

National Center on Elder Abuse

Creating Effective Local Elder Abuse Prevention Networks: A Planning Guide



A Project of the National Center on Elder Abuse and the National Committee for the
Prevention of Elder Abuse

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INCORPORATED**

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The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) serves as a national resource for elder rights advocates, adult protective services, law enforcement and legal professionals, medical and mental health providers, public policy leaders, educators, researchers, and concerned citizens. It is the mission of NCEA to promote understanding, knowledge sharing, and action on elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The Center consists of a consortium of five organizations united by a shared commitment to elder abuse prevention. Administered by the National Association of State Units on Aging, NCEA is supported by Grant No. 90-AM-2792 from the U.S. Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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**The National Center on Elder Abuse
and the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
Local Network Development Project 2004-2006**

**Creating Effective Local Elder Abuse Prevention Networks:
A Planning Guide**

Developed by the Area Agency on Aging, Region One
Phoenix, Arizona

This Planning Guide is based on the experience of several Area Agencies on Aging in the development of local elder abuse prevention networks. It offers an outline of basic steps to take in forming, directing and assessing the success of the group. Information about how the tool was developed is provided in the Background and Overview section. Instructions for strategic planning, including sample forms, an outline and suggested small group procedures are included to help organizations begin a results-oriented planning process.

Background and Overview

In 2004, the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) initiated a project to promote the development of new local elder abuse prevention networks. One of the NCEA partner agencies, the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA), received funding to assist local communities in addressing elder abuse and late-life domestic violence. In March 2004, NCPEA commissioned the Area Agency on Aging, Region One in Phoenix, Arizona, to implement the network development project. The project consisted of four components: surveys of existing local elder abuse prevention networks, national teleconferences, on-site training and technical assistance to create new networks, and presentations of the project at national conferences.

Phase I

During the first phase of the project, the Area Agency on Aging, Region One developed and distributed a 60-second survey to all 655 area agencies on aging and 240 Title VI grantees to identify local elder abuse prevention networks. In collaboration with NCEA and NCPEA, the Area Agency designed and distributed a comprehensive survey to 117 identified coalitions* to glean promising practices of local elder abuse prevention networks. Survey recipients were asked to rate the effectiveness of their networks. Responses to the surveys were received from 57 networks. Results of the comprehensive survey were tabulated and reported to NCEA and NCPEA. Two focus group teleconferences were also conducted within the initial survey phase of the project, designed to obtain additional input from elder abuse prevention networks that had rated themselves as highly effective and/or networks that were interested in reaching special populations. The teleconferences provided a forum for participants to share promising practices of their effective networks and strategies for reaching special populations. Based on information captured in the comprehensive survey and the teleconferences, two briefs were written: *Elements of Effective Local Elder Abuse Prevention Networks* and *Reaching Special Populations Through Local Elder Abuse Prevention Networks*.

* Note: The terms “network,” “coalition” and “task force” are used interchangeably throughout this training manual.

Generally, the networks that were self-rated as very effective were collaborative and had strong area agency leadership and support, participation by their law enforcement and legal communities, and regular, well-attended monthly meetings. The survey results and subsequent teleconference discussions identified four core elements of very effective networks:

- Effective leadership
- Effective network infrastructure
- Strong commitment to purpose
- Results-oriented approach

Phase II

The second phase of the project consisted of six national teleconferences with participants selected from survey respondents and earlier teleconference participants. Discussions centered on survey findings reported in the two briefs as well as successful elder abuse prevention programs, strategies and activities being conducted by the teleconference participants. The teleconferences also provided an opportunity to discuss barriers to effective elder abuse prevention network development and how various networks have overcome these obstacles.

Phase III

The third phase of the project, on-site technical training and assistance, built on the knowledge gained in the first two phases and included a six-step process for developing effective local elder abuse prevention networks. The steps are designed to provide agencies wanting to create a new network with a roadmap to get started. They also serve to provide existing networks with a method to strengthen their groups and build on what is already in place. The process provides a positive influence to encourage agencies to put aside territorial attitudes and work together for a common goal, focus on projects that build cohesiveness, and raise awareness of elder abuse issues. Each step is built around group activities to help create a strategic plan.

Local Elder Abuse Prevention Network

STRATEGIC PLAN

The following Strategic Plan is designed to help agencies compile their information from a six-step process into one organized document, thereby making implementation easier.

