

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 coordinated community response (CCR) to address and prevent elder abuse.

57 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017, 57 unique grantees reported activities funded by the ALL Program.

826 Victims Served

On average, grantees served or partially served 826 victims during each 6-month reporting period.

6,274 People Trained

Grantees trained a total of 6,274 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 (Fileborn, 2017).



FL • Grantee Perspective

Prior to receiving OWW funding for the Abuse in Later Life program, there was no forum for elder serving agency and organization professionals to meet and discuss issues related to the well-being of older adults. The Coordinated Community Response on Elder Abuse, now in Duval, Baker, and Nassau counties, is that forum for discussions that lead to the system changes needed to address crime against older adults. We have uncovered problems with reporting elder abuse cases, concerns over the language used to define what is an elder abuse case between agencies, and failure to ensure investigators receive cases from APS and for APS to move cases forward to law enforcement.

WOMEN'S CENTER OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA



WA • Grantee Perspective

The Elder Grants Program funding has allowed us to provide training to law enforcement professionals and cross-training to victim service providers on how to recognize and respond to elder abuse. We have also been able to adapt this training curriculum to provide condensed “mini-trainings” on the topic to community groups who have not been able to attend the cross-trainings. This funding has also allowed us to develop a Coordinated Community Response Team focused on systems change and multi-agency collaboration to improve our response to elder abuse in our community. Prior to this funding, we did not have a concentrated effort dedicated to this cause. Also as a result of this funding, we now have the opportunity to provide direct victim services to older adult victims of abuse, which was previously not possible as there are no similar programs in place in our community that are specific to this population.

PIERCE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON

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.**

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 **57** individual grantees for the July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 progress reporting period.

- **6** (11%) grantees reported that their grants specifically addressed tribal populations.
- Grantees most frequently addressed the following purpose area:
 - Create or support 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.**

- **55** (96%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **44** 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 2015–June 2017: Selected groups	
Staff funded	6-month average
Total FTE staff funded	55
Program coordinators	21 48%
Victim advocates	15 34%
Administrators	2 5%
Counselors	2 5%

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.**

- **47** (82%) grantees used funds for training.
- Grantees convened a total of **179** training events.
- Grantees trained a total of **6,274** people.
- Most often these trainings reached law enforcement officers (**38%**), elder services agencies (**21%**), and victim services organizations (**14%**).

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.**

- **40** (70%) grantees used funds for victim services.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **826** victims during each 6-month period.
- **98%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.



IN • Grantee Perspective

Prior to this funding, our community did not have a specific position or agency that provided services to male and female victims ages 50 or older, who were abused by an intimate partner, family member, or caregiver. The funds from the Elder Grants Program have allowed the Family Justice Center of St. Joseph County to hire the first Abuse in Later Life Case Manager in our community (and state).

INDIANA SUPREME COURT



SC • Grantee Perspective

As a result of the Elder Grants Program, the City of Charleston Mayor’s Office on Aging has been able to hire an additional staff member to expand its capacity to engage new partners, such as financial institutions, in efforts to improve the safety and quality of life of seniors in our community. Expanded outreach to local partners has created more awareness about abuse in later life and has helped dispel myths about the aging population and where abuse occurs. As a growing retirement community, a lot of attention is paid to abuse and neglect at nursing homes and assisted living facilities, even though 63% of adults over the age of 60 live alone or with a family member. This has generated interest from organizations who want to learn how to identify signs of abuse and appropriate actions to take. Without this grant, the Mayor’s Office on Aging, City of Charleston Police Department, and local service providers would not have been able to participate in the Training of Trainers programs that will allow us to provide this specialized training to service providers in the community.

CITY OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



VA • Grantee Perspective

This grant has allowed us to provide in-depth training for law enforcement and victim services in the Bristol and Washington County community to address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This training would not have been available otherwise. It has positioned those who have received the training for trainers to become leaders in addressing this issue.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES



MN • Grantee Perspective

OWW Abuse in Later Life Elder Grants funding has allowed us to fill a significant need in our community. As a result of the creation of the Aging Services Program, we are now able to offer enhanced services to abuse victims in later life. We are able to provide ongoing support and case management services, legal advocacy, and a support group specific to older adult victims. We have also been able to educate our community and colleagues. This funding has allowed our community to train professionals and continue to seek out educational opportunities for agencies, organizations, and individuals on the many facets of elder abuse.

ALEXANDRA HOUSE, MINNESOTA

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

- Victim advocacy services to **502** victims;
- Support group/counseling services to **299** victims;
- Crisis intervention services to **251** victims;
- Criminal justice advocacy services to **246** victims;
- Civil legal advocacy services to **211** victims; and
- Transportation services to **97** victims.

Hotline calls:

- Grantees received a total of **2,540** hotline calls; and
 - The majority of these calls (**61%**) came from victims.

