can make them vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation. As Arizona's population continues to grow and to age, APS expects to experience an increase in the volume of allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

## Statewide Organization

In order to serve Arizonans throughout the state, APS maintains five districts, each with offices and investigation staff, as well as a hotline and several operational units.

### Central Intake Unit

The Central Intake Unit (CIU) is responsible for receiving and assessing reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. To make a report of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, the reporter can use the APS Hotline (1-877-SOS-ADULT) or fill out an online [intake](#). The hotline is staffed Monday - Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m and Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

If CIU determines that a report meets the criteria to be accepted, the case is assigned a priority level and sent to a field investigator.

## Investigations

APS investigators perform two primary and simultaneous functions. Specifically:

- Protective Service -- APS investigators provide protective services by working with the alleged victim (or their guardian) to come up with a case plan to address their safety. Case plans will vary significantly based on the unique circumstances

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "Population Estimates, July 1, 2022 (V2022) - Arizona." *Quick Facts*, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/AZ/PST045222>. Accessed 5 December 2023.

of the alleged victim and their needs. For example, if a vulnerable adult is the victim of neglect from a caretaker, APS can work to arrange an alternative caretaker. If concerns surround neglect or self-neglect, APS can often provide resources to stabilize the situation while simultaneously implementing a more long-term community-based solution.

When allegations involve abuse or neglect and there is an immediate safety risk to an alleged victim, APS coordinates with law enforcement. If concerns surround neglect or self-neglect, APS can often provide resources to stabilize the situation while simultaneously implementing more long-term community-based solutions.

- Investigations – The APS investigator must determine if the alleged victim is indeed a vulnerable adult, per statutory criteria, and if the alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurred. This involves gathering and reviewing evidence and speaking with parties involved in the case. The nature of the evidence gathered will depend on the specifics of the case, but this may include interview evidence, medical and financial records, security footage, and witness statements.

Certain cases present unique challenges that require specialized investigatory backgrounds and skill sets. APS maintains dedicated teams to investigate cases involving individuals with developmental disabilities and cases involving financial exploitation. This ensures the APS investigator has expertise to perform the highest quality investigation.

Once the APS investigator determines the case outcome, they submit the case for further review and closure processing.

## Case Review Unit and Quality Assurance Unit

Each case that is submitted for closure that has a determination of “unsubstantiated” is reviewed for completeness and accuracy by the Case Review Unit (CRU). CRU checks the case file against APS policy and procedure to ensure that all necessary steps were followed. If anything is missing or requires correction, the case is sent back to the field to make the changes.

The Quality Assurance Unit (QA) reviews information contained in APS case files to provide feedback on opportunities for improvement. Each component of the case, from intake to closure, is reviewed to ensure that investigations are high quality and also performs specialized review of cases upon request. Twice a year, QA facilitates an exercise for all levels of APS staff to help drive consistent decision-making across the organization.

## Appeals/Substantiation Unit

Cases with a determination of “propose to substantiate” are sent to the Appeals Unit. The Appeals Unit reviews and prepares the case for submission to the Arizona Attorney General for review. The case is then sent to an Administrative Hearing and a Judge rules if the evidence presented reached a preponderance of the evidence. The ruling may be upheld, amended or rejected by the ADES Director.

If the ruling is to add the alleged perpetrator’s name to the APS Public Registry, the name is added and a notice is sent to the alleged perpetrator who may appeal the decision. When this happens, the APS Appeals Unit works to facilitate that process through the Arizona Office of Administrative Hearings.

## Records Unit

As part of an investigation, APS must gather evidence pertaining to the case. This often involves requesting medical, law enforcement, financial or other records. The APS Records Unit is responsible for requesting these documents to facilitate a high quality and timely investigation.

External individuals and organizations may also request records from APS, which are processed by this unit. Because APS information is generally confidential by law, the APS records team must carefully review all requests and determine what information can be released.

## Training Unit

New APS investigators require extensive training to develop and hone their skills. This is facilitated through the APS Training Academy. The Training Academy facilitates an eight-week introductory training for new investigators as well as ad hoc trainings designed to provide staff with up-to-date information.

