

# Communities Educating Older Adults about Crime

The National Association of Triads Program Manual

2024 Edition



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# Contents

<b>Letter from the Director of the COPS Office .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Purpose .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Why Triad is Necessary .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Community safety and the older adult.....	3
The older victim .....	3
<b>2. Structure of Triad .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Elements of Triad.....	5
Local Triad .....	5
Regional Triad.....	8
State Triad .....	8
<b>3. Starting a Triad.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Step 1. Identifying potential Triad partners .....	9
Step 2. The first meeting.....	9
Step 3. The cooperative agreement .....	10
Step 4. Establishing a S.A.L.T. council .....	10
Step 5. Surveying older adults.....	14
<b>4. Sending the Triad Message.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5. Evaluating Triad.....</b>	<b>16</b>
The measuring stick .....	16
Goals and objectives .....	16
Methods of gathering information.....	17
Keeping score.....	17
Determining results.....	18



<b>6. Suggested Topics and Programs</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Law enforcement training .....	19
Older adult training .....	20
Programs .....	20
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Appendix A. Sample Triad cooperative agreement .....	53
Appendix B. Sample letter of invitation.....	55
Appendix C. Senior Advisory Council policy .....	56
Appendix D. Triad S.A.L.T. Council bylaws .....	57
Appendix E. Sample agenda .....	59
Appendix F. S.A.L.T. community action survey .....	60
Appendix G. Triad Quality of Life Survey .....	62
Appendix H. Facts on aging quiz and selected answers .....	63
Appendix I. Citizen Law Enforcement Academy application .....	68
Appendix J. Home Safety Assessment release form .....	70
Appendix K. Adopt-A-Senior program .....	73
Appendix L. Senior refrigerator card.....	74
Appendix M. Senior referral card .....	75
Appendix N. Application for Triad call-in program .....	76
Appendix O. Sample Basic Content on Fraud Identification and Prevention .....	77
<b>Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Initialisms</b> .....	<b>80</b>



**Recommended Resources ..... 81**

A..... 81

B..... 82

C..... 83

D..... 85

E..... 85

F..... 86

G..... 87

H..... 87

I..... 87

M..... 88

N..... 88

O..... 92

P..... 92

R..... 93

S..... 93

U..... 94

V..... 94

W..... 95

Y..... 95

**Podcasts ..... 96**

**Recommended Reading ..... 98**

**About the COPS Office ..... 100**







## Letter from the Director of the COPS Office

Colleagues:

As our population ages, a growing number of older adults become more vulnerable to crime and often less resilient in the unfortunate event that they are victimized. Many resources are available to help law enforcement agencies institute or sustain specific programs for elder safety and crime prevention. The COPS Office proudly supports the National Sheriffs' Association's (NSA) efforts to help communities start or strengthen law enforcement and community partnerships through Triad. Triad agreements—which enable community groups to come together to share ideas and information and address crime both preventively and responsively—allow law enforcement, community groups and organizations, and individual volunteers to work together to address neighborhood crime and help older adults feel and be safer in their homes for longer. The COPS Office supported NSA's webinars and updates to this Triad guide with input from Triad coordinators in the field to add tools and resources that not only have helped their communities feel safer but also have been able to fight the efforts of some international criminal organizations.

This publication outlines Triad's background and structure, ways of establishing and evaluating a Triad, and a variety of current topics and programs a Triad can discuss and implement, including regular crime prevention programs to fight fraud and scams. It also includes appendices with sample documents and links to resources for Triads to use. Altogether, it can help to create a comprehensive crime prevention and education program serving this growing segment of our community.

Sincerely,

Hugh T. Clements, Jr.  
Director  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



## Purpose

This manual is designed to help law enforcement and older adults interested in the Triad concept to implement a comprehensive crime prevention and education program. It explains what Triad is, why it is needed, how to organize a Triad, and how to leverage the group's collective strengths to address issues affecting older adults. It will also present several programs that can be implemented through a Triad.

*“Over many years of working in Triad, there has been one constant. That is a confusion between the terms Triad and S.A.L.T. To break it down in simple terms, Triad is the program and S.A.L.T. is the group that drives the program.*”

*“Triad is not an acronym; it is merely the coming together of three groups: law enforcement, senior citizens, and support and protective services. On the local level, law enforcement can be sheriffs, police, state police, and district attorneys. Support and protective services comprise councils on aging, fire departments, hospitals, local businesses, banks, media, and civic groups to name a few. Any group that brings something to the table to reduce senior victimization is welcome.*”

*“S.A.L.T. is an acronym that stands for **seniors and law enforcement together**. This council usually comprises senior citizens and representatives from several of the above-named groups that meet on a monthly basis. This is the working group that identifies senior needs and either develops initiatives to combat them or works cooperatively to enhance existing projects.”*

— David Fenton, Director of Triad/Crime Prevention,  
Hampshire County (Massachusetts) Sheriff's Office





## Introduction

Triad is a model of local partnerships among law enforcement and other stakeholders to educate older adults about crime. Since 1988, Triad has helped law enforcement keep older adults safe in their communities by using older volunteers and others in the private and nonprofit sectors who have a vested interest in older adults. In addition to helping prevent crime, the Triad model is a positive public relations and marketing tool for both law enforcement and service providers.

Triad was first conceived at the genesis of the community policing movement as commitment shared by sheriffs; chiefs of police; leaders in the older adult community; and affiliated organizations such as AARP, local councils on aging, area agencies on aging, and similar organizations to reduce victimization of older adults and increase law enforcement services available to them. The Triad model was defined in 1988 by the three founding stakeholders: (1) the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), (2) the AARP (then known as the American Association of Retired Persons), and (3) the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Triad's goal at its inception, as now, was to reduce both crime against older adults and the fear of crime that older adults often experience. Working together, these entities (the NSA, AARP, and IACP) developed and implemented crime prevention and education programs for older adults.

Triad activities address crime from both a pre-victimization (preventive) and a post-victimization (victim/witness assistance) standpoint. Triad crime prevention programs are also aimed at reducing fear of crime by identifying misconceptions. To achieve that goal, Triad promotes and facilitates ongoing information exchange between law enforcement agencies and the older adults they serve.

The first local Triad agreement was signed in St. Martin Parish, Louisiana, in 1988. Word about the Triad model spread, and communities large and small adopted the concept. The three founding groups, NSA, AARP, and IACP, promoted the idea at every opportunity. By the early 2000s, more than 800 counties had signed Triad agreements. A list of current Triads can be found in the NSA's Triad database at <https://www.sheriffs.org/programs/locate-triad>.

In 1989, Louisiana signed the first statewide Triad agreement, a vehicle by which individual communities in a particular state could come together to share ideas and information. Triad agreements have been signed in 47 states, and each state has constructed programs and activities that have met the individual needs of its community.

Through time, the range of agencies that partner with community leaders to form a Triad has grown considerably. In the early days, only representatives from the three founding groups participated in Triad. Nowadays, most Triads have a large and varied number of partners from the community: Triads can involve the fire department, the council on aging, emergency and social services, and various other organizations that work directly with older adults.

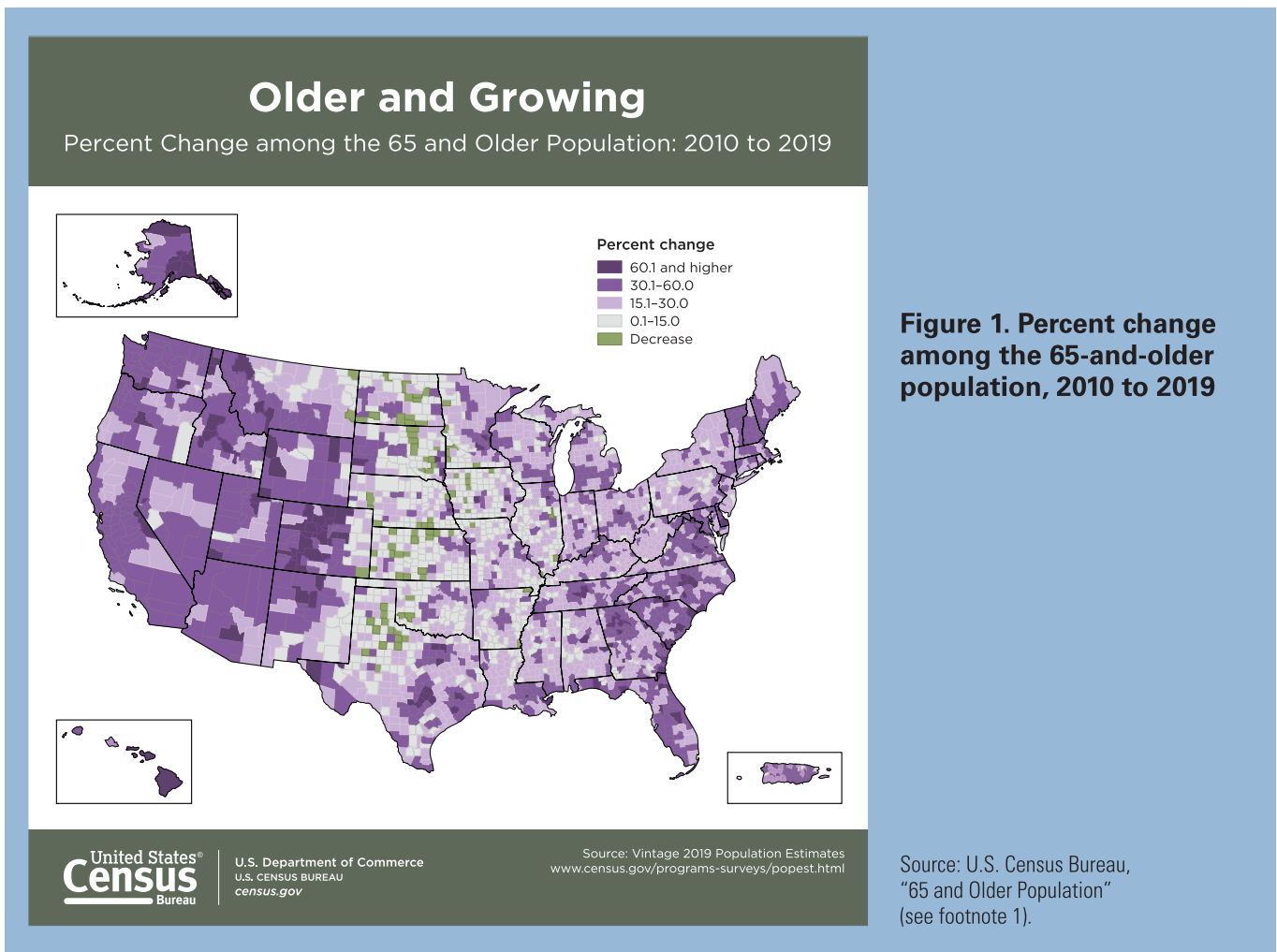
In 2000, the NSA created an affiliate not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, the National Association of Triads, Inc., to institutionalize the Triad effort and to bring uniformity to programs and activities conducted nationwide.



# 1. Why Triad is Necessary

Americans are getting older and living longer. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the nation’s 65-and-older population has grown rapidly since 2010, driven by the aging of Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964). The population older than 60 grew the most, as shown in figure 1. The 65-and-older population grew by more than one-third (34.2 percent, or 13,787,044 individuals) between 2010 and 2019 and by 3.2 percent (1,688,924 individuals) just from 2018 to 2019. The growth of this population contributed to an increase in the national median age from 37.2 years in 2010 to 38.4 in 2019, according to the Census Bureau’s 2019 Population Estimates.<sup>1</sup>

“The term ‘older adult’ belongs to the age group that includes people who are over 65 years of age.”<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, older adults have higher levels of trust than their younger neighbors with regard to strangers, telephone salespersons, contractors, workers, officials, and others they deal with. This trust makes them an easier target for home invasion, dishonest contractors, fraudulent banking transactions, identity theft, and other scams. Violent crimes—including mugging, sexual violence, physical and mental domestic abuse, neglect, and intimidation—are less common but also pose a threat to older adults. Older adults with cognitive impairments are even



1. U.S. Census Bureau, “65 and Older Population Grows Rapidly as Baby Boomers Age,” press release, June 25, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/65-older-population-grows.html>.

2. “What is the meaning of Older Adult? Concept, Definition of Older Adult,” Wiki Didactic, last modified April 15, 2013, <https://edukalife.blogspot.com/2013/04/older-adult-definition-concept-meaning.html>.



more vulnerable than those without cognitive impairments to these crimes. The older adult victim may not recover from the physical and mental repercussions of the crime, which may lead to a loss of independence and self-confidence.

As the number of older adults rises, so does the need to protect and serve this at-risk population. Unfortunately, in an era of skyrocketing costs and budget cuts, many law enforcement agencies lack the resources to implement older adult crime prevention and safety programs. Triad fills this gap by providing vital services that help keep older adults safe and secure.

## Community safety and the older adult

According to the Administration on Aging report *2021 Profile of Older Americans*, in 2020, approximately 27 percent of noninstitutionalized people aged 65 or older lived alone. Among women aged 75 or older, 42 percent lived alone. These older adults are less likely to change residence than any other age group.<sup>3</sup>

Among older adults, especially the physically impaired and those isolated from others, fear of crime is often higher than among the younger population. Fear can be paralyzing; many older adults become afraid to leave their homes and withdraw from friends, family, and activities they once enjoyed.

After hitting a low of 20 percent in 2020, in 2021, 23 percent of U.S. adults said they or a member of their household had been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. Still, household crime rates remain lower than they were between 2009 and 2016, when the rates ranged from 26 to 29 percent. Furthermore, 14 percent of U.S. adults said they personally were victimized by a crime in 2021, essentially unchanged from 2020's 13 percent. Personal crime victimization rates ranged from 15 to 19 percent between 2009 and 2016.<sup>4</sup>

## The older victim

Older adults are less likely than the general population to report crimes against them for a variety of reasons:

- They may doubt their ability to meet law enforcement expectations when reporting the incident and worry that officers or family members will perceive them as incompetent.
- They may also fear offender retaliation for reporting the crime.
- They may feel guilty for “allowing” the victimization to occur.
- They do not want to get their loved one in trouble.

After a crime, many older adults may take necessary precautions and continue with their lives. But others acutely alter their lifestyle or withdraw, which can have a debilitating effect on their physical and mental well-being. The following are some specific ways that targeted crimes can affect older adults:

- **Physical and emotional impact.** Those who are injured tend to recuperate more slowly than younger people with similar injuries. Physical and emotional trauma can lead to incapacitation and often death of the older victim. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) estimates that 206,780 individuals aged 65 or older were victims of violent crime in 2020, including rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault and including threatened, attempted, and completed occurrences of those crimes.<sup>5</sup>
- **Income.** Financial loss, whether the result of street robbery, home burglary, telephone fraud, real estate scam, identity theft, or other crime, can do irreparable damage to an individual's limited budget as well as to their emotional

3. Administration for Community Living, *2021 Profile of Older Americans* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2022), 3, [https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Profile%20of%20OA/2021%20Profile%20of%20OA/2021ProfileOlderAmericans\\_508.pdf](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Profile%20of%20OA/2021%20Profile%20of%20OA/2021ProfileOlderAmericans_508.pdf).

4. Jeffrey M. Jones, “U.S. Crime Victimization Up Slightly From 2020 Low,” Gallup, last modified November 9, 2021, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/356972/crime-victimization-slightly-2020-low.aspx>.

5. Rachel E. Morgan and Alexandra Thompson, *Criminal Victimization, 2020 – Supplemental Statistical Tables*, Statistical Tables (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv20sst.pdf>.



well-being. According to AARP, purse snatchers and pickpockets target older adults more often than younger ones.

- **Independence.** Victimization may destabilize an older adult's sense of security. It can compromise their will to cope with future problems. The crime may be the catalyst that brings about an end to emotional and financial independence.
- **Quality of life.** Whether recovering from victimization, worrying about the likelihood of another incident, or regretting the consequences of what they may feel was a poor decision, victims may become reclusive. Embarrassed, distressed, and suffering from poor self-confidence, victims may choose to lock out the outside world, which can have a detrimental impact on quality of life. This withdrawal can happen in varying degrees.

- **Secondary or vicarious victimization.** Older adult victimization often frightens the victims' peers. They abandon patterns of visiting friends, going to worship, shopping, and other social interaction. This withdrawal becomes more acute with violent crimes.

A single victimization can frighten an entire community of older adults. The U.S. Department of Justice states that, among victims of nonlethal violence, persons 65 and older are about six times more likely than younger persons not to go out at night after they have been victimized. For the isolated or incapacitated older adult, perception of the outside world is based on (and frequently skewed by) media reports, which often sensationalize crime.<sup>6</sup>

Through Triad, law enforcement, civic organizations, and older adults working together can successfully combat neighborhood crime.

*“Crimes targeting older adults are different in that victims are sought out because of perceived vulnerabilities, and these crimes affect older adults differently. Law enforcement, first responders, and those who work with older adults must understand this dynamic to curb these activities and to assist the victims.”*

— Edward Hutchison, Triad expert

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6. “Elder Justice Initiative (EJI),” U.S. Department of Justice, accessed December 14, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice>.



## 2. Structure of Triad

*Much of the material in this chapter is based on the monograph “Older Volunteers with Law Enforcement” by Lee Pearson, Assistant Manager, Criminal Justice Services, AARP.*

The Triad concept is successful thanks in large part to the participation of dedicated and capable older volunteers who are willing to invest time and energy to make their communities safer.

### Elements of Triad

Triads can be local, regional, or statewide. Decide which format best suits the community and will best help to fulfill intended goals. Each Triad program is led by a S.A.L.T. (Seniors And Law enforcement Together) Council, which will be discussed in more detail later in this publication. Triad can improve the safety of the older adults in a community. Focusing on this ultimate goal, the Triad and the S.A.L.T council will enrich the lives of older adults as well as those of the individuals who serve them.

### Local Triad

The S.A.L.T. council consists of older adult community members, people who work with older adults, and law enforcement. Open dialogue with the council allows sheriffs and chiefs of police to hear firsthand from older adults about crime—and about their fear of crime, as perception and reality do not always coincide. Both groups can focus on unmet needs and concerns as well as alleviate fears.

Further, the council assumes an active role, adopting available programs, recommending appropriate initiatives, or beginning new programs. The S.A.L.T. council prioritizes activities based on the most prevalent issues. Bear in mind that expectations must be based on the new Triad program’s capabilities.

Triad may accomplish its goals through one council or several, depending on the size of the area, the population, and the needs of the area’s residents. Triad members may serve on the S.A.L.T. council, or, if they do not, they may suggest representatives to serve.

Because the council plays a vital role within the Triad, careful consideration of members is paramount. Ideally, selection is based on leadership and familiarity with older adult issues as well as the amount of time and energy potential members have to give. Diverse representation reflecting the community is equally important.

Community leaders and older adult–related agencies can suggest council members who will work to accomplish Triad goals. Volunteers fill many roles in Triad and can be used for specific projects or on a short-term basis; however, only a limited number should become permanent S.A.L.T. council members.

### Older volunteers

According to AmeriCorps, in 2017 22,631,756 Baby Boomer volunteers (30.7 percent of the Baby Boomer population) contributed roughly 2.2 billion hours of service worth an estimated \$54.3 billion.<sup>7</sup>

Older adult volunteers are a valuable asset to law enforcement. With the help of volunteers, an agency’s capabilities can be expanded without increasing paid staff. Also, older adults often prove to be especially faithful assistants who bring maturity, experience, and enthusiasm to a task.



iStock/View Productions

7. “Volunteering in America: Demographics,” Key Findings from the 2017 Volunteering in America Report, AmeriCorps, accessed December 14, 2022, <https://americorps.gov/newsroom/news/via>.





Volunteering benefits everyone involved—law enforcement, the community, and individual volunteers—in a host of ways.

#### **For law enforcement**

- Relieves sworn law enforcement so they may tend to other duties
- Enhances community policing
- Enhances lines of communication between law enforcement and older adults
- Improves system efficiency
- Provides for officer-citizen interaction

#### **For the community**

- Helps the community to better understand law enforcement functions
- Renews community pride
- Facilitates property return to owners
- Prompts the development of new programs and activities

#### **For the older volunteer**

- Reduces older adult isolation
- Provides a chance to help others
- Enriches daily living
- Reinforces self-confidence
- Develops talents and new skills
- Nurtures fellowship and friends
- Gives the satisfaction of contributing to the community

## **Law enforcement members**

Law enforcement leaders must participate in the S.A.L.T. council to hear older adult concerns first-hand. Council membership might also include district attorneys, state police, and other law enforcement representatives including staff who work in planning, crime prevention, victim assistance, or older adult issues.

A deputy or officer serving as a Triad Coordinator can support local Triad efforts in several ways:

### **Building relationships or becoming a point of contact**

Deputies and officers can build relationships within their own law enforcement agency—with their crime prevention officers, detectives, public information officer (PIO), and victims' assistance. They can read crime reports by older victims to get to know the specific issues in their community.

They can also build relationships and become their agency's point of contact with external law enforcement agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Attorneys' offices, state Attorneys General, and District Attorneys' offices.<sup>8</sup> These relationships can yield knowledge and resources to help identify potential fraud and abuse and by gathering preventative information to share. Law enforcement partners may serve as a pool of experts to present and support at Triad events.

In the community, deputies and officers can provide an additional point of contact (in addition to the law enforcement executive) for advocates and senior groups as well as for individual older adults.

They can build relationships with the media to disseminate information about Triad efforts, classes, and events and crime prevention information. It may be helpful to create a dissemination network with local, media outlets that serve older adults such as magazines (which may be handed out for free) and local

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8. A February 2023 episode of the COPS Office's *The Beat* podcast features Felix Salazar, an investigator with the San Diego County, California, District Attorney's Office who handles online elder fraud scams. "Investigating Elder Fraud Online Scams," *The Beat*, accessed September 8, 2023, <https://cops.usdoj.gov/thebeat>.





radio shows with local news affiliates. You may be able to use your PIO's connections. Additional activities could include

- posting a weekly safety tip or tips on your agency's Facebook or other social media page;
- conducting or sharing webinars that can be watched live or recorded and can be made available in a library; one example is a partnership the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office had to produce the Crime Prevention Series (<https://www.metrotech.edu/events>).

### Participating in local MDTs

Deputies and officers can participate in local multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) that may include the local District Attorney's office, local law enforcement agencies, and Adult Protective Services (APS). Generally the goal of an MDT meeting is to streamline processes and to case manage; however, they are a wealth of information on what is going on in your local area. To learn more about MDTs, visit <https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/mdt>.

### Participating in professional organizations

Deputies and officers can join the Fraud Investigators Association to hear from bank fraud investigators and law enforcement investigators (local up to federal) to find out more about how contact was initially made with the victim and then reverse-engineer current prevention lessons.

### Participating in ongoing training

Deputies and officers can enhance their expertise and stay current on the quickly evolving information on both aging and the crimes being committed against older adults by engaging in training, reading, and gathering educational resources (some available only to law enforcement; see the resource section for more information):

- International Association of Financial Crimes Investigators — <https://iafci.org>
- National White Collar Crime Center — <https://www.nw3c.org>
- National Cybersecurity Alliance — <https://staysafeonline.org>
- Internet Crime Complaint Center — <https://www.ic3.gov>
- Consumer Sentinel Network | Federal Trade Commission — <https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/consumer-sentinel-network>

## Other members

Older adults and professionals who work with older adults, know the community, and are familiar with local resources should constitute half the council. When selecting a candidate, it is important to consider the qualities that person would add to the group. Does the person have a positive attitude? Is this person action-oriented? Do they have new ideas? What geographical area does this person represent?

Council membership can be drawn from diverse sources. Following is a sample list of potential members:

- **The faith-based community.** A representative from a clergy association or a retired spiritual leader
- **The business community.** A representative of business or industry, the chamber of commerce, or Better Business Bureau
- **Health care professionals.** A professional from the behavioral health field, hospital, or auxiliary, or a geriatric physician or retired doctor
- **Service or membership organizations.** Local councils on aging, area agencies on aging, AARP, retired teachers' representative, Jaycees, Kiwanis, Exchange Club, Masons, or Federation of Women's Clubs
- **Local agencies working directly with older adults.** The public housing authority, council of governments, city or county council, mayor's office, or retired senior volunteer program (RSVP)



- **Aging professionals.** A representative from the aging network, including social services, adult protective services, organizations promoting nutrition (e.g., Meals on Wheels), agency or council on aging, senior centers, or others
- **Media.** A representative from newspapers, radio, or television stations

S.A.L.T. council members with knowledge of sheriffs' offices and police departments tend to be more effective than those without. Acquaint new volunteers with law enforcement and the activities of the individual departments. Social service providers and others with knowledge of community facilities may conduct training for Triad members—both law enforcement and civilian.

## Regional Triad

While local Triads focus on their immediate community, a regional Triad is a platform for local Triads to share among all towns and counties in a specific region. Participants plan crime prevention programs for local train-the-trainer events.

At meetings, regional or multicounty Triads give presentations highlighting successful programs and share resources of benefit to other counties. For best results, regional triads should work with local resources to secure space and training materials for regional meetings and should ensure that these meetings do not conflict with local S.A.L.T. council meetings. Ensure focus is maintained on older adult safety at the regional level.

