

## 1105-0NEW

### Elder Justice Victim Needs Assessment

#### **B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

The agency should be prepared to justify its decision not to use statistical methods in any case where such methods might reduce burden or improve accuracy of results. When the question “Does this ICR contain surveys, censuses or employ statistical methods” is checked, "Yes," the following documentation should be included in the Supporting Statement to the extent that it applies to the methods proposed:

**1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection methods to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

To capture multiple perspectives regarding the service needs of elder abuse victims, the national elder abuse victim services needs assessment is comprised of two main methodologies: 1) a series of national surveys with elder justice professionals and older victims and their family and friends; and 2) a series of virtual focus groups with elder justice professionals and older victims and their family and friends.

#### **Descriptive Statistics and Definitions Related to Elder Abuse**

Relevant elder abuse statistics are presented in the Supporting Statement document. For purposes of this data collection effort, the following definitions are utilized:

- Elder justice professionals are individuals who study, prevent, identify, respond to, or provide or arrange services for a victim of elder abuse.
- As defined in the Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act (EAPPA, Sec. 2), an elder abuse victim is a person aged 60 and older who has experienced some form of elder abuse.
- As defined by US DOJ (2014), the perpetrator must be a “trusted other” or someone “targeting the victim”.
- Family is defined as a person connected to the older adult by blood, adoption, or marriage.
- A friend is defined as a person whom the older adult knows and with whom there is a bond of mutual affection, typically exclusive of sexual or family relations.

#### **Advisory Board**

This research will be guided by input from an Advisory Board. Further, the Advisory Board will assist in recruitment efforts and ensuring methods and procedures are trauma-informed to reduce the risks of participating in this study. The Advisory Board consists of:

- **Hilary Dalin**, Director of the Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services, Administration for Community Living, US Department of Health and Human Services
- **Jennifer Spoeri**, Executive Director, National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)

- **Lori McGee**, Manager, National Elder Fraud Hotline
- **Lori Smetanka**, Executive Director, National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
- **Debbie Deem**, Retired Victim Specialist, Federal Bureau of Investigation
- **Sandy Markwood**, Chief Executive Officer, USAging
- Survivor of Elder Abuse
- Family Member of Survivor of Elder Abuse

### **Sampling Framework**

To produce reliable high-quality data, the sampling and data collection design for the national elder abuse victim services needs assessment uses purposive sampling (i.e., specific people within the population are chosen) (Sharma, 2017). Purposive sampling is best applied when researchers need to study a phenomenon with knowledgeable experts, in this case elder justice professionals and older victims and their family and friends. The study will use multiple nonprobability sampling techniques to arrive at a representative sample for each study group (elder justice professionals and older victims and their family and friends). These samples are not convenience samples, but samples that are consistent with and reflective of the populations of interest as defined above and as such are qualitatively generalizable. Described below are the sampling parameters for each aspect of this study.

### **National Survey**

Surveys can yield powerful data and information for ascertaining the nature and magnitude of older victim needs and gaps in services across the United States. Professionals have an important voice that will complement, but cannot replace, what is learned from the sample of older victims. Family and friends are an important resource and source of support for older victims (Burnes et al., 2019), and also have a unique perspective into what these victims need to manage their own victimization and recovery process. Therefore, elder justice professionals (including federal staff) and older victims and their family and friends will be recruited to participate in the national survey. The goal of the national survey is to achieve a broad sampling of service needs rather than a depth of understanding.

The sampling frame consists of elder justice organizations that serve older victims (e.g., adult protective services, VOCA-funded elder abuse victim services organizations, Long-Term Care Ombudsmen programs, civil legal aid, Area Agencies on Aging, etc.) to create a nationally representative sampling frame of organizations serving older victims. This sampling frame of organizations will serve as the basis for drawing samples for each of the populations necessary for the proposed study (i.e., elder justice professionals, older victims and family and friends). Each group will be stratified by five geographic regions in the United States (Northeast, Southwest, West, Southeast, and Midwest). One-third of the organizations from each region will be randomly selected to ascertain a nationally representative sample of victim service organizations serving older adults proportionate to the number of organizations operating in each region. Using this sampling frame, a list of elder justice professionals' contact information will be created, leveraging the Advisory Board members to ensure success reaching the populations of interest and developing a nationally representative sample.

This sampling frame also will be used to calculate quotas to ensure representation, applying snowball sampling strategies to recruit study participants within the organizations and among the people they serve. Since the sample has already been grouped by geographic region, quotas will be established for representation within each region. To establish these quotas, the contractor will first identify and select the relevant stratification criteria (described below) and divide the population, accordingly, ensuring they are mutually exclusive categories. Calculation of the

quota or sample size for each stratum will occur, from which participants will be selected. Once this is complete, recruitment will continue until the quota (sample size) for each stratum is met. The chosen strata for each study population is described below.

