

A stylized illustration of a lighthouse on the left side of the slide, with yellow sun rays emanating from behind it. The lighthouse is light blue with a white top section. The sun rays are yellow and white, creating a bright, warm background for the text.

The Aging Services Response to Fraud and Scams

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Terminology

- Financial Fraud and Scams

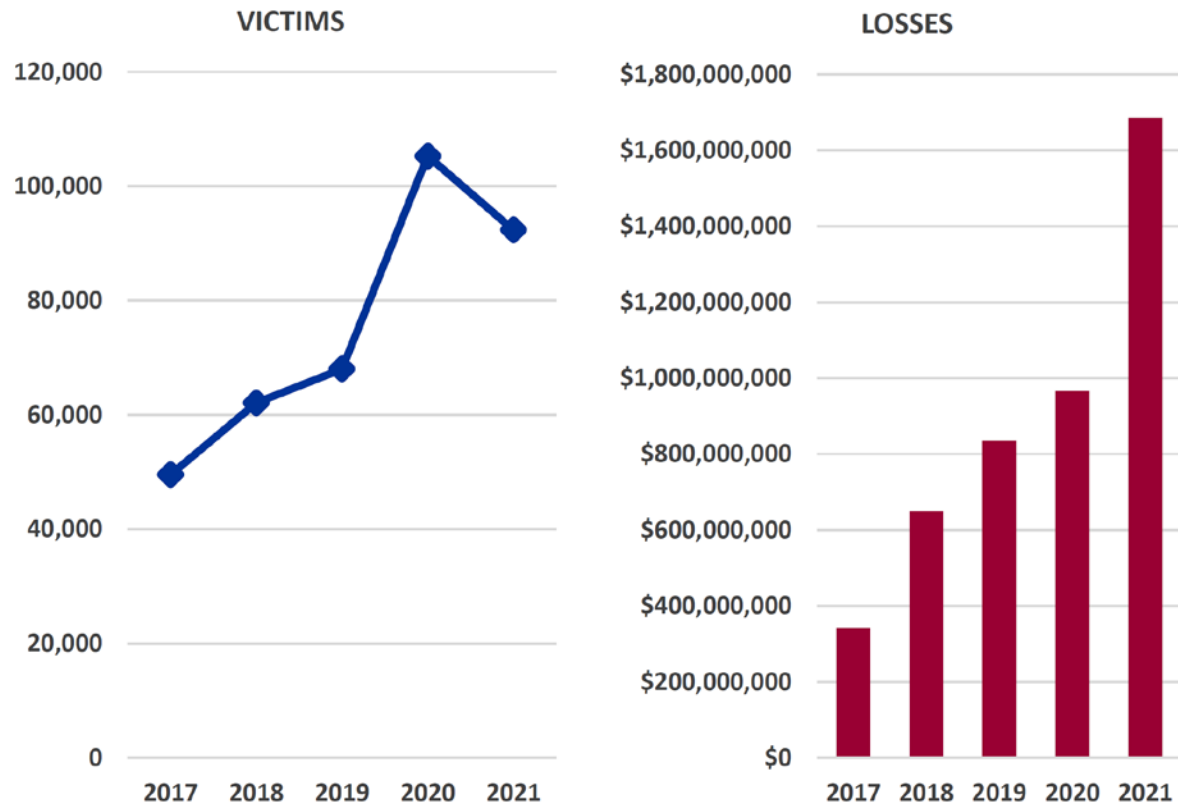
- Acts perpetrated by a stranger or someone else outside of a conventional trust relationship. Scams involve an intentional distortion of truth initiated to convince another to part with something of value or to surrender a legal right.

- Financial Abuse

- Occurs when an older person's resources are used improperly or illegally by a person in a relationship involving an expectation of trust, such as a family member, friend, home care attendant, or someone else who is entrusted to protect the older person's interests or care.

Fraud & Scams During Pandemic

OVER 60 VICTIM REPORTING FOR PAST FIVE YEARS³



Source: FBI, Internet Crime Complaint Center 2021 Elder Fraud Report.

Research Questions

- How have aging services organizations in Massachusetts experienced the surge in fraud and scams during the pandemic?
- Are there emerging best practices in response to the increase in fraud and scams?
- Are additional resources needed, and where should they be directed?

Massachusetts Aging Services

- Area Agencies on Aging/Aging Services Access Points
- Councils on Aging
- Legal Services

Aging services are key touchpoint

- All but a handful of respondents said they have learned of an older person who has been victimized by a financial scam since the pandemic started.
- 47% of respondents indicated that since the pandemic started, the number of scams targeting their clients has increased.

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Mixed satisfaction with reporting

If you've reported a scam, were you satisfied with how the situation was resolved?

- 18% very satisfied
- 25% somewhat satisfied
- 26% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 6% somewhat dissatisfied
- 3% completely dissatisfied

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Sense of frustration & futility

“There is never a good resolution if someone has already sent money. It’s impossible to get back and seemingly no way to prevent it again.”

“There is nothing our organization can do more than we are. It is really up to the government to stop these attacks, which is what they are and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law. You don't see much of this happening.”

“I wish we could trace these scammers but it seems pretty impossible to do.”

Client education as best practice

- A large majority of responses indicated that enhancing client awareness through education and training can help prevent financial fraud and scams.
 - Educate on current scams.
 - Provide information and training that is ongoing, persistent, and repetitious.
 - Training should be interactive, relatable, and should reduce stigma.

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Greater Resources Needed

- 97% of respondents indicated that additional resources would help their organizations to protect their clients against scams.
 - 35%: additional educational materials to give to clients
 - 20%: collaboration with legal or financial services
 - 19%: training for additional staff
 - 8%: internal policies and procedures about protecting clients' personal information

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Enhanced Collaboration

- 84% of respondents indicated that additional collaboration with partners would help their organizations to protect their clients against scams.
 - 23%: law enforcement
 - 23%: government agencies outside of law enforcement
 - 15%: legal services organizations
 - 8%: social service providers

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Recommendations

- Create a centralized, state-level coordinating office
- Facilitate single-point reporting to law enforcement
- Enhance staff training
 - Prevention
 - Response and Reporting
 - Enforcement developments

Grassroots solutions

- Engagement with local aging services organizations would benefit law enforcement efforts at the state, federal, international levels
 - Prevention
 - Reporting
 - Victim remediation

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