



# Adult Protective Services in Georgia

The Adult Protective Services (APS) program is mandated under the Disabled Adults and Elder Persons Protection Act to address situations of domestic abuse, neglect or exploitation of disabled persons over the age of 18, or elders over the age of 65 who are not residents of long term care facilities. The purpose of the APS program is to investigate reports alleging abuse, neglect or exploitation and to prevent recurrence through the provision of protective services intervention. Principles that guide the assessment consider an adult's right to personal autonomy, self-determination and the use of the least restrictive method of providing safety prior to more intrusive methods.

Abuse is defined by law as the willful infliction of physical pain or injury, mental anguish, unreasonable confinement or the deprivation of essential services to a disabled adult. Abuse can take many forms including physical, psychological, financial abuse as well as neglect. Adults unable to meet their essential needs may be victims of self-neglect.

Adult Protective Services are available in all counties in Georgia. Funding for the program depends primarily on State funds (\$8,166,693), the Social Services Block Grant (\$2,254,540) and Title XIX Medicaid (\$4,178,062). Statewide, in FY 2005, with data provided from February to June, the program serves approximately 3,600 active cases per month. Services might involve finding another residence for the abused person, getting medical help, educating the caregiver to care for the older adult or finding a senior center for the older adult to attend during the day to relieve stress in the home.

Reports of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation should be made to the local APS office in the region where the adult resides. Law enforcement, financial institutions, medical and human services personnel are among those required to report suspected cases of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation to Adult Protective Services. In instances where harm or threat of harm is imminent, emergency medical and/or law enforcement should be summoned as a first response. In all instances, the identity of the referring source will be kept confidential.

Adult Protective Services uses a region-based multi-disciplinary approach to meet the needs of vulnerable disabled and senior adults in the State of Georgia. The toll-free number to report abuse is 1-888-774-0152 or in Metro Atlanta, 404-657-5250.

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