

NATI NEWSWIRE

SENIOR SAFETY ISSUES

OVC Accepting Applications for HOPE Grants

Through its Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) grant awards, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) will provide up to \$10,000 each to grassroots community- and faith-based victim service organizations and coalitions to help them improve their outreach and services to crime victims.

Since the program was launched in November 2002, OVC has offered grants to grassroots, nonprofit, community- and faith-based victim organizations and coalitions to improve outreach and services to victims of crime.

This work may include developing program literature, training advocates, producing a newsletter, supporting victim outreach efforts, and recruiting volunteers. For more information about the application process, please visit the [OVC Web site](#).

Background

Through a series of roundtable meetings with crime victims and victim advocates, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) has become aware of a growing body of grassroots, nonprofit, community- and faith-based victim organizations and coalitions that are not linked to mainstream victim service programs. As such, they do not have access to traditional funding sources for services, outreach, and networking. Often only a small amount of money and access to resources are needed to expand and enhance their outreach and services to crime victims.

What Is Helping Outreach Programs to Expand?

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime will provide up to \$10,000 each to grassroots community- and faith-based victim service organizations and coalitions to help them improve their outreach and services to crime victims, through support of program development, networking, coalition building, and service delivery. Funds may be used to develop program literature, train advocates, produce a newsletter, support victim outreach efforts, and recruit volunteers.

Who Can Apply?

Organizations and coalitions operating for at least 1 year that have not received federal Victims of Crime

Act (VOCA) victim assistance grant funding and that have an annual operating budget of \$50,000 or less are eligible to apply. All applicants must also have a history of serving crime victims.

How To Apply?

Interested organizations should submit a letter of request on the agency's letterhead to the OVC Director. The letter should include the following:

- Organization or coalition's mission statement.
- Background information about the organization or coalition (e.g., how long in existence, names and titles of principal staff).
- Breakdown of annual operating budget.
- Description of activities and crime victim services.
- Statement of need.
- Breakdown of intended uses of funds.
- Three original letters of support. They may be from law enforcement agencies, social services agencies, and/or established victim services agencies on the recommending agency's letterhead. The letters of support must address the work that the program does with victims of crime in the community and must be dated within the past 12 months.

The HOPE grant program is part of OVC's funding efforts to support victim assistance programs at the grassroots level. For more information, please contact:

Office for Victims of Crime

Tel.: 202-307-5983

**Fax: 202-514-6383 and
202-305-2440**

Please send requests to:

HOPE Program Manager
Office for Victims of Crime
810 Seventh Street NW, Washington, DC 20531

Application Due Date Open
(Contingent upon fund availability)

OVC shares your mission and has a wide range of resources to help you accomplish it. [Visit the National Criminal Justice Reference Service](#) (NCJRS) online at www.ncjrs.gov to register for services or to find out more.

Family Haven sends out call

Special to The Paris News Macon, GA

Family Haven Crisis Resource Center is making a call to the community for used cell phones, and Lamar County Sheriff B.J. McCoy urges residents to participate.

In partnership with The 911 Cell Phone Bank, Family Haven Crisis and Resource Center collects used cell phones to provide emergency communication and funds for victims.

Under the agreement in an on-going effort, cell phones collected by Family Haven Crisis and Resource Center will be sent to the 911 Cell Phone Bank for processing. In return, they will build a bank of free emergency phones and funds for victims of abuse and seniors in need.

"Donating cell phones shows civic responsibility," Sheriff B. J. McCoy said. "We want to bring an awareness to the community that those useless old cell phones tucked away in a drawer can play a big part in making a senior citizen or victim feel safe and enabling someone in trouble to get the help they need," McCoy said.

James Mosieur, Director of the 911 Cell Phone Bank, said law enforcement agencies around the country are signing up to participate in the 911 Cell Phone Bank Program.

"No need is greater than supporting law enforcement agencies who work so tirelessly on behalf of their local communities," Mosieur said. "We're happy to enable residents to not only receive emergency cell phones, but to donate and give back to their community as well."

Residents and businesses are encouraged to drop off used cell phones at the Family Haven Crisis and Resource Center, 830 6th S.E. St., during lobby hours from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

For more information on how to get involved, contact Doug Garnett at 903-784-6901. According to industry statistics, Lamar County retires over 1,800 cell phones every month.

Steve Westbrook, executive director of the Texas Sheriffs' Association, recorded a public service announcement for the 911 Cell Phone Bank.

To view, please go to <http://www.911cellphonebank.org/psa/steve-westbrook.asp>. For stories of how emergency cell phones can help people, see <http://newsletters.911cellphonebank.org/true-stories.html>.

Who handles a Nigerian Letter Scam?

<http://www.sec.gov/answers/nigeria.htm>

http://www.secretservice.gov/field_offices.shtml

Early-Alzheimer's patients flunk financial study

By Kathleen Fackelmann, USA TODAY

People who are in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease show rapid declines in their ability to manage their financial affairs, a study reports this month.