Step 1 – Determine Network Mission, Vision and Values

NETWORK NAME:	<input type="text"/>
POPULATION FOCUS:	<input type="text"/>
NETWORK'S MISSION:	<input type="text"/>
NETWORK'S VISION:	<input type="text"/>
NETWORK'S VALUES:	<input type="text"/>

Step 2 – Create Effective Leadership

FOUNDING CO-CHAIRS (Names, Titles, Affiliations):

CO-CHAIRS: Appointed *or* Elected

LENGTH OF TERMS OF FOUNDING CO-CHAIRS:

STEERING COMMITTEE (Names, Titles, Affiliations):

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Co-Chairs and Committee Chairmen (Names, Titles, Affiliations):

COMMITTEES / TASK FORCES	CHAIR(S)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
Additional as needed	

Step 3 – Build an Effective Coalition Infrastructure

AGENCIES	POTENTIAL COALITION MEMBERS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACTING
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Additional as needed		

Step 4 – Promote a Strong Commitment to Purpose

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

DAY / TIME / LENGTH OF MEETINGS:

LOCATION OF MEETINGS (Same location or rotating locations):

PERSON / AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR MINUTES, AGENDAS, E-MAILS, MAILINGS:

STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP AND MEETING ATTENDANCE:

Step 5 – Create a Results-Oriented Approach

PROJECT IDEAS
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
Additional as needed

Step 6 – Identify Performance Outcome Measures

PROJECT (OBJECTIVE)	PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING
1.	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
2.	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
3.	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
Additional as needed		

Step 1: Determine Network Mission, Vision and Values

The Mission Statement is the network's fundamental purpose, its primary reason for being. This first step is probably the most difficult and time-consuming because group members will each have their own view as to the mission of the network. Breaking into small groups to draft potential mission statements and then coming together to look at all of the possibilities and write one final statement is an excellent method to start people thinking in terms of compromise and team work. This process will also help the group coalesce. Depending on the size of the group, plan for at least two hours to complete this first task.

MISSION:

First, create a mission statement that defines the network's purpose for existing. To do this, elicit words, phrases and ideas from everyone, and then condense them into a simple paragraph, free of jargon. As the statement is written, make sure it answers the following three questions:

1. What are the needs we exist to address?
2. What are we doing to address those needs?
3. What principles guide our work?

VISION:

Vision is a view of the future, where the network wants to be, and what it wants to become. It is the network's long-range goal, what it is working toward. Vision is closely related to dreams.

Defining the vision includes setting goals of where the network wants to go and objectives for how to get there. Well-chosen goals will keep the network pointed in the right direction for as long as it exists. They create a roadmap for the future and should be carefully defined.

VALUES:

Values are the beliefs that govern behavior as a network. When creating a values statement, consider the principles behind the scenes that are guiding the network and the way it operates. Announce these to the world through the values statement. It will prove to be invaluable, especially when the network faces a challenge as to purpose. It is then that the network's beliefs will be tested. Adhering to values can boost image and confidence as an effective network. Make sure everyone in the network knows its mission, its vision and its values well enough to be able to explain them to anyone outside the network. Then, put them into action.

Sample Network Mission Statements

Upper Cumberland of Tennessee Adult Abuse Coalition (Cookeville, Tennessee) –

The Upper Cumberland Adult Abuse Coalition exists to prevent abuse including neglect and exploitation to at-risk adults through networking, community resource development, awareness, advocacy and education.

Cape Fear Elder Abuse Prevention Network (Wilmington, North Carolina) –

Cape Fear Elder Abuse Prevention Network will provide awareness of elder abuse through community based education, advocacy and victim services.

New York City Elder Abuse Network (New York City, New York) –

The New York City Elder Abuse Network's mission is to strengthen partnerships to promote advocacy, education, and services to prevent and address elder mistreatment.

Multi-Disciplinary Team – Elder Abuse (Warm Springs, Oregon) –

The coalition's mission is to work as a team to acknowledge, respond to and stop elder abuse; to improve respect for elders through education, prevention, advocacy and case review; and to hold members responsible for their coalition actions.

Maricopa Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance (Phoenix, Arizona) –

To prevent and decrease elder abuse and late-life domestic violence through advocacy, education, networking, and program development.

East Tennessee Elder Abuse Coalition (Knoxville, Tennessee) –

East Tennessee ElderWatch functions to heighten awareness of elder abuse and to increase prevention effectiveness throughout the community structure of our region.

