

Keeping Older New Yorkers Safe



Working in the aging sector is incredibly rewarding. We get to see older adults celebrate birthday parties, participate in dancing and singing classes, and get to call it work! But there is another area critical to our mission – elder justice.

Anyone who follows the news has seen a story about an older New Yorker who was assaulted on the subway, robbed on the street,

or randomly attacked. These are some of the most vulnerable members of our community and they should not have to worry about their safety.

Unfortunately, crimes and abuse against the elderly happen more often than the public realizes, and studies have shown that many cases go unreported because victims may be embarrassed, ashamed or afraid, but there is help.

This summer, Mayor Eric Adams and the Department for the Aging announced the expansion of the City's elder justice services, which help older victims of crime and abuse with support and services. Our elder justice network added three additional offices, one each in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Each year, program staff at these organizations support about 2,000 victims with case assistance, crisis intervention, safety planning and counseling, and at times can retain compensation through the New York State Office of Victim Services. These three additional programs will allow us to reach and serve even more older adults in need.

We are also working more closely with the Police Department (NYPD) to reach victims and give them the support they need. In September, our Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center and NYPD began a pilot program that directly connects older victims who report a crime to our elder justice network. This collaboration will ensure that older residents get both police case assistance, as well as the support and social services that we provide. The three-year pilot program will operate in NYPD Patrol Borough Manhattan North, which covers police precincts north of 59th Street, and the 5th Police Precinct in Chinatown. This program is particular-

ly important in Chinatown, which saw a rise in hate crimes during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pilot program is only a few months old, but we have already received around 300 referrals per month from NYPD. We are also helping educate NYPD recruits at the police academy to recognize the signs of elder abuse and crime and how to properly respond to these cases.

Albany has also taken action by adding identity theft as one of the forms of elder abuse in New York, expanding the services and resources provided by our elder justice network to further support them with these crimes.

We all have a personal responsibility to prevent these incidences from taking place. If you are an older crime victim or know someone who is, call us at 212-AGING-NY (212-244-6469). The steps we have taken this past year are just the start to keeping older New Yorkers safe.



**NYC Department for the Aging
Commissioner Lorraine
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