

The Enhanced Training and Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women Later in Life Program

While sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking can affect victims in any age group, individuals who are 50 years of age or older who experience elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation can face unique barriers to receiving assistance.

RECOGNIZING THIS, THE ENHANCED TRAINING AND SERVICES TO END Violence Against and Abuse of Women Later in Life Program (Abuse in Later Life or ALL Program) supports a comprehensive, community coordinated response (CCR) to address and prevent elder abuse.

49 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2015, 49 unique grantees reported activities funded by the ALL Program.

585 Victims Served

On average, grantees served 585 victims during each 6-month reporting period.

5,586 People Trained

Grantees trained a total of 5,586 people.

Age or disability may increase isolation for victims of elder abuse, and professionals may mistakenly perceive age or disability, rather than abuse, as the reason for a victim's injuries. Victims may depend on their abusers for care or housing, and abusers may intimidate them using threats of placing the victim in a nursing home. The victim may also experience shame or embarrassment in addition to the fear of losing the support their abuser provides. It is particularly critical for criminal justice professionals and victim service providers to recognize indicators that an older individual is being abused.

Sexual violence against older women is rarely talked about. Ageism contributes to the mistaken notion that older people are "asexual," which fosters the dangerous assumption that they cannot be targets of sexual violence. Older women may be reliant on their perpetrators to provide their care, which makes victims especially vulnerable to continued violence.³³⁶



DC • Grantee Perspective

Prior to receiving this grant, the community had never before collaborated in a multidisciplinary way on elder abuse issues. Ad hoc partnerships based on chance meetings at conferences may have facilitated some positive referrals, but no attempt had been made to bring together key agencies interacting with senior victims. This funding has allowed for a dedicated project coordinator to bring together the systems-based agencies and community organizations, as well as provided training hosted by the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life with national experts with career experience in law enforcement, prosecution, adult protective services, sexual assault, domestic violence, and senior services.

NETWORK FOR VICTIM RECOVERY, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The Abuse in Later Life Program enhances the safety of victims by supporting projects uniquely designed to address and prevent elder abuse. Purpose areas include:

- Train programs to assist criminal justice system personnel in recognizing, addressing, investigating, and prosecuting instances of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation;
- Provide or enhance services for victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation;
- Create or support multidisciplinary collaborative community responses to victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and
- Conduct cross-training for victim service organizations, governmental agencies, courts, law enforcement, and nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations serving victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

VAWA 2013 added the following new purpose areas to this program:

- Provide training programs to assist attorneys, healthcare providers, faith-based leaders, or other community-based organizations in recognizing and addressing instances of abuse in later life; and
- Conduct outreach activities and awareness campaigns to ensure that victims of abuse in later life receive appropriate assistance.

In addition, VAWA 2013 clarified that victim services and legal assistance include services and assistance to **victims of domestic/sexual violence who are also victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons.**

These changes were implemented in FY 2014, meaning that grants made on or after October 1, 2014 could specifically address these purpose areas. If an activity falling under one of the added purpose areas could not be captured in sections of the existing form that grantees use to report, they could describe their accomplishments in narrative sections of the form.

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **49** individual grantees for the July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015 progress reporting period.

- **5** (10%) grantees reported that their grants specifically addressed tribal populations.
- Grantees most frequently addressed the following purpose area:
 - Created or supported multidisciplinary collaborative community responses to victims.

Staff

Grant-funded staff provide services to victims and training for criminal justice professionals to help ensure a CCR to victims of elder abuse. **Being able to hire staff is critical to the overall function and success of programs.**

- **49** (100%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **36** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- Grantees most often used these staffing funds for program coordinators and victim advocates.

Table 1 Staff supported with Abuse in Later Life grant funds, July 2013–June 2015: Selected groups		
Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	36	
Program coordinators	18	50%
Victim advocates	10	28%
Administrators	2	6%

NOTE: Data presented for the most frequently reported categories only (≥5%).

