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Oregon Adult Protective Services (APS)

Who Are We and What Do We Do?

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Today's Agenda...

Adult Protective Services (APS)

- Program Overview
- Misconceptions
- APS Eligibility
- APS Functions
- Screening Reports
- Investigations – Community and Facility
- Protective Services
- Learn more, contact us





In 2025, Adult Protective Services (APS) received 59,452 reports with concerns about possible abuse of older adults or adults with physical disabilities. This was an increase from 2024 by over 3,000 reports. In 2024, there was an increase of almost 4,000 reports from 2023.

Although not all reports are screened in for investigation, data shows that abuse of Oregon's older adults and adults with physical disabilities is pervasive and increasing.

Who is APS?

Adult Protective Services (APS) is part of Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Aging and People with Disabilities (APD).



- APS Central Office is housed in the Department of Human Services Building in Salem.
 - About 50 Central Office Staff
 - About 250 investigators in local APD Offices and Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs).
- APS provides protective services, investigates reports of alleged abuse and works with community partners (local law enforcement, behavioral health and domestic violence groups) to serve Oregonians.
- APS investigates allegations of abuse in the community and in assisted living/residential care and adult foster homes.

DHS APD DISTRICTS

 **Aging and People with Disabilities**
Office Locations

-  Multnomah County (MultCo) AAA
-  Northwest Senior & Disability Services (NWSDS) AAA
-  Oregon Cascades West Senior Services (OCWCOG) AAA
-  Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) AAA
-  Aging and People with Disabilities (APD)



Common Misconceptions about APS?

- APS can remove people from their homes.
- APS can arrest people.
- APS can provide funds to victims.
- APS can place victims in facilities or housing.
- APS can impose a guardian on a victim.



Who APS Serves



An APS eligible adult is anyone:

- **Over the age of 65.**
- **Between the ages of 18 and 65 who has a physical disability.**
 - “Physical disability” is defined as any physical condition or cognitive condition such as brain injury or dementia that significantly interferes with an adult’s ability to protect themselves from abuse or self-neglect.
- **Living in an APD licensed facility.**
 - A “licensed facility” is defined as a facility licensed by APD, including assisted living facilities, residential care facilities and adult foster homes. This does not include nursing facilities. Nursing facilities conduct their own monitoring and investigations of abuse.

APS Functions

- Screening
- Investigating
- Coordination and collaboration with partners
- Protective Service Referrals
- Risk management
- Collection of state-wide data

APS Investigation Process



Adult abuse investigation process

1

A report is made

- Someone suspects that an adult who is older or physically disabled has suffered abuse.
- The concerned person reports it to an abuse reporting line like SAFELINE or the local DHS office.

2

The allegation is screened

- A screener determines if the concern meets criteria for an abuse investigation or a protective service response.
- Concerns that meet the criteria are assigned an investigator.
- If concerns fall outside the scope of APS, they may be referred to another program.

3

An investigation begins

- The assigned investigator is an adult protective services specialist who conducts a civil investigation.
- The APS specialist interviews the alleged victim, witnesses and alleged perpetrator.
- They conduct unannounced visits to the alleged victim or facility, gather evidence and do fact finding.

4

A report is written

- The investigator writes a report after an objective analysis and weighing of the evidence.
- The report may be shared with law enforcement or other qualified agencies, or used by the DHSIOHA background check unit for employment screening purposes.

5

A conclusion is reached

Based on the majority of evidence, the conclusion is that the abuse is:

- Substantiated** more likely than not occurred
- Unsubstantiated** more likely than not did not occur
- Inconclusive** unable to determine if abuse occurred.

Screening

- All calls or contacts involving the possibility of abuse or self-neglect are directed to APS screening.
- Screening is used to gather and assess information to determine eligibility for Adult Protective Services. This includes determining whether the reported concern meets the definition of abuse or self-neglect.
- If the reported concern **does not** meet the definition of abuse or self-neglect, **but** requires intervention, APS will make referrals to other resources, including case management, licensing, APS risk management, or other services.
- If the reported concern **does** meet the definition of abuse or self-neglect, the report will be assigned for investigation with an appropriate response time.

Screening Data for 2025

- In 2025, APS received 59,452 contacts about possible abuse. 13,687 of these contacts were input as non-abuse concerns.
- The remaining 45,765 contacts encompassed 54,878 allegations of separate abuse types.
- Out of 45,765 contacts, 33,756 involved allegations or concerns in a community setting. The remaining 21,122 reports were allegations or concerns in licensed facilities.
- Out of the 33,756 reports of allegations in a community setting 16,359 (**48%**) were closed at screening.
- Out of 21,122 reports of allegations in facilities 9,781 (**46%**) were closed at screening.

