

Older Adult

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Annual Report | Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025



Pennsylvania
Department of Aging

Introduction

Pennsylvania’s Older Adults Protective Services Act

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) is responsible for establishing and maintaining a statewide system of protective services for individuals 60 years of age and older. Pennsylvania’s Protective Services system is governed by Act 79 of 1987, known as the Older Adults Protective Services Act (OAPSA), 35. P.S. 10225.101 et seq.

For the past 38 years, OAPSA has served as the cornerstone of Pennsylvania’s system for providing the protective services necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of older adults who lack the capacity to protect themselves and who are at imminent risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or abandonment (collectively referred to as “elder abuse” or simply “abuse”). Imminent risk can be defined as a situation where there is a high likelihood of immediate and substantial harm occurring.

OAPSA is victim-oriented and aims to safeguard the rights of older adults while providing for the detection, reduction,

correction or elimination of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and abandonment.

Under OAPSA, public education is conducted regarding the availability of protective services and creating an awareness of issues impacting older adults in the area of elder abuse and elder justice. PDA contracts with 52 local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to administer the Older Adults Protective Services program across all 67 counties in Pennsylvania. The AAAs receive allegations of abuse which are documented on intake forms, referred to as Reports of Need (RONs). RONs can be made on behalf of an older adult, whether the individual lives in the community or in a licensed care facility, such as a personal care home or skilled nursing facility. AAAs conduct investigations, request necessary records, make determinations on whether to substantiate cases, and when deemed necessary, provide protective services to older adults in order to reduce or eliminate abuse.

In order to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements, PDA performs quality assurance monitoring on local AAAs protective services programs to ensure their compliance with OAPSA. Under OAPSA, each AAA develops and submits an annual protective services plan to PDA. These plans describe how the local programs are administered and how they plan to maintain regulatory and statutory requirements. Based on the results of these quality assurance reviews and ongoing collaboration, PDA provides technical assistance and training to the local AAAs to ensure that quality protective services are delivered to older Pennsylvanians.

To learn more about the full range of programs available to older Pennsylvanians through PDA and the AAA network, including the law and regulations governing the prevention of and protection from elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, and abandonment, please visit PDA’s website at pa.gov/Aging. ■

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Statistical Overview	3
Reports of Need	
Overview	4
Statewide OAPSA Reports	5
RON Categorization	
Statewide OAPSA RONs –	
Continuing Trends	6
Older Adult RONs Investigations	
and Substantiations by AAA	7
Mandatory Abuse Reporting	
Overview	11
Statewide Abuse Types	
Alleged and Substantiated	12
Victims & Perpetrators	
Characteristics	13
Provision of Services	
Services Provided to Reduce or	
Eliminate Risk	14
Monitoring, Training	
 and Teamwork	16
Amendments to OAPSA	18
Guardianship	19
Contact Information	20

Older Adult Protective Services Snapshot – Fiscal Year 2024-25

14%

Increase In Reports (RONs)

Statewide reports of elder abuse totaled 66,719 – this is an increase of 14% over the previous fiscal year. | More on page 6.

33%

Abuse Allegations are Financial Exploitation

More on page 12.

52,679

RONs Investigated

79% of all reports were investigated.

More on investigations – page 6.

15,777

Substantiated

34% of the investigations were substantiated.

More on substantiated cases – page 6.

47%

Abusers were Family Members

More on page 13.

Family members were the most common substantiated perpetrators, followed by caregivers (33%).

59%

Female Victims

Females were the most common victims to be abused, neglected, and exploited.

More on victims – page 13.

83%

Caucasian

The majority of victims were Caucasian (white).

More on victims – page 13.

51%

Self-Neglect

Self-neglect was the most common substantiated allegation, followed by caregiver neglect (21%).

More on allegations – page 12.

OAPSA Reports of Need

Overview of Older Adult Abuse Reports

The number of elder abuse reports, also known as Reports of Need or RONS, continue to grow each year. As this report notes, the number of RONS submitted to PDA have increased by 84% over the past five years.

Several factors are recognized as playing a role in this increase: a rapidly growing aging population, where one in three Pennsylvanians will be aged 60 and over by 2030; ongoing awareness efforts at the state and local levels focused on building and enhancing education regarding the recognition and reporting of elder abuse; and the rise of financial exploitation and scams, fueled in part by the enhanced sophistication of tactics used by scammers who prey upon older adults.

The number and complexity of financial exploitation investigations have created challenges that require a multifaceted approach to the provision of protective services. PDA recognized the need to continue to serve as a visible and effective advocate for Pennsylvania's older adults and is committed to engaging

in efforts that are focused on building stronger collaboration through multi-disciplinary teams including providers, community-based organizations, state agencies, law enforcement, the judicial system, and other organizations that help older adults live with dignity, age well, and be free from all types of abuse.

Reports of Need for individuals aged 60 years and older for abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or abandonment are taken by the AAAs and Statewide Elder Abuse Helpline.

RONS are assigned a category, each with a required response time based on the information provided by the reporter.

There are two types of reporting under OAPSA: voluntary and mandatory. Under the voluntary reporting provisions, any person who has reasonable cause to believe that an older adult is in need of protective services may report that need to the local AAA directly, or call the Statewide Elder Abuse Helpline at 1-800-490-8505, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Voluntary reporters may choose to remain anonymous. They have legal protection against retaliation, discrimination, and civil or criminal prosecution under the law.

Mandatory reporters include any employee or administrator of a facility who has reasonable

cause to suspect that a recipient of care is a victim of abuse. Mandatory reporters are required to report the suspected abuse to their local AAA immediately.

The definition of a facility under OAPSA includes:

- long-term care nursing facilities
- personal care homes
- home health agencies
- domiciliary care homes
- adult daily living centers

Other state agencies such as the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) have created and implemented policies requiring additional types of facilities that they oversee to also be in compliance with OAPSA. In addition to reporting to the local AAA, if the abuse that the mandatory reporter is reporting involves sexual abuse, serious physical injury, serious bodily injury, or suspicious death, they are also required to make an immediate report to law enforcement and to PDA. ■

Statewide Elder Abuse Helpline

1-800-490-8505

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

OAPSA Reports of Need

Statewide OAPSA Reports - Reports of Need Categorization

Reports of Need for individuals aged 60 years and older for abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or abandonment are taken by the AAAs and Statewide Elder Abuse Helpline. RONS are assigned a category, each with a required response time based on the information provided by the reporter.