Sample Network Vision Statements

New York City Elder Abuse Network (New York City, New York) –

The New York City Elder Abuse Network's vision is to work towards recognition and elimination of elder abuse.

Multi-Disciplinary Team – Elder Abuse (Warm Springs, Oregon) –

It is the vision of this coalition to continue the traditional respect that the members of the Tribes have for tribal elders, as elders are valuable resources and are our custodians of tribal history, culture and tradition.

Sample Network Values Statements

New York City Elder Abuse Network (New York City, New York) –

We value the dignity, respect and justice for older adults, victims and survivors.

We value diversity.

We value reducing the incidence of elder abuse.

We value the right to be safe and have a good quality of life.

Multi-Disciplinary Team – Elder Abuse (Warm Springs, Oregon) –

We honor different tribes’ traditional values.

We value culture and spirituality.

We value the safety, health, living conditions and protection of elders.

We value seniors’ heritage, integrity and self-determination.

We value intervention on behalf of elders.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

Divide into small groups and have each group draft a mission statement considering the information provided in Step 1. After each group has developed a proposed statement, have each share its statement with the entire group.

Next, have the entire group discuss all of the proposed statements and reach a consensus among all participants as to the final version of the mission statement.

This step will require the longest amount of time. At least 1 to 2 hours should be allocated for completion of this process. The vision and values statements can now be completed based on the mission statement.

NETWORK NAME:

POPULATION FOCUS:

NETWORK’S MISSION:

NETWORK’S VISION:

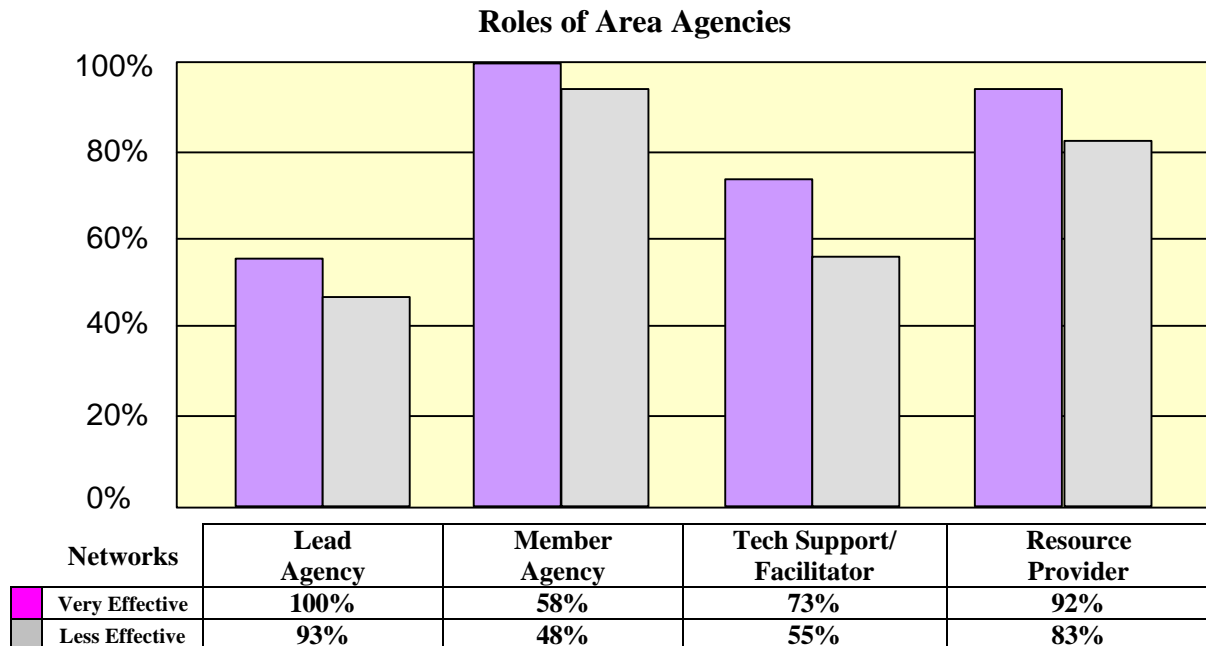
NETWORK’S VALUES:

Step 2: Create Effective Leadership

After the mission, vision and values statements have been completed and there is a consensus among the group, network leadership can be discussed and determined.

