

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF SENIOR CITIZENS

FY 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Bureau of Adult Protective Services

PERIOD COVERING: OCTOBER 01, 2024 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2025



Guam Adult Protective Services

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1. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BUREAU AND ALL DESIGNATED AGENCIES DURING THE PRECEDING YEAR

Background

The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS), through its Division of Senior Citizens (DSC), serves as Guam's State Office on Aging (SOA), as established by Guam Public Law 14-139 and codified under Title 10 GCA, Chapter 8 (Health and Safety, Senior Citizens). The SOA is entrusted with the responsibility of planning, coordinating, and implementing programs that address the evolving needs of older adults. Its mission is to support seniors in overcoming challenges and maintaining lives of dignity, independence, and fulfillment.

Consistent with the provisions of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, the Guam SOA administers a comprehensive array of federally funded programs designed to promote the health, safety, and well-being of senior citizens. These programs include Title III Supportive Services, the Elderly Nutrition Program, Preventive Health Services, the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the Nutrition Services Incentive Program, and Title VII Elder Abuse Prevention and Ombudsman Programs. Central to these efforts is the development and oversight of Guam's Four-Year State Plan on Aging (2024–2027), which outlines the strategic direction and priorities for aging services across the island.

In addition, the SOA manages the Guam State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), locally known as the Guam Medicare Assistance Program; the Senior Medicare Patrol Project, which works to prevent fraud and abuse targeting seniors; and the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) Software and Services, which streamlines access to vital information and resources for both seniors and their caregivers.

Recognizing the diverse needs of the community, the SOA also extends services to individuals with disabilities under the age of 60. Through programs such as the Bureau of Adult Protective Services (APS Referrals), the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the Guam Senior Medicare Patrol Project, and Guam SHIP, the office ensures that vulnerable populations receive the protection and assistance necessary to live safely and independently.

To effectively carry out its mission, the State Office on Aging is structured into four bureaus: the Bureau of Administrative Support, the Bureau of Community Support, the Bureau of Program Administration and Development, and the Bureau of Adult Protective Services. These bureaus work collaboratively to provide the administrative, programmatic, and protective services essential to the SOA's operations.

The Guam SOA is driven by a commitment to fostering opportunities for older adults to age in place, and prevent premature institutionalization, by promoting independence, dignity, and self-respect, the SOA ensures that Guam's seniors remain active and valued members of the community.

This dedication reflects the core principles of both the Older Americans Act and Guam Public Law

14-139. Through coordinated services, advocacy, and protective measures, the SOA not only supports the well-being of older adults but also upholds Guam's cultural values of respect and care for elders. The office's efforts extend beyond program administration to encompass a broader mission: safeguarding the rights, dignity, and quality of life of Guam's aging population.

Guided by the standards set forth in the APS Final Rule published on May 7, 2024, the SOA assures that older adults be treated with respect, protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and supported in making informed decisions about their care and daily lives. Through strengthened programs and strategic partnerships, the SOA works to ensure that every elder can live independently, participate fully in community life, and age with dignity in the setting of their choice. This vision reinforces the belief that seniors deserve not only protection but also empowerment, enabling them to remain engaged, respected, and integral members of Guam's island community.

Bureau of Adult Protective Services

The Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) was originally established as the Adult Protective Services Unit in January 1989 through Public Law 19-54 and later amended by Public Law 21-33 under the Division of Senior Citizens. In recognition of the increasing need to protect vulnerable adults, the Guam Legislature strengthened this mandate with the passage of Public Law 31-278 on December 28, 2012. This legislation elevated the unit to bureau status, formally establishing BAPS and expanding its authority and responsibilities.

BAPS is charged with receiving and investigating all reports of abuse involving Guam's elderly population, aged 60 and older, as well as adults with disabilities between the ages of 18 to 59. These investigations encompass incidents occurring in facilities operated by the department, programs administered by private agencies, and within private residences.

Public Law 31-278, as amended, significantly enhanced the Bureau's capacity to protect vulnerable individuals. It provided clearer definitions of abuse, expanded the list of mandated reporters to include emergency and non-emergency medical transport providers, medical and allied health professionals, personnel from banking and financial institutions, pension providers, and health and human services practicum students. The law also defined the organizational and staffing structure of the Bureau and established the Bureau of Adult Protective Services Fund (§2954) to support its operations.

Under this legal framework, BAPS investigates various forms of abuse, including abandonment, physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, financial or property exploitation, neglect, self-neglect, and sexual abuse. Beyond its investigative role, the Bureau engages in outreach, education, monitoring, and advocacy to ensure that Guam's elders and adults with disabilities are not only protected from harm but also empowered to live with dignity and self-determination.

The importance of the Bureau of Adult Protective Services lies in its dual mission: protection and empowerment. By intervening when abuse occurs and



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holding perpetrators accountable, the Bureau safeguards vulnerable individuals while affirming their right to age with dignity, make choices about their own lives, and remain valued participants in Guam's society. In doing so, BAPS embodies the island's cultural values of respect and care for elders and persons with disabilities, ensuring that every individual can live safely, independently, and with integrity.

Mission

The mission of the BAPS is to provide protective services to the elderly and adults with a disability in a manner that is least restrictive with respect to their dignity and in consideration of the values and practices of their culture.