**Elder justice professionals.** The sample of elder justice professionals and federal staff will consist of 1000 respondents. Within each geographic region, stratification will occur by (1) type of victim service organization, (2) urban/rural service areas, and (3) employment position (e.g., Advocate, Executive Director). That is, 200 elder justice professionals within each geographic region will be recruited, with an equal or near equal representation of professionals in each type of service organization, urban/rural service areas, and employment position. Recruitment of federal staff with elder justice programming will be facilitated through the Chair of the federal Elder Justice Interagency Working Group affiliated with the Administration for Community Living who also serves as an Advisory Board member. Elder justice professionals (except federal staff) will receive a \$5 gift card for participating.

**Older victims and family and friends.** The sample of older victims and their family and friends will consist of 1500 respondents. Stratification will occur within each of the five geographic regions by (1) type of victimization (e.g., physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, financial exploitation and fraud, neglect), (2) urban/rural service areas, (3) age categories (i.e., to ensure the inclusion of younger and older elders are represented), (4) gender, and (5) race/ethnicity. Within each geographic region, an estimated 300 older victims and family and friends will be recruited, with equal or near equal representation for type of victimization, urban/rural service areas, age categories, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Recruitment of older victims and their family and friends will not be publicly advertised. Instead, elder justice professionals identified through Advisory Board networks will be provided guidance, strategies, and protocols on engaging their clients in the study, determining eligibility, and implementing the referral process for interested clients. These referrals will include family and friends of older victims who supported the older victim as they received services (e.g., at the request of the older victim or due to cognitive impairment). All individuals will be offered multiple modes for participation, including completing the online questionnaire at the partner organization in a neutral, safe environment or following a web link at their convenience. This strategy of utilizing a space that has already been deemed safe by older victims to privately take the survey has been successful across multiple victim studies to improve response, while ensuring safety and reaching marginalized older adults such as rural and Indigenous populations. Older victims will receive a \$5 gift card for participating.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups are methods used to obtain information that might be difficult to acquire through closed-ended surveys and allows for greater depth of understanding than can be captured in surveys (Aubel, 1994; Morgan, 1996). Two different types of focus groups will be conducted: (1) elder justice professionals and federal staff and (2) older victims and their family and friends. Focus groups will employ the same sampling and recruitment procedures as the national surveys.

**Elder Justice Professionals.** Consistent with Del Rio-Roberts' (2011) recommendation of between 6 and 12 participants per focus group, focus groups will be comprised of no more than 10 participants. Up to 15 focus groups with elder justice professionals will be conducted. Organizations that provide victim services, as well as federal staff engaged in elder justice programming, will be eligible to participate in separate focus groups, and will be clustered by organization type (e.g., federal agency, victim service provider, APS). Elder justice professionals will receive a \$30 gift card for participating.

**Older Victims and Family and Friends.** As noted above (Del Rio-Roberts, 2011), focus groups will be limited to 10 participants. Up to 15 focus groups with older victims and their family and friends will be conducted. The purpose of these focus groups is to ensure an in-depth understanding of their needs and how those needs differ by geographic location (e.g., rural, urban, U.S. region), victimization type (e.g., physical, psychological, and sexual abuse; financial exploitation or fraud; caregiver neglect), age, gender, and culture. This approach ensures the voices of older victims are reflected in the recommendations.

Clustering individuals by victimization type or cultural community provides an atmosphere for sharing and reduces the risk of vicarious trauma or trauma triggering. Hennink, Kaiser, and Weber (2019) find that code saturation is achievable with three focus groups per topic.

Therefore, the recommended distribution of focus groups is: three physical or psychological abuse, three sexual abuse, three financial exploitation or fraud, three caregiver neglect, and three culturally specific groups (e.g., Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinx). This strategy helps to facilitate discussions that naturally flow across the domains of interest without differing victimization and service receipt experiences changing the course of the conversation or dynamics of the group. This trauma-informed approach explores the most significant needs and unaddressed gaps in services without further harm to participants.

To be eligible for a focus group, the participant must have been 1) aged 60 or older at the time of the crime, 2) residing in the community at the time of the victimization, and 3) self-identify as emotionally ready to participate in the study. Family and friends of victims aged 60 or older at the time of the crime will also be eligible to participate in focus groups when appropriate (e.g., at the request of the older victim or for older victims of crime experiencing dementia or other cognitive impairment).

