

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA



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February 16, 2016

Honorable David E. Ryu, Chair  
Health, Mental Health, and Education Committee  
City Hall Room 425  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Attention: Office of the City Clerk

Honorable Councilmember Ryu:

**ELDER ABUSE REPORTING POLICY SURVEY – CF NO. 15-0611**

At the September 22, 2015 meeting of the Health, Mental Health, and Education (HMHE) Committee, the Los Angeles Department of Aging (LADOA), Housing Community Investment Department, and the Department of Recreation and Parks reported on their policy and procedures for handling Elder Abuse reporting. The HMHE Committee instructed the LADOA to survey City Departments to determine the need for a Citywide Elder Abuse Reporting Policy; if the City should make all city employees mandated reporters; furthermore, for the Department to report back on leveraging other resources available from the County.

**Reporting Policy**

The LADOA surveyed all City Departments except for LAPD, City Attorney, and LAFD. The survey asked each department if they have an elder abuse reporting policy, are a mandate reporter, and the frequency of interaction with seniors or if employees enter the home of seniors. Seven of the 38 departments surveyed reported either having a policy or a procedure for reporting suspected cases of elder abuse. Five more departments reported regular or frequent interactions with seniors, but did not have a reporting policy or procedure. The remaining 25 departments indicated that they occasionally, rarely, or never have interactions with seniors and have no policy for reporting suspected elder abuse.

The Animal Services Department, Housing Authority, and LADOA are mandated reporters. These three departments have a policy with procedures in place or utilize the

existing Welfare & Institution Code 15630-15632 reporting requirements. All employees of these departments are mandated to report any cases of suspected elder abuse, even those in purely administrative positions. Attached is a copy of LADOA's reporting policy as an example.

The Department of Water and Power, Department (LADWP) of Building and Safety, Housing and Community Investment Department, and Department of Recreation and Parks reported having a procedure to report suspected cases of elder abuse and conduct regularly scheduled training. These departments reported regular or frequent interactions with seniors or employees whose job functions include entering the home of seniors. LADOA has partnered with these departments to assist with the referral to Adult Protective Services, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Bet Tzedek Legal Services as part of its Serving Our Seniors (SOS) program. The SOS program consists of a referral process for these departments to notify LADOA if a senior may need support services or a victim of elder abuse. If there is no elder abuse, LADOA can still provide the vulnerable senior links to other services such as home delivered meals, case management, and assistive transportation for the frail elderly. LADOA offered to implement the same arrangement with the remaining five departments with regular interactions with seniors. A copy of LADWP's reporting procedure is attached as an example.

LADOA informed the 25 departments that only occasionally, rarely, or never interact with seniors and have no policy for reporting suspected elder abuse about the SOS Program. LADOA informed these departments that it assists other departments in reporting suspected cases of elder abuse to Adult Protective Services, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Bet Tzedek Legal Services. LADOA offered to provide this assistance if they would like to implement a similar arrangement.

### **Leveraging Resources**

LADOA currently has procedures in place with some departments to assist their employees if they encounter a situation that is not clear, if there is elder abuse. The employee contacts LADOA and is provided assistance in gathering enough information to make the referral to the appropriate agency, usually Adult Protective Services as mandated under California Welfare & Institutions Code 15630-15632 or the Long Term Care Ombudsman if in a nursing home or skilled facility. In 2015, the LADOA received 444 referrals for assistance from its SOS partners. Many of them were made by LADWP's customer service representatives and meter readers. One hundred twenty one of those referrals were cases of suspected elder abuse. These cases include suspected self-

neglect, exploitation, abuse, or multiple types of abuse. After reviewing the suspected elder abuse referrals and speaking with the seniors, most did not fit the criteria for reporting to APS. However, the seniors interviewed lived alone with little or no help in the home. They stated they were very lonely, and social security was their only source of income. LADOA contacted their local MPC to arrange for a care manager, home delivered meals, and other supportive services.

LADOA also assists adult children of seniors acting as family caregivers by providing training on caregiving and assistance in determining what resources are available. The LADOA is not funded to provide direct elder abuse prevention training. The Department leverages its training events by partnering with APS to provide the training on elder abuse awareness.

The Department also partners with LA County Mental Health's Genesis Program. LADOA utilizes a foundation grant program initially funded by the SCAN Foundation to provide emergency cash up to \$500 per year for low income seniors. It has been successfully used to address one time unforeseen expenses such as medical and dental bills or home repairs that potentially could cause homelessness for low income seniors. LADOA coordinates with Genesis to assist their clients with these one-time emergency payments.

In addition to APS, the Long Term Care Ombudsman, and Bet Tzedek Legal Services, there are other agencies at both the County and State with programs to assist victims of elder abuse, both physical abuse and financial abuse. Seniors and their family caregivers can seek assistance from the California Consumer Affairs Agency, District Attorney, Attorney General, Department of Mental Health, and California Victim's Compensation Program. Professionals such as social workers can contact the Los Angeles County Elder Abuse Forensic Center and/or the FAST Team, a joint elder abuse task force formed by the City Attorney's Office, LAPD, and the Long Term Care Ombudsman.