Major Objectives of the BAPS

The BAPS is tasked with establishing and maintaining a comprehensive, coordinated system that both responds to and helps prevent the abuse of older adults and individuals with disabilities. Its core mission is to safeguard the dignity and well-being of vulnerable populations by protecting them from harm and upholding their right to make informed choices about their lives.

Beyond immediate protection, BAPS plays a vital role in arranging and overseeing services that support holistic well-being. When appropriate, the Bureau also works to preserve and strengthen family relationships, recognizing the importance of familial support in promoting stability and independence. This approach is rooted in a person-centered philosophy that prioritizes the unique needs, preferences, and goals of each individual.

To ensure the highest standards of care and protection, BAPS is committed to continuously enhancing its operational capacity and service delivery. This includes aligning its practices with federal guidelines outlined in the BAPS Final Rule, enacted on June 7, 2024. In pursuit of this commitment, the Bureau has identified several short-term strategic goals aimed at improving protections for vulnerable populations and advancing compliance with national standards.

1. **Expand Access to Protective Services** - Increase the availability and responsiveness of BAPS by delivering a comprehensive range of services, including intake, investigation, aftercare, emergency shelter for individuals in imminent danger, and maintaining a 24/7 crisis hotline. These efforts aim to ensure timely and effective support for those at risk.
2. **Protect Rights and Dignity Through Legal and Policy Reform** - Advance the protection of seniors and adults with disabilities by strengthening legal safeguards. This includes pursuing updates to existing laws to better reflect the definitions, procedures, and protections required under the BAPS Final Rule.
3. **Foster Strategic Collaboration** - Continue to build and formalize partnerships with government agencies, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and community organizations to create a coordinated network of support. These collaborations will improve case outcomes and reflect the multidisciplinary approach.
4. **Ensure Accountability and Timely Investigations** - Commit to addressing 100% of appropriate referrals through thorough, timely investigations. Implement performance monitoring and quality assurance measures to ensure consistency, transparency, and compliance with local and federal standards for documentation, response times, and case resolution.

- 5. Elevate Public Awareness and Engagement** - Continue to participate in and provide targeted outreach and education initiatives to increase public understanding of BAPS services, the signs of abuse and neglect, and the importance of reporting to improve efforts of community and stakeholder involvement.

BAPS Activities

The Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS), under the Division of Senior Citizens of the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services, carries the vital responsibility of receiving and investigating all suspected reports of abuse and neglect involving elderly individuals and adults with disabilities. This mandate ensures that Guam's most vulnerable populations are protected, their rights upheld, and their dignity preserved.

For the purposes of the Bureau's work, an elderly individual is defined as a person aged sixty (60) years or older. An adult with a disability is defined as a person eighteen (18) years or older who has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities, or who has a history of such an impairment. Major life activities include, but are not limited to caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, standing, walking, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, lifting, bending, speaking, amongst others.

The importance of BAPS lies not only in its investigative role but in its broader mission to safeguard the well-being of elders and adults with disabilities. By addressing abuse and neglect, the Bureau ensures that these individuals are treated with respect, afforded the right to self-determination, and supported in living with dignity as contributing members of the community.

BAPS Staffing

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) operated with six full-time staff: one Human Services Program Administrator, one Social Services Supervisor I, one Program Coordinator IV, two Social Workers III, and one Social Worker II. This staffing level remained below the minimum required under Public Law 31-278, limiting the Bureau's ability to fully meet its protective mandate.

Staffing challenges intensified during the year with the retirement of Social Services Supervisor I after over 30 years of service and the reassignment of Program Coordinator IV. Although a new Social Worker II was onboarded in September 2025, staffing levels remain critically low.

The Bureau's compensation structure falls short of the incentives provided by other divisions and agencies, making recruitment and retention more difficult. Lengthy hiring processes and restrictions under Public Law 37-42 further delayed efforts to fill vacancies, compounding operational strain.

These challenges are especially concerning given the rising demand for services an increase of 159 referrals. In 2025, BAPS received 446 referrals versus FY2024 305 referrals of alleged abuse or neglect, a 45% increase from the previous year. This surge underscores the urgent need to strengthen staffing through equitable compensation, streamlined hiring, and stronger collaboration with policymakers. Building workforce capacity is essential to ensuring timely interventions and

protecting Guam's elderly and adults with disabilities.

Functions and Activities of BAPS Social Workers

Social Workers within the Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) play a vital role in protecting Guam's elderly and adults with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Their work is both complex and compassionate, requiring a deep understanding of individual rights, crisis response, and person-centered care.

When a referral is received, Social Workers initiate an investigation by meeting directly with the individual involved. This initial engagement is approached with empathy and respect, ensuring the person's autonomy and right to self-determination are upheld. Through careful listening and assessment, the Social Worker gathers information about the situation and collaborates with the individual to develop a personalized case plan. Rather than imposing solutions, the plan is shaped by the individual's needs, goals, and preferences, with the aim of promoting safety, restoring dignity, and resolving the abusive or neglectful circumstances.

Interventions provided by BAPS Social Workers are comprehensive and tailored to each case. These may include immediate crisis response, education and advocacy to support informed decision-making, and coordination of multidisciplinary team meetings to ensure holistic service delivery. Social Workers also facilitate individual and family sessions to strengthen natural support systems, collaborate with government and community agencies to secure formal services, and assess the need for protective shelter when necessary. Throughout every step, the individual's consent and choices remain central to the process.

