

# OVC NEWS & PROGRAM UPDATES

RESPONDING TO ELDER ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, AND VICTIMIZATION



Office for Victims of Crime  
**OVC**

February 2012

## OVC Helps Local Programs Focus on Senior Victims of Identity Theft



*“Older people are often fearful of stepping forward when they discover they have been victimized because of the fear of being labeled incompetent. Through the coalition we hope to de-stigmatize victimization so that older adults can get the help they deserve to recover what has been taken from them.”*

— Carlos Rodriguez, retired New York Assistant Attorney General and Finger Lakes Identity Theft Coalition chair

For criminals, identity theft is a high-yield, low-risk crime. This is particularly true when the victims are older individuals (seniors) who have retired from the workplace and are, therefore, living on a fixed income. Without future employment earnings to pay off debt and meet daily needs, many senior victims face a grim recovery from victimization and can be particularly in need of assistance.

It's a need that OVC recognized and began working to fill some time ago. Its efforts led to the National Identity Theft Victims Assistance Network Project, which began providing technical assistance and support to new coalitions dedicated to expanding and improving services to older victims of identity theft in October 2011. The project is the result of a cooperative agreement between OVC and the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. Its goal is

which began providing technical assistance and support to new coalitions dedicated to expanding and improving services to older victims of identity



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Updated almost daily, [OVC.gov](http://OVC.gov) provides quick and easy access to many resources that help to enhance victim services around the Nation. Tour the [OVC Web site](http://OVC Web site) now!

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our first edition of *OVC News & Program Updates* for 2012, a year that is certain to bring new challenges to all of us who serve victims of crime. In this issue we focus on elder abuse, a complex crime that can be extremely difficult to recognize and resolve, especially as abusers may be loved ones. Nevertheless, it is critical that we learn to respond effectively to this crime because the U.S. population is “graying” at a rapid rate: the U.S. Census Bureau projects that 62 million Americans will be age 65 or older by 2025.



This issue features a broad array of information to provide insight into elder abuse issues and guide readers toward a more effective response, from policymaking to promising practices. We profile state- and county-based coalitions designed to address the specific needs of older victims of identity theft, domestic violence, and other crimes. We also highlight a national clearinghouse for training and resources, as well as OVC's latest tools for informing and educating service providers, advocates, and other professionals about the care and protection needed by this population.

The urgent need for action on this issue is underscored by our “Victims' Voices” feature, which recounts actor Mickey Rooney's experience of abuse. His story demonstrates that there are no guarantees against this cruel but increasingly common violation of trust against some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

—Joye Frost, Acting Director  
Office for Victims of Crime

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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to improve the outreach and capacity of victim service programs to better address the rights and needs of identity theft victims nationwide.

The project is supporting 10 coalitions, with 4 particularly focused on addressing the needs and rights of older Americans who may fall prey to identity theft: the Arizona Identity Theft Network, the Finger Lakes

Identity Theft Coalition, the Idaho Statewide Identity Theft Coalition, and the Wisconsin Identity Theft Network. For more information, please e-mail [Merry O'Brien](mailto:Merry.O'Brien), Project Director, or find us online at [identitytheftnetwork.org](http://identitytheftnetwork.org). See page 10 for each coalition's contact information.

*"My hope is that our coalition will be of great benefit to Idaho seniors by increasing service providers' understanding of the needs of victims and then addressing those needs to prevent re-victimization and minimize continuing damage to the seniors' financial stability, emotional well-being, and physical health. By developing best practices for our community to tackle the various financial and legal problems resulting from identity theft, our coalition hopes to help senior identity theft victims feel empowered."*

— Sunrise Ayers, Coordinator, Idaho Statewide Identity Theft Coalition

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## Victims' Voices

Mr. Mickey Rooney Fights to Regain Quality of Life

Mickey Rooney is a Hollywood legend whose illustrious career has spanned over nine decades. From his start in vaudeville as a toddler, Mr. Rooney has appeared in hundreds of films and on television and Broadway. He is still in demand for personal appearances and entertainment.

