



Administration for Community Living Office of Performance and Evaluation

ACL's Data Collection Process

November 2021

Acknowledgment

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Purpose

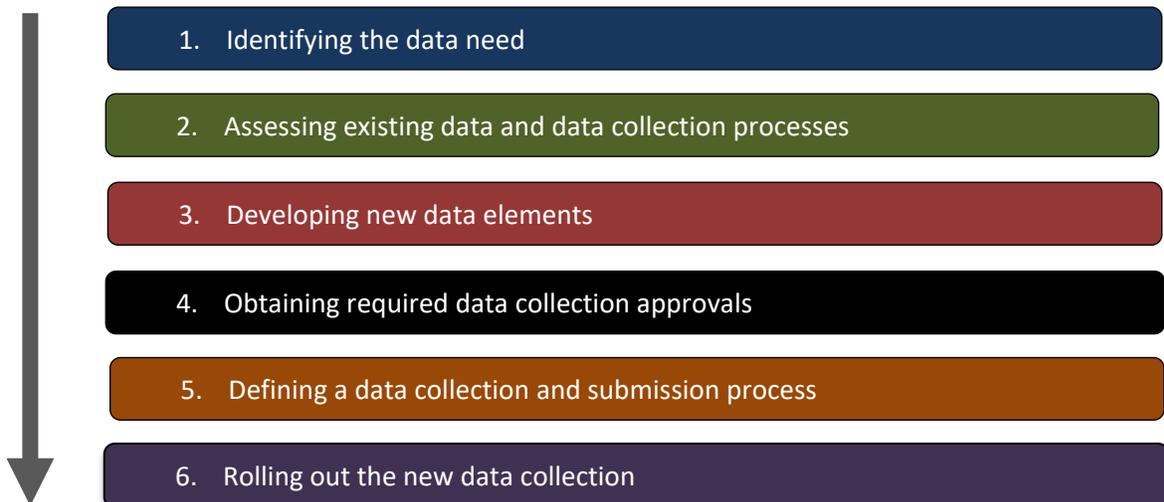
The collection, analysis, and dissemination of timely, reliable, and quality data are essential to the success of the ACL mission of maximizing the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers.

As ACL builds on its existing programming and implements new programming, new data collection processes need to be created to evaluate the performance of these programs and collect data about individuals served.

The purpose of this flowchart presentation is to illustrate the processes needed to roll out a new ACL data collection, including key activity areas, action steps, constraints and requirements, and time estimates.