An estimated 5 million people in the USA have Alzheimer's, a degenerative brain disease that ultimately causes severe confusion and memory loss. In the early stages of the disease, they symptoms are mild. Yet the new study suggests that even at this stage, patients may have trouble with basic money matters, such as paying bills or counting change.

The findings suggest that patients, even those who have mild symptoms such as some foggy thinking, should act right away to get their finances in order.

"The longer you wait, the more impaired you become," says Stephen McConnell, senior vice president of the Alzheimer's Association. The study is one of the first to document the steep decline in patients' ability to handle money matters, he says.

Daniel Marson, director of the University of Alabama-Birmingham's Alzheimer's Disease Center, and his team recruited 55 people who had early-stage Alzheimer's and compared them with 63 healthy seniors. The team gave the recruits a series of basic financial tasks such as writing out a check or reading a bank statement.

They found that compared with healthy seniors, patients with mild symptoms of the disease scored poorly on 16 out of 18 such tasks right at the study's start. The team tested the seniors after a year and found that Alzheimer's patients showed a substantial decline in overall financial capacity and made lots of mistakes when they performed specific tasks, including filling out checks and preparing a bill to go out in the mail.

Alzheimer's patients also were increasingly taken in by fraud schemes, Marson says. Most of the healthy seniors had no trouble identifying a letter outlining a scam as suspicious. Many of the Alzheimer's patients were duped or swayed by the letter, Marson says.

He says fraud schemes by phone or mail often target the elderly, and older people with confusion are a prime target.

"Patients lose the ability to size up the situation," Marson says. "And before you know it, they've made a sizable donation." The research is published in the March issue of the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.

Early-stage Alzheimer's patients still have the ability to make decisions about how they want their affairs handled, McConnell says. They should visit a lawyer while they are healthy enough to consider setting up some protections such as a durable power of attorney, he says. A durable power of attorney allows a designated family member to step in and make decisions when the disease has worsened.

Find this article at:

http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2008-03-10-alzheimers-money_N.htm

More Senior Safety related articles are located at www.nationaltriad.org; e-news section

POLICE INACTION ANGERS VICTIM OF IDENTITY THEFT

BY SONU MUNSHI TRIBUNE

Going by the string of gas purchases and ATM withdrawals on her recent bank statements, it would appear that Irma Judson is a plastic-savvy Mesa resident who loves to drive about town.

But the dusty, beat-up yellow Mercury sedan parked outside the 84-year-old's residence clearly shows years of being rarely used. And Judson didn't even know she owned a debit card.

When a good Samaritan neighbor figured something was wrong and contacted police on Judson's behalf requesting them to look into the matter, the police's apparent disinterest left him hapless.

"Here she was, totally wiped out; but they just weren't listening," said neighbor Bill Adams. "They thought she was just some crazy old lady."

Adams said the police did come by and he told them that the person who could be using credit and debit cards in Judson's name goes by the same name as a man who, since about last September, had been helping Judson with running errands including paying her utility bills. But the police did not follow up despite several attempts, Adams said.

After the Tribune contacted a Mesa police official Thursday, officers took all the documents and the identity theft case is currently under investigation. Judson has since closed her old account and opened a new one this month, with funds from her husband's Social Security and military pension. But she has lost more than \$15,000.

Mesa police spokesman Detective Chris Arvayo said that if someone calls about a felony charge, in this case identity theft, the police typically need to follow up on the charge. "We should have done that here," Arvayo said.

Arvayo added that Mesa police had responded to other unrelated calls from Judson's house 21 other times since March 2005. Nothing had come out of those calls, but said that should not have made a difference in checking up on this case.

Recently, Mesa has touted its training for police officers on how to handle elder abuse cases. Also, there's the SAFE Senior Program, which educates seniors about financial exploitation. But Adams said the officers did not read the bank statements, which showed the apparent case of ID theft.

Arvayo said there should be no difference in how an ID theft case is handled, regardless of a person's age.

Seniors are an easy target for financial crime but such cases are often underreported, said Steve Lacy,

ombudsman coordinator at the Area Agency on Aging, a private nonprofit funded through the state.

According to the state Adult Protective Services, which looks into reports of abuse and exploitation of vulnerable adults 18 and above, 774 cases of financial exploitation were reported in Maricopa County between July 2006 and June 2007. Of all abuse cases, about 20 percent come from the 85 and above age group.

Lacy said seniors are most vulnerable to financial exploitation, especially from people with easy access to their personal documents.

He added that financial abuse is easier in Arizona because in many cases, senior residents' families live out of state.

In 2005, the Federal Trade Commission published a report that ranked Arizona the worst in identity theft cases, at 142.5 victims per 100,000 people, followed by Nevada and California.

"I'd encourage families to be more proactive and check that everything's going well," Lacy said.

Judson said she's glad the police are finally working on the case, but it's been a bitter lesson.

"I don't want to see another credit or debit card in my name — ever," she said.

Bank Teller Charged With Taking \$165K From Elderly Woman

Skyler Blattner

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- A 21-year-old bank teller has been charged with taking \$165,000 from an elderly woman's account in Jackson County.

Prosecutors charged Skyler Blattner with Financial Exploitation of the Elderly on Friday.