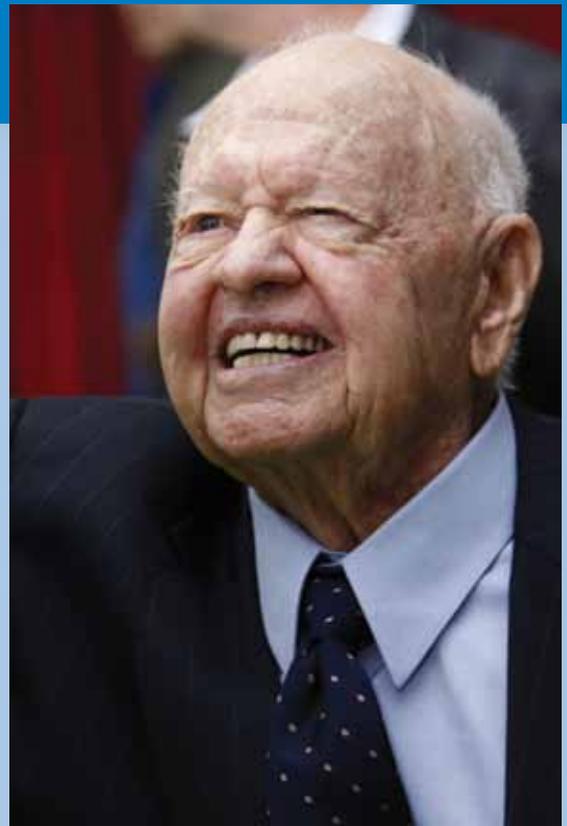
At age 91, Mr. Rooney remains mentally competent and physically able. Like many actors, Mr. Rooney has always relied on others to manage the business and financial aspects of his career. During the past decade, Mr. Rooney placed his confidence in his stepson Mr. Chris Aber, based on their family relationship and his initial trust and faith in him. Assuming the role of Mr. Rooney's agent in most, if not all, aspects of his life, Mr. Aber is alleged to have maintained a confidential fiduciary relationship with him.

Mr. Rooney, in a petition filed in the California state court, has accused Mr. Aber of naming himself as account owner and signatory on all Mr. Rooney's accounts.

The petition accuses Mr. Aber of regularly signing checks payable to himself for his personal expenses and transferring Mr. Rooney's income to personal accounts held by himself and his wife Ms. Christina Aber. Allegedly, unknown to Mr. Rooney, the couple arranged for ATM and credit cards for their use. In addition, Mr. Aber is accused of establishing a post office box under his exclusive control and arranging for Mr. Rooney's mail to be diverted there, thus preventing him from receiving his mail and being apprised of his finances.

Mr. Aber is further accused of failing to properly pay Mr. Rooney's bills and taxes, resulting in exorbitant credit card fees and interest rates, foreclosure notices, and

damaged credit. The petition alleges that, in a unique position of trust, Mr. Aber exploited Mr. Rooney's celebrity to fund an opulent lifestyle for himself and his family—at Mr. Rooney's expense. Mr. Aber is accused of scheduling the



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entertainer's personal appearances and acting engagements, controlling negotiations and contract terms, and committing Mr. Rooney to appearances he would have refused, had he been consulted. Declining an appearance was not an option, as Mr. Rooney alleges that he was forced to honor these contracts.

Mr. Rooney's petition indicates that when he attempted to take control over his own affairs, he met with resistance and intimidation. Ordering one's groceries is a simple matter for most people. Mr. Rooney contends that Mr. Aber had conditioned him to accept groceries delivered only by himself or his wife, once every 3 or 4 weeks, sometimes with the groceries being dumped on his front lawn. In one instance, while Mr. Aber was on vacation, Mr. Rooney said that he was running low on food and contacted a nearby grocery store to establish an account for grocery delivery. According to Mr. Rooney, when Mr. Aber



discovered this, he instructed the store to cancel the account and discontinue communications with Mr. Rooney.

Seeing no other alternative, Mr. Rooney voluntarily sought to have a conservator appointed to oversee the protection of himself and his estate from fraud and undue influence. By the time the court appointed a conservator, Mr. Rooney owned a single pair of shoes, was missing all of his personal identification and medical insurance cards, and had no access to any of his own funds.

Attorneys for Mr. Rooney and his conservator, Michael R. Augustine, successfully filed for a restraining order against Mr. Aber, requiring him to stay away from Mr. Rooney and his home. They have also petitioned for breach of fiduciary duty, elder abuse, fraud, action to compel accounting, misappropriation of name and likeness, and violation of civil code section 3344 against both Mr. Aber and Ms. Aber, and two non-relatives.