## APS Action Plan

In March 2020, APS released an Action Plan. The Plan was developed through coordination between DES and the Arizona Department of Health Services with input from stakeholders. The Action Plan includes the following goals:

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

To support the achievement of these goals, the Action Plan included nine recommendations. APS has implemented several of these recommendations and continues to work to make improvements towards the goals. In SFY 2023, APS successfully implemented two more of the recommendations.

## Implement Initiatives to Improve Recruitment and Retention

APS has made great strides in its recruitment and retention efforts. In the SFY 2023 budget, APS was appropriated an additional \$11.2 million in funding, which was used to hire 77 new investigators and 60 specialty and support roles, including case reviews, records specialists, supervisors and hotline staff.

Compensation is key to both successful employee recruitment as well as retention. APS investigators are skilled professionals with backgrounds in law enforcement, social work, accounting, and other competitive fields. To remain competitive, APS must compensate investigators in a manner consistent with other similar roles. In SFY 2023, APS achieved salary parity for investigators with the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS), which also employs investigators of a similar skillset. Additionally, all other APS positions received increases in compensation as part of the SFY 2023 budget.

Understanding the steep learning curve experienced by APS investigators and the unique challenges of the work, APS launched a new training academy, described in more detail below, for new investigators to receive specialized and in -depth training to help them launch their careers. This program provides supervisors and training mentors who are available to answer questions and provide assistance throughout training without disrupting field supervisors.

APS provides staff with opportunities to grow and develop within the organization. Additionally, APS continues to partner with National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) to provide APS investigators with access to NAPSA Certification. This program provides continued development to all APS investigators.

## Identify Legislative Recommendations

In Summer 2022, enacted legislation added “emotional abuse” to APS statute. With this change, APS was granted the authority to investigate allegations of emotional abuse against a vulnerable adult. Originally proposed during the 2019 Legislative Session, this change is the culmination of years of efforts on behalf of vulnerable adults.

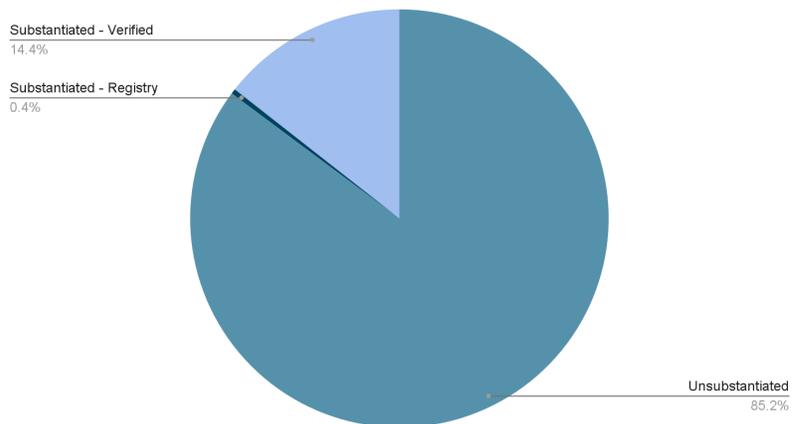
# Hotline Communications, Cases, and Substantiation

In SFY 2023, APS received approximately 64,655 communications into CIU. These communications may come in as either phone calls or through the APS website. Of these 64,655 communications, 41,654 were attempts to report new allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation. APS accepted 84 percent of these new allegations as reports that met criteria for investigation.

The individuals who communicate allegations to APS are key partners in protecting vulnerable adults. A.R.S. § 46-454 requires certain types of professionals to report or cause reports to be made to either APS or a peace officer. Of the approximately 37,305 individuals who communicated a concern to APS, roughly 35 percent were mandated reporters. In addition, APS cross-reported nearly 25,000 instances of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation to other entities for investigation, the highest number of which were to law enforcement and the Arizona Department of Health Services.