There are four categories of Reports of Need and each category has a designated category response time. The investigation is initiated by the AAA, who determines if the allegations are true and/or if the older adult (alleged victim) named in the report is in need of protective services (substantiated report) or is not in need of protective services (unsubstantiated report).

State Population
13,078,751*

Population 60 and Over
3,551,642 (27.2%)*

*Data prepared by the Pennsylvania State Data Center using 2024 population estimates.

Categories of RONS

Emergency: Requires an investigation to be started immediately to ensure the safety of older adults.

Priority: Requires a response as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours, and a face-to-face visit with the older adult within 24 hours.

Non-Priority: Requires a response in a timely manner, but no later than 72 hours, and a face-to-face with the older adult at an appropriate time in the investigation, but no later than 20 calendar days after the date the RON is received.

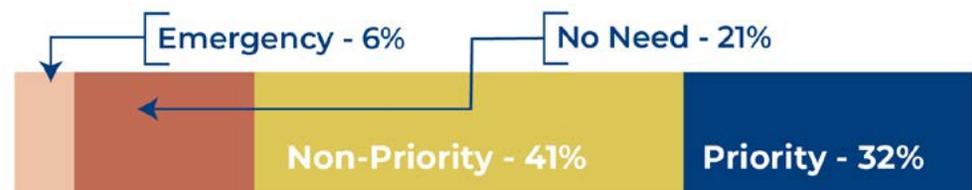
No Need: Based on the information contained in the Report of Need (RON), there is no need for an investigation. A report is categorized as a No Need when the alleged victim meets any of the following criteria: under age 60, does not live in PA, has capacity to perform or obtain necessary services, has a responsible caretaker (mandatory reporters who are also the alleged perpetrator may not be considered a responsible caretaker), is not or was not at imminent risk. At times, a case may require a referral for other resources to an appropriate community entity.

Capacity

Capacity is defined as the ability of an older adult to use and understand information to make personal decisions on one's own behalf and communicate any decision made. An older adult's capacity is determined

by an assessment performed by a medical professional(s). The older adult has individual rights, including a right to self-determination, and PDA respects and honors the decisions of older adults that have capacity to make their own decisions.

Report of Need Categorization



OAPSA Reports of Need

Statewide OAPSA RONs – Continuing Trends

Fiscal Year
2024-25

66,719

Reports of Need

14%

Increase
Over Last Year

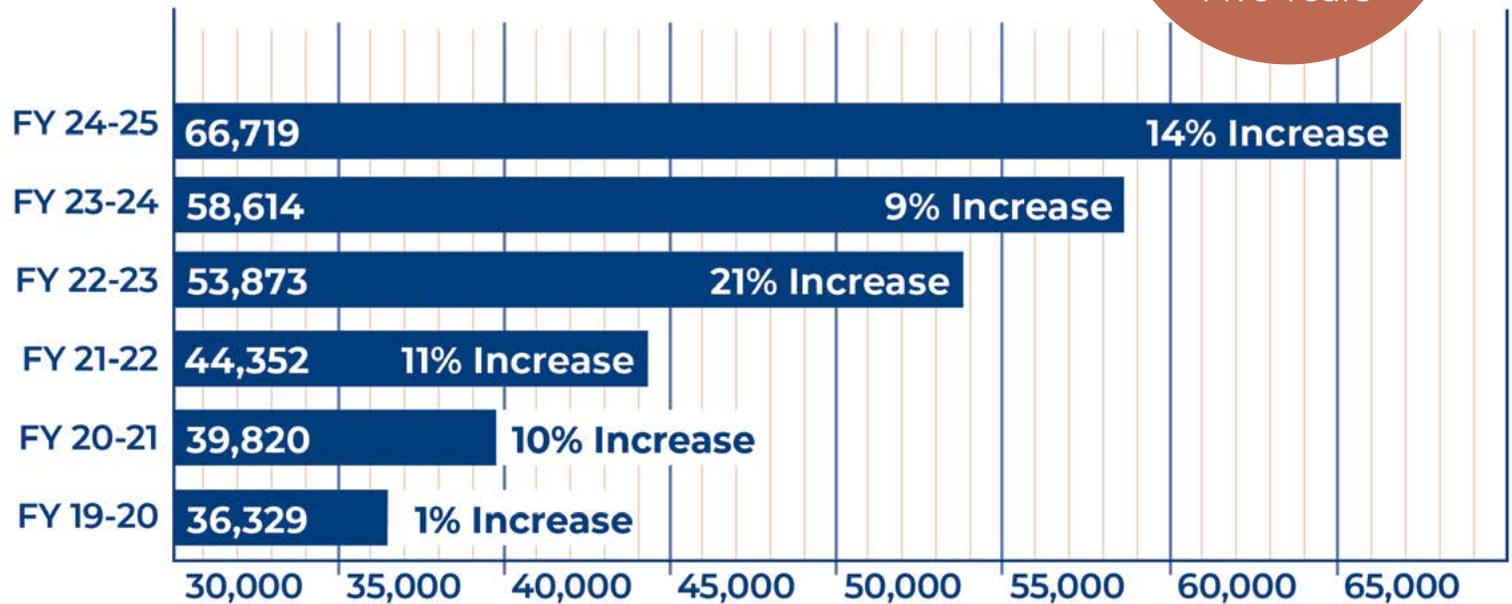
52,679

RONs Investigated
(79%)

15,777

Investigations
Substantiated (34%)

Historical Reports of Need



84%

Increase in
RONs Over
the Past
Five Years

Historically each year the number of RONs increases. These increases may be attributed to multiple factors, including an increasing aging population, continued awareness efforts, enhanced trainings, targeted collaboration with other state agencies and community partners, and improvements in data collection methods. Investigations provide the AAA with the opportunity to determine if allegations made in a report of need can be substantiated and/or whether the older adult is in need of protective services.

