

Adult Protective Services (APS)

State Fiscal Year 2025 Year in Review

Established in 1980, APS handles reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Each staff member and partner works hard to safeguard vulnerable adults through a comprehensive process of intake, field investigations, collecting evidence, records analysis, and connecting clients with vital support service.

While APS achieved significant milestones this year, the work is never finished. The State Fiscal Year 2025 Year in Review highlights the dedicated efforts of our staff, stakeholders, and partners who are committed to protecting and improving the lives of vulnerable adults.

Statutory and Regulation

APS's work is prescribed in federal regulation and State law. Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.), Title 46, Chapter 4 establishes APS, provides key definitions, and describes APS duties and responsibilities.

SFY 2025 Legislative Enhancements

Laws 2025, Chapter 175/House Bill 2894 passed the Arizona legislature and was signed by the Governor in May 2025. This legislation specifically strengthened Arizona's emergency alert system for missing people by adding those with a cognitive disability to the list of individuals for whom an alert must be issued. The bill also changed the name of the Silver Alert to the Seek and Find Alert. Additionally, it prohibits the denial or delay of an alert due to administrative processes, prior missing episodes, or discretionary assessments that are unrelated to the immediate risk to the missing person's safety. While APS is not responsible for locating missing people, when a vulnerable adult goes missing APS may investigate the report to determine if someone is neglecting the vulnerable adult or if the individual is unable to meet their own basic needs because of a physical or mental impairment. Sometimes, when a vulnerable adult is found, APS can assist in helping that adult's caregivers implement solutions to prevent future incidents.

APS in SFY 2025

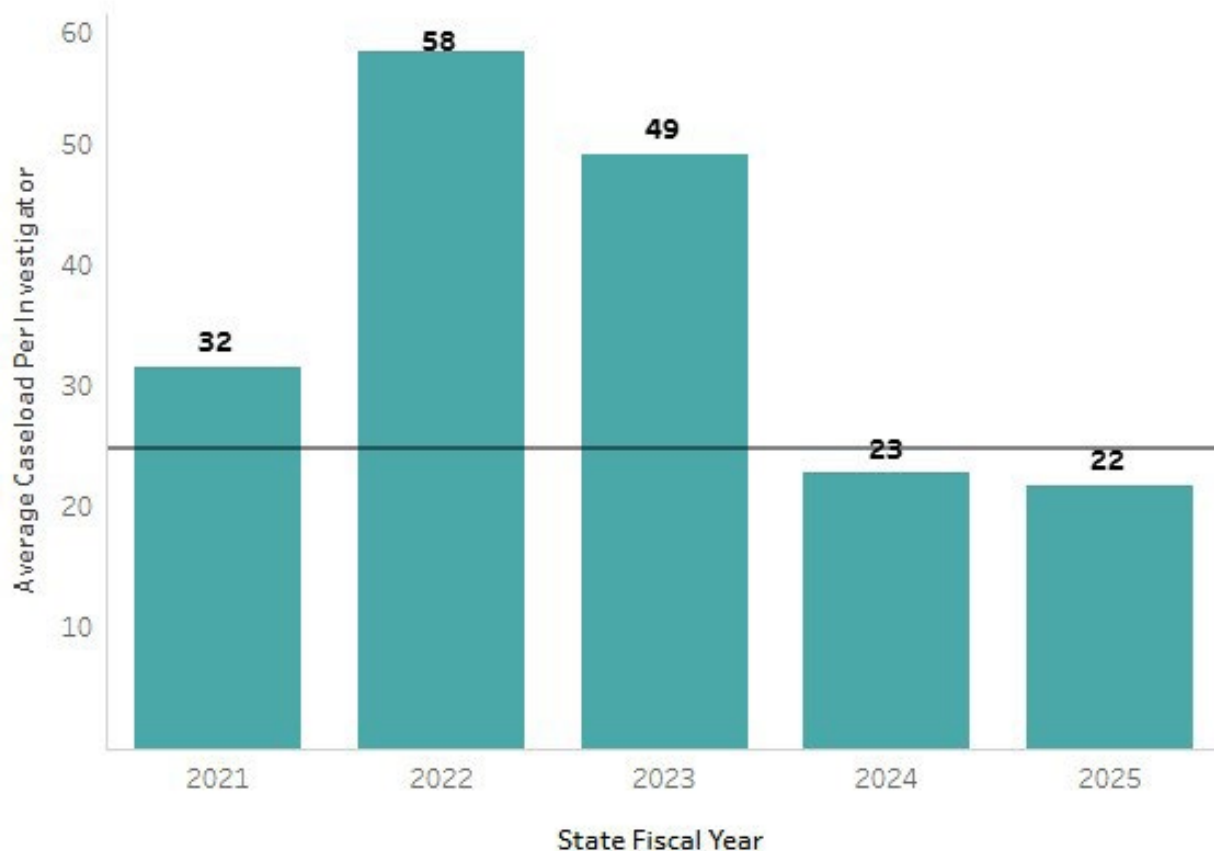
Data Demonstrates Enhanced Performance and Stability