The majority of the allegations APS receives are for financial exploitation (approximately 27 percent) followed by neglect (approximately 26 percent) and self-neglect (approximately 26 percent). Approximately 16 percent of APS allegations are for abuse (including sexual and emotional abuse). Eighty-five percent of APS allegations were determined to be

SFY2023 Allegation Determinations



“unsubstantiated” upon investigation. This means that the facts of the investigation demonstrated that either the allegation could not be confirmed or the alleged victim was not actually a vulnerable adult as defined in the law. In SFY 2023, approximately 6,880 allegations (15 percent) were substantiated. Approximately 180 of these were placed on the APS Registry and almost 6,700 were “verified,” meaning that APS confirmed that the allegations did occur and the alleged victim was a vulnerable adult, but the perpetrator could not be placed on the registry. This is most frequently the case with self-neglect allegations where APS confirms the neglect, but it is the victim who is neglecting themselves. “Verified” may also be used when the perpetrator cannot be identified, is deceased, or is themselves vulnerable.

In SFY 2023, the majority of the allegations placed on the APS Registry concerned financial exploitation (approximately 59.5 percent), followed by abuse, including sexual abuse (nearly 22 percent), and neglect (approximately 18 percent).

## 2023 System Achievements

SFY 2023 has been a year of successes for APS. From planned improvements to unexpected opportunities, APS has continually raised the bar.

### Customer Service

#### Centralized Records Processing for Timely Investigations

In May 2023, APS launched a new process for requesting records for its investigations. This new process streamlines records requests as a whole by centralizing the formerly manual and time-consuming process into one location. Now, an investigator can submit all records requests for one case with one request form and it will be assigned to one of the records management specialists within the new Records Unit.

Since implementing the new records request process, APS has experienced an average turnaround time between eight and ten business days to fully complete records requests, which is a significant decline from the one to two month average from prior to the launch.

#### Client Satisfaction Survey

At the start of SFY 2023, APS began Client Satisfaction Surveys. With technical support from a surveying expert, surveys were designed to capture the voice of the APS client and to provide APS with data on how to best improve client outcomes. Each month, a sample of APS clients whose cases were closed in the previous month are called and surveyed on their experience. Questions target how clients were helped by services received, how APS can improve the quality of services provided, and how effectively their APS investigator communicated with them.

In SFY 2023, 278 APS clients completed the client satisfaction survey. Of these, 75 percent gave APS a score of seven or above (out of 10) and 79 percent stated that they were treated with respect. APS noted improvement throughout the Fiscal Year (FY), with 44 percent of initial respondents reporting very good or excellent communication. This percentage increased to 66 percent by the end of June 2023.

APS plans to integrate many responses into SFY 2024 system-improvement plans. Additionally, several questions have been added for SFY 2024 to increase APS' commitment to improving communication, both written and verbal, to clients whose primary language is not English.

## Emotional Abuse Investigations

As discussed above, in Summer 2022, state law was changed to add “emotional abuse” to APS statute. With this change, APS was granted the authority to investigate allegations of emotional abuse against a vulnerable adult. A.R.S. 46-451(A)(5) defines emotional abuse as “a pattern of ridiculing or demeaning a vulnerable adult, making derogatory remarks to a vulnerable adult, verbally harassing a vulnerable adult or threatening to inflict physical or emotional harm on a vulnerable adult.”

Adding an additional type of abuse represents an enormous change to APS' day-to-day operations, and implementation required collaboration across APS. APS stood up new policies and processes, modified its Information Technology (IT) system, and created new reporting functionality. Additionally, APS collaborated with NAPSA to develop and deliver a new, interactive, virtual training on emotional abuse so that APS investigators could best understand how to recognize and investigate cases of emotional abuse.

From implementation in September 2022 to June 30, 2023, APS received 140 reports that met the criteria for investigation of emotional abuse.

## Financial Exploitation

In August 2022, APS created a statewide investigations district (composed of multiple teams statewide) devoted entirely to financial exploitation cases. This allows for investigators trained in financial exploitation to cover all 15 counts in Arizona. Financial exploitation cases require specialized expertise in accounting, auditing, and financial crimes.

Compared to SFY 2022, APS received approximately 93 percent more financial exploitation allegations in SFY 2023. This growth reflects both Arizona's growing population and the proliferation of financial schemes and scams targeting vulnerable adults.

