



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Event Options

To assist with your preparations for WEAAD, below are five WEAAD event options to facilitate your District's commemoration of WEAAD and related outreach efforts. Districts are encouraged to plan one or more of these events and/or create your own. The events will be coordinated by the District's Elder Justice Coordinator, in conjunction as appropriate with the Healthcare Fraud Coordinator, Victim-Witness Coordinator, or other members of the USAO community outreach team. To customize your WEAAD activities, [Appendix A](#) contains a link to the National Center on Elder Abuse's WEAAD Toolkit, along with a link to the WEAAD National Event Map where you can showcase your WEAAD events.

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Create a WEAAD Webpage or Issue a Press Release to Highlight Your District's Elder Justice Efforts

Create a WEAAD webpage or issue a press release, including content unique to your District. For example, a simple webpage could state:

The USAO for the _____ Observes Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Content could include:

- Purpose and history of WEAAD (see [Elder Justice Initiative's WEAAD webpage](#) or [About WEAAD](#))
- Highlight important elder justice cases and/or outreach events in your District
- List community WEAAD events (if any) in your District
- Resources for the general public on financial scams

For examples of WEAAD announcements and press releases, see [Appendix B](#).

Host a Community Event to Educate Residents and Staff in Nursing Homes about Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Exploitation

As WEAAD approaches, consider what your Elder Justice team can do to improve the lives of older adults in the nursing homes in your communities. Some ideas include hosting a community event to educate residents and staff about elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation and how to report abuse, if it occurs. Also think about what other groups in your communities could participate with you in these trainings! Here at EJI, we have prepared a standard PPT on educating staff and residents on elder abuse and neglect in nursing homes which we would be happy to share with you. We have also partnered with several other law enforcement and community members in our communities to get the word out about abuse and neglect in nursing homes, and where to report it. These key groups include: Emergency Medical Services, Medicaid Fraud Control Units, and State Ombudsman. Please feel free to reach out to Susan Lynch, Senior Counsel for Elder Justice at susan.lynch@usdoj.gov if you would like to brainstorm about how to put together an event in your area for WEAAD.

Write an Op-Ed, Blog, Letter to the Editor, or Newspaper Article on Elder Justice

Prepare an op-ed, blog, letter to the editor, or other newspaper article to highlight WEAAD. Potential topics could include:

- Description of WEAAD (see [Elder Justice Initiative's WEAAD webpage](#) or [About WEAAD](#))
- The role of the EJC in combatting elder abuse and financial exploitation and fraud
- Highlight recent cases or community outreach efforts
- Provide a list of resources for the general public and where to report

[Appendix C](#) contains potential content for an op-ed or similar piece, as well as a link to an op-ed written by a former U.S. Attorney and an example of a blog.

Post a Twitter PSA, Participate in a Media Interview, or Host a Webinar Focusing on Emerging Scams

Use WEAAD as an opportunity to post a Twitter PSA, arrange a media interview, or host a webinar with a recognized community group (e.g., AARP, local radio station, [Radio Media Tours](#)) to discuss emerging scams. The conversation could address:

- Information on emerging financial scams affecting older adults
- The role of the EJC in fighting elder fraud
- Tips on fraud prevention for older adults
- How and where to report elder fraud

Sample interview questions and topics are contained in [Appendix D](#). If you are interested in collaborating with your local AARP office, email FWN@AARP.org to get connected to your local AARP state office.

Host or Participate in a Live WEAAD Community Outreach Event

WEAAD is an opportunity to host a live community outreach event, either by yourself or in collaboration with partners. Several ideas for hosting a live WEAAD event are featured in [Appendix E](#).

Appendix A



The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) has developed a WEAAD toolkit, social media, and other planning materials that are available [here](#). NCEA can also provide any assistance you might need in using these materials.

Help the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) Cover the Earth with WEAAD Events

If you are hosting or participating in a WEAAD event in your community, add it to the national [WEAAD Event Map](#) and help the [NCEA](#) cover the earth with WEAAD events.



Appendix B

Examples of past USAO's WEAAD webpages/press releases:

- USAO-District of Colorado ([2022 WEAAD](#))
- USAO-District of Maine ([2022 WEAAD](#))
- USAO-Southern District of Florida ([2020 WEAAD](#))
- USAO-Northern District of Georgia ([2020 WEAAD](#))

Appendix C

Op-Eds, Blogs, Letters to the Editor, or Newspaper Articles on Elder Justice

An op-ed or similar piece can highlight the importance of elder abuse awareness, describe your Office's and the Department's work to combat elder abuse, and educate the public on financial scams and prevention.

