



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 29, 2017

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## Arizona Department of Economic Security Strengthens Adult Protective Services Policies

*Policy Enhancements Will Result in Investigations of More Cases to  
Protect Vulnerable Populations*

**PHOENIX** – The Arizona Department of Economic Security (“DES”) announced today it has strengthened policies related to Adult Protective Services (“APS”) intake procedures, which will result in the investigation of more cases that allege abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults. DES also announced it will review information and referral reports previously received and investigate them in a manner consistent with this new policy. The policy change is part of continuous improvement efforts by DES to evaluate whether longstanding practices sufficiently allow the State to protect the vulnerable.

“As the State’s human services agency, DES has a responsibility to do all that it can to care for individuals and families in need,” said DES Director Michael Traylor. “DES is taking a deep dive into our policies and procedures to ensure we are doing our best to uphold our obligation to protect the state’s vulnerable population. This policy change will allow the state to investigate more reports and protect those in need.”

DES considers a number of factors in every APS case: 1) Is the person a vulnerable adult? and 2) Is there an allegation of maltreatment? (abuse, neglect or exploitation). In 2015, DES established standard work procedures and adopted a case intake form following an internal audit of the agency’s practices. The form, used in North Carolina was seen to be a best practice, includes a question that requires a correlation between an individual’s vulnerability and the alleged maltreatment – a standard that is neither prescribed nor prohibited by Arizona state law.

Following a recent review of the intake form, DES concluded the question limits the ability for the state to investigate certain incoming cases. To address this matter, DES has removed the question from the intake form and strengthened APS case intake policies. The change requires that all reports that meet the criteria of vulnerable adult status and alleged maltreatment be forwarded for investigation, regardless of whether there is a correlation between the two factors.

In addition to the revision of the intake form, DES will also emphasize new, innovative practices including analysis for thresholds for accepting a report, screening and priority ratings, expansion to policy manuals, enhancements to training curriculums and continued collaborative interaction with community stakeholders including our partnerships with local law enforcement officials to protect vulnerable adults in need.

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*The Arizona Department of Economic Security makes Arizona stronger by helping Arizonans reach their potential through temporary assistance for those in need, and care for the vulnerable.*

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