

## Protecting Older Veterans Who Once Protected Us

**Serving the wide-ranging needs of vulnerable older veterans in Philadelphia who are victims of crime and elder abuse with a range of focused, collaborative victim services and resources, addressing their continuum of needs, including safety, health, shelter, and economic security.**

Funded by a Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, this project targets two currently underserved victim populations in Philadelphia: elders and veterans. Both face specific vulnerabilities which make access to victim services challenging and innovative services necessary. There are approximately 70,000 veterans currently living in Philadelphia. More than 50% of these vets are seniors (approximately 36,000 older veterans). **Older veteran victims need focused, sensitive and accessible services to meet their special needs.**

Because veterans have their own health care system, they are often isolated from other non-veteran oriented social and legal support systems. Veterans are often reluctant to ask for assistance, in light of their strong personal histories and the military culture of independence, self-reliance and strength. This culture creates additional barriers for victimized older veterans against accessing the help they need in critical areas of their lives. This project addresses all of these many challenges facing older veterans.

We provide the following services to older veteran victims of crime:

- Three monthly community-based clinics at the following partner venues: Intercommunity Action/Journey's Way, Martin Luther King, Jr. Older Adult Center and West Oak Land Older Adult Center. (Click [here](#) to see clinic schedule)
- Legal assistance to veterans, including the following:
  - Housing: reverse mortgages; fraudulent deed transfers; landlord-tenant actions
  - Elder Abuse: misuse of powers of attorney; physical abuse; financial exploitation
  - Family Law: custody; spousal support; domestic violence
  - Consumer Issues: identity theft; debt collection; contract disputes; home repair contractor fraud
  - VA benefits: misuse of VA Fiduciary status; appeals from denials of benefits
  - Consumer Issues: advice on debt collection, bankruptcy filing, seeking debt counseling
  - Other noncriminal legal issues: advance planning documents (financial and health care powers of attorney, living wills, simple wills), pensions

- Referral to emergency financial assistance, emergency food service, in-home care services and emergency shelter.
- Connection to the full network of other veterans' services, including benefits available to veterans' families, dependents, spouses or children, with multi-generational impact. For our veteran victims, we will pursue financial benefits (disability compensation, pension), Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits for homebound or seriously disabled veterans, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for dependents and survivors of veterans, burial and funeral expenses, and pensions for surviving spouses and dependent children of deceased veterans
- Connection to the full network of senior services including geriatric mental health counseling, senior housing counselors, senior home repair assistance programs, senior tax freeze and other real estate tax and utility programs, senior in-home meal and companionship services, and much more.

We are also pleased to announce that we are forming a volunteer peer corps of older veterans who will serve as advisors to this project.

For additional information, click [here](#). For informational flyers, click [here](#).