

Kentucky Annual  
Elder Abuse Committee  
Report 2025



---

CABINET FOR HEALTH  
AND FAMILY SERVICES

## Kentucky Elder Abuse Committee 2025 Membership

Victoria Elridge, Co-Chair of Committee  
Commissioner, Department for Aging and  
Independent Living

Keith Knapp, Co-Chair of Committee  
Senior Adult Programs Advisor  
Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Cliff Bryant, Assistant Director  
Department for Community Based Services

William F. Campbell, Assistant US Attorney  
U.S. Attorney's Office, WDKY

Sherry Culp, Ombudsman  
State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Lesa Dennis, Commissioner  
Department for Community Based Services

Troy Broussard, Associate State Director of  
Advocacy and Outreach, AARP Kentucky

Eric Friedlander/Steven Stack, Secretary  
Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Jill Green, Disability Rights Advocate  
KY Protection and Advocacy

Sue Greenwell, Director  
Lincoln Trail Area Agency on Aging and  
Independent Living

Matthew Kleinert, Executive Director  
Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse  
Control, Attorney General's Office

Scott Lengle, Captain  
Kentucky State Police

Elisha Mahoney, Executive Staff Advisor  
Justice and Public Safety Cabinet

Katie Marks, Commissioner  
Department for Behavioral Health,  
Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

Adam Mather, President  
KCARE

Candy Pettry, Elder Care Navigator  
University of Kentucky HealthCare

Stephanie Rose, Women's Health Division  
Director  
KY Department for Public Health

Tricia Steward, Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General

Tim Veno/Jason Squires, President/CEO  
Leading Age Kentucky

Heather Wagers, Deputy Ombudsman  
Commonwealth Office of the Ombudsman

Mackenzie Wallace, Director of Public  
Policy, Alzheimer's Association, Greater  
Kentucky & Southern Indiana

## ELDER ABUSE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Elder Abuse Committee met five times virtually during calendar year 2025. The committee welcomed the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs as a standing member. The Committee defines an elder as any individual age sixty or older. The focus for 2025 was public awareness campaigns, recommended practices, and comprehensive resources.



### Public Awareness Campaign

- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event



### Recommend Practices

- Elder and Vulnerable Victims Trust Fund
- Self-Neglect Prevention
- Exploitation Prevention



### Comprehensive Resources

- Kynect Resources

### Public Awareness Campaign



On June 13, 2025, the Kentucky Elder Abuse Committee convened in person in the Capitol rotunda along with over 100 Kentuckians to host the 5<sup>th</sup> annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The committee was joined by older adults from senior citizens centers, high school students, advocates, community members, and state leaders. A member of the Franklin County Senior Citizen Center provided remarks and introduced Governor Beshear, who spoke and signed a proclamation.

Two awards were presented to an individual and an agency who were identified as CHAMPs (Champion of Adult Maltreatment Prevention). Shelly Hearn, a victim advocate for the Frankfort Police Department, was awarded the individual award. Officer Hearn developed a program called Frankfort Connects which provides cell phones to vulnerable adults to ensure they are connected to community resources. The Lexington Community Paramedicine Program was awarded the agency award for establishing a steering committee to support complex adult protective services cases. The committee brings together community agencies such as first responders, hospitals, and local service agencies to provide services to individuals in need. The World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event closed with Bath County High School students sharing how they are working to prevent elder abuse in their region. For the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row, Kentuckians were able to place purple flags on the grounds of the Capitol to honor Kentuckians who are survivors of elder abuse or who were lost to elder abuse.

