

DC Office on Aging Elder Abuse Prevention Committee

2016 Annual Report

October 27, 2016



**PREVENTION
COMMITTEE**



**Government of the District of Columbia
D.C. Office on Aging**

**Laura Newland, Executive Director
Michael Kirkwood, General Counsel**

**Elder Abuse Prevention Committee
2016 Annual Report**

Introduction

Since prior to fiscal year 2000, the U. S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, has provided a formula Elder Abuse Prevention Grant annually to states and the District of Columbia. The original grant was \$25,000 and it remained at that level until 2014 when the U. S. Congress cut federal spending across the board and the District's grant was reduced to \$23,626. The Elder Abuse Prevention Committee (EAPC) was organized to manage the grant and select programs and projects to help reduce elder abuse in the District of Columbia. The DC Office on Aging collaborates with Iona Senior Services for fiduciary management of the grant, and the EAPC develops an annual work plan and ensures that funds are spent for services that will address elder abuse prevention efforts in the District of Columbia. This committee is comprised of advocates, representatives from government and community-based agencies, and senior volunteers who meet monthly, develop an annual spending plan and carry out activities focused on reduction or prevention of abuse, neglect or exploitation of the elderly in the District of Columbia. Funds are spent in accordance with the spending plan approved by the EAPC. All committee members work as volunteers.

Composition of the Committee

The Elder Abuse Prevention Committee is comprised of representatives who work or have worked with seniors and disabled residents of the District of Columbia or manage programs that work to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of seniors. It includes social workers, case managers, a geriatric nurse practitioner, advocates, lawyers, outreach workers and financial experts. Agencies represented include: Adult Protective Services (APS); the U. S. Attorney's Office; The Office of the Attorney General; Legal Counsel for the Elderly; the Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking; the DC Office on Aging; the D.C Office on Aging's Aging and Disability Resource Center; the Department of Behavioral Health; the Financial Planning Association of the DC Area; the DC Housing Authority; the DC Department on Disability Services; the DC Metropolitan Police Department, the U. S. Department of Justice; the DC Commission on Aging; Seabury Aging Services; and Iona Senior Services, both of which are community-based agencies that work with seniors. All representatives are unpaid volunteers and make unique contributions toward helping the committee achieve annual goals to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults in the District of Columbia.

In 2015/2016, the Elder Abuse Prevention Committee included:

Michael Kirkwood, Esq.
General Counsel
DC Office on Aging
Chair of the EAPC
Michael.kirkwood@dc.gov
(202) 715-7745

Theodore A. Miles
Associate Commissioner of Securities
Department of Insurance, Securities and
Banking
Theodore.miles@dc.gov
(202) 442-7800

Fiona Druy, RN, NP
Geriatric Nurse Practitioner
IONA Senior Services
fdruy@iona.org
(202) 895-9491

Barbara Strother
Retired
Staffed the committee
Barb.strother@verizon.net
(703) 671-2455

Cecelia Steiner-Smith, Esq.
Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
Cecelia.steinersmith@dc.gov
(202) 724-8021

Lynne Person
Senior Manager
Legal Counsel for the Elderly
AARP

Purley Jones, LICSW
Manager, Board & Care Ombudsman
Legal Counsel for the Elderly/AARP
pjones@aarp.org
(202) 434-2139

Melva Meade, MSW, LICSW
Social Work Coordinator
Seabury, Ward 5 Aging Services
mmeade@seaburyresources.org
(202) 529-8701

Sina Baktash, LICSW, LCSW-C, LCSW
Supervisory Social Worker
Adult Protective Services
Sina.Baktash@dc.gov
(202) 698-4284

Idriys Abdullah
Consumer Protection Advocate
Department of Insurance, Securities and
Banking
Idriys.abdullah@dc.gov
(202) 986-2092

Theresa Brownson
Supervisor, Senior Medicare Patrol
Legal Counsel for the Elderly
tbrownson@AARP.org

Wanda Robinson
Office of Public Safety, DC Housing
Authority
wrobinson@dchousing.org
(202)734-1553
(202)535-2583 (direct)

Janet Heisse
Senior Volunteer and Advocate
DC Commission on Aging

Carolyn Nicholas
Senior Volunteer and Advocate
DC Commission on Aging
Cnico41@aol.com
(202) 723-2939