## Sober Living Fraud Cases

In February 2023, APS began receiving reports of exploitation and potential human trafficking homes with the promise of shelter, food and/or resources for sobriety. From there, the perpetrators would enroll victims in services and fraudulently bill the Arizona

Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). The financial exploitation district was tasked with investigating corresponding APS reports statewide, and created a system to investigate these while collaborating with other state social services agencies, Tribal Nations, and state and federal law enforcement. APS worked to support vulnerable victims with their families and coordinated real treatment options for these victims, given the complexity of this multi-state criminal enterprise and the variety of scenarios that victims are facing upon closure of these facilities.

## Central Intake Unit Phone System

In September 2022, the CIU began receiving calls through the Genesys cloud-based system, which allowed for calls to be accessed in one easy step via dashboards for QA review, monitoring metrics, and managing the work more efficiently. This change allowed the CIU to operate exclusively within these dashboards to allow for call monitoring and clear communication in real time. As a result of this change, the monthly call answer rate increased from an average of 96 percent to an average of 99 percent and the average speed of answer decreased from 43 seconds to less than 15 seconds. This improvement has allowed for increased efficiency and responsiveness to the individuals calling CIU.

## Outreach

### Speak Up AZ!

In 2019, the Abuse and Neglect Prevention Task Force was created to ensure the health and safety of Arizona's most vulnerable citizens. One of the task force's recommendations was the launch of a robust



public awareness campaign to educate all Arizonans on the prevalence of abuse and neglect, as well as, how to prevent, identify and report it. The recommendation was funded by AHCCCS American Rescue Plan (ARP) dollars.

APS partnered with Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs, AHCCCS, and Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) to create a public awareness campaign, [SpeakUpAZ.org](https://www.speakupaz.org) which includes practical resources to educate and equip Arizonans so that when they see warning signs of the abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult, they recognize what to do and how to help. The campaign also serves a resource for

potential victims so that they know where to turn when they need help. In addition to the website, SpeakUpAZ.org is also utilizing commercials, billboards (see photo), social media, and more to spread the word across Arizona communities.

## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Conference

Recognizing the importance of shining a spotlight on elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, the International Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World



Health Organization at the United Nations recognized June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) beginning in 2006. On June 15, 2023, Division of Aging and Adult Services held its 5th annual World Elder Abuse Day Conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

APS played a vital role in the successful planning and coordination of the WEAAD conference. The conference drew more than 250 interested individuals from across the state and nation to network, discover innovative practices, and share information and resources aimed at preventing elder abuse. Session topics centered around the theme of *See It, Stop It, Prevent It* and included panel discussions such as how to reach difficult to reach populations, addressing elder abuse in tribal communities, and collaborating effectively with law enforcement. Key highlights included a nearly-doubled attendance from previous years, launching the SpeakUpAz.org campaign, and hearing from esteemed keynote speakers including ADES Executive Deputy Director Angie Rodgers and Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes.

## Staff Improvements

### Caseloads

In SFY 2023, APS made great strides in workload management. Through increased hiring, improved training and process efficiency, APS has reduced caseloads as well as its volume of open cases and the average age of cases. Specifically:

- At the start of SFY 2023, APS caseloads averaged 61 per investigator. By June 2023, as a result of increased staff and process improvements, caseloads were nearly cut in half to 29 per investigator. In addition to reducing the overall average caseload, APS also implemented a data-focused equalization strategy

so that APS offices experiencing particularly higher case volumes could receive assistance from those offices with lighter caseloads. This process helped to ensure no single office became overwhelmed with cases, thus ensuring that clients and cases received adequate time and attention.

- At the start of SFY 2023, APS had over 11,000 open cases. Through the practices described above, APS ended SFY 2023 with fewer than 6,600 open cases. Working through these cases brought important resolution to thousands of people.
- APS reduced the total length of time necessary to close a case and continues to make strides in this area. At the start of SFY 2023, 66 percent of cases were aged over 60 days old. At the end of the FY, that number decreased to 60 percent.