Training

Grantees train professionals to effectively respond to older victims of domestic/sexual violence and elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation. **This training improves the professional response to victims and increases offender accountability.**

- **43** (88%) grantees used funds for training.
- Grantees convened a total of **168** training events.
- Grantees trained a total of **5,586** people.
- Most often these trainings reached law enforcement officers (**35%**), elder services agencies (**16%**), and detectives or investigators (**15%**).

Victim Services

Grantees provide an array of services to victims. Victims may receive victim advocacy, crisis intervention, financial counseling, legal advocacy, transportation, safety planning, or other services as needed. **These comprehensive support services address a wide variety of needs to help victims become and remain safe from violence.**

- **32** (65%) grantees used funds for victim services.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **585** victims during each 6-month period.
- **98%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.



NM • Grantee Perspective

The grant funds have enabled project staff to work with local law enforcement and victim services agencies throughout the First Judicial District to ensure that they receive quality, accessible Abuse in Later Life training. Grant funds also enabled us to create the first Law Enforcement Legal Remedies and Resource Booklet. The booklet was created in partnership with the First Judicial District Attorney's Office and it provides a comprehensive list of the applicable laws, statutes, and protection order information. The guide is the first resource guide that has been created that focuses on abuse in later life in New Mexico. Without grant funds, this valuable resource would not exist.

NEW MEXICO COALITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS



NY • Grantee Perspective

The law enforcement training has been very popular, and the ability to offer a \$150 per participant incentive to send officers has helped us attract officers from agencies who had not signed onto the grant. To date, we have had 97 officers from 10 agencies attend training, exceeding our commitment from law enforcement of sending 64 officers, and there is still demand for more training. Four of those departments have exceeded their commitment of number of officers to send, and three departments elected to send officers who had not committed to send them.

VERA HOUSE INCORPORATED, NEW YORK

During each 6-month period, on average, grantees provided:

- Victim advocacy services to **395** victims;
- Crisis intervention services to **222** victims;
- Support group/counseling services to **204** victims;
- Criminal justice advocacy services to **131** victims;
- Civil legal advocacy services to **111** victims; and
- Financial counseling services to **96** victims.

Hotline calls:

- Grantees received a total of **1,864** hotline calls; and
 - The majority of these calls (**76%**) came from victims.

Victims Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence, and elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2015:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victims of **domestic/dating violence** (61%).

Figure 1 | Provision of victim services by Abuse in Later Life Program grantees, by type of presenting victimization

Victims served by type of victimization (6-month average)

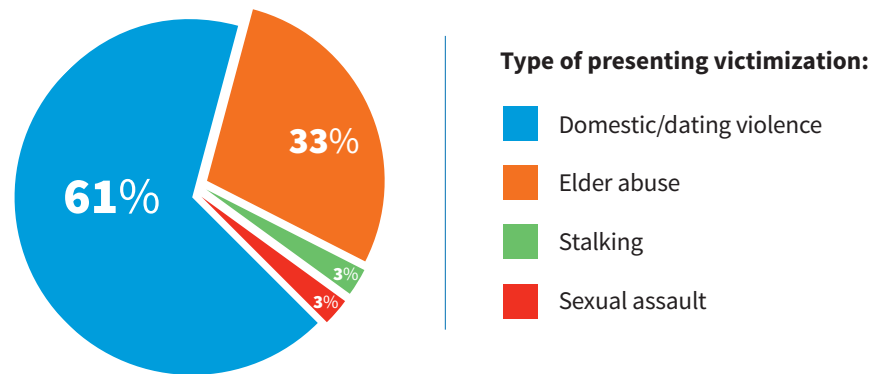


Table 2 | Victims seeking services with Abuse in Later Life grant funds, July 2013–June 2015

Victims seeking services	6-month average	
Total victims seeking services	597	
Victims served	545	91%
Victims partially served	40	7%
Victims not served	12	2%

NOTE: "Partially served" represents victims who received some but not all of the service(s) they requested, provided those services were funded under the Abuse in Later Life Program grant. "Not served" represents victims who sought services and did not receive the service(s) they were seeking, provided those services were funded under the Abuse in Later Life Program grant.

