



# ACL Strategic Plan

2013 - 2018



*Maximize the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities, and their families and caregivers.*

## **MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR**

All Americans—including people with disabilities and older adults—should be able to live at home with the supports they need, participating in communities that value their contributions. To help meet these needs, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) created a new organization in 2012, the Administration for Community Living (ACL). This is ACL's first strategic plan, encompassing many of the efforts and achievements of ACL's two major components -- the Administration on Aging and the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

ACL is charged with working with states, tribes, community providers, universities, nonprofit organizations, businesses and families to help older adults and people with disabilities live in their homes and fully participate in their communities.

Our focus is characterized in our mission:

*Maximize the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities, and their families and caregivers.*

We will advocate to ensure their interests are reflected in the design of public policies and programs; work to protect their rights and prevent abuse and neglect; promote individual self-determination and control of their independence, well-being, and health; and enable their access to needed long term services and supports. These needs go well beyond health care and include the availability of appropriate housing, employment, education, meaningful relationships, and social participation.

The strategic direction set forth in this plan embodies both the present and the future. With this plan as a guide, I am confident that the Administration for Community Living will continue to advance our mission on behalf of people with disabilities and older adults.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Greenlee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathy Greenlee

Administrator & Assistant Secretary for Aging

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# ACL Strategic Goals and Objectives 2013-2018

## Goal 1: Advocacy

*Advocate to ensure the interests of people with disabilities, older adults, and their families are reflected in the design and implementation of public policies and programs.*

Increase public awareness and understanding of the interests of people with disabilities, older adults and their family members.

Engage federal policy makers and other partners to ensure existing policies and programs optimally reflect the interests of people with disabilities, older adults and their family members.

Lead the development and implementation of new public policies and programs that advance the interests of people with disabilities, older adults and their family members.

## Goal 2: Protect Rights and Prevent Abuse

*Protect and enhance the rights; and prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities.*

Identify, strengthen, and enhance collaboration of programs at all levels that impact the rights and prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities.

Educate and empower stakeholders on the rights and prevention of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities.

Identify and mitigate gaps in the current systems to ensure the rights and to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities.

Facilitate individual access to advocacy and representation to protect individual rights and prevent abuse.

## Goal 3: Individual Self-Determination & Control

*Work with older adults and people with disabilities as they fully engage and participate in their communities, make informed decisions, and exercise self-determination and control about their independence, well-being, and health*

Promote programs and strategies that support community integration for older adults and people with disabilities.

- Provide older adults and people with disabilities with information, education, and counseling on their options to live as independently as possible in the community.
- Increase the availability of evidence-based programs and practices that empower individuals to improve the quality of their health, independence and well-being.
- Promote and increase the accessibility of all aspects of community life.
- Ensure that people with disabilities of all ages are supported in skills preparation, achieving competitive integrated employment, and remaining in the workforce.

## Goal 4: Long-Term Services and Supports

*Enable people with disabilities and older adults to live in the community through the availability of and access to high-quality long-term services and supports, including supports for families and caregivers.*

- Administer and continue to modernize the Older Americans Act and Developmental Disabilities Act Programs.
- Assist states to develop high quality, person-centered, and integrated systems that seamlessly address the health and long-term services and supports needs of people with disabilities and older adults.
- Assist the aging and disability networks to continue to play a meaningful role in support of the Affordable Care Act transformations in health and long-term care.
- Promote the development and adoption of national standards for home and community-based services, including quality standards that reflect consumer experience with long-term services and supports programs.

## Goal 5: Effective and Responsive Management

*Implement management and workforce practices that support the integrity and efficient operations of programs serving people with disabilities and older adults and ensure stewardship of taxpayers' dollars.*

Invest in the ACL workforce and enhance opportunities for recruitment, retention, and development.

- Implement management improvement activities, including program integrity and internal control initiatives, to strengthen business processes, improve efficiency, and promote accountability.
- Utilize emerging technologies and leverage shared services to promote innovation, improve accessibility, and better support our mission.



