**Federal Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Toolkit**

Now is the time to ask Congress to fund APS via the Elder Justice Act ([42 U.S.C. 1397m-1(b)](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title20/2042.htm)).

NAPSA urges Congress to, at a minimum, provide appropriations of $100 million for grants to directly support APS program operations and $20 million for the National APS Training Center, National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System, and innovation grants. NAPSA requests, at a minimum, $1.7 billion for the Social Services Block Grant Program which provides critical funding to over 37 APS programs.

**We need to tell Congress funding for APS is critical!**

**Appropriations Key Points**

**(Appropriations means Funding)**

* Federal funding for APS needs to be part of the regular appropriations process to build infrastructure, capacity and sustain services.
* Funding should allow for diversity of programs, including bifurcated (states with two programs based on eligibility) systems and funding for tribal APS programs.
* Tell your Representative and Senators to support APS and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funding in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

**Ask your Senators and Representative to support APS.**

**Action Items**

* Call or email Congress. It’s easy with the NAPSA action link: <https://bit.ly/APS26>.
* Ensure APS is a priority for your locality and state’s advocacy with Congress. States and localities have legislative liaisons to highlight their priorities to their Representatives and Senators. Learn about your liaison’s procedure and make sure APS is on their mind every year.
* Ensure APS is a priority for other professional organizations representing you and your agency.
* Write a letter to the editor or opinion piece to your local newspaper (print or online).
* Share news and local happenings with Congressional offices. If your agency was recognized with an award, had a great news article, handled a noteworthy abuse case, or submitted a letter to the editor be sure to share.
* Share this call to action with your partners and friends!

**Let us know what you are doing and sharing so NAPSA can elevate your efforts.**

Bill Benson ([bill.benson@napsa-now.org](mailto:bill.benson@napsa-now.org))

Kendra Kuehn ([kendra.kuehn@napsa-now.org](mailto:kendra.kuehn@napsa-now.org))

**Action: Contact Congress**

Hearing from constituents makes the biggest impression. Congress is there to represent the older adults and people with disabilities in your community and you!

Invite Congressional members and their staff to any events and celebrations. It’s a great photo op for them and an opportunity to show the impact of your program. When Congressional members are not in session it doesn’t mean they are not working. These periods are an opportunity to learn in person from APS programs.

Call or email Congress. It’s easy with the NAPSA action link: <https://bit.ly/APS26>.

Or you can find your Congressional members here:

Representative: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

Senators: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>

Voice your thoughts through contacts you have, their contact form, by calling their DC office, and by calling their district office. Be sure to invite them to any events and celebrations.

Keep your message to the point and tailor to your experience as much as possible.

* Let them know who you are and that you are a constituent (a resident of the state and/or district).
* Tell them what APS is and who you serve.
* Let them know that ongoing funding for APS is a critical need. Elaborate on why it is important to you and your clients. Be sure to share impact, data, and stories of what the new funding has meant. Share what would happen if the funding stopped.
  + Administrators and managers: consider elaborating on specific parts of the strategic plan you are developing, what outcomes/impact you have seen, any data, and the impact of not continuing this level of funding.
  + Field staff and investigators: talk about how APS impacts your community and clients. What is the direct impact of funding on you and your work? What would happen if it were not continued?
  + Partners and friends of APS: talk about what you see as the impact of APS with those you work with and how funding would help.
* Ask your Representative & Senators to support the Senate bill and increase the funding level.
* Say thank you!

**Action: Share Your Story**

Sharing a case (deidentified if needed) highlights the people being impacted behind the numbers. Congressional staff consistently note that stories are an important tool for advocacy. Share your stories with Congress, the press, and NAPSA.

**SAMPLE TEMPLATE TO SHARE YOUR STORY – BE SURE TO CUSTOMIZE**

**Adult Protective Services and Federal Funding in My State**

Adult Protective Services (APS) is a program provided by state and local governments nationwide serving seniors and adults with disabilities who face abuse, neglect, and exploitation**. APS is crucial in preventing, detecting, and remedying abuse of vulnerable adults.** The APS funding to states through the Elder Justice Act and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) support critical services to constituents facing maltreatment. In FY2023, 35 states used SSBG for APS, serving at least 623,770 adults. In FY2024, federal elder justice appropriations provided $15 million to APS across the country. A National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) survey of APS directors found that it would be devastating to programs if there were cuts to or elimination of these funds.

Add your impact story including:

* How much APS formula grant funding and SSBG funding goes to APS in your state or locality.
* Info on who you serve, number of reports annually, trends you are seeing, or other compelling data.
* Include a story about the impact of APS on a client (it’s ok to use a story that’s edited to be deidentified).
* Consider using a quote from an APS director, investigator, or a client or family that was involved with APS.

Because of federal funding for elder justice and SSBG funding, APS is able to provide the essential services and partnerships to address and prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities.