Screening Challenges

- Reporters that choose to remain anonymous. Although APS will accept anonymous reports and will maintain the confidentiality of reporter, having the opportunity to further interview the reporter during an investigation can be helpful.
- Reporters that are hesitant to provide information for fear of reprisals or confrontation. Could be a neighbor, friend or family member.
- Vague or incomplete information. Reporter saw or learned of something concerning but doesn't have a lot of details. Sometimes even the name of the alleged victim isn't known.
- The identity of the alleged perpetrator isn't known or the age of the alleged perpetrator is under 18. APS will not name a minor as an alleged perpetrator.

Law Enforcement

The Department or local office shall immediately notify law enforcement if any of the following conditions exist:

- Reasonable cause to believe a crime has been committed;
- Access to the allegedly abused individual is denied and legal assistance is needed in gaining access;
- The situation presents a credible danger to the Department worker or others and police escort is advisable;
- Forensic photographic or other evidence is needed; or
- Those required under OAR 411-020-0123 or 411-020-0126.

Types of APS Investigations

Community and Facility



APS Community Investigations

Conducted and documented when the Alleged Perpetrator is reported to have abused:

- An older adult or adult with a physical disability residing in a non-facility setting.
- An adult residing in an APD licensed facility setting when the alleged perpetrator is not employed by, volunteers for, or is contracted personnel with the facility.
- An adult under APS eligibility who receives in-home services.

APS Facility Investigations

Conducted and documented when a resident of a facility licensed by APD is reported to have been abused by a licensee, staff member, contractor or volunteer of the facility.

- Adult Foster Homes
- Residential Care and Assisted Living Facilities

May also occur when a facility resident is reported to have been abused by an Alleged Perpetrator not employed, contracted or supervised by the facility, to determine whether the licensee or facility staff failed to protect the resident.