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## Mission and Vision

### ACL's Mission:

*Maximize the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities, and their families and caregivers.*

### ACL's Vision:

*ACL's vision is that all people, regardless of age and disability, live with dignity, make their own choices, and participate fully in society. Therefore, we will:*

#### *For the people we serve*

Promote strategies that enable people to live in their communities.

#### *For our networks*

Provide leadership and support.

#### *For our partners*

Be a source of collaboration, innovation, and solutions.

#### *For our employees*

Support their contributions, professional growth, and work-life balance.

#### *For the public*

Be effective stewards of public resources and a source for information.

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# Strategic Goals & Objectives

## Goal 1: Advocacy

*Advocate to ensure the interests of people with disabilities, older adults, and their families are reflected in the design and implementation of public policies and programs.*

ACL, and the state and local networks it oversees, have a statutory responsibility under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the Help America Vote Act, and the Older Americans Act, to serve as an effective advocate for people with disabilities, older adults, and their families. Paramount in this role is understanding the varied perspectives and needs of the populations ACL represents and making sure their interests are reflected in the development, implementation and on-going refinement of the federal and state policies, programs and supports that affect their lives. This involves listening to and having an ongoing dialogue with individuals with disabilities, older adults, their families, and their key stakeholder organizations. It also involves educating the public and policy makers on the aspiration of people of all ages to fully participate in community life and be valued and contributing members of society.

### Objective 1.1

*Increase public awareness and understanding of the interests of people with disabilities, older adults, and their family members.*

ACL will continuously engage in a dialogue with individuals with disabilities, older adults, and their family members, through the use of technology and in-person meetings, including listening sessions, teleconferences, webinars, social media, conferences and other public forums at the national, state and local level to better understand their needs and interests. ACL will also work with its local networks and consumer advocacy organizations to communicate with the American public, policy makers at the federal, state and local level, as well as leaders in the private sector, to increase their awareness of the perspectives and interests of people with disabilities and older adults. This also will involve the use of technology and in-person forums, along with the dissemination of fact sheets, issue papers, speeches and testimony before Congress and other public bodies.

### Objective 1.2

*Ensure that existing policies and programs optimally reflect the interests of people with disabilities, older adults, and their family members.*

This includes ACL's effective administration of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the Help America Vote Act, and the Older Americans Act, including partnering with consumers, their families, and the aging and disability networks at the national, state and local level to continually modernize and enhance the performance of these programs. This also involves advocating with other federal agencies and other federal departments that administer programs that have an impact on people with disabilities and older adults to ensure these programs optimally reflect the interests of these populations. Additionally, ACL will ensure individuals with disabilities and older adults and their key stakeholder organizations are notified of opportunities for providing public comments on proposed changes to programs that affect their lives. ACL will also engage people with disabilities, older adults, and their family members to ensure their interests and priorities are reflected in the development and implementation of discretionary grant programs.

### Objective 1.3

*Lead the development and implementation of new public policies and programs that advance the interests of people with disabilities, older adults, and their family members.*

ACL will also lead the development of new policies, programs and initiatives that advance the interests of people with disabilities, older adults, and their family members. These initiatives will address needs and issues not currently being fully addressed by federal programs and will involve ACL stand-alone initiatives as well as partnerships with other federal agencies, departments, private foundations, and national organizations. Areas of potential focus for these initiatives will be guided by input from the populations ACL serves and will include, but not be limited to: consumer rights and protection, long-term services and supports, housing, transportation, employment and economic independence and security.

## Goal 2: Protect Rights and Prevent Abuse

*Protect and enhance the rights; and prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities.*

Existing studies reveal that abuse of older adults and people with disabilities is both extensive and underreported. The ability of older adults and people with disabilities to be safe, free from the fear of abuse and exploitation, and empowered to exercise their essential rights is a basic goal that underlies individual health, welfare and independence. It is crucial to ensure that these persons should be protected against the threat of mistreatment.

ACL's aim has been and continues to be a collaboration in the advancement of research and evidenced-based interventions that will help protect individuals from all forms of abuse. This includes physical, emotional, and financial abuse of elders as well as violence, neglect, and bullying of individuals with disabilities. ACL programs work to preserve the dignity and independence of all individuals served, ensure their access to justice, and support their desire to live in their own homes and communities to the greatest extent possible.