Victims Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence and elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victims of **domestic/dating violence** (51%).

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

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

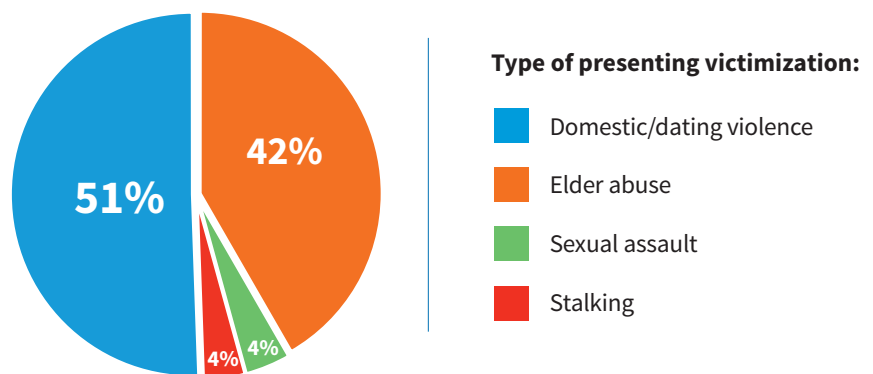


Table 2 | Victims seeking services with Abuse in Later Life grant funds, July 2015–June 2017

Victims seeking services	6-month average	
Total victims seeking services	839	
Victims served	799	95%
Victims partially served	27	3%
Victims not served	13	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, 2015 and June 30, 2017:

- The victims most frequently served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (47%).
- The remaining victims were most commonly victimized by a **child/grandchild** (21%) or another **family or household member** (19%).

Figure 2 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Domestic/dating violence** (6-month average)

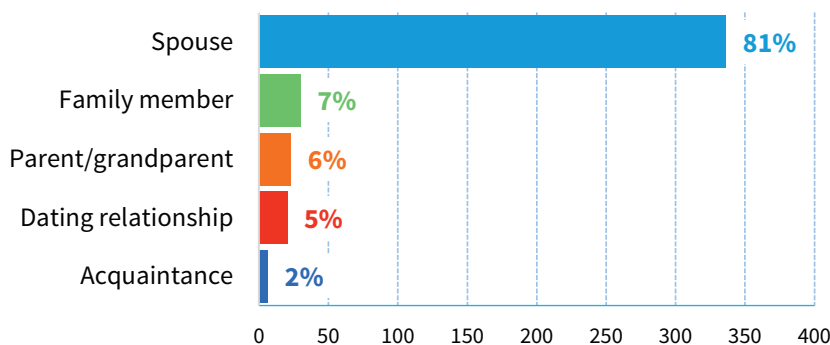


Figure 3 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Elder abuse** (6-month average)

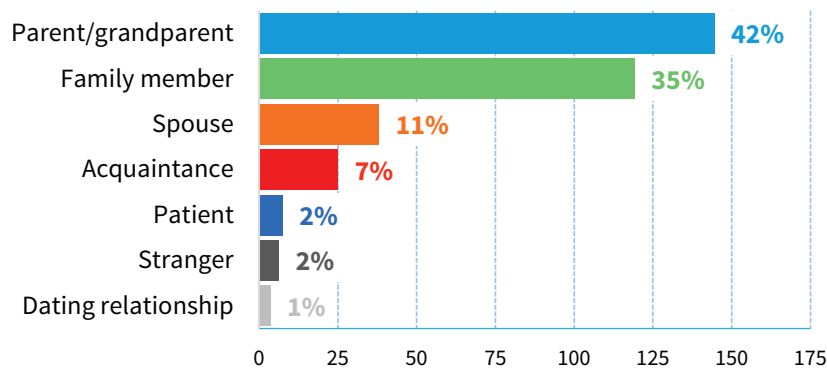
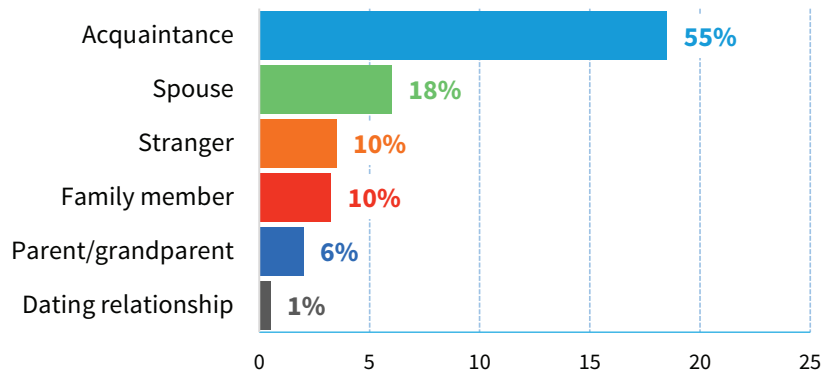