Types of Abuse Investigated

Physical Abuse

Neglect

Abandonment

Verbal or
Emotional Abuse

Financial
Exploitation

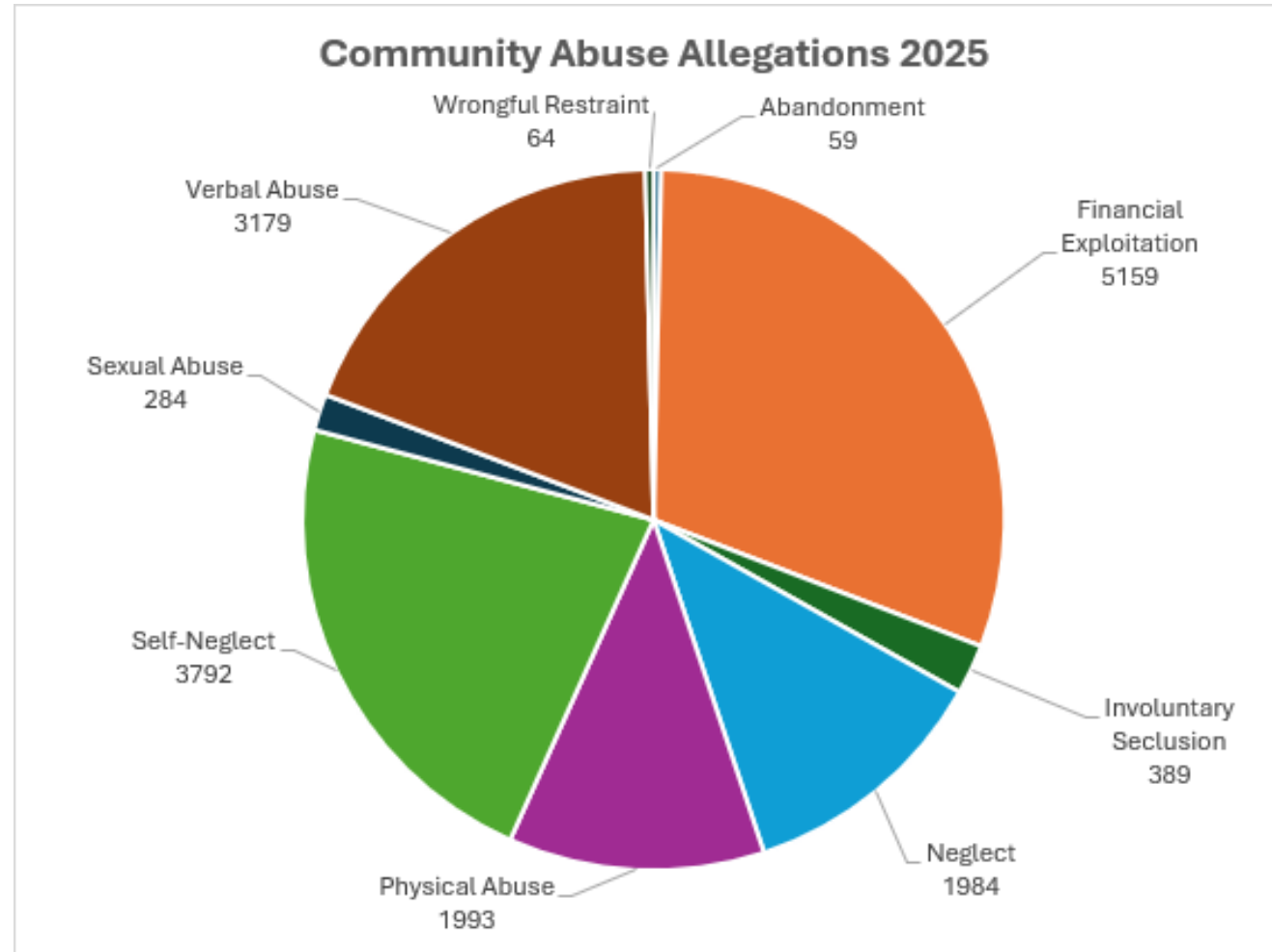
Sexual Abuse

Involuntary
Seclusion

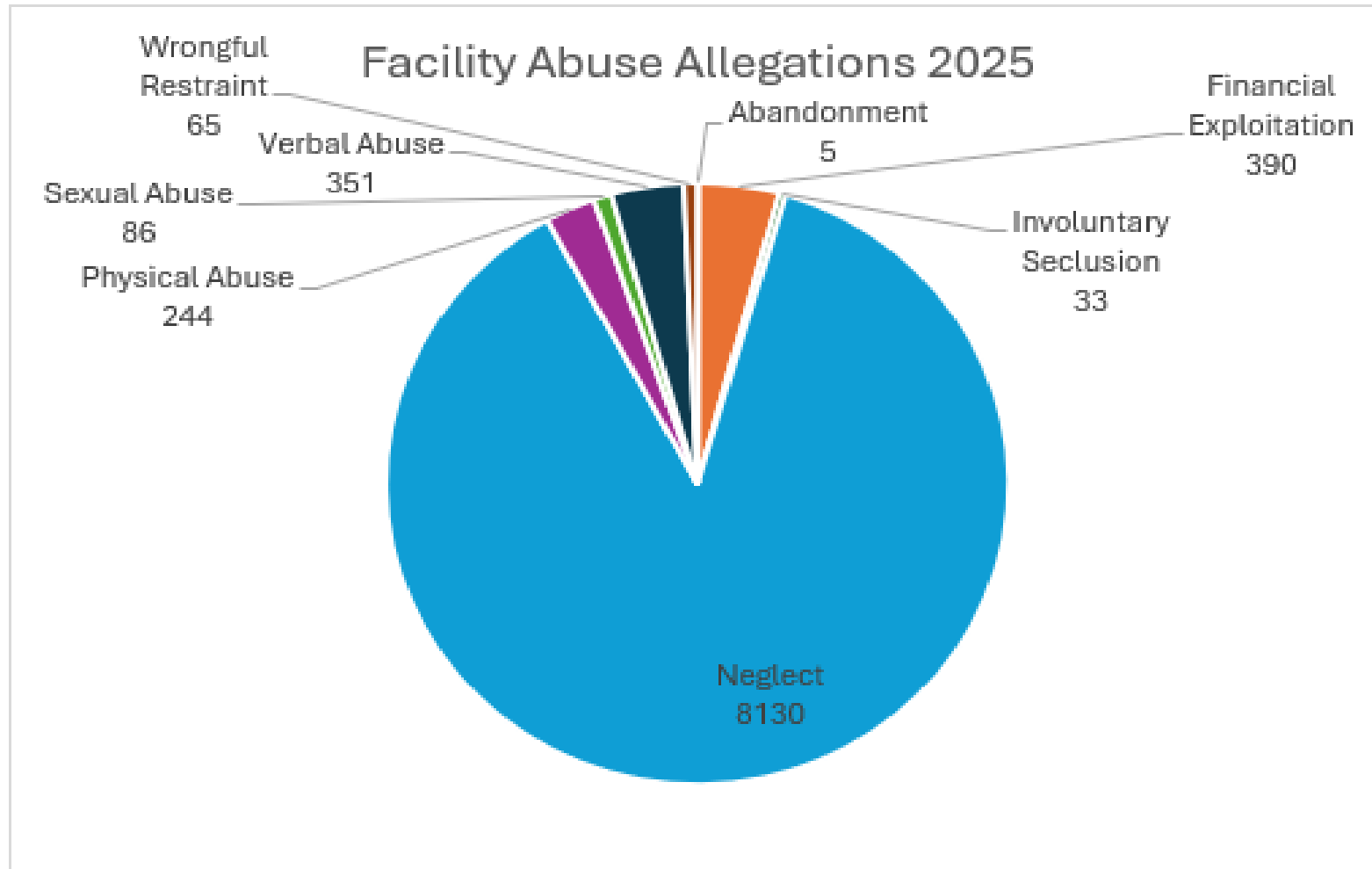
Wrongful Use of a
Physical or
Chemical Restraint