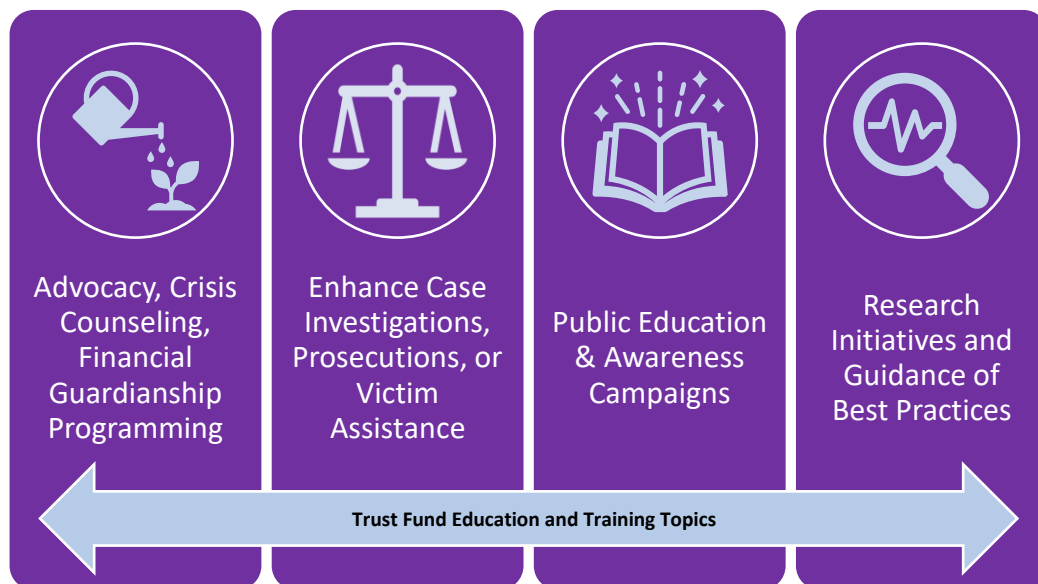
### Recommend Practices

On January 15, 2025, Executive Director Matthew Kleinert from the Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse Control within the Office of the Attorney General shared information regarding elder exploitation cases. Director Kleinert stated that exploitation cases have increased the last few years in Kentucky. The Elder Abuse Committee received information on individuals utilizing power of attorney status to financially exploit elders, and individuals financially exploiting long-term care residents resulting in the residents not having payment for services. Director Kleinert mentioned possible actions to prevent elder exploitation, including limitations of power of attorney abilities and strategies to prevent exploitation of private pay long-term care residents.

On July 2, 2025, the committee received updates on the Elder and Vulnerable Victims Trust fund (KRS 41.305). The trust fund was established in June of 2011 however regulations were not promulgated until 2023 with the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet with support from the Elder Abuse Committee. The Elder and Vulnerable Victims Trust Fund allows the opportunity for state agencies and community partners to access dollars to increase training and education on adult maltreatment prevention.

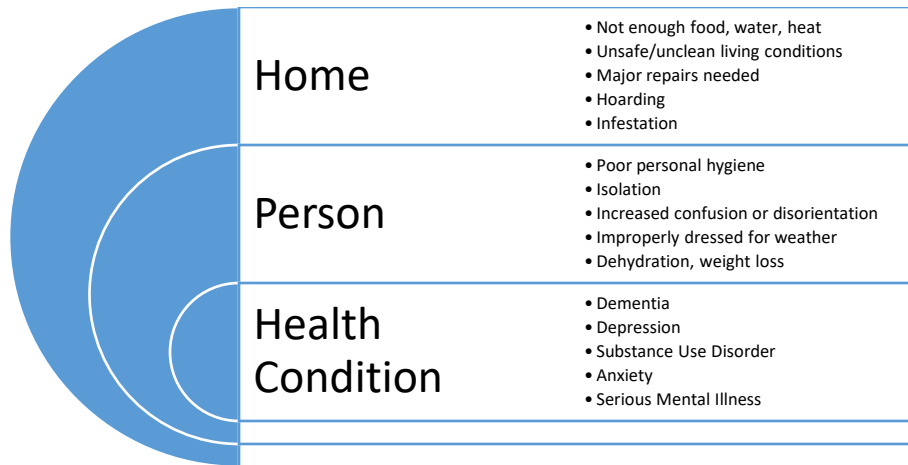
To date, there has not been an established funding stream to support the trust fund. Recommendations by the committee were made to explore modifying the Kentucky Employee Charitable Campaign (KECC) to allow for state employees to contribute to the trust fund.

Currently, state employees can contribute to the Kentucky Child Victims' Trust Fund through KECC. Additional proposals included voluntary contributions via state income tax returns and a budget line-item appropriation request.