### Objective 2.1

*Identify, strengthen, and enhance collaboration of programs at all levels that impact the rights and prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities.*

ACL will lead the development of a coordinated, collaborative network to prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities. This is a responsibility that ACL takes seriously. Where possible and practical, partnerships will be encouraged or strengthened between the Disability and Aging Networks, the Protection and Advocacy system, Adult Protective Services, state long-term care ombudsman programs, legal services networks, national aging and disability organizations, courts, state survey agencies, law enforcement, and criminal justice communities to improve



coordinated advocacy efforts and responses to abuse, neglect and exploitation. Additional collaboration will be pursued with key federal and private sector partners such as the financial services industry, Social Security Administration, Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which will yield strategies to prevent and address the financial exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities. Collaborative efforts among local agencies and service providers will be advanced, as they are essential to ensure access to high-quality health and social supports sufficient to protect each individual's health, safety, rights and well-being. To this end, ACL will lead efforts to advance a coordinated response among federal agencies in addressing elder abuse, neglect and exploitation through the work of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council.

### Objective 2.2

*Educate and empower stakeholders on the rights and prevention of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults, and people with disabilities.*

ACL will work to expand awareness and understanding of the importance of the prevention of abuse and other rights of older persons and persons with disabilities among consumers, professionals, partners and the public. This will involve outreach and educational activities at the national, state and local levels provide substantive information as well as support advocacy efforts necessary to prevent, identify and report abuse of individuals. It will

also involve training for aging and disability networks, advocates, and partners on topics focused on individual rights and protections, serving those who are targeted the most, and prevention of and response to abuse and exploitation will provide knowledge necessary to empower these stakeholders. ACL will strive to promote consumer empowerment, person-centered planning and protection of consumer rights in newly developed health and long-term services and supports programs.

### **Objective 2.3**

*Identify and mitigate gaps in the current systems to ensure the rights and to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and people with disabilities.*

ACL programs work to ensure the needs of all individuals are served to the greatest degree possible, particularly those in the greatest social and economic need. As systems of access and long-term services and supports are developed and implemented to serve older adults and persons with disabilities, it is important to constantly examine the potential for gaps in coverage, service, outreach or eligibility, that may limit the rights of individuals—particularly the most vulnerable—to access needed assistance. Developing models for integration of elder rights programs and protection and advocacy efforts will help ensure that those individuals encountering legal issues, potential abuse, or exploitation are identified and referred to appropriate sources of information and assistance. Full integration will also help to ensure that older adults and persons with disabilities experiencing difficulties or barriers to exercising their rights, obtaining entitled benefits, or facing potential Medicare, Medicaid or other healthcare fraud and abuse will be identified and referred to elder rights, consumer protection, or protection and advocacy programs.

ACL will lead efforts, through the Elder Justice Working Group and its support of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council, to identify and address gaps in federal programs involving financial exploitation and other forms of elder abuse. In addition, ACL will continue to support the efforts of the Protection and Advocacy Systems, which protect and advocate the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities. People with disabilities should be provided with maximum protections from abuse and neglect, including expansive reporting of suspected or alleged abuse and

neglect or incidents suggestive of abuse or neglect. Penalties should be developed and implemented for perpetrators of abuse or neglect and facilities, programs or agencies that fail to prevent abuse or neglect or respond to alleged or suspected abuse or neglect. Individuals in the abuse response and criminal justice systems must be trained regarding working with people with disabilities and the identification, reporting, and investigation of incidents of suspected abuse or neglect. People with disabilities, including victims and witnesses to abuse, neglect, or criminal activity, must be provided with accommodations to ensure equal access to the criminal justice system. People with disabilities, family members, and advocates must be provided with training regarding abuse and neglect and accessing the abuse response and criminal justice systems.