In addition to direct casework, Social Workers lead outreach and prevention efforts to raise awareness and foster community responsibility. They conduct presentations and training for government agencies, private organizations, and nonprofit groups to educate stakeholders on recognizing abuse and understanding the importance of early intervention. These initiatives are essential in building a community that is informed, proactive, and committed to safeguarding vulnerable populations.

Consent is a foundational principle in all BAPS services. Investigations and interventions proceed only with the informed and voluntary agreement of the elder or adult with a disability. This approach ensures that services are delivered in a manner that respects personal autonomy, affirms dignity, and supports individuals in making decisions about their own lives.

Through these functions and activities, BAPS Social Workers fulfill a critical mandate: to protect vulnerable adults while empowering them to live safely and independently. Their work reflects a thoughtful balance between intervention and respect, reinforcing Guam's cultural values of compassion, dignity, and care for its elders and individuals with disabilities.

Bureau of Adult Protective Services

The Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) carries the responsibility of administering several programs that safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of older adults and adults with disabilities. Among its core programs are the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and the Elder Abuse Prevention Program, both funded entirely through Title VII federal allocations.

The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman serves as a vital advocacy resource for elderly residents living in long-term care facilities. Its mission is to ensure that the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents are protected at all times. Ombudsman representatives conduct regular visits to designated service providers, including St. Dominic's Senior Care Home and the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority Skilled Nursing Facility. On July 2, 2024, Title VII Ombudsman informed by grantor no home and community-based settings such as adult daycare only for long-term facilities. During these visits, residents and their family members are given the opportunity to voice concerns, seek assistance, and engage in dialogue regarding issues that affect their quality of care and daily living. The Ombudsman works to resolve complaints, mediate disputes, and advocate for improvements, ensuring that residents are treated with dignity and respect. This program embodies the principles of person-centered advocacy by amplifying the voices of residents and safeguarding their rights against neglect, abuse, or exploitation.

The Bureau also administers the Legal Assistance Services Program, which serves to strengthen protections for older adults. Funded in part through Title IIIB Supportive Services and local funds, this program provides essential legal support to individuals aged 60 and older. The services offered are comprehensive and address matters that directly impact independence, security, and quality of life. Legal assistance includes estate planning services such as the preparation of Powers of Attorney, Last Wills and Testaments, and Living Wills to ensure that an individual's wishes regarding assets and healthcare are clearly documented.

The program also provides support in guardianship matters, offering protection for individuals who are no longer able to make decisions for themselves. In cases of elder abuse, whether financial, physical, or emotional, the program facilitates legal representation and intervention, including changes in guardianship or other protective measures. When specific needs fall outside the program's scope, the Guam Elder Justice Center provides referrals to other organizations that can offer appropriate assistance.

Together, these programs reflect the Bureau's commitment to a holistic approach to elder protection. By combining advocacy, prevention, and legal support, BAPS ensures that older adults are not only safeguarded from harm but also empowered to exercise their rights, make informed decisions, and live with dignity, autonomy, and security.

Outreach and Advocacy for Adult Protective Services Funded Locally

Outreach and advocacy are essential to the mission of Adult Protective Services (BAPS), serving as powerful tools to ensure that mandated reporters, partnering agencies, service providers, and the broader community are well-informed and prepared to support alleged victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. These efforts not only raise awareness but also foster meaningful collaboration, leading to more effective and timely interventions.

To address a critical gap in understanding the roles and limitations of BAPS, the Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS), under the leadership of the Human Services Program Administrator (HSPA), launched an innovative pilot educational campaign. This new and unprecedented effort was designed to build capacity among close partners and mandated reporters, particularly those who regularly submit referrals or who required re-education due to misinformation about BAPS's responsibilities. The BAPS Education Series delivered targeted training to clarify BAPS's scope

of services, its roles and responsibilities, address historical misconceptions, and reinforce the importance of accurate and timely reporting. To meet the diverse needs of stakeholders, the series was offered in three separate sessions, engaging participants from Government of Guam agencies such as the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (GBHWC), Guam Memorial Hospital (GMH), the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities (DISID), Guam Police Department (GPD), Division of Homelessness and Poverty Prevention (DHAPP), Guam Regional Medical City (GRMC), Office of the Public Guardian (OPG), Health Services of the Pacific (HSP), non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, coalitions, amongst others.

Complementing external outreach, the HSPA led strategic internal improvements to strengthen BAPS operations. Staff development was prioritized through mentorship and the implementation of new tools, including a comprehensive BAPS flow chart and a Directory of Services to streamline referrals and discharge planning. The introduction of “Module Mondays”, a dedicated time for professional development, provided BAPS staff with opportunities to enhance their investigative skills, improve case management, and deepen their understanding of their roles through webinars, online courses, and community engagement.

To further modernize BAPS practices, the HSPA emphasized the use of technology to improve efficiency and accountability. By mandating the use of the APS funded database for local and federal reporting and creating a centralized registry, BAPS significantly enhanced its ability to assign cases promptly, monitor maltreatment trends, and track outcomes. This data-driven approach has strengthened operational transparency and enabled BAPS to better meet its mandate with consistency and precision.