*I know what many of you must be thinking. How could this happen to Mickey Rooney? Yet, as many of you know, elder abuse has no bounds. Rich or poor, famous, weak or strong; if there is something to be gained by people with a selfish agenda, they will attempt to strip you of any dignity and your rights.*

—Mickey Rooney

Mr. Rooney testified before the Senate Special Committee on Aging in March 2011. His archived webcast and written testimony are available on the Committee's Web site.

**Note:** The contents of this article are primarily derived from and summarize the Petition for Breach of Fiduciary Duties, Elder Abuse, and Fraud filed in the Superior Court of the State of California (Case No. BP 126970), on behalf of Mr. Rooney, and prepared remarks delivered by Mr. Rooney at a symposium on elder abuse.

*In my situation, the abuse involved family members. I was torn because I knew that if I spoke up it would create a great deal of turmoil for my family. Some family members would deny that we were anything but one big, happy family in public. Others would be outraged. And still others would seek retribution.*

*Eventually I did speak up. I did it because I could no longer live with the pain of the abuse. I want to put a spotlight on the problem and let those abusers know they are no longer going undetected.*

—Mickey Rooney

*I woke up each day to a chain of events that both saddened and frightened me. I could not believe what had become of my life. Since I have spoken out about the abuse I have silently endured, my life has changed tremendously.*

—Mickey Rooney

# Research to Practice: Elder Abuse

By: Debra Whitcomb, Visiting Fellow, Office for Victims of Crime

*What we know about elder abuse lags some 40 years behind child abuse and 20 years behind domestic violence. We don't know why it occurs, how often it occurs among several populations, how much it costs, what practices and programs are most effective in addressing it, what the relationships are among its various forms, or how to detect and prevent it. We don't even know how to define what a successful intervention looks like.*

These are the words of Marie-Therese (MT) Connolly in her [recent testimony before the Senate Special Committee on Aging](#). Connolly, a 2011 recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant, is perhaps the Nation’s most visible advocate for older crime victims. She uses her “bully pulpit” to great advantage, relying heavily on research results that emphasize the need for increased attention on elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

and financial exploitation and to identify the projected costs of this abuse to individuals and society. Although research in this area is admittedly sparse, resourceful advocates can benefit from the available knowledge in many ways. Two notable examples of this advocacy are Candace Heisler and Bonnie Brandl.

Heisler is a former prosecutor who now trains multidisciplinary professionals on topics relating to victims who are older or disabled. She relies heavily on research to explain that the physical appearance of bruises is not helpful in estimating the timing of injuries or that brain function in older victims may slow down but this does not necessarily diminish their reliability. She cites research supporting the value of multidisciplinary teams in elder abuse cases and support groups for helping victims heal. For more information about sexual abuse in later life, Heisler recommends the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#), and for assistance with relevant medical and forensic research, she suggests the [Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse and Neglect at the University of California–Irvine](#).

Brandl, Director of the [National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life \(NCALL\)](#), points to the value of using research to inform our approach to elder abuse cases. For instance, thanks to ongoing research, “caregiver stress” is no longer recognized as a primary factor contributing to elder abuse; instead, the “power and control” paradigm has taken its place, leading to significant shifts in intervention strategies.

Even research findings that offer nothing new to experienced victim advocates are helpful because they validate the work that both advocates and researchers have been doing. After all, researchers need input from the field to ensure that their studies will add value to the work advocates do. Share your good ideas.



Marie-Therese (MT) Connolly, Director of Life Long Justice at Appleseed and 2011 recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant.

Courtesy the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

In 1999, as Director of the Department of Justice’s Elder Justice and Nursing Home Initiative, MT worked with OVC to support several grants aimed at enhancing services for older victims. Today, as Director of Life Long Justice at [Appleseed](#) and a Senior Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, MT remains involved in federal legislation—most notably, helping to write the Elder Justice Act, which was passed by Congress in 2010.

Following Connolly’s lead, you can use research in your presentations to policymakers and the general public in your own communities to underscore how many older people become victims of abuse, neglect,

*Researchers want to hear from you! What questions are most important to your work? E-mail [Debra Whitcomb](#) to share your ideas.*

# Domestic Violence Does Not Respect Age

By: Alice Ghareib, Area Agency on Aging, Region One

As a society do not want to believe that late-life domestic violence and elder abuse exist. The sad truth is that older people are being victimized in their own homes every day. In Maricopa County, Arizona, for example, there are more than 4,000 adult abuse and neglect reports each year. It is estimated that 10 times that number of victims exist but most are too afraid or ashamed to seek help.