The following four pages detail the number of RONs, RONs investigated, and investigations substantiated by each AAA. ■

Older Adult Reports of Need— Investigations and Substantiations by AAA

Starting with this year’s 2024-25 report, this chart has been expanded to provide additional transparency and improve accuracy with regard to how RONs are categorized and how the number and percentage of investigations are calculated.

The **RONs Received** column represents the total reports of need (report) that the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) received. The AAA may receive more than one report regarding the same incident. When received, the AAA determines the category of each individual report, including whether the report is to be investigated, marked as a No Need, or referred to another agency.

The **RONs Investigated** column shows the total reports by AAA determined to be Priority, Non-Priority, and Emergency. Reports categorized as No Need or Referred to Another Agency are excluded from this total. This number is calculated differently from previous years to improve accuracy in reporting. In previous years’ calculations, PDA used the number of investigations instead of the number of individual reports investigated. Since more than one report can be associated with an investigation, PDA decided to include both RONs Investigated and Number of Investigations to more

accurately reflect the work of AAAs and provide greater transparency of protective services work. Percentage of RONs investigated are now calculated by dividing the number of RONs investigated by the number of RONs received.

The **Number of Investigations** column shows the total number of investigations conducted by the associated AAA. While comparing the number of RONs investigated with the number of investigations, please note that there can be more than one report associated with one investigation, and one AAA may take the report while another conducts the investigation. The

number shown is the number of investigations that the specified AAA conducted.

The **Investigations Substantiated** column shows the number of investigations where a determination has been made that the details of the report are confirmed or it has been determined that the older adult is in need of protective services.

The **No Needs** column shows the total number of reports that the AAA determined to not meet the criteria for protective services. ■

Counties (AAAs)	RONs Received	RONs Investigated By Number/Percent	Number of Investigations	Investigations Substantiated By Number/Percent	No Need RONs By Number/Percent
AAA of Somerset County	347	300 / 86.5%	315	153 / 48.6%	47 / 13.5%
AAA of Westmoreland County	1,776	1,439 / 81.0%	1,338	629 / 47.0%	328 / 18.5%
Active Aging, Inc. (Crawford)	261	227 / 87.0%	197	99 / 50.3%	33 / 12.6%
Adams County Office for Aging, Inc.	391	338 / 86.4%	341	112 / 32.8%	51 / 13.0%
Aging Services, Inc. (Indiana)	277	247 / 89.2%	213	53 / 24.9%	30 / 10.8%
Allegheny County DHS AAA	7,846	6,220 / 79.3%	5,233	2,870 / 54.8%	1,601 / 20.4%
Armstrong County AAA	323	287 / 88.9%	258	102 / 39.5%	35 / 10.8%

Older Adult Reports of Need Investigations and Substantiations by AAA (cont'd)

Counties (AAAs)	RONs Received	RONs Investigated By Number/Percent	Number of Investigations	Investigations Substantiated By Number/Percent	No Need RONs By Number/Percent
B/S/S/T AAA	746	596 / 79.9%	563	283 / 50.3%	149 / 20.0%
Beaver County Office on Aging	946	658 / 69.6%	607	161 / 26.5%	287 / 30.3%
Berks County Area Agency on Aging	2,191	1,829 / 83.5%	1,744	367 / 21.0%	358 / 16.3%
Blair Senior Services, Inc.	1,095	844 / 77.1%	719	309 / 43.0%	251 / 22.9%
Bucks County AAA	2,281	1,874 / 82.2%	1,580	319 / 20.2%	402 / 17.6%
Butler County AAA	912	623 / 68.3%	599	168 / 28.0%	288 / 31.6%
Cambria County AAA	630	492 / 78.1%	430	95 / 22.1%	138 / 21.9%
Carbon County AAA	290	257 / 88.6%	243	36 / 14.8%	32 / 11.0%
Centre County Office of Aging	363	166 / 45.7%	163	31 / 19.0%	197 / 54.3%
Chester County Department of Aging Services	1,850	1,203 / 65.0%	1,052	392 / 37.3%	643 / 34.8%
Clarion Area Agency on Aging	120	95 / 79.2%	83	42 / 50.6%	25 / 20.8%
Clearfield County AAA, Inc	434	350 / 80.6%	295	133 / 45.1%	82 / 18.9%
Columbia/Montour Aging Office, Inc.	433	373 / 86.1%	366	170 / 46.4%	60 / 13.9%
Cumberland County Office on Aging	1,467	1,168 / 79.6%	1,022	430 / 42.1%	293 / 20.0%
Dauphin County AAA	2,285	1,753 / 76.7%	1,512	726 / 48.0%	523 / 22.9%
Delaware County AAA	1,699	1,097 / 64.6%	1,084	198 / 18.3%	602 / 35.4%
Experience Inc. - AAA (Warren/Forest)	267	244 / 91.4%	217	96 / 44.2%	22 / 8.2%
Franklin County AAA	528	301 / 57.0%	292	60 / 20.5%	225 / 42.6%
Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC)	1,843	1,414 / 76.7%	1,223	561 / 45.9%	428 / 23.2%

Older Adult Reports of Need— Investigations and Substantiations by AAA (cont'd)