As part of its broader outreach strategy, BAPS, in collaboration with the Ombudsman Program, successfully engaged 1,145 participants through targeted educational efforts. These participants represented a wide range of stakeholders, including government entities, non-profit organizations, service providers, and community members. These activities played a vital role in increasing awareness of BAPS’s responsibilities, correcting misconceptions, and reinforcing the importance of cross-sector collaboration.

While these initiatives have laid a strong foundation for progress, the transformation of BAPS is an ongoing journey. There remains significant opportunity for continued growth, innovation, and refinement. As the needs of vulnerable adults evolve, so too must the strategies and systems designed to protect them. BAPS is committed to sustaining and expanding its outreach and education efforts, ensuring that BAPS remains a responsive, informed, and effective resource for the entire community.

Table 1. Outreach Activities.

Activity	Date	Event Title - Location	No. of Participants
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	October 4, 2024	Catholic Social Services	20
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	October 5, 2024	Family Violence Outreach - Micronesia Mall	40
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	October 11, 2024	Catholic Social Services	22

Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	October 11, 2024	Family Violence Outreach - Skinner's Plaza	15
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	October 13, 2024	Health Fair – Micronesia Mall	37
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	October 18, 2024	Catholic Social Services	24
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	October 24, 2024	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	4
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 6, 2025	Victims' Advocates Reaching Out (VARO) – Hilton Hotel	67
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 11, 2025	Outreach – Micronesia Mall	40
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 15, 2025	Guam Homeless Coalition, Point in Time – Sinajana Mayor's Office	62
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 16, 2025	Guam Homeless Coalition, Point in Time – Sinajana Mayor's Office	62
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 17, 2025	Guam Homeless Coalition, Point in Time – Sinajana Mayor's Office	63
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 20, 2025	Community Outreach – Micronesia Mall	111
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 21, 2025	Guma Asucena	5
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 22, 2025	Guam Homeless Coalition, Point in Time – First Church of God	63
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 28, 2025	Adult Daycare - South	10
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 29, 2025	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	11
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 29, 2025	St. Dominic's Senior Care Home	14
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 30, 2025	Adult Daycare – North	26
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	January 31, 2025	Adult Daycare – Central	23
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	February 04, 2025	Guma Asucena	5
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	February 18, 2025	Adult Daycare – North	27
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	February 20, 2025	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	11
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	February 21, 2025	Adult Daycare – South	6
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	February 26, 2025	St. Dominic's Senior Care Home	15
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	February 26, 2025	Bureau of Adult Protective Services Education Series – Division of Senior Citizens Conference Room	11
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	March 01, 2025	Victims' Advocates Reaching Out (VARO) – Tamuning Senior Center	25
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	March 04, 2025	Guma Asucena	20
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	March 05, 2025	Bureau of Adult Protective Services Education Series – Division of Senior Citizens Conference Room	16
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	March 12, 2025	Bureau of Adult Protective Services	25

Ombudsman Presentation		Education Series – Division of Senior Citizens Conference Room	
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	March 13, 2025	Adult Daycare – North	35
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	March 26, 2025	St. Dominic’s Senior Care Home	12
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	April 24, 2025	School of Social Work -University of Guam	10
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	May 7, 2025	University of Guam	13
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	May 22, 2025	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	8
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	May 28, 2025	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	8
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	May 28, 2025	St. Dominic’s Senior Care Home	15
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	June 19, 2025	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	8
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	June 27, 2025	Guam Police Department	20
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	June 24, 2025	St. Dominic’s Senior Care Home	21
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	July 29, 2025	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	10
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	July 30, 2025	St. Dominic’s Senior Care Home	21
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	August 26, 2025	Guam Regional Medical City	13
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	August 27, 2025	St. Dominic’s Senior Care Home	21
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	August 28, 2025	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	8
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	September 29, 2025	St. Dominic’s Senior Care Home	21
Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Presentation	September 30, 2025	Skilled Nursing Unit Facility	21
Total Participants for all Outreach Events			1,145

Project Activities

The BAPS strengthened its program in FY2025 by actively participating in project activities that fostered innovation, enhanced staff capacity, and deepened collaboration with local and national partners. These efforts improved the Bureau’s ability to address complex cases, coordinate resources, and align services with national standards.

Active participation in these activities has been essential in advancing advocacy and improving outcomes for Guam’s elderly and adults with disabilities. More importantly, this work is helping BAPS transition toward full compliance with the BAPS Final Rule, effectuated on June 7, 2024, which outlines new federal standards for Adult Protective Services programs. As the field of adult protection evolves, BAPS remains committed to continued growth, capacity building, and policy development. Aligning local mandates with national standards is essential to ensuring high-quality, consistent services and securing future support for Guam’s Adult Protective Services.

National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)

The BAPS proudly participated in the 2025 National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) Conference held in Bellevue, Washington from September 8-12, 2025. With over 1,000 participants from across the nation, the conference served as a premier gathering of professionals dedicated to advancing the protection, dignity, and well-being of older adults and adults with disabilities. Travel funded through federal APS Grant(s).

A highlight of the Bureau's presence was the recognition of Guam BAPS Human Services Program Administrator, Krisinda C. Aguon, who was honored as a finalist for the prestigious Spirit of NAPSA Award. This award celebrates individuals who exemplify innovation, leadership, and commitment to the mission of Adult Protective Services. Mrs. Aguon's recognition marked a historic milestone, as Guam's first ever presenter at the national conference. Her presentation, entitled "Beyond the Handbook – Collaboration and Innovation in Adult Protective Services," showcased Guam's efforts to move beyond traditional approaches by fostering creative partnerships, strengthening interagency collaboration, and implementing innovative strategies to better serve vulnerable populations.