On November 19, 2025, the Elder Abuse Committee heard from former U.S. Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary on Aging, Kathy Greenlee, regarding self-neglect. Self-neglect is defined as a person's inability, due to physical or mental impairment or diminished capacity, to perform essential self-care tasks including obtaining essential food, clothing, shelter, and medical care; obtaining goods and services necessary to maintain physical health, mental health, or general safety; hoarding; or managing one's own affairs.

Self-neglect is a chronic issue and national data has indicated individuals experiencing self-neglect have a higher rate of recidivism to adult protective services. According adult protective services data from state fiscal year 2024, self-neglect in the older adult population had the highest rate of substantiation at 26% of cases. Kathy Greenlee provided the committee with recommendations on community-based, person-centered strategies to prevent self-neglect, including exploring Tennessee's CREST (Collaborative Response to End Self Neglect in Tennessee) model. CREST provides services to older adults experiencing self-neglect. Services include and are not limited to: emergency housing assistance, emergency food and clothing, home modification, transportation, durable medical equipment, medication, personal care services, and homemaker services.



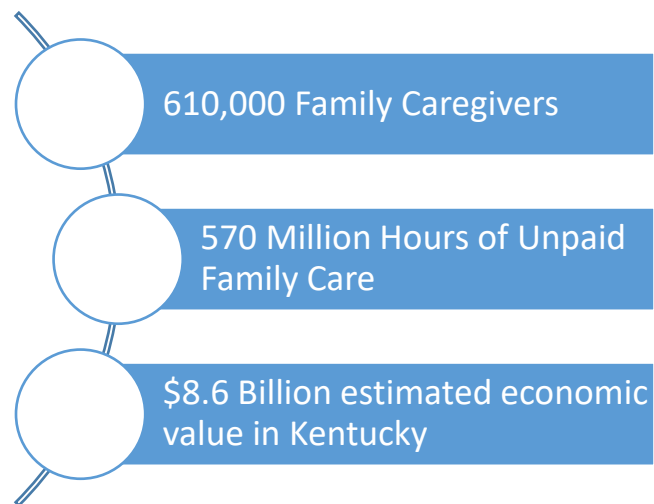
Source: National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System, 2022

### Comprehensive Resources

In May of 2025, the Elder Abuse Committee received a presentation from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Office of Data Analytics on the Kynect Resources web-based platform. Kynect Resources is a closed loop referral process available to all Kentuckians with the goal to improve outcomes, strengthen partnerships, and promote wrap-around services to residents. The web-based platform supports almost 1,200 agencies who can connect users to local agencies to receive assistance. Kynect Resources has a tile specific to elder care which allows users to see what services are available in their communities. The committee commended the Cabinet on the development of the resource. Kynect resources achieves the Elder Abuse Committee’s statutory requirement (KRS 209.005(3)(c)) to “Explore the need for a comprehensive statewide resource directory of services for the elderly”.



