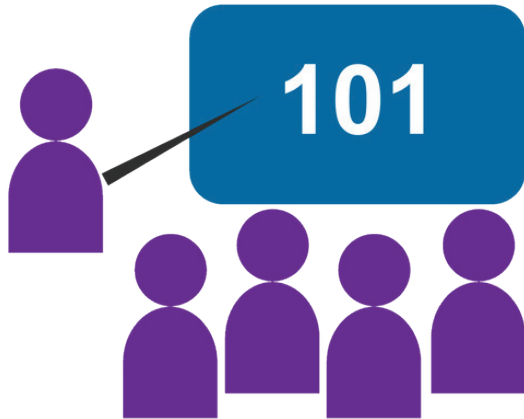


# APS Admin 101: Resources and Information for New Adult Protective Services Administrators

February 2023

Part of the **New APS Administrators Toolkit** located at <https://apstarc.acl.gov/toolkits>.



## Introduction

This brief represents the beginning of a new APS administrator's orientation and education. Whether you are new to the field or simply new to administering a program, managing a state or local adult protective services (APS) program can feel like a daunting task when faced with the daily challenges of staffing, including training and onboarding new professionals, program capacity, quality assurance, and meeting the health and safety issues of clients and professionals.

This brief, part of the New APS Administrators Toolkit, contains information and resources on a variety of topics from the history of APS to federal resources that can support APS programs and will provide a foundation for understanding some of the complexities of APS program administration.

## Diversity in Program Structures and Funding

### Program Structure

APS programs vary from state to state regarding structure, funding, population served, types of maltreatment investigated, etc. This brief will highlight the most prominent differences in comparing APS programs.

- While most programs are “state administered,” meaning all APS staff are state employees, some are “county administered,” meaning APS employees are regional or county employees.
- Almost all APS programs are located within health and human services offices, often within state units on aging (SUA), and may also be organized with other programs including child protective services (CPS) or other health and human services programs.
- All APS programs serve older adults aged 60+ or, in some states, 65+. The vast majority

**For the purposes of this brief, a program administrator is defined as any staff person in a position of management at a state or county APS program.**

also serve younger adults age 18+ with a disability, which may include physical or intellectual disabilities.