Counties (AAAs)	RONs Received	RONs Investigated By Number/Percent	Number of Investigations	Investigations Substantiated By Number/Percent	No Need RONs By Number/Percent
Huntingdon/Bedford/Fulton AAA	398	322 / 80.9%	310	152 / 49.0%	76 / 19.1%
Jefferson County AAA	196	171 / 87.2%	176	94 / 53.4%	25 / 12.8%
Lackawanna County Area Agency on Aging	1,499	1,262 / 84.2%	1,154	714 / 61.9%	236 / 15.7%
Lancaster County Office of Aging	2,762	1,992 / 72.1%	1,947	1,178 / 60.5%	766 / 27.7%
Lawrence County AAA	437	365 / 83.5%	343	76 / 22.2%	72 / 16.5%
Lebanon County AAA	1,018	777 / 76.3%	703	179 / 25.5%	240 / 23.6%
Lehigh County Aging & Adult Services	1,448	1,101 / 76.0%	1,056	430 / 40.7%	344 / 23.8%
Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Bureau	1,552	1,152 / 74.2%	1,008	332 / 32.9%	397 / 25.6%
Mercer County AAA, Inc.	320	248 / 77.5%	218	80 / 36.7%	72 / 22.5%
Mifflin/Juniata AAA, Inc.	284	198 / 69.7%	188	88 / 46.8%	86 / 30.3%
Monroe County AAA	714	547 / 76.6%	478	192 / 40.2%	165 / 23.1%
Montgomery County Aging and Adult Services	3,750	2,721 / 72.6%	2,352	606 / 25.8%	1,023 / 27.3%
Northampton County AAA	1,753	1,066 / 60.8%	939	198 / 21.1%	682 / 38.9%
Northumberland County AAA	588	484 / 82.3%	427	152 / 35.6%	104 / 17.7%
Office of Human Services, Inc. (Cameron/Elk/McKe)	427	355 / 83.1%	324	123 / 38.0%	71 / 16.6%
Perry County AAA	170	132 / 77.6%	127	25 / 19.7%	37 / 21.8%
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging	10,665	9,966 / 93.4%	7,970	781 / 9.8%	691 / 6.5%
Pike County AAA	323	285 / 88.2%	258	138 / 53.5%	38 / 11.8%
Potter County AAA	73	65 / 89.0%	66	30 / 45.5%	8 / 11.0%

Older Adult Reports of Need Investigations and Substantiations by AAA (cont'd)

Counties (AAAs)	RONs Received	RONs Investigated By Number/Percent	Number of Investigations	Investigations Substantiated By Number/Percent	No Need RONs By Number/Percent
Schuylkill County Office of Senior Svcs	1,062	688 / 64.8%	560	183 / 32.7%	372 / 35.0%
Southwestern PA AAA, Inc. (Wash/Fay/Greene)	2,468	1,933 / 78.3%	1,564	730 / 46.7%	531 / 21.5%
STEP Office of Aging	406	307 / 75.6%	295	144 / 48.8%	99 / 24.4%
Union-Snyder Agency on Aging, Inc.	381	175 / 45.9%	163	20 / 12.3%	204 / 53.5%
Venango County AAA	315	258 / 81.9%	247	102 / 41.3%	55 / 17.5%
Wayne County AAA	207	134 / 64.7%	135	55 / 40.7%	71 / 34.3%
York County AAA	1,624	1,401 / 86.3%	1,376	364 / 26.5%	216 / 13.3%

Counties (AAAs)	RONs Received	RONs Investigated By Number/Percent	Number of Investigations	Investigations Substantiated By Number/Percent	No Need RONs By Number/Percent
Statewide	66,719	52,679 / 79.0%	46,125	15,777 / 34.2%	13,889 / 20.8%

Mandatory Abuse Reporting Overview

In 1997, OAPSA was amended to require mandatory abuse reporting for administrators and employees of facilities. The law and regulations require that an employee or an administrator of a facility who suspects abuse must immediately report the abuse by calling (717) 265-7887.

As noted in the chart below, mandatory abuse reports decreased during 2019-20 and 2020-21, the two fiscal years coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, but again increased during 2021-22 and 2022-23. The data shows a decrease in 2023-24. For 2024-25, mandatory abuse reports have increased. Mandatory abuse reporting data collected during the fiscal year may include duplicate reports due to the statutory requirement to report to both PDA and the Department of Human Services.

Annual Mandatory Abuse Reports



Facilities Make Oral Mandatory Reports to PDA (717) 265-7887

There are four serious abuse types – sexual abuse, serious physical injury, serious bodily injury, and suspicious death. If the abuse being reported involves one of these, the facility must report to law enforcement and PDA in addition to reporting to the AAA. Definitions from OAPSA of these four serious abuses are as follows:

Sexual Abuse: Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing or attempting to cause rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, sexual assault, statutory sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault or incest.

Serious Physical Injury: An injury that causes a person severe pain; or significantly impairs a person’s physical functioning, either temporarily or permanently.

Serious Bodily Injury: Injury that creates a substantial risk of death or causes serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a body member or organ.

Suspicious Death: There is no OAPSA definition for the term “suspicious death.” However, a general definition for suspicious death is a death that is unexpected, and its circumstances or cause is medically or legally unexplained. ■