Key Activities for New ACL Data Collections

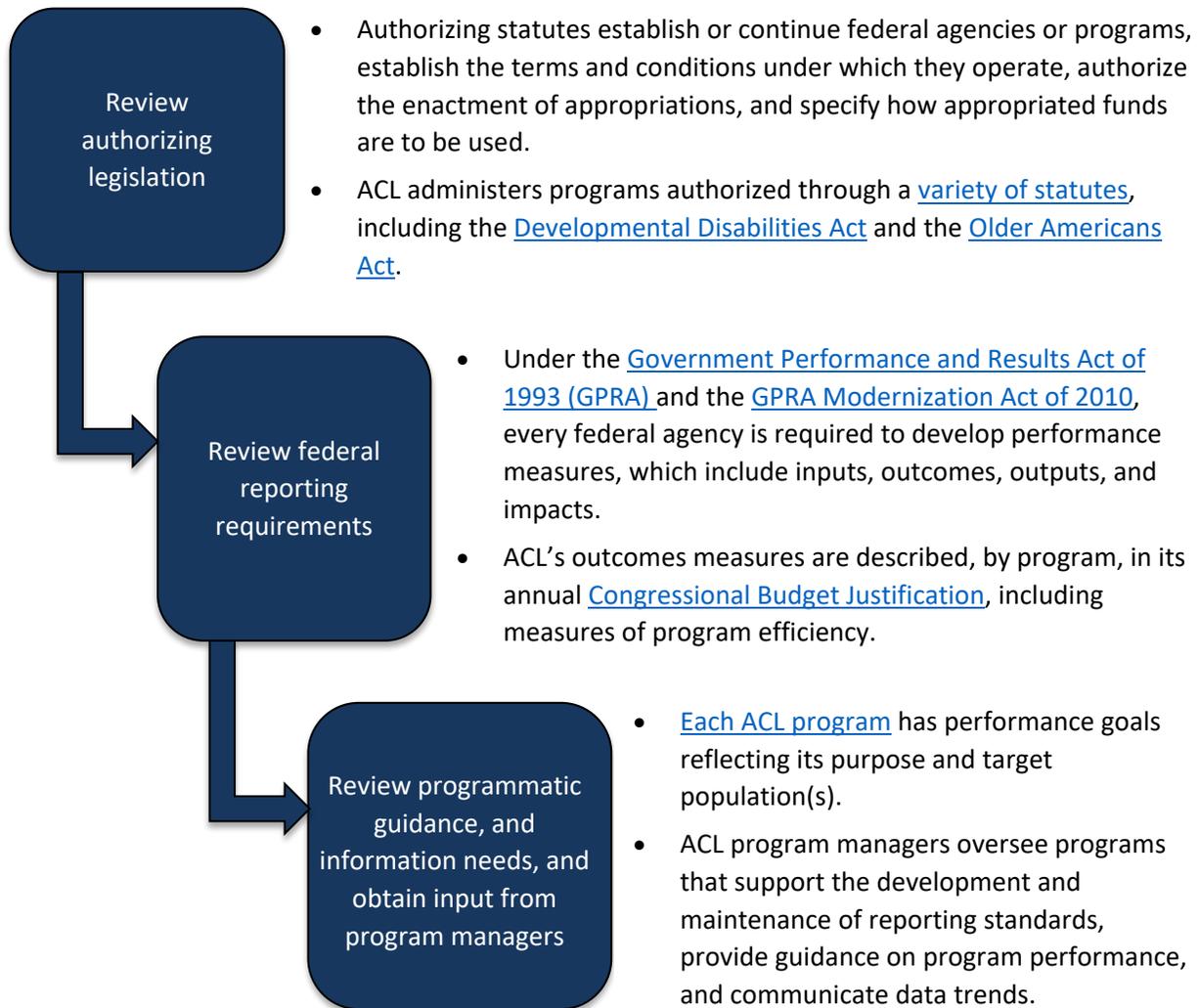
Generally, the following six key activities must be completed before new ACL data collection can be implemented:



1. Identifying the Data Need

Data collections by ACL are driven by authorizing legislation, federal reporting requirements, program needs, and needs for information that would support ACL in achieving its mission. These sources stipulate the types of data ACL is required to collect, as well as the limitations on what data and how much data ACL can collect.