In counties with a large number of incorporated areas and police departments, each department might rely on a smaller S.A.L.T. council group. Each individual council should be allowed to send one or two representatives to regional council meetings.

## State Triad

Once local or regional Triads mature, a state-level Triad can also provide advanced training, advice, and technical support. It may convene training conferences and disseminate pertinent information about state and federal legislation. A state-level Triad may make training available to law enforcement officers and volunteers on topics such as the process of aging, expansion of senior services, and community organizations.

State Triads document and publicize statewide resources. Legislative issues can be addressed at this level. A state-level team of representatives from law enforcement or the judiciary, the state attorney general, the RSVP, and social services organizations can be convened to identify older adult issues and model Triad programs to replicate and create advanced programs for new local Triads to follow.

The State Triad should address aging issues from state and national perspectives, including national crime trends and remedies. It is critical to the state-level Triad's success to have the right delegates representing the local Triads as well as state-level participants who can implement necessary change.



## 3. Starting a Triad

When establishing a Triad, be sure to consider all the different cultures in the community. Older adults may be less culturally integrated into their community than members of other age groups. Cultural values may inhibit interaction between law enforcement or volunteers and an older adult resident, victim, or witness, as might physical and emotional limitations. Cultural or historical influences may affect how older adult members in distinct ethnic communities perceive and interact with law enforcement officers of other races, backgrounds, and genders.

Understanding differences that drive behavior can lead to successful interchange and reduction of obstacles. Use Triad to address cultural differences and the ways that cultural values, beliefs, and traditions affect individual perception. Remember, ageism—the stereotyping of older adults—is a barrier as well.

Alternative lifestyles are another factor that may arise and should be considered when addressing older adults. Ensuring that law enforcement and volunteers are aware of this factor prior to an encounter may help lead to a positive outcome.

Understand your local cultural norms to begin the process of removing barriers. A community member representing each local subculture may be able to answer questions that law enforcement and volunteers might have. Contact social service agencies, culture-specific community centers, religious organizations, or leaders in each subculture for insight on minimizing cultural differences and misconceptions.

Forming a Triad has five main steps, which are outlined in the sections that follow. Each community and its needs are different, so some modifications may be necessary.

### Step 1. Identifying potential Triad partners

The first step in forming a Triad involves law enforcement leaders. In most cases, one law enforcement leader brings together other members of law enforcement, older adults, and those who serve them to form a team. As an example, the sheriff or chief of police may contact someone to represent the older adult community and their services and introduce the idea of forming a Triad. That person may be an RSVP leader, a community leader, or another older adult with experience, knowledge of the community, and the ability to motivate others.

### Step 2. The first meeting

The second step is to schedule the first meeting, which should be the platform to discuss how forming a Triad can assist both law enforcement and the older adult population in the community. Other topics to cover include the following:

- The growth of the older adult population in the local community
- How local law enforcement services are impacted by the population changes
- Triad benefits to law enforcement, other service providers, older adults, and the whole community
- The possible benefits of having a council composed of law enforcement leaders and older adults and the potential resources that could be tapped to better serve the aging community (see the [Recommended Resources section beginning on page 81](#) of this publication)
- Identifying if there are other partners that need to be at the table
- The commitment level expected for each partner



## Step 3. The cooperative agreement

Schedule a second meeting to review and sign a Triad cooperative agreement (an example is available at [appendix A beginning on page 53](#)), consenting to work together to assess older adult needs and enhance crime-related services. The group may also wish to draft a press release announcing the formation of the new Triad to local television, radio, and print media outlets, especially those with large older adult audiences. The press release should include the name, telephone number, and email address of a designated representative the media can contact for further information. You will also want to reiterate the commitment level and responsibilities of each Triad partner.

## Step 4. Establishing a S.A.L.T. council

The fourth step is to establish a S.A.L.T. council, consider members for this senior advisory council, and set a date for the first council meeting. Many law enforcement agencies have an agency policy on the Triad approach to crime and older adult individuals. Check with your local agencies to see if they have a policy.

A newly formed S.A.L.T. council should include no more than 10 members initially. Additional members can be added as needs arise. A letter of invitation explaining the role of the S.A.L.T. council may clarify volunteer rules and limitations. A sample letter is included as [appendix B beginning on page 55](#).

### Role of the S.A.L.T. council

The S.A.L.T. council is a Triad action group that focuses on senior crime and safety. The council reviews and recommends programs with community benefit. The council should also work to recruit volunteers for specific projects.

The S.A.L.T. council facilitates information exchange among older adults, agencies, and law enforcement. To understand the limitations of law enforcement response to older adult concerns, the council should have knowledge of law enforcement responsibilities. Often, underreporting of senior-related crimes is a key factor to response in this area.

Council meetings should offer an opportunity for frank discussion, and the council should function as a working group and source of ideas. Samples of S.A.L.T. council purpose, role, model policies, and bylaws are included in [appendices C and D beginning on page 56](#).

The S.A.L.T. council has limitations as well. It is not a law enforcement review board or a policy-making body. The council is not involved in agency operations and has no authority over agency personnel. Members normally have no supervisory or sworn authority. However, the perspectives of its members can provide officers and deputies with insight. The council can act as a focus group for law enforcement on older adult issues.

### Activities of the S.A.L.T. council

Each Triad pursues issues appropriate for its older adult community. In areas where crime is intense, crime prevention may be the sole focus. In others, reassurance or agency volunteering may take priority. Finding the pulse of your community is paramount

### Budget

Most Triads have little or no budget. Following are ways a Triad and S.A.L.T. council can offset budget limitations:

- Older adults can volunteer their time and provide much of the leadership.
- Senior service organizations usually provide support.
- Hospitals and medical associations often add crime prevention to health care events and assist in other ways.
- Firefighters, libraries, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, and civic and Masonic groups are often very supportive.
- Organizations to whom older adults are important as clients or customers (e.g., agencies on aging, grocery stores, drugstores) may offer in-kind or other support.



## Staffing constraints

A leader for the council can be an active or retired law enforcement deputy or officer or a capable older adult. In such an instance, deputies or officers may serve in an advisory capacity. They suggest, encourage, and help to plan but do not direct the program.

## Variables

The S.A.L.T. council should be prepared to encounter and overcome or work around difficulties. Begin by looking at well-known Triad programs similar to those you foresee establishing.

Although there is no single format for replicating Triad activity and success, established Triads report some commonalities:

- The sheriff and at least one police chief attend most council meetings.
- Deputies and officers provide guidance and support rather than chairing council meetings.
- Within the first few months, the council creates a survey of older adult residents and conducts it with the assistance of members.
- Council meetings are held monthly (groups meeting only quarterly tend to move slowly and rely too heavily on the support of law enforcement).
- The Triad sponsors crime-prevention seminars for older adults.
- The Triad members recruit older volunteers to work with law enforcement agencies.
- An effort is made to identify and publicize programs that assist older adults.
- Members provide outreach to vulnerable older adults living alone.

The commitment of agency representatives and volunteers will dictate the variety and scope of programs and services that each Triad can offer. The Triad will

only progress through the efforts of a group of individuals who know the community and understand older adult concerns.

Triad focuses on the reduction of crime, prevention education, response to criminal victimization, and safety. Following is a list of sample agenda items to help ensure all appropriate areas of activity are covered during the first S.A.L.T. council meeting:

- Ways to inform older adults of how and where to obtain services
- How the practice of referring older adults to needed services benefits law enforcement
- Educating law enforcement about the older adult population
- Teaching law enforcement skills for communicating with older adults

## Volunteers

Use the S.A.L.T. council to form a subcommittee to find, enlist, manage, and retain volunteers. Before recruiting volunteers, the S.A.L.T. council should have a clear vision of what the Triad program will accomplish.

The subcommittee should focus on the following:

- Setting time frames
- Identifying and assigning tasks
- Identifying supervisors for volunteers and their projects
- Establishing screening procedures for volunteers
- Writing job descriptions
- Identifying liability and insurance requirements
- Establishing a standard for task measurement
- Developing a plan for how contributions of volunteers will be acknowledged





This focus in turn gives volunteers a clear definition of duties and expectations.

The initial steps in volunteer recruitment are screening and selecting volunteers for specific programs. Here are some tips when recruiting volunteers:

- Explain clearly what the volunteer job is and what it is not.
- Present the opportunity both realistically and enthusiastically. Effective volunteers must place value in the program.
- Recruit from the community and professional, civic, and charitable organizations. A personal invitation to volunteer in Triad can be especially effective.

The one-on-one approach is more successful than a blanket invitation. There are numerous ways to announce the need for volunteers, including the following:

- Local newspapers (crime prevention articles, advertisements, and letters)
- Local radio or television (talk shows and public service announcements)
- Community/spiritual/senior newsletters and bulletins
- Merchant window displays
- Flyers in public libraries, waiting rooms, and other public places
- Bulletin boards in places where older adults shop or gather
- Neighborhood/condominium associations and civic groups

After volunteers are recruited, begin educating— for example, through a civilian police academy. Volunteers link law enforcement and the community. Solicit suggestions and implement when appropriate.

## **Law enforcement agencies**

After training, volunteers can assist with various senior-related issues, including anonymous reporting, administrative or clerical tasks, civil process administration, communications, crime prevention, computer data entry, fraud alerts, investigative follow-up, missing persons, neighborhood patrol, disaster evacuation, public relations and media, search and rescue, and writing (e.g., reports, bulletins).

## **The community**

Opportunities to volunteer at the community level abound. Types of community activities to consider include block organizing, court watch, crime reporting, educational presentations, excursion companions or escorts for older adults or people with disabilities, literature distribution, neighborhood dispute resolution, Neighborhood Watch programs, pedestrian safety and training, personal or home security, property identification, telephone reassurance, vacant house checks, and school resource officers' assistance.

## **Victim and witness assistance**

Helping crime victims and witnesses can be a rewarding experience. Potential volunteer activities include advocacy services, compensation applications, complaint referrals, counseling, court assistance, crisis support, emergency shelters, impact statement preparation, legislative watch, pre-trial briefings, transportation, and trial date notification.

## **S.A.L.T. council meetings**

S.A.L.T. councils, if not properly organized, can be ineffective in addressing issues. Listed here are proven methods for healthy, organized, successful, and long-lasting councils.

## **When to meet?**

Initially, meetings should be held more than once a month to establish objectives, devise a plan of action, and get Triad activities underway. Afterward, meetings may be scheduled for the same time each month. Consider daylight hours for meeting times, as some volunteers may prefer not to drive or venture out after dark.





## Where to meet?

A regular meeting place should be established when a Triad is formed. Often, law enforcement agencies have a convenient meeting space. When multiple agencies have space available, Triads can alternate meetings between sheriffs' offices and police or fire departments; this variety will help the council learn about different agencies' operations.

Alternatively, the most convenient location may be a community center, older adult center, religious center, or library. Also, S.A.L.T. councils may choose to schedule meetings in different parts of the community, making it easier for older adults in different areas to attend.

## Who chairs?

Leadership by a capable older adult volunteer is desirable. There should also be a law enforcement perspective represented for balance. Law enforcement and senior service providers can contribute and provide guidance.

## What is the best meeting format?

Most meetings are divided into information and planning segments. Typical agenda items include the following:

- Updates on crimes affecting older adults as well as seasonal crime awareness (crime statistics can be reported, but older adults should be allowed to discuss concerns and remedies to crime during this part of the meeting)
- Reports from committees on new and ongoing activities
- Informative programs such as crime prevention presentations
- Short-term plans for S.A.L.T. activities
- Long-term goals to reduce crime against older adults and older adults' fear of crime

A sample S.A.L.T. meeting agenda is included in [appendix E beginning on page 59](#). Meetings can be formal or informal, as desired, but they must have structure and provide thorough agenda coverage. Be sure to address each item with action.

## Supplies

Before the meeting begins, distribute name tags, agendas, and Triad information packets, especially to newcomers, visitors, and speakers. Offering refreshments and social time after the meeting is a certain way to increase attendance.

## Publicity

Invite members of the media from local publications, radio, TV, and newspapers to join the S.A.L.T. council. Media coverage provides publicity for Triad, which builds awareness among new volunteers, companies, and organizations. Articles and programs on crime prevention help to keep older adult issues before the public.

## Success

The S.A.L.T. council succeeds by implementing and maintaining one program at a time. Once one issue is addressed, it is time to address the next issue. Surveys are discussed in more detail later on in the chapter.

Finally, ensure that you have bylaws to replace members of the council as needed. The S.A.L.T. council provides a very important function for a Triad. Be sure to take the time and care to create an effective council.

## Remember:

- Start with a small council and expand the group as needs arise.
- Create subcommittees to handle planning and activities.
- Select a capable older adult to chair meetings.
- Hold a brief session before each meeting for the chairperson and law enforcement to determine the meeting goals.
- Plan the meeting agenda around crime prevention.



- Evaluate all subcommittee efforts, either formally or informally.
- Include all members. Allow them to participate and provide input.
- Plan meetings during daylight hours, if possible.
- Establish a regular meeting day and time.
- End meetings on time with clear subcommittee follow-up assignments.
- Invite members of the media often.

## Step 5. Surveying older adults

Triad begins by focusing on the specific crime-related concerns older adults indicate on the initial survey, starting with one or two programs, and expanding as these programs succeed.

Perception and reality often do not correlate. Triads should never assume they know what types of criminal activities and fears affect the older adults they represent; they should ask them directly.

A survey of older adults is the first order of business for new Triads. Sample surveys, which can be adapted to meet local needs, are included in [appendices F and G beginning on page 60](#). Surveys should be easy to read, short, simple, easily distributed, and easily collected. A survey subcommittee can draw from the generic survey form. The council can review the final draft. The survey committee can also recommend methods for administering the questionnaire, assist with distribution, and tabulate findings.

- Strive for wide questionnaire distribution: Publish in newspapers, senior papers, or organizational bulletins.
- Distribute at libraries and senior centers.
- Hand out during meetings of religious or civic groups.
- Ask Meals on Wheels and others to distribute and collect surveys.
- Request that utility companies include surveys with monthly statements.

For best results, start with the most pressing activity, address it to the best of the program's ability, and then expand to the next issue. Programs might take weeks or months to identify, orchestrate, and execute.



## 4. Sending the Triad Message

Once you have conducted the initial survey and analyzed and the programs your Triad is going to offer, you will need to send the Triad message out to older adults in the community.

Address older adults with a crime prevention message unique to their needs, communicated in a variety of ways and repeated often. Repetition is especially important for bringing about a change in behavior. It is important to inform older adults about crimes and scams that should concern them, to offer tools to combat these crimes, inform them where to report (National Elder Fraud Hotline, <https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/elder-fraud-abuse/national-elder-fraud-hotline>), and to dispel perceptions of crime that are disproportionate to reality.

Consider the following ways to reinforce your Triad message:

**Print and social media.** Place announcements in newspapers; community bulletins; council on aging newsletters; neighborhood association or housing authority newsletters; publications targeted to older adults, retired veterans, and educators; and employee bulletins. Often, advertising space in these venues is provided as a free community service. For those that are not free, consider a sponsoring partner to cover costs. Senior service providers are an excellent resource for Triad partnerships.

**S.A.L.T. speakers' bureau.** Members of the S.A.L.T. council, law enforcement, and other older adults can be trained to deliver crime prevention messages tailored for the community. AARP chapter meetings, religious organizations, community groups, senior meal sites, and other gatherings provide ideal forums for your event. Offer your services to older adult venues.

**Triad calendar.** Print a calendar for older adults with safety and crime prevention tips for each month. Sponsors may absorb the cost of printing; often, the printing company itself is willing to sponsor the calendar. Be sure to include text thanking the sponsor for supporting Triad.

**Public service announcements:** Radio and television stations are often eager to broadcast community service messages about crime prevention. Ask the local community college to produce public service announcements (PSA) explaining Triad and its crime prevention emphasis. Use community resources to benefit both Triad and the resource.

### Senior centers and retirement communities.

Most places where older adults reside or gather will be willing to add your

program to their agenda. Focus the program on law enforcement, crime, or prevention of crime or on all three. Open a forum to educate older adults, allay fears, and answer questions.

**Public housing projects.** City government, social services, law enforcement, and housing administration officials share concern for criminal issues in public housing, particularly those affecting older persons living in unsatisfactory or unsafe arrangements in such a setting. In high-risk areas, deliver a crime prevention message with concrete strategies for older persons' safety. Build a coalition involving law enforcement, senior services groups such as RSVP, and volunteers to protect older adults in high-risk areas.

**Inner city older adults.** For older persons living in high-risk areas, use lectures, as discussed earlier in this manual, but focus primarily on safety and prevention. Obtain relevant statistics and survey results, caution older adults about current crime, and offer training on maintaining a safe living space. Emphasize the importance of always locking doors, stressing the often-creative ways criminals gain entry into older adults' homes. Some programs offer equipment such as whistles or collect unused cell phones to help keep older adults safe—a charged cell phone, even without a purchased service agreement, can still reach 911.

Courtesy of Oklahoma County (OK) Sheriff's Department





## 5. Evaluating Triad

Evaluation is a necessary component of every successful Triad—at the volunteer, assigned-task, and program levels.

To measure how Triad is meeting the needs of law enforcement and older adults, plan for assessment to be an integral part of the program from the start. Establish who will oversee the Triad evaluation after the cooperative groups are formed. If possible, engage a specialist in the design and administration of the evaluation. Ideally, a single person or subcommittee will be responsible for the evaluation. This project can be an excellent opportunity to work with colleges, universities, high school social science classes, local businesses, or other organizations having research capability.

An evaluation should answer these questions:

1. Does the program do what you want done?
2. Is the program being carried out the way you had planned?
3. Should the volunteer assignment or program continue as originally begun, or should it change?

Be sure you also evaluate all individual programs the Triad offers. This evaluation will help identify individual programs you may need to revise to make them more effective and others that may not be needed at all. Eliminating unneeded programs will free up resources to focus elsewhere.

Assessment justifies the continuation of a Triad. A Triad's funding assistance is often based on successful demonstration of the program's effectiveness.

### The measuring stick

These questions can help you focus on what should be evaluated:

- Does the community know about the Triad?
- Do law enforcement and older adults know what Triad is and its purpose?
- Are Triad programs duplicated by other community organizations?
- Are individuals representing Triad doing so effectively?
- Are Triad goals being met?
- Are goals specific and understandable?

### Goals and objectives

Base evaluations and progress on the following fundamental Triad program objectives:

- Reduce criminal victimization of older adults.
- Educate older adults on community-specific crime and crime prevention information.
- Start/expand reassurance programs.
- Educate law enforcement to work more effectively with older persons.

If the objectives are not clearly defined or are unrealistic, accurate evaluation may be elusive or even unattainable—and so will success for the program.



## Methods of gathering information

Written questionnaires should be brief and easy to read. If you use multiple-choice and yes-no questions, respondents will need to do very little writing. Ask standardized questions for comparison purposes.

The sample methods, illustrated here, may be adapted to fit local programs:

1. I (am) (am not) aware that our sheriff's office and police department are working together to reduce crimes against older adults.
2. I (have) (have not) attended one or more crime prevention program in the past six months.
3. If a salesperson or repairperson whom I did not know appeared unexpectedly at my door, I (would) (would not) know how to determine if they were legitimate.
4. I would (feel comfortable) (hesitate) calling the sheriff's office or police if I saw something suspicious.
5. I (know) (do not know) about the Senior Call program at the sheriff's office or police department.
6. I (know) (do not know) whom to contact about programs or services I might need.



The following hypothetical situation illustrates another measuring method—from desired results to assessment of actual results.

**Objectives.** Reduce the incidence of victimization and the level of fear among the residents of Oakdale Manor; increase the number of older individuals feeling safe enough to leave their homes and be involved in civic activities.

**Activities.** Conduct at least one personal safety and crime prevention presentation per week for an audience composed of older persons; establish volunteer escort service daily from 3:00–7:00 p.m., persuade the city to route mini-buses through the area; install streetlights in five key areas.

## Keeping score

Ensure you are mapping progress toward goals. For example, an informal check-up sheet might read as follows:

**Program.** Crime prevention presentations (initial programs planned for senior centers during March and April). Topics: personal safety, spring home-repair scams.

**Objectives.** (1) Inform older adults about crime-related scenarios and appropriate responses designed to reduce victimization. (2) Officer Jones will train Mr. Senior Volunteer to conduct similar presentations.

**Participants.** Officer Jones, Deputy Smith, and Mr. Senior Volunteer.

The purpose of the evaluation is to confirm that objectives are being met or to identify aspects of the program that need to be changed. Some programs can be assessed by pre/post-testing. Evaluate programs in a standard, measurable format.

Perceptual programs are more difficult to evaluate. Follow-up calls with a brief survey can document participants' perceptions. Allow volunteers in the victim/witness program to carry out this portion of the evaluation.





## Determining results

### Measuring numbers and events

- Count of reported crime incidents involving older victims before Triad efforts start and at six-month and one-year points
- Number of crime prevention presentations made and persons addressed
- Number of bus routes rescheduled and changes in ridership
- Number of new street lights installed

### Measuring attitudes and activities

- Pre- and post-surveys of older adults' attitudes and activities—daytime and evening

Resident attendance at evening events

Changed behavior on the part of residents as the result of crime prevention programs; tabulation of this information provides the basis for a realistic evaluation

### Other evaluation techniques

- Uniformly interview participants, volunteers, and program staff
- Analyze existing data—census, crime reports, economic and social data

- Solicit direct observations from evaluators
- Review programs, reports, and key group surveys
- Review data on actual area crimes
- Record meeting attendance

Poor evaluation results should not be discouraging. Break down the program into its elements; keep those that are successful and re-evaluate or modify unsuccessful elements.

### Remember these essential key points:

- Be sure it gets done. Triad doesn't work without an evaluation process.
- Plan for an evaluation method from the beginning of the program.
- Review the process and the results.
- Assess changes in feelings and perceptions as well as facts.
- Use your results to improve the program.





## 6. Suggested Topics and Programs

### Law enforcement training

Training and education are important not only for older adults but also for law enforcement. Responding officers generally know little about the process of aging. They can be more effective in their jobs when educated to consider the following:

- Vision, hearing, and depth perception are sometimes limited in older adults. Such impairments can affect how an older adult responds to an officer. Cognitive limitations can lead to confusing responses.
- Older adults' fear of crime is often disproportionate to their risk. Some officers may not appreciate the impact that the fear of crime has on older persons or the reasons behind some of their actions. The very presence of an officer may also be intimidating in minority communities.
- Older adults are often susceptible to specific kinds of targeted crime and fraud that prey on trust or on perceived frailties or cognitive limitations.

To help educate law enforcement, educational materials can be obtained from senior services, the AARP, the local council on aging, the area agency on aging, or a community relations, training, or senior resource officer. A doctor, nurse, or social worker skilled in older adult care could be invited to conduct a training session for law enforcement officers and volunteers.

#### What officers know

The quiz in [appendix H beginning on page 63](#) may reveal officer misconceptions. Subjects to incorporate into officer training include the following:

- The process of normal aging
- Communicating with older persons
- Impairments—observe vision and hearing limitations and make adjustments in communication as needed



- Medication—the effects of medication, mixing medications, or failure to take the appropriate dosage
- Detecting older adult abuse (see [Recommended Resources beginning on page 81](#))
- Facts and effects of criminal victimization
- Persons living with Alzheimer's Disease and other related dementias

#### Victimization and its effects

Older victims often do not report crime and have difficulty recovering from the trauma. Officers who are cognizant of this fact when responding to older adult calls will be more effective than those who disregard it in gathering evidence, handling crime reports, and offering reassurance.

#### Crime reporting by older individuals

Three reporting tendencies are especially common among older adults: (1) nonreporters, (2) chronic callers, and (3) those seeking immediate action.

Nonreporters fear that officers will not or cannot do anything or are too busy. They also may fear retribution, or they may convince themselves that the crime committed was comparatively insignificant. Officers cognizant of these reporting barriers when responding to older adult crime reports can more clearly



delineate the crime and perhaps stop others from being victimized. Is the victim embarrassed by the prospect of neighbors observing a uniformed officer at their door? Might they fear law enforcement? Are law enforcement sometimes perpetrators of crime in their native country? Are they hesitant about becoming involved with the judicial process? Do they lack awareness of anonymous reporting programs, such as Crime Stoppers?

Answering these questions can remove roadblocks to the capture and prosecution of criminals, ensure that older adult crime statistics fully reflect actual cases, and inhibit reoccurrence. A Triad victim assistance volunteer may help to allay these concerns as well. Offering the victim a volunteer's telephone number may foster a better interaction between victim and officer.

Chronic callers may contact agencies repeatedly to report minor activities that often do not constitute law-breaking. By reinforcing the fact that officers can only enforce the law, Triad volunteers can help raise awareness and appreciation of law enforcement's limitations.

Individuals who seek immediate action are often lonely or fearful or are losing a realistic perspective. Some could be living with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia (see the Alzheimer's Association's "Communication and Alzheimer's" at <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/daily-care/communications>). Raising awareness of these possible reasons may alleviate miscommunication when officers respond to these callers.

## Older adult training

Plan a crime prevention education campaign to reach older adults. The Safety Training and Resources (STAR) Initiative is a community-based training and database development project Triads can use to instruct community members in how to collect, collate, and disseminate safety and community resource information in order to better prepare for natural and manmade disasters. More information about the STAR Initiative is available at <https://www.sheriffs.org/programs/star-initiative>.