The DOVES® program was designed to serve this population—victims of late-life domestic violence and elder abuse—in Maricopa County. Developed by the Area Agency on Aging, Region One, it is the first program of its kind in Arizona and possibly in the United States. The program reaches out to victims through education, support groups, emergency housing, transitional housing, and interim housing. Older victims of abuse have specific and unique needs that are not addressed by traditional domestic violence programs and shelters that focus on younger women with children. Although DOVES is open to both women and men, it is women who have the most difficulty finding protection and leaving their abusers. Women frequently have—

- No access to or control of resources, such as cash, or a bank account.
- Never worked outside the home (often were not allowed to).
- Few marketable job skills.

- No Social Security benefits.
- No car, cab fare, or other transportation options.
- Very little community or family support.
- Low self-esteem resulting from years of verbal and/or physical intimidation.
- Cultural and religious obstacles to divorce.



DOVES offers support groups to help older victims of abuse find friendship and hope and begin to overcome the isolation that is a hallmark of abuse. The program also partners with nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the community to provide victims with free emergency housing for up to 2 weeks. Unfortunately, 2 weeks is not long enough to change a lifetime marked by abuse, no matter how short that lifetime may be or how young the victim. At the end of the 2 weeks, many women (and some men) return to their abusers because they have no other place to go.

In 2003, the DOVES program addressed this problem by expanding its resources to include transitional housing for up to 2 years in a 17-unit apartment complex. Housing is not these victims' only need, however. Many residents leave their homes in crisis and arrive at DOVES with few or no personal belongings, so DOVES provides not only a safe haven, but also food, clothing, personal care items, counseling, and referrals to any other services residents may need.

DOVES staff members provide intensive one-on-one case management and support services to help older victims through this difficult time and put them on a path toward a fresh start in life. The program also offers interim housing for DOVES clients who are ready to live on their own but are waiting for affordable housing or to complete school or a training program that will enable them to find employment and become self-sufficient.

The DOVES program receives support from charitable trusts, foundations, businesses, organizations, and individuals through grant funding and cash and in-kind donations. For more information about DOVES or other services and programs offered by the Area Agency on Aging, visit [www.dovesprogram.org](http://www.dovesprogram.org) or call our 24-hour Senior HELP LINE at 602-264-HELP (264-4357) or toll free at 888-783-7500.



AREA AGENCY ON AGING  
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# CrimeSolutions.gov Launched To Inform Practitioners and Policymakers

The Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) launched [www.crimesolutions.gov](http://www.crimesolutions.gov) last year. This new Web site is a central, credible resource for informing practitioners and policymakers about what works in justice-related programs and practices, including crime victim services. It includes information on more than 150 justice-related programs and assigns "evidence ratings"—effective, promising, or no effects—to indicate whether there is evidence from research that a program achieves its goals. Approximately 45 of these programs are evaluated on the [Victims & Victimization page](#), which focuses on victims, victimization, crisis intervention/response, health, and mental health.

The Web site's purpose is to assist in practical decisionmaking and program implementation by gathering information on specific justice-related programs and reviewing the existing evaluation research against standard criteria. It is a tool for understanding and accessing scientific evidence about programs, and integrating that evidence into programmatic and policy decisions.

"We all have tight budgets today," explained Laurie O. Robinson, Assistant Attorney General. "CrimeSolutions.gov helps us take a 'smart on crime' approach that relies on data-driven, evidence-based analysis to identify and replicate justice-related programs that have shown real results in preventing and reducing crime and serving crime victims."



The new Web site is part of the Evidence Integration Initiative (E2I) launched by Assistant Attorney General Robinson in 2009. The Initiative has three goals: improving the quantity and quality of evidence that OJP generates; integrating evidence into program, practice, and policy decisions within OJP and the field; and improving the translation of evidence into practice.

[Click here for more information](#) about how to use the information provided on CrimeSolutions.gov or [here for FAQs](#).

## NCALL Challenges, Changes Beliefs About Older Victims of Abuse

Older victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are often a hidden population in

response, and ultimately, put an end to abuse in later life is the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL).

quality and availability of victim services and support, especially for older victims, where the need is less recognized by society.



