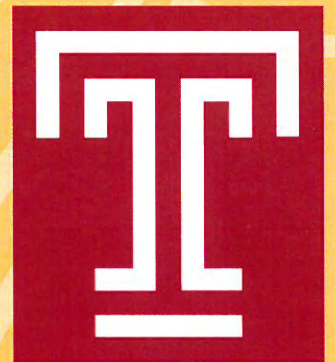


BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL TASK FORCE FOR VICTIMIZED OLDER ADULTS

Pennsylvania Department of Aging's
**INSTITUTE
ON PROTECTIVE SERVICES**
at Temple University



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF AGING



JUNE 2013

Pennsylvania Department of Aging
Institute on Protective Services
at Temple University

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Task Force
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This resource was created by gathering best practices from around the state and across the country. It is not intended to be all inclusive. We are thankful to those counties who have shared their work and we apologize for any resources we omitted. If you have other examples you would like us to include in future editions of this publication please send them to linda.mill@temple.edu.

OVERVIEW

Successful Task Forces are built on the premise that to effectively protect older adults the aging services network and law enforcement must work cooperatively in identifying and responding to elder victimization. Victims need to not only receive protective services to cope with the harm that has been done to them, but they also need to have the ability to seek restitution and justice. Professionals from the many different agencies that work with victimized older adults bring different but equally valuable knowledge and perspectives to achieve these goals.

The PA Department of Aging Institute on Protective Services at Temple University (Institute) has always worked collaboratively with local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's) to establish elder abuse Task Forces and does not recommend any single model. This is done in that the political and governmental structures are different in every jurisdiction, and the mechanisms for meeting elders' needs vary from locality to locality. Thus it is essential that any guidance provided be seen as a general description of the steps to be taken rather than as a definitive assessment of the way to proceed.

To engage a definitive assessment, the Institute is available to assist in the development of the Task Force and in collaborating with the parties seeking to establish it.

When developing a successful Task Force, the Institute recommends the following eight steps.

1. Draft a Statement of Purpose
2. Recruit Members
3. Develop Memoranda of Understanding
4. Conduct Initial Task Force Meetings
5. Hold Educational Sessions for Task Force Members
6. Develop a forum for regular review / referral of cases
7. Hold Educational Sessions for the Community
8. Brainstorm Other Ways to Meet the Need of the Community

These ideas will hopefully serve as a guide to beginning an effective Task Force in your county. The goal is not to provide a mandated lengthy process but to share successful models, ideas and resources that you can customize for the particular needs of your county. The Institute is available to support you in the development and implementation of your Task Force. While Task Forces do take effort to be successful, counties throughout Pennsylvania are demonstrating that they do work in meeting the needs of victimized older adults. Without Task Forces, a community's ability to meet the complex needs of older victims is greatly compromised. With a Task Force, older victims are better able to have their need for safety met as well as often obtain restitution and justice through the agencies who serve them working together.

TASK FORCE MODELS

There is no single model. Various models have been successfully implemented in Pennsylvania and across the country. The key is to assess the needs of older adults in the county or counties to be served and work within the local government, community and political structures to affect positive change.

The following are examples of models that are currently in use:

501(c)(3) Non-Profit Corporation

The Schuylkill County Elder Abuse Task Force was first established in 2004 by a county commissioner to address the growing concerns of abuse against the elderly. In 2007, the Task Force voted to convert the organization into an independent, non-profit corporation known as the Schuylkill Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance, Inc. ("SEAPA"). The shift to a non-profit model was to serve the growth of the organization, formalize the mission, and allow for dedicated funding and fundraising. The focus is on prosecution, community awareness and education, and training of professional entities that have significant contact with older adults.

- Contact: Georgene Fedoriska, gfedoriska@co.schuylkill.pa.us
- www.schuylkillelderabuse.com

Financial Exploitation Prevention Focus

The idea of the Philadelphia Task Force was to focus on the type of elder abuse that has the greatest opportunity for third party detection, which would then lead to intervention and community education for all types of abuse. The Philadelphia Financial Exploitation Prevention Task Force was formed in June of 2010. The charter members included representatives from the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, the District Attorney's Office and the Philadelphia Police Department. It was later expanded to include banks and other community groups dedicated to serving seniors: Beneficial Bank, TD Bank, SeniorLAW Center, Intercommunity Action Inc. and CARIE. The Task Force is led by PCA and focuses on training financial institutions and other professionals to detect and prevent financial exploitation and elder abuse, and prosecute those responsible.

(see Appendix A - The Philadelphia APS Bank Reporting and Loss Prevention Program)

- Contact: Joe Snyder, jsnyder@pcaphl.org

County Task Force Led by District Attorney's Office

The Lehigh County Elder Abuse Task Force was first established in 2003 using a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency that was obtained by the PA Department of Aging to develop county based Task Forces. The grant was used to fund the work of the Institute on Protective Services in developing Task Forces that would bring together the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), the District Attorney's Office, the coroner and law enforcement. The primary goal was to increase the effectiveness of the AAA in referring appropriate cases of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of older adults to the law enforcement for successful prosecution. Once the Task Force was established the District Attorney assumed responsibility for the ongoing work and the Institute moved into an advisory and investigative role. Today the Task Force meets quarterly with members from the District Attorney's Office, The Area Agency on Aging, Law Enforcement and community organizations serving older adults. They do extensive community outreach and training and work collaboratively to investigate and prosecute cases.

- Contact: Diane Weitknecht, dianeweitknecht@lehighcounty.org

TASK FORCE MODELS (continued)

County Task Force Created by Public Officials

The Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Elder Abuse Task Force was formed in 2008 under the leadership of state representatives Phyllis Mundy and Karen Boback. It is dedicated to reducing the number of elderly victims through the prevention, education, identification and prosecution of elder abuse. It is co-chaired by the Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Area Agency on Aging and the Ethics Institute of Northeastern Pennsylvania at Misericordia University. The Task Force works collaboratively with local community leaders to design programs that raise awareness of elder abuse. Since its inception, the Task Force has sponsored informational workshops on elder care abuse and elder sexual assault for health care professionals and law enforcement officials.