The 57 respondents to the comprehensive survey were asked to identify all functions that their area agencies on aging perform related to their elder abuse prevention network. Only two respondents stated that the area agency is not involved in the elder abuse prevention network. Thus, 55 of the 57 respondents (96.5%) indicated that the area agency is a member of their local elder abuse prevention network. In addition to the role of member, three other roles of area agencies were identified: lead agency, technical support to the network, and resource provider. Nearly half of the respondents (26, or 45.6%) reported that area agencies provide all four identified functions. In networks that rate themselves as very effective, area agencies participate in an average of 3.2 of the four roles identified in the survey. In more than half (52.6%), the area agency is the lead agency. The surveys indicate that area agency leadership and support are critical to elder abuse prevention network success.

Role of the Area Agency in Elder Abuse Prevention Networks	Number of Networks (n = 57)	Percentage of Networks
Member Agency	55	96.5%
Lead Agency	30	52.6%
Technical Support/Facilitator	37	64.9%
Resource Provider	50	87.7%



Lead agencies were found in 84% of the survey respondents. Nearly two-thirds of the lead agencies are appointed (as opposed to elected), and a third of these are appointed by the local area agency on aging. In many instances, co-chairs with one/two-year terms of office were found to be most effective.

In terms of leadership to create an effective network, a steering committee and founding co-chairs usually take on the initial steps of forming a coalition. Depending on the size of the network, it is also recommended that an executive committee be created to oversee the network’s activities, as well as other committees to accomplish specific tasks. Examples of such tasks include developing policies and protocols, training bank personnel in fraud prevention and detection, conducting multi-disciplinary case reviews, and implementing outreach and education activities.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

Divide into small groups and discuss the following. Then have the entire group discuss and reach a consensus on co-chair and committee assignments.

FOUNDING CO-CHAIRS (Names, Titles, Affiliations):

CO-CHAIRS: Appointed *or* Elected

LENGTH OF TERMS OF FOUNDING CO-CHAIRS:

STEERING COMMITTEE (Names, Titles, Affiliations):

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

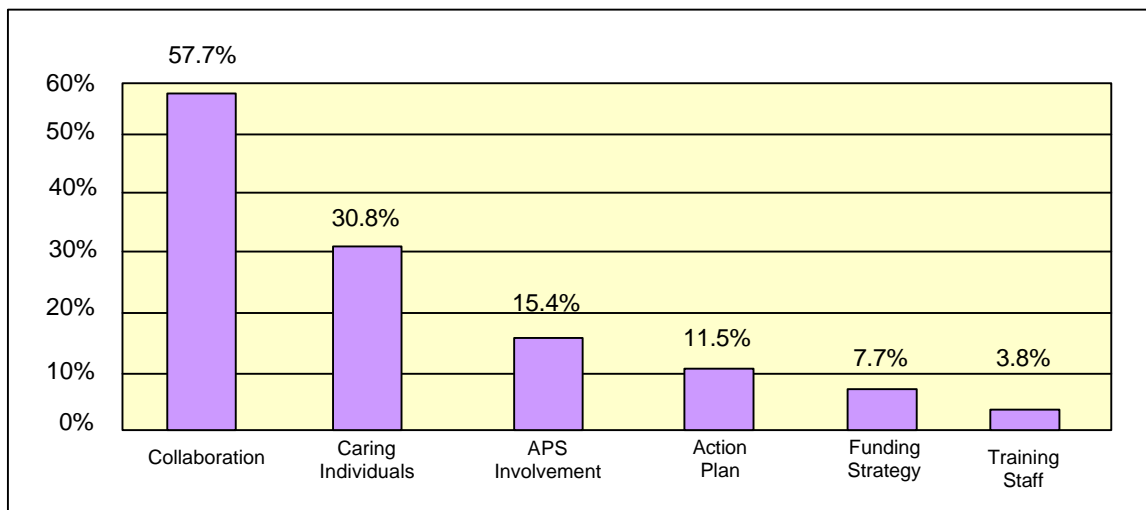
Co-Chairs and Committee Chairmen (Names, Titles, Affiliations):

COMMITTEES / TASK FORCES	CHAIR(S)
1.	
2.	
3.	
Additional as needed	

Step 3: Build An Effective Coalition Infrastructure

The ability of elder abuse prevention networks to work collaboratively with others is key to building an effective coalition. Responses from the comprehensive survey and the teleconference reveal the importance of building an effective coalition infrastructure in the success of very effective elder abuse prevention networks. In addition to working collaboratively with others, involving broad membership is a key strategy in building an effective coalition infrastructure. In the survey, collaboration was the most often cited reason for network effectiveness. Of the 26 respondents who rate their networks as very effective, 57.7% stress the importance of collaboration—identifying key stakeholders and involving them in the network. Notable infrastructure components indicated in the survey are set out below.