Similar to the recruitment described above, focus groups with older victims and family and friends will not be publicly advertised. Instead, elder justice professionals identified through Advisory Board networks will be provided guidance, strategies, and protocols on engaging their clients in the study, determining eligibility, and implementing the referral process for interested clients. These referrals will include family and friends of older victims who supported the older victim as they received services (e.g., at the request of the older victim or due to cognitive impairment). Older victims participating in the focus groups will receive a \$30 gift card for participating.

Interviews will be offered to older victims who would like to take part in the study but are uncomfortable with discussing their perspective in a group space or virtually. Focus groups will be offered primarily in English and Spanish, and other languages will be determined by the participant pool. As language needs are gathered, either a focus group or an interview will be provided to support the volume of victims and their family and friends.

## **2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**

- \* Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
- \* Estimation procedure,**
- \* Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**
- \* Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**
- \* Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

## **National Survey**

Aspects of the national survey that are consistent across the two respondent groups are described immediately below. Unique aspects of procedures are described following this section.

Survey data error can be introduced in multiple ways (Collins, 2003). The software selected for the electronic surveys reduces error in a number of ways. For example, drop down boxes are provided for categorical variables to reduce input errors. Furthermore, electronic surveys obviate the need to transfer paper and pencil responses into electronic databases which has historically introduced error. Once a survey is completed and “submitted” by the respondent, the software automatically saves the information on its mainframe in an excel spreadsheet for easy extraction to more sophisticated software such as SPSS, again obviating the need to manually transfer data from one source to another.

Survey administration will begin with a “slow start” to data collection. Pilot testing with a sample of 10 individuals reflecting the sample population of interest will be performed. Pilot testing will include cognitive aspects of the survey methodology (Collins, 2003), with attention to the wording of questions to ensure reliability and comprehension of respondents (Fowler, 2014; Taherdoost, 2018).

Upon review of the pilot data, improvements to the questionnaire will be made before proceeding with full data collection. Survey implementation involves fielding the survey and monitoring survey progress and quality metrics. Questionnaires will include links to the contractor’s email help desk staffed Monday through Friday during regular business hours, and a FAQ will be on all screens so respondents can ask questions or resolve operational difficulties while completing the survey. An automated return email to acknowledge receipt of all emails will be created, communicating that the respondent will receive a response within one business day. Should respondents have any questions or concerns about their participation in this study, they can contact the Department’s Project Officer.

Experienced technical staff will program the questionnaires for easy navigation on the Qualtrics online survey platform. Questionnaires will also feature SSL encryption, compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, a flexible and user-friendly interface, secure login, the potential for complex skip patterns, consistency checks, and “other specify” response options. The instrument will allow respondents to exit the survey, save responses, and return to the point of exit. The survey will be mobile optimized so that each screen is scaled to the user’s device and can be easily completed using touch-based navigation, keeping the same look and feel whether accessed on a PC, tablet, or smartphone. A review of the survey questionnaire will take place and recommendations made based on mobile-first best practices, such as keeping questions and instructions succinct, reducing nonessential content, and minimizing scrolling. A multistage testing process will be applied, including generating random data to verify skip patterns and manual testing on multiple browsers.

All contact materials and survey instruments will be provided in English and Spanish. The contractor will work with trusted translation companies (e.g., LanguageLine) for its surveys. These companies employ professional translators with subject matter expertise, which helps to ensure accurate translations of industry and technical terms (for the elder justice professional survey) and trauma-informed translation (for the older victims and family and friends survey). If needed, ICF will review the survey materials and any necessary instructions related to dialect. A Spanish speaker affiliated with ICF will review the translated documents as a quality control step. Should other survey languages be requested, ICF will provide an updated cost estimate to

the Department of Justice for additional translations. Querying each source below is necessary to obtain a complete picture of the needs of older victims from differing vantage points.

**Elder Justice Professionals.** It is estimated that the elder justice professionals survey will take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Formal support from elder justice professionals is critical for both the prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation and victim recovery. Elder justice professionals can describe the current state of services (e.g., services offered, barriers to service delivery, gaps in services, capacity-building and training needs, outreach/awareness-raising strategies, quality control processes, indicators of success) and offer recommendations for future improvements. The survey consent form and instrument for the national survey of elder justice professionals are detailed in Appendix A.

**Older Victims and Family and Friends.** The surveys of older victims and family and friends will be shorter than the survey of elder justice professionals, taking no more than 10 to 12 minutes to complete. Older victims and family and friends can shed light on the availability of and access to services, quality of services, interactions with all elder justice professionals (i.e., police, prosecutors, services providers), satisfaction with the services they received, and recommendations for future improvements. Additionally, they can clarify reasons for seeking or not seeking services and which services were most useful in helping them recover. The survey consent form and instrument including demographic questions for the national survey of older adults, family and friends are detailed in Appendix B.

