

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025**

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HOUSE BILL 391

Short Title: More APS Staff to Address Elder Abuse. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Price and Buansi (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

March 17, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES, DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES, TO FUND ADDITIONAL ADULT
PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKERS AT COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL
SERVICES TO INVESTIGATE AN INCREASING VOLUME OF ELDER ABUSE
REPORTS.

Whereas, Article 6 of Chapter 108A of the General Statutes mandates county departments of social services to evaluate reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults through a system of protective services known as Adult Protection Services (APS); and

Whereas, reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults may include all forms of abuse such as physical, sexual, emotional, mental, passive neglect, and financial exploitation, and may include acts of confinement and willful deprivation; and

Whereas, the federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) provides 21% of the funding for APS staff at county departments of social services, and the counties provide the remaining 79%; and

Whereas, in North Carolina, the State does not allocate State funds for Adult Protective Services; and

Whereas, according to the National Council on Aging, pre-pandemic sources estimated approximately one in 10 Americans 60 years of age or older have experienced some form of elder abuse, a more recent study found that one in five older adults reported elder abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, in county departments of social services with APS units, SSBG funds earmarked for APS are often depleted by mid-year, if not earlier; and

Whereas, with the growth in the older adult population, county departments of social services APS staff are overwhelmed by the increased demand in elder abuse cases; and

Whereas, while the population increase of those 60 years of age or older contributes to the increased number of APS reports, analysis shows that the number of abuse reports per capita has increased as well; and

Whereas, North Carolina counties report the need for additional APS staff; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, the sum of two million one hundred seventy-eight thousand dollars (\$2,178,000) in recurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and the sum of four million five hundred forty-two thousand dollars (\$4,542,000) in recurring funds



for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to increase the number of full-time Adult Protective Services (APS) workers statewide by at least 25 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and by an additional 25 for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Funds authorized by this section for the allocation of 50 additional Adult Protective Services (APS) workers shall be distributed to county departments of social services based on the greatest need for additional APS workers, as determined by the Division of Social Services. In determining the counties with the greatest need for additional APS workers, the Division of Social Services, in consultation with the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services, shall consider the following factors: (i) the total number of APS cases within the county; (ii) the number of APS workers required to adequately assess and evaluate the APS cases in the county; (iii) the population of individuals 65 years of age or older residing in the county; and (iv) the volume of reports related to abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults within each county.

SECTION 1.(b) County departments of social services that are the recipients of these allocated funds shall not use these funds (i) for any purpose other than to pay for salaries, benefits, and related expenses associated with the additional APS workers or (ii) to supplant any other source of funding for staff.

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2025.