



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

## DFPS News Release

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
Contact a [DFPS Media Specialist](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, October 1, 2015

### **If it's Not Your Money - It's a Crime!**

*More than 1,200 Texans fall victim to financial exploitation*

Adult Protective Services (APS) is putting the spotlight on financial exploitation and asking Texans to make it their business to protect people who are elderly or have a disability.. More than 1,200 Texans were victims of financial exploitations last year, an increase of nine percent from the previous year and a 23 percent increase over two years.

Financial exploitation occurs when a relative or caretaker (or anyone with an ongoing relationship) improperly or illegally uses the money or property of a person who is elderly or has a disability for personal benefit or profit.

"This crime has a devastating effect on its victims both financially and emotionally," says Beth Engelking, DFPS assistant commissioner for Adult Protective Services. "It's really a betrayal, but everyone can do their part to stop it by learning how to recognize financial exploitation and reporting it."

On October 6, APS and its partners are putting on several [events and conferences](#) about financial exploitation to raise awareness and increase understanding of this serious crime.

#### ***Recognizing Financial Exploitation***

The warning signs of financial exploitation include:

- Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices.
- Unexplained or unexpected withdrawal of large sums of money.
- Adding names to someone's bank signature card.
- Unfamiliar people accompanying bank customers to withdraw large sums.
- Unauthorized withdrawal of funds using ATM cards or sudden transfers of assets.
- Sudden changes in financial documents.
- Unpaid bills despite having enough money.
- Previously uninvolved relatives who suddenly claim rights to a person's affairs and possessions.
- Abuse of power of attorney.

If you see the signs financial exploitation, call the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400) or report online at [TxAbuseHotline.org](http://TxAbuseHotline.org).

Find out more about this issue at [EveryonesBusiness.org](http://EveryonesBusiness.org), including tips on how Texans can protect themselves from financial exploitation.

### ***APS Facts and Figures<sup>1</sup>***

- APS is a division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Its mission is to protect people who are 65 or older or who have disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by investigating, and providing or arranging for services to alleviate or prevent further maltreatment.
- Texas has more than three million residents who are 65 or older and 1.7 million younger adults who have a disability.
- APS investigations found that 54,730 Texas residents who lived at home were victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation last year. In most cases, a member of the victim's family was responsible.
- About half of victims were 65 or older and half were younger adults with a disability.
- APS confirmed that 1,221 people were victims of financial exploitation in Texas last year. Of those, 1,108 people were living at home and 113 people were exploited in institutions.

### ***More Information***

- More APS Data:  
[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About\\_DFPS/Reports\\_and\\_Data/Data\\_and\\_Stats/adult\\_protective\\_services/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Reports_and_Data/Data_and_Stats/adult_protective_services/default.asp)
- APS Reporting Guide:  
[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/APS\\_Reporting/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/APS_Reporting/default.asp)

---

<sup>1</sup> All data is fiscal year 2014, the last full year of data available.