#### **Focus Groups**

Two sets of focus groups will be conducted: (1) elder justice professionals (and federal staff) and (2) older victims and their family and friends. The focus groups will provide more detailed and contextual information about experiences providing and receiving services.

**Elder Justice Professionals.** Focus groups will be facilitated by ICF staff with extensive experience in victim services research. Consent forms will be provided to all focus group participants, detailing the study overview, purpose, risks and discomforts, and confidentiality procedures. Each focus group will have one facilitator and one notetaker. The focus group consent form and protocol for elder justice professionals are detailed in Appendix C.

**Older Victims and Family and Friends.** Focus groups will be facilitated by ICF staff with extensive experience recruiting and engaging victims of crime and adults over age 60 as well as conducting research on sensitive topics using trauma-informed and victim-centered principles. Older victims participating in a focus group will receive a \$30 gift card to show appreciation for the time spent participating in the study. Consent forms will be provided to all focus group participants, detailing the study overview, purpose, risks and discomforts, and confidentiality procedures.

Each focus group will have one facilitator and one notetaker. Although questions about specific experiences with victimization will not be asked, the contractor will follow the guidance of the International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies (2020) and the National Institute of Mental Health (Collogan et al., 2004) for ethical, trauma-informed research practices to minimize risk and maximize the benefits to all participants in this study. All facilitators will review policies and procedures for managing and reporting emergency situations or adverse events that might arise with participants. The focus group consent forms and protocol for older adults, family and friends are detailed in Appendix D.

**3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for**

**intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

### **National Survey**

Several approaches to maximize response rates will be employed. Across surveys, participants will be informed that the information they provide will be confidential and that no personally identifying information will be collected as part of the survey, thus ensuring their anonymity. To further maximize response rates, the surveys will be held open for four weeks and those who have not completed the survey in the first week will be sent a reminder in weeks two and three, a method known to increase response (Millar & Dillman, 2011). Recruitment by victim serving organizations implicitly provides an endorsement of the survey which may further incentivize participation (Dillman, 2000). Finally, as noted earlier, all individuals will be offered multiple modes for participation which should increase participation. These elements in combination ensure a maximum response rate.

**Elder Justice Professionals.** As noted above, ICF will work through their Advisory Board to tap into victim serving organizations. Elder justice professionals are stretched thin and may perceive this survey request as burdensome. However, professionals dedicated to an issue will make the time to complete a survey they believe ultimately will benefit the people they serve. Likewise, by virtue of their work, members of these elder justice serving organizations undoubtedly will take advantage of an opportunity to voice their opinion about the service needs of older victims (Dillman, 2000). To provide additional incentive for federal employees, an endorsement will be sought from the co-Chairs of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council, the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services (or their designee) and the US Attorney General at the US Department of Justice (or their designee). Elder justice professionals (except federal staff) completing the survey will receive a \$5 gift card intended to be incentivizing but not perceived as coercive.

**Older victims and their family and friends.** Older victims and their family and friends will be recruited through trusted sources such as victim serving organizations which will enhance the response rate and decrease nonresponse. Participation is also enhanced when there is a pre-existing interest in advocating for a phenomenon of interest, a characteristic known to increase response rates (Dillman, 2000). Older victims completing the survey will receive a \$5 gift card intended to be incentivizing but not perceived as coercive.

### **Focus Groups**

**Virtual focus groups.** Virtual focus groups will be utilized. The use of virtual focus groups is believed to increase participation by making it easy to participate. Virtual focus groups will be conducted using software that allows elder justice professionals and older victims and family and friends to anonymously participate and decide whether to use a camera, audio, or chat features if they are uncomfortable speaking (e.g., Webex, Teams). Participants will be reminded in the introduction that no names will be used in any reports.

Significant barriers to professional's participation is not anticipated. However, particular attention to the recruitment of older adults and family and friends will be taken. Guidance will be provided to service providers who share the virtual platform and recruitment steps to suggest to older victims, family, and friends what they should consider before taking part. Some considerations may include (1) selecting a private, safe location in an area where their participation can be kept confidential, (2) demonstrating how to reach out if technology is an

issue, and (3) showing what the virtual room will look like and how it will function. These steps will assist with creating a safe space for older victims when trust cannot be built beforehand. Further, older victims will be notified that they will receive a small token of appreciation for their time in the form of a \$30 gift card, an amount designed to be perceived as welcoming but not coercive.