- Contact: Trula Hollywood, thollywood@aging.luzerne-wyoming.org

Collaboration with other County Task Forces

Two counties (Mercer and Bedford) partner with the Domestic Violence STOP Task Force meetings. In these counties they have found many of the same law enforcement and community leaders attend both meetings. After the STOP meeting has concluded the appropriate individuals stay to discuss elder abuse cases.

- Contact (Bedford): Alan Smith, asmith12@hbfaaa.org
- Contact (Mercer): Sam Bellich, sbellich@mercercountyaging.org

Law Enforcement Collaboration

Some counties have decided not to have official Task Force meetings – usually for one of two reasons: 1) Law Enforcement resources are limited and time is not available for ongoing meetings. 2) A formal Task Force was in place but has now evolved into focused case specific meetings between the DA and the AAA. This model is most effective when the communication between law enforcement and the Area Agency on Aging occurs on a regular basis. If the meetings become too irregular or infrequent then the collaboration tends to lose momentum.

A successful example of this model is the:

Washington County Elder Abuse Investigative Unit

The core members of the unit are the District Attorney, Director of Legal and Protective Services and the Protective Services Supervisor. They meet monthly to review cases and invite law enforcement personnel, the coroner or bankers to meetings for specific cases. They also do extensive outreach into the community through presentations to senior groups and professionals who interact with seniors. Key to the unit's success is due to the fact that it has remained small and true to the goal of getting cases prosecuted and /or recouping assets stolen from older adults.

- Contact: Marie Christinis, mchristinis@swpa-aaa.org

Financial Abuse Specialist Team (F.A.S.T.)

FAST teams focus on complex financial abuse cases. Teams may be comprised of public agencies only (Adult Protective Services, law enforcement, Public Guardian, LTC Ombudsman), or public-private partnerships, which include private practitioners from the fields of law, real estate, banking, etc. Teams typically meet monthly and discuss one to three cases. This concept was developed in California and focuses on rapid response in order to preserve or recover the older adults assets. Team members are also involved in training and community outreach.

(To download more information on this program, search the Internet for: "Financial Abuse Specialist Team Practice Guide")

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE / MISSION STATEMENT

The statement of purpose provides the Task Force with a framework that outlines its guiding principles and goals. The Institute recommends that two very important goals be incorporated into the statement of purpose for each Task Force. Task Forces should focus on:

1. Improving the investigation and prosecution of cases that rise to the level of criminality
2. Increasing the recognition and reporting of victimization in the community to the AAA and law enforcement.

EXAMPLES

SCHUYLKILL ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION ALLIANCE (SEAPA)

"The corporation shall work to create an abuse free community for seniors by creating an awareness of elder abuse, educating the community on elder abuse prevention, and aiding law enforcement and the courts in prosecuting offenders."

FRANKLIN COUNTY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As the Task Force of Franklin County, it is our desire to work collaboratively in identifying and assisting elderly people in our community that have been the victim of abuse. Our primary goals are as follows:

1. To educate groups of people who have regular contact with elderly people in our community so that they are aware of the existence of Protective Services, law enforcement and the Task Force. This includes the education of our police forces, clergy, attorneys, and banks. With this education, it is our primary goal to increase the awareness of financial abuses of the elderly, and provide specific information as to what can and should be reported to Protective Services and/or law enforcement.
2. To work together on strategies and open communication so as to have efficient investigations into the financial abuses of the elderly, and to prosecute the situations that arise to criminal behavior.

In order to effectuate our goals, it is our intention to do the following:

1. Educate each other as to what each entity involved in the Task Force can offer toward both the education of our community and the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed against the elderly.
2. Develop specific procedures whereby investigations are carried out and criminal cases addressed in a timely manner.
3. Recruit members to the Task Force that can assist in the carrying out of our primary goals as set forth above.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE / MISSION STATEMENT (continued)

PHILADELPHIA FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION PREVENTION TASK FORCE

PURPOSE: Develop a comprehensive plan to protect Philadelphia seniors from financial exploitation and abuse.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Enhance collaboration between key agencies in order to Prevent, Detect, Investigate, Recover and Prosecute elder financial abuse.
2. Develop and deliver training to law enforcement, social workers, banks, and investment firms.
3. Develop and deliver awareness & prevention campaign for seniors and the broader community.

LUZERNE-WYOMING COUNTIES ELDER ABUSE TASK FORCE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Elder Abuse Task Force is to reduce the number of victimized elderly through prevention, education, identification and prosecution.

WASHINGTON COUNTY ELDER ABUSE INVESTIGATIVE UNIT

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the team is to protect older adults and to reduce the effects of the trauma of multiple investigations and interviews through a joint Team investigation of physical and sexual abuse, neglect and other forms of exploitation, while continuing to provide services to victims through a multidisciplinary approach.

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

The makeup of a Task Force can be as focused or diverse as necessary to achieve its purpose. The first contact is usually between the AAA and the District Attorney. Establishing that relationship and gaining District Attorney (DA) buy-in is critical to the success of the Task Force. A lunch meeting with the DA, AAA and the Institute has been successful in developing that relationship and at that meeting we can provide examples of successful models in other counties and the resources the Institute can bring to the Task Force. As an alternative, if relationships already exist in your county, it may be more effective to start with the local or state police and then have them bring in the District Attorney.

Start by drafting a letter outlining the initiative and send or hand deliver to key constituents. *(See Appendix B for sample)*

At minimum, the Institute recommends that representatives be invited from the:

- District Attorney's Office
- Area Agency on Aging
- Solicitor for Area Agency on Aging
- State Police
- Police Departments
- Coroner's Office

Other Task Force members can be from:

- Victim Services Agencies (Domestic Violence, Mental Health Services, Crime Victims)
- Financial Institutions
- Common Pleas Judges and or District Judges
- Orphans Court
- Bar Association
- Regulatory and Advocacy agencies such as Department of Public Welfare, Ombudsman, Department of Health, etc.
- Clergy
- Community Legal Services
- TRIAD
- Senior Centers
- Hospitals, Physicians
- State Representatives / elected officials

The relationships developed among the Task Force members are critical to the success. Contact lists should be developed that are internal to the Task Force only that contain direct phone numbers and email addresses for members. A public version should also be created with key agency numbers that all members can distribute throughout the community and can be placed into a brochure. (See page 17 Communications)

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) / WORKING AGREEMENTS

Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) are informal agreements that commit agencies to following established protocols or procedures. They ensure that the agreed upon protocols are fully understood, endorsed by the agencies' leadership, and that they will be passed on to new staff.