The Bureau's participation underscored the importance of collaboration and networking in the field of Adult Protective Services. Conferences such as NAPSA provide a vital platform for professionals to share best practices, exchange knowledge, and build partnerships that extend beyond geographic boundaries. For Guam, this engagement ensures that local BAPS programs remain aligned with national standards while also adapting innovative solutions to meet the unique needs of the island's elderly and adults with disabilities.

Networking at the national level strengthens Guam's ability to advocate for its most vulnerable residents. By connecting with peers, researchers, and policymakers, the Bureau gains access to new resources, training opportunities, and collaborative initiatives that enhance service delivery. Ultimately, these connections translate into stronger protections, more responsive interventions, and a system that respects the autonomy, dignity, and rights of those served.

The presence of the Bureau of Adult Protective Services at the 2025 NAPSA Conference reflected Guam's growing recognition in the field and its commitment to ensuring that every elder and adult with a disability is supported through innovation, collaboration, and respect.

National Adult Protective Training Center (NATC)

The NATC serves as a source of high-quality on-line education for APS professionals across the United States. Its curriculum is developed and delivered by leading experts from the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA), San Diego State University, Temple University Harrisburg, Purdue University, the Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission, and The National Consumer Voice. This collaborative approach ensures that BAPS professionals, whether frontline workers, supervisors, or administrators, receive relevant, evidence-based training to effectively serve older adults and individuals with disabilities. In FY2025, the National APS Training Center was not available.

However, in prior years, staff received certificates of completion to include HSPA, and SWIII in a wide range of specialized topics, including: The Aging Process, APS Overview, Case Closure, Case Collaboration, Documentation, Safety Protocols, Communication and Interviewing, Ethics

and Cultural Responsiveness, Financial Exploitation, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Neglect, Neurocognitive Disorders, Sexual Abuse, Trauma-Informed Practices, and Working with People with Disabilities and the Criminal Justice System. These courses, supplemented by webinars and best practice literature, addressed critical areas identified through internal assessments and staff feedback.

Participation in these national training efforts not only enhanced the skills and preparedness of BAPS staff but also positioned the Bureau to better align with the National Adult Protective Services Final Rule, effectuated on June 7, 2024. This federal mandate outlines new expectations for APS programs nationwide, emphasizing standardized practices, data collection, and service delivery. Continued engagement in professional development and policy alignment is essential to meeting these requirements and advancing the quality of care and protection for vulnerable populations in Guam.

As a result of BAPS's commitment to excellence and innovation, the Bureau has been invited to participate in the National Adult Protective Services Training Center Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board. This significant opportunity brings together NAPSA and other nationally recognized leaders in the field to shape the future of BAPS workforce development. Through this collaboration, BAPS is committed to contributing to national dialogue, sharing local insights, and learning from best practices that will further strengthen Guam's BAPS system.

2. STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER AND TYPES OF REPORTS RECEIVED DURING THE PRECEDING YEAR

BUREAU OF ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (BAPS): In FY2025, the Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) responded to 446 referrals of alleged abuse involving elderly individuals and adults with disabilities, averaging 37 cases per month. This represents a 45% increase from the 307 referrals received in FY2024 indicating a significant rise in demand for protective services. **Table 1: Number of Reports**

These 446 referrals included a total of 509 reported maltreatment types, underscoring the complexity and severity of the cases. **Table 2: Types of Reports.** The allegations encompassed Financial Exploitation, Emotional/Psychological Abuse, Neglect, Physical Harm/Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Abandonment, Self-Neglect, and other forms of maltreatment. Both tables include comparative data from FY2024, providing context for the year-over-year increase in volume and diversity of cases. This upward trend highlights the urgent need for adequate staffing to ensure timely investigations, effective interventions, and the continued protection of Guam's elderly and adults with disabilities and to enhance public awareness and outreach on prevention of financial exploitation.

Table 1. Number of Reports

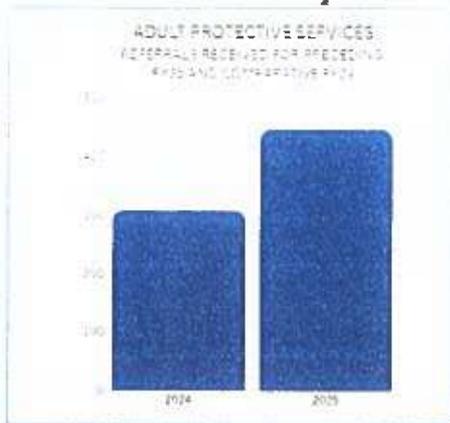
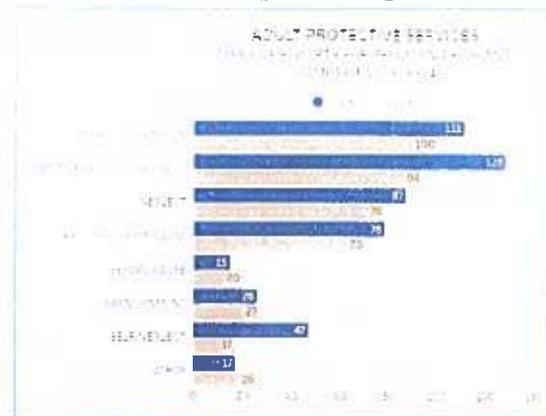


Table 2: Types of Reports



3. RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS CONDUCTED AND THE AMOUNT, TYPE, AND COSTS OF SERVICES PROVIDED

BAPS evaluated and assessed each referral to determine the nature, severity, and appropriate level of intervention. Person-centered services were provided to meet individual needs which may have included coordination for a temporary emergency shelter, medical support, case management, legal assistance, and other protective measures.