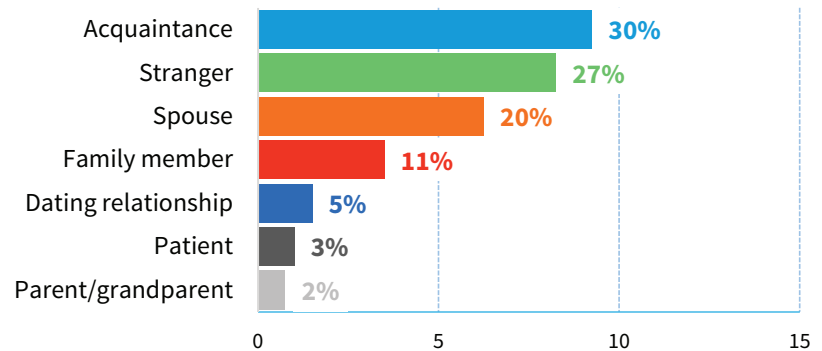
Figure 4 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Stalking** (6-month average)



IA • Grantee Perspective

These funds have provided us with learning opportunities and an avenue and a measure of force to bring attention to the issue of abuse in later life and to educate law enforcement, prosecutors, and members of the judicial system who play a role in stopping it. This opportunity and these funds have created positive change just simply as a result of bringing people together. Many conversations have occurred that would never have occurred without this grant. Further, without this funding our outreach to older victims would be limited to those who report victimization. Though our DV/SA organizations do terrific work, we would not be conducting outreach to some of our most vulnerable older Iowans who reside in rural areas or who are not able or willing to come forward to report victimization.

Figure 5 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Sexual assault**
(6-month average)



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

Demographics of Victims Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **826** victims during each 6-month reporting period. The victims most frequently served or partially served were **white** (73%), **female** (81%), and between the ages of **50 and 59** (45%).

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

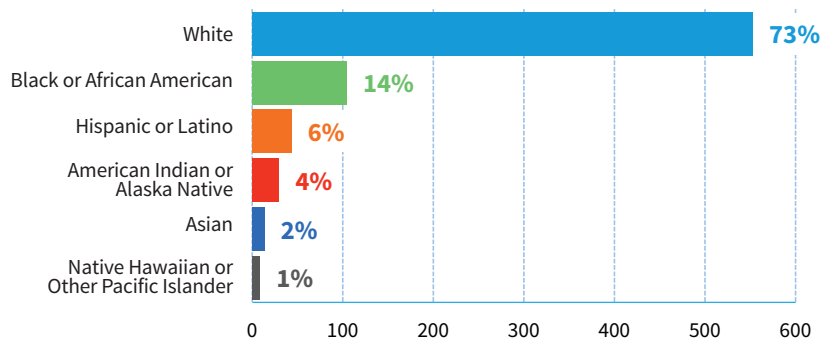


Figure 7 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Gender** (6-month average)

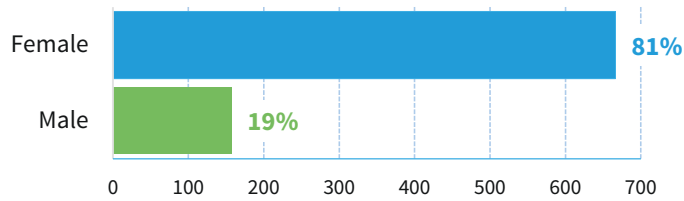


Figure 8 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Age** (6-month average)

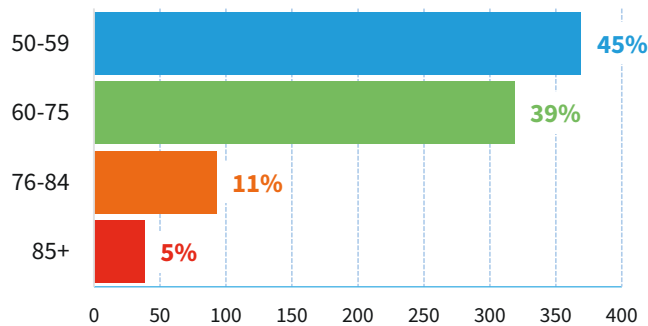
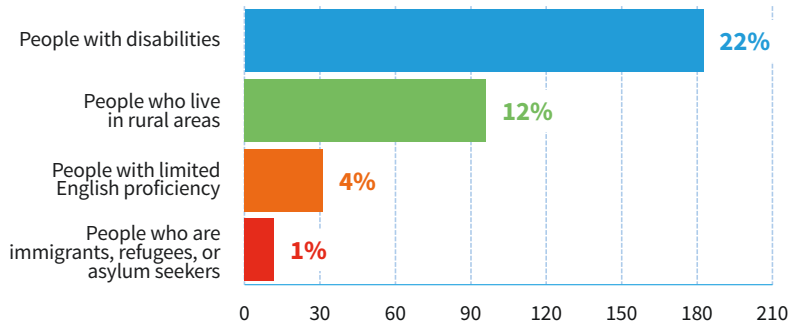