## New Investigator Training and Onboarding

In October 2022, the APS Training Academy launched its New Investigator Training and Onboarding (NITO) Program. The innovative training lasts eight weeks and blends virtual instructor-led training with in-person instruction, shadowing, mentoring, and discussion. Topics include, but are not limited to: APS statutes, types of allegations, interviewing techniques, assessing client vulnerability and safety, APS investigator safety, case planning, documentation, and testifying in court. Through NITO, all new APS investigators receive a high-quality, consistent experience that allows them to learn in a safe environment where they can ask questions, gain confidence, and learn from seasoned professionals. Throughout NITO-8, training supervisors who oversee training work hand-in-glove with the new employee's future field supervisor. This ensures the field supervisor knows about the investigator's progress and can offer continued coaching and support. When APS investigators graduate from NITO, they are equipped to begin investigating cases out in the field. In total, 112 new investigators graduated from NITO in SFY 2023.

In March 2023, LeCroy & Milligan Associates (LMA), Inc. conducted a review of NITO. As a component of its review, LMA asked investigators to score the quality of their training. Six of the eight investigators who were surveyed scored NITO at a seven or higher. LMA also interviewed investigators and found that multiple noted that within their first weeks out of NITO, they had many opportunities to work with their supervisor to ask clarifying questions and receive coaching.

To ensure a consistent approach throughout the state, all investigators hired prior to the implementation of NITO also completed the NITO training in SFY 2023.

## Investigator Safety

Recognizing the inherent risks that APS investigators face in the field, APS launched an initiative to quickly and dramatically enhance investigator safety. In August 2023, APS held six focus groups to gather the perspectives of investigatory staff at all levels. Approximately 50 staff in total participated and provided valuable insights that were used to make specific system-wide improvements.

- In November 2022, APS hired its first Safety Officer. The Safety Officer has years of both law enforcement and APS investigatory experience. Through a partnership between DES's Office of the Inspector General, the APS Safety Officer supports APS by developing safety policy and protocols, emergency planning, assessing investigator risk in different situations, and coordinating safety training for every APS staff person. In SFY 2023, the Safety Officer reviewed 417 cases for issues that might be potential safety risks to APS investigators.
- In January 2023, the APS Safety Officer began providing in-person, personal safety training to each APS office. By March 2023, all APS investigators had received the safety training. This training provided instruction on vital safety topics, such as conducting research on cases, safely approaching individuals and situations, conducting safe interviews, and how to remain safe once the investigator leaves a situation. This training was also incorporated into the training delivered to all new staff.
- In April 2023, APS deployed APS-branded polo shirts to all investigators. These shirts make the investigator immediately identifiable as State APS employees which reduces confusion and ambiguity while allowing visual coordination with law enforcement, emergency responders, and ADHS partners in the field. It also assures clients that the person they are speaking with is a professional APS investigator.
- In May 2023, APS deployed enhanced safety technology for all investigators. Through cell phones and satellite devices, APS investigators are able to maintain communication with a 24 hour per day dispatch center, even in remote and rural areas where there is no cellular signal.



# Outcomes for Vulnerable Adults

As APS strives to improve its customer service, outreach, and employee experience, vulnerable adults throughout the state experienced increased safety and improved outcomes.

## APS Registry

Once due process is complete and APS has concluded that an individual has abused, neglected or exploited a vulnerable adult, that perpetrator's name and date of birth are added to the APS Registry. This publically available registry also contains a description of the offense. Neither the victim's nor the reporter's names are included on the registry. The purpose of the APS Registry is to prevent vulnerable adults and children from being victimized by individuals who have been found to have abused, neglected or exploited a vulnerable adult. The APS Registry is a powerful tool for employers and members of the public to ensure that individuals with documented histories of maltreatment are not placed in situations where they have access to vulnerable adults. Employers are encouraged to review the registry when deciding whether to employ a person to provide care for vulnerable populations. Examples of individuals placed on the registry in SFY 2023 include:

- A perpetrator was employed as a registered nurse at a skilled nursing facility in which vulnerable adults resided. The perpetrator crushed a vulnerable adult's prescribed oral medications and injected that medication into the vulnerable adults PICC/TPN line. This resulted in the vulnerable adult's death.
- A perpetrator, while employed as a caregiver at a group home for developmentally disabled individuals and while assisting the vulnerable adult with showering, failed to monitor the water temperature, which caused the vulnerable adult to sustain second-degree thermal burns to the head, face, and neck.
- A perpetrator, while acting as the vulnerable adult's agent pursuant to a Power of Attorney, made approximately 46 ATM withdrawals and four debit transactions from the vulnerable adult's account. These transactions were performed without the vulnerable adult's knowledge or consent, and for purposes that did not benefit the vulnerable adult.