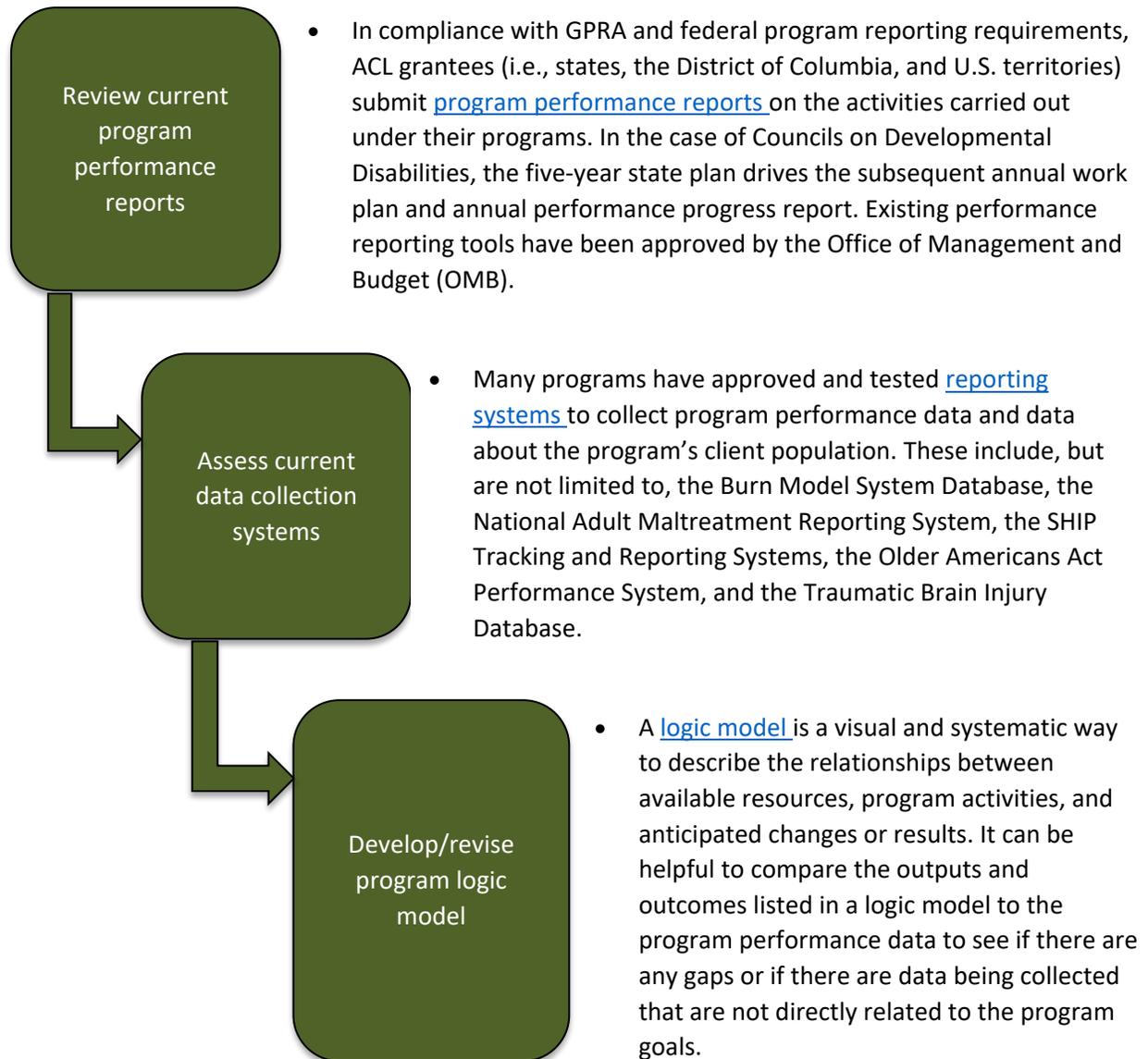
Steps for Identifying Data Needs



2. Assessing Existing Data and Data Collection Processes

Once the data needs have been determined, existing data and data collection processes must be reviewed to avoid duplication in data collection and to minimize the burden of data collection on ACL stakeholders (e.g., grantees, subgrantees, service recipients).