The MOUs should be built between agencies to support the goals of the Task Force. For example, the Area Agency on Aging and the District Attorney's Office can have a MOU that enhances communication and cooperation between the two offices when victimization has the potential to rise to the level of criminality. Other goals that can be achieved through MOUs include ensuring efficient and effective investigation and prosecution of cases; enhancing communication between police departments and the Area Agency on Aging; increasing awareness of crimes against older victims throughout the community; and assuring that protection and treatment are provided promptly and effectively to victims.

Appendix C contains two sample agreements, one from Pennsylvania and one from California:

1. **Washington County, PA "Inter-Agency Letter of Agreement"**
(available in Microsoft Word for easy editing upon request)
2. **San Francisco, CA "Consortium for Elder Abuse Prevention Membership Agreement"**

There are other MOU's available for Wisconsin, Colorado, and Florida but these contain very state law specific language. These can be provided to you upon request.

TASK FORCE MEETINGS

The National Center on Elder Abuse* surveyed 117 elder abuse coalitions for the *Promising Practices Issue Brief: Elder Abuse Coalitions*. Respondents identified a number of factors that can make a real difference in a coalition's (Task Force) success:

- *A strong and resourceful lead agency*
- *Shared vision and goals*
- *Strong commitment to purpose*
- *Results oriented accountability*
- *Expansive, inclusive membership with a solid core membership base*
- *Clear structures (formalized procedures; regularly scheduled meetings)*
- *Commitment to the principle of shared decision making; a willingness to openly share ideas and plans*
- *Assigned responsibility for projects*
- *Innovative, culturally appropriate outreach, driven by community need.*

Meetings involving the establishment and initial carrying out of the Task Force often include shared meals. It is always an effective strategy to eat together, converse informally and engage in relationship development prior to finalizing and implementing the structure of the Task Force. Some groups continue having lunch meetings with members taking turns covering the costs or bringing their own lunch, while others move away from the lunch format and find a time that works best for all.

The key is to have regular meetings planned in advance so they become a habit. Infrequent meetings tend to cause the Task Force to lose momentum and focus, particularly when elected officials change. Many successful groups meet the same day each month (ex: first Friday or second Thursday) and then may move to bi-monthly or quarterly meetings as the process matures.

It is important to publish agendas and minutes of the meetings**. Due to the nature of the work of the members not everyone will make every meeting but you want to keep them informed and engaged.

One the following pages you will find suggested meeting formats and agendas. Feel free to adapt as needed.

* Website: www.ncea.aoa.gov

** *Meeting minutes should not include details of case investigation discussions due to the need for confidentiality.*

TASK FORCE MEETINGS (continued)

1st Meeting

The goal of the first meeting should be to get to know everyone and level set the need for the Task Force. The AAA can share information about case volumes and trends in the county. The DA may share crime statistics. Others can comment on their perspective. The group should discuss objectives for the Task Force that meet the unique needs of the county. Ask if the right people are at the table or if additional members should be invited. Note: It is recommended that you start with a smaller group and expand as the Task Force develops. Too many members may mean too many priorities and a lack of a clear focus for the group.

Sample Agenda

- Introductions
- Why Do We Need an Elder Abuse Task Force?
 - **See Appendix D – Talking Points for Collaborating to Prevent Elder Abuse**
- Elder Abuse Today in _____ County
Share relevant local or national news articles, new studies, County statistics, etc.
- Brainstorming: Task Force Objectives
- Brainstorming: Task Force Members
- Next Meeting

2nd Meeting

The second meeting should focus on training each other in the key functions and processes within the respective agencies: Protective Services, Police, District Attorney's Office. See page 14 for more guidance on this topic.

Key questions to answer include:

- How does each organization receive cases?
- What are the timeframe, criteria and limitations for working cases?
- What are the steps in the process?
- When and why would the organization seek assistance from the other member organizations?
- What are the current barriers to successful outcomes?

Depending on the length of your meeting this may be carried over into the 3rd meeting.

Sample Agenda

- Introductions
- Follow-Up to Actions Items from last meeting
- Adult Protective Services Investigation Process Overview
- State and/or Local Police Department Case Intake and Investigative Process Overview
- District Attorney's Office Case Intake and Investigative Process Overview
- Next Meeting

TASK FORCE MEETINGS (continued)

3rd Meeting

The third meeting should move the Task Force into action. Finalize objectives, establish working agreements, and set the schedule for ongoing meetings. Meeting at a consistent time each month will improve attendance.

Sample Agenda

- Introductions
- Follow-Up to Actions Items from last meeting
- Finalize Task Force Objectives & How Success will be Measured
- Establish MOU's or Working Agreements
- Determine Training Needs & Schedule Sessions
- Set Ongoing Meeting Schedule

Ongoing Meetings

Subsequent meetings should be used to work towards the objectives. Cases should be reviewed. Training and Community Awareness sessions planned and implemented. Special events developed. Each Task Force will evolve based on the needs of the county and the participants involved. For many Task Forces the review of cases is done at the end of the meeting so that members that should not be part of those confidential discussions can be excused.

- Introductions
- Follow-Up to Actions Items from last meeting
- Review Progress of Task Force Objectives
- New Business
- New Research or News Articles (including successful prosecutions in other counties or states)
- Next Meeting Date
- Case Reviews:
 - It is recommended that those presenting the case should be prepared with a discussion document highlighting the key facts of the case. The document should omit full names and key identifiers to preserve confidentiality. (ex: Use Mrs. S for the victim instead of the older adult's full name)
 - See the ***Financial Exploitation Case Discussion Format in Appendix E*** as a resource for this part of the meeting. This is not intended to be a form that must be completed by the team, but rather serves to focus on the discussion on the key points.

TASK FORCE MEETINGS (continued)

Track Your Progress

Meeting minutes are important to capture the key discussion points for each meeting, but in order to stay on track with your objectives, someone should maintain a matrix on specific projects, goals or ideas so that they stay in front of the group. This is part of the *Results oriented accountability*.