Victims' Relationship to Offender

Grantees serve older victims of domestic/sexual violence and victims of elder abuse. Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2015:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (53%); and
- The remaining victims were most commonly victimized by a **child/grandchild** (11%) or another **family or household member** (22%).



AR • Grantee Perspective

Having a grant-funded advocate to exclusively support victims who are 50 years and older has allowed clients to receive one-on-one support to navigate their recovery, and reach out for assistance (medical, legal, housing, employment, public benefits, etc.) with the support of an advocate. Any victim of domestic violence needs emotional support, but with victims who are 50 years and older, emotional support is essential since some of them have been in an abusive relationship for a longer period of time, and leaving their abuser could be harder to process. Victims are now offered the opportunity to have someone accompany them to apply for any service or to be transported.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES,
DIVISION OF AGING AND ADULT SERVICES

Figure 2 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Domestic/dating violence**

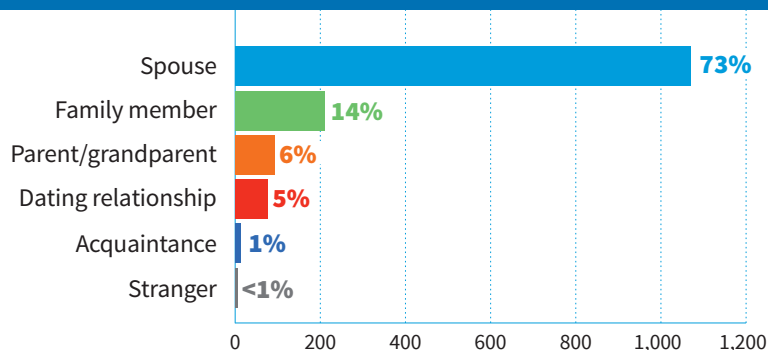


Figure 3 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Elder abuse**