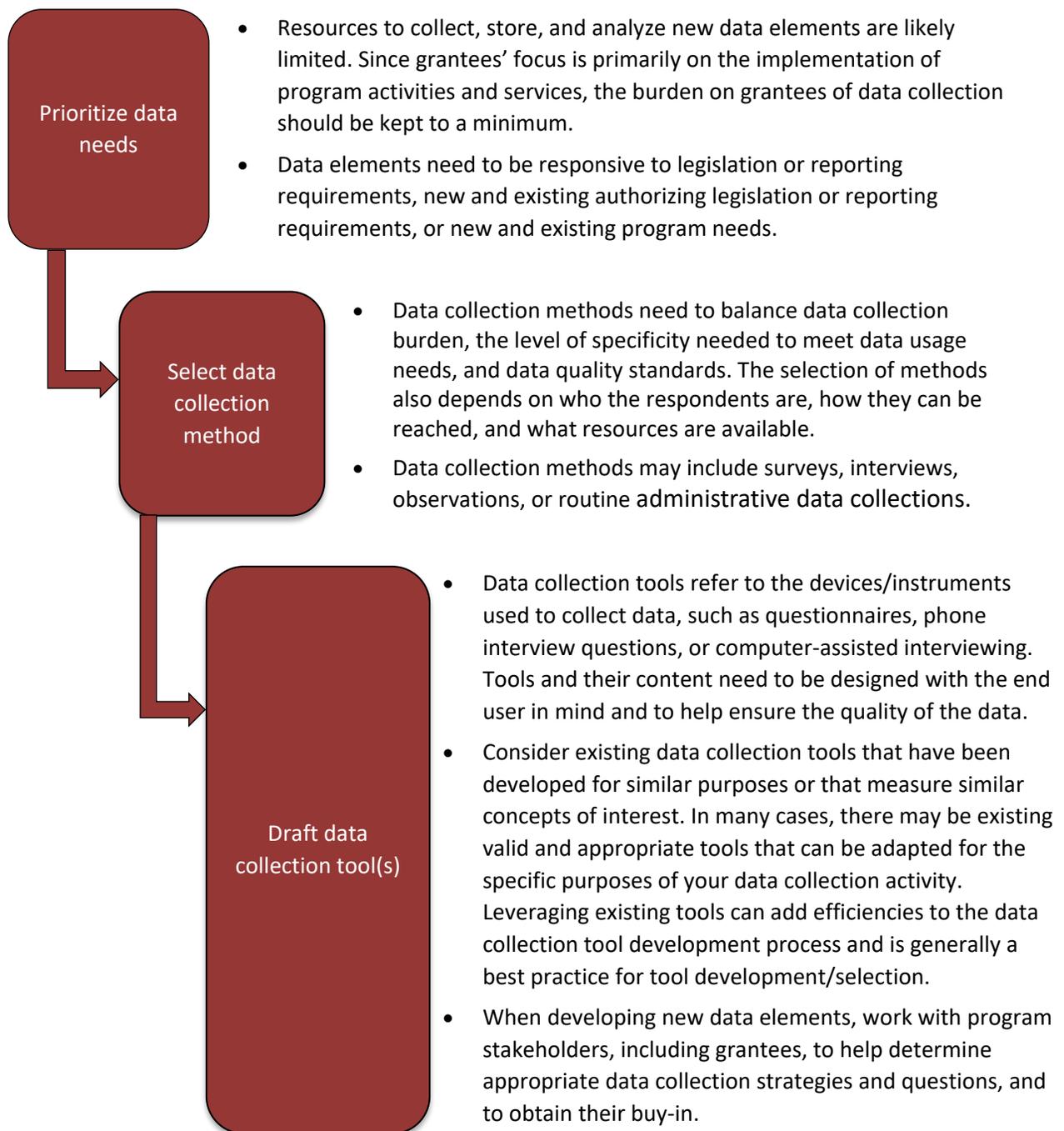
Steps for Assessing Existing Data and Data Collection Processes



