

WEAAD 2026: Protecting Older Adults from Financial Fraud

Each year on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), communities across the United States and around the world recognize the serious and often hidden issue of elder abuse. Although there are many forms of elder abuse, financial exploitation—particularly through fraud, scams, and identity theft—has emerged as one of the most rapidly expanding threats to older adults.



In the United States, approximately 1 in 10 older adults experience abuse each year, affecting an estimated 5 million individuals annually. Financial exploitation alone results in approximately \$28.3 billion in annual losses, reflecting both the scale of the problem and its devastating impact on older adults' financial security.

A significant and growing portion of this loss is driven by fraud, scams, and identity theft which often involve unknown perpetrators who use deception, technology, and psychological manipulation to target older adults.

To help spread awareness of the risks of financial exploitation caused by fraud, scams, and identity theft, the Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) will present a public forum on June 16 from 10 a.m. to noon at Miller's Grant at Lutheran Village in Ellicott City. Co-sponsored by AARP, the **Awareness, Action and Financial Safety** forum serves as a platform for professionals and community members dedicated to safeguarding older adults from exploitation.

Join Tracy Rezvani, Administrator for the Howard County Office of Consumer Protection, and Maryland Assistant Attorney General Jeff Karberg to learn the signs and patterns of identity theft and scams. Participants will gain practical strategies to prevent and respond to exploitation and connect with local resources and support systems designed to protect older adults, caregivers and professionals.

OAI offers a wealth of resources for families on topics ranging from how to identify the various forms of elder abuse to preventing financial scams and frauds at www.howardcountymd.gov/ElderAbuse. There you can also find an Elder Abuse Awareness Guide and organizations to contact if you, or someone you love, is a victim of elder abuse.

For more information about Identity Theft, visit the Office of the Attorney General online. To learn more about avoiding scams and fraud, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer-protection/scam-squad.

From the desk of Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive



The United Nations recognizes June 15 annually as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a global call for communities to recognize and address elder abuse as both a human rights violation and a growing policy challenge for ageing societies.

Since I became County Executive, we joined AARP's Age-Friendly Network in 2019. Since then, we have released our five-year progress report, which outlines 120 action items that have begun to transform Howard County into an Age-Friendly community, including the construction of a new East Columbia 50+ Center, the first Age-Friendly Tables for Connection at Cedar Lane Park West, the first Age-Friendly Fitness Lot at Centennial Park North, and a nationally recognized Ageism Awareness Campaign.


Though we are working to raise the quality of life for our older residents, an unfortunate reality is older adults are frequently targeted for financial fraud and exploitation. I encourage you to join the Office on Aging and Independence for a forum titled Awareness, Action and Financial Safety on June 16 from 10 a.m. – noon at Lutheran Village at Miller's Grant. The Howard County Office of Consumer Protection and Assistant Attorney General Jeff Karberg will give presentations to educate you on these topics.

The event is free to attend, but pre-registration is required; register on Eventbrite to secure your spot.

We are also taking meaningful steps to prevent the emerging trend of benefits exploitation, which occurs when an individual is pressured, coerced, or manipulated into giving up control of their financial benefits (such as Social Security, disability income, pensions, or housing assistance) for someone else's gain. Join our Office of Human Trafficking Prevention and Office of Disability Services for a roundtable discussion on this topic on June 24 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the East Columbia 50+ Center.

SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 16, 10 A.M. - NOON




WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY
Building Strong Support for Elders

**Awareness,
 Action and
 Financial Safety**

A World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event

Visit bit.ly/HoCo-WEAADFORUM for more information.



Presented by
Howard County
Office on Aging and Independence

Sponsored by
AARP

June Events at Howard County 50+ Centers

Preventing Elder Financial Exploitation

Glenwood 50+ Center • #A03732.701

June 9, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Financial exploitation and scams make it hard for victims to get back on track financially, especially older adults. Join MakingChange to learn how scams work, how scammers obtain your information, and steps you can take to keep your identity secure.

“Catch a Rising Star” (Film and Music)

East Columbia 50+ Center • #A04821.700

June 9, 1 – 2 p.m.

Experience the magic of film music as Alan Rubenstein guides you through iconic classics and modern favorites, with engaging stories, behind-the-scenes insights, and audience participation.

Senior Planet: Staying in Touch as Landlines Change

Glenwood 50+ Center • #A20673.708

June 11, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Learn why copper lines are being phased out in favor of fiber-optic cables. Explore the benefits of fiber-optic cables and alternatives to landlines that allow you to keep your number and phone, as well as mobile phones and other options.

Senior Planet: Virtual Museum Tours

North Laurel 50+ Center • # A20673.710

June 30, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Did you know many of the world’s leading museums make their collections and exhibits available to view virtually? Explore virtual galleries and digital tools that bring art, architecture and history to life!

Beyond the Thermostat

North Laurel 50+ Center

June 12, 11 a.m. – noon • #CF0612.100

Ellicott City 50+ Center

June 17, 1 – 2 p.m. • #A02651.701

Save money on your BGE bill! Join Civic Works Energy Programs to learn about Maryland’s energy system, why bills are rising, and what you can do. Learn how to read your BGE bill, get tips to save energy around the home, and explore free and low-cost grant-funded programs to help reduce your household energy use.



Seniors Together: Men’s Forum

Ellicott City Fitness Center

Thursdays, 10 a.m. - noon • #A30123.507

Join our men’s group to discuss current events, ideas, and life experiences in a comfortable setting. This facilitated group meets weekly. To register call 410-313-1400. For more information, contact Karen Hull at 410-313-7466 (voice/relay).

History of Woman Lighthouse Keepers

Elkridge 50+ Center

June 17, 1 – 2 p.m. • #A05613.700

The National Archives show more than 140 women officially served as head lighthouse keepers between 1845 and 1912, with many more as assistants. The U.S. Lighthouse Society lists 518 women in its Research Catalogue; join us to learn more about their role.

Fauvism with Errol McKinson

Bain 50+ Center

June 25, 1 – 2 p.m. • #A01506.700

Fauvism was an early 20th-century art movement marked by bold, non-naturalistic color and expressive brushwork. Join Errol McKinson to learn how Fauves like Henri Matisse and André Derain used color for emotional impact to help shape later modern art.

Celebrate Juneteenth, Father’s Day and African American Music Month

Bain 50+ Center

June 23, 11 a.m. – noon • # A01757.700

Join us as we honor freedom, fatherhood, and legendary Motown music classics that shaped generations, presented by Julia’s Heart. Light refreshments served.

Mind, Body & Energy Session: Reincarnation

Elkridge 50+ Center

June 26, 10 – 11:30 a.m. • #A05665703

Have you ever wondered if there is such a thing as reincarnation? Join this fascinating discussion exploring the possibility of past lives. Call 410-313-5174 for more information.



9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046

410-313-6410 (VOICE/RELAY) • www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

Find us @HoCoCommunity on Facebook, Instagram, X, and Nextdoor

AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATE FORMATS UPON REQUEST

Join the subscriber list <https://bit.ly/HoCosubscribe>

Advertising in the *Beacon* is not endorsed by the Office on Aging and Independence or by the publisher.