Reports of Serious Abuse for 2024-25 By Category*

685 Sexual Abuse

358 Serious Physical Injury

134 Serious Bodily Injury

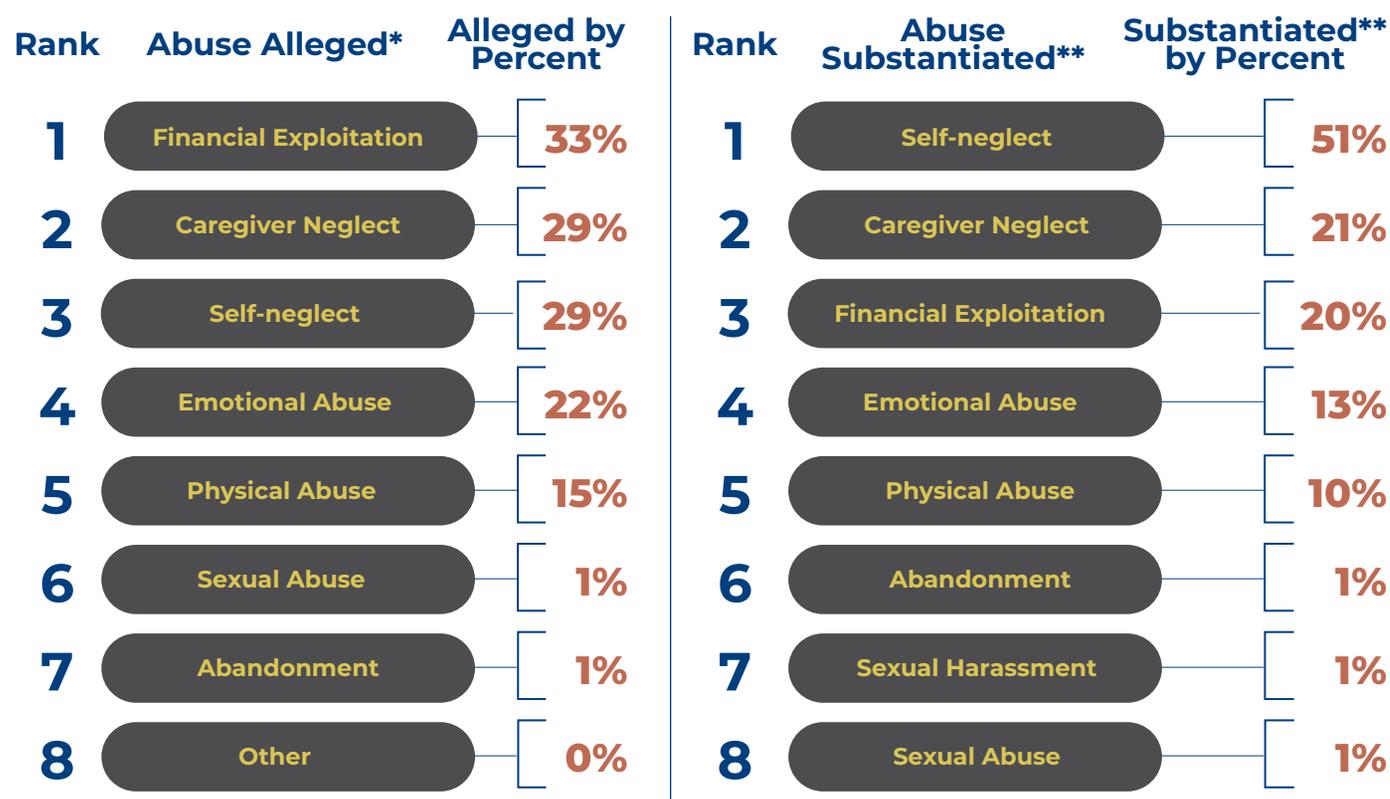
154 Suspicious Death

*Both older adult and adult mandatory reports of serious abuse broken out by type total 1,331 rather than the 1,317 noted on the Annual Mandatory Abuse Reports graph due to some reports covering more than one type of abuse.

Statewide Abuse Types Alleged and Substantiated

The below chart displays the types of abuse (alleged) originally reported versus types of abuse that were substantiated. They are ranked with the most common abuse type at the top. Fiscal year 2024-25 is the third year in a row that Financial Exploitation was the leading type of Alleged Abuse.

As part of the safeguards in place to protect older adults, the AAA protective services program investigates all areas of abuse when investigating the allegation(s) in a RON. There are times when the comprehensive investigation may identify additional substantiated abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment that was not originally alleged in the RON. ■



*Alleged abuse percentages are based on all RONs.

**Substantiated abuse percentages are based on all investigations.

Some Risk Factors for Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Abandonment

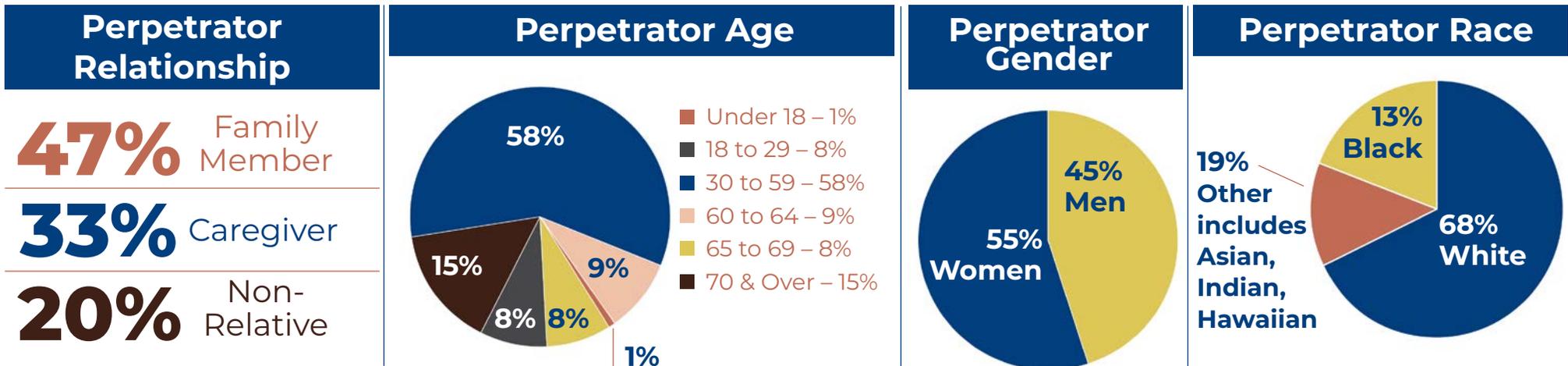
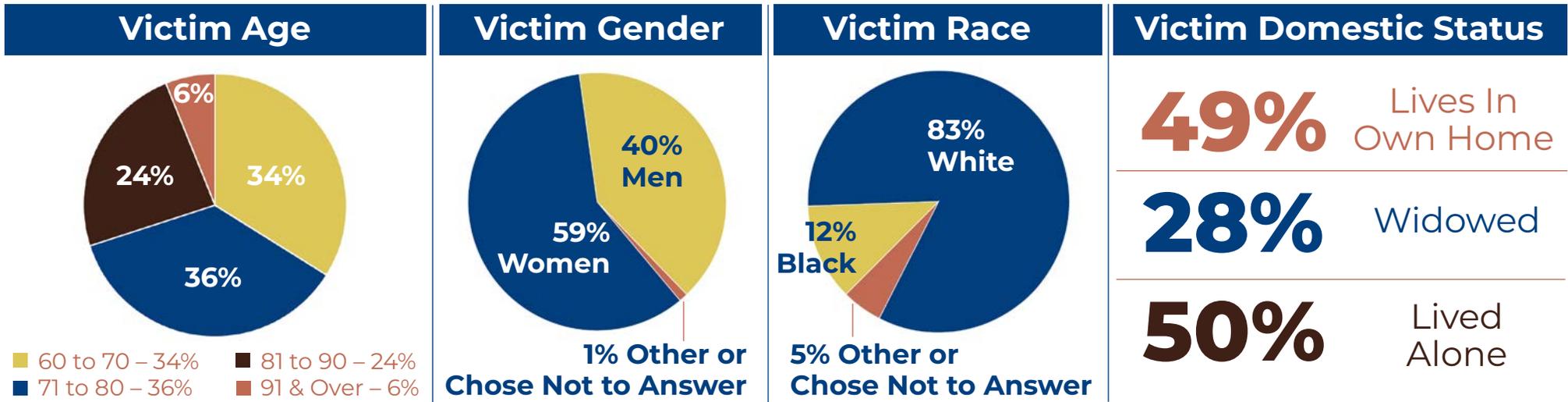
- Lives alone
- Lives in own home
- Socially isolated
- Incapacitated (physically and/or cognitively)
- Lack of formal or informal support
- Dependence on others for assistance