A detailed breakdown of the types of maltreatment reported and the specific vulnerable populations affected is presented in **Table 3: Assessments and Evaluations**. These populations include elderly individuals, adults with disabilities, and those identified as elderly with disabilities (dual). The data offers critical insight into the scope and impact of abuse across these groups, reinforcing the need for adequate staffing and resources to ensure timely and effective service delivery. A percentile analysis provides a clear overview of the proportion of referrals received.

Table 4: FY25 Referral Assessments and Evaluation Percentile Analysis

Table 3: Assessments and Evaluations

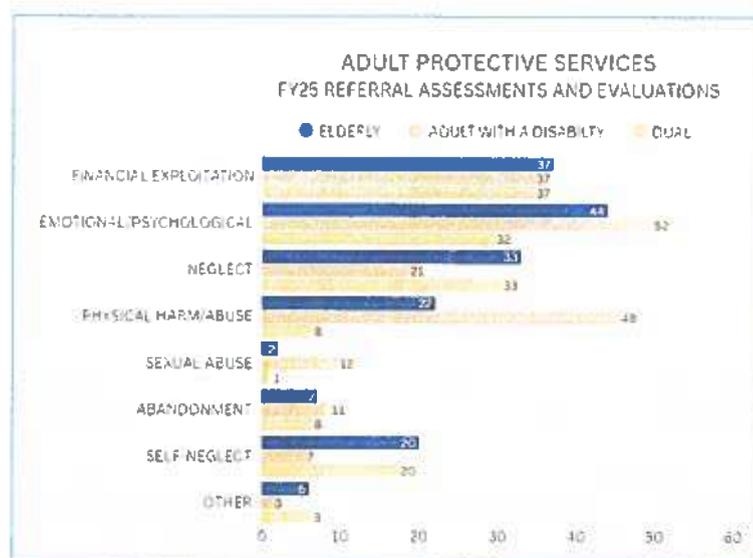
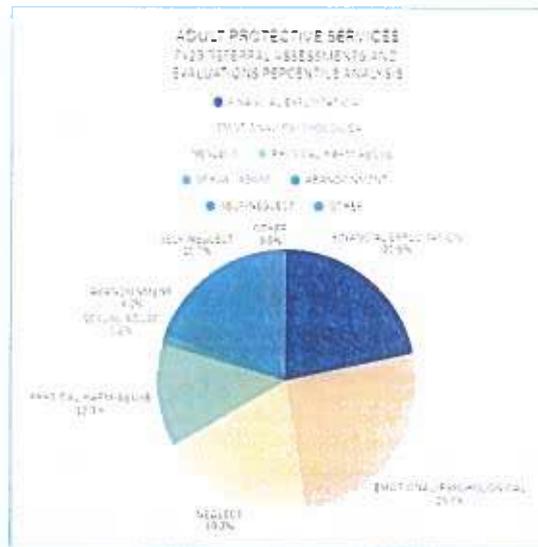


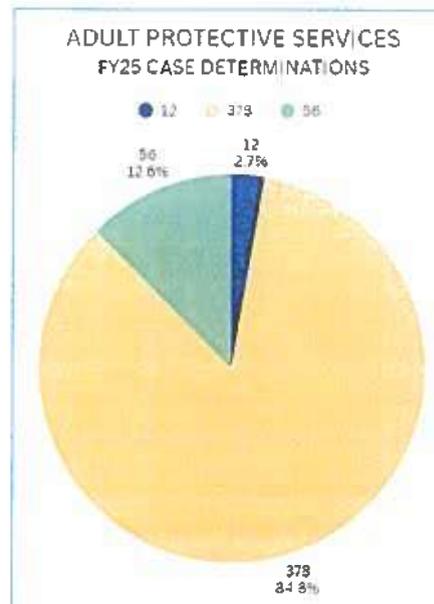
Table 4: FY25 Referral Assessments and Evaluation Percentile Analysis



During the reporting period, the Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) investigated 466 reports of suspected maltreatment involving elderly individuals and adults with disabilities. Of these, 378 or 84.8% of alleged abuse cases were unsubstantiated, 12 or 2.7% were substantiated, and 56 or 12.6% were deemed inappropriate referrals. BAPS prepared and submitted five (5) declarations to the Office of the Attorney General for legal review and potential action, demonstrating its continued commitment to safety, accountability, and access to essential services.

BAPS coordinates access for individuals from unsubstantiated or inappropriate referrals to appropriate support services based on their needs and eligibility. These included case management, Title III programs, legal assistance, housing, disability services, amongst others.