Information should be concise, clear, and provided frequently. Where other agencies sponsor crime prevention programs for older adults, expand on and support those efforts. These agencies provide an opportunity for information gathering, alliance building, and possible recruitment of volunteers for the new Triad.

In many areas, law enforcement agencies lack staff for senior-targeted crime prevention. The council and Triad volunteers can work with law enforcement professionals and agencies to make up for this lack; volunteers especially can become valuable assets to law enforcement agencies with personnel constraints. However, it is very important to assess the specific needs of the target population or area before the council creates new programs or expands an established one.

Law enforcement and older adults may connect only when problems arise, which often fosters impatience, misunderstanding, and miscommunication between officer and victim. Triad can help address this problem by providing training for both law enforcement and older adults to alleviate common misperceptions. In addition, Triad programming can further help to improve understanding of both law enforcement processes and community expectations. A comprehensive list of programs is included later in the chapter.

## Programs

This section describes several different programs. A Triad's choice of programming should be strongly based on the survey responses. Not all of these programs will provide a benefit to every community; they are presented only for reference and as examples.

A variety of crime prevention programs can be integrated into a community. Focus on crimes targeting older adults and prevention techniques. Or initiate a community events with sponsors, seminars, and safety personnel. Pair crime prevention messages with other outings or social events for older adults. Senior centers serving meals may provide a ready audience at lunchtime. Offering refreshments along with a brief program garners a receptive audience.



## Topic #1. Citizen Police Academy

To promote civilian/law enforcement cooperation, it is important to educate members of the S.A.L.T. council and older adults about the criminal justice system—laws, courts, and law enforcement. Schedule a citizen or civilian police academy after establishing the S.A.L.T. council. Both older adults and volunteers should receive this training. Offer training to volunteers before they begin work.

Community members are invited by the sheriff and chiefs of police to participate in the program. Participants fill out an application and sign a liability waiver. The agency performs a background check on participants. A sample application and liability waiver are included in [appendix I beginning on page 68](#).

The objectives of the academy are as follows:

- Provide insight into law enforcement training and duties
- Explain agency policies and procedures to promote understanding and dispel misconceptions
- Target older adult safety issues

Topics to cover include the following:

- Responsibilities of sheriff and police agencies
- Officer training
- Patrol procedures
- Crime scene investigation
- Narcotics and vice investigation
- Crime prevention
- Traffic crash investigation
- Duties of highway patrol
- Firearms training and safety and deadly force issues

Ideally, the program should be repeated semiannually or quarterly.

*The Citizen Police Academy procedures were supplied by the Union County (North Carolina) Sheriff's Office and the DeSoto (Texas) and Bridgeport (Connecticut) Police Departments.*

## Topic #2. Property crime programs

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Unified Crime Reporting (UCR) program, in 2019 there were almost 7 million property crime offenses in the United States and an estimated 1,117,696 burglaries. By subcategory, 55.7 percent of burglaries involved forcible entry, 37.0 percent were unlawful entries, and 6.5 percent were attempted forcible entry (based on table 19). Victims of burglary offenses suffered an estimated \$3.0 billion in property losses in 2019, with an average dollar loss per burglary offense of \$2,661 (based on tables 1 and 23).<sup>9</sup> Burglaries of residential properties accounted for 62.8 percent of all burglary offenses. In addition, more than half of all victims of nonlethal violence ages 65 or older offered no resistance to the crime, which often makes that age group a tempting target for criminals. Triad can offer several lecture programs to educate older adults about property crimes and how to make themselves an unlikely target.

Burglary, theft, and vandalism are economically and emotionally distressing for older people. Many older adults have a fragile sense of security and limited ability to replace stolen or damaged property.

Some older adults do not report crimes and suspicious activities, fearing retaliation, scorn from neighbors for not being independent, and perceived poor response to previous calls for assistance. Defacement of property and automobile vandalism are often viewed as personal attacks. Educating older adults on localized crime and prevention methods therefore becomes a key objective of Triad.

9. FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), *2019 Crime in the United States*, Unified Crime Report (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2020), <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/burglary>.



### **Resources needed (volunteers, staff, and material requirements)**

Invite your crime prevention officer or trained older adults or senior providers to lecture at older adult gatherings about crime, crime safety, and prevention. The Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center provides comprehensive technical assistance and training resources to victim service providers and allied professionals. Information on training initiatives and tools and resources are available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov> or 866-682-8822. In addition, contact victim assistance programs in your area to locate lecturers and resources. AARP's *The Criminal Justice System – A Guide for Citizens*<sup>10</sup> is a widely used resource.

Obtain older volunteers through RSVP, advertisements, and other older adult programs.

### **Procedures (how program is put together)**

Establish a property theft program by creating several training events on senior-targeted crimes. Present these programs where older adults gather or create a venue to educate them on crime safety. Many topics vary by community, although several remain consistent. For example, all older adults will benefit by learning how to protect themselves and their property from thieves and vandals. Also illustrate ways to carry money safely and stress the importance of leaving valuables at home.

Community members can deter theft, or more easily reclaim stolen property, by marking valuables with an identifying number (Operation Identification). Contact the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) or telephone participating local law enforcement agencies for details.

Thieves know when monthly checks are delivered and act accordingly. Encourage older adults to use direct deposit to their banks rather than mail delivery. Inform community members about crime deterrence but convey information without frightening them. Foster caution and safe habits; do not feed paranoia.

### **Evaluation process**

Initially, as mentioned earlier, as older adults become more comfortable in reporting crimes your crime reporting rate may increase. Establish an education program for avoiding property crime and lecture on that topic repeatedly. Monitor statistics for property crime. Property victimization rates among older adults should drop in correlation to lecture programs.

Administer a survey to older adults after attending your program. Ask clear questions, such as "Can you list three ways to keep your property safe?" to assess vulnerability.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multidisciplinary crime prevention approach that uses urban and architectural design and the management of built and natural environments. CPTED strategies aim to reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas, reduce crime, and minimize fear of crime. CPTED is pronounced "sep-ted" and it is also known around the world as designing out crime, defensible space, and other similar terms.

### **Topic #3. Home safety inspection programs**

In addition to senior crime safety, your Triad can implement programs that keep older adults safe in their homes. Often, older adults are unable to maintain their homes, and the cycle of disrepair and neglect can lead to an unsafe environment. In addition, safety equipment such as locks, peepholes, and fire detectors may be out of date or not functioning.

Statistics show that as they continue to age, older adults are increasingly likely to be injured or killed by falls in unsafe environments and from fires caused by equipment that has not been maintained. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), at age 65, older adults are twice as likely as the population at large to be killed or injured by fires. That risk increases to three times that of the general population by age

10. Stephen R. Stiles, *The Criminal Justice System – A Guide for Citizens* (Washington, DC: National Retired Teachers Association, 1981), <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/criminal-justice-system-guide-citizens>.





75 and to four times by age 85.<sup>11</sup> Fires and burns are not the only hazards that threaten our older community members. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that falls are the leading cause of death due to unintentional injury in the home. Thirty percent of people aged 65 and older are involved in falls each year—some of those falls are fatal, while others permanently disable victims, often causing loss of mobility or independence.<sup>12</sup>

Although not a senior crime safety issue per se, these statistics have bearing on law enforcement duties. By addressing fall, fire, and safety issues as they pertain to older adults, Triad alleviates some law enforcement duties but also helps to keep older adults safe. Programs of home fire safety and security inspections are joint efforts between sheriffs' offices, police departments, fire departments, and emergency medical technicians (EMT). Triad should work with law enforcement and older adults to perform home inspections to reduce fall and fire incidences.

### Resources needed (volunteers, staff, and material requirements)

Contact the federal online resources, AARP, Administration on Aging, American Federation for Aging Research, International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Volunteer Fire Council, National Fire Protection Association, National Safety Council, and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control for distribution and lecture materials on fall, fire, and home safety. If you prefer to create your own materials, team up with printing services in your area. Recruit volunteers for leaflet distribution, signup, and maintenance and installation efforts. For presentations, any space accessible by older adults—such as a community center, library, or other facility with lecture space—will suffice. Use local advertisement resources for your program.



iStock/sturti

### Procedures (how program is put together)

Distribute prevention information through spiritual groups, civic organizations, Meals on Wheels, Neighborhood Watch, and senior centers. Arrange for safety lectures where older adults gather. Promote your free evaluation and home safety inspection program after setting qualifying factors for participants. Volunteers should take registrations for a free inspection. Obtain volunteers from among other resources, including high schools and trade schools with handyman capabilities (e.g., woodworking), Masons, Kiwanis Clubs, and Eagle Scouts. Schedule each person for a one-hour slot. Allow 30 minutes for a law enforcement security check and 30 minutes for a fire department/EMT fall and fire prevention check. Team up with local hardware companies to sponsor the program. Companies often donate fire alarm systems, peepholes, night lights, light bulbs, or other safety devices for older adults lacking safety equipment. Obtain reliable volunteers to install equipment. Promote the donor to establish repeat participation. Make prevention awareness a regular lecture topic, including home assessment materials, free inspections, and volunteer services and equipment. [Appendix J beginning on page 70](#) includes a sample home inspection form.

### Evaluation process

Evaluate your program by the number of older adults who sign up. You may also administer a short survey after the inspection and walkthrough lecture in order to determine the amount of information retained.

11. "Older Adults," National Fire Protection Association, accessed December 21, 2022, <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Specific-groups-at-risk/Older-adults>.

12. "Facts About Falls," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last modified August 6, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/falls/facts.html>.



## Topic #4. Disaster preparedness programs

Each year in the United States, natural and manmade disasters cause billions of dollars in damages, displace residents, halt productivity, and take many innocent lives. According to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), individuals can mitigate the effects of such events by recognizing potential and impending hazards, knowing what to do to protect themselves and their families, and preparing before disasters strike.

A 2014 FEMA report, *Preparedness in America*, revealed that adults aged 55 and older are less prepared than younger people to cope with disaster. Older adults perceive many barriers to being prepared, including higher reliance than younger groups on emergency responders. In fact, 55 percent of survey respondents aged 75 and older had not taken disaster preparedness steps because they expected to rely on first responders such as fire, police, or emergency personnel. Individuals aged 75 or older were not confident that their own disaster preparedness steps would be effective.<sup>13</sup>

When disaster threatens, older persons are among the most vulnerable. Establish an emergency preparedness subcommittee to chart locations of older adults in disaster-prone areas and care for them. Create a plan before disaster strikes—for example, planning for the evacuation of those with special needs. This preparation builds relationships between Triad and emergency personnel. Such a program can also train volunteers to help law enforcement with noncritical duties in a disaster situation. Team up with a local Neighborhood Watch or Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to further implement the program.

*“We all have a role in homeland security. Citizen Corps asks you to embrace the personal responsibility to be prepared; to get trained in first aid and emergency skills; and to volunteer to support local emergency responders, disaster relief, and community safety.”*

— Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)

Triads, emergency response agencies, and national disaster preparedness organizations should collaborate to ensure that vulnerable older adults receive all necessary assistance before, during, and after an event occurs. Furthermore, these organizations can work with agencies such as Citizen Corps to educate and create volunteer opportunities that empower capable older adults to plan for and recover from disasters.

### Disaster facts

According to FEMA’s 2022 National Preparedness Report, as a result of climate change, disasters of certain types are becoming more common and more costly, as are response and recovery efforts that may extend for months or years. “In 2021 there were 20 weather-related disasters with losses exceeding \$1 billion each. As a comparison, from 1980–2021 the average number of billion-dollar disasters was 7.4 incidents per year.”<sup>14</sup>

In FEMA’s 2021 Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Reviews (SPR) submissions, 95 percent of communities reported natural hazards as likely to

13. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration), *Preparedness in America: Research Insights to Increase Individual, Organizational, and Community Action* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2014), [https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/Preparedness\\_in\\_America\\_August\\_2014.pdf](https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/Preparedness_in_America_August_2014.pdf).

14. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration), *National Preparedness Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2022), [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_2022-npr.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_2022-npr.pdf).





occur and 92 percent of communities reported these hazards are being exacerbated and stressing their emergency management capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

Quiet but deadly, extreme heat is now one of the deadliest types of weather incidents in the United States, causing more fatalities than hurricanes, tornadoes, or flooding.<sup>16</sup> Heat fatalities have outpaced hurricane fatalities by a significant margin in recent decades.<sup>17</sup> Socially vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected by extreme heat, particularly those who live with disabilities, communities of color, low-income individuals, individuals lacking a high school diploma, and populations 65 or older.<sup>18</sup>

### Linking Triad to emergency management

Often, disaster preparedness plans fail to serve (or underserve) those most vulnerable—older adults and people with disabilities. Triads can work with emergency management (EM) organizations to locate, map, and plan assistance programs for these individuals.

Triad is a direct link to communities and the vulnerable people they serve. Incorporating Triad into a disaster preparedness system builds capacity and effectiveness of response to the human service issues that result from disasters. Triad can be linked to the emergency operations center through the same EM branch as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other organizations. Also, Triad works with FEMA to ensure that recovery services reach older people and that efforts are not duplicated.

### The older volunteer

For older volunteers interested in disaster preparedness, the CERT database includes more than 1,100 community programs nationwide. For an online directory, visit [https://community.fema.gov/Register/Register\\_Search\\_Programs](https://community.fema.gov/Register/Register_Search_Programs).

### Getting started

Create pre-event agreements to provide disaster response services. Include agreement purpose, statements about the organizations involved, a list of duties and services Triad will provide, a list of government provisions supporting each function, joint responsibilities, how and when agreement terms become activated, costs covered and how costs are documented and paid, and signatures of all parties concerned.

Bring Triad and EM together to discuss Triad resources and services, emergency planning, and roles. Include Triad representatives in meetings that involve EM issues and task forces. Involve social services, public and mental health organizations, area agencies on aging, the United Way, volunteer centers, Catholic Charities, food banks, health clinics, homeless service providers, Jewish Family and Children’s Services, the Salvation Army, Neighborhood Watch, and interfaith providers.

Become the EM conduit to ensure that local communities are informed and involved in activities by organizing teams of volunteers to do door-to-door outreach following disasters.

### Triad as a resource

Triad’s primary mission is to provide services to specific groups, including older adults, the disabled, and the cognitively compromised (e.g., persons living with

15. FEMA, *National Preparedness Report* (see note 14).

16. *Climate Change and Extreme Heat: What You Can Do to Prepare* (Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016), <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/pubs/extreme-heat-guidebook.pdf>; National Weather Service, “Severe Weather Awareness – Heat Waves,” National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed August 31, 2023, <https://www.weather.gov/mkx/heatwaves>; “Be Prepared for Extreme Heat,” Federal Emergency Management Administration, accessed August 31, 2023, <https://community.fema.gov/ProtectiveActions/s/article/Extreme-Heat>.

17. “Be Prepared for Extreme Heat,” Federal Emergency Management Administration (see note 16).

18. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), *Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the United States: A Focus on Six Impacts* (Washington, DC: Environmental Protection Agency, 2021), <https://www.epa.gov/cira/social-vulnerability-report>.



Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia). Triad helps incapacitated older adults through various programs, including the following:

- Collaboration with Meals on Wheels, CERT, and area agencies on aging to map individuals who need assistance during disasters
- Assistance with service accessibility; personal care support; and distribution of food, water, and other supplies
- Pre-charting vulnerable individuals to alert EM personnel about potential in-home dangers, medication levels, electricity/utilities, and so forth

Use the Triad website section (if applicable) to offer emergency planning tips on how individuals can get involved. Involve EM and Triad in planning, training exercises, creation of service teams, geographic cluster groups, and coordinated response support plans. Identify a Triad leader to serve as a single EM contact, and add the leader to the operational area council. Develop a disaster collaborative group of volunteers active in pre- and post-disasters. Cover responsibilities and services of each group.

Identify an ongoing network such as a Citizen Corps council for community leadership (if applicable) in your jurisdiction to bring together volunteers within the community. Triad's goal may be to tie into an existing group. Create a hierarchy of services to provide should a shortage of resources occur. Plan a communication strategy for before, during, and after a disaster. Include alternate meeting points.

### Disaster planning

The following checklist is designed to help community organizations and individual volunteers prepare for potential disasters.

- Include people living both independently and in dependent care facilities.
- Identify community needs and the support necessary to meet them.

- Arrange personal care assistance if in-home care support is unavailable.
- Get food, water, and other supplies distributed to older people and individuals with disabilities living alone or in isolated areas.
- Provide food for those who depend on home-delivered meals if services are interrupted.
- Help older people and individuals with disabilities fill prescriptions for medications and replace vital personal equipment (e.g., hearing aids, wheelchairs) damaged or lost in the disaster.
- Ensure that dependent care facilities have disaster plans that include measures to support the population they serve.
- Contact isolated and homebound individuals to check on their status and to help them get needed services.
- Check on and, if needed, evacuate people who cannot be self-sufficient for 5 to 7 days following a major disaster.
- Relocate people dependent on electricity to maintain life support during power outages. Support mobility needs with accessible transportation resources. Triad can help transport people to disaster service areas during evacuations.





- Supplement the response to medical needs through volunteers and/or staff trained in first aid and emergency response, and/or by providing medical supplies.
- Support people with special dietary needs and help with distribution of food and water to at-risk, homebound, and disabled persons. Ideas include volunteer kitchens, meal programs, and food pantries to support mass feeding and food distribution efforts.
- Provide information on community resources that connect people who need help to available services.
- Create emergency supply kits for older people.

### Resources

- FEMA. Information on how to assess needs and take simple, low-cost steps that help you get better prepared. <https://www.ready.gov/older-adults>
- FEMA mobile app. <https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/mobile-products>
- American Psychological Association. Older Adults and Disasters — <https://www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/older-adults-disasters.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults — <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/older-adult-emergency.html>
- Red Cross. Older Adults Emergency Preparedness — <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/older-adults.html>
- Research. Improving Disaster Resilience Among Older Adults: Insights from Public Health Departments and Aging-in-Place Efforts — [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2300/RR2313/RAND\\_RR2313.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2300/RR2313/RAND_RR2313.pdf)

## Topic #5. Vandalism and the older adult

Smashed mailboxes, graffiti, keyed automobiles, broken windows, and similar crimes are not just an eyesore. Vandalism costs schools, homeowners, businesses, youth, and others billions of dollars each year.



One report from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) estimates that \$12 billion is spent annually cleaning up graffiti in the United States.<sup>19</sup>

### Countering vandalism

- Stay active in your community to feel safer and to make your neighborhood safer.
- Train community members to recognize and report suspicious and criminal activities in their neighborhoods.
- Join a Neighborhood/Apartment/Window/Business Watch, Triad, or Citizen Patrol.
- Report broken streetlights and lobby local government for better public lighting.
- Start a cleanup crew. Ask local businesses to donate supplies for covering graffiti or tools and equipment for repairing vandalized property.
- Clean up graffiti quickly. According to Graffiti Hurts, immediate removal—within 24 to 48 hours—is key to successful prevention of future graffiti.

19. Deborah Lamm Weisel, *Graffiti*, Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Problem-Specific Guides Series No. 9 (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2013), <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/Home.aspx?page=detail&id=COPS-P026>.



- Write articles on the cost of vandalism and graffiti, their impact on neighborhoods and school, and how the courts—juvenile and adult—treat vandals.
- Work with your community to adopt a street or park monthly. Clean up; plant trees, bushes, and flowers; repair equipment; and install trash containers.
- Be a role model for youth by volunteering with mentoring organizations (e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters). Visit <https://www.volunteermatch.org> to find opportunities in your area.

Read “Preventing Vandalism,” published by the Urban Institute and its Safe City partners, to learn strategies for assessing and combating vandalism in your community (<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/preventing-vandalism>).

## Topic #6. Fraud and scams programs

Each year, millions of people living in the United States become victims of marketing fraud and imposter scams, as well as identity theft.<sup>20</sup> For older adults, financial loss can be devastating. A trusting nature leaves many older people susceptible to frauds and scams from individuals—often family members or primary caregivers, predatory institutions, or professional scammers.

Older adults are targeted for crimes for several reasons:

**Availability.** Older adults are often home for cold calls and scam artists. Also, older adults increasingly use email and the Internet, the most popular venues for scammers.

**Isolation.** Very often, older adults do not live near family and have nobody to help them review financial and investment decisions.

**Loneliness.** Lack of friendships can position some to be receptive to the friendly voice of a con artist. This also makes them more vulnerable to romance scams and grandparents scams, manipulating their emotions.

**Money.** Older adults are often targeted, as they have more resources and because con artists see them as trusting and easy targets for theft of money from savings or property.

Financial exploitation collectively costs older adults an estimated \$6.3 billion a year, according to a 2022 analysis of state and federal case data by cybersecurity research company Comparitech.<sup>21</sup> And that’s just from known incidents; experts say the true toll is likely far higher, as most cases go unreported. Compared to fraud by anonymous scammers, older adults typically suffer greater financial losses when they know the perpetrator.

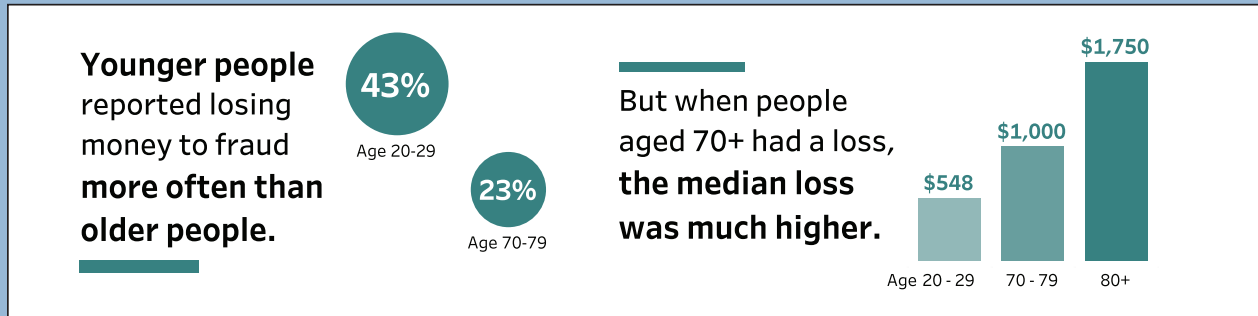
Various factors lead to victimization: persons committing these crimes are often sophisticated; victims may be dealing with reduced mental and physical abilities, loneliness, grief, isolation, loss, sensory impairment, illness, vanity, limited income, and mistrust of financial institutions (both brick-and-mortar and online).

In 2022, as shown in figure 2 on page 29, people aged 70 and older had a much higher monetary loss than younger people. There were almost 726,000 imposter scam reports to the Consumer Sentinel Network, a fraud complaint database developed and maintained by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), in 2022. Of those, 26 percent reported a dollar loss, totaling nearly \$2.7 billion lost to imposter scams that year. These scams include, for example, romance scams and people falsely claiming to be the government, a relative in distress, a well-known business, or a

20. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “New FTC Data Show Consumers Reported Losing Nearly \$8.8 Billion to Scams in 2022,” press release, February 23, 2023, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2023/02/new-ftc-data-show-consumers-reported-losing-nearly-88-billion-scams-2022>.

21. Paul Bischoff, “The United States of Elder Fraud – How Prevalent is Elder Financial Abuse in Each State?” Comparitech, last modified January 11, 2022, <https://www.comparitech.com/blog/vpn-privacy/elder-fraud-by-state/>.



**Figure 2. Fraud facts**

Source: "Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2022" (see footnote 35).

technical support expert. People aged 70–79 lost money in 23 percent and people aged 80 and older in 22 percent of the reports.<sup>22</sup>

Among the top web-based scams reported in 2022 were sales of merchandise not delivered or misrepresented (36.43 percent); phishing and spoofing (22.00 percent); prize, sweepstakes, or free gift offers (5.66 percent); friendship and sweetheart swindles (3.62 percent); fake checks (6.61 percent); investments including cryptocurrency (6.04 percent); and advance fee loans and credit assistance (3.05 percent). Other internet scams included Nigerian money offers, computer equipment and software scams, employment and job counseling, and bogus business opportunities.<sup>23</sup>

With email spam filters getting progressively better, phone and the web continued to be the most frequent ways that consumers reported being contacted by scammers. Combined, they were the first method of contact in more than 75 percent of complaints (39.07 percent phone; 36.56 percent web.)<sup>24</sup>

Newly released FTC data show that "consumers reported losing nearly \$8.8 billion to fraud in 2022, an increase of more than 30 percent over the previous year."<sup>25</sup> Triads can serve to educate and empower the elders in the community to fight would-be scammers and reverse an alarming trend.

### Resources needed (volunteers, staff, and material requirements)

**Predatory lending.** Home loans and predatory lending schemes can result in the loss of older adults' homes. These offers come by telephone, mail, and email as well as door to door.

The county or state office of consumer affairs or state attorney general's office can provide information on borrowing that may be helpful in preventing victimization through predatory lending. A qualified attorney, financial advisor, or housing counselor or a panel of these individuals can provide ongoing information to older adults to prevent a very painful experience. Find local U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offices at <https://www.hud.gov/localoffices>.

**Home improvements.** According to the Consumer Federation of America, home improvement and contractors are the second-largest U.S. consumer complaint. Common issues include workmanship, overpricing, abandonment or unfinished work, failure to meet building code requirements, and failure to use a written contract. They are often connected to predatory lending scams to finance the work. Home improvement fraud is especially prevalent in the aftermath of community disasters.