A simple Project Plan can be created in Microsoft Excel or Word to track your progress. Due dates and ownership are the key points.

SAMPLE:

PHILADELPHIA FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION PREVENTION TASK FORCE

ACTION ITEMS LOG

No.	Issue	Assigned	Open Date	Status	Comments
1.0	Enhance Case Handling Process	Task Force	6/14/10	In process	ongoing
2.0	Recovery & Prosecution Guidelines	Task Force	6/14/10	In process	Each agency to draft their general guidelines for review by Task Force. Goal will be to develop TF case guidelines.
3.0	Resource Identification	Snyder/Mill	6/14/10	In process	Beneficial Bank June 2011; SeniorLAW Center July 2011; Intercommunity Action July 2011; VAO's Feb 2012
4.0	Agency Training	Task Force	6/14/10	COMPLETE	
4.1	Philadelphia PD Victim Assistance Officer's	Snyder/ Mill/ Bulls	6/14/10	COMPLETE	Nov 2010 Police Academy
4.2	PCA Investigators	Cella	6/14/10	COMPLETE	January 2011 – PCA – Investigative training by Sgt Cella – Major Crimes
4.3	Assistant District Attorneys	Snyder/ Pfeffer	6/14/10	COMPLETE	February 2012 – semi-annual CLE course for all ADA's in Phila
5.0	Public Awareness	TBD	6/14/10		Need an ongoing vehicle to communicate latest scams to the general public

The plan also serves as a “parking lot” for ideas generated by the Task Force that are deferred for action at a later date. Your time and resources are limited and you can't always act on every idea. However by putting it on the project plan you show respect to the contributor and also build an inventory of potential activities as the Task Force grows and matures.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS FOR TASK FORCE MEMBERS

One of the most important tasks to undertake when first establishing a task force is for each organization that is part of the task force to introduce the purpose, functions and processes of the organization. This is so all members of the task force understand what the organizations can and cannot do to be of assistance with older adults. Likewise, it provides the task force with a common framework to understand each other's work and how that work fits together to the benefit of older adults.

So, if the coroner's office is part of the task force, the representative of that office should explain the duties and functions of the coroner's office and what deaths are under the purview of that office. The representative should then discuss how that office can be of assistance in advising the area agency on aging, police or the district attorney about being called to a personal care home of a nursing home, or other congregate care giving settings, to claim a deceased body and relate what was observed and noticed during the coroner's removal trip. The law does not give the area agencies on aging the authority to continue an investigation if an older adult has died, but if there are living older adults in a caregiving setting that are not being adequately cared for, then the area agency on aging may conduct an investigation into the observed neglect or abuse, either in the name that the coroner's representative has reported or the "Jane Doe" or "Joe Doe" that the coroner's representative observed and described.

Similarly the police, district attorney and area agency on aging should do the same as the coroner's office in explaining the jurisdictional foundations of each office, what practices and procedures are implemented, what authority the office has and how the organization has been involved in serving older adults. This builds camaraderie among members and a sense of understanding of how each office can collaborate in better protecting older adults. . And during that time organizational charts for each organization should be distributed and members of the task force should be encouraged to ask questions of each of the organizations.

In addition to this orientation within the context of the task force, the area agency on aging staff should be trained in the statutes and elements of crimes committed against older adults. This can be done by local law enforcement, the district attorney, or the Institute on Protective Services. Additionally, if law enforcement and prosecutors have not been involved in investigating and prosecuting crimes against the elderly, they too should be trained in the range of crimes and the elements to be established for effective prosecution. Many elements of civil and estate law interact in theft crimes committed against older adults via use of power of attorney documents or through guardianships. These related and interacting bodies of law need to be addressed and explained to all parties involved in the task force. Again, this can be done by legal staff from the area agency on aging, the district attorney's office or the Institute so that all have the same foundation of knowledge.

In the early development of the Task Force the Institute often provides training for police officers serving the county (state and local). This training provides an overview of elder abuse, review of the relevant laws for neglect and theft cases and financial investigation tips and techniques. This is a 3 hour training usually delivered in the morning with a 2 hour afternoon session for local banks.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY / PUBLIC AWARENESS

Public education is a vital part of a successful Task Force. Many professionals that serve older adults may not be part of the Task Force. Trainings for bankers, coroners, probation and parole officers, and EMS professionals are available from the Institute on Protective Services. Other trainings can be developed to meet the needs of specific professionals and community groups. Often Task Force members will work together to develop a community training presentation that all members can use throughout the community.

TARGET AUDIENCES FOR TRAINING:

- Bankers / Financial Institutions
- Coroners
- EMS
- Health care providers, hospitals, etc.
- Nursing Home / Personal Care Home Administrators
- Town Watch groups
- Senior Centers
- Chamber of Commerce
- Faith based organizations: churches, synagogues, etc.
- Landlord groups
- Funeral Directors
- Bar Association

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

SEAPA SILVER RIBBON MONTH

The Schuylkill County Commissioners designated May 2005 as "Silver Ribbon Month" and the campaign has continued every year. During that month all businesses, churches, civic organizations, families and individuals were encouraged to display a silver ribbon to demonstrate their support of a safe Schuylkill County for all citizens, most especially the elderly.

Large window display ribbons were sold for \$9.00 and small lapel ribbons were given away for free. (pictured below)

- Contact: Kathy Moser, KMoserSEAPA@hotmail.com



EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY / PUBLIC AWARENESS (continued)

LOCAL TV NEWS FEATURE AND “PHONE BANK”

Many local TV stations have consumer reporters who do feature stories on the evening news. Often you can interest them in a story accompanied by a live call in “phone bank” staffed by members of the AAA and your Task Force. This creates awareness for Elder Abuse and provides viewers (older adults) with immediate access to individuals that can provide information and direction on specific concerns.

PROCLAMATIONS & PRESS RELEASES

One of the best methods to get free advertising is to hold an event and invite the press. Counties around the state have accomplished this through:

- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – County Commissioner Proclamations
- Task Force Announcement – Press Conference by District Attorney and Task Force members announcing the formation of the new organization.
- Elder Justice Seminar – *See Appendix G* for a front page article from the May 2013 event in Huntingdon County.