Sheila Kelly
Department of Behavioral Health
Sheila.kelly-long@dc.gov
(202) 673-3516

Carla Rawlings, LGSW
Geriatric Care Manager
Seabury Resources for Aging – Case
Management
crawlings@seaburyresources.org
(301) 775-5573

Marguerita (Rita) Cheng
Chair, Financial Planning Association of the
DC Area
mcheng@blueoceanglobalwealth.com
(301) 502-5306

James Brennan
Victim Program Specialist
U.S. Attorney's Office
james.p.brennan@usdoj.gov

Tiffani Nichole Johnson, JD
Rights and Advocacy Specialist
DC Department on Disability Services
tiffani.johnson@dc.gov
(202) 730-1802

Lt. Michelle Robinson
Metropolitan Police Department
Criminal Investigations Division

Lt. Angela Cousins-Douglas
Metropolitan Police Department
Criminal Investigations Division
Angela.cousins@dc.gov

Gale Cooke
Aging Disability Resource Center
D. C. Office on Aging

Douglas Klein, Esq.
U. S. Attorney's Office
Douglas.klein@u.doj.gov
(703) 785-5589

Dr. Sheila Y. Jones
Chief, Adult Protective Services
Sheilay.jones@dc.gov
(202) 299-2155

Christine O. Kenny, LICSW
City-wide Money Management Program
Manager
Iona Senior Services
ckenny@iona.org
(202) 895-9405

Vincent Tucci
Fraud Investigator
NASA Federal Credit Union
Vincent.tucci@me.com
(202)345-0472

Maria Shumar
U. S. Department of Justice
Elder Justice Initiative
maria.o.shumar@usdoj.gov
(202) 305-3250

Brian Footer
DC Office on Aging
brian.footer@dc.gov
(202) 535-1423
(866) 657-1067

Committee Roster Changes:

The committee membership changed in 2015/2016 as new members were recruited, and other members changed jobs or moved from the DC area. Lynne Person left AARP for a position in the DC government and Purley Jones came onto the committee as the new AARP representative. Lt. Michelle Robinson was reassigned in the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and Lt. Angela Cousins-Douglas came onto the committee in her place. Vincent Tucci was recruited as a new member after he retired from the MPD. Carla Rawlings volunteered for the committee during the year and was welcomed. Janet Heisse resigned with plans to relocate out of the DC area and Carolyn Nicholas was invited to join the EAPC as a senior advocate and representative

of the Commission on Aging. Maria Shumar retired from the U.S. Attorney's Office but remains on the committee representing the U.S. Department of Justice. Gale Cooke resigned from the EAPC at the end of the year as she was leaving her position at the D.C Office on Aging's Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Annual Spending Plan

In FY 2016, the Elder Abuse Prevention Committee developed a spending plan that funded: outreach and education of seniors; training of professionals who work with vulnerable populations: a Real Property Tax Initiative to protect seniors from losing their homes in tax sales: Adult Protective Services: City-wide case management services: emergency food and gift cards for vulnerable adults: and a small administrative support fund. The FY 2016 funds were spent as follows:

- 1. Real Property Tax Initiative Conducted by Legal Counsel for the Elderly.** Budgeted: \$7,000. All funds were spent. Legal Counsel for the Elderly's Real Property Tax Project assisted homeowners with litigation defense, counseling, advocacy and outreach programs throughout the District.
- 2. Training for Professionals Who Work with Vulnerable Adults.** Budgeted: \$1,700. Spent: \$1,532. The *Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults – Risk and Prevention* conference was held on June 2, 2016 and 106 social workers, case managers, nurses, lawyers, advocates and other professionals attended.
- 3. Adult Protective Services Imprest Fund to Protect Vulnerable Adults in an Emergency from Loss of Basic Needs.** Budgeted: \$4,950. All funds were spent. Funds were used for a variety of emergency needs to protect vulnerable adults, including heavy duty cleaning, extermination of bed bugs, purchase of a bed and other basic household items, payment of utility bills, and provision of other basic needs to protect vulnerable adults in their homes.
- 4. City-wide Imprest Fund to Protect Vulnerable Adults in an Emergency from Loss of Basic Needs.** Budgeted: \$4,950. Community-based case management programs spent \$4,979. Funds were used to prevent foreclosure, purchase an air mattress, pay utility bills to avoid disconnection, pay for cleaning to prepare for bed bug extermination services, and pay for partial rent to prevent eviction of a disabled senior.
- 5. Administrative Support:** Budgeted: \$3,000. All funds were spent. Funds were used to support the work of the committee; maintain tracking reports for the *Money Smart for Older Adults* training workshops; compile and update survey information about financial exploitation; and provide for planning, coordination, and evaluation of a professional conference.
- 6. Education and Outreach:** Budgeted: \$1,800. Education and outreach materials were developed and \$1,832 from the EAPC grant was spent. A partnership was developed with DC TROV and additional funds were added for the campaign and a total of \$2,793 was spent on information materials. Funds were spent to purchase magnets,