In SFY 2023, APS initiated a project in collaboration with the DCS and Department of Public Safety to consolidate the three respective registries so that employers can cross-check potential or current employees more efficiently. This will not only save employers a great deal of time in the verification and vetting process of prospective or

current employees, but also keep Arizonans safer by sending updates to the employer if an employee does get placed on one of the registries or if their fingerprint card is suspended. The system is planned to launch in SFY 2024.

## Client Care

APS does not just place individuals on the APS Registry. It also provides protective services to improve the circumstances of vulnerable adults and works towards their safety. The following examples illustrate the important work accomplished in SFY 2023:

- APS received a report of an 84-year-old male who showed signs of injury and malnourishment. The man was located in the residence and taken to the hospital where it was believed the man might die. Minor children were also residing at the residence and a cross-report was made to DCS.

APS determined the granddaughter was neglecting the man by not feeding him, providing his medication, or taking him to necessary medical appointments. She also financially exploited him by surrendering his life insurance policy for its cash value, transferring ownership of his home and vehicles, and withdrawing approximately \$30,000 from his bank account.

APS coordinated the investigation with law enforcement, and both alleged perpetrators were arrested and charged with attempted murder, abuse, fraud, and theft. The criminal case is ongoing, and APS plans to pursue substantiating the allegations which would place the granddaughter and her husband's names on the APS Registry. The minor children living in the home were taken into DCS custody. APS facilitated the process to obtain a guardian to oversee his finances and care and to apply for the Arizona Long-Term Care System (ALTCS). Once stabilized, the man was transferred to a skilled nursing facility where he is now thriving in his new environment.

- APS received a report of possible self-neglect of a 73-year old woman. The reporter said that the woman had been seen in the hospital emergency room three times in a single week with confusion and bruising injuries. The reporter also stated that the woman had misplaced her car and wallet. During the investigation, police had stopped the woman for erratic driving, and she was again taken to the hospital and placed on an overnight hold with a diagnosis of altered mental state. The next day she was clear and fully alert. Although the doctor recommended case management services, the woman chose to leave the hospital prior to being discharged. The APS investigator located her in her home and learned she was also being evicted from her apartment. The investigator was able to help the woman get a new debit card (she had lost her wallet) and

located a room for the woman in a semi-assisted living group home. While the woman was reluctant at first, after support and encouragement, she ultimately decided to move and has done well.

- APS received a report with allegations of neglect and exploitation of a 64-year old woman by her adult daughter. There had been previous self-neglect allegations dating back to 2020, but those self-neglect cases were closed as the woman had hospice care in place, a primary care physician, a home health caregiver and she had refused other services. It was during the first investigation that the woman's daughter had agreed to move into the home to be her caretaker. However, APS continued to receive allegations of self-neglect because of the woman's worsening dementia.

When the most recent report came in, APS learned that the woman had been living in an assisted living facility but was evicted, so she had moved back in with her daughter. The daughter claimed to be the Durable Power of Attorney, but the document was invalid as it was signed after the mother had been diagnosed with dementia and unable to make decisions. The daughter withdrew all funds from her mother's bank account for her own personal use. The daughter also failed to pay the home's electric bill so the woman was left without the use of heat in the home or her much-needed oxygen.

The APS investigator was able to connect the woman to ALTCS and worked to identify an assisted living facility for her. The daughter's name was placed on the APS registry.

These were just a few of the many lives APS touched throughout FY 2023 and demonstrates the breadth of situations investigators face.

## More Information

More information can be found on the APS website at:

<https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/adult-protective-services>.