



# The N.C. Coalition on Aging

## 2015 Priority Issue

### Protect At-Risk Older and Disabled Adults from Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

#### Issue:

In FY 2011-2012, \$2 million in state funding was eliminated from the State Adult Protective Services Fund. Current funding to provide protective services for vulnerable adults is limited to Medicaid (for those eligible), Federal Social Services Block Grant and, increasingly, County Only Funding, while vulnerable adults--18 years of age and older, who, as a result of a physical or mental limitation that impairs their abilities--are at increasing risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

#### The Coalition's Position:

To meet the growing need and complexity for Adult Protective Services in North Carolina, restore \$2 million in state funding in the State Adult Protective Services Fund.

#### Background:

County Departments of Social Services are required by state law to receive, evaluate and provide protective services to adults 18 years of age and older who are abused, neglected or exploited and determined to be in need of protection. While there is a state legislative mandate to provide Adult Protective Services, state funding is no longer earmarked to address this mandate. This service is significantly underfunded relative to increasing need which places many counties in North Carolina in extremely difficult situations in meeting the needs of a very vulnerable and increasingly more complex population.

Adult Protective Services is a service provided for vulnerable older and disabled adults who are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation; and APS reports are increasing at a rapid rate.

State Fiscal Year	APS Reports Received	APS Reports Evaluated
2009	17,043	9,252
2014	22,824	11,311

The number of reports received over the past five years has increased by 34 percent. Of those evaluated 44% found abuse, neglect or exploitation. At the same time, however, resources needed to provide Adult Protective Services has been decreasing along with tightening availability to provide related supportive services needed by those individuals determined to be in need of protection. Federal and State funding available through the Social Services Block Grant, the



Home and Community Care Block Grant and through the Medicaid Program all support provision of services and supports needed by Adult Protective Services clients. Of critical importance, however, are state resources needed to directly support Adult Protective Services—what North Carolina’s County DSS’s are required to do to receive, evaluate and provide Protective Services in accordance with statutory requirements.

**What we know:**

1. The numbers of vulnerable adults being abused, neglected and exploited is increasing.
2. Vulnerability to abuse, neglect and exploitation increases with age.
3. Our system of adult protection must be better prepared to respond.

Now is the time to act to improve our systems of care and support.