door hangers, and other informational materials for distribution to senior centers, wellness centers and at other sites. In addition, EAPC committee members continued to conduct Money Smart for Older Adults training sessions for seniors throughout the District of Columbia.

7. **Refreshments for Education and Outreach Workshops:** Budgeted: \$200.00. None of these funds were spent for refreshments. A portion of these funds was used to cover the overspending for the City-wide Imprest Fund and the outreach and education campaign. The balance of the unspent funds was applied toward the purchase of gift cards at the end of the year.

9. **Purchase of Food and Gift Cards:** Budgeted: \$76 as a placeholder for any unspent funds. There was a \$334 balance after all invoices were paid and gift cards valued at \$330 were purchased from Target and Safeway. The gift cards were split evenly between Adult Protective Services and the City-wide Imprest Fund and are available for emergency purchases for vulnerable seniors in need.

2015/2016 Spending

Project	Amount Budgeted	Amount Spent	Notes
Real Property Tax Initiative	\$7,000	\$7,000	Spent in full
Training for Professionals	\$1,700	\$1,532	Unspent balance of \$168 applied toward other line items and gift cards
Adult Protective Services Imprest Fund	\$4,950	\$4,950	Spent in full
City-wide Imprest Fund	\$4,950	\$4,970	Funds transferred from training surplus to cover deficit.
Administrative Support	\$3,000	\$3,000	Spent in full
Education and Outreach	\$1,800	\$1,832	Funds transferred from training surplus to cover small deficit of \$32. Partnership with DC TROV provided additional funds. A total of \$2,793 was spent.
Refreshments for Education and Outreach Workshops	\$200	\$0	Unspent balance was applied toward purchase of gift cards
Purchase of food and gift cards	\$76	\$330	Unspent funds were used to purchase gift cards
End of Year Total	\$23,626	\$23,614	

Decisions about which projects to fund, the amount of funding, and all adjustments to the spending plan were made by the members of the Elder Abuse Prevention Committee.

2015 Accomplishments

1. **Prevention of Abuse through Outreach and Education to Help Seniors Avoid Financial Exploitation:** The Money Smart for Older Adults outreach and training program was extended into 2015/2016. The curriculum was developed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). EAPC members volunteered to lead workshops and presented information to over 740 seniors in the District of Columbia.

Training sessions for seniors were conducted in the community at the following locations:

- St. John's Episcopal Church
- Edgewood Terrace Apartments
- Mt. Sinai Baptist Church
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- People's Congregational Church
- AARP Penn Branch Chapter
- Seabury at Friendship Terrace
- Petersburg Apartments – Fort Lincoln III
- Residences at Thomas Circle
- Senior Village I – Ft. Lincoln II
- Gettysburg Apartments – Ft. Lincoln I
- East Rock Creek Senior Village
- Guy Mason Recreation Center
- So Others Might Eat (SOME)
- Berniece Fonteneau Senior Wellness Center
- Plymouth Congregational Church
- U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
- Edgewood Commons
- Mt. Pleasant Senior Village
- Palisades Senior Village
- Capitol Hill Senior Village
- Glover Park Senior Village
- Green Valley Senior Apartments
- The Office on Aging Senior Symposium
- UDC Institute of Gerontology – Senior Companion/Respite Care Program
- Chevy Chase House
- Washington Wellness Center
- UPO Foster Grandparent Program/Matthews Memorial Church
- Emery Heights, AARP Neighborhood Chapter at Peoples' Congregational Church

- Shepherd Park AARP Neighborhood Chapter
- Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center
- Sunrise Senior Living

The *Money Smart for Older Adults* training was conducted in every ward of the District and approximately 760 seniors received direct information about how to protect themselves from financial scams and exploitation. A total of 33 workshops were conducted during 2015/2016.

