

Frequently Asked Questions about Adult Protective Services (APS)

Who is eligible for help from Adult Protective Services?

APS is available without regard to income for adults 18 years of age or older who:

1. The person has a physical or mental impairment
2. The person is in need of protection from actual or threatened harm due an inability to meet their essential needs OR protect them from abuse or financial exploitation
3. The person has no one available in the community who is willing and able to assist them responsibly.

If a person does not meet all three of these criteria, the Adult Protective Unit cannot open a protective case. Therefore, it is important that you provide as much information as you can on these three points when making a referral.

If I make a referral for someone I know, will the person find out I called?

No, unless you want the person to know that you contacted us, your identity will remain confidential.

How do I make a referral to APS?

To make a referral, call 274-5323. An intake worker will speak with you about the referral and ask you a number of questions to gather information about the person's current situation and concerns you have about their safety/

When I call to make a referral what kind of information will I need to give?

When making a referral to adult protective unit please give the following information to the intake worker to address the criteria for APS:

1. Explain what type of physical or mental impairment the person has. In particular, describe the specific physical, mental or cognitive factors that impair the person's ability to maintain their safety and meet their basic needs.

If you know that they have a specific diagnosis and/or received some type of treatment in the community please provide this information.

2. Describe what are the factors currently present that put the client at risk?

Specifically, what do you know with regard to the person's current situation that puts their safety at risk or impairs their ability to meet their essential needs such as food, shelter, clothing, medical care or manage finances?

If you think there is physical, sexual or emotional abuse or financial exploitation occurring, please provide as much detailed information as you can with regard to the evidence basis of your concern.

3. Are there any other resources in the community such as family members, neighbors, other agencies that are assisting the person in addressing the issues identified above?

Adult Protective Services are considered a last resort and intended to be short term. Hence, we work to connect referrals with community members and services that can help provide ongoing assistance and support. Any information you can share regarding community connections that the person you are referring already have will help to better serve them and ensure their safety and well-being in the long run.

After I make a referral what will happen?

If the intake worker determines that the case meets the criteria for APS, a worker will make a home visit to meet with the person and assess their safety and current situation. APS will make a final determination whether or not to accept a case.

Will I find out whether APS will work with the person I referred?

Yes, an APS worker will notify any person or agency who makes a referral whether APS is accepting the case.

What happens if the person says they do not want to receive any services from APS?

If the worker determines that the person has enough supports and resources available that they will be safe without the involvement of APS, we will close the case. However, if we determine that the situation is unsafe and the person is in need of additional services and support APS will keep the case open and continue to try to engage the person and provide them assistance.

If the person I refer has a severe substance abuse or mental health problem, can APS make them go to treatment services?

No, under the law all persons APS serves have the right to self-determination. This means that when someone is struggling with a mental health or substance abuse problem, except when they are an immediate danger to themselves or others, they have the right to refuse treatment services and APS cannot in anyway force them to go against their will.

What does it mean when APS becomes someone's representative payee (rep-pay)?

When someone who is receiving SSI, SSA or SSD are unable to manage their finances so that they meet their basic needs such as paying rent, buying food and covering other essential expenses, APS may apply to become their representative payee. When this happens, APS then assumes responsibility for their finances to make sure their bills are paid and essential needs are met. Their worker will talk with them regularly and provide them with personal needs allowance that they can spend as they wish based on their budget after basic needs are met.