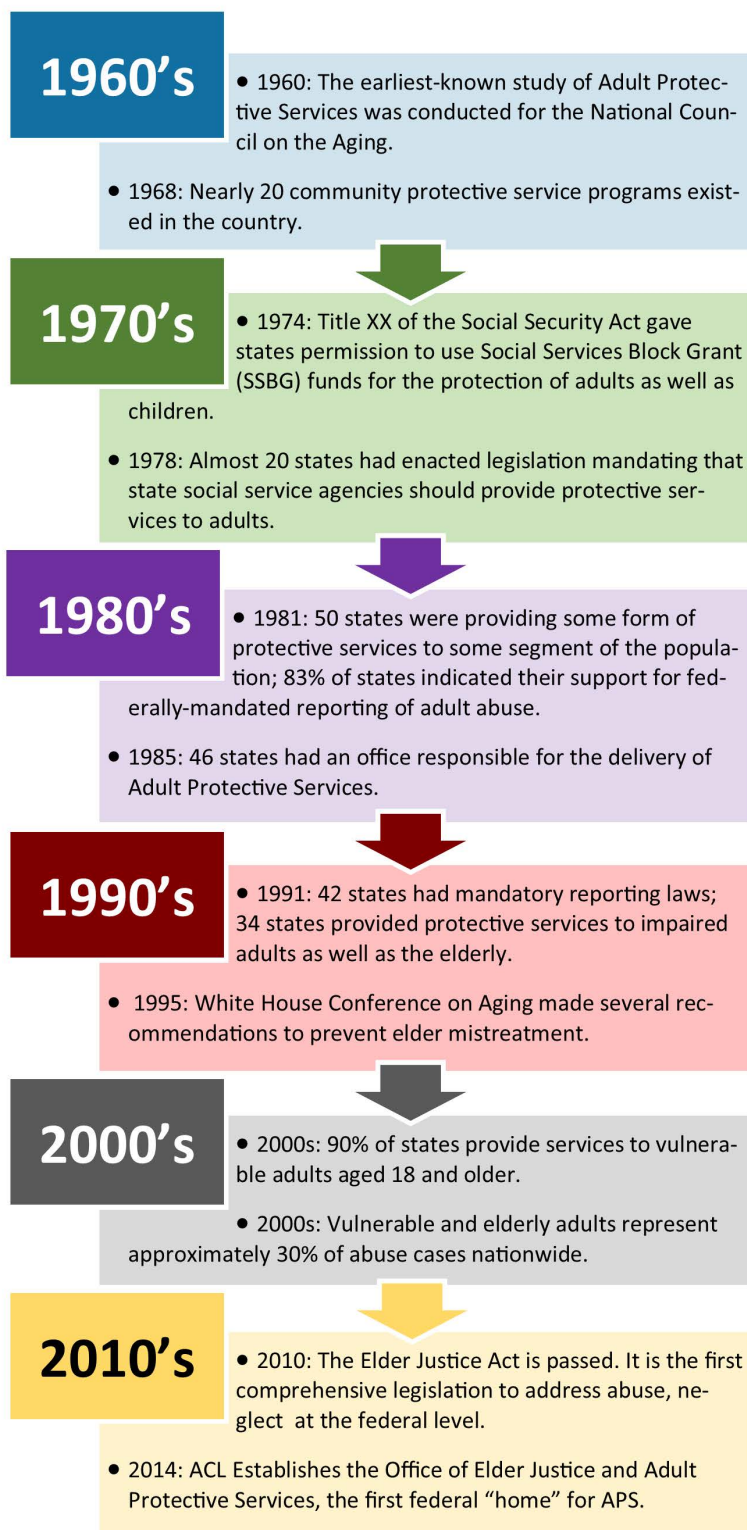
- Some programs require that an older adult be “vulnerable” or have a disability to investigate maltreatment, while others don’t have this requirement. All programs require that younger adults have a disability or vulnerability. Definitions of vulnerability vary by state.
- Three states (Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana) have bifurcated systems, with separate programs for older adults and younger adults with a disability.
- All programs investigate neglect of those they serve. The vast majority also investigate physical abuse, self-neglect, sexual abuse, financial exploitation, and emotional abuse (McGee & Urban, 2022).
- All programs investigate cases that occur in the community (i.e., an adult’s own home). A subset of programs also investigate cases in licensed or unlicensed congregate settings, such as nursing homes or group homes, but often only under specific circumstances, such as when a family member, not a facility employee, is the perpetrator.

For additional details on how programs vary, see the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS) reports at <https://namrs.acl.gov/reports>. NAMRS is discussed in more detail later in this brief.

### Common Funding Sources

APS is funded through a variety of federal, state, and local sources.

**Figure 1 - History of Adult Protective Services**



(National Adult Protective Services Association, 2022)

- [State Grants to Enhance Adult Protective Services](#) (often referred to as “discretionary grants”) that are awarded on a competitive basis to states, so they can enhance APS systems statewide and include innovations and improvements in practice, services, data collection, and reporting. A recent example of this type of grant was to address opioid use disorder. These are funded through the [Elder Justice Act](#).
- [Elder Justice Mandatory Grants](#) (often referred to as “formula grants”) that were awarded to every state, territory, and DC, beginning in calendar year 2021 as a result of the Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Grants were awarded based on a formula using the number of older adults (age 60+) in a state or territory. For federal fiscal year 2023, for the first time, formula grants were funded by regular appropriation in the amount of \$15 million.
- [Social Service Block Grant](#) (SSBG) - SSBG is a flexible funding source that allows states and territories to tailor social service programming to their population’s needs (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2022). Some state governments choose to make ample use of SSBG for APS, while others may not use it at all.
- [Victims of Crime Act Funding](#) (VOCA) – VOCA provides federal financial assistance to states for the purpose of compensating victims of crime, assisting victims of crimes, and providing funds for training and technical assistance of agencies providing crime victims’ services. APS programs can use funds designated for assisting victims of crime (Urban, 2015).
- [Medicaid Administrative Claiming](#) – Medicaid Administrative Claiming is used by certain states and is provided via a formula involving the number of clients with Medicaid and amount of time spent on reimbursable activities. Use of this funding source typically involves random moment time studies and collaboration with a State Medicaid Office (Urban, 2015). For additional details, see the report [Alternate Sources of funding for APS Programs](#).