VIDEOS / RADIO BROADCASTS

There are multiple resources available to help with public awareness and training without spending the time or money to create your own.

- YouTube: Search “Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect” (University of California, Irvine)
- American University Radio 5 part series on Aging and Abuse (http://wamu.org/aging_and_abuse)

ADMINISTRATION ON AGING “YEAR OF ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION”

In 2013, The Administration on Aging (AoA), an agency of the Administration for Community Living (ACL), is sponsoring the Year of Elder Abuse Prevention (YEAP) to encourage national, state, and local organizations to protect seniors and raise awareness about elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

As part of the YEAP, the AoA is pleased to provide information, tools, and resources to support partners in their efforts to raise public awareness about elder abuse and shed light on the importance of preventing, identifying, and responding to this serious, often hidden problem.

Visit the AOA website to obtain these resources:

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/YEAP/index.aspx

(Note: Contact the Institute to obtain copies of these materials if you cannot locate them online.)

COMMUNICATIONS

There are many ways to tell the story of elder abuse and your work as a Task Force. Technology today allows you to do many things with minimal or no funding.

BROCHURES

If funds are not available for professional design and printing, in house brochures can be created using the Microsoft Word brochure templates. These templates can help you create professional looking brochures for only the cost of printing. **See Appendix F** for samples of brochures created by Pennsylvania Task Forces.

LOGO

While not critical to a new Task Force, it's great to brand your efforts with a unique logo as your work grows and you obtain more resources. Logos are great for brochures, letterhead, magnets, pens, etc. Look to graphic designers in the community to volunteer their time and talents.

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY



PA DEPARTMENT OF AGING



WEBSITES

Websites are a great way to make information available to the community. Some counties have a dedicated website for the Task Force while others use the existing District Attorney or AAA site with a dedicated page. Below are links to some sites currently in use. This is a great project for community volunteers and could be a project for your local high school technology club.

SCHUYLKILL (SEAPA):	www.schuylkillelderabuse.com
BUCKS:	www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org
PHILADELPHIA:	www.stopseniorscams.org

COMMUNICATIONS (continued)

NEWSLETTERS

- **Paper** – Microsoft Word has templates for paper based newsletters that can be produced in-house.
- **E-Newsletter** – electronic newsletters are becoming more popular and are often free of charge for groups. These newsletters can be used for overall agency program news and/or for specific Task Force communications. Your target audience can include all agencies, business professionals and community groups who interact with older adults. Below are some commonly used vendors that groups in the state have used – however this is not an exhaustive list and we do not endorse a particular company.



- Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com) *used by Luzerne-Wyoming above*
 - \$15 per month for up to 500 email addresses
- Madmimi (www.madmimi.com)
 - Free for up to 2,500 email addresses (user friendly but no technical support)
 - \$10 per month for up to 500 email addresses
- Mailchimp (www.mailchimp.com)
 - Free for up to 2,000 email addresses (user friendly but no technical support)
 - \$10 per month for up to 500 email addresses and extra features

(note: pricing as of May 2013 – subject to change)

OTHER WAYS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Every county in Pennsylvania is unique. Building Task Forces in a one size fits all format doesn't work. Task Forces should be creative in finding ways to meet the needs of older victims. Some counties have developed closer relationships between protective services and law enforcement by assigning specialists to handle the investigation and prosecution of cases and be the main point of contact for collaboration between the agencies. Other counties are creatively focusing on older adults by doing public education through the development of resource material and online technology to raise awareness.

Some examples of innovative programs in Pennsylvania include:

PERSONAL AMPLIFICATION DEVICES

Operation "Listen Up" : You Can't Help if They Can't Hear (Schuylkill County)

Obtaining detailed information is "key" to helping older adults who may have been victimized or traumatized. One of the most common obstacles to that information exchange is hearing impairment. In 2011, the Schuylkill Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance (SEAPA) distributed 125 Personal Amplification devices to county police departments, state police barracks, hospital emergency rooms. Advanced Life Support (ALS) services, Protective Services Unit, The Long – Term Care Ombudsman Program, District Attorney Office, Victim Advocate and Victim Witness Coordinator.

These free portable battery operated devices help first responders and victim protection professionals provide services more efficiently to those they are working with. The "Super Ear" devices were purchased with funds from an anonymous donation and cost approximately \$30 each.

- Contact: Kathy Moser, KMoserSEAPA@hotmail.com

ELDER JUSTICE SEMINAR (Huntingdon County)

(excerpted from the May 10, 2013 News Article from wearecentralpa.com)

MT. UNION, HUNTINGDON COUNTY – Local and State officials who deal with elderly abuse investigations say they have a growing problem on their hands.

More than 150 older residents from across Huntingdon, Bedford and Fulton counties gathered in the mount union senior center to learn how they can avoid becoming a victim. The seniors were warned that they can fall victim in a number of different ways and often that physical or financial abuse can come from people they know. Some of seniors attending the elder justice seminar say their next step will be to urge others to watch out for cases of possible senior abuse. Because the number of fraud cases involving seniors continues to grow, organizers of the conference say they are delivering a very important message to those who attended.

(see Appendix G for the Seminar Program & Newspaper Article)

OTHER RESOURCES

FUNDING

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services / Administration for Community Living
 - www.acl.gov/funding_opportunities/
- Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)
 - www.pccd.state.pa.us
- Foundations
 - County Based
 - Example: The Luzerne Foundation
 - www.luzfdn.org
 - Corporate
 - Example: Verizon Foundation (Philadelphia)
 - www.verizonfoundation.org/grants/
- Fundraisers
 - Partnership with Retailers & Restaurants
 - Boscov's Community Partnerships and Programs
 - Applebees pancake breakfast
 - "Main Street" Restaurant Week/Night for Seniors
 - Selling Awareness Items
 - Silver Ribbons (SEAPA)
 - Bumper Stickers "No Excuse for Elder Abuse" (Philadelphia)
- Private Community Donations & Bequests

OTHER MODELS / RESEARCH

- **National Center on Elder Abuse** www.ncea.aoa.gov > Publications
 - "Creating Effective Local Elder Abuse Prevention Networks: A Planning Guide"
- **Financial Abuse Specialty Team "F.A.S.T"** www.sccgov.org (search FAST)
- **The National APS Resource Center** www.napsa-now.org/resource-center/

CONTACT INFORMATION

PA DEPARTMENT OF AGING INSTITUTE ON PROTECTIVE SERVICES AT TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging has established the Institute on Protective Services at Temple University's College of Health Professionals and Social Work, Harrisburg Campus. The Institute has been set up to provide educational opportunity, investigative consultation, and task force development assistance to the Commonwealth's 52 area agencies on aging and local law enforcement.

