The Gatekeeper Program is designed to assist vulnerable people who need help, but may be unable to get it for themselves.

A single call can save a life.

Gatekeeper Referral Numbers

Multnomah County (24/7)  503-988-3646
Clackamas County  503-650-5622
Washington County  503-640-3489
Columbia County  503-397-5863
Clark County  360-694-8144

You made a Gatekeeper Referral…now what?

Have you ever wondered what happens once you have made a Gatekeeper Referral? What does Aging and Disability Services do? What happens to the client? Here are some possible outcomes:

- An attempt to make a home visit within 5 days of referral
- Case management help to link to services such as energy assistance, meal sites, legal help, etc.
- An attempt to locate family or other natural supports
- Referrals to other community supports and/or programs
- ADS honors client choice and supports independence
- Multi-Disciplinary Team called upon for complex cases
- Agreements with law enforcement and the DA to share information in prosecuting cases of fraud, abuse and neglect.

Problematic Hoarding and Clutter

In older adults, hoarding can create a dangerous situation. Stacks of newspapers and other combustibles may be located near a heat source such as a fireplace, kitchen stove or room heater. Excessive clutter can cover the floor, increasing a senior’s risk of falling. Sometimes people are afraid of eviction due to their hoarding, so they may avoid repairs to toilets, sinks, heaters and other necessary home utilities. This makes for a poor quality of life and potentially creates a health risk.

Many older adults will hide their hoarding behavior, living with a sense of shame and a fear of being exposed. They may stop having friends or family come to their home, leading to more isolation and loneliness. If an older adult also has dementia, the hoarding can spiral out of control.

When a Gatekeeper call includes the information that the client may have excessive clutter, Aging and Disability Services (ADS) responds with care and understanding. ADS will help the senior and/or their family approach the difficulty of hoarding and offer suggestions to create a safer environment.
Gatekeeper
Red Flags to watch for:

- Communication: confusion, anger, forgetfulness, hostility
- Financial: trouble paying bills, mentions “missing” funds, bounced checks, large withdrawals
- Caregiver Stress: yelling, frustration, despair, lack of support
- Social Isolation: self isolates or being isolated by someone, unable to leave home, no visitors or help
- Emotional Health: depression, anxiety, significant personal loss, paranoid thinking
- Appearance of the Person: unkempt, unshaven, soiled clothes, odor, inappropriately dressed for weather
- Physical Limitations: difficulty seeing, hard time moving around home, home not accessible, difficulty hearing
- Around the home: mail and newspapers stacking up, yard is not kept up, debris, pets neglected or too many pets, strong odors

Benefits for local Veterans and their families

The state of Oregon is home to approximately 330,000 male and female veterans of all ages who served from the WWII era, through the Korea, Viet Nam, and into the current Gulf War era. Approximately 48,000 veterans live in the Portland area, and of the 2,700 National Guard and Reserve service members who recently returned from overseas duty, approximately 445 of them reside in Multnomah County.

Many veterans are not aware that they may be entitled to benefits they earned while serving in the armed forces. Family members of veterans may also be entitled to veterans’ benefits. What many potential beneficiaries do not know is that in order to receive benefits from the department of Veterans’ Affairs, these benefits must be applied for.

The Multnomah County Veterans Service Office is available to assist veterans and their dependents with understanding and obtaining all benefits available to them under state and federal laws. The office works closely with county agencies, the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in providing all services to veterans and their families. Multnomah County Veterans’ Services can be reached by calling (503) 988-3620 x25005 or via www.multco.us and searching “veterans’ services.”

Time for a Gatekeeper Training or Refresher? Would your business, local branch, office or work unit, church or neighborhood association like to have a Gatekeeper presentation? Please contact the Gatekeeper Coordinator, Quince, to schedule a training or refresher. Trainings can be tailored to the specifics of your group and can be 30 minutes (or shorter) or an hour long, depending on audience, agenda and questions. The valuable information presented can help you learn how to identify warning signs and red flags that an elder or an adult with disabilities may need some support or may be the victim of a scam or financial exploitation. Call or email Quince to discuss your training needs and get a training scheduled.

503-988-6717 or Quince.Affolter@multco.us