### **LA County and State Resources**

#### **Adult Protective Services**

LA County Department of Senior and Social Services

3333 Wilshire Blvd, LA 90010

(213) 351-5401 local or (800) 992-1660

Mandated Reporter Hotline (888) 202-4248, or LA County Elder Abuse Hotline (877) 477-3646.

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Long Term Care Ombudsman  
WISE and Healthy Aging  
1527 Fourth Street Suite 250, Santa Monica, CA 90401  
(800) 334-9473, and after hours at (800) 231-4024

Los Angeles County District Attorney  
(213) 974-3501 or LA County Elder Abuse Hotline (877) 477-3646

Attorney General's Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse  
California Department of Justice  
Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse  
PO Box 944255, Sacramento CA 94244-2550  
(800) 722-0432

**Other Resources**

California Consumer Affairs Agency  
Consumer Information Center  
1625 North Market Blvd., Suite N-112  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
(800) 952-5210 (TDD: 800.326.2297)  
dca@dca.ca.gov  
[http://www.dca.ca.gov/online\\_services/complaints/consumer\\_complaint.shtml](http://www.dca.ca.gov/online_services/complaints/consumer_complaint.shtml)

The agency takes complaints about licensed professionals.

Department of Mental Health  
GENESIS Program  
550 South Vermont Ave, 6th floor, Room 601  
Los Angeles, CA 90020  
(213) 739-7347, or general DMH 24/7 ACCESS hotline at 1-800-854-7771

Provides confidential mental health information, referrals to service providers, and crisis counseling at any day or time.

California Victim's Compensation Program (CaVCP)  
(800) 777-9229 or Los Angeles Office (213) 231-4024

Provides money to crime victims for medical, dental, and mental health expenses, relocation expenses, home security, etc.

Professional Fiduciaries Bureau  
1625 North Market Blvd., Suite S-208  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
(916) 574-7340  
[www.fiduciary.ca.gov](http://www.fiduciary.ca.gov)

The Professional Fiduciaries Bureau licenses and regulates private fiduciaries, including conservators, guardians, trustees, and agents under durable power of attorney who handle healthcare and financial matters for adults who cannot handle their own affairs. For licensing information, contact the Bureau.

Los Angeles County Elder Abuse Forensic Center (LACEAFC)  
[LACEAFC@gmail.com](mailto:LACEAFC@gmail.com)

LACEAFC provides a multidisciplinary team of professionals that provide expert case examination, documentation, consultation, and prosecution of elder and dependent adult abuse cases. Only professional County and City agencies may refer a case for discussion at the Forensic Center. These professionals include: Law Enforcement, Adult Protective Services, Long-Term Care Ombudsman, District Attorney's Office, City Attorney's Office, GENESIS (Department of Mental Health), Victim Witness Program Advocates, the Coroner's Office, and other related fields.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Thousands of seniors are abused, neglected, and exploited annually. Elders throughout the United States lose an estimated \$2.6 billion due to elder financial abuse and exploitation, impacting their ability to pay for basic needs. Any senior is vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation regardless of education, income level, or degree of social support. It can happen to anyone, but only one in five of those crimes are ever discovered.

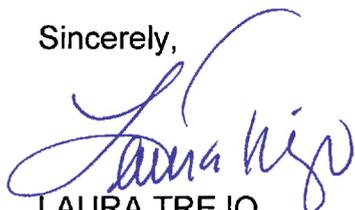
The major hurdles to preventing elder abuse are lack of awareness and unwillingness of some victims to report it. Public outreach and training will bring more eyes on the subject and make it harder for perpetrators to isolate their victims. Training employees to recognize the signs of elder abuse and how to refer suspected cases leverages City

resources in prevention. LADOA recommends that any City employee who are mandated reporters or have regular interactions with seniors or enter the home of seniors have annual training on Elder Abuse Reporting. The LADOA can coordinate with the departments to arrange for training to be provided by APS. Currently LADOA is not funded to provide direct elder abuse prevention training to employees, but leverages its regular training events to include other agencies such as APS.

LADOA further recommends that the departments which infrequently or rarely interact with seniors have access to elder abuse training and assign as they deem appropriate for specific positions. The Personnel Department offers an online training system. If an elder abuse training course is made available, each department training coordinator can determine which of their employees to assign the training.

LADOA also recommends that the HMHE Committee consider recognizing the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2016. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. This year the Administration on Aging and the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging are supporting this initiative. The goal is to provide an opportunity to improve understanding of abuse and neglect of seniors.

Sincerely,



LAURA TREJO  
General Manager

LT:JD:mn:z\EARP survey reportback

#### Attachments

cc: Nick Greif, Director of Policy and Legislation – Council District 4  
Star Parsamyan, Deputy Legislative Director - Council District 13  
John Popoch, Legislative Director - Council District 3  
Jennifer Shar, Office of the City Administrative Officer