22. *Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2022*, Federal Trade Commission (Washington, DC: Federal Trade Commission, 2023), <https://www.ftc.gov/reports/consumer-sentinel-network-data-book-2022>.

23. Fraud.org, Top Scams of 2022, (Washington, DC: National Consumers League, 2023), <https://nclnet.org/top-scams-2023/>.

24. Fraud.org, Top Scams of 2022 (see note 23).

25. FTC, "New FTC Data Show" (see note 20).





The FTC’s Consumer Response Center publishes “Home Improvement Tools You Can Use,” helpful for this type of fraud. Call 877-382-4357 to order or visit [How To Avoid a Home Improvement Scam at https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-avoid-home-improvement-scam](https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-avoid-home-improvement-scam) for more resources.

**Telemarketing.** The National Council on Aging reports that older adults lose an estimated \$3 billion each year to financial scams.<sup>26</sup> Encourage older adults to adopt a prepared response to suspicious unsolicited offers. Older individuals will be better able to resist high-pressure and often fraudulent sales pitches with replies such as the following:

- “Leave your number and I will get back to you after I check with (the Better Business Bureau, police department, relative, attorney, etc).”
- “Send (or leave) some literature and I will consider it.”
- “I no longer respond to telephone solicitations.”
- “I have to consult my (spouse, brother, daughter, attorney) before I make that sort of decision.”
- “If I have to give you an immediate answer, the answer will have to be ‘no.’”

Instruct older adults not to transact with their credit card numbers over the telephone unless they themselves placed the initial call. Encourage them to add their names to the National Do Not Call Registry at <https://www.donotcall.gov>.

Request speakers from local sources, your Better Business Bureau (BBB), or the fraud unit within your agency. Obtain written materials from Experian, Equifax, and TRW credit reporting agencies (see Resources for contact information), the National Fraud Information Center, and the National Center for Victims of Crime.

Find volunteers by approaching social and spiritual organizations, RSVP, and AARP. Use your local senior outreach programs to reach homebound older adults. Repeat your message often.

**Imposters.** There are a variety of imposter scams that generally work the same way: a scammer pretends to be someone the target trusts to convince them to send money.<sup>27</sup> Each of these common types of imposters could be good educational topics with resources on how to spot them and report them:

- **Government impersonators.** Scammers claim to represent government agencies (Social Security, IRS [Internal Revenue Service], Medicare). They warn of dire consequences if bills aren’t paid or personal information isn’t shared; the target might miss out on a benefit they’re entitled to, or they might even be committing a crime.<sup>28</sup>
- **Utility company impersonators.** Callers claim the target must confirm account details and possibly pay extra fees to keep their gas, water, or electricity from being shut off.<sup>29</sup>
- **Nanny and caregiver scams.** Scammers exploit people searching for jobs as babysitters or nannies, which might appeal to retirees with time on their hands.<sup>30</sup>

26. Genevieve Waterman, “The Top 5 Finance Scams Targeting Older Adults,” National Council on Aging, last modified July 27, 2022, <https://www.ncoa.org/article/top-5-financial-scams-targeting-older-adults>.

27. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “How to Avoid Imposter Scams,” accessed September 8, 2023, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/features/how-avoid-imposter-scams>.

28. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “How to Avoid a Government Impersonator Scam,” last modified May 2021, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-avoid-government-impersonator-scam>.

29. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “Scammers Pretend to Be Your Utility Company,” last modified May 2021, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/scammers-pretend-be-your-utility-company>.

30. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “Nanny and Caregiver Job Scams,” last modified December 2022, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/nanny-and-caregiver-job-scams>.



- **Tech support scams.** Tech support scammers contact targets and try to convince them to pay up front to remove a nonexistent virus or to install a phony virus protection package (which may be nothing or may actually be malicious software itself).<sup>31</sup>
- **Family emergency scams.** A caller pretends to be a friend or family member in trouble, such as a teenaged grandchild who needs money but is scared to call their parents.<sup>32</sup>
- **Romance scams.** Scammers befriend targets on social media or online dating sites, create a relationship and build trust, and then ask for help with a financial situation.<sup>33</sup>

All the programs should reinforce that if someone demands money; makes threats; promises a prize; or tries to convince a person to transfer money, buy gift cards, or send cash—they are a scammer. Report impersonators at <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov>.

### Procedures (how program is put together)

Use crime prevention officers, volunteers, articles, brochures, and presentations with follow-up bulletins and reminders to educate older adults about fraud and scams—and how to recognize those who perpetrate them.

Interaction with law enforcement encourages older adults to call when they suspect someone is attempting to defraud them. Promote it in Triad meetings and seminars. Use law enforcement (Triad officer if available), the S.A.L.T. council, and volunteers to alert older adults when fraudulent operators are in the area. Contact your local media to create public service announcements for these topics. See the Resource and Appendices sections for additional resources.

### Activity ideas

The following are some activities that have been successful Triad activities:

- **Safety bingo.** Develop and facilitate a S.A.L.T. group to learn important safety lessons on how to recognize imposters in an interactive way, using bingo cards with public safety tips—things like, “The IRS will never just show up at your house” and “USPS [U.S. Postal Service] drivers always wear black shoes.”
- **Uniform fashion show.** Hold a safety fashion show with a red-carpet runway featuring law enforcement, city officials, uniformed delivery services, and others to teach older adults how to distinguish legitimate uniforms from fraudulent ones and how to verify the identity of someone who knocks on their door.

### Evaluation process

Monitor before-and-after program statistics on scams and fraud through your crime statistics and victim assistance programs or your local law enforcement agencies. Surveys can also be used after lecture programs. Keep surveys easily quantifiable.

### Resources

- Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
  - Provides tips on how to recognize and avoid phishing scams - <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-recognize-and-avoid-phishing-scams>
  - What To Do If You Were Scammed - <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-do-if-you-were-scammed>

31. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “How to Spot, Avoid, and Report Tech Support Scams,” last modified September 2022, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-spot-avoid-and-report-tech-support-scams>.

32. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “Scammers Use Fake Emergencies to Steal Your Money,” last modified May 2021, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/scammers-use-fake-emergencies-steal-your-money>.

33. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “What to Know about Romance Scams,” last modified August 2022, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-know-about-romance-scams>.



- The American Bankers Association
  - Safe Banking toolkits - <https://www.aba.com/advocacy/community-programs/safe-banking-for-seniors>
  - Provide tips on how to spot frauds and scams - <https://www.aba.com/advocacy/community-programs/older-americans-month>
- U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
  - Protect Your Investments with researching financial investor, red flags for investment scams and where to call if you have questions. - <https://www.investor.gov/protect-your-investments>
  - Older Investors Never Stop Learning - <https://www.investor.gov/additional-resources/information/older-investors>

## Topic #7. Identity theft prevention programs

Identity theft occurs, according to AARP, when someone obtains someone else's personal information, such as a SSN, home address, date of birth, or bank account data, and uses it for fraud or other illicit purposes. The FTC fielded nearly 1.4 million complaints about identity theft in 2020, more than double the 2019 total.<sup>34</sup>

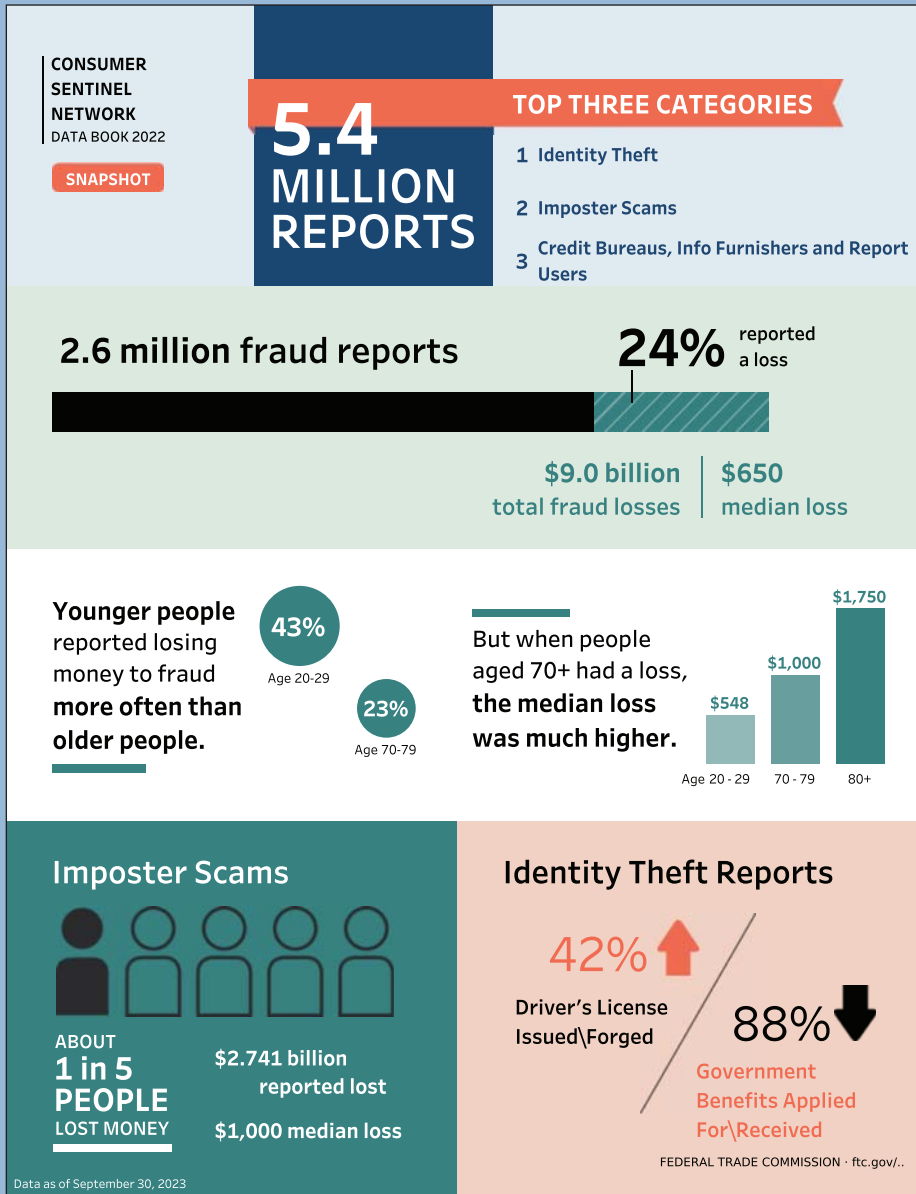
Older adults are targeted for several reasons:

- **Availability.** Retired, less mobile, and perhaps in poor health, older adults are often home for cold calls. Also, more recently older adults are using email, the Internet, and social media – which are now the most popular venue for fraudsters.
- **Vulnerability.** Physically or mentally impaired older adults who rely on unscrupulous caretakers or family members often are targeted for identity fraud.
- **Money.** Targeted older adults with savings or property are a ready money supply.
- **Loneliness.** Lack of friendships can position older adults to be receptive to identity fraud.

Criminals obtain personal information in many ways:

- **Dumpster diving.** "Divers" rummage through trash to find bills, pre-approval applications, or other papers containing personal information.
- **Skimming.** ID thieves use a special device to steal credit or debit card numbers.
- **Telemarketing.** Fraudsters pose as telemarketers or sweepstakes employees to get personal information.
- **Phishing.** Pretending to be from a financial institution or legitimate company, phishers send spam or pop-up emails to get the recipient to reveal personal information.
- **Pre-texting.** Using false pretenses, thieves obtain personal data from financial institutions, utility companies, and other sources.
- **Old-fashioned stealing.** Thieves steal wallets, purses, or mail. Dishonest employees steal employer personnel records. Criminals watch or listen for personal identification, calling card, or credit card numbers.

34. Katherine Skiba, "Pandemic Proves to Be Fertile Ground for Identity Thieves," AARP, last modified February 5, 2021, <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2021/ftc-fraud-report-identity-theft-pandemic.html>.



**Figure 3. Consumer Sentinel Network Databook 2022 Snapshot**

**Identity theft facts**

Since 1997, the Consumer Sentinel Network has collected tens of millions of consumer reports about fraud, identity theft, and other consumer protection topics. During 2022, it received more than 5.4 million consumer reports (see figure 3).<sup>35</sup>

**Reporting identity theft**

Actions related to identification theft can be a federal offense, and violations of federal laws are investigated by the FBI, U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and Social Security Administration (SSA)/ Inspector General. Federal identity theft cases are prosecuted by the U.S. Department of Justice.

35. "Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2022," Tableau Public, last modified November 1, 2023, <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/federal.trade.commission/viz/ConsumerSentinel/Infographic>.



The FTC provides the following four steps for reporting identity theft. For more information, visit <https://www.identitytheft.gov/#/Steps>.

1. Place a fraud alert on your credit reports—and review your credit reports.
2. Close the accounts you know or believe have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.
3. File a complaint with the FTC online at <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov> or call the Identity Theft Hotline at 877-ID-THEFT (438-4338), TTY: 866-653-4261.
4. File a report with your local law enforcement agency or with the law enforcement agency in the community where the identity theft took place.

### Social Security theft

Thieves may try to use stolen Social Security numbers (SSN) to file tax returns in order to receive a refund or obtain employment. If you suspect someone else is using your SSN, contact the SSA. The SSA will review your earnings with you to ensure their records are correct.

If someone has misused your SSN or other personal information and caused you credit problems, contact the FTC. If an identity thief may have filed a tax return in your name, contact the IRS Identity Protection Unit. Finally, victims should file an online complaint with the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), which alerts the appropriate law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

### Credit card theft

Federal law limits a cardholder's maximum liability for unauthorized card use to \$50 per card. Also, if the loss involves the credit card number but not the physical card, the cardholder is not liable for any charges. Be



aware, however, that federal law regarding automatic teller machine (ATM) / debit card loss or fraudulent transfers differs. Consumers who report a loss within two business days after realizing a card is missing are not responsible for more than \$50 for unauthorized use. However, if the loss is not reported, cardholders can lose up to \$500. Cardholders who fail to report an unauthorized transfer within 60 days after their bank statement was mailed to them risk unlimited loss—possibly the entire amount in the account and any unused portion of credit line or overdraft. For more information, read the FTC report “Lost or Stolen Credit, ATM, and Debit Cards.”<sup>36</sup>

Many people learn they have been victimized when a debt collector calls regarding unpaid account activity. Federal and state laws regulate collection agencies in order to protect identity theft victims.

### Social media accounts

Hackers try to take over people's social media accounts. Some may want to steal personal information like usernames and passwords, bank account numbers, or Social Security numbers to commit identity theft. Many want to spread malware or to scam others using your social media account.

Learn how to prevent social media accounts from being hacked and to recognize the signs you have been hacked and what steps to take to recover hacked social media accounts with resources from the FTC.<sup>37</sup>

36. “Lost or Stolen Credit, ATM, and Debit Cards,” Federal Trade Commission, last modified January 2022, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/lost-or-stolen-credit-atm-debit-cards>.

37. FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “How to Recover Your Hacked Email or Social Media Account,” last modified August 2023, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-recover-your-hacked-email-or-social-media-account>.





## Resources needed (volunteers, staff, and material requirements)

Contact the FTC, local law enforcement agencies, and the three major credit-reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion) (see [Recommended Resources beginning on page 81](#) for more information). Obtain a copy of the Consumer Action Handbook at <https://digital.gov/topics/consumer-action-handbook> for general consumer assistance. Additional materials and resources can be obtained from AARP, your local RSVP organization, the local council on aging or area agency on aging, or the U.S. Department of Justice. Contact your local bank for bank fraud representatives, BBB personnel, fraud investigators, or specialized law enforcement personnel for presenter contacts. Recruit volunteers to distribute handouts and fraud leaflets. For presentations, use senior-accessible space, such as a community center or library. Ask your local Meals on Wheels or equivalent to distribute informative placemats with printed identity theft messages. Use local printing and advertisement resources for your program.

## Procedures (how program is put together)

Educate older adults about identity theft to reduce underreporting and the occurrence of financial crimes. Teach older adults to identify fraudulent activities before they are victimized and how they can rectify the situation afterward.

- Provide articles, brochures, and presentations—with follow-up bulletins and reminders—to individuals and older adult organizations outlining ways to recognize, prevent, and rectify fraud.
- Offer seminars on the fraud trends in your area with community experts as presenters. The presenters or moderators of the program could include bank fraud representatives, Better Business Bureau staff, fraud investigators, or other experts. Summarize the material in flier format, distributed through channels used to advertise your program.
- Older adults should be instructed not to make any transaction in which they give credit card information over the telephone unless they placed the initial call. Encourage older adults to join the National Do Not Call Registry at <https://www.donotcall.gov>.
- Criminals obtain personal information by stealing wallets and purses as well as by rummaging through trash, stealing mail, pre-approved applications, and tax information. They pose as telemarketers or sweepstakes employees to get personal information over the telephone. They send false emails requesting information. Some dishonest employees steal employer records with personal information. Criminals will watch or listen for PIN numbers and calling card or credit card numbers.
- Inform older adults that identity theft is a serious crime. Actions related to identity theft can be a federal offense, and violations of these federal laws are investigated by federal law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and SSA. Federal identity theft cases are prosecuted by the U.S. Department of Justice.
- Advertise your program. If older adults are unaware of your seminars and efforts, your program will fail. Many radio stations provide free air time for public service announcements. Triad should have or create a contact sheet of local senior center newsletters, long-term care facilities, and other senior-targeted publications to disseminate seminar information. Other advertising venues are local news coverage, fliers in public areas, spiritual centers, and volunteer programs such as Meals on Wheels.
- Finally, train law enforcement to interview victims effectively. Gathering better information from older adults will increase the likelihood of apprehending offenders. Law enforcement must be trained to identify and work around health impairments. Physical, sensory, memory, or other impairments can interfere with an officer's attempt to gather information. Improved techniques will allow the officer to develop a quality investigation and to positively impact victims' behaviors and attitudes toward law enforcement. Address all relevant inquiries, including victim, offense, and offender characteristics. Create and use a detailed investigation checklist for the older adult's estate, financial arrangements, and relevant legal documents. Ask crime victim volunteers to gather additional information after the initial law enforcement interview.



## Evaluation process

Use a quiz after the presentation to assess the amount of information participants absorbed. Asking generalized questions on recognizing, preventing, and rectifying identity theft can determine weaknesses in presenters for the next seminar. By offering these seminars and evaluations often and updating the material as criminal activity evolves, you help ensure that older adults are continually reminded of the factors that constitute identity theft.

A reduction of identity theft in your community is an indicator of program success. Review crime statistics for these changes.

Keep a working rapport with the sheriff, chief of police, or other officers to increase the number of law enforcement officials attending and contributing to training.

## Topic #8. Older adult abuse

As the average lifespan increases in the United States, more older people are subjected to physical, mental (e.g., intimidation), and sexual abuse; neglect; and financial exploitation. Often society's most hidden crime, elder abuse may not be evident in your community.

Victims dependent on abusive caretakers may be too frightened or physically or mentally unable to report abuse. Financial abuse may occur without the victim's knowledge. The National Crime Victimization Survey cannot accurately measure older adult abuse, as those with mental impairments often cannot report

victimization or describe details. Triad volunteers can become adept at recognizing signs of abuse and acting upon it. They can implement programs to prevent older adult abuse.

Studies find different rates of prevalence of different types of abuse. Older adults self-reported abuse at the following rates in a number of studies: psychological (11.6 percent), physical (2.6 percent), financial (6.8 percent), neglect (4.2 percent), and sexual abuse (0.9 percent).<sup>38</sup> One study in the United States found the following abuse rates: emotional (4.6 percent), physical (1.6 percent), financial: family (5.2 percent), financial: stranger (6.5 percent), neglect (5.1 percent), and sexual (0.6 percent).<sup>39</sup>

## Older adult abuse defined

Older adult abuse refers to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or other person that causes harm, serious risk, or death to an older person. The World Health Organization has adopted the following definition: "a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within relationships where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person."<sup>40</sup>

Self-neglect is a form of abuse that often stems from diminished mental or physical ability or social isolation. Self-neglect may be a risk factor for other forms of abuse, and it can be a consequence of older adult abuse.

Unwilling or unable to request help, many older people remain in abusive situations. In fact, a competent older person has the legal right to refuse services.

38. Yongjie Yon et al., "Elder Abuse Prevalence in Community Settings: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *The Lancet Global Health* 5, no. 2 (2017), [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(17\)30006-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(17)30006-2).

39. Ron Acierno et al., *National Elder Mistreatment Study* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, 2008), <https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/national-elder-mistreatment-study>.

40. World Health Organization, "Preventing Abuse of Older People," accessed December 27, 2022 <https://www.who.int/activities/preventing-elder-abuse>.



## Know the warning signs

Caregivers, family members, social service providers, health care providers, and law enforcement should learn to recognize the following signs of older adult abuse and neglect.

### Abuse and neglect of older persons

- Bruises, pressure marks, broken bones, abrasions, burns, or untreated injuries in various stages of healing; signs of being restrained (e.g., rope marks on wrists)
- Unexplained withdrawal from routine activities, a sudden shift in alertness, or unusual depression
- Bruises or bleeding around the breasts, genitals, or anus, or unexplained sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- Bedsores, unattended medical needs, poor hygiene, and abnormal weight loss
- Extreme hunger or thirst
- Drug overdose or failure to take a medication regularly (a prescription has more or fewer remaining than it should)
- Behavior such as belittling, threats, and other uses of power and control by caretaker
- Strained or tense relationships, frequent arguments between a caregiver and an older person
- Unusual behavior usually attributed to dementia (e.g., sucking, biting, rocking)
- Desertion of an older person in a medical facility, shopping center, or other location
- Broken eyeglasses or frames

### Financial abuse

- Sudden changes in financial situation, unexplained disappearance of funds or valuables, or unexplained transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family
- Suspicious changes to wills, power of attorney, titles, policies, or signature cards
- Overbilling for medical services or charges for medical services not rendered
- Unpaid or overdue bills when an older person has enough money to pay them
- Unusual bank account activity (e.g., ATM withdrawals when the account holder is bedridden, online transactions when the account holder does not use a computer)

### Self-neglect

Most cases regarding older adults reported to Adult Protective Services (APS) are due to self-neglect. Self-neglect is often coupled with health factors, lack of a social support group, Alzheimer's disease or dementia, or drug or alcohol abuse. Signs of self-neglect often include the following:

- Hoarding
- Failure to take medications
- Failure to seek medical treatment
- Poor personal hygiene
- Failure to take routine safety precautions (e.g., turn off a stove)
- Inappropriate clothing (e.g., no coat in winter)
- Bewilderment
- Poor housekeeping
- Dehydration or malnutrition



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## Types of caregiver offenders

Generally, a combination of psychological, social, and economic factors, along with the mental and physical state of the victim and the abuser, contribute to elder maltreatment. Following are five typical abuser profiles:

1. **Well-intended, normally competent.** Overwhelmed, highly stressed, with limited resources
2. **Well-intended, impaired.** May have chronic or cyclical impairments
3. **Narcissistic.** Self-centered, exclusive interest in his or her own needs
4. **Aggressive.** Lacks impulse control and emotional well-being, resulting in chronic anger, unhappiness, and feeling critical and justified in abuse
5. **Sadistic.** Derives a sense of power from controlling and inflicting pain on others

## Preventing and reporting abuse

Everyone plays a role in preventing and reporting older adult abuse, including friends, family members, health care providers, in-home service providers (e.g., meal delivery services), law enforcement, and other community members.

Isolation is a risk factor for older adult abuse and neglect. Friends and family members can commit to regular visits or invite older relatives or neighbors to participate in outside activities (e.g., sporting events, and church socials). Individuals can also volunteer with organizations such as Triad to educate the community about older adult abuse.

Law enforcement agencies can help establish and become involved with Triad. Many agencies also offer call programs—regular phone calls or visits to check up on vulnerable older adults. Law enforcement officers and deputies should be trained to recognize and investigate the signs of potential abuse and neglect.

Physicians, pharmacists, and other health care providers who serve older patients should be alert for physical signs of abuse, as well as for changes to patients' cognitive abilities. These providers should know how to refer and report suspected cases of abuse to the proper authorities.

## Resources needed (volunteers, staff, and material requirements)

Health care, mental health, or certain social service agencies; law enforcement officers; and volunteers can provide pamphlets and other literature. Find volunteers by approaching social and spiritual organizations, posting requests in senior-related areas, and contacting RSVP chapters. Use your local Meals on Wheels and other senior outreach programs to disseminate abuse information.

## Procedures (how program is put together)

Make abuse awareness a regular topic for examination. Training topics should include detection, assistance, and prosecution, with older adults educated to assist themselves and/or others. Understand the hidden nature of the crime—one that won't readily be discussed. Invite local professionals to lecture on this topic.