Percentages do not sum to 100% due to some RONs and investigations involving more than one type of abuse.

Victims and Perpetrators

Characteristics of Victims and Perpetrators

Throughout the course of a protective services investigation, information is collected about the characteristics of an individual reported to be in need of protective services (victim) and the abuser (perpetrator). Tracking this demographic data helps identify and guide public education and outreach efforts. ■



Percentages may not add to 100% due to numeric rounding.

Provision of Services

Services Provided to Reduce or Eliminate Risk

Following the substantiation of a Report of Need for protective services, an assessment is conducted by the AAA to develop a service plan, which describes the older adult's identified needs, goals to be achieved, and the specific services needed to reduce or eliminate risk. The AAA develops the service plan cooperatively with the older adult, their guardian and other family members, when appropriate. The AAA advocates for the older adult, who has a right to self-determination.

Service Provision

When the AAA develops a written service plan for an individual, the ultimate goal is to put services in place that are the least restrictive alternatives and will reduce or eliminate imminent risk to the older adult or their property. Services that are identified through the service plan may be provided by the AAA or they may be purchased from another agency, referred to another agency, and/or provided by family and friends.

The most frequently used service in fiscal year 2024-25 was personal care, followed by in-home meals and then care management. Overall statewide for fiscal year 2024-25, the 52 AAAs in Pennsylvania reported that 82,616 units of service were delivered to alleged victims of abuse.

The Pennsylvania Code 6 Pa. Code § 15.91. General, under section (c) informed consent required, clarifies that protective services may not be provided to an older adult who does not wish to receive the services. 6 Pa. Code § 15.91(c) (2025). Exceptions to this law are services that are ordered by a court, services that are requested by a court-appointed guardian of the older adult, or services that are related to involuntary intervention by an emergency court order. Id at (d) (2025).

Service Delivery Type	Units
Personal Care	38,067
In-Home Meals	20,507
Care Management	13,050
Overnight Shelter/Supervision	2,361
Home Support	2,323
Legal Assistance	2,182
Information & Assistance	1,224
Emergency Supplies	1,188
Guardianship Services*	547
Adult Daily Living Center	366
Pest Control/Fumigation	276
PS Petition to Court	228
Competency Evaluation	93
PERS-Personal Emergency Response System	55
Transportation	51
Any Services Delivered Due to COVID	39
Physician Consultation	36
Environmental Modification	7
Third Party Payer	5
Medical Equipment & Supplies	5
Informal Supports	4
Home Health	1
Totals	82,616

Provision of Services— Services Provided to Reduce or Eliminate Risk (cont'd)

Documenting Service Provision

During the prior fiscal year 2023-24 reporting period, PDA noted that not all AAAs are consistently documenting all the protective service work (including Guardianship) that is being provided to consumers during the protective services case. This would include the time the RON is received through the time a consumer is receiving protective services. A few reasons for the lack of consistently documenting all services may include staffing, workload, and training. In order to show the work that is being done, AAAs must document all service deliveries in the statewide reporting system so PDA can report them accurately in the annual report.

The statewide rollout for the Comprehensive Aging Performance Evaluation (CAPE) monitoring, referenced on page 16, began in January 2025 and further validates that the documentation is lacking in protective services cases. PDA is actively working with the AAAs to improve documentation by offering and providing technical assistance, developing additional training documents, and continued monitoring with CAPE. The Department anticipates service deliveries being skewed in the fiscal year 2024-25 but will have more complete and accurate reporting of service deliveries for fiscal year 2025-26 to show the complete picture of the work being done with protective services. ■

Law Enforcement Referrals

OAPSA provides for designation of a perpetrator if there is clear and convincing evidence that the individual was responsible for the abuse of the older adult. If a criminal act was committed, law enforcement may be contacted as part of the case investigation process.

The AAA refers a case to law enforcement when a protective services caseworker witnesses a crime in progress and when an older adult requests a referral as part of the service plan or their guardian or power of attorney requests or agrees to a referral when the older adult lacks the capability to consent.

929

**Number of
Law
Enforcement
Referrals**

Act 53 Referrals

Revisions to 18 PA C.S § 2713 (neglect of a care-dependent person), including the creation of § 2713.1 (abuse of a care-dependent person) mandate that if a AAA has reasonable cause to believe that a caretaker has engaged in conduct in violation of this law, the agency is required to report the incident to local law enforcement or the Attorney General.

193

**Number of
Referrals
Made Under
Act 53**

Monitoring, Training and Teamwork

Quality Assurance Monitoring

PDA is responsible for overseeing the performance and quality assurance monitoring of the 52 AAAs' protective services programs for compliance with the law, regulations and policies.

As part of the quality assurance monitoring protocol, PDA evaluates compliance with the statutory and regulatory requirements by sampling and reviewing cases to ensure consistent and quality services are administered by the AAA Older Protective Services program (OAPS) across the commonwealth. PDA provides technical assistance and additional support to the AAAs through follow-up visits, offering consultation and training.