**EXAMPLE STORY –** [**2017 FACES OF SSBG**](https://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/attachments/FINAL%20Faces%20of%20SSBG_06.06.17.pdf)

Adult Protective Services (APS) is a program provided by state and local governments nationwide to serve seniors and adults with disabilities who face abuse, neglect and exploitation. APS is crucial in keeping vulnerable adults at home in the community. The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) is the only designated federal funding source to states for APS. In FY 2014, 37 states used SSBG for APS, serving at least 578,000 adults. A National Adult Protective Services Association survey of APS directors found that cuts to or elimination of the block grant would be devastating to APS programs.

In Texas, APS became involved with Gladys after she began exhibiting self-neglect, a common APS case. Gladys became increasingly withdrawn after the death of her husband. It was soon apparent that Gladys needed care and was stealing from the local grocery store and her neighbors. Gladys repeatedly refused to accept help from APS. Eventually, Gladys’ utilities were cut off and she was involuntarily hospitalized several times.

APS obtained a court order to enter her home when it was reported that Gladys had booby trapped her yard. When APS entered, the home was as dangerous and deplorable as feared, including a makeshift stove of a hubcap over burning wood and rain water for drinking. APS was granted an emergency order for protective services and although Gladys was resistant, she calmed down when in the ambulance. Gladys was placed in a nursing home. Though the APS team feared she would deteriorate further, when the supervisor visited she had adjusted well and was playing the piano. Gladys was grateful for her new friends at the facility and took pleasure in gathering in a prayer and praise circle nearby.

With the help of SSBG funds, APS was able to remove Gladys from a dangerous situation and place her into a new home.

**Action: Engaging the Press**

Congressional offices pay attention to what is happening in their state and district and local press (traditional or online). Staff often highlight local news and social media to inform their Representative or Senator. Local news often carries the most impact.

Write a letter to the editor, other opinion piece, share success stories with the local news, share awareness efforts, and ensure your events are publicized. Surveys show letters to the editor are among the best-read sections of papers. See below for a sample template and example from retired NAPSA Executive Director Kathleen Quinn. Consider writing a letter in response to a news story or national event, such as a Presidential transition as in Kathleen’s example, which was written the year before the enactment into law of the Elder Justice Act. Letters don’t have to be long to make an impact.

**SAMPLE LETTER TO EDITOR – BE SURE TO CUSTOMIZE.**

The article on [NAME AND DATE OF ARTICLE] highlighted the essential role of Adult Protective Services (APS) in addressing abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities in our community. Abuse has significant financial, physical, and mental impacts on members of our community and nationwide. 1 in 10 older adults will experience abuse annually and people with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to be victims of violence. APS is a critical part of addressing this issue but does not receive enough funding to address the need.

Federal funding for APS is in danger and not sufficient. Greater funding for APS has resulted in innovative services and partnerships and improved outcomes. [HIGHLIGHT YOUR WORK]. Continued funding will go a long way to supporting older adults and people with disabilities in our community and across the nation.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

**EXAMPLE LETTER TO EDITOR BY RETIRED NAPSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KATHLEEN QUINN**

December 18, 2008

Editor, Chicago Tribune, Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor:

If a child is abused or neglected, your readers are horrified, but not helpless. They know what to do: call DCFS and expect them to intervene to protect the child to the extent possible. If a younger woman is abused in an intimate relationship, they know where to refer her: to a battered women’s shelter, where she can find safety for herself and her children, legal advocacy and support.

But what if it’s your grandmother, or the developmentally disabled adult who lives down the street, who is being physically abused, mentally tortured, sexually assaulted, financially ripped off, and/or cruelly neglected almost to the point of death? Whom do they call then? Would they know?

They should call Adult Protective Services (APS), which operates under state law in every state to respond to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disabilities and older persons. In Illinois, for example, suspected abused, neglected or exploited persons aged 60 and over, should be referred to the Illinois Department on Aging’s excellent Elder Abuse and Neglect Program.

People in many other states are not as fortunate in having a well-trained and decently funded APS program. Unlike battered women’s shelters and child protective services, which receive over hundreds of millions to billions in federal support every year, adult protective services programs receive not one dollar of directly appropriated federal support. This even though older persons, *one in twenty of whom will be abused*, *neglected or exploited*, are the country’s fastest growing population group, and despite the evidence that *older abuse victims die at* *three times* the rate of their non-abused cohorts. Moreover, seniors whose carefully husbanded life savings are stolen out from under them often must then turn to publicly funded programs such as Medicaid, costing taxpayers many millions in expenditures.

Congress has held hearings *for thirty years* on the tragedy of elder abuse, but it has yet to enact a single, comprehensive law addressing it or the abuse of adults with disabilities. APS programs throughout the country, already underfunded and in many areas undertrained, are facing state budget reductions that will mean thousands of suffering older veterans, developmentally disabled adults, and grandmothers suffering from dementia will be left to suffer at the hands of their “caregivers,” family members, and new “best friends” because there will be no one to respond to the reports of their abuse.