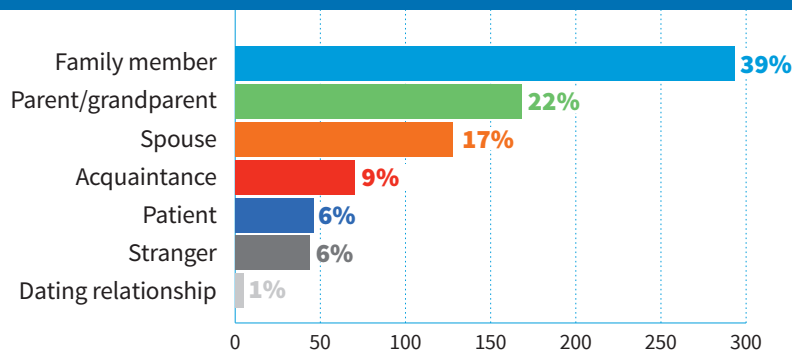


Figure 4 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Stalking**

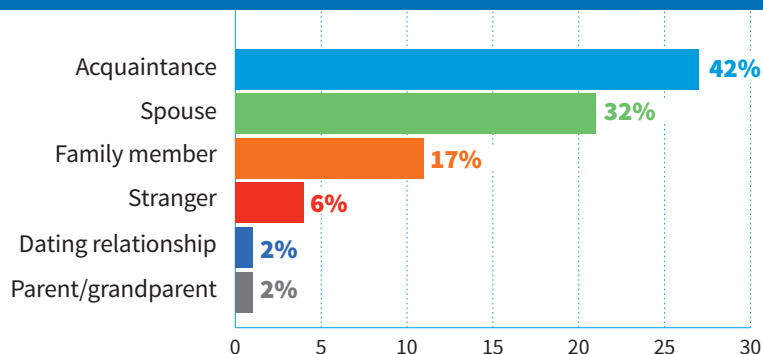
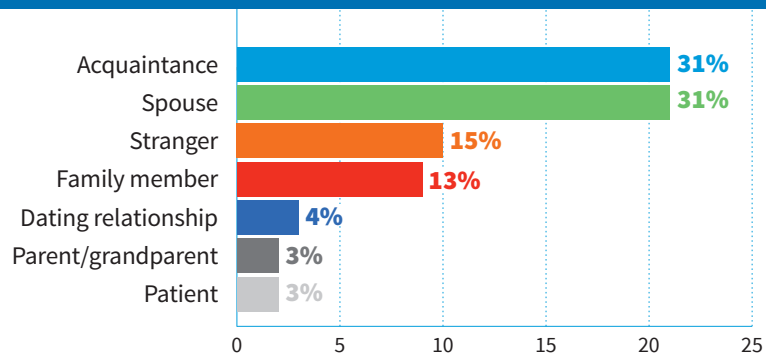


Figure 5 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Sexual assault**

Reasons Victims Were Not Served or Were Partially Served

During each reporting period, grantees most frequently noted the following barriers as reasons why victims were not served or were only partially served:

- Victim did not meet eligibility or statutory requirements;
- Services were not appropriate for victim;
- Services inadequate/inappropriate for victims with mental health issues;
- Program unable to provide service due to limited resources; or
- Conflict of interest.

Demographics of Victims Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **585** victims during each 6-month reporting period. The majority of those victims were **white** (76%), **female** (82%), and between the ages of **50 and 59** (48%).

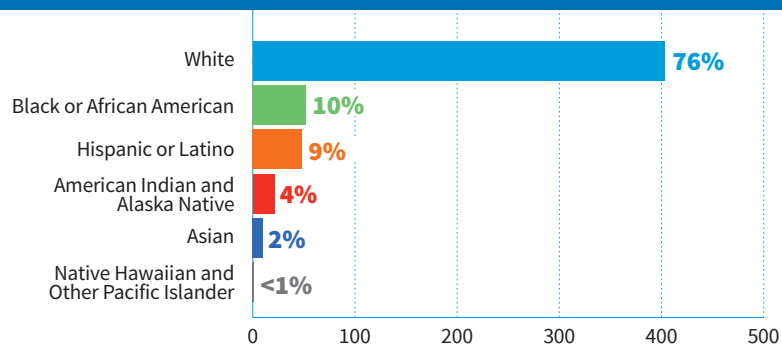
Figure 6 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Race/ethnicity** (6-month average)

Figure 7 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Gender** (6-month average)

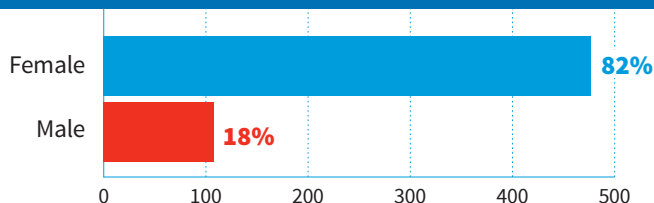


Figure 8 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Age** (6-month average)