In 1999, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence created NCALL with funding from the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women. Since 2002, NCALL has provided this office with technical assistance for its "Enhanced Training and Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women Later in Life Program." Today, NCALL is a nationally recognized leader on program development, policy, technical assistance, and training that addresses the nexus between domestic violence and sexual assault and elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

NCALL staff and consultants have trained thousands of professionals throughout the country; written six national model training curricula; been published in numerous journals; and created a variety of interactive exercises, toolkits, and other materials on abuse in later life. NCALL's target audiences include domestic violence and sexual abuse advocates, aging network workers, justice professionals, faith community leaders, and social workers, among others.

For more information, contact NCALL staff at—

communities throughout the United States. One organization that works every day to improve victim safety, increase abuser accountability, expand the community's re-

Through its advocacy and education, NCALL strives to challenge and change the beliefs, policies, practices, and systems that allow abuse to occur and continue. It also works to improve victim safety by increasing both the

[National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life](#)

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# 2012 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide Released

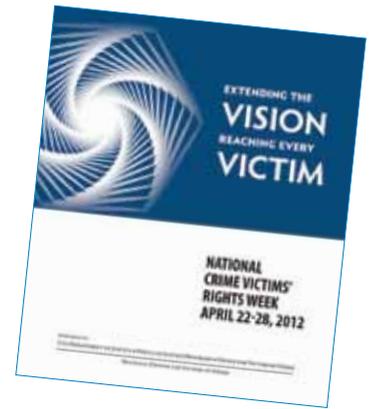
The Office for Victims of Crime, in partnership with the National Center for Victims of Crime, is pleased to announce the availability of the 2012 *National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide*. [The 2012 National Crime Victims' Rights Week](#) (NCVRW) theme—Extending the Vision: Reaching Every Victim—calls on us to revisit, revive, and expand the vision that inspired the crime victims' movement and the progress we celebrate each year.

The theme is woven throughout the Resource Guide's wide array of user-friendly outreach and awareness tools. Looking for current statistics on victimization, or for information on the history of victims' rights in the United States? Want to learn some great tips for working with the media, or discover new ideas for public events to help raise awareness of crime victims' rights and issues within your community? The 2012 NCVRW Resource Guide gives you this information and more!

This year's guide includes a variety of camera-ready artwork branded with this year's NCVRW theme image. You will find buttons and magnets to help you advertise your NCVRW events and bookmarks, name tags, table cards, letterhead, and a certificate of appreciation that you

can customize by adding your agency's information—all to assist you in advertising your NCVRW events and making them memorable. In addition, you will find three customizable public awareness posters, in English and Spanish, and in black and white and color. And many of this year's other products are available online in Spanish as well.

We hope you find the NCVRW Resource Guide and its tools useful as you plan your own events during NCVRW, April 22–28, 2012. The entire Guide can be [downloaded for free](#).



*Included in the Resource Guide are facts about elder victimization.*

## New York City Observes National Crime Victims' Rights Week

Last year, in observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2011, the New York City Mayor's Office hosted the launch of part of the "Let's Call An End To Human Trafficking" multimedia crime awareness initiative at the Bronx Family Justice Center. Among the guests were the Honorable Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen, Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, and Dr. Michael Korzinski, Cofounding Director of the Helen Bamber Foundation. They honored survivors of the crime to "reshape the future" by promoting victims' rights, and recognized the community partners who tirelessly advocate on each victim's behalf.

The initiative involved a video public service announcement (PSA) narrated by Emma Thompson. The PSA has aired on Time Warner Cable, CNN, NY 1, CUNY TV, NYC TV, and in taxis around New York City. It remains on the city's [anti-human trafficking Web site](#) in English, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. Outreach also included ads in print media, including ethnic newspapers and palm cards in six languages that continue to be distributed throughout the city. The

campaign was made possible by the support of the Somaly Mam Foundation, Emma Thompson, the Helen Bamber Foundation, Estée Lauder, and in-kind support from Grey New York.

The New York City Family Justice Center Initiative of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence reduces barriers faced by victims of domestic violence and human trafficking by giving clients access to prosecutors, trained counselors, legal assistance, and supervision for their children in one location—all in the language that the client is most comfortable speaking—making it the perfect venue for honoring crime victims' rights.