PDA also supports the AAAs by providing basic, advanced, and annual training related to protective services. Training is made available through PDA's contract with the Institute on Protective Services at Temple University Harrisburg. ■

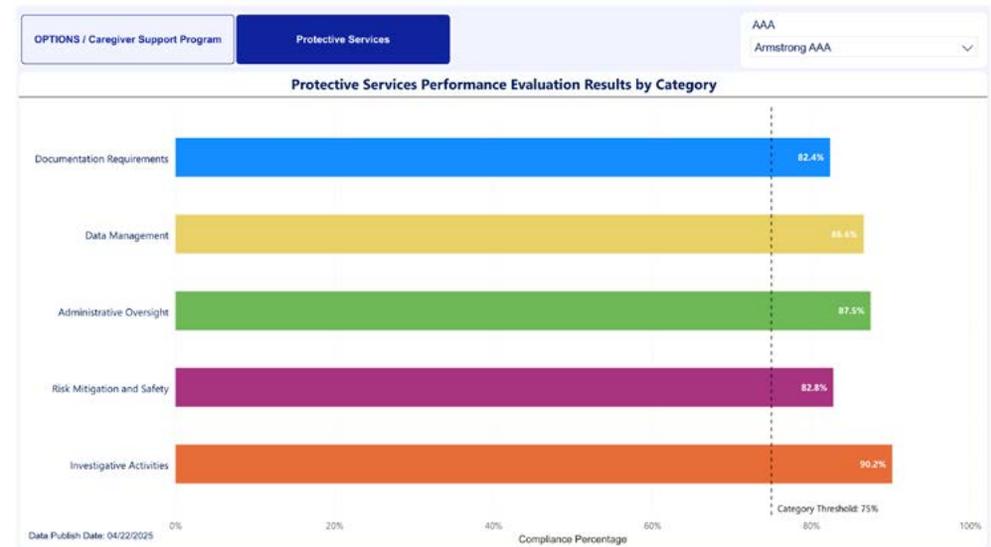
Launching CAPE, the New Performance Monitoring System

During fiscal year 2024-25, PDA moved away from a single program monitoring approach to a comprehensive approach that includes several programs. The Comprehensive Aging Performance Evaluation, or CAPE, is an innovative tool designed to boost transparency and accountability of Pennsylvania's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) network, which provides a host of services to older adults.

CAPE transforms the Department's prior monitoring approach into a more holistic philosophy, where each of the 52 AAAs is evaluated for different performance metrics during a singular monitoring review.

CAPE uses standardized individual measures to look at specific services that are provided by the AAAs. The performance evaluation includes each AAA's OPTIONS Program, Caregiver Support Program (CSP), Older Adult Protective Services (OAPS) Program, and a fiscal component associated with OPTIONS and CSP.

Following a 2024 pilot program with an initial group of four AAAs, the Department began using CAPE to monitor AAA performance in January 2025.



For Older Adult Protective Services, performance categories include documentation requirements, data management, administrative oversight, risk mitigation and safety, and investigative activities.

For OPTIONS (help at home) and the Caregiver Support Program, performance categories include documentation requirements, data management, administrative oversight, care management, program eligibility, and policy and fiscal operations.

Monitoring, Training and Teamwork

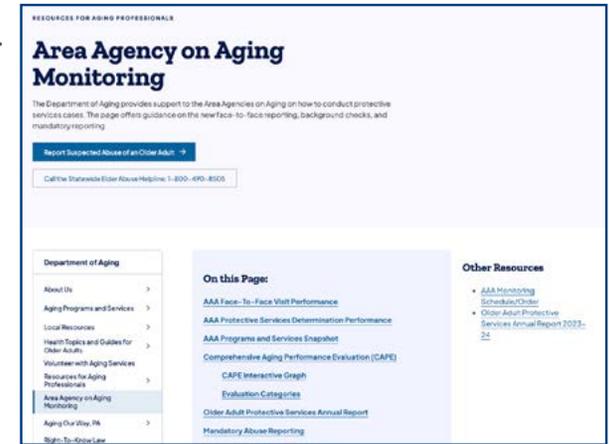
Launching CAPE (cont'd)

Multiple measures feed into each category score, with clearly defined, simple key categories for each AAA.

In April 2025, PDA began posting the performance results of the new system on its website. All of the results can be viewed on the new “Area Agency on Aging Monitoring” page at www.pa.gov/agencies/aging/aaa-monitoring.

Key Performance Data

The new AAA monitoring section on PDA’s website also provides public-facing data for two key AAA performance measures: the timeliness of face-to-face visits after a report of suspected abuse is received, and timeliness of completions of investigations within 20 days. This data is updated monthly. This section also includes quarterly snapshots of AAA program enrollment, census data and waiting lists. ■



Institute of Protective Services at Temple University Harrisburg

For more than 20 years, PDA has contracted with the Institute on Protective Services (IPS) at Temple University Harrisburg. With a mission to prevent, respond, and when necessary, obtain justice for victimized elders and other vulnerable adults, IPS works collaboratively with PDA to provide required protective services training to the local AAAs, as well as education and consultation to human services and law enforcement professionals on identifying, investigating, and resolving cases of elder victimization. ■

Multidisciplinary Teams: Bringing National-Level Expertise to PA to Keep Older Adults Safe in Communities

In early 2025, PDA began working with the AAA Network to develop Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) to help address complex older adult protective services cases in their respective counties and regions.

MDTs are community-based groups that support the Department’s commitment to

protecting older Pennsylvanians from abuse by bringing together professionals from various fields like social services, criminal and civil justice, mental health, medicine, finance, and public health to improve collaboration and outcomes for protective services cases. This collaborative approach, which is supported by the U.S. Department of Justice and utilized by several other states including New York and California, will deploy national level expertise and proven practical approaches to help AAAs and community partners build teams that are person-centered and able to move quickly to get the right resources for the victim.

In June 2025, PDA hosted a special learning session with the AAA Network to explore how MDTs can support elder justice efforts in Pennsylvania. The event brought together a bipartisan group of leaders, including representatives from the PA Office of Attorney General, the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association and the Office of Elder Justice in the Courts of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, along with 27 AAAs representing every region of the Commonwealth. AAAs were invited to apply for customized support and training to develop an MDT in their service area, with rollout of initial MDT projects planned for early 2026. ■

Amendments to OAPSA— Criminal History Background Checks

Since 1987, the Older Adults Protective Services Act (OAPSA) has served as Pennsylvania’s system for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of older adults who are at imminent risk of these serious offenses.