While working at the bank near 89th and State Line, prosecutors say Blattner asked the woman about borrowing \$2,000 to help his father. When the woman agreed to the loan last November, Blattner wrote a counter check on the transaction for \$165,000.

Shortly after the transaction, Blattner quit his job at the bank and went to work for another bank in the same area.

He was arrested on Wednesday in Lee's Summit. Prosecutors are asking for a \$10,000 bond.

The \$165,000 was returned to the woman's account.

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800-424-7827 phone 703-519-8567 fax
triad@sheriffs.org www.nationaltriad.org



More Senior Safety related articles are located at www.nationaltriad.org; e-news section

EXPERTS DISCUSS BEST, SAFEST WAYS TO KEEP SENIORS ON THE ROAD

ANTHONY McCARTNEY Associated Press Writer

Senior drivers are nothing new in Florida, but each year makes the state's roads a little grayer.

And Florida's current crop of older drivers is just a taste of what the nation can expect as Baby Boomers age. By 2020, state officials estimate that one in four drivers will be 65 years or older. Nationally, about 40 million seniors are expected to hold driver's licenses by then.

Crash data show that seniors aren't necessarily more accident prone than younger drivers, but they are at greater risk of dying or being seriously injured in a crash. While drivers ages 65 and older accounted for 14 percent of U.S. traffic fatalities in 2006, experts expect the number of serious accidents involving seniors to climb as that population ages.

Some states are testing older drivers for mental and physical acuity. In Canada, some provinces are requiring doctors to report patients who shouldn't be driving. In many cases, tougher testing is opposed by seniors because they fear that losing one's driver's license is equivalent to losing one's freedom.

"Driving is a privilege, which we often forget in this country, but mobility really is a right," said J. Peter Kissinger, president and CEO of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, which has been studying the issue. He is one of dozens of presenters at this week's International Conference on Aging, Disability and Independence, a three-day gathering of researchers around the world discussing everything from traffic roundabouts to robots.

While states have traditionally looked at solutions based on a driver's age, that isn't necessarily the best way to deal with seniors, Kissinger said. He said senior driver safety will require better road design, more education and the cooperation of doctors, children and drivers to know when it's time to take away the car keys.

Dr. Bonnie Dobbs, a researcher at Canada's University of Alberta, said the focus should be on drivers who are unable to drive safely anymore.

"We have shifted away from the older drivers to the medically at-risk drivers," Dobbs said while explaining a pilot program in Edmonton that enlists doctors to help determine when patients should turn in their keys.

"It's important that we don't target older drivers," she said.

Dobbs said seven out of 10 Canadian provinces require doctors to report patients who have conditions that may impair their ability to drive, a mechanism not commonly used in the United States. Data offers a mixed view of senior citizens as drivers. Crash data charted by age frequently looks like a bathtub, with fatality rates higher for the youngest and oldest drivers.

Experts say the difference is that older drivers aren't as dangerous on the road, but are more vulnerable to being killed or seriously injured in accidents.

"Older drivers don't get into the same crashes that 16-year-

olds do," said Russ Rader, a spokesman for Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Seniors' mistakes behind the wheel are often high profile, and can prompt changes.

Last year, Texas enacted "Katie's Law," named after a 17-year-old Dallas girl killed when an older driver ran a red light.

The law requires Texas residents 79 and older to renew their licenses in person and submit to mandatory vision tests. Drivers 85 and older now have to renew their licenses every two years, rather than six.

Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick said this month that he is looking into legislation that would require older drivers to prove they can still handle a car safely. His remarks came after an 86-year-old man lost control of his car and struck a second-grader who was standing outside a polling place on Super Tuesday.

"There are really great and able seniors and people of the same age who are not as able," Patrick said during a monthly radio call-in show.

Florida has had several horrific crashes caused by older drivers as well. Since 2004, Florida has required vision tests for drivers 80 and older who renew their licenses.

Rick and Johna Bolka, who championed "Katie's Law" after their daughter was killed, said they understand concerns from seniors that new restrictions will hurt.

But if standards aren't changed, crash rates and deaths for senior citizens will rise dramatically, Rick Bolka said. The couple plan to ask Oklahoma lawmakers to adopt a similar version of "Katie's Law," which they said they hope becomes a national model.

Policy makers changing the driving rights of seniors must take into account that they still have to get around, said Elinor Ginzler, a director with AARP.

"When people stop driving in the United States of America, they slide over and become a passenger in a vehicle" or a pedestrian, Ginzler said.

Experts warn that many places don't have the infrastructure to accommodate aging residents who give up their cars.

Florida is especially lacking in its transit options, said Dave Bruns, an AARP official in Florida.

He and Ginzler both said training for older drivers can help them stay on the road longer. They also said states should also consider making greater investment in medical review boards that can evaluate driver safety on a case-by-case basis, and require people to renew their licenses in person. Because of Florida's demographics, many expect the state will be influence policies on senior drivers. "Florida will be an example for the nation," Bruns said. "The question is, will it be a good example or a bad example. That's up to us."

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