Figure 9 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Other** (6-month average)



ME • Grantee Perspective

One way this funding has allowed us to provide additional resources to elder victims is the expansion of the assistance to include individuals 50 and above, who were not just intimate partners but also victims whose abuser is an adult son or daughter, family member, or a person in a position of trust. Our prior assistance for elders began with those individuals who were 60 and above.

FAMILY CRISIS SERVICES, MAINE



MN • Grantee Perspective

Housing remains a significant barrier for older adult victims we serve, many of whom still live with their abusive partners while receiving services. For those victims who wish to leave their abusive partners, they often cannot afford their home without benefit of their abuser's income and do not qualify for many types of housing/financial assistance due to property and financial assets that they don't have immediate access to. Some clients who would like to leave, and who are victims of neglect by a caregiver, often need assisted living, which they cannot afford.

ALEXANDRA HOUSE, MINNESOTA

Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees cited **access to emergency and long-term affordable housing** as one of the biggest challenges facing victims of abuse in later life. In addition to a shortage of adequate housing, service providers also cited a number of unique challenges of working with older clients, including:

- The need for enhanced care due to health concerns;
- The limited mobility of many of their clients; and
- The unique financial circumstances of older victims.



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

In our community, the greatest challenge or obstacle to providing services is lack of reporting. Victim fear, shame, embarrassment, and even feelings of guilt with regard to abuse create a strong stigma about reporting elder abuse. In addition, older victims do not feel that services are available to them. For example, we have a domestic violence shelter, however, most victims assume that this program is for younger women with children. We also have a 24-hour crisis line, which was identified by both elders and service providers in the community needs assessment as the number one service needed for our community with regard to Abuse in Later Life. Our community has had a crisis line for a number of years; however, elders (and apparently service providers) feel that this line is not for elder abuse.

MENOMINEE INDIAN TRIBE OF WISCONSIN



SC • Grantee Perspective

In focus groups, older adults have described the challenges they face finding help for themselves or a friend who is being abused. They are unfamiliar with existing community directories and hotlines, including 2-1-1, and simply do not know where to start. They have described going through the phone book and not being able to find an organization to help, especially if they are calling after normal business hours. Even Adult Protective Services is only open during normal business hours (although Adult Protective Services will expand to a 24/7 operation in July 2017). Law enforcement is the last call they make when they cannot find anyone else to help. Better coordination and promotion of referral resources is needed to make it easier to find help.

CITY OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Grantees noted that **failure to report abuse** constituted the biggest barrier to serving victims of abuse in later life. They cited a number of reasons for the lack of reporting, including:

- Shame and embarrassment on the part of the victim;
- Manipulation by family members and caretakers;
- Physical isolation due to lack of access to transportation;
- Little knowledge about available services; and
- Lack of community education about the dynamics of elder abuse.

They emphasized the **need to increase public education and victim outreach efforts** in order to encourage victims to come forward.

Grantees felt that **enhanced coordination and collaboration between service providers and improved case management** would allow victims of elder abuse to better access services.

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

- Victims with limited English proficiency;
- Immigrant victims;
- LGBTQ populations; and
- Male victims.



NC • Grantee Perspective

Based on the data received via the individual survey responses and service provider responses, the most significant areas of need for providing services to older individuals/victims include the need for case management services that will link existing services together in a way that helps older victims who are currently unserved/underserved (due to being “screened out” or not receiving services because they do not meet traditional eligibility criteria, definitions or categories of victims in need of services). Having a case manager who will be able to receive older individuals who are being harmed who have “fallen through the cracks,” and who will assess their needs and interests, help identify existing services, assist them in accessing helpful resources, and provide ongoing support as is appropriate to them, will be especially helpful.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER OF ALAMANCE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA



CA • Grantee Perspective

Systems change, which is critical to the success of this program, is to ensure that well-trained gender appropriate interpreters are available to the victims of this crime for several reasons: 1) police interpreters are usually men who are acculturated to “change the story” when they come from cultures that culturally sanction DV and other abusive behaviors; 2) the only Southeast Asian DV advocate is unable to serve as such when she is called upon by LE to fulfill the role of interpreter; 3) the intimidation factor for Southeast Asian victims is significantly reduced with the use of trusted female interpreters; and 4) victim cooperation will be increased proportionately with this critical systems change.

HEALTHY HOUSE WITHIN A MATCH COALITION, CALIFORNIA