

Adult Protective Services **2020 year in review:** Community Cases



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Background



There are about 185 Adult Protective Services (APS) workers in Oregon Department of Human Services Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) and Area Agency on Aging (AAA) offices across Oregon.

These APS workers:

- Receive and investigate reports of abuse and self-neglect,
- Coordinate with law enforcement, and
- Help older adults and people with disabilities find resources for immediate and long-term protection.

Tracking abuse data is essential to understanding the risk of abuse in Oregon, where it happens and the types of abuse that occur.

In 2020, local APS offices received a total of 46,239 calls. Unsurprisingly, these numbers are down from 2019, when local offices received 50,832 calls. COVID-19's effect on reporting was most dramatic in the early months of the pandemic. Just when numbers began to rebound, reporting was affected by the wildfires and their aftermath.

APS investigates abuse allegations in licensed adult foster care, assisted living and residential care facilities, as well as in the community. Facility investigations represent 25%–35% of APS investigations. The rest are community APS investigations. Community investigations can include the abuse taking place in their own homes, or in homes of a relative, acquaintance or friend. This report documents Oregon’s community APS investigations in 2020. The facility investigations are reported by the APD office of Safety, Oversight and Quality (SOQ).

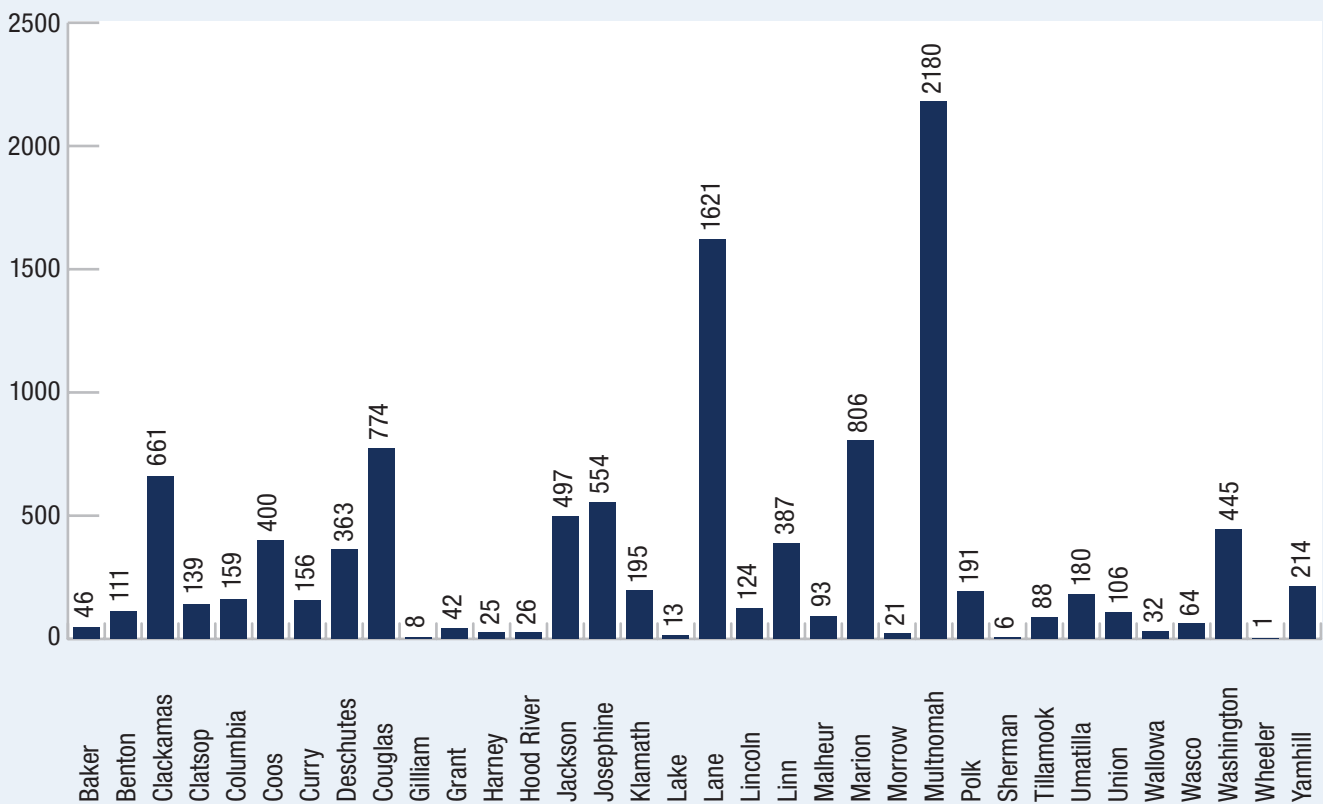
When considering the number of calls local offices receive, it’s important to keep the following in mind:

- Many of the calls are not abuse complaints, but requests for information, referrals and other services which APS provides to the caller. In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, many calls were from concerned family members and friends about the safety of their loved ones in facilities, visitation protocols and other COVID-related issues.
- Some calls are abuse reports that other agencies would investigate. APS refers these to the appropriate agency.
- Many calls voice concerns that do not meet the official definition of abuse that APS can investigate. In these cases:
 - » There may be ways to help the caller without an investigation, or
 - » Other agencies, such as licensing, may need to be aware of the concern.
- The remaining calls voice a concern that meets the definition of abuse. APS assigns these for investigation.

Investigations

APS completed 10,728 abuse investigations in community settings in 2020 (some investigations may have started in 2019). The total investigations completed in 2020 is similar to 2019, in which APS completed 10,033 investigations. While this number dropped during the early months of the COVID pandemic, it rebounded later in the year. The chart below lists the total cases investigated by each county during 2020.

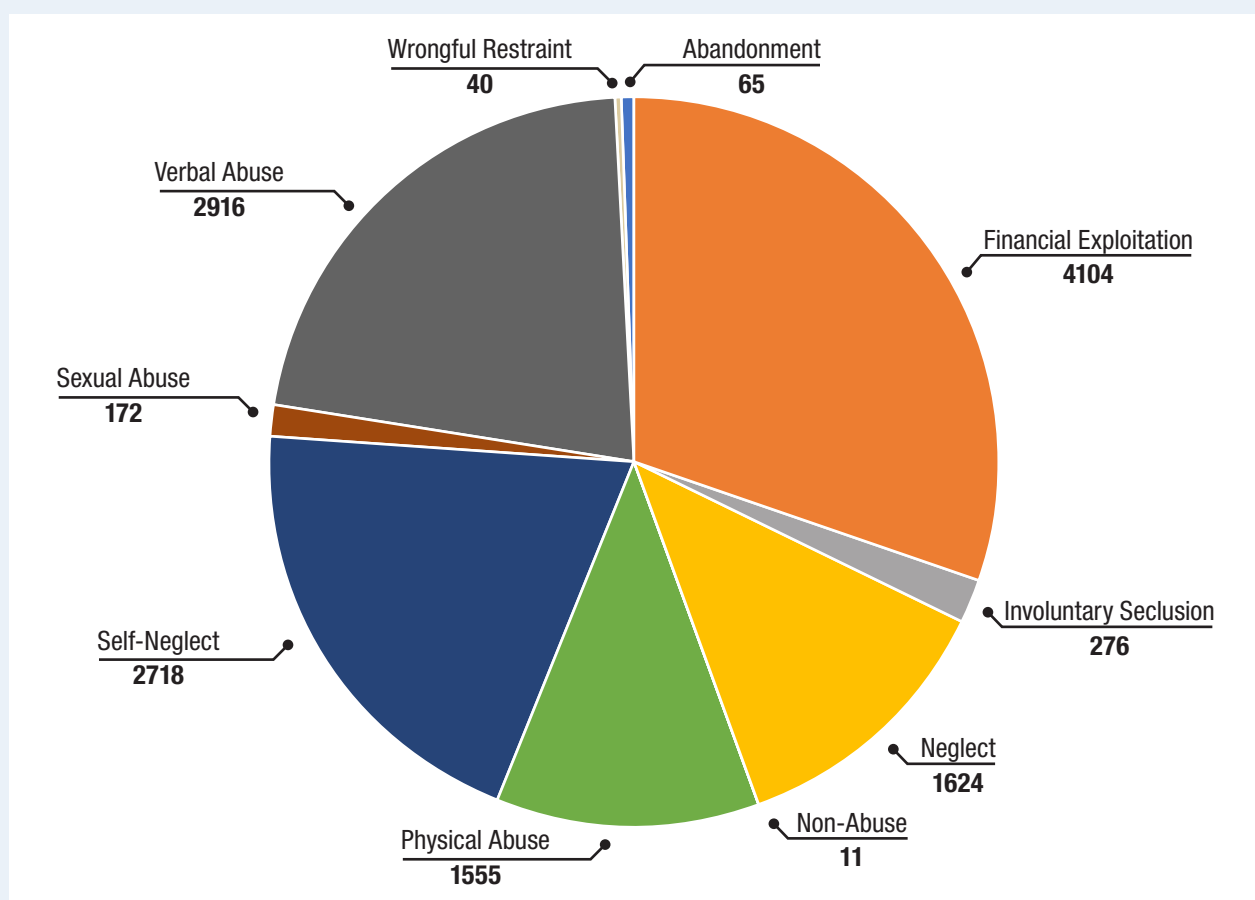
2020 Total cases investigated by county



Allegations

Of the 10,728 community cases investigated in 2020, there were 13,481 separate abuse allegations. The chart below shows the amount of each type of alleged abuse.

2020 Total abuse allegations



The percent of substantiated allegations are shown below.

Abuse type	Substantiation rate
Abandonment	20.0%
Financial exploitation	21.1%
Involuntary seclusion	10.5%
Neglect	14.8%
Physical abuse	29.6%
Self-neglect	19.5%
Sexual abuse	11.6%
Verbal abuse	24.0%
Wrongful restraint	10.0%

The substantiation rates from 2020 were similar to 2019. This is notable because investigations during this time had limited face-to-face capability. Most interviews occurred by phone or through online video chat.

Substantiation rates for abandonment rose from 11.9% to 20%. This is likely in part due to caregivers who were uncertain, unable or unwilling to fulfill their caregiving duty for fear of contracting COVID or exposing the alleged victim to COVID.

