

## Definition

An unbefriended elder, also called an adult orphan, is an older adult with no identified family or friends to assist in medical decision-making.

## Philosophy

**Volunteers of America–Minnesota Protective Services balances respect for self-determination with concerns for safety, and honors an older person’s rights, values and lifestyle.**

## Fees

**This project is supported, in part, by a Community Service/Community Services Development grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services and a grant from the Stevens Square Foundation. There are no fees for participating in this project. Donations are welcome.**

## Contact Information

### Senior Services

2021 East Hennepin Suite 200  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
612-331-4063

### Referral Contact

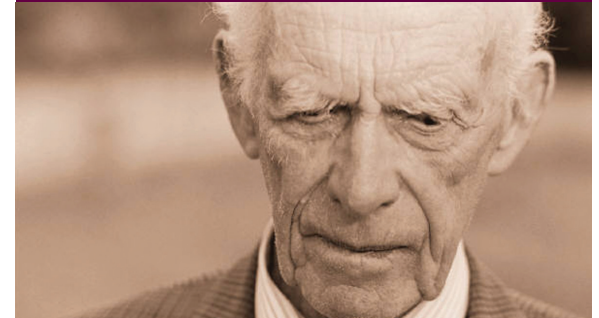
Mary Bornong, LISW  
mbornong@voamn.org  
612-617-7815

**[www.voamn.org](http://www.voamn.org)**

The mission of Volunteers of America –Minnesota is to provide opportunities which will make a significant, lasting impact in the lives of our program participants, and to elicit community support for our program participants.

## Unbefriended Elders:

### Matching Values with Decisions



Supporting the Rights and Choices of Unbefriended Older Adults at Risk of Incapacity

A Protective Services Program for proactive involvement with older adults prior to incapacity or medical crisis

## About this project

Volunteers of America–Minnesota has embarked on a new project to support the rights and choices of unbefriended elders/adult orphans at risk of incapacity. The project, Unbefriended Elders: Matching Values with Decisions, is aimed at proactive involvement with these seniors prior to incapacitation or a medical crisis.

Due to lack of a family member or friend to serve as a surrogate decision-maker, when unbefriended elders/adult orphans experience a medical crisis or develop cognitive impairment and are unable to state their wishes regarding care, they are at risk of:

- Medical treatment that is not consistent with their values and preferences;
- Over or under treatment when admitted to medical or care settings;
- Unnecessary guardianship.

Through this project, Volunteers of America–Minnesota will support adult orphans through intensive work with participants.

Project activities include:

- Locating family members who have lost touch and seek reconnection;
- Facilitating communication between participants and their primary care; physicians/practitioners to ensure medical wishes are known, discussed and documented;
- Working with the participant to identify a surrogate decision-maker when possible;
- Facilitating and distributing completed Health Care Directives to health care and other professionals.

## Referral Criteria

- 1) **Lives in Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey or Washington Counties**
- 2) **Age 65+**
- 3) **No emergency contact/responsible party known**

**And**

- 4) **One or more of these criteria:**
  - No written Health Care Directive
  - No verbal health care instructions
  - At risk of guardianship



## Referral Process

Contact Mary Bornong, LISW with questions or to refer a client: 612-617-7815 or [mbornong@voamn.org](mailto:mbornong@voamn.org)