The Institute is a collaborative endeavor of the Department of Aging and Temple University. It operates with funds provided by the Department.

PA DEPARTMENT OF AGING

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See Appendix H for a map and listing of the regional Aging Specialists for the Department of Aging - Protective Services Division

www.aging.state.pa.us

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

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www.temple.edu/harrisburg > Institute on Protective Services

APPENDIX A

Innovative APS Practice

The Philadelphia APS Bank Reporting and Loss Prevention Program

Project Overview

Working in partnership, local banks and APS entities have provided cross-training to increase financial fraud protection for vulnerable elderly persons. From 2003 through 2007, the Philadelphia APS Bank Reporting and Loss Prevention Program prevented the loss of \$2.2 million, protected \$62.5 million in assets and investigated over 3,000 cases. In partnership with Wachovia, the program expanded from a city-wide pilot project to a 14-state initiative. This partnership resulted in the development of a national banking training toolkit. The Philadelphia APS Bank Reporting and Loss Prevention Program continues to develop and maintain relationships with banking institutions.

Project Narrative - Phase I

History

In 2000, Joe Snyder, the Director of Older Adults Protective Services at the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, the private, non-profit Area Agency on Aging for Philadelphia County, noticed that financial exploitation was the fastest rising category of APS elder abuse reports. Recognizing that this was a growing phenomenon, he began researching best practices for fraud prevention. However, there were few resources. Operating with little know-how, Snyder attempted to create a pilot project that involved an APS/local bank partnership in the city of Philadelphia. But he made little headway. The banking staff he approached expressed little interest, privacy concerns stymied the dialogue, and Snyder's own unfamiliarity with financial lingo made it difficult to bridge the professional divide.

But in 2001, the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) awarded the Pennsylvania Department of Aging \$100,000 to explore ways to prevent the financial exploitation of aging persons. Fifty thousand of those dollars were given to the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) and the other half was distributed to Allegheny County. Snyder decided that in order to bridge with the banking industry, he needed a staff member with financial expertise to develop an APS/banking partnership. He went outside of the social work field to recruit for the position, figuring that he could teach a financial expert how to be an APS investigator. Snyder used the funds received from AoA to develop a new position and subsequently hired an insurance fraud business expert.¹ Snyder's new hire was soon able to

Major Aspects of Project

The project documented that millions of older persons' dollars were saved or protected through a well-developed relationship between APS and a major bank. The project has evolved into a city-wide financial exploitation task force which includes several major banks, law enforcement, prosecutors and APS. The key to the project's success was APS developing positive working relationships with financial institutions, starting with understanding their terms.

¹ A job description of the Financial Fraud Expert is located in the attachments.

establish relationships with the local banks. A connection with a staff member in the Wachovia Loss Prevention Unit led to a meeting between their two bosses, Snyder and Linda Mill, Vice President of Loss Prevention with Wachovia. This, in turn, led to a meeting with higher level Wachovia banking officers and legal staff. It became clear that the loss prevention unit of the bank and APS shared similar concerns; both agreed that a partnership should be formed between the bank and APS. The Wachovia home office gave their stamp of approval, viewing an APS/Wachovia partnership as a win/win: it would help older persons from being exploited and would save money for both the client and the bank.

Expanding From Local to National Program

In 2003, the APS/Wachovia partnership was initiated with a pilot project in Philadelphia. Snyder was asked to “train the trainers” jointly with Linda Mill of Wachovia in four locations. With each training event, Snyder found that bank tellers and staff were often unfamiliar with issues that were a common entry point for financial predators, such as the establishment of guardianship and aging issues such as mild cognitive impairment. Unexpectedly, Snyder found himself embraced by the banking staff, who consistently verbalized their relief about having access to additional resources for action. Once the format for the training was established, Mill took over the training internally. Mill proceeded to train Wachovia staff in the State of Pennsylvania, expanding the program throughout the state in 2003. In 2004, the APS/Wachovia elder exploitation partnership expanded to include 14 states across the nation.

“I am finding that we [Philadelphia APS] have an unusual arrangement with the banks. It shouldn’t be that way. [This partnership] should be more prevalent.

“I’m hoping to use the momentum from this program to spur similar programs along with the banking industry.”

Joe Snyder, Project Director

During the program’s national expansion, Snyder and Mill were asked to present the program to BITS, the fraud section of the Financial Services Roundtable, a consortium of major financial services companies. The then-president of BITS, Katherine Allen, perceived the need and helped to enable the creation and distribution of a BITS Fraud Protection Toolkit.² The toolkit became a nation-wide vehicle for other banks to participate in the bank reporting program. Snyder and his team continue to be able to offer the toolkit to every bank they visit.

The Program

The bank reporting program consists of training bank employees on ways to recognize vulnerable adult abuse, including verbal or physical mistreatment and financial exploitation. Typical instances of financial exploitation include misusing a vulnerable adult’s banking funds, forging checks, and coercing an older person into signing checks. In these instances, bank employees are trained to delay suspicious transactions and to report suspected incidences to the bank’s loss prevention department. The loss prevention department reports all suspected cases to their local APS. The bank continues to partner with APS

² The training toolkit is currently available on-line at www.BITS.org/Publications/Fraud.

following the report by providing appropriate records and maintaining contact if needed. All services provided to the banks by APS such as trainings, materials, and consultations are provided free of charge.



Key Stakeholders

- Joe Snyder, Director of Older Adults Protective Services, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
- Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
- Wachovia Bank
- Pennsylvania Department of Aging
- US Administration on Aging

Budget

The first year of funding for the APS financial exploitation expert at the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging was provided by AoA. Due to the success of the APS/banking partnership, the full-time position was retained and added to the APS budget. The initial position, budgeted at \$44,000, is now budgeted at \$49,000. Bank trainings and consultations are provided through APS staff time.

