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.156
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff funded</th>
<th>6-month average</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total FTE staff funded</td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program coordinators</td>
<td>18 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim advocates</td>
<td>10 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>2 6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1**  
Staff supported with Abuse in Later Life grant funds, July 2013–June 2015: Selected groups

*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.
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%).
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%).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to Offender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/grandparent</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating relationship</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to Offender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/grandparent</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating relationship</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to Offender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating relationship</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/grandparent</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**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**
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%).
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
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.