



Request for Information:
Updates for the National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State Adult Protective Services Systems

AGENCY: Administration for Community Living, HHS.

ACTION: Request for Information (RFI)

SUMMARY

The Administration on Aging's Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services (OEJAPS) at the Administration for Community Living (ACL) is seeking input from stakeholders on updates to the National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State APS Systems (Guidelines). We are interested in input on suggested updates to the Guidelines; topic areas for which research on APS practices is lacking; and the frequency at which ACL should re-engage stakeholders in the consensus process to update the Guidelines. All comments on the original and revised Guidelines are welcome.

DATES: *Comment Date:* To be assured consideration, comments must be received by Friday, May 31, 2019.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted electronically to ejpubliccomments@acl.hhs.gov with "RFI APS Guidelines Updates" in the subject line.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: ejpubliccomments@acl.hhs.gov with "RFI APS Guidelines Updates" in the subject line.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to obtain input from stakeholders on updates to the [National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State APS Systems](#) (Guidelines). ACL published the 1st National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for APS in 2016. In that document, ACL established a 2-year interval by which to re-engage in the stakeholder consensus process to review and update the Guidelines. Consistent with this schedule, ACL has initiated the process to revisit the Guidelines to incorporate new research findings and new focus areas for APS practices and policies. Additionally, ACL is leveraging this update to the Guidelines to identify research gaps in the area of APS, as well as determine the best intervals to periodically update the Guidelines. Comments on all parts of the original and suggested updates to the Guidelines are welcome. Specifically, ACL is seeking input on the following areas:

1. Suggested updates to the Guidelines;
2. Additional topics to be considered for inclusion in the Guidelines;
3. Topic areas for which research on APS practices is lacking;
4. Frequency at which ACL should re-engage stakeholders in the consensus process to update the Guidelines, and ideas on the most efficient way for stakeholders to provide input.

This RFI is for information and planning purposes only, and should not be construed as a solicitation or as an obligation on the part of the federal government, the Administration for Community Living, and/or

AoA/OEJAPS. AoA does not intend to make any awards based on responses to this RFI or to otherwise pay for the preparation of any information submitted or for the government's use of such information.

BACKGROUND

The OEJAPS at ACL is responsible for the operation, administration, and assessment of the elder abuse prevention, legal assistance development, and pension counseling programs funded through the Older Americans Act. The office also leads the development and implementation of comprehensive APS systems in order to provide a coordinated and seamless response for older adults and people with disability who are victims of abuse and to prevent abuse. In addition, the office implements and coordinates innovation and demonstration activities, and develops standards to improve delivery and effectiveness of such services, and provides support for the Elder Justice Coordinating Council.

As part of its effort to support and enhance the APS system, OEJAPS has implemented key initiatives in the past four years. Specifically, the office established an APS Technical Assistance Resource Center, developed the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System for APS systems to report program and case data, released the first federal grants to state APS programs, and developed the Guidelines.

The abuse and maltreatment of older adults and adults with disabilities presents a significant public health and human rights problem. Approximately 10% of older Americans experience abuse or maltreatment, which includes emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, financial exploitation and neglect (Lachs & Pillemer, 2015). Adults with disabilities are 4 to 10 times more likely to experience abuse or maltreatment than persons without disabilities (Sobsey et al., 1995). Thus, it is critical that APS programs are effective, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary in responding to and addressing the needs of adult victims of abuse or maltreatment. The Guidelines are intended to provide APS administrators with guidance for effective APS practices, with the goal of ultimately developing an APS system that is research-based, consistent and coordinated across states.

Currently, APS programs are state-run programs that are not subject to federal rules and regulations. As a result, each state has designed its own unique programs, creating a fragmented system, and creating challenges for assessing the effectiveness of the APS system as a whole and identifying best practices that can be adopted across programs. ACL developed the Guidelines in an effort to help enhance the APS system and promote effective, consistent, and multidisciplinary strategies for responding to abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation experienced by older adults and adults with disabilities.

The Guidelines were developed with extensive input from stakeholders, including the general public; staff from APS, aging, long-term care, disability, and domestic violence, sexual assault, and victim services networks; legal services and law enforcement; the tribal community; and federal staff. Engaging stakeholders in the process helped to ensure that the Guidelines are informed by experiences from the APS field and strategies that have shown to be effective, and may help enhance ownership and adoption of the Guidelines. This year, ACL is revisiting and updating the Guidelines to incorporate new research findings and new areas of interest in APS practices and policies. Similar to the development process, ACL will engage in a consensus feedback process with the public for changes and updates to the Guidelines.

References

- Lachs, M., & Pillemer, K. (2015). Elder abuse. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 373, 1947–56.
- Sobsey, D., D. Wells, R. Lucardie, and S. Mansell. 1995. *Violence and Disability: An Annotated Bibliography*. Baltimore, MD. Brookes Publishing.