Successes and Challenges

Challenges

The challenge of financial privacy concerns.

It is not uncommon for a bank to report a financial fraud suspicion to its local APS and, when APS returns the call, for the bank to indicate that it cannot share that information due to financial privacy restrictions. However, the challenge goes both ways as often APS

responds to a bank's queries in a similar way. Misperceptions about financial privacy regulations can be clarified with a thorough understanding of *The Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978*.

According to the American Bar Association (ABA) Commission on Aging, *The Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978* applies only to federal agencies requesting consumer information from financial institutions. Further, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act applies to federal, state and local agencies, but it contains several exemptions that permit disclosure, including protecting against or preventing actual or potential fraud, unauthorized transaction, claims, or other liability. In addition, 49 states and the District of Columbia include immunity provisions in their APS laws that protect individuals who make reports in good faith. These immunity provisions may be interpreted as overriding the restrictions in applicable state privacy laws.³

The challenge of bridging professional divides.

Maintaining an APS/banking partnership takes ongoing communication. It is important for both the bank and APS entities to learn each other's processes and language. Additionally, it is important to set up communication structures. In the APS partnership with Wachovia, if bank employees ran into problems when communicating with APS, they were instructed to report this to higher-ups. APS implemented the same policy regarding communications with the bank staff. When in receipt of a problem, bank higher ups were expected to call and speak about the issue with their equivalent at APS and vice versa. Additionally, management from the top down was instructed to continually encourage their employees to work with their outside partners. "If management is persistent," Snyder reports, "it pays back one hundred fold." "Don't look at them as the bad guy, but as people who don't know the issue," encourages Snyder. "Find out why they do what they do. Treat them as partners and stakeholders." For example, Pennsylvania law allows APS to share information if it is a part of the care plan for a client. This provides leeway for APS to let the banks know if a case reported by the bank is substantiated. While state mandates vary across the nation, APS units need to find a way to provide ongoing communication with banks in whatever way is legally possible.

The challenge of understanding the banking structure.

Establishing a partnership can be stalled when you talk with the wrong banking department. The loss prevention unit of each banking entity tends to share the same concerns as APS staff. However, it is extremely important to have a staff member who knows the banking business, lingo, and culture. A staff member who can easily navigate a financial statement is crucial for successful investigations.

³ Presenter Joe Snyder (2011, September). *What Banks Can Do*. Paper presented at the 2nd Annual National Summit on Elder Financial Exploitation, Buffalo, New York.

Successes

The success of developing a positive relationship.

Because the relationship has been so well established between the Philadelphia APS and local banks, they are almost never charged a fee when requesting bank records.

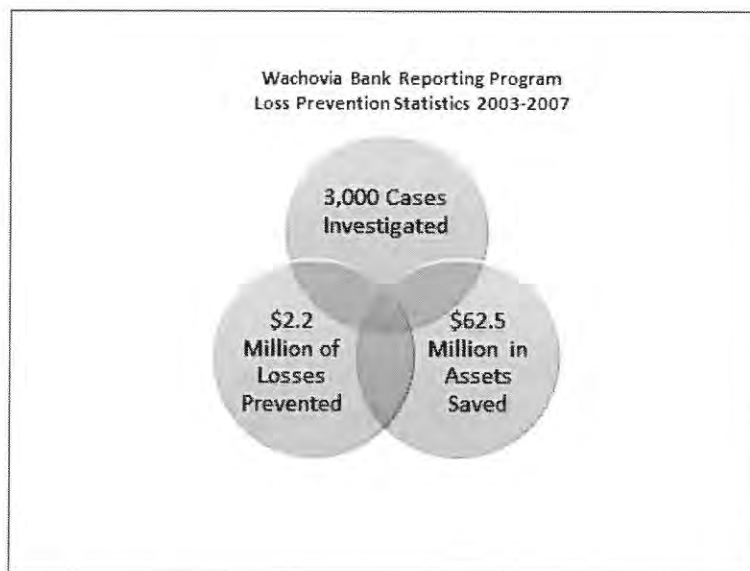
The success of the Bank Reporting Program led to the development of the Philadelphia Financial Exploitation Prevention Taskforce.

This is a multi-disciplinary group of professionals who work together to prevent, detect and prosecute those who prey upon the elderly. (More information on the Task Force is provided below.)

Project Outcomes

From 2003 to 2007, over 3,000 cases were investigated. In addition there were \$2.2 million of losses that were prevented along with the protection of \$62.5 million in assets.⁴

Additionally, there has been an increase in the numbers of prosecutions of elder abusers. This number continues to rise because of the focused efforts of the Philadelphia Exploitation Prevention Taskforce.



Current Status of Project

In 2009, Wells Fargo purchased Wachovia, and while parts of the partnership continued, others elements have been dropped. This year's White House Event commemorating World

⁴ Protected funds are assets of older victims which would have been at risk if the exploitation had continued.

Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) presented a networking opportunity for adult protective services, financial industry, governmental agencies, and other.⁵ Snyder was able to continue the dialogue with executives from Wells Fargo as was the National Adult Protective Services Association. Other banks have also expressed interest in the bank reporting program, although, in general, from the perspective of many within the APS community, the banking industry is behind the curve when it comes to preventing financial fraud of the elderly. While most banks will report the incident to APS, what is also needed is for the bank to delay suspicious transactions and to provide investigative support as happened in the PCA/Wachovia partnership.

Snyder is currently looking for private and non-profit funding sources in Philadelphia to initiate a public awareness campaign to further help prevent the financial exploitation of seniors.

Key Take Home Message

"Having a change agent on the other side of the door is really important. Take some of the successful programs already out there and study up. Be ready to look at your own confidentiality and privacy issues and how they may be an impediment to the process."

The National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) is a great resource. If we have a bank that wanted to be a national leader in helping to prevent financial exploitation, NAPSA can arrange for a 50-state call. They have the ability and resources."