Infrastructure Components of Very Effective Networks



Creating a strong, integrated infrastructure of partnering organizations is critical to the success of the network. Large, inclusive and diverse memberships correlated to very effective networks in the survey and teleconference responses. Findings indicated that responsibilities can be shared and outcomes can be most effective when tasks are delegated to the appropriate stakeholders.

Three components of the comprehensive survey asked specific questions concerning elder abuse prevention network membership: number of agencies/entities in the network; number of people participating in the network; and types of organizations in the network. In general, the very effective networks are collaborative and often involve a broad range of stakeholders. They have strong area agency leadership and support, participation of their legal communities, and regular, well-attended monthly meetings.

**Responses of 57 Networks Regarding Agencies
Participating in Elder Abuse Prevention Networks**

Types of Agencies Participating in Networks	Number of Networks (n = 57)	Percentage of Networks
Area Agencies on Aging	55	96.5%
Adult Protective Services	53	93.0%
Aging Services Providers	45	78.9%
Mental Health Organizations	45	78.9%
Law Enforcement Agencies	44	77.2%
Aging Organizations, e.g. AARP	36	63.2%
Long-Term Care Ombudsmen	32	56.1%
Medical and Health Care Entities	31	54.4%
Domestic Violence Advocates	29	50.9%
Social Services	27	47.4%
Long-Term Care Facilities	26	45.6%
Emergency Responders	25	43.9%
Faith-Based Organizations	25	43.9%
Private Attorneys/ Legal Assistance	25	43.9%
Citizen Representatives, Age 60+	23	40.4%
Prosecutors	22	38.6%
Financial/ Banking Entities	21	36.8%
Victim/ Witness Services	19	33.3%
Academic Institutions	18	31.6%
Courts	16	28.1%
Sexual Assault Advocates	12	21.1%
Elected Officials	11	19.3%
Other Government Representatives	11	19.3%
State Units on Aging	10	17.5%
Media	10	17.5%
Other	14	24.6%

GROUP ACTIVITY:

Consider the information provided. What agencies and agency representatives will help build the strongest network for your community? Identify a steering committee member who will be responsible for contacting each potential member.

AGENCIES	POTENTIAL NETWORK MEMBERS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACTING
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
Additional as needed		

Step 4: Promote a Strong Commitment to Purpose

Responses from the elder abuse prevention networks that rate themselves as very effective indicate that a strong commitment to purpose by the members is essential to their success. One of the most cited reasons for network effectiveness by very effective networks was having caring individuals who are dedicated to the cause of elder abuse prevention. They “find individuals that actually care and let their spirit spread” throughout their networks. Successful coalitions have members who are committed to elder abuse prevention, regularly attend coalition meetings, and participate in decision-making. Key strategies to develop this commitment emerged from survey responses.

Effective coalitions have:

- Committed members
- Shared visions and goals
- Participatory decision-making
- Cohesive, cooperative and trusting environments

Frequency of meetings:

- 65% of very effective coalitions meet monthly
- 31% of less effective coalitions meet monthly

Good attendance:

(More than half of members attending meetings)

- 58% of very effective coalitions report good attendance
- 14% of less effective coalitions report good attendance

GROUP ACTIVITY:

The coalition should determine the following to promote a strong commitment to purpose:

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

DAY / TIME / LENGTH OF MEETINGS:

LOCATION OF MEETINGS (Same location or rotating locations):

PERSON / AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR MINUTES, AGENDAS, E-MAILS, MAILINGS:

STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP AND MEETING ATTENDANCE:

Step 5: Create a Results-Oriented Approach

Responses from the comprehensive survey and the teleconference indicate that self-rated very effective elder abuse prevention networks have developed strategies that lead to specific action. Several of the very effective networks recommend that the key to a successful coalition is to outline a clear achievable goal, delineate tasks, and work toward achieving that goal. Creating a task-oriented work environment is a key strategy. Qualitative data were obtained from survey respondents through open-ended questions. Very effective networks have focused, innovative, culturally competent program objectives driven by community need. Twenty-three percent (23%) of very effective networks assign projects to motivate coalition members compared to 10% of less effective networks. Below is a list of projects and activities reported by effective coalitions:

Public and Professional Awareness/ Training

- Publications
- Plays and videos
- Prevention training for postal workers, law enforcement, bank tellers and clergy
- Protocol development with hospitals, coroners and law enforcement
- Elder Abuse Awareness Campaign
- Professional Awareness Day
- Senior Awareness Week
- Placemats in local restaurants
- “Safe at Home” magnets for elderly homebound clients

Advocacy Activities

- Legislative advocacy for abuse statutes
- Increased prosecutions
- Establishment of investigation and prosecution units in detective offices

Victim Services

- Home safety/security reviews
- Home repair contractors
- Multidisciplinary teams
- Abuse/neglect/exploitation check sheet
- Volunteer Guardianship Program
- Elder Abuse Interdisciplinary Team
- “Bridge Room” for Adult Protective Services (personal items/food for victims)
- Support Groups
- Emergency Housing
- Transitional Housing

GROUP ACTIVITY:

Discuss possible project ideas for your coalition, discuss the benefits and feasibility of accomplishing each project, and reach a consensus as to which project(s) will be given priority.

PROJECT IDEAS
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
Additional as needed

Step 6: Identify Performance Outcome Measures

Performance measures are tools used to measure the success of a project. Three common terms used in the discussion of performance measures are: inputs, outputs and outcomes. Inputs are the resources needed to accomplish the project, such as materials, equipment and supplies. Outputs focus on the level of activity in a particular project, such as the number of brochures distributed or the number of clients served. Outcomes measure the actual results achieved and the effectiveness or success of the project. Instruments used to provide measurement of outcomes include surveys, self-administered scales, direct observation, pre- and post- tests, or self-reports. The S.M.A.R.T. method is often used to clearly define desired outcomes. S.M.A.R.T. refers to:

Specific
Measurable
Aggressive (yet achievable)
Relevant to the project
Time bound

Following are examples of outcome measures listed by elder abuse prevention networks that participated in the comprehensive survey:

- 130% increase in elder abuse cases reported since baseline year of 2001
- 67% increase in substantiation rates of elder abuse in counties served
- 25% improvement in knowledge about the indicators of elder abuse
- 50% increase in victims of late-life domestic violence achieving self-sufficiency

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is a process that provides a method for identifying and evaluating performance outcome measures, monitoring the progress of the project, and making changes as needed. The CQI process increases service quality and creates team spirit within the coalition. A CQI process may include the following steps:

- Identify a process/performance to improve
- Organize a team to improve the process
- Select the steps in the process to be measured
- Implement the process/performance improvement
- Evaluate the improvement

GROUP ACTIVITY:

Use the process described to identify how you will measure success in reaching your project objectives. Who will be in charge of monitoring the progress and changes that might need to be made?

PROJECT (OBJECTIVE)	PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING
1.	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
2.	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
3.	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
Additional as needed		

In Summary

Between 500,000 and 5 million older Americans are abused every year. These victims are subject to injury and death from mistreatment and neglect, often from their caregivers and family members. In recent years, communities nationwide have been focusing more and more on elder abuse prevention strategies through formal or informal collaborations or partnerships.

This project, funded by the Administration on Aging, demonstrates that local elder abuse prevention networks can successfully address elder abuse by developing effective leadership, building an effective coalition infrastructure, adopting a strong commitment to purpose and taking a results-oriented approach. These local networks have heightened public awareness through community outreach and education, and some networks have been able to effect tougher laws on reporting and prosecuting elder abuse.

For further information about this project, or to receive a copy of the full report, contact Mary Lynn Kasunic, President & CEO of the Area Agency on Aging, Region One in Phoenix, Arizona, at networks@aaaphx.org.

This Planning Guide is based on the experience of several Area Agencies on Aging in the development of local elder abuse prevention networks. It offers an outline of basic steps to take in forming, directing and assessing the success of the group. Information about how the tool was developed is provided in the Background and Overview section. Instructions for strategic planning, including sample forms, an outline and suggested small group procedures are included to help organizations begin a results-oriented planning process.