Search your community resources to identify and provide education on the following:

- Older adult abuse
  - Elder Abuse Guide for Law Enforcement (EAGLE)
    - Law Enforcement Resources (Recognizing Abusers, Interviewing Older Adults, Working with Others to Build a Case, documentation tools and tips, Senior Abuse Financial Tracking and Accounting Tool, and more), <https://eagle.usc.edu/law-enforcement-resources>
    - Types of Abuse, <https://eagle.usc.edu/types-of-abuse>



- Roll Call Training Videos, <https://eagle.usc.edu/roll-call-training-videos>
- State Specific Laws, <https://eagle.usc.edu/state-specific-laws>
- Office of Justice Programs - Elder Abuse Overview, <https://www.ojp.gov/feature/elder-abuse/overview>
- Organizations that offer assistance
  - Elder Abuse Guide for Law Enforcement, “Community Resource Referral,” <https://eagle.usc.edu/law-enforcement-resources/community-resource-referral>.
  - Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, “How to Find Help Responding to Elder Financial Abuse,” <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/resources-for-older-adults/elder-abuse-resources>.
- Alternatives to the abusive situation
  - Domestic violence elder shelters, <https://www.councilonelderabuse.org/committees.php?PageTitle=Committees&PCID=5>
  - Abuse victim assistance programs
    - National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) – Find where to report suspected elder abuse, <https://www.napsa-now.org/help-in-your-area>
    - National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center – Find where to report suspected abuse in long-term or residential care facilities, [https://theconsumervoice.org/get\\_help](https://theconsumervoice.org/get_help)
    - National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) – Offers helpful links to victims of crime, <https://trynova.org>

Establish “buddy networks.” Buddies may be friends, acquaintances, or another volunteer who is adept at detecting and preventing the mistreatment of older adults. See topic #9 Buddy Programs.

Call older adults on the Triad telephone list to both deter and detect abuse. Telephone calls provide the opportunity for individuals reluctant to discuss abuse to be more forthcoming. Keep this kind of information secure with law enforcement. See topic #13 Phone Programs.

Go to older adult venues and schedule lecture times during regular older adult events. Alternatively, create your own safety fair, tapping resources through your senior provider organizations.

### Evaluation process

Monitor before-and-after statistics on older adult abuse through your crime statistics and victim assistance programs, self-reporting surveys, or your local law enforcement agencies. Surveys can also be distributed following lectures. Keep surveys easily quantifiable.

### Animal abuse in the context of family violence

Research into the human-animal bond confirms that pets can enhance the emotional and physical health of older adults, in a therapeutic context and particularly in daily living. Pets can provide companionship, emotional support, daily exercise, a sense of purpose, security, and opportunities for staying social. Service animals can assist individuals who have hearing, visual, or physical disabilities. Acquiring a pet can, under the right conditions, improve aging in place; where this is not feasible, animal-assisted therapy programs can bring visiting animals to long-term care, assisted living, memory units, adult day care, and other facilities. But there is, unfortunately, also a “dark side” of the human-animal bond in which animals become the victims of cruelty, abuse, and neglect when vulnerable adults are involved. The result is species-spanning suffering.

We have long known that children who torture animals or who witness animal abuse may grow up and expand their aggressive acts against people and that animal abuse and neglect may be symptoms of





co-occurring child maltreatment as well. We have also long known that domestic violence abusers target animals to control their human victims and warn them of the sad fates that will befall them if they dare to escape. The National Link Coalition calls these examples of how animal abuse often coincides with and predicts interpersonal violence “the Link.”

### **Forms of animal abuse involving older and vulnerable adults (may indicate elder abuse)**

The newest area of “the Link” is the recognition of the association between animal abuse and elder abuse, and it takes several distinct forms, including the following:

- **Animal neglect.** Older adults who love their pets or farm animals, but who experience memory loss, fixed or low income, physical and transportation limitations, or social isolation, may inadvertently neglect their animals and fail to feed or groom their pets or provide veterinary care.
- **Self-neglect.** Older adults may spend their limited financial resources on their animals or delay going into hospitals or long-term care because they have no one to care for their animals.
- **Animal hoarding.** While the unhealthy and unsafe environments marked by accumulating too many animals can affect any age group, animal hoarders tend to be older adult women.
- **Denied services.** Home health aides, caregivers and APS case workers may be reluctant to enter animal hoarding residences because of an overwhelming stench and presence of vermin, excessive numbers of animals, or dangerous pets threatening their safety.
- **Attachment and bereavement issues.** The death of a beloved pet can be especially painful to a senior for whom the animal represents either a last link to a deceased spouse or the sole opportunity for social interaction and physical exercise.
- **Financial exploitation.** Grown children have been known to hold their parents’ pets hostage to extort money from them.
- **Jealousy.** Disabled individuals’ dependence on their service animals can cause a partner to become jealous of the emotional attachment given to the animal.

Link advocates nationwide are responding to these challenges:

- **Training.** APS case workers are being trained to recognize that declining animal welfare is often an early warning sign of a senior’s self-neglect or animal hoarding problems.
- **Interagency collaborations.** Collaborative programs are being established between APS and local animal services and humane agencies to provide emergency foster care for hospitalized or incapacitated older adults.
- **Illegal coercive control.**
- **Pets in protective orders.**
- **Cross-reporting.**
- **Federal guidelines.** The Federal Government’s Administration for Community Living’s guidelines for state APS agencies include recommendations that APS collaborate with animal welfare organizations during investigations and interventions; the presence of animals in the home be included in requests for APS services; and needs and risk assessments include questions about the presence of abused, dangerous, or hoarded animals in the home. Such collaborations create healthier and safer environments for vulnerable adults and animals.



## Steps to take

The National Link Coalition encourages APS officials to take the following action steps to better protect all vulnerable members of the families they serve:<sup>41</sup>

1. **Assess** for animal welfare, animal dangerousness, animal waste, pet grooming, clients eating pet food, and safety or risk-of-fall conditions during home visits. Identify veterinary and animal shelter support services (e.g., pet food banks, low-cost spay-neuter programs, pet-friendly domestic violence shelters, pet loss support lines) available in the community. Refer to the National Link Coalition's National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies for your specific county or city at <https://nationallinkcoalition.org/how-do-i-report-suspected-abuse>.
2. **Planning for transitions.** Locate pet foster care or new homes for animals while clients are in the hospital or long-term care. Identify **pet-friendly housing opportunities** for older adults needing to relocate. Identify long-term care facilities with animal-assisted therapy visitors.
3. **End-of-life planning.** Include decisions about pets in this process. Alert veterinarians that requests to have all pets euthanized may suggest a client's suicidal ideation.
4. **Get a full picture.** Include questions about the number, health and welfare issues, dangerousness, and veterinary support for clients' pets in hotline, intake, interview, and assessment questionnaires.
5. **Emotional attachments.** Acknowledge clients' grief over the death or disappearance of their pets as a potentially serious emotional consideration.
6. **Collaborations.** Develop interagency memorandum of understanding (MOU) for cross-training with animal control and humane societies.

7. **Human-animal bond activities.** If the client is capable, suggest they adopt a low-maintenance pet or volunteer at an animal shelter for physical exercise, social outreach, companionship, and a sense of responsibility.
8. **Public policy.** Promote state legislation for animal control and APS officials to cross-report abuse and neglect with immunity from civil and criminal liability.

## Topic #9. Buddy programs

**Safe walks.** Mark Fenton, host of the PBS series "America's Walking" and former editor of *Walking Magazine*, states that the psychological benefits of regular physical activity for older adults are great.

Health benefits from regular physical activity such as walking include the following:

- Decreased risk of dying prematurely
- Decreased risk of dying from heart disease
- Decreased risk of developing colon cancer
- Decreased risk of developing high blood pressure
- Help in reducing blood pressure
- Decreased risk of developing diabetes
- Decreased risk of developing osteoporosis
- Weight control

In some neighborhoods, however, venturing out can be potentially dangerous. Remove older adults from these neighborhoods by locating a neutral, public place where they can go. Provide transportation and supervise walking events to alleviate the dangers of unsafe neighborhood exercise. Distribute notices through newspapers, senior centers, food distribution programs, religious centers, and local publications to ensure participation.

41. "National Link Coalition," accessed December 27, 2022, <https://nationallinkcoalition.org/>.



In addition to serving as an older adult exercise option, walks provide an opportunity to educate older adults on crime prevention. Make this a weekly event arranged in a community space, such as the zoo, mall, or park. Local hospitals or other health organizations may agree to be sponsors, providing beverages and snacks. Although this event can be construed as a social gathering, maintain focus on the crime prevention message.

**Safe shopping.** Co-sponsored by Triad and local grocery store chains, the program provides safe transportation to buy groceries on designated days. Off-duty law enforcement officers or volunteers escort older adults into the store, where clerks assist them, allowing for plenty of time to shop and check out. Some grocery stores provide services to accommodate the group, such as using smaller packages of produce and providing shopping assistants, chairs, or refreshments. Tie this event into the crime prevention message prior to the store visit.

**Escort partnerships.** Carefully select youth volunteers or members of youth programs to accompany older individuals when needed. Collaborating with other social services can help you find Triad volunteers. Bring community attention to specific older individual

needs, such as escorts to and from religious services, grocery shopping, and community events, where vulnerable older adult-targeted crime is prevalent. Recruit law enforcement officers to live in senior housing or to be assigned to crime prevention projects—chiefly to serve as a deterrent to crime.

**Adopt-a-Senior.** The program provides an outside contact for older adults who are isolated. The law enforcement officer visits and telephones assigned older adults once a week. This program allows isolated older adults to maintain independence. Suggested guidelines are in [appendix K beginning on page 73](#).

## Topic #10. Prescription drug abuse

Medication misuse is a significant problem for older adults. In fact, substance misuse and abuse among older adults is one of the fastest growing health problems in the United States. Most people older than 65 do not use illegal drugs, but almost 20 percent of older adults misuse alcohol, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, and prescription drugs—most often unintentionally.<sup>42</sup>

Chronic health conditions tend to develop as a normal part of aging, and older adults are often prescribed more medicines than other age groups. This rate of prescription increases their exposure to potentially addictive medications.

Other risks could include accidental misuse of prescription drugs and possible worsening of many other health conditions, including mental health issues. “A 2019 study of patients older than 50 found that more than 25 percent who misuse prescription opioids or benzodiazepines expressed suicidal ideation, compared to 2 percent who do not use them, underscoring the need for careful screening before prescribing these medications.”<sup>43</sup>



42. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, *Get Connected: Linking Older Adults with Resources on Medication, Alcohol, and Mental Health* (Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019), [https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma03-3824\\_2.pdf](https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma03-3824_2.pdf).

43. Ty S. Schepis, Linda Simoni-Wastila, and Sean Esteban McCabe, “Prescription Opioid and Benzodiazepine Misuse is Associated with Suicidal Ideation in Older Adults,” *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 34, no. 1 (2019), 122–129, <https://doi.org/10.1002/gps.4999>, cited in NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse), “Substance Use in Older Adults DrugFacts,” last modified July 2020, <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/substance-use-in-older-adults-drugfacts>.



According to federal statistics, medication misuse among older adults also has increased dramatically and is expected to continue rising with the large Baby Boomer generation. Although people aged 65 and older constitute only around 15 percent of the population, they account for nearly one-third of all drugs prescribed in the United States. More than 80 percent of older patients (aged 57 to 85 years) use at least one prescription medication daily, with more than 50 percent taking more than five medications or supplements daily.<sup>44</sup>

Knowing the growing risks of prescription drug use provides opportunity to mitigate those risks through some of the following activities and dissemination of the additional resources.

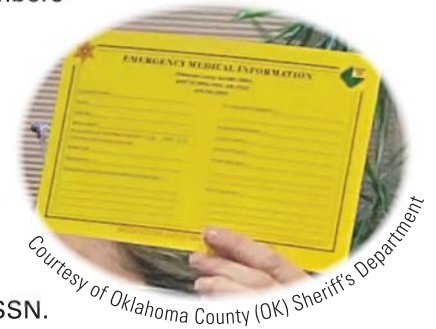
### Possible activities

**Proper disposal of unwanted medications.** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and White House Office of National Drug Control Policy have developed the following guidelines to help consumers properly dispose of unneeded prescription and OTC medications:

- Follow any disposal instructions on the drug label. Do not flush medications unless the instructions specifically say to do so.
- If no instructions are given, take medications out of their containers and mix them with an undesirable substance (e.g., kitty litter, coffee grounds) to make them less appealing to children, pets, and others.
- Place the mixture in a sealable bag, empty can, or other container before putting it in the trash to prevent leaks or tears.
- Participate in community drug take-back events. Call your local trash and recycling service, local sheriff's office or police, or Triad to see if a take-back program is scheduled in your community. Many pharmacies now offer take-back services as well.

- Before trashing or recycling empty medicine containers, always scratch off label information, including your name and prescription number, to protect your identity and privacy.

**Refrigerator cards.** Originating in Monmouth County, New Jersey, this easily replicable product is now widely used throughout the United States and other countries. The cards are printed and distributed by Triads ([appendix L beginning on page 74](#)). A brightly colored card displays health information, including names and numbers of emergency contacts, doctors, health care plans, known allergies, and current medications. Because of the risk of identity theft, older adults should be advised not to post personal data such as a SSN.



**File of Life.** An idea originally developed in Bridgeport, Connecticut, this program uses a clearly marked envelope designed to be magnetically mounted on the refrigerator door. Along with medical information, the envelope can contain a copy of important health-related papers, a living will, or other documentation a physician may need.

**Older adult referral card.** Originally developed in Volusia County, Florida, these cards are carried by law enforcement so that they can make appropriate referrals to special services for older adults in need. Law enforcement can use the card, included at [appendix M beginning on page 75](#), to obtain services for older adults who may be suffering from conditions such as dementia or malnutrition. Use volunteers to follow up with agency or service recommendations. The volunteer should check to make sure that the older adult is making use of the service and report results.

44. NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse), "Misuse of Prescription Drugs Research Report: What Is the Scope of Prescription Drug Misuse in the United States?" last modified June 2020, <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/misuse-prescription-drugs/what-scope-prescription-drug-misuse>.





Triad focuses on preventing domestic abuse by educating older adults about the need to plan for their later years and develop reliable support networks. Establish a network system to help prevent or stop abuse—be it financial, physical, psychological, neglect, or self-neglect. Train volunteer buddies to recognize changes in health, well-being, mental attitude, and financial situation. Older adults tend to be more comfortable confiding information to a peer that they feel they cannot share with law enforcement or other strangers.

### **Your role in prevention**

There are many things older adults and their caregivers can do to keep themselves and those they love safe from the dangers of prescription and OTC drug abuse. Health care providers and law enforcement play an equally important role in helping to prevent abuse and report violations involving prescription and OTC medications.

#### **Older adults and caregivers**

- Keep your medications out of sight and out of reach of children and young adults who visit your home. Consider purchasing a small safe to store your medications securely.
- Properly dispose of all unused and expired drugs.
- When prescribed a new medication, tell your doctor and pharmacist what other drugs (as well as vitamins and supplements) you take, because these could interact with the new medication.
- If you or someone you care for take multiple medications, vitamins, or supplements, consider using a packaging service (e.g., AccuPax) to help ensure correct dosages.
- Always follow your doctor's and pharmacist's instructions when taking your medication. Know what side effects may occur.
- Never share prescription medications.

#### **Health care providers and pharmacists**

- Provide patients with clear information and advice about how to take medications properly.
- Look for false or altered prescription forms. Report suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities. Consider submitting prescription orders electronically.
- Be aware of some physical signs of possible drug abuse in older adults: anxiety, memory loss, depression, agitation, changes in blood pressure, falls, fatigue, pain in upper abdomen, sleep disturbance, appetite and weight loss, weakness, and confusion.
- Be on the lookout for "doctor shoppers," people who go from one health care provider to another seeking controlled substances.
- Older patients who are prescribed medicines that could be abused should be monitored frequently and receive regular checkups.
- Be aware that the sudden need for larger or more frequent doses of a medication may indicate the patient has become addicted.

#### **Law enforcement**

- Gain additional knowledge on recognizing drugs, such as through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) / U.S. Department of Transportation for information on drugged drivers and how to become a certified Drug Recognition Expert (DRE).
- Educate your older adult community on controlling their medications using resource material available free from Triad.
- When you encounter a driver who appears to be under the influence of drugs, complete a medical referral form to alert your state licensing agency or department of motor vehicles.
- If you come into contact with suspected abusive primary caregivers (those who withhold drugs, steal drugs, or overmedicate), refer the





suspected older adult abuse victim to your local area agency on aging or ombudsman program for further case review.

- Sponsor prescription take-back day events in your city or county.
- Learn to recognize the physical signs of drug abuse—in older adults as well as in younger people.
- Become involved in, or start, a local Triad.

#### Additional resources

- Talking with Your Adult Patients about Alcohol, Drug, and/or Mental Health Problems, A Discussion Guide for Primary Health Care Providers: <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-with-Your-Adult-Patients-about-Alcohol-Drug-and-or-Mental-Health-Problems/sma15-4584>
- Get Connected: Linking Older Adults With Medication, Alcohol, and Mental Health Resources: <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/dbhis/get-connected-linking-older-adults-medication-alcohol-mental-health-resources>
- Too Many Prescription Drugs Can Be Dangerous, Especially for Older Adults: [https://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/media/3331/polypharmacy\\_pire\\_2\\_web\\_no-samhsa-logo.pdf](https://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/media/3331/polypharmacy_pire_2_web_no-samhsa-logo.pdf)
- National Council on Aging, Issue Brief 2: Alcohol Misuse and Abuse Prevention: <https://www.ncoa.org/resources/issue-brief-2-alcohol-misuse-and-abuse-prevention>
- 4 Medication Safety Tips for Older Adults: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/4-medication-safety-tips-older-adults>
- COPS Office Training Portal offers a series on Drug Awareness and Enforcement: <https://copstrainingportal.org>

## Topic #11. Victim assistance programs

Older adults often feel law enforcement is unable to assist when victimization occurs, that law enforcement is too busy, or that the crime is not worth reporting. Triad helps break down these myths. The sheriff's office, local police departments, and the district attorney's office can help with victim assistance.

Cultural influence affects law enforcement perceptions. Some older people aren't sure what constitutes a crime. Others are embarrassed by the prospect of family or authorities knowing that they have been swindled. A primary Triad activity is victim assistance. Triad must first identify who needs assistance, a task complicated by the unwillingness of some older people to report crimes. A goal of Triad is to develop a program in which older adult volunteers educate fellow older adults on older adult crime. Volunteers provide a comfortable means of reporting crime and render victim assistance and support.

According to the World Health Organization, around 1 in 6 people 60 years and older experienced some form of abuse in community settings during the past year.<sup>45</sup> Rates of elder abuse are high in institutions such as nursing homes and long-term care facilities,<sup>46</sup> with two-thirds of staff admitting that they have committed abuse in the past year. Elder abuse can lead to serious physical injuries and long-term psychological consequences. After victimization, few older adults understand the court system and how to navigate it.

### Resources needed (volunteers, staff, and material requirements)

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) provides comprehensive technical assistance and training resources to victim service providers and allied professionals. Information on training initiatives and tools and resources are available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov> or 866-682-8822. In addition, contact victim assistance programs in your area to locate lecturers and resources. AARP's *The Criminal Justice System* –

45. "Preventing Abuse of Older People," World Health Organization, accessed February 10, 2023, <https://www.who.int/activities/preventing-elder-abuse>.

46. "Preventing Abuse of Older People" (see note 45).



*A Guide for Citizens*<sup>47</sup> is a widely used resource. Obtain older adult volunteers through RSVP, advertisements, and other older adult programs.

Each year, through its Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) victim assistance and victim compensation grant programs and its discretionary grant programs, the OVC awards funding to states and victim service organizations to address the emotional, advocacy, and financial needs of victims of crime. Because of older adults' vulnerabilities to victimization, it is vital that victim service providers reach them and other underserved populations.

Victim service providers receiving VOCA subgrants served a total of 357,571 older victims in FY 2019, representing 5 percent of the 7 million total victims served by all VOCA-funded victim service providers. In each quarter of FY 2019, an average of 27,958 victims sought services for elder abuse or neglect.<sup>48</sup>

### **Procedures (how program is put together)**

Primarily, through the S.A.L.T. council, work to educate older adults on the importance of reporting crime and its benefits: lower recidivism, safer neighborhoods, and fewer repeat crimes against other older adults. Provide education on what constitutes a crime and why, when, and how to report crime. Teach older adults about law enforcement functions and the availability of anonymous reporting, such as through Crime Stoppers.

Establish a victim assistance program. Establish a committee to recruit older adults with counseling experience. Provide sufficient volunteer training and peer assistance, recognizing that older victims are more comfortable discussing experiences with a fellow older adult. Often, former victims can heal by helping others in similar straits. In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for the victim assistance volunteer to do the following:

- Listen to the victim, share experiences, and offer support.
- Help the victim obtain appropriate counseling.

- Act as liaison to service providers (e.g., locksmiths to install deadbolts).
- Act as a criminal justice system guide, escorting victims to court or to hearings.
- Recommend involvement in Neighborhood Watch.
- Arrange for transportation through a rideshare service or alternate transportation.
- Take part in a crime report callback program, updating victims on the progress of the investigation. Volunteers can also get crime information details.

If your community already has a victim assistance program, expand it by recruiting older volunteers to help older adult victims. In this way, Triad can help older adults reduce the likelihood of repeat victimization. Contact your local citizen academy or law enforcement to coach or train volunteers on how to assist victims.

### **Evaluation process**

Initially, your crime reporting rate may register an increase as older adults become more comfortable with reporting crimes. Establish education programs on how to avoid victimization for different crime categories and lecture on these repeatedly. Monitor statistics for each crime category. Victimization rates among older adults eventually should drop in correlation to lecture programs and eventual reduction in recidivism. Administer a survey to older adults after attending your program. Ask clear questions, such as "Do you feel safer now knowing more about crime?" or ask direct questions about identifying criminal behavior. Set up an evaluation process before implementing your program.

47. Stiles, *The Criminal Justice System* (see note 10).

48. *Office for Victims of Crime Grant Programs: Victim Services for Older Adults*. FY 2019 Topical Snapshot (Washington, DC: Office for Victims of Crime, 2021), <https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/office-victims-crime-grant-programs-victim-services-older-adults-fy-2019>.



## Topic #12. Older adult safe driving programs

According to the 2020 highway statistics report from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and analysis by the CDC, in 2020 there were more than 48 million licensed drivers aged 65 and older in the United States, representing a 68 percent increase since 2000.<sup>49</sup> Driving helps older adults stay mobile and independent. Mobility is vital to health and well-being. Loss of mobility can lead to social withdrawal and “shut-in” mentality, which in turn negatively affect physical and emotional health.

Triads can play an important role in ensuring that older adults have the skills to drive as long as mental and physical health allow. Further, they can help older adults develop a transition plan for when it becomes necessary to relinquish the car keys and find new forms of mobility. Finally, Triads can link older adults to local transportation resources.

### Older driver safety

Ability to drive safely is less about empirical age and more about the type of certain medical conditions older adults may be more likely than younger people to have, such as problems with eyesight, sleep, tremors, or memory—all of which can make driving more difficult and dangerous. Many older people also take multiple medications, whether prescribed or OTC. Unfortunately, some of these drugs alone or in combination can impair judgment or affect reflexes or the alertness necessary for safe driving.

As we age, physical changes affect our ability to drive safely. Eyesight, one of the most critical aspects of driving, begins to deteriorate after age 40.<sup>50</sup> Reaction time and flexibility also diminish as we age. The NHTSA states that physical changes and decreased ability due to disease may alter the performance level of critical skills needed to drive. Although older drivers are involved in fewer crashes overall than younger drivers, their fatal crash rate per miles traveled increases after age 75.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the statistics, many older adults continue to drive safely.

### Current statistics

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) reports that drivers aged 70 and older have higher fatal crash rates per mile traveled than middle-aged drivers.<sup>52</sup> Studies have also found that failure to yield the right of way is the most common error by seniors involved in crashes.<sup>53</sup>

According to a report by NHTSA, there were more than 6,500 people ages 65 and older killed in traffic crashes (17 percent of all traffic fatalities) in 2020. Traffic crash fatalities in this age group decreased by 10 percent from 2019 to 2020.<sup>54</sup>

### Training and education

Law enforcement officers need to be trained about aging—how it affects older adults, society as a whole, and law enforcement services delivery. They especially need to understand how an older driver population impacts traffic safety. In addition, it is important for law enforcement to recognize prescription drug impairment in older adults.

49. Federal Highway Administration, “Highway Statistics 2020,” U.S. Department of Transportation, last modified September 24, 2022, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2020/>; “Older Adult Drivers,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last modified June 28, 2022, [https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/older\\_adult\\_drivers/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/older_adult_drivers/index.html).

50. “At What Age Does Eyesight Deteriorate?” 43Vision, last modified September 6, 2022, <https://www.43vision.com/blog/at-what-age-does-eyesight-deteriorate>.

51. IIHS (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety), “Older Drivers,” last modified July 2022, <https://www.iihs.org/topics/older-drivers>.

52. IIHS, “Older Drivers” (see note 51).

53. IIHS, “Older Drivers” (see note 51).

54. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Older Population: Traffic Safety Facts 2020 Data* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2022), <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813341>.