3. Developing New Data Elements

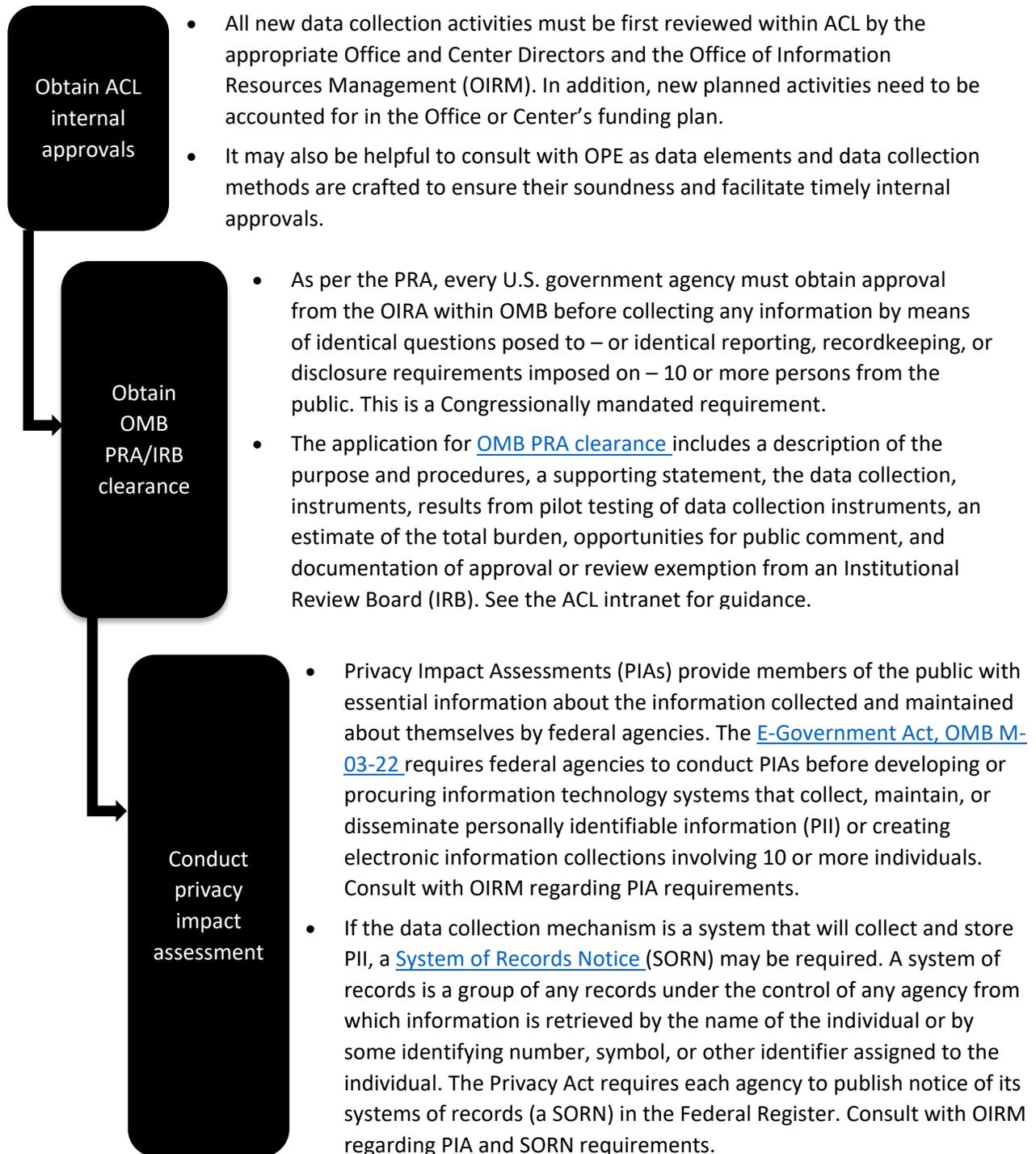
New data elements are developed after the data needs have been determined, existing sources have been reviewed, and ACL program staff have been consulted. When developing new data elements, it is important to have a clear understanding what the goal of the new data collection is – i.e., what are we trying to achieve with the data. This will help ensure that data needs can be prioritized and data elements are relevant for addressing the identified needs. It is also important to work with program stakeholders, such as grantees, to develop the data elements and to ensure buy-in for them.