Community partners included the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women—International; Cultural Infinity; Crime Victims Treatment Center; Davis Wright Tremaine LLP; Downstate



From left: Dr. Michael Korzinski, Cofounding Director of the Helen Bamber Foundation; Norma Abbene, Deputy Counsel to Mayor Bloomberg; Carol Robles-Roman, Deputy Mayor and Counsel to Mayor Bloomberg; the Hon. Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen, Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings; Yolanda Jimenez, Commissioner, Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence; Rachelle Abrahami, Executive Director of the New York City Family Justice Center.

Coalition for Crime Victims; ECPAT International; Equality Now; Fuel | we power change; GEMS; inMotion; My Sister's Place; New York Asian Women's Center; National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum; National Organization for Women NYC; NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault; NYU Graphic Communications Management and Technology Program; Safe Horizon; and Sanctuary for Families.

# Pueblo of Jemez Launch Elder Abuse Initiative

In FY 2010, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), U.S. Department of Justice, awarded the Pueblo of Jemez a grant to implement the Community Outreach and Victim Assistance Services to Address Elder Abuse Initiative. This 2-year project will work to improve community outreach and delivery of services to abused older people by (1) developing an elder code and improving prosecution; (2) employing Pueblo-based approaches, values, and beliefs regarding the care and treatment of older individuals; (3) working on conflict resolution; (4) developing elder advocacy services; (5) expanding community education about and awareness of elder abuse; and (6) creating partnerships to assist with delivering services, developing policies, and supporting older tribal members overall.

A collaborative effort between the Pueblo of Jemez Social Services Program and Senior Citizen Program, the program managers for each will work together to implement and oversee the project. Contributing partners

also include the Jemez Tribal Court, Law Enforcement, Behavioral Health, Jemez Clinic, and traditionally appointed officials such as a member of the Governor's staff, the Traditional Sheriff, and community elders.

The Elder Abuse Advisory Committee, which is composed of 10 partners and 16 members, held 4 meetings to further define project activities relating to the committee's code development. Specific activities included researching the existing codes of other New Mexico Pueblos and tribes from other parts of Indian Country. Through this, the committee obtained 16 codes, which its members reviewed and used to discuss which codes they would include and modify for the tribe's new Jemez Elder Code.

To date, the program is progressing as the tribe continues to receive support from the newly appointed tribal leadership—Governor



nor Michael Toledo, First Lieutenant George Shendo, and Second Lieutenant William Waquie.

For additional information, please e-mail [Tanya Miller](mailto:Tanya.Miller@ovc.gov), OVC Victim Justice Program Specialist.

## You Too Can Be an OVC Fellow: Apply Today!

The OVC FY 2012 Victim Assistance Professional Development Fellowship Program seeks applicants for activities related to financial fraud and abuse, with a focus on elder financial

exploitation and the relationship between financial abuse and other types of victimization.

The successful candidate will work onsite at OVC in Washington, D.C. This person must be knowledgeable about financial fraud and abuse and elder financial exploitation by both family members and individuals who have gained the older person's trust. The candidate will need to be able to address financial abuse, including identity theft, and its connection to other types of victimization, such as domestic violence and child abuse. The individual selected for this fellowship also will support OVC's work with discretionary grantees to develop evidence-based training, technical assistance, and models for programs and practices

that will build the capacity of organizations and service providers to assist victims of these crimes.

The award amount is up to \$135,000, depending on professional experience, salary history, and proposed travel costs. No more than \$95,000 can be allocated for salary. OVC fellowships are initially awarded for 12 months, after which they may be continued in 12-month periods for up to 3 years, contingent on funding and the grantee's performance.

The complete solicitation and instructions on how to apply for OVC's FY 2012 Victim Assistance Professional Development Fellowship Program are posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The application deadline is May 1, 2012. If you have questions, contact Meg Morrow, Attorney Advisor, by phone at 202-307-5983 or by [e-mail](mailto:em@ovc.gov).



# Workgroup Seeks Justice and Services for California's Older Citizens

By: Lisa Nerenberg MSW, MPH, Chair, California Elder Justice Workgroup Author, *Elder Abuse Prevention: Emerging Trends and Promising Strategies*



Even with the historic passage of the Elder Justice Act in 2010, the elder justice movement has much to accomplish. Stakeholders can play a prominent role in promoting programs and services for older Americans by creating and participating in statewide elder justice coalitions. The California Elder Justice Workgroup (CEJW) is one such example.