- Describe WEAAD and why the Department recognizes it.
 - [Information about WEAAD](#)
 - Highlight the Department's efforts, such as the [Elder Justice Initiative](#), Consumer Protection Branch's [Elder Fraud Initiative](#) and [Transnational Elder Fraud Strike Force](#), and the National Nursing Home Initiative.
 - Include elder fraud statistics, such as
 - The Department's National Institute of Justice funded a [national prevalence study](#) finding that at least one in ten older Americans have experienced some form of elder abuse in the past year. Research funded by the National Institute on Aging finds that older adults who have experienced abuse have a [300% higher risk of death](#) than those who have not been mistreated.
 - The 2022 [Elder Fraud Report](#) (IC3) concluded that of the 88,262 victims ages 60 and older reporting to IC3, 17,810 were victims of Tech Support, followed by Non-payment/Non-Delivery. However, the highest financial losses came from Investment fraud, followed by Tech Support. Cryptocurrency-related losses reported by older adults increased by 350%, largely due to Investment fraud.
 - A [CFPB report](#) noted loss estimates due to elder fraud range from \$2.9 billion to \$36.5 billion. The average individual loss to older adults, as reported by financial institutions in Bank Secrecy Act filings, is \$34,200.
- Social isolation is a well-known risk factor for elder abuse. Therefore, it is important to emphasize reaching out to older adults to ward off isolation, which can lead to a decline in mental and physical health and increased susceptibility to exploitation. Read [Social Isolation and the Risk of Investment Fraud](#) (NASAA).
- Highlight elder fraud cases or initiatives from your office, including the role of the EJC.
- Discuss some of the scams and frauds that are trending nationally or in your region ([Financial Scams and Abuse](#) and the [Transnational Elder Fraud Strike Force Elder Fraud Schemes](#)). To find trends in your local area, see [Explore Data with the FTC](#) (interactive dashboard; scroll down to State and Metro Area Maps).
- Provide tips on how to guard against frauds and scams, such as:
 - *Slow Down*
One of the most effective ploys criminals use to get your money or information is a sense of urgency. Take time to consider what you've been told, talk to a trusted friend or family member, or do a little research.

- *Protect Your Information*
Watch out for unsolicited or unverified emails or text message and don't click on links in such messages. And, unless from a known and verified source, hang up on callers requesting personally identifiable information, Medicare numbers, or banking information.
- *Awareness Matters*
People who have heard of a particular scheme are less likely to fall for it. Learn about scams and frauds and pass on that knowledge to your friends, family, and community (see or share the FTC's [Pass It On](#) campaign and FDIC/CFPB's [Money Smart for Older Adults](#)).

- Suggest where fraud can be reported
 - Highlight DOJ's [National Elder Fraud Hotline](#), which not only assists older adults with filing a complaint with the appropriate federal agency, but also connects victims with local resources where warranted.
 - [Report Fraud to the FTC](#)

Sample Op-Ed

- [Other Voices: Elder fraud: An unconscionable crime](#)
Peter Deegan, former US Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa
March 5, 2020

Sample Blog Post

- [The Role of Elder Justice Coordinators in the U.S. Attorneys' Offices](#)
David Degnan, Assistant US Attorney, Elder Justice Coordinator for the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
February 23, 2020

Appendix D

Post a Twitter PSA, Participate in a Media Interview, or Host a Webinar Focusing on Trending Scams

There are multiple media outlets available to commemorate WEAAD. Post a Twitter PSA, arrange an interview with a local media outlet, or host a webinar with a well-respected community group. Determine in advance whether you will have a Q&A. Have a few final thoughts/takeaways prepared for the end of the interview/webinar.

Post a Twitter PSA

The following is an example of a [Twitter PSA](#) posted by the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina.

Participate in a Media Interview or Host a Webinar

Below are some sample questions and potential talking points/resources for the following outline:

- WEAAD and the Department of Justice's role in combatting elder abuse
- Public awareness about financial scams
- How the public can protect themselves
- Where to report
- Resources to share with the audience

WEAAD and the Department of Justice's Role in Combatting Elder Abuse

- What is WEAAD?
 - WEAAD is a global effort to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons.
 - Each year, [1 in 10 older Americans](#) experience some form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
 - Very few cases of elder abuse are reported (i.e., [1 in 24](#)), meaning that many cases of elder abuse are undetected, therefore many older adults are not receiving the intervention and services they need and deserve. This is why public awareness is so important.
- What does the Department of Justice do to fight elder abuse?
 - Discuss role of the EJCs
 - Highlight your office's cases and outreach efforts
 - Discuss Elder Justice Initiative, Consumer Protection Branch's [Elder Fraud Initiative](#) and [Transnational Elder Fraud Strike Force](#), and the National Nursing Home Initiative and other ways the Department addresses elder abuse

