This week I was privileged to join with 40 experts in the field of elder justice gathered in Washington, D.C. to put the finishing touches on a national road map to guide programs and services to address elder justice issues – preventing elder abuse, providing services for victims of elder abuse in all its forms, and building systems for prosecution of abuse, sexual assault and financial exploitation. CSG was invited to the meeting to bring the perspective of state level policy makers to the table.

The group is looking at key recommendations in four areas: training and education, policy, research, and frontline services. While the plan will necessarily address federal level actions, as required by Congress which mandated its development, the collateral impacts to state level policy and service delivery are obvious.

States are increasingly taking up this important issue – over twenty states have passed legislation in the last two years the group was told at the D.C. meeting.

The importance of the topic and respect given to the experts assembled was underscored by the presence of Kathy Greenlee, U.S. Assistant Secretary on Aging, and Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division, Tony West, during the last day. Ms. Greenlee likened the tasks ahead to a political campaign but urged those assembled to continue to advocate funding of the Elder Justice Act, passed by Congress in 2012 but currently unfunded. Tony West pledged federal leadership in the prosecution of elder abuse and financial exploitation.

The finished road map plan, to be released soon in a joint report from the U.S. Departments of Justice and Human Services, will be required reading for state policy makers interested in the topic of elder abuse, an issue of increasing importance as the numbers of older Americans grow.

Resources:

- Congressional Testimony by Assistant Secretary Greenlee on elder justice issues
- National Center on Elder Abuse, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse and Neglect, Univ. of California, Irvine

By:
Friday, February 21, 2014 at 01:43 PM
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