### **Objective 2.4**

*Facilitate individual access to advocacy and representation to protect individual rights and prevent abuse.*

ACL will lead efforts to enhance and support justice for older adults and people with disabilities, and seek to assist those facing challenges in securing their rights or protections in obtaining adequate representation and support. This includes working to ensure that individuals are empowered to serve as their own self advocates and have access to advocacy and representation in their local communities when needed to advance their rights. ACL will champion the advocacy and awareness efforts of the protection and advocacy system, the long-term care ombudsman programs, legal services network, elder abuse prevention advocates, and others that work to protect and advance the rights of older adults and people with disabilities regardless of where they reside.

## **Goal 3: Individual Self-Determination and Control**

*Work with older adults and people with disabilities as they fully engage and participate in their communities, make informed decisions, and exercise self-determination and control about their independence, well-being, and health.*

Engaging and participating in one's community, making informed decisions, and exercising self-determination and

control about one's independence, well-being, and health are vitally important for all individuals, especially older adults and people with disabilities. ACL will vigorously pursue programs and policies that ensure older adults and people with disabilities are able to exercise their right to self-determination and control.

### **Objective 3.1**

*Promote programs and strategies that support community integration for older adults and people with disabilities.*

Each person has unique strengths and abilities, personal resources, and health and long-term service and support needs. In collaboration with federal partners, other agencies within HHS, and across the government, ACL will continue to work to transform the nation's health and long-term services and supports system to be more person-centered, empowering citizens to exercise self-determination and control in decisions related to their independence, well-being, and health.

To support this objective, ACL will promote the integration of person-centered planning and participant directed models into publicly administered programs and services. ACL will also analyze data and publish reports related to self-determination in services and supports; provide education on how to exercise self-determination and control in decisions related to independence, well-being, and health through promising and evidence-based programs; and, promote self-determination through existing and future funding opportunities and technical assistance for aging and disability networks, consumers, and other stakeholders.

### **Objective 3.2**

*Provide older adults and people with disabilities with information, education, and counseling on their options to live as independently as possible in the community.*

When older adults, people with disabilities, and their family members seek information on supports for health, social, advocacy, and/or long-term services, they often face a complex and fragmented maze of options. They may require help understanding such programs and accessing programs and services that best support their needs and preferences.



To increase and improve access to community living options, ACL will continue to implement and support programs and services that focus on self-determination, control, and person-centeredness, including a “no wrong door system” through Aging and Disability Resource Center Programs, which provide options counseling, as well as streamlined access to services and supports targeted to those at greatest risk of institutionalization, hospital readmission, and/or spend-down to Medicaid. In addition, ACL will continue to support protection and advocacy services, long-term care ombudsman programs, and the training and certification of community workers in order to help older adults, people with disabilities, family members and caregivers find and make informed decisions about various options to live as independently as possible in the community.

### **Objective 3.3**

*Increase the availability of promising and evidence-based programs and practices that empower individuals to improve the quality of their health, independence and well-being.*

In the United States, over 70% of older adults have multiple chronic conditions, placing them at greater risk for premature death, poor functional status, unnecessary hospitalizations, adverse drug events, and nursing home placement. As compared to people without disabilities, people with disabilities are also more likely to experience secondary health conditions. ACL has a long history of supporting chronic disease self-management programs

and other evidence-based prevention programs, which educate participants about how to take more control of their health, independence and well-being by managing their conditions, building self-confidence, adopting healthy behaviors, and enhancing their quality of life.

Through program and policy, ACL will continue to support innovative and promising practices, such as development of systems change efforts to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities, formalized communities of practice where systems can test and share promising and best practices, and the deployment of evidence-based transitions programs that have proven effective in reducing avoidable hospital readmissions by better integrating the delivery of health care and community supports. ACL will continue to increase access to these programs and will work with other federal partners to ensure greater coordination with programs and resources that support the same goal. ACL will also continue to work with grantees and partners to serve underserved populations, including tribal entities and other minority serving organizations. ACL will work with grantees on sustainability strategies, including pursuing accreditation and Medicare reimbursement for Diabetes Self-Management Training, integration with care transitions programs, medical homes, and other Affordable Care Act opportunities.