Steps for Developing New Data Elements



4. Obtaining Required Data Collection Approvals

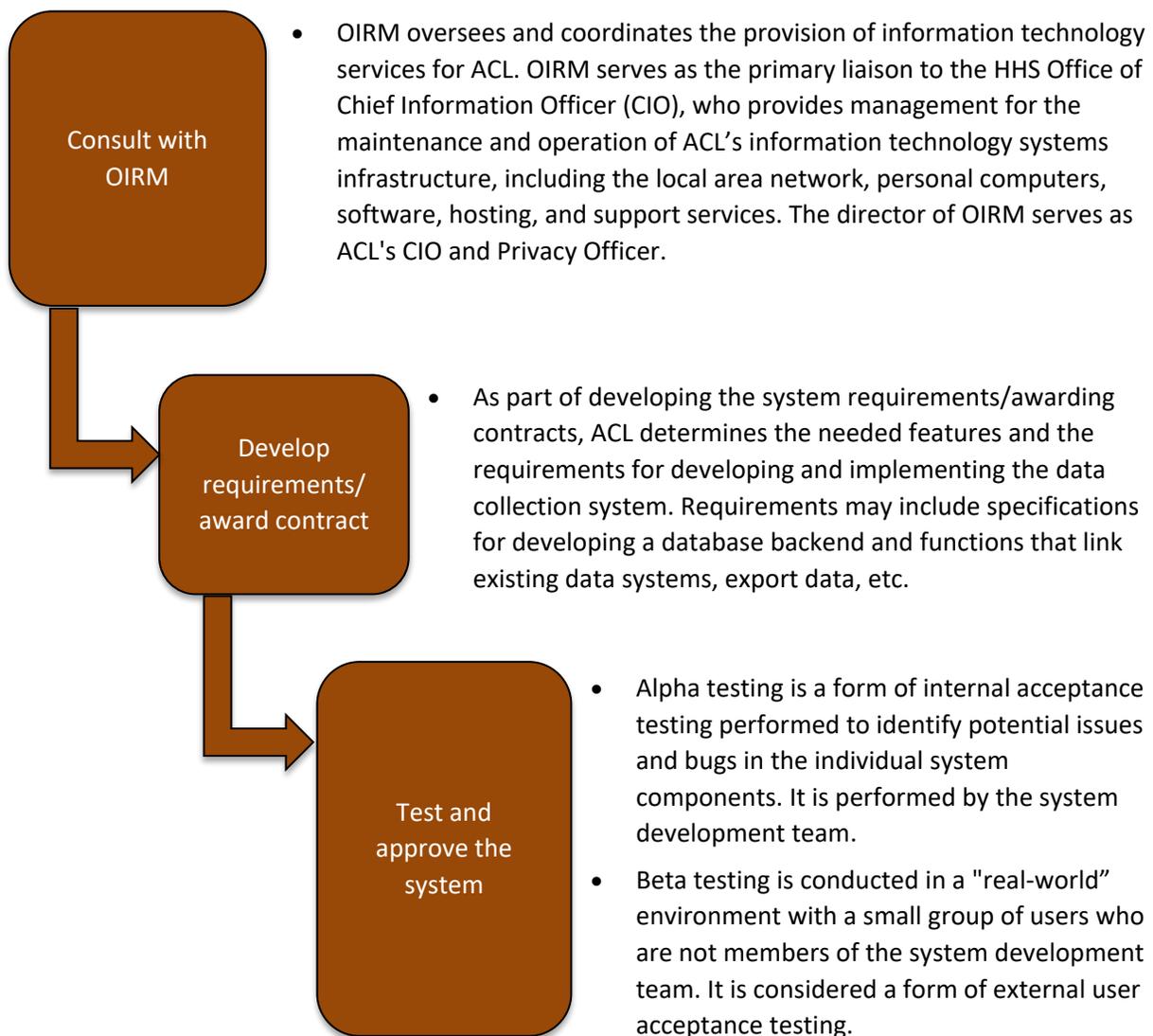
Federal agencies, including ACL, must follow stringent procedures and obtain approval before collecting any new data or information from the public. In addition, the [Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995](#) (PRA), 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501–3521, stipulates that federal agencies must minimize the burden resulting from the collection of information by or for the federal government on individuals; small businesses; educational and nonprofit institutions; state, local, and tribal governments; and other persons. To ensure that all of these needs are met, all new data collections must undergo several reviews and approval processes.