APS improves outcomes for vulnerable adults by monitoring performance data. While metrics can't capture all aspects of their work, the outputs show APS's commitment to continuous improvement, achieving positive results for vulnerable adults, and holding perpetrators accountable.

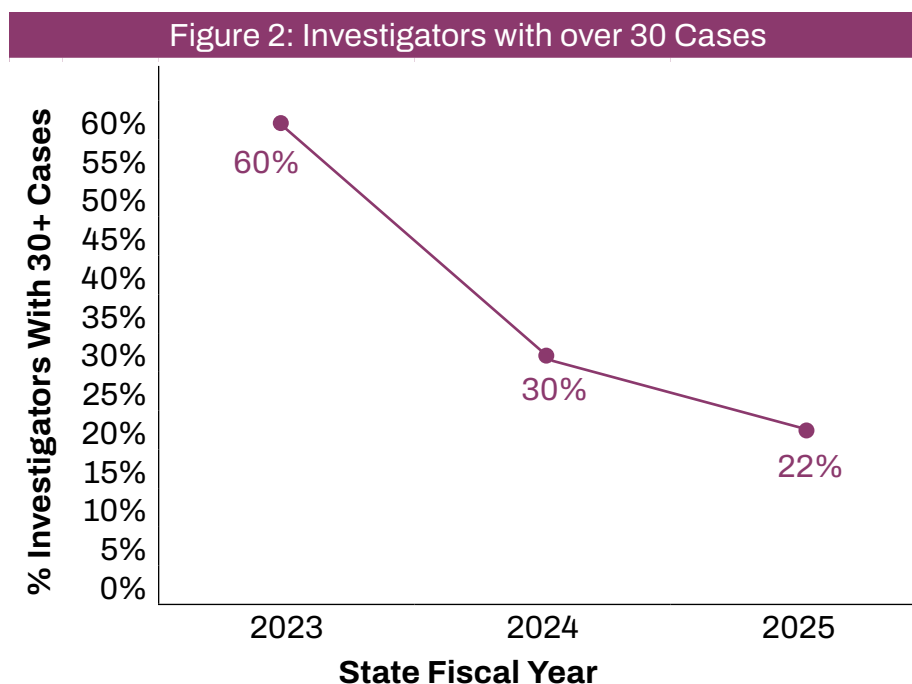
The Importance of Caseload Size

Investigating abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults is complex, requiring careful planning and coordination. APS recognized that lower workloads help investigators perform better (reference NAPSA caseload standard below), and partnered with the Legislature and Governor's Office to increase staffing levels and reduce average caseload ratios. From 2022 to 2025, APS reduced the average caseload from 58 to 22 per investigator. By 2025, only 22% of investigators handled 30+ cases, down from 60% in 2023. This improvement has helped investigators review evidence and make service referrals more effectively.

Figure 1: Caseload Size



In addition to bringing the caseload ratio in line with the national best practice standard, APS has worked to ensure that the lower ratio remains stable and that it results in greater investigator capacity. This has been achieved by carefully monitoring and distributing incoming cases so that no single office experiences a spike in incoming volume. Figure 2 shows that in SFY 2023, 60% of APS investigators had an average of 30+ cases. By SFY 2025, APS reduced this to 22%, demonstrating significant enhancement in the ability of APS investigators to perform essential activities like reviewing and analyzing evidence and facilitating service referrals.