CEJW was launched by representatives of elder abuse programs that were part of the [Archstone Foundation's](#) Elder Abuse and Neglect Initiative, an \$8 million, 5-year program that supported 18 projects across California. The group met monthly to discuss challenges to its work that required systems advocacy and policy reform. For example, personnel in programs funded to conduct statewide training on the mandatory elder and dependent adult abuse reporting law discovered widespread discrepancies in how counties interpreted the law and responded to reports of neglect or abuse. Ensuring a uniform response clearly required state-level action.

The group solicited input from others within and beyond California, gathering momentum as well as a sizeable inventory of additional challenges, recommendations, and promising practices. Their efforts culminated in a statewide summit in April 2010, during which 92 professionals from various disciplines reviewed, discussed, and expanded upon the group's findings. The summit proceedings, an environmental scan of policy reports and recommendations, and additional discussions with professional associations and advocacy groups formed the

basis of the guide *Improving California's Response to Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation: A Blueprint*, which is available at [Improving California's Response](#).

The blueprint outlines 12 distinct needs in the following areas:

- Exchange among criminal, probate, family law, behavioral, and other courts that serve victims of elder abuse to identify common needs and interests. Specific topics include unmet needs for forensics research and experts, the benefits and costs of "elder courts," and the need for improved access to legal aid, advocacy, and court services by older adults.
- Improved service response to victims of elder financial crimes and exploitation, including mental health services to address the trauma of catastrophic financial losses, assistance with restitution recovery, and advocacy with creditors to mitigate abuse-related problems.
- Collaboration with providers of long-term services and supports to preserve the "safety net," build in added safeguards such as assistance to older consumers in screening and hiring personal care attendants, develop risk assessment strategies, and expand the workforce that provides long-term services and supports by advocating for improved wages, training, and screening.

The blueprint has been widely disseminated as a model for local communities and states. Members of CEJW's Steering Committee

have presented testimony at state hearings; represented the elder abuse network on the Smart on Crime Work Group on Victims' Rights, sponsored by California Attorney General Kamala Harris; and helped state advocacy groups and legislative staff to develop proposals. Last summer, WISE & Healthy Aging in Los Angeles became CEJW's fiscal agent and partner. Future plans include launching a statewide membership organization to implement CEJW's blueprint and respond to the emerging needs of the field.

If you are interested in getting involved or receiving monthly news and updates from CEJW, visit the [WISE & Healthy Aging Web site](#).

## Arizona Identity Theft Network (AITN)

**Focus** All identity theft victims with an emphasis on seniors and veterans

**Coordinating Agency** [Arizona Attorney General's Office](#)

AITN consists of two goal-oriented task forces operating independently to increase awareness of identity theft, establish best practices for responding to the needs of identity theft victims, and develop and expand victim service networks. AITN is composed of coalition members from government agencies, law enforcement agencies, victim service providers, legal services providers, veterans' services, and academic institutions in Arizona.

**Contact** [Amy Bocks](#), Office of Victim Services, 520-628-6454

## Finger Lakes (NY) Identity Theft Coalition

**Focus** Senior identity theft victims

**Coordinating Agency** [Lifespan of Greater Rochester](#)

A regional network of professionals and other stakeholders in eight counties in the Finger Lakes region of New York will be developed to sponsor and coordinate activities. The goals of the coalition are to organize a systematic campaign to educate older people about identity theft, enable victims to take appropriate legal action to recover their assets, when possible; and provide supportive services that will help them to restore a sense of safety and integrity in their lives.

**Contact** [Paul Cassamise](#), Vice President, 585-244-8400

## Idaho Statewide Identity Theft Coalition (ISITC)

**Focus** Senior identity theft victims

**Coordinating Agency** [Idaho Legal Aid Services \(ILAS\)](#)

ISITC will provide identity theft outreach and training, enhance members' collaboration on the issue, and increase the number of attorneys trained to help victims. Coalition members will also collaborate to develop an online identity theft portal accessed through the ILAS and other Web sites to be used as tools for members and the general public.

**Contact** [Sunrise Ayers](#), Coordinator, 208-345-0106

## Wisconsin Identity Theft Network (WITN)

**Focus** Interfamilial identity theft

**Coordinating Agency** [Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups](#)

WITN will create, enhance, and deliver training and outreach to improve the ability of its members to provide direct victim assistance to identity theft victims. The combination of underreporting of older identity theft victims and the frequent family-member perpetrators creates a huge gap in victim services in Wisconsin, so the network will focus on intrafamilial identity theft.

