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## **TRIAD in Virginia**

### **What is TRIAD?**

TRIAD is a cooperative effort of law enforcement agencies (police/fire/sheriffs), senior citizens, and senior organizations focused on reducing crimes against our most vulnerable citizens: our seniors.

The goal of TRIAD is to reduce the fear of crime and victimization among seniors by increasing awareness of scams and frauds targeting them, strengthening communication between the law enforcement and senior communities, and educating seniors on local and state resources that are available in their community. This goal is accomplished through speaking engagements, community collaborations, targeted trainings for seniors and law enforcement practitioners, providing a support mechanism to current local TRIAD groups, and marketing the TRIAD concept to non-participating localities. Today, Virginia has a total of 200 cities, counties, and towns with signed TRIAD agreements. Virginia TRIAD has also been recognized by the National Association of TRIADs, Inc. as having the highest number of active local groups nationwide and is the only state in the nation with a statewide coordinated office at the Executive Level of government.

The Virginia Triad Office can provide information and resources to Triad chapters across the Commonwealth. We can also assist you in organizing your Triad, planning ideas and programs for your seniors, and provide training opportunities for law enforcement, senior volunteers, and community groups.

### **Some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about TRIAD**

#### **What do the letters in TRIAD stand for?**

Triad is not an acronym. The term refers to the three founding organizations of Triad: AARP, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA).

## **When did TRIAD start?**

The Triad concept was originated in 1988, when the AARP, IACP and NSA agreed to establish a partnership to arm senior citizens with the information they need to keep from being victimized by criminals. The first Triad partnership in the country was established in 1989 at St. Martin Parish, Louisiana.

Triad was brought to Virginia in 1995 by Attorney General Jim Gilmore, who established a state Triad coordinating section in his office. The first Virginia Triad partnership, the Peninsula Triad, was signed into existence on May 22, 1995, by the Hampton Police Division, the Newport News Police Department, the Poquoson Police Department, the Williamsburg Police Department, the James City Police Department, the York County Police Department, the Virginia State Police, the Peninsula Chapters of the AARP, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

## **What is the purpose of TRIAD?**

Triad seeks to build partnerships between senior citizens and law enforcement to share information on how seniors can avoid becoming victims of crime and enhance the safety and quality of their lives.

## **Isn't TRIAD just another program?**

Triad is not a program; it's a partnership between senior citizens and law enforcement. Both groups benefit the community by sharing goals, desires, information, and resources.

## **How much does it cost to have a TRIAD partnership in time and money?**

There is no cost involved in having a Triad in your community. In fact, many police departments and sheriff's offices report saving thousands of dollars a year by having Triad volunteers assist with routine phone calls and paperwork, freeing up their officers and deputies for other duties.

## **Who is responsible for making TRIAD work?**

If Triad is the car, the S.A.L.T. Council (Seniors And Law Enforcement Together) is the engine that drives the car. The S.A.L.T. Council is usually comprised of 10 to 20 representatives from community agencies that work with, or for, the elderly. The S.A.L.T. Council meets at least quarterly (usually monthly) to keep abreast of the

needs of senior citizens in the community and make plans to address these needs.

### **How do short-staffed law enforcement agencies find the time for TRIAD?**

The main purpose of the law enforcement involvement in Triad is to advise the S.A.L.T. Council about the latest frauds and scams being tried in the community, as well as any crime prevention tips they may have to offer. This usually means sending an officer or deputy to the S.A.L.T. Council meetings for one hour a month.

### **Does TRIAD really work?**

In communities where Triad is actively informing seniors about frauds and scams, law enforcement agencies report a drop in the amount of these crimes being committed. Scam artists naturally seek seniors who are uninformed about their frauds. Anecdotal evidence and testimony abound about how those trained by Triad partnerships simply refuse to be taken in by these criminals.

### **Does TRIAD work better in large cities or small towns?**

Triad is entirely community-based. Therefore, each locality decides what they need to do on their own. What works in Richmond may not work in Vinton, and vice-versa. But every community, large or small, can benefit from the information and services provided by Triad.

### **How do we get started?**

First, identify the catalyst: One leader in the community must be willing to carry the torch and reach out to other agency/organization leaders, asking them to join a partnership to keep seniors safe. This person is usually in a prominent position, such as the sheriff, a police chief, the Commonwealth's Attorney, or other elected official. Have them contact the Director of Community Outreach at 804-786-2071 or [seniors@oag.state.va.us](mailto:seniors@oag.state.va.us), and we'll take it from there.

> For more information, see the [Virginia TRIAD Handbook](#) (Senior Citizen Resource Manual) and the [Virginia TRIAD Brochure](#).

> Additional resources are available at [Publications for Seniors](#).

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