

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATION BRIEF: Outreach and Education

BACKGROUND & GAP: APS operates under specific statutory authority in [Arizona Revised Statutes Title 46](#) Chapter 4 “Adult Protective Services”. The definitions of vulnerable adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation as well as the hearing process and mandatory reporter duties are outlined in statute and are different than criminal statute. APS works collaboratively with many external parties that include the public, law enforcement and first responders, Attorney General, multiple state and local agencies, medical professionals, financial professionals, public fiduciaries, oversight committees, and community partners amongst others. The network that ultimately serves to protect vulnerable adults in Arizona is complicated by the sheer number of parties involved but also the various required steps to place a perpetrator on the APS Registry.

Stakeholder feedback highlights a lack of understanding of the APS process as well as the resources available to support vulnerable adults.

TRENDS & SERVICES IN ARIZONA: The Executive Order 2019-03 Abuse & Neglect Prevention Task Force recommended that Arizona should commit to creating a statewide culture of abuse, neglect, and exploitation prevention. A public awareness campaign, developed collaboratively by the Governor’s Office, state agencies, and community stakeholders, should include, but not be limited to, these key messages:

- Arizona values and protects vulnerable individuals.
- Arizona is committed to recognizing signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Arizona encourages all parties to report concerns.
- Arizona supports the provision of information about how to make a report, whistleblower protections, and the process and timeline after a report is made.
- Arizona supports the provision of information about the principles and benefits of trauma-informed care and compassionate care.
- Arizona supports the provision of information about accessing trusted resources for information and support.

The Task Force additionally recommended that Arizona build on previous efforts and implement a system-wide trauma-informed approach, with attention to the special needs of vulnerable individuals and their families, including support when families interact with clinicians, law enforcement, and other professionals. Arizona should support efforts to build and enhance community-based sexual assault services that utilize a trauma-informed approach and address the specific needs of vulnerable adults and their families. Services should be available to all survivors of sexual assault throughout the lifespan and include crisis lines and support groups for survivors of different ages, genders, and backgrounds; sexual assault specific legal and medical advocacy; and counseling by therapists with specialized training in addressing sexual trauma.