The EAPC agreed to continue to offer the *Money Smart for Older Adults* training to senior groups in 2016/2017 and set a goal for each member of the EAPC to participate in conducting at least two sessions during the program year.

2. **Prevention of Abuse through an Outreach and Information Campaign--World Elder Abuse Awareness Day:** The EAPC collaborated with DC TROV to develop public awareness of elder abuse around World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15th. DC TROV is a multi-agency group created to engage the community in spotting and reporting elder abuse and to improve the response to older victims, and joining forces to develop an informational campaign made sense. The campaign included the development and purchase of magnets that includes the APS Hotline number for distribution to seniors, door hangers that provide information about what people can do to help prevent abuse of seniors for distribution in the community, and purple ribbons sent to Wellness Centers with information about World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Information was also posted through social media.
3. **Prevention of Abuse through Training for Professionals Who Work with Vulnerable Adults:** The EAPC sponsored a professional conference in June for professionals who work with vulnerable adults. The training was approved for six (6) continuing education hours for social workers by the Metro Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

The *Financial Exploitation – Risk and Prevention* conference was held at the Brickfield Center, AARP Building on Thursday, June 2, 2016. One hundred and six (106) social workers, case managers, nurses, advocates, and other professionals who work with vulnerable adults attended and 82 written evaluations were completed.

Training objectives were met and included helping professionals:

- Develop knowledge about identify theft, reverse mortgages and Medicare Fraud
- Develop awareness of the extent of financial exploitation of seniors
- Enhance capacity to help clients avoid risk through advance planning from health, social and legal perspectives

The conference was developed by the Elder Abuse Prevention Committee and included the following sessions:

- Identity Theft in the 21st Century – Can We Protect Ourselves? Det. Thomas Stein, Jr., U.S. Metropolitan Police
- Reverse Mortgages – Set Up to Help, but Are Seniors Being Exploited? Charlotte Knott, Housing Counseling Services
- Medicare and Medicaid Fraud – Keeping the Lid on Essential Benefits, Theresa Brownson, AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Senior Medicare Patrol
- Case Presentation and Discussion – Affinity Fraud, Idriys Abdullah and Robert LoProto, Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking
- Case Presentation and Discussion – A Study from Exploitation to Prosecution, Virginia Cheatham, JD, Assistant U.S. Attorney
- A panel presentation and discussion to help clients avoid risk through advance planning from health, social and legal perspectives.

Evaluations were tallied and summarized and the conference was evaluated as very successful. One hundred percent (100%) of evaluations indicated that the program objectives were met. Eighty-seven percent (87%) indicated that the training was very helpful to their area of practice and 13% indicated that it was helpful for their practice. The presenters were rated very highly and a sampling of evaluation comments are included here:

- Each presentation was very informative and presented in a way that was easy to understand. Outstanding trainers/speakers.
- The issue/explanation of reverse mortgage is overwhelming yet critical information. Pleased to have opportunity to ask questions and receive responses.
- Everyone was awesome and held my interest. I loved every minute of this training. Great information.
- The information on Reverse Mortgages was VERY thorough and debunked many myths, concerns and miss-information.
- All the presenters were clear and very professional.
- Excellent! This was the best workshop over all the years.
- The presenters gave very relevant and useful information. They were all very knowledgeable about the subject matter. Excellent!
- Presenters were prepared and had a vast amount of knowledge in this area.
- Great information! Thanks.
- This has been an excellent training. The topics covered have been extremely relevant and beneficial.
- Conference was well presented and appreciate all aspects. Very good presenters.

3. Prevention of Neglect through the Provision of Imprest Funds and Gift Cards: The EAPC provided an Imprest Fund for Adult Protective Services and for City-wide Case Managers in the Aging Network who work with vulnerable adults.

- Adult Protective Services used these funds to help vulnerable adults avert a crisis through purchase of heavy duty cleaning, bed-bug extermination, purchase of basic furniture, provision of a wheelchair and gel cushion and by covering moving expenses for vulnerable adults who were unable to provide for basic

needs. When social workers identified the need for funds to address a critical need to protect a vulnerable adult and established that funds were not available from any other source, the Imprest Funds were used to reduce risk and ensure that services were provided to meet the basic needs of the client. Use of Imprest Funds were approved by the Adult Protective Services Chief and documentation of expenditures was maintained.