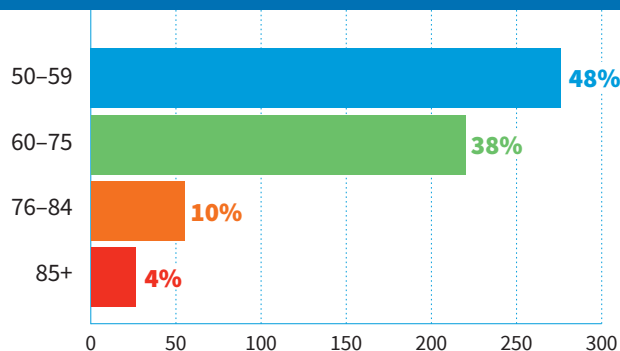
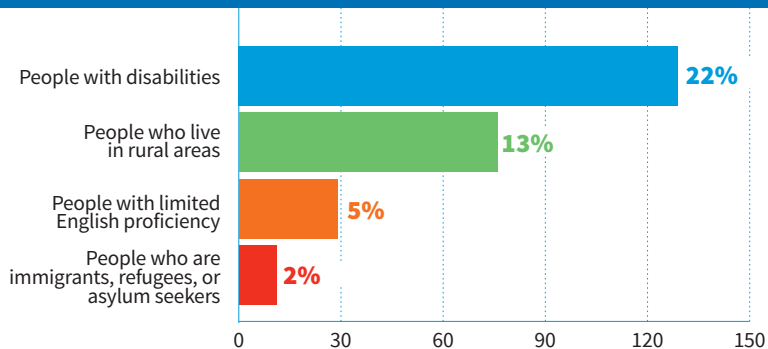


Figure 9 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Other** (6-month average)



Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees most frequently cited **access to basic needs** as the biggest obstacle facing victims of abuse in later life. These needs included:

- Rent and utilities;
- Food;
- Medication;
- Transportation;
- Healthcare (including mental healthcare); and
- Housing.



FL • Grantee Perspective

Emergent and long-term housing solutions are desperately needed in our Northeast Florida region. Too often elders who have suffered from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and have other physical or mental health concerns that require assistance in shelter facilities have been turned down due to their level of need for assistance with the activities of daily living while in a shelter. The costs to cover even emergent issues are high, while affordable long-term housing options are nearly impossible to find for this population.

WOMEN'S CENTER OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA



MI • Grantee Perspective

There is a continuing challenge to get information about the availability of resources into the hands of older victims. While this community has had a very proactive plan to inform the public of related services, it is apparent that this information is not reaching all seniors or older victims. This lack of awareness results in victims suffering needlessly although these resources are available.

ELDER LAW OF MICHIGAN



CA • Grantee Perspective

During this reporting period, we assisted a large number of disabled/impaired seniors. These clients face all sorts of medical concerns. They are often on several medications that have various debilitating side effects, they have incontinence issues, have limited mobility, are on oxygen tanks, fatigue easily, are receiving chemotherapy, etc. When we are able to directly represent them, we can file any legal paperwork on their behalf and are very successful in getting accommodations for hearing dates. However, for clients representing themselves, the courts are largely inaccessible. The typical wait time to file a temporary restraining order is between 4-6 hours. The average amount of time spent standing in line is 45 minutes. For many of the people we serve, that is simply not possible.

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS, CALIFORNIA



NY • Grantee Perspective

Another challenge faced by the immigrant Asian population is access to officers and social service providers who speak their native language. So often, abuse goes unreported or elderly Asian individuals are unable to properly express themselves due to the language barrier. Although all NYC governmental agencies are mandated to provide translation, which most of the time is over the phone, many times the victim's story is misunderstood or cultural norms are not recognized, resulting in misinformation about the ongoing abuse.

KINGS COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, NEW YORK

Grantees found it particularly difficult to find **safe and affordable emergency, transitional, and long-term housing for their clients**, many of whom require special accommodations.

Grantees also cited the need to provide more **community education and outreach** in order to:

- Increase awareness of the issue of abuse in later life;
- Encourage victims to report abuse; and
- Inform victims, who are often isolated, about available services.

In addition to **low-cost legal assistance**, grantees cited the need for **additional accommodations for victims pursuing legal charges** against their abusers.

Finally, grantees cited the need to reach out and provide specialized services for underserved populations, including:

- Victims with limited English proficiency;
- Immigrant victims;
- Victims with disabilities, including Deaf or hard of hearing populations;
- American Indians/Alaska Natives; and
- LGBT populations.