Self Neglect

Community Abuse Allegations 2025



Facility Abuse Allegations 2025



Abuse Type Challenges

- Subjectivity of terms in the Statute and Rule. Terms like “significant”, “inappropriate”, “substantial” and “severe” can be dependent on personal experience or bias. For example, “Verbal or Emotional Abuse” has “significant emotional harm” as a potential impact to the victim.
- Proving intent by the alleged perpetrator. Some abuse types, such as “Physical Abuse” states that physical injury must be caused by “other than accidental means” or “Abandonment” includes “desertion” or “willful forsaking” as crucial components.
- Sexual Abuse can sometimes be challenging to investigate as consent is a crucial component. It must be determined if the victim had capacity to be able to consent.

Can a victim refuse to participate in an APS investigation?

- Adults have the right to make informed choices (as defined in OAR 411-020-0002) that do not conform to societal norms as long as those decisions are not harmful to others.
- This includes the right to refuse participation in APS assessments, investigation, or intervention.
- This **does not** include the right to prevent an investigation from occurring.

Components of an APS Investigation

- Assessing the allegations.
- Mapping the investigation process.
- Conducting interviews and assessments.
- Documenting observations.
- Collecting evidence (documents, statements, care plans, financial information, etc.)
- Evaluating all the gathered information for relevancy.
- Using all gather relevant information to reach a conclusion.

Preponderance of Evidence

- After a complete and thorough investigation, all relevant evidence is evaluated.
- APS standard of proof is a preponderance of evidence must support a conclusion of substantiated or not-substantiated.
- Preponderance of evidence means that “more likely than not” the allegation of abuse occurred.
- If the evidence doesn’t clearly indicate a preponderance, a finding of “inconclusive” can be determined.

What happens after an APS investigation is completed?



- Protective service referrals are made, if appropriate.
- Quality assurance reviews of reports are made by APS Central Office.
- Safety, Oversight and Quality (SOQ) reviews APS Facility reports.
- Due process for alleged perpetrators of substantiated allegations in Community Investigations.
 - Due process gives the alleged perpetrators rights to administrative reviews and judicial reviews.

Signs of Self-Neglect

Know
the
signs

Dehydration, malnutrition

Untreated medical conditions

Lack of necessary medical aids

Hazardous or unsafe living conditions

Unsanitary or unclean living quarters

Inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing

Houseless

Mandatory Reporters

- Everyone can and should report abuse.
- We all have a responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves.
- Certain people are “mandatory reporters.”
- This means by Oregon law they must report (ORS 124.050).



Tips for Preventing Adult Abuse

- Always report abuse or suspected abuse.
- Learn how to recognize the signs of elder abuse, and how these are different from the normal aging process.
- Check in on older or vulnerable adults who may not have friends and family members.
- Listen to adults and their caregivers to understand their challenges and give support.
- Encourage family caregivers to get help when they need it. Caregiving is very rewarding but can also bring challenges. Training and support are available.

Spotting the Signs of Elder Abuse

Each year, hundreds of thousands of adults over the age of 60 are abused, neglected, or financially exploited.

Here are signs that an older adult in your life may be experiencing abuse:



Physical

Unexplained injuries or physical signs of punishment or restraint, such as bruises, scars, or burns

Emotional

Depression, anxiety, or changes in behavior

Neglect

Preventable health problems such as bedsores or unclean living conditions

Abandonment

Leaving an older adult who needs help alone without planning for their care

Sexual

Changes in mood, becoming withdrawn, or other physical signs

Financial

Changes in banking or spending patterns

If you suspect an older adult is being abused, talk with them and report what you see to an authority.

Learn more at www.nia.nih.gov/elder-abuse.



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF
Human Services

Adult Abuse Reporting Hotline:

855-503-SAFE (7233)

or your local APD Office

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Questions and discussion



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