- The City-Wide case managers used funds to assist vulnerable adults avert a crisis through emergency purchases for heavy cleaning in preparation for bed bug extermination, purchase of basic furniture, and payment to prevent foreclosure for an elderly client. In one instance, funds were used to assist Legal Counsel for the Elderly help a vulnerable client avoid eviction. Use of the Imprest Fund was managed and approved by the EAPC member who manages the grant funds and documentation of expenditures was maintained.
- Gift cards or food cards were purchased and made available to both APS and the City-wide case managers to be used to provide for emergency food and other basic necessities for vulnerable adults.

Imprest funds and gift cards were only used when clients had no other resources, the client situations were critical, and intervention was needed to provide relief from neglect or prevent a crisis.

- 4. Prevention of Financial Exploitation through the Real Property Tax Initiative:** Funds were awarded to Legal Counsel (LCE) for the Real Property Tax Project to assist homeowners with litigation defense, counseling, advocacy and outreach programs throughout the District

LCE's Real Property Tax Project assists older D.C. homeowners with litigation defense, counseling, advocacy and outreach programs throughout the District. LCE's attorneys represented more than 40 clients with real property tax problems.

The Real Property Tax Project is led by a Senior Staff Attorney who appears on behalf of LCE clients at the real property tax sale docket in D.C. Superior Court. She is the leading expert working on behalf of elderly low-income homeowners in the District of Columbia. LCE's advocacy over the past several years resulted in a significant reform of real property tax sale procedures in the District. All D.C. homeowners now experience the positive effects of those reform efforts, including a \$2,500 threshold under which properties would not be included in the sale, as well as greatly improved deficiency notices. Also as a result of advocacy efforts, LCE forged a new, improved relationship with the D.C. Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR). By gaining access to the tax sale list directly from OTR, Legal Counsel for the Elderly can conduct targeted outreach to senior homeowners at risk of tax foreclosure.

Starting in mid-May and continuing through mid-June, LCE mailed outreach letters to 350 D.C. homeowners who were listed for inclusion in the 2016 Real Property Tax Sale.

As a result of these mailings, LCE provided follow up advice and consultation to over 30 homeowners and directly assisted 14 senior homeowners to submit a formal request to be removed from the tax sale—giving them more time to pay, without the threat of imminent foreclosure.

5. **Prevention of Abuse through Development of Data About Financial Exploitation:** Data about the extent of elder abuse and financial exploitation in the District of Columbia is not available and the EAPC created a simple five-question survey to ask seniors who attended the *Money Smart for Older Adults* about whether they have been financially exploited or knew anyone who has been financially exploited. The purpose of collecting this data was to gather basic information that will be used to help obtain funding for a more in-depth, well-crafted research project to gather more specific information necessary for data driven policy and program development.

Surveys were collected at 24 *Money Smart for Older Adults* training sessions from March through September 30, 2016. Surveys were collected from over 500 seniors who live in all eight wards of the District. A summary report was prepared indicating that 27% of the participants knew someone who had been financially exploited and 15% of the participants indicated that they themselves had been financially exploited.

Summary

The Elder Abuse Prevention Committee draws experts from government and community-based agencies to focus on efforts to reduce abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults in the District of Columbia. A small federal grant provides limited funds to assist with outreach and education, provide for advocacy, and meet some of the basic needs of adults at risk. Committee members came together monthly to ensure that efforts were coordinated, services were publicized, and the community was made aware of how to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation from occurring and how to obtain help when services were needed.

In 2015/2016, the committee continued to focus much of its energy on getting the *Money Smart for Older Adults* training out to seniors throughout the District to help them avoid being financially exploited. A professional conference was conducted to help professionals who work with seniors understand financial exploitation issues and how to help seniors prepare for decision-making that will help avoid exploitation. Support was provided for legal services to help vulnerable adults remain in their own homes, direct assistance was provided to seniors at risk of neglect through Imprest Funds used as a last resort, a public information campaign was conducted in collaboration with DC TROV to provide public information about elder abuse and how to obtain help, and a survey was conducted at Money Smart training sessions to obtain basic information about the extent of financial exploitation in the District.

Completed by:
Barbara Strother, LICSW
Elder Abuse Prevention Committee
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