## Federal/National Organizations and Notable Resources

There are numerous federal government and private organizations across the US that have resources that may benefit older adults and adults with disabilities.

### Administration for Community Living, Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services

The federal “home” for APS is the [Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services](#) (OEJAPS) at the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL). OEJAPS administers grants and contracts with organizations to support the development of systems and programs that prevent abuse from happening, protect people from abusive situations, support people who have experienced abuse to help them recover, and preserve and promote their independence, choice, and financial security (Administration for Community Living, 2022). This office coordinates multiple programs, including APS.

## Notable Resources

- [National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State Adult Protective Services Systems](#)  
– Originally developed in 2016 and then updated in 2020, the “Guidelines” are research based and designed to provide APS Administrators with recommendations from the field about quality practice.
- [Adult Maltreatment Screening and Assessment Tools Inventory](#) - The purpose of the Adult Maltreatment Screening and Assessment Tools Inventory is to identify and describe tested screening and assessment tools related directly to adult maltreatment for use by professionals in the field who interact directly with clients.
- [Research Agenda for Adult Protective Service](#) – Developed in 2020, the goal of the agenda is to highlight research gaps to help inform the APS field and, ultimately, help build a cohesive body of evidence in the field.

## Adult Protective Services Technical Assistance Resource Center

The Adult Protective Services Technical Assistance Resource Center (APS TARC), serves as the focal point for the overall approach to leading the development of comprehensive APS systems. The mission of the APS TARC is to support federal, state, and local partners’ use of data and analytics, research and evaluation, and innovative practice and innovative strategies to enhance the effectiveness of APS programs. The APS TARC works primarily with state APS programs to improve reporting of data through the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (see section later in this brief), through research and evaluation to identify promising practices, and providing technical assistance to state APS programs.

## About the National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State Adult Protective Services Systems

Originally developed in 2016 and then updated in 2020, the “Guidelines” are designed to provide APS Administrators with recommendations from the field about quality practice. The document was authored by consensus of many APS professionals and is research-based.

It addresses several areas of APS practice and policy, including:

- Program Administration
- Timeframes
- Receiving Reports of Maltreatment
- Conducting Investigations
- Service Planning and Service Implementation
- Training
- Program Performance

New APS program administrators are strongly encouraged to read these Guidelines. More information is available at

<https://acl.gov/programs/elder-justice/final-voluntary-consensus-guidelines-state-aps-systems>.

The APS TARC provides one-on-one technical assistance to state or territory APS programs upon request. It regularly publishes blog posts, briefs, toolkits, and webinars that address a variety of topics from program policy and practice. In addition, the program conducts several peer support activities such as networking and peer support meetings.



The [APS TARC website](#) hosts many resources, all of which relate specifically to APS practice and policy. [Contact us](#) to see how we can help.

**APS TARC Website**  
**<https://apstarc.acl.gov/>**

The APS TARC website hosts many resources, all of which relate specifically to APS practice and policy. If you are a new APS administrator, please check out our website or [reach out to the APS TARC](#) to see how we can help.



## National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System

Launched in 2016, The [National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System](#) (NAMRS) is a voluntary data reporting system established and operated by OEJAPS for the purpose of better understanding the phenomena of adult maltreatment in the US. Currently, the data collected is submitted by state APS programs (National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System, n.d.).

NAMRS annually collects data on APS investigations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and adults with disabilities, as well as information on the administration of APS programs. The data provide an understanding of key program policies, characteristics of those experiencing and perpetrating maltreatment, information on the

types of maltreatment investigated, and information on services to address the maltreatment.

NAMRS accepts data from APS programs in several ways, depending on the resources and data system states use. Only one organization per state or territory may report data to NAMRS. County or local APS programs provide data to the state or territory, which in turn submits the data to NAMRS (county or local programs are not able to participate directly).

