



FACT SHEET – Project Lifesaver

1. Overview

The primary mission of Project Lifesaver is to provide timely response to save lives and reduce potential injury for adults and children who wander due to Alzheimer's, autism, and other related cognitive conditions.

- Currently 5.2 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's with as many as 16 million cases expected by 2050.
- Wandering, the most life-threatening behavior associated with Alzheimer's, affects 59 percent of patients and 45 percent of those cases end tragically in death if the person is not located within 24 hours.
- Autism, which is the fastest growing developmental disability that now afflicts one in every 110 children, can also cause children to wander.

Project Lifesaver International (PLI) is a **non-profit organization** that started in 1999.

The task of searching for wandering or lost individuals with Alzheimer's, autism, Down syndrome, dementia or other cognitive conditions is a growing and serious responsibility. Without effective procedures and equipment, searches can involve multiple agencies, hundreds of officers, countless man hours and thousands of dollars. More importantly, because time is of the essence, every minute lost increases the risk of a tragic outcome.

Working hand in hand with trained law enforcement and other public safety agencies, Project Lifesaver saves time, money, resources, but most of all, SAVES LIVES. Project Lifesaver agencies have had over **2,100 successful rescues** since the program's inception, and the average rescue time is approximately 30 minutes.

Currently, over 1,100 agencies – police, sheriff, fire, public safety departments and other emergency responders – in 45 states, D.C., Canada and Australia participate. The method relies on proven Radio Frequency technology and specially trained search and rescue teams.

2. Key Components

Project Lifesaver Program:

Project Lifesaver International provides in-depth training for law enforcement and other public safety agencies on the use of specialized electronic search and rescue equipment, technology and procedures, as well as teaching rescuers how to communicate with people afflicted with

cognitive conditions, all of which are essential to the successful rescue of missing persons who wander or otherwise become lost. They certify search and rescue personnel and provide ongoing management to participating agencies.

In addition, Project Lifesaver develops public outreach programs to educate others about the issue of wandering, and they constantly work toward developing public policy and effective law enforcement response to help save lives and “bring loved ones home.”

In-Depth Training:

- Training for a new agency includes two days of on-site instruction for up to 15 people in each new agency, provided by a State Coordinator (a law enforcement professional certified by PLI to train others) or by PLI’s own staff.
- PLI also provides one-day training for up to six officers to be trained as instructors and re-certify staff every two years.
- Each new agency will also receive training on Alzheimer’s disease and autism, as well as other conditions, to help when responding to a missing client, and to help facilitate a safe escort home.

Ongoing Management:

- Project Lifesaver ensures all agencies receive updated information on equipment, training, supplies, and marketing materials to continue their program in their communities and help surrounding agencies come on board.

Public Outreach:

- Project Lifesaver, as a non-profit organization, continually works with federal, state, and local governments to apply for grants and develop public outreach programs for communities throughout the United States.
- **Project Lifesaver is endorsed by the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, the National Autism Association, the National Sheriff’s Association, Pilot International, and many other organizations throughout the country.**
- Project Lifesaver helps develop educational materials targeted at families and caregivers of wanderers, participates in numerous conferences and speaking engagement each year to spread the word about the service, and works with national organizations on an ongoing basis to help develop public policy.

3. Grant:

The U.S. Department of Justice - Office of Justice Programs - Bureau of Justice Assistance has awarded Project Lifesaver grant funding to assist in education, awareness, equipment, and public policy efforts to help expand the Project Lifesaver program across the country – directly helping individuals, living with Alzheimer’s disease, who wander.

The grant is the Missing Alzheimer’s Disease Patient Assistance Program – an initiative that seeks to: 1) Develop and enhance an outreach program to increase awareness among law enforcement agencies and the public in addressing the needs of people with Alzheimer’s disease that wander; 2) To provide training and informational material to law enforcement agencies

through a regional or national initiative; 3) Support the development of a public policy that can be implemented nationwide by law enforcement; and 4) Develop a process for aiding in the location of lost persons with Alzheimer's disease.

Project Lifesaver received funding to cover the start-up costs for 100 agencies across the country, as well as provide existing agencies with up to 2 transmitters and a year's supply of batteries and bands for two individuals with Alzheimer's disease in the program. Funding will also allow Project Lifesaver to send 2 wandering kits, provided by the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, to families who enroll in the program under the grant. Included in the kit is an educational DVD on wandering, as well as informational brochures on caregiving and a Care Advantage magazine.

Other grants are available through Pilot International, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, and the National Autism Association.