A separate but related issue is participants' willingness to talk at the focus group. It is anticipated that self-selection will play a role and those not comfortable in this environment will decline to participate. Further, the subject matter of the focus group explores experiences with seeking and receiving services which may inhibit some participants from speaking frankly. However, ICF has extensive experience in facilitating focus groups and interacting with older victims and drawing them into a conversation. These elements in combination ensure a maximum response rate.

**4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of test may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.**

### **National Survey**

The software package selected for the surveys returns results in an excel format that can easily be imported to SPSS, the statistical package that will be used for this project. After data collection, data processing for all modes is composed of three functions. The first step is to convert the raw data into a user-friendly data file. The second step is to assign a final disposition to all records (completed and incomplete surveys). These data are used to calculate the final response rates. After converting and cleaning the data, the third step is to produce frequency tabulations of every question and variable to detect missing data or errors in skip patterns. A variety of other checks will be performed using SPSS. For example, for each question, any remaining responses outside of the expected range will be flagged and the program will reassign response values according to specified requirements. Consistency will be evaluated by performing quality checks across questions. The output will be a clean dataset that conforms to skip-check logic. Use of an automated program to perform this task lessens the risks associated with manual reviews by staff. Any personally identifiable information will be removed.

Primarily descriptive analyses (e.g., the total number, percentage, means, and standard deviation) will be used on the quantitative data collected through surveys. Demographics for older victims and their proxies (friends and family) will include percentage reporting by types of abuse, race/ethnicity, geography (e.g., rural/urban), age, gender, and types of services. For elder justice professionals, percentage of respondents and organizations, services provided, targeted population and service area, their role in the organization, education, and gender will be calculated. Integration of the data from various sources will provide the current status of services accessed and/or received by older victims.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus group notes and responses to open-ended survey questions will be coded using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. Additionally, the contractor will use a five-step qualitative analysis framework (Sharken Simon, 1999), which is developed for studies completed in a quick timeframe and producing actionable outcomes (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009).

**Step 1:** Task Lead and analysts read the transcripts to become familiar with the data.

**Step 2:** Task Lead develops a thematic framework of preliminary codes derived from the study research questions, document review, and first reading of the transcripts. Codes will be based on research questions and responses to understand whether and how experiences vary by individual, victimization, and location.

**Step 3:** Task Lead and two analysts independently code a subset of transcripts to establish consensus and refine the codebook. The coders review each other's work and discuss inconsistent coding, disagreements on codes, and codebook ambiguities. Codebook revisions improve clarity and add new codes where appropriate. Three coders then code a subset of transcripts to establish intercoder reliability (achieving 80% agreement on 95% of codes). Any coding discrepancies between staff members going forward will be discussed until a mutually agreeable decision has been reached.

**Step 4:** Staff analyze the coded text to identify dominant themes and patterns (e.g., facilitators and barriers to accessing services, unmet needs, definitions of success); this includes exploration of variation by geographic location (e.g., rural, urban, U.S. region), victimization type (e.g., physical, psychological, and sexual abuse; financial exploitation or fraud; caregiver neglect), age, gender, and culture.

**Step 5:** The team synthesizes and interprets the data. For example, it is anticipated that results will support detailed recommendations for meeting needs and improving services for older victims of crime by victimization type, geographic location, age, gender, and culture; gaps in services; and how elder justice professionals and older victims of crime define successful outcomes.

Information gathered from the literature review, survey, and focus groups will be used to provide a summary of services currently provided to older victims and organizations providing these services. Findings also will include length of time serves were received, challenges and barriers related to affordability, accessibility, acceptability of the current services, and quality/satisfaction with services. Perceptions of service access across older victims' characteristics such as abuse types, age, race/ethnicity, geography, and other community characteristics will be assessed to understand if any variations exist by service provision and access to services. Analysis will include a detailed summary of survey respondents by the types of needs, by respondent type, and for various service domains (e.g., safety planning; case management; victim compensation; counseling; transportation; connections to community, criminal justice, and social services; housing) to address a continuum of needs from crime incident to post-recovery. In addition, efforts to quantify, integrate, and summarize the needs identified in focus groups will provide context to survey findings to confirm and validate the findings, including participants by number of unmet needs identified under each service domain.

This approach will provide a detailed and contextualized understanding of the types of services provided to and received by older victims, the facilitators, and barriers to providing or receiving these services, unmet needs of older victims, and recommendations for improvement.

**5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

The following individuals will be contributing to the statistical design and analysis:

<b>DOJ Staff</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
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