Table 5. Case Determinations



APS Emergency Receiving Home – Guma Serenidad

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) continued operating the Emergency Receiving Home (ERH), Guma Serenidad, a vital sanctuary for elderly individuals and adults with disabilities facing imminent danger due to abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The ERH provides temporary protective housing, offering immediate safety and stability during times of crisis. Admission is contingent upon medical clearance to ensure the individual's health status is stable and that urgent medical needs are addressed prior to placement. As a foundational step in the placement process, the ERH enables BAPS to assess each individual's circumstances and begin planning for long-term care that prioritizes safety, dignity, and well-being.

Over time, however, utilization of Guma Serenidad has declined. This trend reflects BAPS's strategic shift toward more innovative, person-centered approaches that emphasize safe and supportive living arrangements tailored to individual needs. These alternatives include placements with trusted family members, friends, faith-based communities, medical facilities, or off-island care providers. Such options often better align with the individual's personal preferences, cultural values, and existing support systems, promoting continuity of care and emotional stability.

To support person-centered placements, BAPS currently employs a voucher system that connects clients to a network of shelter and housing options. This flexible mechanism allows BAPS to respond effectively to diverse needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility. By leveraging community-based resources, BAPS continues to deliver high-quality protective services that uphold the safety, autonomy, and dignity of those it serves. This evolving model of service delivery underscores BAPS's commitment to responsible resource management and outcome-driven care. It also highlights the importance of reimagining traditional sheltering practices to better support vulnerable populations through coordinated, person-centered interventions.

In FY25, three individuals required placement in the Emergency Receiving Home due to imminent danger. Each case was carefully assessed to ensure timely intervention and connection to essential services, with medical evaluations serving as a critical step in confirming the necessity and appropriateness of shelter placement. These cases activated a coordinated response involving the Division of Homelessness and Poverty Prevention, the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities (DISID), and Case Management Services.

Through collaborative efforts, BAPS developed individualized service plans addressing housing, medical, and social support needs. Strengthened interagency partnerships continue to enhance BAPS's capacity to deliver comprehensive, person-centered care. By advancing innovative planning and leveraging community collaboration, BAPS is redefining emergency protective sheltering, ensuring that every individual receives care that is not only safe and effective, but also respectful of their unique circumstances and aligned with their best interests.

Cost of Services Provided (Budget Information).

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) Total Expenditures for the year amounted to \$362,839.97, reflecting the costs associated with salaries, fringe benefits, and telecommunication. Outlined in Table 6. Year-to-Date Expenditures.

Table 6. Year-to-Date Expenditures.

Item	Expenditures	Percentage
Regular Salary	\$ 252,151.37	69.49%
Fringe	\$ 109,438.32	30.16%
Contractual	\$ 0	0.00%
Telecommunication	\$ 1,250.28	0.34%
TOTAL	\$ 362,839.97	100%

4. INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED AND THE RESULTS OF SUCH SERVICE IN TERMS OF ALLEVIATING ABUSE

A significant shift in family structures has led to a decline in traditional caregiving roles. Increasingly, elderly individuals are left without nearby family support due to the passing of spouses, adult children relocating off-island, or families unable or unwilling to provide care. This loss of critical support has left many seniors isolated and vulnerable.

Caregivers who remain are often overwhelmed, facing emotional, physical, and financial stress that can compromise their ability to provide safe and consistent care. BAPS recognizes these pressures and works collaboratively with families and community partners to identify sustainable solutions that prioritize the dignity, safety, and well-being of clients.

In addition to operating a 24-hour shelter and Crisis Intervention Hotline, BAPS is expanding its focus on alternative placement options that better align with individual needs. These include placement with trusted relatives, close family friends, faith-based community support, and off-island arrangements when appropriate. These options offer more personalized and culturally sensitive environments that promote stability and healing. Through these efforts, BAPS continues to adapt and innovate, ensuring that services remain effective and compassionate in the face of changing societal dynamics.

BAPS Database Component. In accordance with Guam Public Law 31-278, the BAPS maintains a comprehensive Central Registry through a secure software application designed to document reports of suspected maltreatment involving elderly individuals and adults with disabilities. This registry serves as a vital tool for tracking and managing cases, capturing key information such as the individual's name, address, and date of birth; the nature, extent, and dates of the suspected abuse; the location of the incident; the identity of the alleged perpetrator; and the progress of any related legal proceedings.

Both substantiated and unsubstantiated reports are recorded and preserved in the Central Registry, ensuring a complete and accurate account of reported cases. The software also supports federal and other applicable reporting requirements, enabling BAPS to generate timely and reliable data for oversight, compliance, and program planning. This system strengthens the bureau's ability to monitor trends, coordinate services, and uphold its mission to protect vulnerable adults across

Guam.

Technical Assistance. The Bureau of Adult Protective Services (BAPS) continues its active engagement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL), through monthly technical assistance conference calls with Region IX representatives and the Adult Protective Services Technical Assistance Resource Center (APSTARC). These ongoing discussions support information sharing and collaborative planning to strengthen APS service delivery across jurisdictions.

As a result of these partnerships, BAPS is preparing to transition into the implementation phase of the APS Final Rule, a landmark federal policy that will standardize Adult Protective Services across all states and territories. Officially enacted on June 7, 2024, the APS Final Rule establishes national guidelines for APS programs, ensuring consistency, accountability, and quality in the protection of vulnerable adults. All states and territories are required to achieve full compliance by 2028.