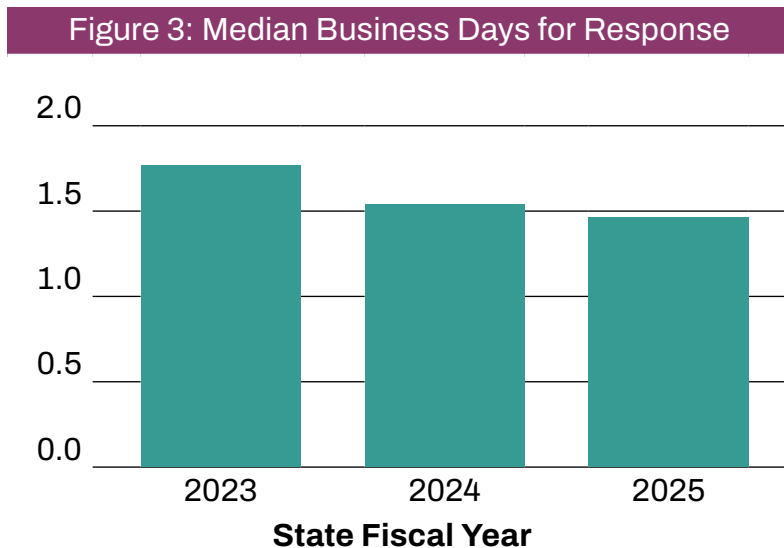
National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) Best Practice Caseload Standard

NAPSA reports that “effective caseload management is essential at every administrative level” and “victims depend on a prompt and effective APS response.” NAPSA further explains that when APS investigators carry too many cases, there may be waitlists and reports that “stressed workers may start taking shortcuts by omitting home visits, relying on phone contacts with victims rather than face- to-face interviews, accepting suspicious explanations of how injuries occurred, omitting important information in case records and closing cases prematurely.” These types of practices may increase risk to vulnerable adults. Traditionally, NAPSA has recommended a caseload ratio of 25 cases per investigator. However, more recently, each APS program has been encouraged to develop its own caseload standard based on research and analysis.

Otto, Joanne M. (n.d.). Adult Protective Services Caseload Management [Online forum post]. [napsa-now.org. https://www.napsa-now.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/TA-Brief-Caseload-Management-FINAL.pdf](https://www.napsa-now.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/TA-Brief-Caseload-Management-FINAL.pdf)

Response Time

In APS, the first contact response time is more than just a performance metric; it is the critical bridge between active harm and immediate safety. From SFY 2023 to SFY 2025, initial response times improved by about 15%, with a median response time of 1.5 business days in SFY 2025. Enhanced training and reduced caseloads helped stabilize response times. Delays beyond the response timeframe are usually due to insufficient information, safety concerns, or coordination with law enforcement. APS aims to respond within one to five business days, depending on risk, to ensure timely assessments and case planning.



SFY 2025 APS Projects and Achievements

System Coordination

Automated Cross Reports with Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)

When APS investigates an allegation that occurred in an Arizona health care facility, a cross-report is made to the ADHS. On December 1, 2024, APS replaced its manual process for making these cross-reports with an automated process.

Rather than an APS Investigator completing a form or calling ADHS, the cross-report now takes place electronically once APS confirms that an ADHS facility is involved. This efficiency saves over 1,600 APS Investigator hours of manual work each year and ensures a more timely cross-report to this critical system partner. The automation of this process also mitigates the risk of human error as it does not require data entry.

Enhancing APS with Specialized Support

APS has made significant strides through specialization, recently adding a Behavioral Health Coordinator to support vulnerable adults with complex mental health needs who are at risk of abuse or neglect. This role facilitates collaboration between APS Investigators and the mental health community to provide necessary services and reduce future risks.

National Recognition for Collaboration

APS was recognized by the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) at its 2024 Annual Conference in Albuquerque. Assistant Director of the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), Rebecca Clayton, was honored with NAPSA's prestigious Collaboration Award. This award acknowledges significant contributions to the growth and development of protective services for elders and persons with disabilities through outstanding collaborative efforts.

Tribal Collaboration

APS has made significant progress in building relationships with tribal communities in Arizona, leading to invitations for collaboration discussions.

Key activities include:

- Participation in the inaugural Arizona Elder Justice Summit.
- Involvement in the National Framework on Aging Listening Session hosted by the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona.
- Contributions to the Tohono O'odham 2025 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event.
- Participation in a multi-state panel at the national Tribal Elder Justice Summit.