The incoming Obama administration has many huge and critical issues to contend with, yet this one, which has languished for decades because of inertia and indifference, could be readily addressed. Representative Rahm Emanuel, to his great credit, was an ardent advocate for passage of the Elder Justice Act, which would provide the first ever, modest funding for struggling state APS programs throughout the country. If the White House asks the new Congress to enact the long overdue Elder Justice Act as one of its first orders of business in 2009, it would signal caring “change we can believe in,” change that will save thousands of lives of “our greatest generation” and will allow many tens of thousands of others to live safely and with dignity, instead of in degradation, suffering and fear.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Quinn

Executive Director, National Adult Protective Services Association

**Written Testimony: NAPSA to Congress on FY 2026 Appropriations**

April 8, 2025

**Written Testimony:**

**Kendra Kuehn, National Policy Advisor**

**National Adult Protective Services Association**

**Regarding the Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations**

The National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) appreciates the opportunity to submit the following testimony regarding Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 federal appropriations. APS programs serve both older adults and younger adults with disabilities nationwide, populations that are frequently forgotten in service provision. As the national professional association representing APS, we see on a regular basis the importance of these funds and the need to continue to invest as the population ages and cases increase in complexity. We submit this FY 2026 testimony in support of funding in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that plays a unique role in this area. **Within the Administration for Community Living’s Administration on Aging, NAPSA’s request includes $100 million for Adult Protective Services (APS) formula grants to directly support programs. We urge language indicating that this funding should serve all populations covered by APS. NAPSA requests an additional $20 million to continue the work of the National APS Training Center, the National APS Technical Assistance Resource Center, and the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System. Within the Administration for Children and Families, NAPSA requests a minimum of $1.7 billion for the Social Services Block Grant Program which provides critical funding to 37 APS programs.** This funding has a high return on investment both in healthcare costs and human dignity.

APS programs support and protect the most vulnerable in their communities, including older adults and people with severe disabilities. Abuse has significant financial, physical, and psychological impacts to the individual, community, and the nation. The Department of Justice estimates that 1 in 10 older adults will experience abuse annually and that people with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to be victims of violence. The direct medical costs of injuries and care related to elder abuse exceed $5 billion a year and further costs to the individual and community result from lifelong injuries, moving into long-term care, and having to enroll in Medicaid. Additionally, victims have higher mortality rates than their peers. While these illustrate the costs that can be easily calculated, emotional and psychological costs are even higher.

On the services side, APS is often under resourced due to decreased budgets and rising caseloads. Administrators also note that cases are becoming more complex. Opioid and substance abuse cases can bring new safety challenges and a lack of available services, particularly in rural areas. Rising financial exploitation cases test the skills of programs who often do not have the resources to hire a forensic accountant necessary to unravel such cases. Caseworkers are stretched thin and in need of more support and training in light of these complexities. Federal funding provides an important supplement to building an APS program that is efficient and effective. The federal National Adult Protective Services Training Center has provided the first comprehensive, easily available, e-learning for the APS field. NAPSA was honored to host the development of the Training Center and would like to highlight the importance of returning the hosting the Training Center and the National APS Resource Center at a nonprofit dedicated to APS. The Trainer Center allows workers to build basic knowledge while states can shift limited training dollars to direct practical learning.

We were pleased to see the first ever funding to APS programs FY 2021. This funding allowed programs to build critical infrastructure including provision of personal protective equipment across the country, softphones in Connecticut, and enhanced data gathering in Oklahoma. However, due to the time limited nature of the funding, states were largely not able to address basic infrastructure gaps such as supporting and growing the workforce. This investment showed the work APS is capable of achieving when given the funding.

We applaud the inclusion of $15 million in funding for APS programs since FY 2023 as well as the set aside for tribal APS programs. We look forward to the possibilities for APS. But greater investment is needed, and APS programs have proven they are responsible stewards of federal money and deserve support that meets the needs in a sustainable way. FY 2024 allocations included a minimum baseline of $111,375 for twelve states and an overall average of $284,935 in funding. The minimum is barely enough to support an employee, and the average does not support a sustainable program. Cuts to APS are a direct threat to vulnerable Americans and result in disappearance of services and staff. Sufficient, ongoing funding is needed to sustain and expand these programs.

Staffing is the most crucial issue for APS across the nation. APS is a labor-intensive service relying upon investigators, intake workers, case managers, experts in financial abuse, capacity assessment, support personnel, and others. It is difficult if not impossible to have an effective program without trained, competent and seasoned workers. APS is hard work and requires truly capable personnel. Adequate staffing is the most important need for APS and consistent funding is needed to support these positions. Our request of $100 million to APS programs is a down payment for sustainability and support to vulnerable Americans.

We urge Congress to provide report language calling for the Administration on Aging to distribute funding directly to the agency overseeing the program not just through the aging entity. There are a small number of states with two different programs based on eligibility. Our understanding is when the funding is only provided to the aging organization it does not always make it over to the agency for those with disabilities.

Justice for older adults and people with disabilities should be more than a tagline, it should be a reality. Abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation exists across the nation and within each of our communities. Its prevention and remediation are core to our humanity. We look forward to the committee’s support and we stand ready to work with Congress and the administration on these critical issues.