**Contact** [John Hendrick](#), Project Director, 608-224-2114

# Resources for Responding to Elder Mistreatment

## DVDs

[In Their Own Words: Domestic Abuse in Later Life](#), a DVD-guidebook package, uses the voices of victims to demonstrate that age offers

no protection from abuse, including the story of a 96-year-old grandmother who experienced longtime abuse by family members and ultimately survived a brutal sexual assault by her grandson. These compelling personal stories are complemented by interviews with victim service providers and criminal justice professionals. The training is intended to facilitate

dialogue about the dynamics of abuse, barriers for victims trying to leave an abusive relationship, and effective responses by service providers.



[Responding to Elder Abuse](#), featuring three DVDs that may be ordered separately or all together, is targeted to meeting the needs of specific audiences. Each video focuses on one target audience, including judges and court personnel, law enforcement officers, and community corrections professionals.



## Trainings

### [Nursing Response to Elder Mistreatment Curriculum](#)

Developed by the International Association of Forensic Nurses and funded by OVC, this curriculum helps nurses acquire the knowledge

and skills they need to respond appropriately to elder mistreatment, and it is available at no cost. Downloadable materials include instructors' manuals, PowerPoint presentations, and participant materials for each module.

[Identity Theft Victim Assistance Online Training: Supporting Victims' Financial and Emotional Recovery](#)

*Identity Theft Victim Assistance Online Training: Supporting Victims' Financial and Emotional Recovery* is a user-friendly e-learning tool that will teach victim service professionals and allied professionals the knowledge and skills they need to more effectively serve victims of identity theft and to assist with their financial and emotional recovery.

[Supporting Crime Victims with Disabilities](#)

Collaboration between professionals in the victim services and disabilities fields means better services and stronger support for crime victims who have disabilities. This 3-day training is for victim service providers, advocates for people with disabilities, self-advocates, and allied professionals. Using case studies and small group discussions, you will examine the prevalence of crime against people with disabilities, perceptions of the criminal justice system, tenets of the disabilities movement, and the impact of disabilities on daily life. Through collaborative activities you will identify ways the various agencies, organizations, and systems can work together to better serve crime victims with disabilities.

[Click here](#) for additional OVC and OVC-sponsored publications on elder abuse and victimization, and [here](#) for more resources on older victims.

Research and additional publications about elder abuse are also available on the [National Institute of Justice's Web site](#).

In addition, the [National Center on Elder Abuse](#) at the U.S. Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, is another national resource center dedicated to preventing elder mistreatment.

## Other Publications

### [Sexual Violence in Later Life](#)

This technical assistance guide for advocates was published by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The guide thoroughly investigates the complexity of the topic and includes information on signs and symptoms, special issues facing older victims, and primary prevention techniques.

### [Study Finds That School-Level Interventions Reduce Dating Violence](#)

According to *Shifting Boundaries: Final Report on an Experimental Evaluation of a Youth Dating Violence Prevention Program in New York City Middle Schools*, school-level interventions reduced dating violence among middle school students by up to 50 percent in 30 New York City public schools. The combination of the classroom and school-level intervention alone led to a 32- to 47-percent reduction in sexual violence victimization and perpetration through at least 6 months after the intervention. Students receiving the school-level intervention were more likely to say that they would intervene as a bystander 6 months after the intervention as well.



## STAY TUNED . . .

In the upcoming issue of *OVC News & Program Updates* you'll learn—

- About resources for assisting male survivors of sexual violence.
- About unique characteristics of victim services in the military.
- How you can tap into the "Show Me Love" public awareness campaign.

### [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#)

A new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report cites that, on average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States. Findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey 2010 Summary Report also show that about 35 percent of women who were raped as minors were also raped as adults compared to 14 percent of women without an early rape history.

## ABOUT THE OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

The Office for Victims of Crime is one of six components within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Led by Acting Director Joye E. Frost, OVC is committed to enhancing the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to providing leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime.

Established in 1988 through an amendment to the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, OVC is charged by Congress with administering the Crime Victims Fund. Through OVC, the Fund supports a broad array of programs and services that focus on helping victims in the immediate aftermath of crime and continuing to support them as they rebuild their lives. Millions of dollars are invested annually in victim compensation and assistance in every U.S. state and territory, as well as for training, technical assistance, and other capacity-building programs designed to enhance service providers' ability to support victims of crime in communities across the Nation.

For more information, visit [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov).

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