OAPSA was amended in 1996 to mandate that all prospective employees of long-term care facilities submit to a criminal history background check and be free of convictions for offenses designated under OAPSA. The conviction of certain “prohibitive offenses” serves to disqualify a person from being hired by a facility. Some of these offenses disqualified a person from working in a facility for life. These “lifetime” bans were listed in the legislation, but the legislation did not provide for the person subject to a lifetime ban with the opportunity to appeal the ban. Consequently, through litigation challenging the use of lifetime bans without the opportunity to appeal (Nixon I, Nixon II and Peake), the Commonwealth Court found the use of lifetime bans without the opportunity to appeal

unconstitutional. The court also held that the previously posted “Interim Policy” (pertaining to the employment of individuals with certain criminal convictions who care for older adults) is invalid.

Currently, all prospective facility employees must still obtain a Pennsylvania State Police criminal history background check, and individuals who have not resided within the Commonwealth for the past two consecutive years must also obtain a federal criminal history background check.

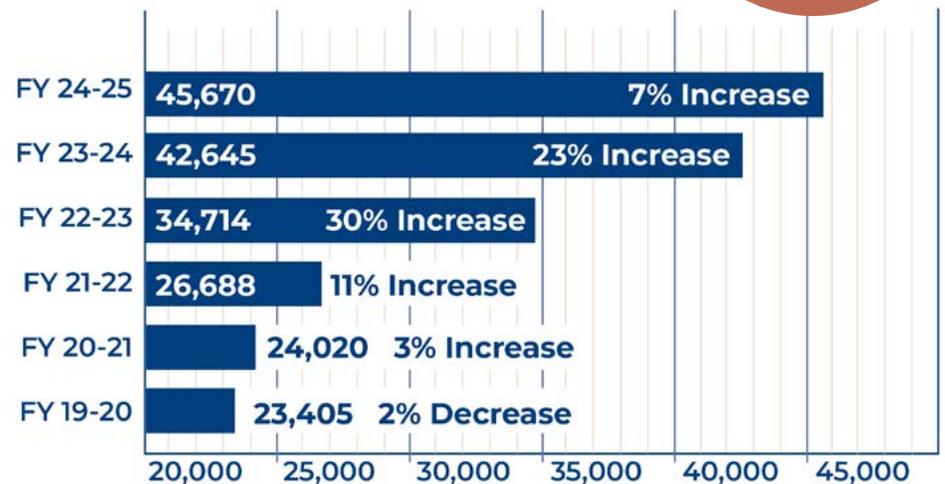
PDA is responsible for administering criminal history background checks, processing the results, and sending the final determination to the applicant. PDA is prohibited by federal law from sharing the contents of any criminal history background check to anyone other than the applicant, and the letters sent out by PDA only indicate the applicant’s eligibility or ineligibility for employment under OAPSA (see chart for the total number of annual background checks.) ■

Ongoing Efforts to Update OAPSA

PDA continues to advocate for the Pennsylvania legislature to update OAPSA to improve protections for older adults. Specifically during the fiscal year 2024-25, PDA participated in informational hearings held by the PA Senate and House to advocate that the law should be modernized to address Financial Exploitation of older adults and expand the list of mandatory reporters of abuse to include certain entities that were not in the original law (such as law enforcement, EMTs and hospital workers) and care options that did not exist in 1987 when the law was first enacted, such as home health, hospice and assisted living. ■

Annual Background Checks

95%
Increase
Over the Past
Five Years



Guardianship

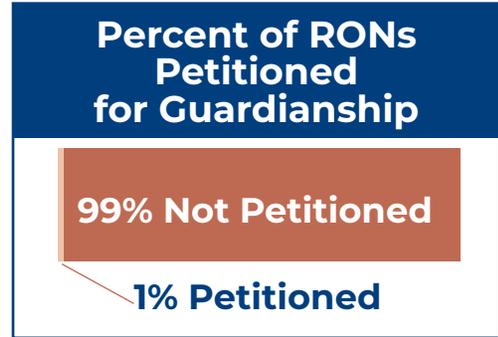
An Option of Last Resort

In Pennsylvania, guardianship is the court-appointed act of asserting the rights and best interests of an individual who is unable to (either partially or totally) manage financial resources or to meet essential requirements for physical health and safety. Prioritizing the autonomy and least restrictive environment for older adults is crucial to maintaining the older adult's right to self-determination. As a result, guardianship should only be considered after exhausting all

other options and least restrictive alternatives. It's essential to explore alternatives that empower the individual while ensuring their safety and well-being. This might include setting up support systems, utilizing community resources, or arranging for assistance with daily tasks. Only when these measures prove insufficient should guardianship be pursued. This measure of last resort measure can be revocable at times, contingent upon the change in needs of the older adult.

An older adult may lack capacity in one area such as managing finances but still retain the ability to make decisions and function independently in other areas of life. In these cases, limited (or partial) guardianship may be appropriate, granting the guardian authority only over specific domains (e.g., financial matters) while the individual retains decision-making rights in all other areas, such as personal care, medical decisions, or daily living activities.

Of the 15,777 substantiated investigations during fiscal year 2024-25, 1% were petitioned for guardianship and 0.74% of the substantiated investigations had guardianship petitions granted. ■



Guardian Petition Types	Count	Petition Type by Percentage	Percent Granted	Petitions Granted
AAA as Guardian	20	8%	90%	18
Third-Party as Guardian	111	44%	56%	62
Other Petition Types	Count	Petition Type by Percentage	Percent Granted	Petitions Granted
Emergency Intervention	36	14%	100%	36
Access to Records	3	1%	33%	1
Access to Person	1	0%	100%	1
Injunction Against Interference	1	0%	0%	0
Protection from Abuse	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Petition Type Unspecified*	82	32%	0%	0
Total Petitions	254			118

*The petition type for which was being filed was not selected (blank).

Statewide Elder Abuse Helpline

1-800-490-8505

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Pennsylvania
Department of Aging

555 Walnut Street, 5th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101

Phone: (717)783-1550 | Email: aging@pa.gov | Website pa.gov/aging