Public Awareness about Financial Scams

- According to the [2022 FTC Protecting Older Consumers Report](#), the 6 most common scams affecting older adults are:
 - Online Shopping
 - Business Imposter
 - Tech Support
 - Government Imposter
 - Romance
 - Prize/Sweepstake/Lottery
- Descriptions of scams are available at FTC's [Scams](#) and EJI's [Financial Scams and Abuse](#).
- It is important to note that social isolation and stress can lead to increased susceptibility, for example, by increasing dependency when older adults are unable to leave their home and require assistance with obtaining goods and services. Social isolation and dependency are known risk factors for elder abuse.
- How do fraudsters contact people?
 - Through almost any medium.
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Website or app
 - Text
 - Mail
 - Social Media
 - In Person (e.g., at your door, out in public)
 - Consumer complaints to the FTC indicate a phone call is the most common contact method, followed closely by text messages, although all methods of contact are used. ([2022 FTC Protecting Older Consumers Report](#))
- Do fraudsters target seniors?
 - Some do. But anyone can become a victim of a scam. In fact, according to the FTC, younger people report becoming a victim of fraud more often than older people. Although older people tend to lose a larger amount of money when they do transfer money to a fraudster. ([2022 FTC Protecting Older Consumers Report](#))

How the Public can Protect Themselves

- What can people in our community do to protect themselves from scams?
 - Awareness is key
 - Hang up on robocalls
 - Don't click on links for sources you don't know or respond to texts or emails purporting to be from the government
 - Ignore offers for miracle treatments or cures
 - Do your research when it comes to charity donations (see [Charity Navigator](#) for legitimate charities) and Investment opportunities
- If someone receives a phone call, email, social media, or text, how can tell whether it is a scam?

- Vigilance in and of itself is a good start.
- Be wary of unsolicited communications, particularly those that raise a large problem or promise a prize (forms of communication that increase emotional arousal and may interfere with sound judgment).
- Fraudsters will try to instill urgency in their communications. Don't let them rush you. Hang up or step away, take a breather, call a family member or friend or do internet research.
- If you get an unsolicited email or text message, avoid clicking on any link or using a phone number in the email message. Instead, if the email appears to be from your bank, call your bank using a phone number you have on file or from a quick internet search. Look for misspellings or bad grammar and see if the sender's email address looks odd. If it purports to be from the government but comes from a private email account, it is probably a scam.
- Some fraudsters will ask for unusual payment mechanisms, like a gift card or cash. Never buy a gift card to pay for a service.
- If one of our community residents does give out their phone number or personal identification information, what will a scammer do with that information?
 - This information could be used to commit identify theft, including applying for financial services or government benefits in your name.
 - The website, www.identitytheft.gov, can help develop a mitigation/recovery plan for identity theft.

Where to Report

Common questions related to reporting include:

- Does money have to be lost for someone to report, or can they report if someone attempted to defraud them?
 - Answer: People can always report fraudulent *attempts*
- If the fraud victim is isolated or unable to submit the report, can a caregiver report on their behalf?
 - Answer: *anyone* can report on behalf of someone else.
- Where should people report? [see below]
 - The DOJ's [Elder Fraud Hotline](http://www.elderfraudhotline.org) at 833-FRAUD-11 or 833-372-8311 Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. eastern time or
 - File a [consumer complaint](http://www.ftc.gov) with the FTC
 - You may also mention that law enforcement uses FTC consumer complaints to identify fraudulent activity and build cases.

Resources to Share with Audience

- Which websites do you recommend for learning more about scams and how to protect oneself?
 - EJI's [Financial Scams and Abuse](http://www.financialscamsandabuse.org) (for descriptions of financial abuse and scams)
 - FTC [Avoiding and Reporting Scams](http://www.ftc.gov) (To find a specific type of scam, see *Filter by type of scam* on the lefthand side of the page)

- AARP [Fraud Watch Network](#)

Some examples of webinars and interviews include:

- [Gift Card Frauds and Scams: Town Hall with the U.S. Attorney's Office and FBI](#) (AARP)
- [WEAAD 2022](#) Webinar/Press Conference - USAO Easter District of Missouri
- USAO Maryland participated in an AARP Tele-Town Hall discussing prevalent fraud schemes targeting older adults and how to avoid them, including resources for reporting (06/15/22) ([announcement](#))

Appendix E

Examples of in-person outreach events include:

- **Florida Free Food and Flyers WEAAD Event**

Staff from the USAO for the Southern District of Florida participated in a food drive-thru hosted by the Violence Reduction Program, in partnership with the Miami-Dade Police Department - South District and Farm Share, where free food and elder abuse flyers were distributed to members of the community at Demps Park.

- **Expert-Led Discussion**

In commemoration of WEAAD, the USAO for the District of Columbia organized an event featuring an expert-led discussion on the intersection of elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation and fraud committed against older Americans. The USAO-DC partnered with the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative, Department of Aging and Community Living, Adult Protective Services, and the Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking.

- **Florida Post Office WEAAD Event**

In collaboration with U.S. Postal Inspectors, staff from the USAO for the Southern District of Florida participated in an in-person WEAAD Outreach Event at three different post office branches in the Southern District of Florida (Pembroke Pines, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami), distributing 2022 WEAAD and Money Mule flyers and answering questions from the public.

- **Lunch and Learn Event**

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina is hosting a lunch and learn event to 'Build Strong Support for Older Americans by Learning More about Elder Abuse.' The event is sponsored by the U.S. Attorney's Office, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Garner Senior Center, and Meals on Wheels. ([Announcement](#))