APS 101 and Mandated Reporter Training

APS engages stakeholders across the state about their responsibilities towards vulnerable adults. For training information, visit APS's [Training, Education, and Community Engagement webpage](#) or contact the [Community Outreach mailbox](#).

Under A.R.S. § 46-454, mandated reporters, including certain state employees and medical/financial professionals, must report any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults. APS training covers:

- Identifying signs of abuse
- Reporting procedures
- Steps following a report
- APS objectives

In SFY 2025, APS delivered 70 trainings to over 2,000 participants, including other state agencies, Area Agencies on Aging, local governments, private businesses, and first responders.

WEAAD Conference

On June 16, 2025, over 200 professionals gathered for the Seventh Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Conference, themed *Arizonans United Against Elder Abuse: It Takes a Village*. The event included educational presentations and resources, featuring APS sessions, Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes' Task Force, and expert panels on elder maltreatment. Governor Katie Hobbs declared June 15, 2025, Arizona Elder Abuse Awareness Day.



“Events like these raise awareness, and share tools, resources, and best practices to reverse this trend. You are educating and equipping yourselves so you can recognize, prevent, report, and respond to elder abuse in all its forms.”

- Governor Katie Hobbs



Operational Improvements

Vehicle Efficiency

In SFY 2024, APS made significant strides in enhancing vehicle efficiency by launching the DAAS APS Reservation Transportation System, or DARTS. This initiative was designed to optimize the use of state-owned vehicles, which are crucial for investigators as they engage with victims, gather evidence, and provide essential services. By SFY 2025, the system was fully integrated, allowing investigators to effortlessly reserve vehicles and report any issues through a convenient mobile app.

Prioritizing Investigator Safety

Another top priority for APS is safety, particularly given the high-risk situations investigators often face during case visits. To address these challenges, APS appointed three Safety Officers who provide crucial advice, accompany investigators in the field, and conduct training sessions. In SFY 2025 alone, over 5,200 safety consultations were carried out, highlighting that approximately 17% of cases required a safety review. Weekly Safety Cafés are also held to educate staff on various safety issues, attracting around 60 participants each session.

New Supervisor Training

APS also focused on improving leadership within the organization by developing an intensive three-week training program for new supervisors. This program built on the existing investigator training and included various methods of learning, culminating in a capstone project that addressed managing underperforming units. Out of 45 supervisors, an impressive 98% completed the training successfully, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing interest in further training opportunities.

APS Cases - Making a Difference!

An APS investigation fulfills two primary objectives. Firstly, APS aims to determine whether abuse, neglect, or exploitation has taken place, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable and barred from employment in residential care facilities, nursing homes, and home health agencies. This crucial process helps protect other vulnerable adults from potential harm in the future. Secondly, APS offers services designed to assist vulnerable adults in achieving safety tailored to their specific needs. Below are examples of the types of cases that APS has investigated in SFY 2025.

Registry Entries to Hold Perpetrators Accountable

- An 84-year-old woman was hospitalized with severe injuries and malnutrition while living with her daughter, a licensed nurse. She faced neglect and abuse but has since improved in a group home after APS intervened and confirmed the abuse, adding the daughter to the APS registry.
- A 93-year-old man experienced financial exploitation by a manipulative perpetrator posing as a romantic partner. APS substantiated this case through interviews and evidence, leading to the perpetrator's addition to the APS registry after the victim's family obtained guardianship.
- A 46-year-old woman in a psychiatric hospital suffered abuse from a staff member who used inappropriate restraints. APS substantiated the case with video evidence, resulting in the staff member's termination and registry listing.

Providing Protective Services

- A 69-year-old woman, partially blind and needing assistance, was living in inadequate conditions with relatives. APS helped arrange long-term care services and placed her in a safe group home where she is now happy.
- A 45-year-old male, a double amputee, was self-neglecting in a cluttered apartment. APS arranged for cleanup services and ongoing support to improve his living conditions.
- An 85-year-old man with cognitive delays was not caring for himself. After multiple discussions, he accepted home-delivered meals and eventually chose to move to a facility where his needs are met.
- A 64-year-old male with mental health issues lived in a boarding home and attempted suicide. APS ensured he received medical help and helped place him in a home that offered 24/7 caregiving services to ensure his safety.
- An 80-year-old female, confused after a car accident, received immediate assistance from APS. She was hospitalized for a brain bleed and expressed gratitude for the investigator's timely intervention, which likely saved her life. She is now safe with family.

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