



NEWS RELEASE

GWINNETT COUNTY GOVERNMENT
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GWINNETT COUNTY RECEIVES FEDERAL GRANT TO COMBAT OLDER ADULT ABUSE AND ENHANCE FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Oct. 20, 2026) – The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners has accepted a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice under the Abuse in Later Life Program to enhance training related to elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. The \$750,000 grant will also provide services to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking involving older adults age 50 and older.

Statistics show that abuse among the older adult population is heavily underreported. According to research initiatives funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, for every case of elder abuse reported to law enforcement, approximately 24 cases go unreported. With Gwinnett's large and aging population, this funding establishes a safety net to ensure older residents are protected, supported and connected to resources.

The initiative was spearheaded by Gwinnett County Solicitor-General Lisamarie Bristol, who has played an active role on the Abuse in Later Life Program training team since 2017 and has seen the impact this grant has made across the country.

“As people get older, whether we like to admit it or not, they face more vulnerabilities, especially when exploitation or neglect comes from a position of trust, like a caregiver,” said Solicitor-General Bristol. “Technology moves fast, and it’s easy for older adults to be taken advantage of. I’m excited to see the positive impact this proactive training will bring to our community.”

The program will focus on cross-training law enforcement, first responders, prosecutors, advocates and adult services and establish a coordinated community response throughout the county. Gwinnett County Community Services will coordinate the grant-funded initiative, working alongside public safety agencies, offices and community partners.

"Our programs touch thousands of residents, and this grant allows us to bring key resources together to make a big impact," said Community Services Director Lindsey Jorstad. "By partnering closely with public safety, prosecution and victim advocacy, we can ensure older adults in Gwinnett are safer, better connected and fully supported."

Gwinnett's approach is intentionally broader. Gwinnett will be the first county to integrate Fire and EMS personnel directly into the response and prevention framework.

"Our firefighters and medics are often the first to enter a senior's home during a vulnerable moment," said Gwinnett County Fire Chief Fred Cephas. "Because abuse is frequently hidden behind closed doors, recognizing those subtle nuances is critical. Being the first in the program to weave Fire and EMS directly into this framework means we can better protect and advocate for our older residents."

The County is in the process of onboarding the grant and engaging partners to lay the groundwork for a coordinated program rollout to launch in 2027.

The grant is 100% federally funded with no County matching requirements.

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