Law enforcement officers may require general awareness training that focuses on the needs of an aging community. A good resource is this NSA webinar: *Understanding the Challenges That Affect the Older Adult for Law Enforcers*.<sup>55</sup>

Other things to consider include the following:

- New technology exists to help older drivers, but older drivers often continue to drive older cars that may not have the new safety mechanisms in place. Features like backup cameras, emergency braking, lane departure warning, etc. can help extend the safe driving period of aging drivers and might be positive considerations.
- Use radio and TV public service announcements to educate older drivers about driving hazards, make them aware of their limitations, and encourage them to adjust driving behaviors accordingly.
- Create advertisements with links to driver safety and training information on social media sites such as Facebook. Filters allow you to target your message to desired age groups.
- Provide deputies and officers with regular training on older driver issues. Topics should include the warning signs of dementia as well as tools for properly interacting with dementia sufferers. Contact your local Alzheimer's Foundation chapter for assistance.
- Develop safety videos or slide presentations to present to older adult organizations, including religious groups and social clubs.
- Organize or strengthen Triads.
- Act as a referral resource to link older people, their grown children, and community outreach systems.
- Build older adult service coalitions to channel community resources to older adults in need.

### **Engineering**

- Inform city traffic planners of the needs of older adult drivers and pedestrians.
- Suggestions include bigger road signs, longer pedestrian crosswalk times, refuge islands for those unable to cross the street during one signal cycle, and high visibility crosswalks with lighting or reflectors.

### **Enforcement**

- Be alert to drivers who appear lost, confused, or incapacitated, stopping them to inquire about their welfare. Drivers who appear to suffer from dementia should not be allowed to continue driving.
- Cite offenders.
- Policies for retesting older or impaired drivers vary by state. Know your state's referral process for driver's licensing retesting and establish a departmental policy for requesting re-examinations of unfit drivers.

### **Evaluation**

- Analyze crashes involving older drivers and work closely with highway engineers and local officials to evaluate the need for changes in traffic control devices, warning signs, and traffic patterns.

### **The older driver's responsibilities**

- Avoid driving at night, in bad weather, or under other stressful conditions.
- Maintain your health: Get regular check-ups and vision screenings.
- Know your meds: Ask your medical professional if any of your medications could affect driving.
- Avoid distractions such as adjusting the radio, eating, talking on the phone, or texting while driving.

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55. National Sheriffs' Association, "Understanding the Challenges that Affect the Older Adult for Law Enforcers," YouTube, May 27, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzUctOK7fZM>.



- Plan travel routes in advance.
- Update your vehicle: Features such as large mirrors, power windows and locks, and automatic transmission may help you overcome physical limitations.
- Never drink alcohol and drive.
- Maintain your vehicle. Check windshields and mirrors, tire tread, and lights. Get regular tune-ups.

Consult a medical professional if you experience unusual concentration or memory problems, or other physical symptoms that could affect your ability to drive safely. If you experience any of the following, consider having your driving assessed by a professional or attending a driver refresher class:

- Fear of driving
- Frequent dents and scrapes on your vehicle, fences, mailboxes, garage doors, or curbs
- Difficulty staying in one lane or paying attention to signals, road signs, and pavement markings
- Frequent “close calls”
- Frequent honking from other drivers, or frequent anger toward other drivers
- Friends and relatives avoid riding with you
- Frequent traffic tickets or warnings
- Difficulty turning to check over your shoulder when backing up or changing lanes

## Resources needed (volunteers, staff, and material requirements)

Contact the following organizations for information on and assistance with older driver education and training resources:

- **American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA).** AAMVA works with NHTSA, the American Medical Association, and other organizations on safe driver programs such as Grand Driver, which urges older drivers and their adult children to learn more about how the effects of aging affect safe driving ability.
- **AARP.** The AARP Driver Safety Program provides local and online training to help older adults brush up driving skills and learn to adjust driving to accommodate normal age-related changes.
- **American Automobile Association (AAA).** The AAA's self-rating tool (<https://exchange.aaa.com/safety/senior-driver-safety-mobility/evaluate-your-driving-ability>) helps older adults and their families deal with driving and mobility challenges. Participants can access tools to help assess and improve driving skills, reduce driving risks, and foster dialogue between adults and their older parents about driving. Tools featured on the website include the AAA Roadwise Review (a computer-based screening tool used to measure functional abilities linked to crash risk among older drivers) and Smart Features for Mature Drivers (a guide that identifies vehicle features that can help drivers deal with the visual, physical, and mental changes often encountered with age). The AAA website <https://exchange.aaa.com/safety/senior-driver-safety-mobility> provides older drivers and their families with information related to safety, mobility challenges, and transitioning from driver to passenger. An online skills assessment checklist allows older drivers or their loved ones to assess driving skills.
- **American Society on Aging (ASA).** Developed by the ASA in collaboration with AAA, AARP, and the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), CarFit is a quick but comprehensive check to help older drivers determine how well they





“fit” into their vehicle. A professional completes a 12-point checklist, recommends any necessary car adjustments or adaptations, and provides a list of local resources (<https://www.car-fit.org>).

- **National Association of Triads (NAT).** The National Association of Triads offers a series of tools, including a meeting agenda template, seminar and lecture PowerPoint slides and handouts, a vehicle safety checklist, and sample law enforcement agency guidelines for responding to older and at-risk drivers (<https://www.sheriffs.org/programs/triad-resources>).
- **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).** NHTSA and ASA offer various older driver resources, including the DriveWell Toolkit, which is designed to help people and organizations that work with older adults to understand older driver mobility issues, plan and implement information events for older drivers, and evaluate the effectiveness of such events. NHTSA also offers a series of tools for law enforcement, including a guide to older driver behavioral cues and a compendium of state law enforcement programs focused on older driver safety (<https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/older-drivers>).
- **National Safety Council (NSC).** The NSC online defensive driving course uses animation and graphics in an interactive learning environment where students analyze real driving situations, spot hazards, and identify correct defenses (<https://www.nsc.org/safety-training/defensive-driving>).

Rideshare services such as Lyft and Uber provide an inexpensive alternative to vehicle ownership with safety features that are attractive for older adults. More information can be found at <https://seniorsafetyadvice.com/is-there-a-lyft-for-seniors>. Compile a list of organizations that provide private transportation or delivery services for older adults. These might include Meals on Wheels, law enforcement agencies, houses of worship that offer bus service, grocery and delivery services, and taxi companies. Compile and maintain a list of public transportation (e.g., bus, subway) options, routes, and schedules. Recruit volunteers to provide

transportation and/or distribute literature about safe driving to older adults. Recruit individuals willing to staff a transportation telephone hotline.

### Procedures (how program is put together)

Distribute safe driving literature at venues to which older adults drive (e.g., older adult centers, doctors’ offices, places of worship, grocery stores). Before creating new materials, check with organizations such as those listed in the previous section. The American Automobile Association (AAA), for example, offers free booklets and flyers that address older driver safety.

Produce a user-friendly guide on local transportation resources and distribute at older adult centers, assisted living facilities, and other places where older adults gather. Develop a database of transportation alternatives and recruit volunteers to staff a telephone hotline to help older adults who no longer drive find reliable transportation and map out schedules and routes.

Invite experts to conduct safe driving presentations and trainings at older adult centers, places of worship, Neighborhood Watch meetings, and other venues. Presenters might include geriatricians specializing in older driver issues; law enforcement traffic safety personnel; Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) representatives who review rules, regulations, reporting requirements, and the revocation process; and AAA representatives to brief on car safety, maintenance, and roadworthiness.

Stress to the older adult community the importance of getting regular medical checkups, including annual vision and hearing screenings. Encourage older drivers to review all medications they take with a physician or pharmacist to ensure that side effects will not affect driving ability.

Like older adults, vehicles also require regular “check-ups.” Encourage older drivers to have their vehicles inspected regularly to check tire pressure and ensure lights, windshield wipers, windshield, mirrors, and tire tread are in good condition.

Encourage Triad members to participate in volunteer training programs such as AAA’s RoadWise Drivers. Such programs teach volunteers how to effectively counsel older adults on safe driving and mobility planning.



Contact local newspapers and radio and television stations that attract an older audience to place public service announcements promoting driver safety and training. Publicize seminars, telephone hotlines, and safety information in local older adult newspapers and bulletins. Create advertisements with links to driver safety and training information on social media sites such as Facebook. Filters allow you to target your message to desired age and interest groups.

Involve law enforcement, the community, and older adult service providers in helping to ensure the safety and mobility of older adults. Triad can provide sensitivity training to DMV and law enforcement personnel to educate them about older driver issues. Use the tools offered by the National Association of Triads and NHTSA to help you get started.

Some law enforcement officers hesitate to cite older offenders, not wanting to take enforcement action against “grandma and grandpa.” Triads can ensure that deputies and officers are aware of their state’s referral process for driver licensing retesting. Triads can also teach deputies and officers to be alert for signs of impaired driving such as vision problems or dementia.

### Evaluation process

Conduct surveys asking participants to rate the effectiveness of the driver safety training they have received. Keep surveys short and easily quantifiable. Adjust training as needed according to feedback. Quiz training participants on safe driving procedures, car maintenance, and health-related topics to assess the degree of learning. Record referrals to public and private transportation resources and keep track of the number of older adults who use these services. Regularly review local traffic and crash statistics to determine if older driver safety training and information programs are effective. Review the number of “hits” public service announcements and advertisements receive on radio and television, in print, and on social media sites to determine if your message is reaching your target audience.

## Topic #13. Phone programs

Volunteers can answer a “senior line” set up within a law enforcement agency. They can encourage callers to report suspicious activities or crimes and gather details with victim callback programs. Older adult volunteers also are helpful when it comes to dealing with chronic callers and callers with unrealistic expectations of law enforcement, freeing up law enforcement to tend to other duties. Triad is an excellent conduit between the older adult community and law enforcement.

**Cell phone banks.** Cell phones can be a vital lifeline between victims and first responders during emergencies. Enhance local law enforcement’s availability to provide cellular communications to vulnerable older adults by getting involved in the 911 Cell Phone Bank program. Open to law enforcement, emergency management, and private charitable victim services agencies, the program provides an ongoing, readily available source of emergency cell phones and funds to participating members. Information on how to volunteer or become a cell phone donor site is available at <https://www.911cellphonebank.org> or 866-290-7864.

**Telephone reassurance.** Older adults often say that their safety and sense of security are improved by a daily telephone call. Telephone contact programs become Triad activities when law enforcement agencies sponsor them through the S.A.L.T. council. Locate older adults through older adult groups, media articles, the local agency on aging, and referrals from friends, neighbors, relatives, and older adult referral cards. Live calls made by older adult volunteers or law enforcement officers are strongly recommended. Depending on resources, either ask the volunteer to place the call, or have the volunteer available to take the call from the older adult daily. A telephone reassurance program model is located in [appendix N beginning on page 76](#).



**You Are Not Alone (YANA) program.**<sup>56</sup> In addition to an automated dialing system coordinated with the resident, periodically (e.g., once a week) each YANA member receives a personal visit from a law enforcement–affiliated volunteer if desired. The YANA program is a wonderful example of community-oriented policing services: law enforcement using volunteers while also building relationships with community residents with the goal of increased safety for all. To hear the story visit COPS Office Podcasts at <https://cops.usdoj.gov/thebeat>.

The S.A.L.T. council establishes a subcommittee for reassurance programs, such as Adopt-A-Senior, telephone reassurance, and the recruiting and assignment of buddies. For program volunteer help, turn to your local older adult organizations.

In conclusion, with a commitment shared by the sheriff, chiefs of police, leaders within the older adult community, and affiliated organizations you can increase law enforcement services available to older community members and reduce victimization. The Triad program has provided services to thousands of older adults and has become an invaluable resource to law enforcement agencies nationwide.

## Topic #14. Neighborhood Watch Program

Expand Neighborhood Watch to focus attention on older adult neighbor needs. Train older persons to assist law enforcement by observing and reporting suspicious activities. Many older adults may be willing to take on leadership roles in the program. Expand the Neighborhood Watch / Triad partnership into a comprehensive community/senior watch program.

### Resource

- National Neighborhood Watch, Crime prevention through neighborhood cohesiveness and collaboration, <https://www.nnw.org>

## Topic #15. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Participate in World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). WEAAD was launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations.

The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.<sup>57</sup>

### Resources

- University of Southern California, USC Center for Elder Justice, <https://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/weaad-home>
- Links to their partners for additional resources:
  - National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS), <https://namrs.acl.gov>
  - National Center on Elder Abuse, <https://ncea.acl.gov>
  - National Center on Law & Elder Rights, <https://ncler.acl.gov>
  - National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative, <https://www.nieji.org>
  - National Consumer Voice, <https://ltcombudsman.org>
  - National Resource Center on Women and Retirement - Wiser Women, <https://wiserwomen.org/national-resource-center-on-women-and-retirement-2>
  - Our History Fighting for Pension Rights | Pension Rights Center, <https://www.pensionrights.org/about-us/history>

56. "You Are Not Alone: A Law Enforcement Approach to Monitoring the Needs of Vulnerable Citizens," *The Beat* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2020), <https://cops.usdoj.gov/thebeat>.

57. University of Southern California, "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day," accessed September 8, 2022, <https://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/weaad-home/>.



# Appendices

## Appendix A. Sample Triad cooperative agreement

Area/City/County

Older Adult

Group(s)

Sheriff's Office

Police Department

### Preamble

Statistics and polls indicate that crime and the fear of crime impact older adults. Recognizing that the number of older adults is increasing, we desire to identify and address more effectively the problems faced by older citizens. Because of the aging of the population and the increasing demands placed on law enforcement agencies to meet the needs of older adults, it is important that the law enforcement agencies of (area/city/county) \_\_\_\_\_ support programs designed to benefit older adults.

### Statement of Agreement

In light of the above, (law enforcement agency[ies], senior group, and affiliated organization[s] the new Triad will comprise) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ are determined to effect change. These groups and agencies agree that the older adult population has special needs with respect to victimization and fear of crime, loss, and isolation. We agree that these needs can be met by law enforcement agencies and the county's premier organization(s) of older adults, working together at all levels of free societies.

We hereby commit to work together to enhance the crime safety of older adults. Our purpose is to reduce criminal victimization through cooperative strategies, planning, and programming and increase law enforcement awareness of older persons' need for security and dignity.

This initiative is designed to mobilize community resources to ascertain the needs and concerns of older adults and to provide mechanisms for meeting those needs.

The sharing of resources is the first step toward achieving an efficient means of providing effective programs. This process will involve law enforcement, older adults, and senior services in the development, implementation, and evaluation of acceptable solutions. Together, we will strive for a renewed sense of responsibility for the security and wellbeing of older adults through public awareness, training, and the provision of criminal justice services.



Therefore, by agreement, the Triad will initiate the appropriate actions to achieve these objectives.

Name Date

Name Date

Name Date

Name Date

When an officer determines that an incident involves an older adult, that officer shall ensure that the following procedures are enacted:

- A. The incident shall be fully investigated and documented.
- B. If circumstances threaten the older adult's health, safety, or welfare, the officer shall immediately notify his or her supervisor.
- C. Officers shall refer to the list of social agencies that may resolve any immediate threat. (The office should prepare and update an appendix to this policy listing all relevant service agencies.)
- D. Initial-response officers shall:
  - 1. Respond in a manner that is sensitive to the victim's condition.
  - 2. Preserve the crime scene and evidence.
  - 3. Identify and interview witnesses.
  - 4. Initiate a follow-up visit by a family member, friend, fellow officer, or social services representative, if warranted, and request notification of final disposition.
  - 5. Advise a supervisor of additional assistance needed.
- E. The reviewing or notified supervisor shall:
  - 1. Ensure that immediate threats to health, safety, or welfare are resolved.
  - 2. Respond to the scene if requested by the officer.
  - 3. Ensure that officer responsibilities (see above) are met.
  - 4. Assure victim(s) that the office will render appropriate assistance.
  - 5. Verify arrangements for any support person or agency to provide assistance.
  - 6. If warranted, arrange for increased patrol of the area to either prevent/solve crime and reassure the victim.
  - 7. Inform the administrator or his or her designee of any health, safety, or welfare condition that may need follow-up.

**Training and Records (Optional)**

- A. The office shall provide periodic in-service training to patrol and investigative officers on topics relevant to the aging process, older adult crime prevention, crime trends, and victimization.
- B. The office shall keep such records that will allow for analysis of victimization data so that appropriate countermeasures can be developed for reduced crime against older adults.
- C. To the extent possible, the department shall share knowledge and records of senior crime, abuse, and neglect with other law enforcement and governmental social service agencies that have a legitimate interest in the case.





## Appendix B. Sample letter of invitation

[Date]

Dear:

I would like to invite you to serve on a council of law enforcement, older adults, and senior service providers dedicated to making (area/city/county) \_\_\_\_\_ a safer place for older adults. This council is named *seniors and law enforcement together*, or S.A.L.T.

In some of our communities, older adults are defrauded, victimized, or are afraid to leave home, shop, worship, or socialize, for fear of crime.

Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_, Chief \_\_\_\_\_, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) representative \_\_\_\_\_, and I have signed an agreement that commits our community's law enforcement, working with older volunteers, to addressing senior-related crimes of our area. Also, the State Sheriffs' Association, the State Association of Chiefs of Police, and RSVP have signed a Triad agreement committing them to work with older adults to reduce senior-targeted crimes.

If you accept this invitation to serve on the S.A.L.T. council (normally composed of 15 of your peers), please plan to attend two meetings within a month, and meet once every month thereafter. Meetings are normally one hour. Sheriff/Chief \_\_\_\_\_, or a designee, will also attend these council meetings.

Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_ and I have selected you to serve on this committee based on your skills and expertise, and we hope you will join us. The program will be rewarding to older adults, our community, and to you personally. If you agree to serve, please call my office. We need your services!

Respectfully,

\_\_\_\_\_ (name and title)



## Appendix C. Senior Advisory Council policy

**S.A.L.T. Council of (area/city/county)** \_\_\_\_\_

The Senior Advisory Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m., alternating meeting locations among the \_\_\_\_\_ Police Department, \_\_\_\_\_ Police Department, and \_\_\_\_\_ Sheriff's Office. At least two meetings each year shall be held at the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_, with all county older adults invited to attend.

### Meetings

Meetings are to be informative, with the S.A.L.T. chairperson officiating.

### Agenda

The agenda is determined by the chairperson, with input from the police chiefs and sheriff or designee.

### Notification

S.A.L.T. members shall be notified of the meeting date and place by email, telephone call, card, or letter at least one week before the listed meeting.

### Minutes

Meeting minutes will be recorded by a S.A.L.T. council designee and distributed to members no more than 10 days after the meeting.

### Attendance

It is expected that all S.A.L.T. council members will attend the monthly meetings unless unavoidably prevented from attending. Those unable to attend will notify the chairperson prior to the meeting time in order to continue participation on the council. Three consecutive, unexcused absences will terminate membership.

### Subcommittees

Community participation shall be encouraged by establishing subcommittees of the S.A.L.T. council as needed. It is expected that subcommittees will be involved in the following types of activities: surveys assessing older adult needs and concerns, crime prevention education, reassurance program development/expansion, victim services, and special projects. Subcommittees shall be established to meet the immediate and changing needs of the local older adult population based on community-specific crimes.



## Appendix D. Triad S.A.L.T. Council bylaws

### Article I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be *seniors and law enforcement together* (S.A.L.T.) Council of the \_\_\_\_\_ Triad.

### Article II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the S.A.L.T. council shall be to further the goals and objectives of the Triad, a joint venture between the (Triad member organizations) \_\_\_\_\_ to reduce the criminal victimization of older adults.

### Article III. MEMBERSHIP

- A. The S.A.L.T. council shall consist of not more than 20 but not fewer than 10 members.
- B. Membership shall be ex-officio and at-large.
  - 1. Ex-officio members shall be the designated representatives of each of the Triad organizations:
    - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (AARP, RSVP, or equivalent)
    - b. \_\_\_\_\_ (law enforcement agency)
    - c. \_\_\_\_\_ (senior organization)
  - 2. At-large membership shall be open to law enforcement officers, community representatives and civic organizations, service providers, and older adults.
- C. Selection of S.A.L.T. council members-at-large shall be made by a membership committee consisting of the elected officers and two members selected at the October meeting. Recommendations for membership may be made to the committee in writing.
- D. The regular term of office for members-at-large shall be three years. Membership shall be staggered so that one-third of the members complete their term each year. Term of membership shall begin January 1 and end December 31. Resigned memberships will be filled by the membership committee.

### Article IV. OFFICERS AND THEIR ELECTION

- A. The elected officers of the S.A.L.T. council shall be the chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary/treasurer.
- B. A five-member nominating committee shall be elected at the July meeting and shall present a slate of candidates for office at the October meeting. The committee shall elect its own chairperson.
- C. The officers shall be elected from within the council for a one-year term. The election shall be held at the October meeting, with those elected assuming office January 1. Officers may be re-elected to the same office for succeeding terms.



## **Article V. DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS**

### **A. Duties of officers:**

1. Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the council, appoint chairpersons as needed, and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of the nominating committee.
2. Vice chairperson shall preside in absence of the chairperson and assume other duties as requested.
3. Secretary/Treasurer shall maintain a membership list, keep meeting minutes, send timely notification of meetings to members, and keep records of moneys under the jurisdiction of the council.

### **B. Duties of members:**

Each member shall be familiar with S.A.L.T. council purposes, attend regular and special council meetings, and serve on at least one standing committee.

## **Article VI. STEERING COMMITTEE**

The steering committee shall be composed of the elected officers, chairpersons of the standing committees, and immediate past chairperson of the council. The steering committee shall have the authority to conduct council business between meetings and to fill by appointment any office vacancy, with approval of the membership.

## **Article VII. COMMITTEES**

### **A. Standing committees of the S.A.L.T. council shall be:**

- Advisory
- Crime Prevention
- Legislation
- Resource Coordination
- Training
- Victim Assistance
- Volunteers
- Membership
- Nominating
- Media or Promotional

### **B. Special committees may be appointed by the council chairperson as needed.**

### **C. Committees shall consist of the chairperson, at least two council members, and committee chairperson appointees.**

## **Article VIII. MEETINGS**

### **A. The S.A.L.T. council shall meet the first Tuesday of the month unless otherwise ordered by the chairperson, with steering committee approval.**

### **B. Special meetings may be called at the request of the council chairperson.**

### **C. A quorum shall consist of one-third of the current membership. A simple majority of the voting members present shall be the voting rule.**



## Appendix E. Sample agenda

### **S.A.L.T Council Meeting**

#### **Date, Time, Location**

- I. Welcome – Chairperson, chief(s), and sheriff or representatives
- II. Introduction of council members and any guests
- III. Minutes of last meeting
- IV. Overview of S.A.L.T. purpose and activities to date
- V. Crime update (current statistics, problems, trends)
  - a. Reported crimes
  - b. Input from older adults—unreported crimes? rumors? fears?
- VI. Reports from committees
  - a. Crime prevention presentations / programs
  - b. Volunteers
  - c. Reassurance programs
  - d. Victim assistance
  - e. Training
  - f. Evaluation
- VII. Short-term plans to meet needs of older residents
- VIII. Long-term plans
- IX. Crime prevention information—tips for S.A.L.T. members  
(also to be shared with friends and acquaintances)
- X. Other concerns
- XI. Next meeting





## Appendix F. S.A.L.T. community action survey

**Sheriff's Office / AARP / Police Department(s)**

We need your help to assist us in taking positive steps to improve our community. Please answer each question by placing a check in the column that best describes your views. (Please complete this survey only once). To what extent does each of the following affect your life?

	Major Concern	Minor Concern	Very Little/ No Concern
1. Fear of going out after dark?			
2. Fear of fraud or con artists?			
3. Vandalism in the neighborhood?			
4. Lack of public transportation?			
5. Sense of personal isolation?			
6. Fear of robbery (e.g., purse-snatching)?			
7. Fear of burglary (e.g., home invasion)?			
8. Vendors knocking on the door?			
9. Neglect by family or friends?			
10. Fear of personal abuse?			
11. Other?			

Below are some suggested improvements for this community. Would these changes/additions improve your life?

	Very much	To Some Degree	Not at All
1. Improved street lighting?			
2. Expanded Neighborhood Watch?			
3. Improved public transportation?			
4. Home security recommendations by law enforcement?			
5. Group housing resident councils?			
6. Daily reassurance phone calls?			
7. Senior van service at night?			