BAPS's continued collaboration with off-island counterparts positions Guam to align with these federal standards, reinforcing its commitment to delivering equitable, person-centered, and effective protective services in accordance with national expectations.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ARTICLE §21011

The implementation of Article §21011 of the Adult Protective Services Act is essential to ensuring the protection of the elderly and adults with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. However, as with any statutory mandate, challenges may arise in translating legal provisions into effective practice. Identifying these potential problems is a critical step in strengthening enforcement, improving service delivery, and ensuring that the intent of the law is fully realized. Key issues that may hinder successful implementation and highlights areas requiring attention to safeguard Guam's most vulnerable populations are as follow:

1. **Employee Retention and Recruitment** - BAPS continues to face difficulties in retaining qualified staff and filling vacant, funded positions in a timely manner, impacting service delivery and case management capacity.
2. **Mandated Reporting Limitations** - While Public Law 31-278 mandates reporting of suspected abuse or neglect, there are no legal consequences for individuals who submit false reports. This lack of accountability can lead to misuse of the system and strain investigative resources.
3. **Non-Cooperation from Alleged Perpetrators** - The law does not grant BAPS authority to compel alleged perpetrators to cooperate during investigations, often resulting in inconclusive or unsubstantiated case outcomes.
4. **Financial and Property Exploitation** - Financial and property exploitation remains the most prevalent form of abuse among the elderly. Although P.L. 37-115 removed the statute of limitations for such cases, there is still a need for proactive measures to educate and protect seniors regarding their assets.

5. **Changing Family Structures** - Traditional caregiving roles are diminishing. Many elderly individuals are left without support due to the death of spouses or adult children relocating off-island, leading to increased isolation and vulnerability.
6. **Caregiver Stress and Burnout** - Families often struggle to balance employment and caregiving responsibilities, especially when caring for loved ones with specialized needs. This stress can lead to neglect or unintentional harm.
7. **Limited Long-Term Care Options** - There is a critical shortage of long-term residential placement options for elderly and disabled adults. Families face challenges in securing appropriate, sustainable care solutions.
8. **Complexity and Volume of Case Referrals** - BAPS is experiencing a rise in both the number and complexity of cases, including issues related to cognitive decline, substance abuse, homelessness, and mental health concerns among caregivers and clients.
9. **Barriers to Abuse Identification** - Cognitive impairments, communication challenges, and social isolation make it difficult to detect and verify abuse, especially when victims are unable to advocate for themselves.
10. **Limited Alternative Placement Resources** - While temporary emergency shelter services exist, there is a growing need for diverse placement options such as trusted relatives, close friends, faith-based community support, and off-island arrangements that better suit individual needs.
11. **Fragmented Service Coordination** - Lack of seamless collaboration among agencies and service providers can result in missed opportunities for early intervention, comprehensive care, and proper multi-disciplinary team planning.
12. **Cultural and Social Barriers** - Cultural stigma and fear of judgment may prevent families from reporting abuse or seeking help, further complicating identification and intervention efforts.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION ON THE PART OF THE LEGISLATURE WHENEVER DEEMED VITAL FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ELDERLY AND ADULTS WITH A DISABILITY

As Guam's demographic landscape shifts, the BAPS faces increasing demands in addressing abuse, neglect, and the complex needs of elderly individuals and adults with disabilities. To improve service delivery and align with the federal APS Final Rule and national standards, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Legislative Updates** – BAPS to coordinate with DPHSS Leadership to Amend Public Law 31-278 to ensure alignment with the Adult Protective Services Final Rule, which took effect on June 7, 2024, and requires full compliance by May 8, 2028.
2. **Workforce Development and Support** – BAPS to coordinate recruitment and retention challenges by requesting competitive compensation, and hazard pay for staff, as appropriate.
3. **Interagency Collaboration** - Allow for BAPS to facilitate enhanced collaboration between healthcare providers, legal services, law enforcement, and community organizations to support coordinated assessments and ensure timely, integrated service delivery through direct engagement and resource alignment.

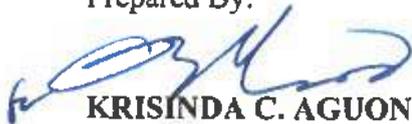
4. **Professional Training and Certification** – BAPS to collaborate with the University of Guam and other institutions to establish certification and specialization programs focused on APS investigations, protective shelter operations, and trauma-informed care and utilize National APS Training Center on-line resources available.
5. **Public Education and Reporting Integrity** – BAPS to conduct targeted outreach to increase awareness of mandated reporting requirements and available services. Introduce measures to discourage false reporting while maintaining protections for legitimate reporters.
6. **Additional Funding** – Secure dedicated funding streams to strengthen BAPS’s infrastructure, expand staffing, and invest in technology and programmatic resources necessary to meet federal compliance standards and improve service delivery.

These recommendations aim to enhance BAPS’s operational capacity, improve service outcomes, and ensure compliance with evolving standards in adult protective services.

7. AMOUNT COLLECTED AND USE OF FUNDS OF THE “BUREAU OF ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES”

“Bureau of Adult Protective Services Fund” §2954. This Sub-Section provided for all fines collected from any person required by the Subsections (a) and (b) of §2952 to report a case of abuse on an elderly or adult with a disability who has failed to make a report to BAPS, be deposited into the Funds and shall be expended exclusively for purposes used to support the operations of the BAPS. For this Reporting Period there were no funds collected for the Bureau of Adult Protective Services Fund.

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