



Veterans Affairs and Adult Protective Services



Partnering to Protect

One Team, One Goal.

Veterans Affairs (VA) is a critical and valued Adult Protective Services (APS) partner in protecting and ensuring the safety of vulnerable adults in Texas. VA services, including health care and financial benefits, are essential to the health and well-being of Texas veterans. Our shared goal is to find solutions for veterans who are in need so they can live healthier, safer lives with dignity. We achieve the best results when APS and the VA work side by side to help the people we serve.

About APS

APS is a division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). We serve Texans who live in the community who are age 65 or older and adults, age 18 to 64, who have a disability that substantially affects

their ability to live independently. APS investigates when someone alleges that a member of either of these groups is a victim of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation. When an investigation confirms an allegation, APS may provide or arrange for services to remedy or prevent further harm.

Reporting to APS

Report situations of suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation to the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. For situations that are not urgent, you can report online at txabusehotline.org.

Please provide as much detail as possible and a good call-back number for APS to ask follow-up questions.

State law requires everyone to report suspected abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of adults who are elderly or have disabilities to DFPS. The law also provides immunity from civil and criminal liability for those acting in good faith.

DFPS's Statewide Intake (SWI) program operates the hotline and the website. If the allegations meet APS's investigation criteria, SWI assigns a priority that is based on the severity of the situation and sends it to a local APS office where a caseworker begins an investigation. The caseworker uses the priority to determine how quickly to see the client.

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Most of the cases APS investigates involve self-neglect. Self-neglect warning signs may include poor hygiene, lack of necessities, and unsanitary living conditions.

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APS Role and Responsibilities

- APS investigates allegations of abuse, neglect and self-neglect, and financial exploitation when the adult is age 65 or older or has a disability causing significant impairment.
- APS finds community resources to help clients with short-term needs such as emergency shelter, rent, house cleaning, minor home repairs, wheelchair ramps, food, and medications. Longer-term solutions include advocating for clients to receive benefits and connecting clients with social service agencies.



Facts about APS

- APS clients who have the capacity to make decisions have the right to refuse services, such as home cleaning or medication assistance, but the investigation is not optional. APS is required to continue the investigation whether the client is cooperative or not.
- APS's ability to take legal action depends on: (1) if there is evidence that the client lacks capacity, (2) if there is a threat to the client's life or physical safety, and (3) if there is no one else to make decisions on the client's behalf.

- APS's ability to pursue legal intervention for imminent mental health concerns is limited.
- APS does not serve as a guardian. If a client needs a guardian, APS looks for relatives or refers the client to other agencies.

Opportunities for Veterans Affairs and APS to Work Together

- **Establishing Points of Contact and Clear Communication Channels.** APS welcomes the opportunity to build relationships with the VA to foster trust and effective communications. By establishing regional or local points of contact, we can more quickly help our mutual clients when issues arise.
- **Preventing Gaps in Services.** The VA and APS can work together to coordinate and enhance supports for our mutual clients to avoid gaps in services, including long-term supports such as caregiver support, health care, and other services.
- **Sharing Information.** Texas law authorizes the VA to share health and financial information of clients to assist in APS investigations or service delivery.
- **Expanding Training Opportunities.** Together, the VA and APS can develop cross-training opportunities such as Brown Bag Lunch-and-Learns and joint meetings with community service organizations to learn about each other's role and what services can be provided.

Contact your local APS office:

For more information, please visit PartneringToProtect.org.



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Department of Family
and Protective Services
Adult Protective Services