As of 2022, all 56 states, territories, and District of Columbia submit data to NAMRS. Data submission is due at the end of each March for data from the prior Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). NAMRS only accepts data based on FFY. OEJAPS provides NAMRS support for states via the APS TARC, who designates a liaison for each state that works with them to submit data.

Annual NAMRS reports are available at <https://namrs.acl.gov/reports>. It is recommended that new state APS administrators visit <https://namrs.acl.gov/participation> for a brief overview of how to report and [reach out to the NAMRS team](#) for a system overview.

## National Adult Protective Services Training Center

The National Adult Protective Services Training Center (NATC) is provided through a grant from OEJAPS and is administered by the National Adult Protective Services Administration (discussed later in this brief) in conjunction with several other organizations. Launched in 2022, the NATC provides no cost training to APS professionals on many topics such as the aging process, case documentation, safety, communication and interviewing, ethics, trauma-informed services, and more. Professionals may register for courses using a learning management system where they receive credit.

For more information, visit the NATC website at <https://natc.acl.gov/>.

## Department of Justice, Elder Justice Initiative

The mission of the Elder Justice Initiative (EJI) at the Department of Justice (DOJ) is to support and coordinate DOJ's enforcement and programmatic efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect and financial fraud and scams that target our nation's older adults. EJI provides a variety of resources, of which the most potentially relevant to APS is support for multidisciplinary teams (MDT). Many APS programs participate in local MDTs as a collaborative effort among government, private, and non-profit organizations to ameliorate maltreatment in complex cases.

MDT support via EJI is available at <https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/mdt>.

## National Center on Elder Abuse

Funded by OEJAPS, the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) provides the latest information regarding research, training, best practices, news and resources on elder abuse, neglect and exploitation to professionals and the public. The NCEA has many resources that can benefit APS professionals and clients. APS programs frequently disseminate NCEA materials to the public and use them in developing their own presentations and materials for public dissemination (see <https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/Publications.aspx>).

### Notable Resources

- [Adult Protective Services, What You Must Know](#) – A fact sheet detailing what APS is and how it helps. Contains frequently asked questions.

- [APS Example Flow Chart](#) – A chart detailing how investigations are conducted and how intervention is sought.
- **APS Wouldn't Take May Report. Why? (Brief | Fact Sheet)** – These two resources help community partners understand APS eligibility, confidentiality, and maltreatment criteria.
- **Understanding and Working with Adult Protective Services (Part I | Part II | Part III)** – A three-part series of briefs that provide an overview of APS programs, and address reporting and investigation of alleged maltreatment and intervention collaboration.

## National Adult Protective Services Association

The National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) is a private, non-profit membership organization. NAPSA's goal is to provide APS programs a forum for sharing information, solving problems, and improving the quality of services for victims of elder and vulnerable adult maltreatment. While NAPSA is an organization that requires membership dues, many of their resources are available via the web free of charge at <https://www.napsa-now.org/>.

## Conclusion

This brief represents the beginning of a new APS administrator's orientation and education. There is much more to learn. Whether you are new to the field or simply new to administering a program, the APS TARC is here to help. Feel free to [reach out to us](#) at any time.

## References

- Administration for Community Living. (2022). *Success*. Retrieved from Elder Justice: <https://elderjustice.acl.gov/success>
- McGee, L., & Urban, K. (2022). *Adult Maltreatment Report 2021*. Administration for Community Living, US Department of Health & Human Services.
- National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System. (n.d.). *Home Page*. Retrieved from National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System: <https://namrs.acl.gov/>
- National Adult Protective Services Association. (2022). *History*. Retrieved from National Adult Protective Services Association: <https://www.napsa-now.org/history/>
- Urban, K. (2015). *APS Administrator Briefing Paper: Alternate Sources of Funding for APS Programs*. Washington, DC: National Adult Protective Services Association.
- US Department of Health & Human Services. (2022, September 19). *Social Services Block Grant Program (SSBG)*. Retrieved from US Department of Health & Human Services: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/ssbg>

*The National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System and the Adult Protective Services Technical Resource Center is a project (HHSP 233201500042I) of the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, administered by the WRMA, Inc. Contractor's findings, conclusions, and points of view do not necessarily represent U.S. Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services official policy.*