



Community Gatekeepers Program

The Gatekeepers Program assists elderly citizens who are sometimes unable to help themselves. There are many who are healthy, active people in our community, but there are others who are not so fortunate. They live alone and have little communication with others. If they become sick or unable to care for themselves, they can easily go unnoticed and unattended.

This program raises the awareness of employees who, in the course of their daily work activities, come into contact with citizens in the community. Gatekeepers are educated to recognize signs and symptoms that may indicate an elderly or special needs person is in need of help. Gatekeepers are not expected to assume the role of social workers or counselors. All that is requested of Gatekeepers is to keep a watchful eye while conducting daily work activities and make a simple referral for those people in need.

Gatekeepers look for changes in a person's overall ability to manage activities of daily living. Gatekeepers could directly observe any one or a combination of the following:

- Inability to communicate, including confusion, memory loss, becoming withdrawn, hostile, or angry.
- Personal appearance, such as poor hygiene, strong odors, poor grooming, or wearing dirty or inappropriate clothes.
- The condition of the home, such as extreme neglect, excessive clutter, or neglected pets.
- Physical losses such as difficulty seeing, speaking or hearing, mobility of balance, significant weight loss, injuries, or untreated wounds.
- Difficulty in paying bills or unusual transactions.
- Inability to cope with recent loss of a spouse, family member or pet.
- Neglect, abuse, isolation, or wandering.

Referrals are reported to the Customer Services Department. When the referral is received, the initial contact will be to a third party reference contact if available and then to the Department of Social Services or other social service agencies. Forcing assistance is not the goal but our citizens deserve to be informed of alternatives and options that will preserve their independence and enhance their quality of life.