### **Objective 3.4**

*Promote and increase the accessibility of all aspects of community life.*

Everyone has the right to live, engage and fully participate in the community of their choice. To this end, ACL grantees work with, for and through the disability and aging populations to advocate for and promote community living. Community living includes access to all aspects of communal life, such as housing, health care, education, competitive integrated employment, the ability to shop, vote, volunteer, gather in a place of worship, or conduct any activity that any other member of a community might choose to do. The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act and the Older Americans Act both lay out the inherent right of individuals to live and be active members of their communities. Grantees work on a variety of concerns, from issues as basic as ensuring that there are sidewalk curb cuts in a community, to

specialized transportation programs, to more difficult issues of inclusion and integration, employment, health care, housing, and guardianship.

ACL will continue to encourage individuals to be fully participating members of their communities by educating individuals with disabilities, older adults, families and caregivers in advocating for themselves and others,, as well as by funding programs that encourage voluntarism and civic engagement. ACL will continue to oversee the disability provisions of the Help America Vote Act and ensure people with disabilities have appropriate access to voting. ACL will also promote community living by continuing to operate programs, fund grants, and provide technical assistance, and work with stakeholders and local, state, and federal entities to promote accessibility so that each person can fully participate in the community of his or her choosing.

### **Objective 3.5**

*Ensure that people with disabilities of all ages are supported in skills preparation, achieving competitive integrated employment, and remaining in the workforce.*

Employment not only helps people achieve more economic self-sufficiency, it gives individuals a sense of purpose and accomplishment, provides opportunity for social engagement, and promotes life-long learning. Integrated employment has also been found to improve a person's physical and mental health. The confluence of demographic, economic and health factors have made the employment situations of both older Americans and Americans with disabilities a matter of urgent national importance. Increasing competitive integrated employment among people with disabilities across the lifespan will not only benefit these individuals and their families, but will also expand the labor force and boost productivity. Americans with disabilities of all ages participate in the workforce at a disproportionately lower rate compared to people without disabilities. The current public support system for working age people with disabilities has significant gaps, while public expenditures for services and supports continue to grow at an unsustainable rate. Additionally, the labor force is aging. As people age, they become more likely to acquire a disability or experience reduced functional capabilities,

which may affect their ability to perform the essential duties of a job and ultimately remain in the workforce.

To improve the lives of all individuals with disabilities, ACL will pursue policies that promote improved economic status through employment. ACL will encourage systems that promote competitive integrated employment opportunities, career and skills development, and offer an array of appropriate work supports needed to achieve and maintain employment.

## Goal 4: Long-Term Services and Supports

*Enable people with disabilities and older adults to live in the community through the availability of and access to high-quality long-term services and supports, including supports for families and caregivers.*

A key role of ACL is to help older adults and people with disabilities through assisting states and communities in the ongoing development and implementation of person-centered systems of long-term services and supports in which individuals and their families have choice, control and access to a full array of services supports that assure independence, health and quality of life. These long-term services and supports systems should be comprehensive, coordinated, cost effective, and balanced. In advancing a national approach to systems change at the state and local level, ACL will emphasize an “all populations and all payer” approach that includes the ongoing identification and replication of evidence-based models and best practices across states systems, that will best enable all individuals regardless of payer source to live in their homes and communities.

### Objective 4.1

*Administer and continue to modernize the Older Americans Act and Developmental Disabilities Act Programs.*

ACL is the lead federal agency responsible for the administration and modernization of Older Americans Act and Developmental Disabilities Act programs. While reauthorization provides the occasion to modernize the Acts, some modernization for these programs can occur on

an ongoing basis. ACL will strive to identify opportunities for program revision and innovation, promote the use of evidence-based models and best practices, and coordinate these efforts to ensure consistency in how older adults and people with disabilities access and utilize these programs. Intra-agency coordination between Administration on Aging and Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities programs will also ensure that the important, and sometime differing needs, of these populations are represented and respected throughout the development and implementation of these efforts.

### Objective 4.2

*Assist states to develop high quality, person-centered, and integrated systems that seamlessly address the health and long-term services and supports needs of people with disabilities and older adults.*

ACL will work with other HHS agencies to identify the key elements of a “high-performing” person-centered long-term services and support system and develop a department-wide strategy to help states with the continued transformation of their systems to include: a full array of home and community-based options; a “No Wrong Door” system of access; participant-directed models; supports for families; quality standards; as well as, housing, transportation and supportive employment opportunities. This will involve the identification and national dissemination of evidence-based models and best practices related to the key elements of “high-performing” state long-term services and supports systems, and the integration of person-centered planning and participant direction into all HHS administered programs that provide long-term services and supports.

