

How the APS System Works

In Virginia, APS caseworkers may be the **first responders** to reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults.

APS programs serve both older (60 and over) and younger vulnerable (disabled) adults. Disabled adult is over 18 and mental or physically incapacitated.

1. Report is Made

- Someone suspects elder or vulnerable adult abuse, exploitation, or neglect.
- Person calls an abuse hotline or state or local APS office to report suspicion.
- If the report does not meet the APS target population as defined by state law, the caller will be given information and/or referral to an appropriate agency.
- Report is assigned a priority response time based on the level of victim risk.
- Report is assigned to APS staff for investigation.

2. Investigation

- APS staff makes contact with victim within state-regulated timeframe (24 hours if emergency otherwise within 5 days), depending on the reported urgency of the situation.
- Caseworker assesses current victim risk factors.
- Caseworker assesses victim's capacity to understand current risk and to give informed consent for further investigation and service provision.

3. Support

- With the consent of the victim, APS caseworker develops service plan.
- Services may be provided directly by caseworkers, through arrangements with other community resources.
- Victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation may receive short-term services such as emergency shelter, home repair, meals, transportation, help with financial management, home health services, and medical and mental health services.
- APS caseworker may continue to monitor service provision to assure that victim risk is reduced or eliminated.

4. If Victim Refuses Service

- Victims who have the capacity to understand their circumstances have the right to refuse services, regardless of the level of risk.
- In Virginia, competent adults have the right to refuse an APS investigation.
- APS caseworker may refer victim to other resources.
- Case is closed.

Adapted from: http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/ncearoot/Main_Site/Find_Help/APS/How_APS_Works.aspx

POSSIBLE REFERRAL SOURCES WHAT HAPPENS IF I CALL?

AGENCY	WHAT WILL HAPPEN
Law enforcement	Law enforcement will determine if a crime has been committed. If there has been a crime, law enforcement will most likely arrest the perpetrator.
Social services and/or adult protective services	Social service workers investigate possible elder abuse cases. Following a call, a worker will make a home visit and investigate if abuse is occurring. If abuse is found, the worker will develop a plan to address the abuse.
Domestic violence program	Domestic abuse programs offer peer counseling, support groups, help with understanding the legal system, and emergency housing for victims of domestic abuse. You can also get detailed information about abuse and other services.
Sexual assault program	Sexual assault programs help victims through the medical examination and in understanding the legal process. These agencies may also offer peer counseling and support groups. You can also get further information on sexual assault and other services.
Ombudsman	An ombudsman assists victims of abuse living in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities.
Victim Witness or Victim Advocate	Victim witness or victim advocates generally work in the prosecutor's office and help victims understand the steps in the criminal justice process if an abuser has been arrested.
Aging Office/Area Agency on Aging	Depending on where you live, staff will either investigate reports of abuse or make referrals. Aging unit staff can arrange for a wide range of services, including home-delivered meals, transportation, and chore services.
Law Office	Lawyers can give information about legal options such as divorce, restraining orders, and guardianships.