

A SNAPSHOT OF THE PATH FORWARD

Maine Elder Justice Roadmap

There is a health, justice, financial, and social crisis facing Maine:

- Research shows that one out of ten adults aged 60 and older have experienced abuse in the past year.¹ That means *tens of thousands of older Mainers experience elder abuse every year.*
- Abuse is most often committed by a trusted person, including intimate partners, adult children, and other family members.²
- The adverse health and broad economic impacts of elder abuse are well documented.³

The *Maine Elder Justice Roadmap* identifies actions that can be taken to address this crisis and improve Maine's response to elder abuse and exploitation.

The *Roadmap* focuses on abuse committed by someone in a position that involves an expectation of trust. It was created by the Elder Justice Coordinating Partnership, a twenty-member multidisciplinary group of private and public sector leaders appointed by the Governor.

To see the full
Roadmap, visit [bit.ly/
EJCPRoadmap](https://bit.ly/EJCPRoadmap).

The *Roadmap* contains recommendations to achieve three desired results:

1. Decrease the incidence of elder abuse;
2. Increase the number of elder abuse victims who seek and receive help in stopping abuse;
and
3. Improve the multidisciplinary response to elder abuse.

TOP PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Please note, the *Roadmap* contains Top Priority, Secondary, and Further Study Recommendations. This Snapshot includes only the Top Priority Recommendations.

Direct Victim Services

“Direct victim services” is defined as those services provided to victims of elder abuse by a broad range of professionals.

- Examine the staffing capacity at Adult Protective Services.
- Develop and expand wraparound support services, including case management services, for victims of elder abuse based upon Adult Protective Services pilot.
- Increase the staffing capacity at Legal Services for the Elderly.
- Establish dedicated, statewide forensic auditing resources to support law enforcement in investigating financial exploitation cases.
- Identify an assigned Elder Abuse Prosecutor within each District Attorney’s office that works with the Elder Service Officers.
- Develop hub and spoke style investigative resources to increase specialized investigative resources and improve the response to elder abuse.

One of Maine’s strengths is the **momentum around collaboration.**

The *Roadmap* builds on this and addresses gaps and challenges.

Public and Professional Education

“Public and professional education” refers to both public awareness, or the ability of the general public to identify and prevent elder abuse, as well as training and education for professionals.

- Add specific elder abuse investigator training to the offerings from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, similar to what specialized domestic violence investigators receive. The training could be part of an Elder Service Officer certification program. Create an elder justice unit in law enforcement agencies.
- Expand and enhance training of Adult Protective Services staff and community partners.
- Mandate training for mandatory reporters and enhance the trainings given to individuals and groups by Adult Protective Services and others on mandatory reporting responsibilities.

Maine has made strides in **raising awareness and developing training programs.**

The *Roadmap* builds on these strengths and takes education to the next level.

Public Policy

“Public policy” includes the publication of laws, regulations, and guidance on elder abuse by local, state, and federal government entities.

- Regularly convene the Elder Justice Coordinating Partnership to monitor and guide implementation of the *Roadmap*.
- Add an attorney’s fee provision to the Improvident Transfer of Title Act.
- Restructure and update the statute on the Maine Elder Death Analysis Review Team.

Strong leadership

in the elder justice space exists in both the public and private sector.

There is commitment to implementation of the *Roadmap* for the Mainers they serve.

Data Collection and Evaluation

“Data collection and evaluation” encompasses research and data collection on the prevalence and scope of elder abuse, tools, and research to detect elder abuse.

- Create a Maine Criminal Justice Academy minimum standard on data collection for law enforcement. Create and implement a document that law enforcement fills out to capture data on older victims.
- Examine capacity and resource needs in order to publish an annual report of Adult Protective Services (APS) data and analyze APS data to identify trends and patterns and develop ongoing recommendations for system improvement.
- Create a comprehensive catalogue/list of victim services interventions to get an understanding on exactly how many specific discrete services (units of service) are available to older victims.

Maine has **experts and researchers dedicated to elder abuse and elder justice.**

These resources can support the ability to be successful in addressing the challenges in truly appreciating the scope of the problem.

TO SEE THE FULL SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS, VISIT THE ROADMAP AT bit.ly/EJCPRoadmap.

Endnotes

1 Acierno, R., Hernandez, M. A., Amstadter, A. B., Resnick, H. S., Steve, K., Muzzy, W., & Kilpatrick, D. G. (2010). Prevalence and correlates of emotional, physical, sexual, and financial abuse and potential neglect in the United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(2), 292-297.

2 Weissberger, G. H., Goodman, M. C., Mosqueda, L., Schoen, J., Nguyen, A. L., Wilber, K. H., Gassoumis, Z. D., Nguyen, C. P., & Han, S. D. (2020). Elder abuse characteristics based on calls to the National Center on Elder Abuse Resource Line. *Journal of Applied Gerontology, 39*(10), 1078-87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0733464819865685>.

3 For more information on elder abuse and its impacts, visit [The National Center on Elder Abuse](https://www.ncea.org/).