As part of this work, ACL will continue to partner with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Department of Veterans Affairs to work with states on the development of national standards and operational models for the nation’s No-Wrong Door /Aging and Disability Resource Center System. The No-Wrong Door/Aging and Disability Resource Center System will serve all populations and all payers, and employ person-centered options counselors, often referred to as community living specialists, who know how to empower individuals and their families to develop and activate person-centered plans to meet their long-term services and supports needs. This includes helping

individuals to access community resources, including public programs such as Medicaid home and community-based services, and then remaining in contact with the individual to assure their plan is meeting their needs and assisting them to modify their plan as their needs change. These options counselors also serve on interdisciplinary care teams to promote the integration of health and long-term services and supports and facilitate transitions from hospitals to home, as well as from skilled nursing facilities and other residential settings back to the community.

### Objective 4.3

*Assist the aging and disability networks to continue to play a meaningful role in support of the Affordable Care Act transformations in health and long-term care.*

Through the Affordable Care Act (ACA), HHS is testing new payment and service models to improve access to critical health and long-term services and supports to improve quality of care and lower costs to Medicare and Medicaid. New models are focused on the integration of care across multiple settings, including community settings, and involve new forms of managed care and new payment models that cover both health care and long-term services and supports. To support the goals of the ACA, ACL will lead and assist the aging and disability networks to participate in these health care transformations.

ACL will assist aging and disability organizations at the state and community level through technical assistance and other means to develop policies, programs and

systems that support transitions across settings, services and payers, including managed care and other integrated models of health, behavioral health and long-term services and supports. In part, technical assistance will focus on increasing state and community organization's business acumen and capacity to achieve meaningful involvement in collaborating with acute care, primary care and behavioral health organizations in administering and directly providing coordinated health-related community care to individuals with disabilities and older adults. ACL will also develop a consensus set of best practice guidelines for states and communities regarding the services and supports needed to offer a well-rounded and sustainable system of family caregiver support across the lifespan in integrated health and community care settings.

### Objective 4.4

*Promote the development and adoption of national standards for home and community-based services, including quality standards that reflect consumer experience with long-term services and supports programs.*

ACL is focused on the unique needs and common issues older adults and people with disabilities face in seeking community-based services and supports that enable them to live in the community, rather than in institutional settings. The development and implementation of national standards for high quality long-term services and supports, and the systems that provide them, is needed to help track and measure the reach and effectiveness of national, state and community programs. ACL, in coordination with other Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and state and local aging and disability organizations, will develop standards and measures directly related to the well-being of older adults, persons with disabilities and their families, as well as the availability of and access to services and supports for all individuals. These standards will be developed and implemented through ongoing program performance, program evaluation, and other continual quality improvement strategies.

ACL will also seek to help document the impact of community services and supports on the delay or avoidance of health costs that result from avoidable acute care and residential facility admissions, or the use of other high-cost services that are not well matched with



individuals' needs. These efforts will help support and provide a clearer picture to the value of ensuring older adults and persons with disabilities have access to needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life.

## Goal 5: Effective and Responsive Management

*Implement management and workforce practices that support the integrity and efficient operations of programs serving people with disabilities and older adults and ensure stewardship of taxpayers' dollars.*

ACL believes that ensuring proper stewardship of taxpayers' dollars while carrying out the programs that serve people with disabilities and older adults requires a strong and diverse workforce, a commitment to efficient and accountable management practices, and an ability to leverage emerging and innovative technologies to support the ACL mission. ACL will invest in the development and professional growth of its workforce and utilize available authorities to attract, recruit, hire, engage and retain the best and the brightest in the Federal government. We will focus on continuous improvement in management practices and business processes to ensure the integrity of programs and accountability in the use of Federal resources. ACL is also committed to using innovative technologies and leveraging shared resources to communicate effectively with our partners, maximize efficiency and reduce costs.

