

# Adult Protective Services for WISCONSIN TRIBAL NATIONS

## What is adult protective services (APS)?

APS is a social services program focused on helping older adults and adults with disabilities by investigating allegations of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial exploitation and by offering services and supports to promote safety, independence, and quality of life. APS looks different within each Tribal Nation in Wisconsin. APS services can be provided by the Tribe, the county, or both.

## Who can receive APS services?

In Wisconsin, APS services are provided to older adults and younger adults with disabilities. Each Tribe defines who can receive services. Contact your local Tribal agency for more information.

## Who can make an APS report?

Anyone can make an APS report. The identity of the reporter and information reported is confidential and protected by law. Below are groups of people who report to APS.

- ✓ Family members
- ✓ Friends
- ✓ Neighbors
- ✓ Caregivers

## How do you define abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial exploitation?

Below are some common definitions. Visit the [Wisconsin APS website](#) or your Tribal website for details.



### Physical and sexual abuse

*Physical abuse* is an intentional act that results in physical pain, injury, or impairment. Abusers may inflict bruises, welts, cuts, punctures, fractures, burns, scratches, or other injuries.

*Sexual abuse* is non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.



### Spiritual abuse

*Spiritual abuse* is causing harm to the spiritual well-being of an Elder or other Tribal member. This can include things such as excluding participation from ceremonies or taking their ceremonial items without permission.



### Financial exploitation

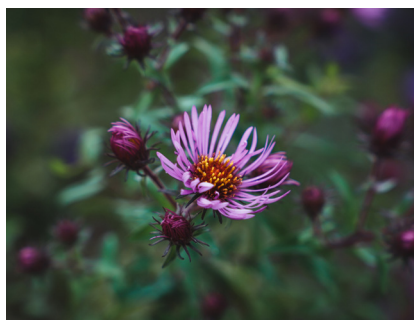
*Financial exploitation* is the illegal or improper use of the funds, assets, or property of an individual, for example, stealing money or possessions, forging a person's signature, or coercing an individual into signing any legal document.



### Neglect and self-neglect

*Neglect* includes the refusal or failure to provide a person with life necessities, such as food, water, shelter, personal hygiene, medicine, physical or mental health care, comfort, personal safety, services, or adequate supervision.

*Self-neglect* occurs when the individual at risk fails to take care of their own basic needs and personal care, which results in significant danger to the person's physical or mental health.



## How do you make a report?

**Note:** If the suspected abuse is an emergency—a life-threatening situation or one involving immediate danger—call the Tribal police or 911 immediately.

1. Contact either the local Tribal or county APS agency to make the report.
2. Provide as much information as possible:
  - ✓ The individual's name, address, age and date of birth, or other identifying information
  - ✓ Why they are at risk for physical or sexual abuse, spiritual abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation
  - ✓ Descriptions of the situation, any important identifiers of the alleged abuser, or other concerns

Any information you provide is kept confidential by law, but you are able to report anonymously if you choose.

## Why should you report?

Although most older adults or younger adults with disabilities live independently without assistance, some face abuse or neglect and need others to advocate on their behalf. By making a report, you may be able to connect someone to the support they need. APS helps by assessing each individual's unique needs, then developing a support plan to maintain their safety, health, and independence.

## What happens after I make a report?


The local Tribal agency or APS will respond to the report of suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation, and connect the individual with support services if the individual wishes to receive them.

Every adult has the right to make their own decisions. APS works with law enforcement, long-term care providers, financial institutions, and other community partners. Due to confidentiality, information cannot be shared except in specific circumstances.


## What if I'm not sure?

Do you have a "feeling" about a situation but aren't sure of the details? APS staff are trained to handle these situations. Based on your report, the agency will assess the situation and determine how best to respond.



 **Contact Your Local Tribal or APS Agency** Hours may vary depending on local agency.

✓ [To report abuse of an adult at risk](#) (age 18 to 59), call your county or Tribal agency. ✓ [To report abuse of an elder adult at risk](#) (age 60+), call your Tribal or county agency or the Elder Abuse Hotline at 833-586-0107.

 **WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT of HEALTH SERVICES**

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