**Where do you live?**

Town:

**Sex:**    Male        Female        Prefer not to say

**Age:**    55–65        66–75        Over 75

---

**Optional Information (your name and address might be helpful but are not required):**

**Name:**

**Phone number:**

**Email address:**

**Street address:**



## Appendix G. Triad Quality of Life Survey

1. Which of these communities do you live in or closest to? (Triad to insert a list of areas)

2. Do you live alone? Yes No

3. Indicate in order of importance

(1 being the most important) the top 5 crime-related concerns in your area:

\_\_\_\_\_ Fear of crime

\_\_\_\_\_ Vandalism

\_\_\_\_\_ Animals

\_\_\_\_\_ Victimization

\_\_\_\_\_ Residential burglary

\_\_\_\_\_ Fraud

\_\_\_\_\_ Robbery

\_\_\_\_\_ Vacant or abandoned house

\_\_\_\_\_ Traffic

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_\_\_ Comments

4. Would you be interested in any of the following crime prevention programs?

\_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Watch

\_\_\_\_\_ Home security survey

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal safety skills

\_\_\_\_\_ How to spot and respond to scammers

5. Would you be interested in participating in a volunteer program to assist law enforcement?

Yes No

If yes, please specify areas of interest:

\_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Watch

\_\_\_\_\_ Home security

\_\_\_\_\_ Victim assistance

\_\_\_\_\_ Office work

\_\_\_\_\_ Reassurance visits

\_\_\_\_\_ Crime prevention

6. Do you need assistance in any of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Banking / paying bills

\_\_\_\_\_ Transportation/courier

\_\_\_\_\_ Shopping

\_\_\_\_\_ Running errands

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Optional Information (helpful but not required):

Sex: Male Female Prefer not to say

Age:

Name:

Phone number:

Email address:

Street address:

*Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. This survey will help your Triad and S.A.L.T. council to help you. Please return the survey to (name and address) or call (phone number) to have a S.A.L.T. volunteer pick it up.*



## Appendix H. Facts on aging quiz and selected answers

### True or false

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| _____ The majority of old people (past 65 years) have Alzheimer's disease.  | _____ Physical strength declines in old age.   |
| _____ As people grow older, their intelligence declines significantly.  | _____ Most old people lose interest in and capacity for sexual relations.  |
| _____ It is very difficult for older adults to learn new things.  | _____ Bladder capacity decreases with age, which leads to frequent urination.  |
| _____ Personality changes with age.   | _____ Kidney function is not affected by age.  |
| _____ Memory loss is a normal part of aging.  | _____ Increased problems with constipation represent a normal change as people get older.                                |
| _____ As adults grow older, reaction time increases.  | _____ All five senses tend to decline with age.  |
| _____ Clinical depression occurs more frequently in older than younger people.  | _____ As people live longer, they face fewer acute conditions and more chronic health conditions.                        |
| _____ Older adults are at risk for HIV/AIDS.  | _____ Retirement is often detrimental to health—i.e., people frequently seem to become ill or die soon after retirement. |
| _____ Alcoholism and alcohol abuse are significantly greater problems in the adult population over age 65 than that under age 65. | _____ Older adults are less anxious about death than are younger and middle-aged adults.                                 |
| _____ Older adults have more trouble sleeping than younger adults do.   | _____ People 65 years of age and older currently make up about 20 percent of the U.S. population.                        |
| _____ Older adults have the highest suicide rate of any age group.  | _____ Most older people are living in nursing homes.   |
| _____ High blood pressure increases with age.   | _____ The modern family no longer takes care of its older adults.  |
| _____ Older people perspire less, so they are more likely to suffer from hyperthermia.  | _____ The life expectancy of men at age 65 is about the same as that of women.   |
| _____ All women develop osteoporosis as they age.   | _____ Remaining life expectancy of Black people at age 85 is about the same as White people.                             |
| _____ A person's height tends to decline in old age.  |  |



- \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security benefits automatically increase with inflation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Living below or near the poverty level is no longer a significant problem for most older Americans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most older drivers are quite capable of safely operating a motor vehicle.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Older workers cannot work as effectively as younger workers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most old people are set in their ways and unable to change.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The majority of old people are bored.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In general, most old people are pretty much alike.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Older adults (65+) have higher rates of criminal victimization than adults under 65 do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People tend to become more spiritual as they grow older.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Older adults (65+) are more fearful of crime than are persons under 65.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Older people do not adapt as well as younger age groups when they relocate to a new environment. Participation in volunteering through organizations (e.g., churches and clubs) tends to decline among older adults.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Older people are much happier if they are allowed to disengage from society.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Geriatrics is a specialty in American medicine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All medical schools now require students to take courses in geriatrics and gerontology.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Abuse of older adults is not a significant problem in the U.S.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grandparents today take less responsibility for rearing grandchildren than ever before.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Older persons take longer to recover from physical and psychological stress.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most older adults consider their health to be good or excellent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Older females exhibit better health care practices than older males.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Research has shown that old age truly begins at 65.





## Selected answers (See citation for link to remaining answers.)

### The majority of old people (past 65 years) have Alzheimer's disease.

**False.** According to the 2014 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures Report published by the Alzheimer's Association, one in nine people 65 and older (11 percent) have Alzheimer's disease. About one-third of people aged 85 and older (32 percent) have Alzheimer's disease. Of those with Alzheimer's disease, the vast majority (82 percent) are age 75 or older.

---

### As people grow older, their intelligence declines significantly.

**False.** Although there are some circumstances where the statement may hold true, current research evidence suggests that intellectual performance in healthy individuals holds up well into old age. The average magnitude of intellectual decline is typically small in the 60s and 70s and is probably of little significance for competent behavior. There is more average decline for most abilities observed once the 80s are reached, although even in this age range there are substantial individual differences. Little or no decline appears to be associated with being free of cardiovascular disease, little decline in perceptual speed, at least average socioeconomic status, a stimulating and engaged lifestyle, and having flexible attitudes and behaviors at mid-life. The good news is that research data now indicate that this is a life stage programmed for plasticity and the development of unique capacities and that intellectual decline can be modified by lifestyle interventions, such as physical activity, a healthy diet, mental stimulation, and social interaction.

---

### It is very difficult for older adults to learn new things.

**False.** Although learning performance tends on average to decline with age, all age groups can learn. Research studies have shown that learning performances can be improved with instructions and practice, extra time to learn information or skills, and

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relevance of the learning task to interests and experience. It is well established that those who regularly practice their learning skills maintain their learning efficiency over their life span.

---

### Personality changes with age.

**False.** Personality remains consistent in all genders throughout life. Personality impacts roles and life satisfaction. Particular traits in youth and middle age not only will persist but may also be more pronounced in later life.

---

### Memory loss is a normal part of aging.

**True.** As one ages there is modest memory loss, primarily short-term memory (recent events). Older adults are more likely to retain past or new information that is based on knowledge acquired or builds upon their life course or events. Retrieval of information may slow with age. The causes of these changes are unknown, but may include stress, loss, physical disease, medication effects, depression, and age-related brain changes. Lack of attention, fatigue, hearing loss, and misunderstanding are among factors impacting memory loss in persons of all ages. Strategies such as activity and exercise, association, visualization, environmental cueing, organization by category and connection to a place may help to prompt memory.

---

### As adults grow older, reaction time increases.

**True.** Reaction time is the interval that elapses between the onset of a stimulus and the completion of a motor response, such as hitting the brake pedal of a car when the traffic light turns yellow or red. When processing ordinary stimuli, adults do show large increases in response time with increasing age.

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### **Clinical depression occurs more frequently in older than younger people.**

**False.** There is no evidence that depression occurs more often in older adults than younger groups, and it should not be considered a normal part of aging. However, it is the most common mental health problem of older adults. Depression may vary from feeling “blue” from grief over a loss to a diagnosis of clinical depression by the DSM-5 criteria. Accurate diagnosis and treatment options are often hindered by the resistance to mental health intervention and by situational depression in older adults as they react to isolation, role change, illness, and medication effects.

---

### **Older adults are at risk for HIV/AIDS.**

**True.** Americans aged 50 and older have many of the same HIV risk factors as younger Americans. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, persons aged 55 and older accounted for 26 percent of the estimated 1.2 million people living with HIV infection in the United States in 2011 and 5 percent of new HIV infections were among Americans aged 55 and older in 2010.

---

### **Alcoholism and alcohol abuse are significantly greater problems in the adult population over age 65 than that under age 65.**

**False.** There doesn’t appear to be substantial support for this idea. However, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted in 2010, nearly 40 percent of adults aged 65 and older drink alcohol. According to the survey, most of them don’t have a drinking problem, but some of them drink too much. Men are more likely than women to have problems with alcohol. Research does support that older people might become more sensitive to alcohol as they age. As we grow older, our metabolism slows down, so an older person will break down alcohol more slowly than a young person and alcohol will stay in an older person’s body longer. In addition, as we age, the amount of water in the blood decreases, so older adults will have a higher percentage of alcohol in their blood than younger people after drinking the same amount of alcohol. Furthermore, aging lowers

the body’s tolerance for alcohol, which means that older adults might experience the effects of alcohol, such as lack of coordination and slurred speech, more readily than when they were younger. As older people are dealing with more chronic health conditions, often they are taking more medications. Drinking alcohol can cause certain medicines to not work properly and other medicines to become more dangerous or even deadly. Because of these issues, an older person is more susceptible to develop problems with alcohol even though his or her drinking habits have not changed.

---

### **Older adults have more trouble sleeping than younger adults do.**

**True.** Older adults often experience sleep changes such as taking longer to fall asleep, frequent awakenings, daytime napping, circadian rhythm changes, lighter sleep (less time in deep sleep and REM sleep), more abnormal breathing events, and increased frequency of leg movements. The overall quality of sleep may decline with age even though more time may be spent in bed. Among the factors that may contribute to sleep problems in older adults are comorbidities, central nervous system (CNS) disorders, gastrointestinal (GI) disorders, or urinary disorders; pain; depression; polypharmacy; lack of exercise; life stressors; alcohol; smoking; environmental noises and institutional routines; and poor sleep hygiene.

---

### **Older adults have the highest suicide rate of any age group.**

**False.** The CDC reported that in 2013 the highest suicide rate was among persons 45–64 years old (19.1/100,000). The second highest rate (18.6) occurred in those 85 years and older. The 65–84 age group had roughly the same rate as 25–44-year-olds with the third highest rate. Adolescents and young adults aged 15–24 had a rate of 10.9. This is a change from the past when older adults (65+) consistently had the highest rates. Men account for the majority of suicides in all age groups.

---



### High blood pressure increases with age.

**True and false.** There is evidence that blood pressure does increase with age. However, there is controversy over the criteria for establishing high blood pressure with increasing age. The systolic (higher number) measure is the pressure when the heart is stressed as it contracts and is recorded when the pressure cuff is first released after being tightened. The diastolic (lower number) is the blood pressure when the heart is at rest and is derived when the blood pressure returns to normal after the first rush of blood upon release of the cuff. In the general population, age 60 and older,

the *Eighth Report of the Joint National Commission on Detection, Evaluation and Treatment of High Blood Pressure* recommends drug therapy if the systolic pressure is 90mm Hg or higher and aims for a systolic goal of less than 150 mm Hg (150/90). The report recommends relaxing the blood pressure goals in elderly patients in order to reduce concerns related to overtreating hypertension and causing adverse events in this population that is specifically at a high risk for falls. However, there continues to be discussion related to a cutoff of 60 years versus 80 years of age for these revised recommendations.<sup>58</sup>

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58. Linda Breyspraak and Lynn Badura, "Facts on Aging Quiz (revised; based on Palmore (1977; 1981))," Consortium for Aging in Community, accessed December 28, 2022, <https://aging.umkc.edu/quiz/>; Erdman Palmore, "Facts on Aging: A Short Quiz," *The Gerontologist* 17, no. 4 (1977), 315–320, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/17.4.315>; Erdman Palmore, "The Facts on Aging Quiz: Part Two," *The Gerontologist* 21, no. 4 (1981), 431–437, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/21.4.431>.



## Appendix I. Citizen Law Enforcement Academy application

Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security number \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's address \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been arrested? Yes No

When?

Where?

Please list or describe any civic activities/organizations you are involved in:

What experience have you had with law enforcement? Positive Negative

Briefly explain:

Briefly explain your interest in the citizen academy:

What do you expect to gain from attending this academy?



Will you be able to attend all of the class sessions? (schedule attached)    Yes    No

Person to be contacted in case of emergency during your attendance at the academy:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Liability waiver**

*I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. You are hereby authorized to make any investigation of my personal history deemed necessary for consideration to attend the Citizen Police Academy.*

Signature

Date





## Appendix J. Home Safety Assessment release form

I certify that I am the owner of this home and that my gross monthly income is less than \$\_\_\_\_\_ (one person) or \$\_\_\_\_\_ (two persons). I request that the Independent Living Week Team visit my home and assess it for safety and security. I understand that I am under no obligation to make any changes to my home and that I can withdraw my request if I change my mind. I also understand that there is no fee for this service and that it may take up to 12 months to complete the authorized repairs due to the workload of the Senior Assistance Program staff.

Homeowner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Homeowner's signature

Assessment team volunteer signature

**Yes No** I authorize \_\_\_\_\_ County Triad Inc. and its related agencies to use pictures of myself and my home, if taken, in any and all publications both paper and electronic for the purposes of furthering this organization's efforts to improve the quality of life of older residents in \_\_\_\_\_ County.

**Type of construction:**    Block frame    Manufactured home    Mobile home

### Windows/Doors

- |   |             |             |          |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>1. What type of windows?</b>                           | Awning      | Double-hung | Jalousie |
| <b>2. Are windows/doors easy to open/close?</b>           | Yes         | No          |          |
| <b>3. Are locks sturdy/easy to operate?</b>               | Yes         | No          |          |
| <b>4. If not, what type of deadbolt lock is required?</b> | Single lock | Double lock |          |
| <b>5. Does the door have a peephole?</b>                  | Yes         | No          |          |
| <b>a. Is it at proper height?</b>                         | Yes         | No          |          |
| <b>b. Does one need to be installed?</b>                  | Yes         | No          |          |



**Floor surfaces**

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Are any surfaces not safe (tripping hazard)?                  | Yes | No |
| 2. Has it been repaired?   | Yes | No |
| 3. If not, what type of surface is it and what needs to be done? |     |    |

**Steps/Stairways/Walkways**

- |                                       |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| 1. Are they in good repair?           | Yes | No | N/A |
| 2. Are there handrails on both sides? | Yes | No | N/A |

**Kitchen/Bath**

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Are stove knobs clearly marked, easy to use?                    | Yes | No |
| 2. Are faucets easy to use?  | Yes | No |
| 3. Are there any leaks in or around the faucets?<br>If yes, where? | Yes | No |
| 4. Can you get out of tub or shower with ease?                     | Yes | No |
| 5. If no, should grab bars be installed?                           | Yes | No |
| 6. Assess whether hand-held shower head is needed.                 | Yes | No |
| 7. Assess whether shower chair is needed.                          | Yes | No |
| 8. Is the toilet seat secure?                                      | Yes | No |

**Electrical outlets**

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Are there any outlets that are inoperable?<br>If so, how many?<br>Where are they located? | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|



### Fire safety

- |   |     |    |     |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <b>1. Are there smoke detectors in all necessary areas?</b><br>(Test each detector) | Yes | No |     |
| <b>2. If the answer is no, how many were installed?</b>                             |     |    |     |
| <b>3. Is there a telephone available for emergencies?</b>                           | Yes | No |     |
| <b>4. Is telephone equipped with hearing enhancement?</b>                           | Yes | No | N/A |
| <b>5. Are house numbers visible from the street?</b>                                | Yes | No |     |

### Project information

Date project started:

Date project completed:

Actual cost: \$

Staff hours:

Volunteer hours:

Home improvement worker signature:



## Appendix K. Adopt-A-Senior program

### Definition

The Adopt-A-Senior program is sponsored by Triad. It is a joint venture involving the \_\_\_\_\_ Sheriff's Office, the \_\_\_\_\_ Police Department, and the \_\_\_\_\_ Council on Aging. It is intended to provide support and reassurance for older adults with special needs. Considered for participation are older persons with limited mobility or medical problems, confined to their homes, or living alone with limited family support. This program is intended to supplement care provided by other persons/agencies.

### Goal

The purpose of Adopt-A-Senior is to establish communication and cooperation among law enforcement, state/local agencies, and older adults to maximize resources and ensure that older adult needs are monitored and referred as necessary.

### Implementation

The following agencies will provide officers who will adopt one or more older adults:

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---

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Background information will be provided on the older person, explaining any special needs or medical problems. The officer will contact the referral agency to schedule the first meeting with advance notice and a caseworker present for the initial visit, if necessary. Afterward, the officer will plan for future visits (at least one per week).

The officer will call the older adult at least once a week. During each visit or call, the officer should be aware of the person's needs or attention required. In the event an officer feels that a referral is in order, the officer should fill out a Senior Referral Card to notify the Adult Protective Services, Senior Referral Program, or appropriate service agencies.

This program will be coordinated by:

---



## Appendix L. Senior refrigerator card

(Front side)

Name: _____	Date Card Completed: _____
Address: _____	Phone Number: _____
_____	Allergies to Medications: _____
_____	
<b>Whom to Contact and Phone Numbers:</b>	Date of Birth: _____
1. _____	Major Illnesses: _____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
Doctor's Name: _____	_____
Doctor's Phone Number: _____	_____
Health Care Plan: _____	_____
<b>OVER FOR MEDICATIONS</b>	

(Back side)

Current Medications	Date Updated	Dosage Strength	How Often Taken	When Taken





## Appendix M. Senior referral card

(Front side)

<b>Triad</b> “Seniors & Law Enforcement Together” <b>Senior Referral Card</b> <i>[Name of local law enforcement agency]</i>	
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
City: _____	State: _____ ZIP: _____
Phone Number: _____	
Nearest Relative: _____	
Emergency Phone Number: _____	
<i>During the course of my duties, I observed the above person in need of the following:</i>	
Food: _____	Security: _____
Clothing: _____	Heat: _____
Care-Taking: _____	Prevention Materials/Type: _____
Lighting: _____	Other: _____
_____	_____
Officer Signature	ID#

(Back side)

<b>Follow-up</b>	
Date:	_____
Referrals:	_____
	_____
	_____
Comments:	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
_____	_____
Auxiliary Signature	ID#



## Appendix N. Application for Triad call-in program

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of home: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please describe exact location of your residence [e.g., route number, color of house, right or left side of road, apartment, and house])

Medical issues: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person to be notified in case of illness: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of nearest neighbor: \_\_\_\_\_

Neighbor's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Neighbor's address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Waiver of property damage:** *I hereby authorize any state or county law enforcement officer or medical unit to forcibly enter my home (address above) in the event there is reasonable cause to suspect that I am in need of immediate medical assistance. I agree to hold the state and county, together with its agents and employees, harmless for any damage to my property, both personal and real, resulting from said forcible entry.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix O. Sample Basic Content on Fraud Identification and Prevention

### How marketing scams work

**How'd they find me?** Fraudsters get contact information from many sources. Some purchase mailing lists or use special software to trawl the Internet for email addresses. Telemarketers may refer to the local phone book, purchase lists of those who have responded to previous solicitations, or use an automated program to dial random numbers sequentially. A fraudulent telemarketing operation is usually a “boiler room,” where seasoned operators try to scam people. Common scam mediums include the following:

**Email and Internet.** Using fake email addresses with links to websites that claim to be from a financial institution or government agency, “phishers” trick you into divulging your Social Security number (SSN), personal identification number (PIN), credit card number, or other personal information.

**Cold calls.** Telemarketing scammers may call with bogus product offers or request donations to a fake charity. “Bank representatives” who call to warn you of an account breach and “market researchers” who ask you to participate in a survey may actually be phishers trying to steal your financial data.

**Text messages.** Claiming to be old friends or admirers, text scammers tempt you into replying. Return calls are redirected to a premium-rate service without your knowledge, and you are charged a high per-minute fee.

**Direct mail.** You receive mail saying you’ve won a prize or a contest. The instructions tell you to respond with certain information. If you do, you’ll be contacted by a fraudster.

**Online, broadcast, and print ads.** You click, call, or write in response to an advertisement. The fact that you initiate the communication doesn’t mean the business is legitimate.

### Warning signs of fraud

- “Free” gifts that require you to pay shipping and handling, redemption fees, or tax before delivery
- “High-profit, no-risk” investments
- “Act now” and other high-pressure sales tactics
- A request for a credit card, bank account, or SSN to verify that you have won a prize
- Refusal to provide basic written information about an organization
- Organizations that are unfamiliar or have no physical address (i.e., those with only a post office box or Internet address)



## Social media fraud, a growing concern

The popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook has caught the attention of fraudsters. From the U.S. Senate’s Committee on Aging’s *Fighting Fraud: Top Scams in 2021*:

According to the FTC data, the percentage of older adults who lost money and were contacted by scammers using social media increased from 3 percent in 2017 to 15 percent in 2021.\* FTC data also show older adults ages 60 to 69 are more likely to be contacted using social media than those ages 80 and older.†

As older adults become more active online, scammers may increasingly use social media as a method of contact. Social media offers scammers an opportunity to access personal details and gain trust from the older adult.

Tips for older adults to protect themselves on social media:

- Accept a new friend request only from someone you know in real life. If you are already friends with someone on social media and receive a second friend request, check with the person first before accepting the request, they may have been hacked.
- Be careful clicking on links, especially links sent by friends with whom you normally do not communicate. These links are usually to a website to claim a prize, win a gift card, take a quiz, fill out a survey, watch a video, or see who died.
- Avoid clicking on ads that offer low prices on popular items and brands.
- Be savvy: Avoid quizzes and other similar social media threads that ask you to provide personal information, such as places you have visited, your favorite food, hobbies, or pets.
- Stop all contact with a potential scammer by blocking instant messages and email addresses.
- Protect your social media account access by using strong passwords and privacy settings to hide information like your city, phone number, and date of birth.<sup>59</sup>

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\* FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “Age and Fraud,” <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/federal.trade.commission/viz/AgeandFraud/Infographic>, last modified July 25, 2023, cited in Casey and Scott, *Fighting Fraud* (see note 59).

† FTC (Federal Trade Commission), “Age and Fraud,” <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/federal.trade.commission/viz/AgeandFraud/Infographic>, last modified July 25, 2023, cited in Casey and Scott, *Fighting Fraud* (see note 59).

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59. Robert P. Casey and Tim Scott, *Fighting Fraud: Top Scams in 2021* (Washington, DC: U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, 2022), <https://www.aging.senate.gov/resources>.



## How to combat fraud

- Take the time you need to decide, take action only after you have had time to think about it.
- Protect your bank account, credit card and Social Security numbers. Only share these critical numbers if you know the request is legitimate.
- Protect your email or home address or phone number, by not posting them on unsecure Internet sites.
- Scrutinize email carefully. Never click on a link unless you know it is from a reliable source. Delete spam without opening. If you are not sure about a link, that looks like it came from a friend, email or text them to ask if they sent you an email with a link. As email addresses can be spoofed (made to look like they are coming from trusted sources).
- Be wary of responding to unknown calls or texts from unfamiliar or foreign area codes.
- Use privacy settings on social media sites to control access to your profile.
- Keep your computer safer by installing a firewall, updating your operating system with the latest security patches, and using current antivirus software.
- If it is too good to be true, it probably is. Common fraud attempts start with you've won a "prize." Don't agree to pay a fee to receive it.
- Before giving, check out the charity with the Better Business Bureau (BBB). Check out all unsolicited offers with the BBB, local consumer protection agency, or state attorney general's office.
- When hiring a contractor, select only a licensed professional. Always insist on a written contract or financial agreement—and read carefully before signing.
- Beware of offers to help you recover lost money or improve your credit. If you are having financial difficulties, consult a non-profit consumer credit counseling service or work directly with your mortgage lender, credit card company, or other lender or service provider.
- Con artists often take advantage of consumer goodwill after disasters such as floods and earthquakes. Check out relief organizations with the BBB before donating.
- Only scammers will ask you to pay for something using gift cards or cryptocurrency.
- Forward unsolicited email to [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov). Messages are stored in a database for law enforcement agencies to use in their investigations.
- List your phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry to reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive. Register at <https://www.donotcall.gov>.





## Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Initialisms

AAA	American Automobile Association	IRS	Internal Revenue Service
AARP	(formerly) American Association of Retired People	MDT	multidisciplinary teams
APS	Adult Protective Services	MOU	memorandum of understanding
ATM	automatic teller machine	NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
BBB	Better Business Bureau	NSA	National Sheriffs' Association
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	OTC	over the counter
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team	OVC	Office for Victims of Crime
COPS Office	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services	PIO	public information officer
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design	PSA	public service announcement
DMV	Department of Motor Vehicles	RSVP	Retired Senior Volunteer Program
DRE	Drug Recognition Expert	S.A.L.T.	Seniors And Law Enforcement Together
EM	emergency management	SPR	Stakeholder Preparedness Review
EMT	emergency medical technician	SSA	Social Security Administration
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation	SSN	Social Security number
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Administration	STAR	Safety Training and Resources
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration	STI	sexually transmitted infection
FTC	Federal Trade Commission	THIRA	Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	TTAC	Training and Technical Assistance Center
IACP	International Association of Chiefs of Police	UCR	Unified Crime Reporting
IC3	Internet Crime Complaint Center	USPS	U.S. Postal Service
IIHS	Insurance Institute for Highway Safety	VOCA	Victims of Crime Act
		WEAAD	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
		YANA	You Are Not Alone



# Recommended Resources

## A

### Administration on Aging

Public inquiries: 202-619-0724

Eldercare locator: 800-677-1116

[aoainfo@aoa.hhs.gov](mailto:aoainfo@aoa.hhs.gov)

[https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/About/Aging\\_Network/AoA.aspx](https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/About/Aging_Network/AoA.aspx)

### Administration on Community Living

<https://elderjustice.acl.gov>

**ADvancing States** - Represents the nation's 56 state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities and long-term services and supports directors (**Previously National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities**) **Information/Resource/Referral Support Center**

202-898-2578

Fax: 202-898-2583

<http://www.ADvancingstates.org/about-ADvancing-states>

### Alzheimer's Association

24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900

TDD: 866-403-3073

Fax: 866-699-1246

[info@alz.org](mailto:info@alz.org)

<https://www.alz.org>

Responding to Elder Abuse Victims with Alzheimer's Disease or Other Dementias  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8wu9eKG7-A>)

### American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

888-687-2277 (OUR AARP)

[member@aarp.org](mailto:member@aarp.org)

<https://www.aarp.org>

Report Fraud to the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline

(<https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/helpline.html>)

### American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety

<https://aaafoundation.org>

### American Bankers Association

800-Bankers (800-226-5377)

<https://www.aba.com/banking-topics/risk-management/elder-financial-exploitation>



**American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging**

202-662-8698

Fax: 202-662-8698

[aging@americanbar.org](mailto:aging@americanbar.org)

<https://www.americanbar.org/aging>

**American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR)**

888-582-2327

Fax: 212-997-0330

[info@afar.org](mailto:info@afar.org)

<https://www.afar.org>

<https://infoaging.org>

**American Medical Association**

<https://www.programsforelderly.com/safety-ama-older-drivers.php>

**American Occupational Therapists Association**

301-652-7711

<https://www.aota.org/olderdriver>

**American Red Cross**

800-733-2767 (RED-CROS)

<https://www.redcross.org>

**AmeriCorps**

202-606-5000

TTY: 800-833-3722

<https://americorps.gov>

**Annual Credit Report Request Service**

877-322-8228

<https://www.annualcreditreport.com>

**B**

**Better Business Bureau**

<https://www.bbb.org>

**Big Brothers Big Sisters**

<https://www.bbbs.org>

**Boys & Girls Clubs of America**

404-487-5700

[info@bgca.org](mailto:info@bgca.org)

<https://www.bgca.org>



## C

### **Carfit**

<https://www.car-fit.org>

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

800-232-436 (CDC-INFO)

TTY: 888-232-6348

[cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)

<https://emergency.cdc.gov>

### **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)**

877-267-2323

TTY: 866-226-1819

<https://www.cms.gov>

### **Charity Navigator**

<https://www.charitynavigator.org>

### **Citizen Corps**

[FEMA-Prepare@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Prepare@fema.dhs.gov)

<https://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps>

### **Clinician's Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers**

[https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/812228\\_cliniciansguidetoollderdrivers.pdf](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/812228_cliniciansguidetoollderdrivers.pdf)

### **Community Transportation Association of America**

800-891-0590

<https://ctaa.org>

### **Consumer Action Handbook**

Federal Citizen Information Center

U.S. General Services Administration

202-501-1794

<https://www.usa.gov/consumer>

### **Community Emergency Response Teams (C.E.R.T.)**

[FEMA-Prepare@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Prepare@fema.dhs.gov)

<https://www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team>

### **Consumer Federation of America**

202-387-6121

<https://consumerfed.org>



### **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau**

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/resources-for-older-adults>

### **Consumer Response Center**

Federal Trade Commission

202-382-4357 (FTC-HELP)

TDD: 202-326-2502

<https://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc/bureaus-offices/bureau-consumer-protection/our-divisions/division-consumer-response>

### **Credit Reporting Companies:**

#### *Equifax*

888-766-0008 (to report credit card fraud)

800-685-1111 (to request credit report)

<https://www.equifax.com>

Get a Free Credit Report (<https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/free-credit-reports>)

Place a Fraud Alert or Active Duty Alert

(<https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/credit-fraud-alerts>)

Security Freeze (<https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/credit-freeze>)

#### *Experian (formerly TRW)*

888-397-3742

(to order credit report and to report credit card fraud)

<https://www.experian.com>

#### *TransUnion*

800-680-7289 (fraud victim assistance)

800-877-322-8228 (to request credit report)

<https://www.transunion.com>

### **Crime Prevention Tips**

<https://www.crimepreventiontips.org>

### **Criminal Victimization in the United States (National Crime Victimization Survey)**

<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&iid=245>

- *Office for Victims of Crime*  
<https://www.justice.gov/vta/ovc>
- *Elder Fraud & Abuse*  
<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/elder-fraud-abuse/overview>
- *National Elder Fraud Hotline*  
<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/elder-fraud-abuse/national-elder-fraud-hotline>



## D

### Deaf Telephone Services

TDD-TTY 800-855-1155

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

877-696-6775

202-619-0257

<https://hhs.gov>

<https://hhs.gov/az/index.html>

(alphabetical directory of HHS information and hotline topics)

### Direct Marketing Association

(to have your name removed from direct mail/telemarketing/email lists)

<http://www.the-dma.org>

### Disaster Fraud Hotline

U.S. Department of Justice

(to report disaster related fraud)

866-720-5721

[disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov)

NCDF Disaster Complaint Form: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>

## E

### Elder Justice Initiative (EJI) | Department of Justice:

<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice>

- *Law Enforcement Resources*  
<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/law-enforcement-1>
- *Elder Abuse Guide for Law Enforcement*  
<https://eagle.usc.edu>
- *Rural and Tribal Elder Justice Resource Guide, Nov. 2018*  
<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/book/file/1110846/download>
- *Elder Justice Resources*  
<https://copstrainingportal.org/elder-justice-resources>

### Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)

800-421-6770

(Response Center)

[AskCopsRC@usdoj.gov](mailto:AskCopsRC@usdoj.gov)

<https://cops.usdoj.gov>

### Elder Abuse Guide for Law Enforcement

First responder and evidence checklist, community resources, roll call videos, training and more

<https://eagle.usc.edu>





### **Eldercare Locator**

800-677-1116

<https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>

## **F**

### **Federal Bureau of Investigation**

Uniform Crime Reports

<https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr>

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency**

800-621-3362 (FEMA)

TDD: 800-462-7585

<https://www.fema.gov>

### **Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics**

800-232-4636

<https://agingstats.gov>

### **Federal Trade Commission**

877-382-4357 (FTC-HELP)

877-438-4338 (ID-THEFT)

[consumeralerts@fdic.gov](mailto:consumeralerts@fdic.gov)

<https://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc/bureaus-offices/bureau-consumer-protection>

<https://www.consumer.gov/idtheft>

Before Giving to a Charity - Consumer Advice

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/giving-charity>

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2023/08/did-someone-insist-you-pay-them-cryptocurrency>

### **Fire Corps**

888-324-6361 (FC-INFO1)

<https://www.firecorps.org>

### **Food Safety Inspection Service**

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Homeland Security Council

TTY: 800-877-8339

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection>

### **Food and Nutrition Service**

Food Distribution Division

U.S. Department of Agriculture

703-305-2680

[fdd-psb@fns.usda.gov](mailto:fdd-psb@fns.usda.gov)

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fd-disaster/food-distribution-disaster-assistance>



## G

### **Gerontological Society of America**

202-842-1275  
Fax: 202-842-1150  
[geron@geron.org](mailto:geron@geron.org)  
<https://www.geron.org>

## H

### **Hearing Aid Helpline International Hearing Society**

800-521-5247  
<https://www.ihsinfo.org>

### **Home Safety Council**

<https://www.staysafe.org>  
Disaster Relief Assistance for Seniors (<https://staysafe.org/disaster-relief-assistance-for-seniors>)

## I

### **International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)**

800-843-4227 (THE-IACP)  
Fax: 703-836-4543  
<https://www.theiacp.org>  
<https://www.theiacp.org/projects/alzheimers-initiatives>

### **International Association of Financial Crimes Investigators**

Wealth of information from webinars to handouts to alerts.  
<https://iafci.org>

### **Internal Revenue Service**

Identity Protection Unit  
800-908-4490  
<https://www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams>

### **Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3)**

Includes Consumer and Industry alerts and data  
<https://www.ic3.gov/Home/EF>  
IC3 Complaint Referral Form: <https://ef.ic3.gov>  
<https://www.ic3.gov>

### **US Security and Exchange Commission's Investor.Gov**

SEC's website with fraud information  
<https://www.investor.gov/additional-resources/information/older-investors>



## M

### **Maryland Department of Transportation**

Motor Vehicles Association  
Older Driver Safety

<https://zerodeathsmd.gov/road-safety/older-driver-safety>

### **Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA)**

703-548-5558  
Fax: 703-548-8024

<https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org>

### **Medical Reserve Corps**

Office of the Surgeon General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
301-443-4951

<https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC>

### **Medicare Fraud and Abuse**

800-477-8477 (HSS-TIPS)  
Fax: 800-223-8164

[HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov](mailto:HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov)

### **Medicare Service Center**

800-633-4227 (MEDICARE)  
TTY: 877-486-2048

<https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/ContactCMS>

## N

### **National Adult Protective Services Association**

<https://www.napsa-now.org>

### **National Association of Medicaid Fraud Control Units**

<https://www.naag.org/about-naag/namfcu>

### **National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA)**

<https://nasdva.us>

### **National Association of Triads (NAT)**

<https://www.sheriffs.org/programs/national-triad>

### **National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA)**

302-831-3525  
Fax: 302- 831-4225

[ncea-info@aoa.hhs.gov](mailto:ncea-info@aoa.hhs.gov)

<https://ncea.acl.gov>



**National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

800-232-4636 (CDC-INFO)  
TTY: 888-232-6348  
[cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/injury/about>

**National Center for Victims of Crime**

800-394-2255  
202-467-8700  
Fax: 202-467-8701  
<https://victimsofcrime.org>

**National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life**

<https://www.ncall.us>

**National Coalition on Violence Against Animals**

[ncovaa720@gmail.com](mailto:ncovaa720@gmail.com)  
<https://ncovaa.org>

**National Consumers League Fraud Center**

(to report suspected Internet or telemarketing fraud)  
800-876-7060  
<https://fraud.org>

**National Council on Aging, Inc. (NCOA)**

202-479-1200  
Fax: 202-479-0735  
[info@ncoa.org](mailto:info@ncoa.org)  
<https://www.ncoa.org>

**National Council on Identity Theft Protection**

<https://identitytheft.org>

**National Criminal Justice Reference Service**

800-851-3420  
TTY: 877-712-9279  
[responsecenter@ncjrs.gov](mailto:responsecenter@ncjrs.gov)  
<https://www.ncjrs.gov>

**National Crime Prevention Council**

202-466-6272  
Fax: 202-296-1356  
<https://www.ncpc.org>



**National Cyber Security Alliance**

<https://staysafeonline.org>

**National Do Not Call Registry**

(to remove your name from telemarketing call lists)

<https://www.donotcall.gov>

**National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH)**

800-799-7233 (SAFE)

TTY: 800-787-3224

<https://www.thehotline.org>

**National Family Partnership/Lock Your Meds™**

<https://lockyourmeds.org>

**National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)**

800-344-3555

Fax: 617-770-0700

<https://www.nfpa.org>

**National Fraud Information Center**

<https://fraud.org>

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

Injury Prevention: Older Road Users Manuals and Brochures for Physicians, Community Groups, and Older Drivers

<https://icsw.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/olddrive/>

**National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO)**

800-658-8898

703-837-1500

Fax: 703-837-1233

[info@nhpco.org](mailto:info@nhpco.org)

<https://www.nhpco.org>

**National Institute on Aging (NIA)**

301-496-1752

TTY: 800-222-4225

Fax: 301-496-1072

<https://www.nia.nih.gov>

**National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)**

919-541-3345

TTY: 919-541-0731

Fax: 919-541-4395

<https://www.niehs.nih.gov>



### **National Institute on Drug Abuse**

<https://www.drugabuse.gov>

<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/substance-use-in-older-adults-drugfacts>

### **National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse**

National Sheriffs' Association

[animalcruelty@sheriffs.org](mailto:animalcruelty@sheriffs.org)

<https://www.sheriffs.org/Animal-Cruelty-and-Elder-Abuse>

### **National Link Coalition**

[arkowpets@snip.net](mailto:arkowpets@snip.net)

<https://nationallinkcoalition.org>

### **National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center (ORC)**

202-332-2275

Fax: 202-332-2949

[ombudcenter@nccnhr.org](mailto:ombudcenter@nccnhr.org)

<https://ltcombudsman.org>

### **National Neighborhood Watch Program**

National Sheriffs' Association

703-836-7827

[nw@sheriffs.org](mailto:nw@sheriffs.org)

<https://www.nnw.org>

### **National Older Driver Research and Training Center**

Fax: 202-366-7394

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/older-drivers>

### **National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)**

800-879-6682 (TRY-NOVA)

703-535-6682 (NOVA)

Fax: 703-535-5500

<https://www.trynova.org>

### **National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)**

800-424-7827

<https://www.sheriffs.org>

### **National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)**

888-275-6832 (ASK-NVFC)

202-887-5700

Fax: 202-887-5291

[nvfcoffice@nvfc.org](mailto:nvfcoffice@nvfc.org)

<https://www.nvfc.org>





### **National White-Collar Crime – NW3C**

This site is for law enforcement or fraud investigators.

<https://www.nw3c.org/UI/Resources.html>

<https://www.nw3c.org>

### **Neuropsychopharmacology (Journal)**

<https://www.nature.com/articles/1301412.pdf> (“Drugs of Abuse and the Aging Brain”)

## **O**

### **Office of Emergency Preparedness**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<https://aspr.hhs.gov>

### **Office of National Drug Control Policy**

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

<https://www.gcappreventioncouncil.org/home/showdocument?id=2070>

### **Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC)**

866-682-8822 (OVC-TTAC)

TTY: 866-682-8880

Fax: 703-279-4673

[TTAC@ovcttac.gov](mailto:TTAC@ovcttac.gov)

<https://www.ovcttac.gov>

### **OptOutPrescreen.com**

888-567-8688 (5OPTOUT)

TDD: Call 711 and refer the relay operator to 800-821-9631

<https://www.optoutprescreen.com>

## **P**

### **Philanthropic Advisory Service Council** (to verify a charitable organization)

<https://www.bbb.org>

### **Physical Environment and Crime Research Report**

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/physenv.pdf>

### **Physician’s Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers**

see [Clinician’s Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers](#)

### **Prescription for Danger: A Report on the Troubling Trend of Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse Among the Nation’s Teens** (January 2008)

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/prescription-danger-report-prescription-and-over-counter-drug-abuse>



### **Privacy Rights Clearinghouse**

619-298-3396

<https://privacyrights.org>

### **Process and Outcomes Evaluation of Older Driver Screening Programs: *The Assessment of Driving-Related Skills (ADReS) Older-Driver Screening Tool***

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/811113.pdf>

## **R**

### **Ready Campaign**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
202-282-8000

[ready@dhs.gov](mailto:ready@dhs.gov)

<https://www.ready.gov>

## **S**

### **Senior Corps**

202-606-5000

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps>

### **Social Security Administration (SSA)**

Office of Public Inquiries  
800-772-1213

TTY: 800-325-0778

<https://www.ssa.gov>

### **Social Security Administration (SSA) Fraud Hotline**

Office of the Inspector General  
800-269-0271

<https://oig.ssa.gov>

### **StopMedicineAbuse.org**

Consumer Healthcare Products Association

<https://stopmedicineabuse.org>

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

Department of Health and Human Services  
800-729-6686

240-276-2000

TTY: 800-487-4889

Fax: 240-276-2010

<https://www.samhsa.gov>



## U

### **U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration**

<https://www.dea.gov>

### **U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Postal Inspection Service**

877-876-2455

<https://www.uspis.gov>

### **Elder Fraud - USPIS**

<https://www.uspis.gov/news/scam-article/elder-fraud>

### **U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging**

202-224-5364

Fax: 202-224-8660

[mailbox@aging.senate.gov](mailto:mailbox@aging.senate.gov)

<https://www.aging.senate.gov>

## V

### **Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles**

Mature Driver Safety

<https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/safety/programs/mature-driver>

### **VolunteerMatch**

717 California Street, Second Floor

San Francisco, CA 94108

415-241-6872

[support@volunteermatch.org](mailto:support@volunteermatch.org)

<https://www.volunteermatch.org>

### **Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)**

International Association of Chiefs of Police

[info@policevolunteers.org](mailto:info@policevolunteers.org)

<https://www.theiacp.org/VIPS>

### **Volunteers of America**

800-899-0089

703-341-5000

Fax: 703-341-7000

[info@voa.org](mailto:info@voa.org)

<https://www.voa.org>



## W

### World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Comprehensive website to support WEAAD activities

<https://ncea.acl.gov/worldelderabuseawarenessday>

Links to their partners:

- National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS) (<https://namrs.acl.gov>)
- National Center on Elder Abuse (<https://ncea.acl.gov>)
- National Center on Law & Elder Rights (<https://ncler.acl.gov>)
- National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (<https://www.nieji.org>)
- National Consumer Voice (<https://ltcombudsman.org>)
- National Resource Center on Women and Retirement - Wiser Women (<https://wiserwomen.org/national-resource-center-on-women-and-retirement-2>)
- Our History Fighting for Pension Rights | Pension Rights Center (<https://pensionrights.org/about-us/history>)

## Y

### Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)

YMCA of the USA

800-872-9622

<https://www.ymca.org>

### Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

202-467-0801

Fax: 202-467-0802

[info@ywca.org](mailto:info@ywca.org)

<https://www.ywca.org>



## Podcasts

These episodes of the COPS Office podcast, *The Beat*, highlight some issues that can be addressed by Triad elder justice and crime prevention initiatives. Visit *The Beat* at <https://cops.usdoj.gov/thebeat>.

### Investigating Elder Fraud Online Scams

Online scams targeting elders and others are the unfortunate byproduct of our increasing reliance on the internet for shopping and efficiently moving funds with the click of a few buttons. Internet-based platforms are also an efficient means for criminals to identify and prey upon victims. Felix Salazar is an investigator with the San Diego County, California, District Attorney's Office and his efforts to build cases against online scam artists are quickly becoming the cheat-sheet for law enforcement and prosecutors to successfully convict these elusive criminals.

**Apple Podcast:** <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/investigating-elder-fraud-online-scams/id1523576720?i=1000599606269>

**Listen/Download:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/02-2023/TheBeat\\_Felix\\_Salazar.mp3](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/02-2023/TheBeat_Felix_Salazar.mp3)

**Transcript:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/02-2023/TheBeat\\_Felix\\_Salazar.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/02-2023/TheBeat_Felix_Salazar.pdf)

### You Are Not Alone: A Law Enforcement Approach to Monitoring the Needs of Vulnerable Citizens

Throughout our communities, seniors and individuals with disabilities live alone, and may face challenges that put them at risk, or result in neglect of their basic needs. The Paradise Valley (Arizona) Police Department's You Are Not Alone (YANA) program is an automated, proactive approach that supports these citizens without overburdening department resources. Officer Steven McGhee and Patricia Wagner join *The Beat* to discuss YANA.

**Apple Podcast:** <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/investigating-elder-fraud-online-scams/id1523576720?i=1000599606269>

**Listen/Download:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/02-2023/TheBeat\\_Felix\\_Salazar.mp3](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/02-2023/TheBeat_Felix_Salazar.mp3)

**Transcript:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/02-2023/TheBeat\\_Felix\\_Salazar.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/02-2023/TheBeat_Felix_Salazar.pdf)

### Collecting Evidence in Elder Abuse Cases

Detective Adam Gibson of the Quincy (Illinois) Police Department and Officer Cherie Hill of the Anaheim (California) Police Department provide insight on effective methods for collecting evidence when the elderly victims may be incapacitated, suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's, heavily medicated, or deceased.

**Listen/Download:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/06-2019/TheBeat\\_ElderAbuse\\_CE\\_062019.mp3](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/06-2019/TheBeat_ElderAbuse_CE_062019.mp3)

**Transcript:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/06-2019/TheBeat\\_ElderAbuse\\_CE\\_062019.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/06-2019/TheBeat_ElderAbuse_CE_062019.pdf)



## **The Role of Law Enforcement in Recognizing and Responding to Elder Abuse**

Chief Gary MacNamara of the Fairfield (Connecticut) Police Department and Inspector Andrea Higgins from the San Mateo County, California, District Attorney's Office discuss the most common forms of elder abuse, how officers can identify abuse, and appropriate measures to consider in response.

**Listen/Download:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/06-2019/TheBeat\\_ElderAbuse\\_RR\\_062019.mp3](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/06-2019/TheBeat_ElderAbuse_RR_062019.mp3)

**Transcript:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/06-2019/TheBeat\\_ElderAbuse\\_RR\\_062019.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/06-2019/TheBeat_ElderAbuse_RR_062019.pdf)

## **Financial Exploitation & Scams Are a Crime: Correcting Misperceptions and Collecting Evidence**

Detective Larry Swain from the Fresno County (California) Sheriff's Office's Elder Abuse Unit and Detective Chuck Szatkowski of the Special Victims Unit of the Colorado Springs (Colorado) Police Department discuss the complexities of financial crimes committed against elderly victims, and provide practical insight on collecting evidence in these cases.

**Listen/Download:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/06-2019/TheBeat\\_ElderAbuse\\_FES\\_062019.mp3](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/06-2019/TheBeat_ElderAbuse_FES_062019.mp3)

**Transcript:** [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the\\_beat/06-2019/TheBeat\\_ElderAbuse\\_FES\\_062019.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/podcasts/the_beat/06-2019/TheBeat_ElderAbuse_FES_062019.pdf)





## Recommended Reading

### Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers

John E. Eck (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, June 2002). This guide is a companion to the Problem-Oriented Guides for Police series. It provides basic guidance to measuring and assessing problem-oriented policing efforts. Available online at <https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/tools/pdfs/AssessingResponsesToProblems.pdf>

### Bringing Victims into Community Policing

The National Center for Victims of Crime and the Police Foundation. (Bureau of Justice Statistics and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, September 2002). This guide shows how to enhance community policing by working with victims and victim organizations to prevent repeat victimization and building collaborative problem-solving skills. Available online at <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-w0016>

### Call Management and Community Policing: A Guidebook for Law Enforcement

Tom McEwen, Deborah Spence, Russell Wolff, Julie Wartell, Barbara Webster. (Bureau of Justice Statistics and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, July 2003). This guide focuses on police call management strategies and how they affect the practice of community policing. Available online at [https://ilj.org/publications/docs/Call\\_Management\\_and\\_Community\\_Policing.pdf](https://ilj.org/publications/docs/Call_Management_and_Community_Policing.pdf)

### The COPS Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships

Gwen O. Briscoe, Ph.D., Anna T. Laszlo, Tammy A. Rinehart. (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2001). The Collaboration Toolkit is designed as a guide for law enforcement agencies and their partners as they work with citizen groups, community-based organizations, youth, government, and others to develop, fix, and sustain productive law enforcement-community partnerships supporting the advancement of community policing. Available online at <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-w0686>

### Financial Crimes Against the Elderly

Financial crimes against the elderly fall under two general categories: fraud committed by strangers, and financial exploitation by relatives and caregivers. This guide addresses the problem of financial crimes against the elderly and helps law enforcement analyze their local problem. <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-w0768>



## Legal Issues Related to Elder Abuse

Bureau of Justice Assistance  
Pocket Guide for Law Enforcement

This national guide provides brief explanations of the following:

- Legal concepts, documents, and tools that may be misused to commit elder abuse or used properly to remedy it
- Issues and actions that justice system professionals should consider if they suspect elder abuse has occurred

<https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/Publications/ABA-ElderAbuseGuide.pdf>

## Opportunity Makes the Thief: Practical Theory for Crime Prevention

Marcus Felson and Ronald V. Clarke (Home Office Police Research Series, Paper No. 98, 1998). Explains how crime theories such as routine activity theory, rational choice theory and crime pattern theory have practical implications for the police in their efforts to prevent crime. Available online at [https://www.academia.edu/66605301/Opportunity\\_makes\\_the\\_thief\\_Practical\\_theory\\_for\\_crime\\_prevention](https://www.academia.edu/66605301/Opportunity_makes_the_thief_Practical_theory_for_crime_prevention)

## Physical and Emotional Abuse of the Elderly

Physical and Emotional Abuse of the Elderly describes the problem of elder physical and psychological abuse, reviews factors that increase its risks, identifies a series of questions to help you analyze your local elder abuse problem, and reviews responses to the problem and what is known about these from evaluative research and police practice.

<https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p255>

## Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships

Karin Schmerler, Matt Perkins, Scott Phillips, Tammy Rinehart and Meg Townsend. (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2006). A tool designed to help readers during every step of their efforts to reduce crime and disorder through problem-solving partnerships. Available online at <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p019>

## Rural and Tribal Elder Justice Resource Guide

<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/book/file/1110846/download>

## Safe Banking for Seniors – Handouts and Other Materials from the American Bankers Association

<https://www.aba.com/advocacy/community-programs/finedlink/older-adults-and-caregivers/resources>



## About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When law enforcement and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than \$20 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 136,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- More than 800,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations and the COPS Training Portal.
- More than 1,000 agencies have received customized advice and peer-led technical assistance through the COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than nine million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.

The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement. COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, <https://cops.usdoj.gov>.



Since 1988, the AARP, the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) have been working together to create local partnerships, engage volunteers and other private sector stakeholders, and educate the public to reduce crime specifically against older adults and keep them safer in the community. This is an updated publication that outlines the purpose, necessity, and structure of Triad; how to organize a Triad; and how to leverage the group's collective strengths to address issues affecting older adults. This guide includes new and enhanced program ideas with tools to create or strengthen law enforcement's unique role in Triad, such as how to develop and deliver effective crime prevention program to address ever-evolving frauds and scams.



**COPS**

*Community Oriented Policing Services*  
*U.S. Department of Justice*

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services  
145 N Street NE  
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call  
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at [cops.usdoj.gov](https://cops.usdoj.gov).