5. Defining a Data Collection and Submission Process

After all required data collection approvals have been obtained, the process for collecting and submitting the data must be defined, developed, and tested. ACL's OIRM is a key partner during this stage, to guide and review the development of any new technology services for ACL. The actual development of the system is performed by a qualified entity based on the system requirements established by ACL.

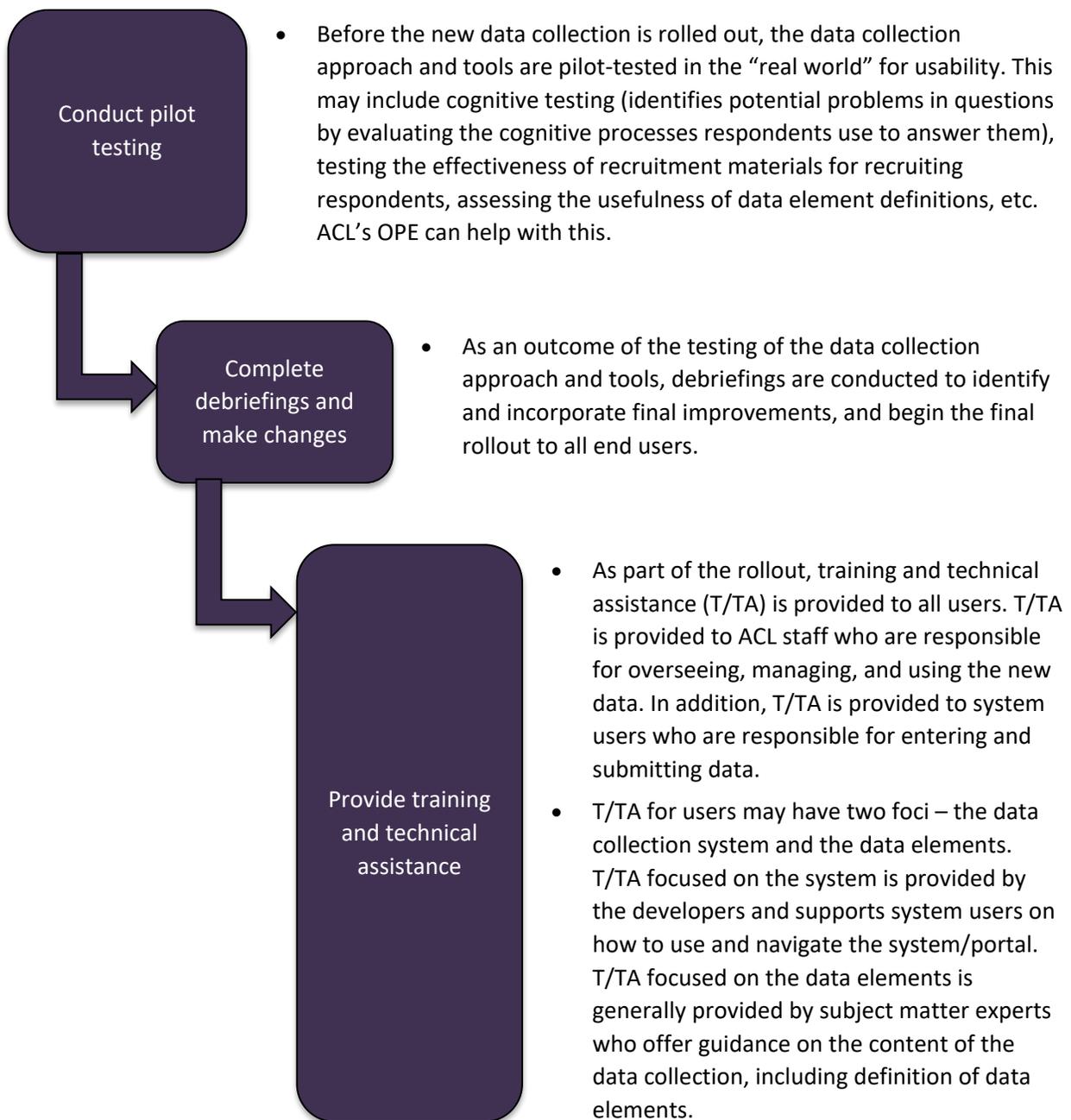
Steps for Defining a Data Collection and Submission Process