Joe Snyder, Director, Older Adults Protective Services, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

The Financial Exploitation Prevention Task Force - Phase II

History

In 2010, Mill arranged a meeting with the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety for the city of Philadelphia. This resulted in an invitation to Mill and Snyder to present at a breakfast sponsored by the Mayor entitled "A Conversation on Financial Exploitation of the Elderly." Invitees included the CEOs of the seven financial institutions with the largest market share in the Philadelphia region, the District Attorney (DA), the Police Commissioner, and other officials from the city and the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging. While cognizant of the scope of the elder abuse issue, key city leaders recognized that greater advances could be accomplished jointly. Together with Mill and Snyder, they formed The Philadelphia Financial

⁵ On June 14 2012, The World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event at the White House brought together all of the allied professions to celebrate and forge stronger partnerships. Snyder attended and spoke briefly about his work in Philadelphia.

Exploitation Prevention Task Force. Soon thereafter, the Task Force started meeting and goals were set.

One current goal of the task force is cross-training police officers and detectives as well as others who work with the elderly, including Philadelphia housing counselors, Social Security Administration personnel, Blue Cross/Blue Shield Medicare staff, and the DA's Office staff. Task Force goals include increasing prosecutions of elder fraud and creating an elder justice DA position in the City of Philadelphia. Further, a representative specializing in navigating the legislative process was recently added. It is hoped that the task force can use this expertise to influence the creation of new legislation to protect vulnerable elderly from financial fraud and abuse.

"The great thing for [the banks is that], we're offering all of the expertise for free. But it's for the public good. The opportunity is there.

Be persistent! There will be obstacles."
Joe Snyder

Funding

PCA has contracted with a former financial crimes specialist from Wachovia to coordinate the multidisciplinary training initiative. The task force coordinator supervises the task force and ensures that their work moves forward. PCA secured an additional \$10,000 grant from Verizon to train professionals in detecting and reporting financial exploitation

An Ongoing Challenge

Communication in multi-disciplinary groups can be challenging. Focusing on shared goals and similarities can help overcome testy moments.

Unexpected By-product

The APS/banking partnership in Philadelphia led to the hiring of Linda Mill, an original partner and former Vice President from Wachovia into the field of adult protective services. Linda first started with PCA as a consultant and trainer. She now works for The Institute on Protective Services at Temple University in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of Aging where she provides training and consultation to protective service staff throughout the State of Pennsylvania.⁶ Snyder recently welcomed a former financial crime specialist from the financial services industry to replace Mill on the PCA PS staff.

⁶ For further information on the Institute on Protective Services at Temple University, see their website at: www.instituteonps.org. The Institute is funded by the Department of Aging of Pennsylvania and operates in collaboration with Temple University.

For More Information

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APPENDIX: JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: OAPS FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION SPECIALIST

DEFINITION: Reporting to the Protective Service Intake Supervisor. This position is responsible for providing investigation, assessment, and care management services for clients age 60 and above who are at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment. This position carries the responsibility for short-term care management, assessment, and care planning for older adults at risk. This position will provide training to rest of staff and develop ongoing relationships with pertinent entities. The investigator is a consumer advocate guided by the principles of client's self-determination and least restrictive alternative.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Education: BA/BS/BSW or MA/MS/MSW

Experience: Candidates must have 3 years' experience in conducting complex financial exploitation investigations. Experience in accounting, bookkeeping or a field related to financial exploitation is preferred.

Personal Characteristics:

- High energy level; able to manage a variety of tasks simultaneously.
- Well developed interpersonal and communication skills.
- Well organized.
- High level of flexibility.
- Possesses advocacy skills and a sense of professional ethics with a commitment to confidentiality.

Additional Requirements:

- Pre-employment physical.
- Drug testing required.
- Criminal history check required.
- Availability via cell phone at all times during schedule working hours including lunchtime, meetings, etc.
- Completion of Pennsylvania Department of Aging's Older Adult Protective Service training set forth in the regulations. Signing the Pennsylvania Department of Aging's confidentiality statement.

Goals:

To determine whom is an older adult in need of protective services as defined by the state of Pennsylvania. To help resolve complex cases involving financial exploitation and to train staffs in how to better resolve financial exploitation cases. Investigator, as a skilled professional, maintains the highest level of professional ethics, continually seeking opportunities for growth and development.

DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS:

- a. Receives and investigates reports of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and abandonment of individuals age 60 and above as described in the Older Adults Protective Services Law and the regulations accompanying this law.
- b. Determines if reports are substantiated or unsubstantiated and makes referrals to appropriate agencies and services. Conduct an assessment and develops a care plan designed to remove the imminent risk to consumer.
- c. References PCA Data base on all reports and inputs and updates data in the client system.
- d. Assesses the need for emergency intervention including petitioning for involuntary mental health commitments, protection from abuse orders, emergency intervention and access orders, when appropriate. Testifies in court as needed.
- e. Provides on-going case management to older adults in need of protective services as defined by the Older Adult Protective Services law reassessing as required.
- f. Documents all case activity in accordance with State regulations, agency policies, and best practice.
- g. Coordinates case planning with other service providers and other service delivery systems.
- h. Coordinates investigations in institutions with appropriate State licensing agencies and Ombudsman.
- i. Arranges case conferences with supervisory approval.
- j. Participates in orientation and training, as assigned, in-service training, and attends regular staff meetings.
- k. Uses regular conferences with supervisor to evaluate work, improve job performance, and enhance professional growth.
- l. Develops ongoing relationship with legal, state and federal law enforcement as well as banks and other financial institutions.
- m. The effective management of a caseload of complex financial exploitation cases.
- n. Assists other investigators in resolving their financial exploitation cases and conducts training as needed.
- o. Performs other related duties as assigned.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:

- Meets agency and state standards of timely and thorough investigation.
- Records and reports are legible, timely, accurate, complete and relevant.
- Ability to establish report with PCA staff, consumers, providers, families, and outside agencies.
- Bring problems and possible resolutions to supervisory conference.
- Participate in special projects as assigned.
- Does training in specialty area as needed.
- Assignment of special cases as needed.

CUSTOMERS:

- Consumers who are 60 years of age or older in Philadelphia County.
- Families and informal support systems of consumers and service providers
- Staff of Older Adult Protective Service Unit

Grade: 16

(Rev. 4/02)