### Objective 5.1

*Invest in the ACL workforce and enhance opportunities for recruitment, retention, and development.*

ACL is developing a five-year strategy to strengthen our human capital program and address challenges in recruitment and retention, with a specific emphasis on workforce development, leadership development, succession planning, and workforce diversity. ACL will continue to provide cross training for the entire workforce on the various ACL programs and initiatives to familiarize staff

with the work performed within each part of the agency. To provide staff growth and development opportunities, ACL will explore options for formal training and rotational programs that provide our employees with exposure to the field and/or other parts of the organization. These opportunities will address a critical need for staff to enhance their subject matter expertise and better understand the issues faced by our stakeholders. In addition, ACL will continue to provide executives and supervisors with topical and innovative leadership training. It is important for ACL to engage in succession planning so that all staff, most especially entry-level and intermediate level employees, are provided with appropriate career advancement and skill development opportunities. Finally, ACL will continue to develop a diverse workforce by making better use of various recruitment authorities. Consistent with our mission, a key element of this strategy will be to ensure effective, timely and consistent provisioning of reasonable accommodation requests, which will support the successful recruitment and retention of employees, particularly those with targeted disabilities.

### Objective 5.2

*Implement management improvement activities, including program integrity and internal control initiatives, to strengthen business processes, improve efficiency, and promote accountability.*

ACL's commitment to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars involves more than just establishing and maintaining an effective system of internal controls; it entails a variety of initiatives designed to ensure the integrity and effective operations of our programs. ACL will continue to implement business improvements in our key grants, acquisitions, and budget processes that promote greater efficiency in our internal operations and reduce the burdens on our recipients, thereby enabling us to award funding earlier in the fiscal year. We will also continue to seek to enhance our systems of internal controls to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and make sure that when we make payments to grantees or contractors the right recipient is receiving the right payment for the right reason at the right time. ACL has embraced the Department's initiatives on promoting program integrity,

adopting a systematic approach to assessing the risks that could prevent programs from achieving their intended results and working to increase the identification and dissemination of best practices so that Federal funds are used responsibly and for their intended purposes. ACL will further look to improve these processes by enhancing the quality of the program and financial data we collect from our grantees and implementing a risk-based approach to grantee monitoring so that training and technical assistance efforts are targeted effectively. ACL will also continue to work closely with the Department on initiatives to increase transparency and accountability, such as posting sub-recipient expenditures data to USAspending.gov, implementing effective records management practices, and providing greater oversight for travel, training, and conferences.

### **Objective 5.3**

*Utilize emerging technologies and leverage shared services to promote innovation, improve accessibility, and better support our mission.*

The emergence of new technologies to deliver information, collect data, and provide services – ranging from smart phones to social media to cloud computing – is transforming how ACL does business. The challenge for ACL is to identify the right technologies to meet emerging needs, while also leveraging existing capabilities to maximize efficiency and reduce costs. Developing an Enterprise Architecture for ACL that maps the relationship between our program and business operations and the information systems that support those operations will be an important

step in helping make informed decisions regarding future investments; determine the appropriate technologies to support business needs; and identify areas of duplication and inefficiencies. One important area of focus will be using accessible technology to improve communications with our external stakeholders, and ACL is currently developing a robust communications strategy that will take advantage of a variety of electronic and social media tools to reach our stakeholders. As part of this effort, ACL will also look to implement the key tenants of the government’s digital strategy by adopting an information-centric approach that promotes sharing of data sets and optimization of web content across mobile platforms. In addition, ACL is exploring options for redesigning key data systems to take advantage of new technologies and reduce the time and burden involved in reporting. With an increasingly mobile workforce, ACL is also exploring how to use collaboration tools to improve knowledge sharing, document management and internal communications.

While technological advances open new doors, they also raise new challenges, such as increased security risks and the need to ensure that all resources are available to people with disabilities. ACL will continue to work with the Department to address these issues by implementing continuous monitoring and promoting compliance with Section 508 requirements. A key priority for ACL will also be working with our partners in the Department to implement technologies that promote full accessibility for people with disabilities.

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**For more information about the  
Administration for Community Living,  
please visit:**

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