6. Rolling Out the New Data Collection

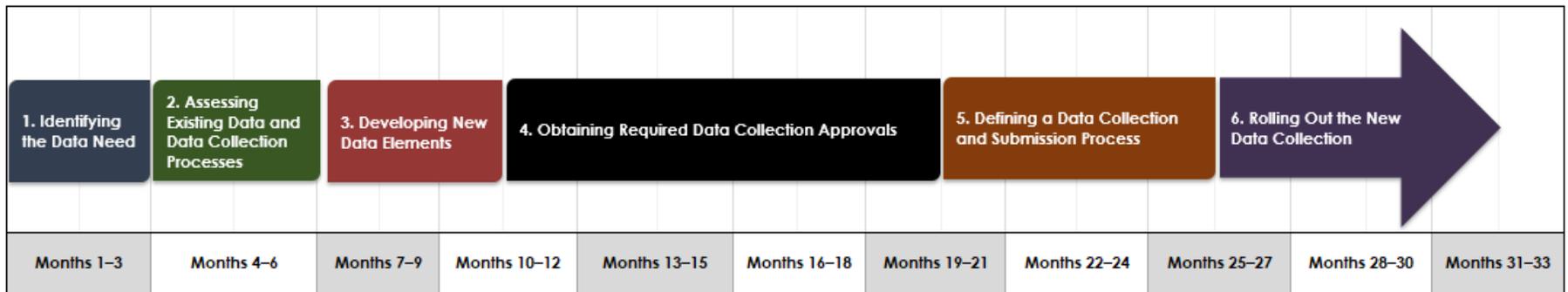
After the new data elements have been developed, data submission processes have been defined, and approvals have been obtained, the new data collection is rolled out to for testing with end-users. During this step, the data collection approach and content is tested. This may include testing the approach for selecting respondents (e.g., sample vs. census), piloting recruitment materials, and collecting responses. Final changes to the new data collection are made based on the results of the testing.

Steps for Rolling Out the New Data Collection



Estimated Timeline

The timeline presents a general framework to show that the process of implementing a new data collection is a complex and long process. It shows how long each activity may take to complete on average. Note: Timeframes will vary based on the needs and scope of the data collection requirements. For example, timeframes may be short for data collections that do not require the development of a new web-based data collection system.



Summary

As highlighted by the [Evidence-Based Policymaking Act](#), “government decisions should be based on rigorous evidence and data about what works.”

As ACL makes changes to its programs and implements new programs, new data elements and data collection systems need to be developed, tested, and implemented to evaluate the performance of these programs and determine their reach. However, as this flowchart highlights, developing and implementing new data collection activities is a stringent and lengthy process that requires dedicated staff and resources. Thus, data needs have to be balanced with available resources. In addition, every effort should be made to keep the burden of data collection to grantees and other nonfederal participants to a minimum.

For additional information contact:

Office of Performance and Evaluation
Center for Policy and Evaluation
Administration for Community Living
330 C St SW
Washington, DC 20201
www.acl.gov/contact