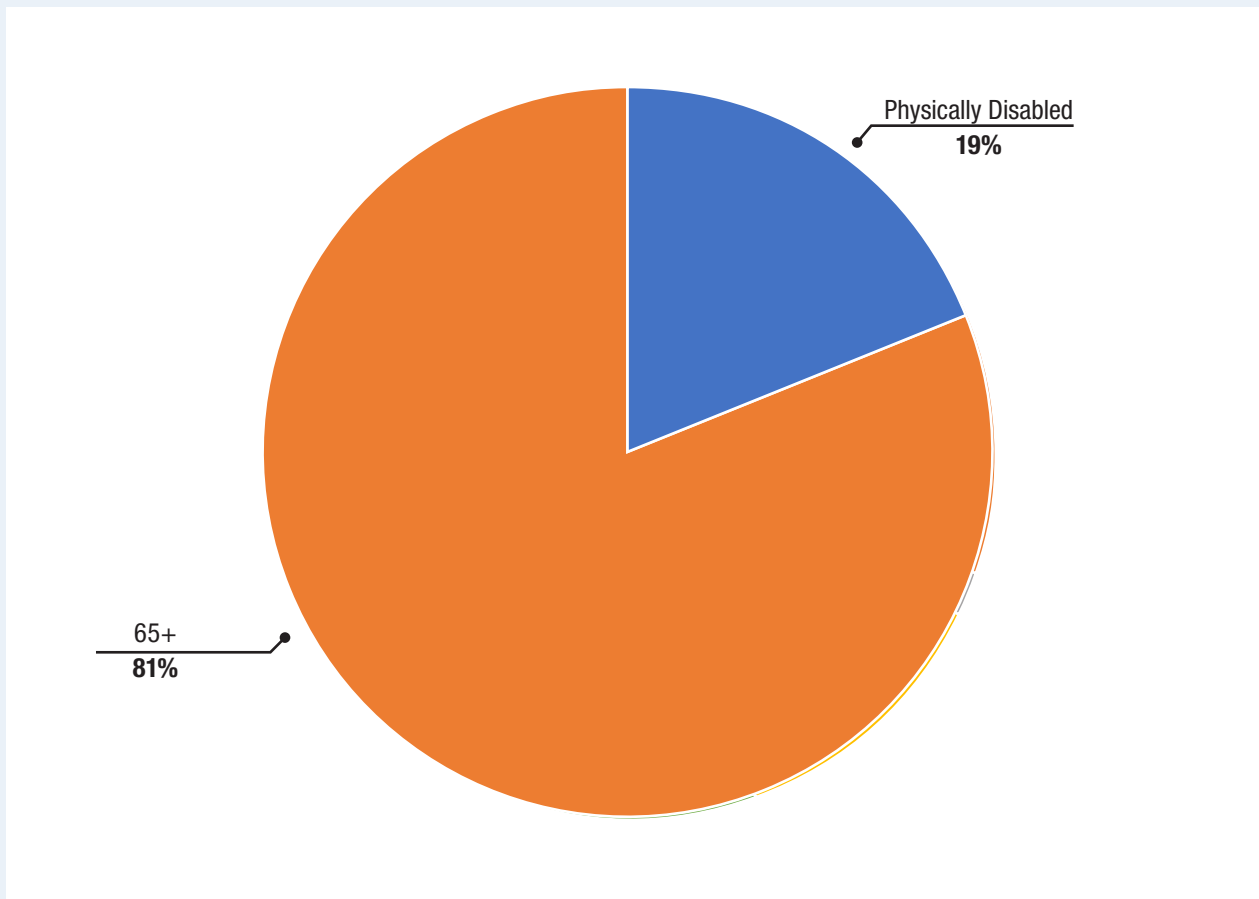
The victims

Though it is not required, investigators often note the alleged victim's gender or age during an investigation. For cases with identified gender, there were 5,576 female and 3,615 male alleged victims. Fourteen alleged victims identified as transgender or nonbinary.

The table below shows the alleged victims' ages for cases with an identified age.

Alleged victim's age	Number of alleged victims
19-29	43
30-39	115
40-49	225
50-59	726
60-64	892
65-69	1507
70-74	1723
75-79	1742
80-84	1433
85-89	1148
90-94	633
95-99	210
100+	40

2020 Alleged victim distribution



Alleged perpetrators are identified by one of the following categories:

- Familial (adult child, sibling, spouse, etc.),
- Professional (caregiver, landlord, medical professional, etc.),
- Situational (roommate, stranger/unknown, etc.), or
- Social (acquaintance, friend, neighbor, etc.).

More than two-thirds of alleged perpetrators are family members. The top two alleged perpetrator relationships are adult child and spouse.

Conclusion

We encourage you to use the information in this report to better understand community adult abuse in Oregon. Think about how you can volunteer in your community to help vulnerable Oregonians live independently and safely. Whether it is delivering meals, checking in on isolated adults or making phone calls, there are ways you can affect a person's life and help keep them safe.

Learn more

Why Should I Care About Elder Abuse flyer:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/Documents/Why-Should-I-Care-About-Elder-Abuse.pdf>

Are you a mandatory reporter of abuse? Review this brochure to find out more about being a mandatory reporter: <https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/de9373.pdf>

If you become aware of an older adult or a person with a physical disability who may be in an abusive situation or if you suspect abuse, neglect or financial exploitation has occurred, call Oregon's **Safeline at 1-855-503-SAFE (7233)** to report it.

Review these websites that have more information:

- National Adult Protective Services Association: <https://www.napsa-now.org/about-napsa/>
- National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse: <http://www.preventelderabuse.org/>
- Oregon Department of Human Services Aging and People with Disabilities website: <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/seniors-disabilities/SPPD/Pages/index.aspx>

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