Source: AARP Public Policy Institute, 2023

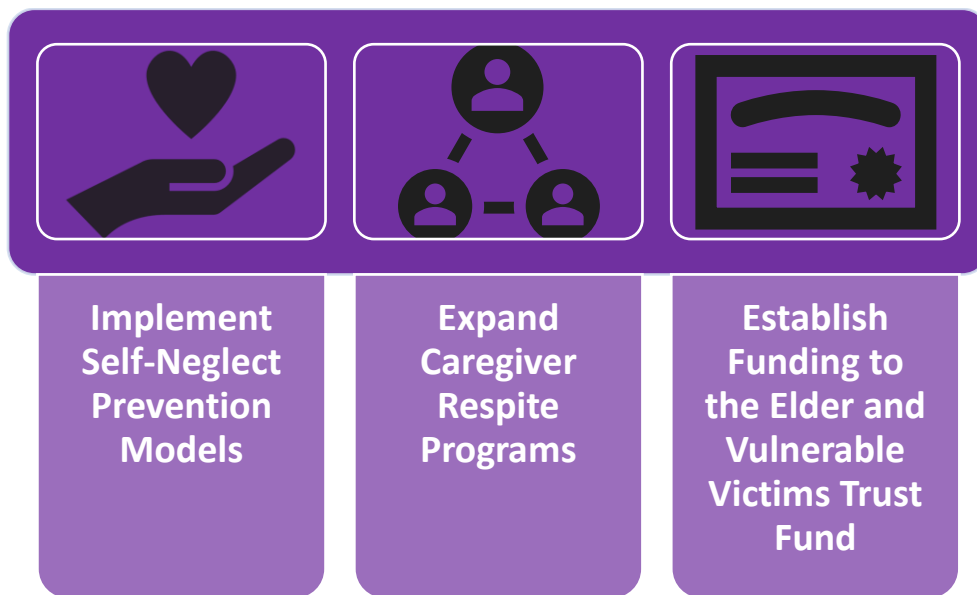


## ELDER ABUSE COMMITTEE PRODUCTS

For calendar year 2025, the only Elder Abuse Committee product produced is the annual Elder Abuse Committee report.

## ELDER ABUSE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Per KRS 209.005, the Elder Abuse Committee shall produce recommendations for public policy to the Governor and the Legislative Research Commission. Based on activities of the Committee, it recommended the Commonwealth of Kentucky consider the following:



### Implement Self-Neglect Prevention Models

The Elder Abuse Committee continues to recommend Kentucky establish self-neglect prevention best practices through an integrated model. Poor health outcomes associated with self-neglect may include higher mortality rates, functional decline, increased hospitalization admission and readmission, higher utilization of the emergency room, and increased nursing home admission. Self-neglect is a chronic issue and national data has indicated individuals experiencing self-neglect have a higher rate of recidivism to adult protective services. The Committee supports strengthening integrative partnerships for self-neglect prevention.

Adult Protective Services (APS) responds to individuals who are experiencing self-neglect as the neglect is occurring. The Elder Abuse Committee encourages Kentucky to implement models to promote self-neglect prevention. In 2024, APS and the area agency on aging and independent

living implemented a self-neglect pilot program in the Buffalo Trace region between to prevent self-neglect using existing funding streams; however funding limitations prevented the pilot from continuing. APS does not provide case management to individuals and refers individuals to community providers such as Area Agencies on Aging and Independent Living (AAAIL), community health workers, and Medicaid waiver programs. Often, individuals experiencing self-neglect require in-home assistance services, case management, and housing services which are services the AAAIL provide through federal and state funding.

In state fiscal year 2025, adults aged 60 and older made up 65% of all adult protective services cases. Of those cases, 46% of were due to individuals experiencing self-neglect.

2025 Adult Protective Services Elder Investigations

Category	Distribution Percentage
Self-Neglect	46%
Caretaker Neglect	26%
Abuse	16%
Exploitation	12%%

Source: Adult Protective Services Annual Report, SFY 2025

The committee recommends an education campaign to increase awareness of self-neglect for health care providers and promote social engagement activities. Health care providers are trusted advisors to older adults and have the opportunity to screen an individual who may be engaging in self-neglecting behaviors. The committee also recommends older Kentuckians participate in social engagement activities. Senior citizen centers offer social engagement opportunities and are embedded in every county across the Commonwealth.

### [Expand Caregiver Respite Programs](#)

The committee recommends the expansion of caregiver respite programs. In state fiscal year 2025, 26% of APS cases for individuals age 60 and older were for individuals experiencing caretaker neglect. Per 2023 AARP Public Policy Institute, over 600,000 Kentuckians are providing 570 million hours of unpaid care to family members. The unpaid care equates to \$8.6 billion in estimated value in Kentucky. In the fall of 2025, the Department for Aging and Independent Living received an Administration on Community Living federal grant to implement the Lifespan Respite Program to support caregivers. The grant aims to support caregivers through the following goals:

Establish a State Respite Coalition

Launch a Respite Care Registry

Implement a Statewide Respite Training Program

Create a Flexible Caregiver Respite Grant Program

#### Establish Funding to the Elder and Vulnerable Victims Trust Fund

The Committee recommends Kentucky increase awareness and obtain a sustainable funding stream to support the Elder and Vulnerable Victims Trust Fund. Without a revenue source for funding, education and awareness of elder abuse in the community cannot occur. Trust fund applicants may include public or private nonprofit organizations, including government organizations. The committee will continue to explore funding opportunities and promote educational awareness of the trust fund.