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**Subject:** ACL Announces Voluntary Guidelines, Funding to Boost State APS at Elder Justice Coordinating Council Meeting

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October 06, 2016

## **ACL Announces Voluntary Guidelines, Funding to Boost State Adult Protective Services at Elder Justice Coordinating Council Meeting**

***Note: Apologies to any who tried to access the live stream of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council meeting on October 5. An Internet outage on site prevented the live stream, however a video replay will be available soon.***

Acting Assistant Secretary for Aging Edwin Walker announced the first-ever [voluntary guidelines for state Adult Protective Services \(APS\)](#) systems as well as new grants to foster innovation in elder justice during the fall meeting of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council (EJCC) on October 5.

ACL facilitated the development of the voluntary consensus-based guidelines which will assist states in developing efficient and effective APS systems. The guidelines provide recommendations from the field about quality APS practice in the areas of program administration, response times, receiving reports of maltreatment, conducting investigations, service planning and intervention, training, and evaluation.

The guidelines were developed by experts in the field of APS and adult maltreatment and are based on research on what works in APS and similar systems where it was available. The final guidelines reflect extensive feedback from members of the public and a broad range of stakeholders including over 500 comments and feedback from 15 listening sessions. ACL intends to revisit and update the guidelines every two years to account for new feedback from the field and emerging research.

The guidelines reflect the value of, and continued need for, an evidence base to guide the work of combating elder abuse. To that end, ACL is funding eight innovation grants totaling \$3.3 million to support the development of knowledge and infrastructure in the areas of guardianship, elder abuse forensic centers, self-neglect, and combating elder abuse in Indian country.

[Learn more about the projects being funded.](#)

Addressing the EJCC, Walker also highlighted [\\$2.2 million in grants recently awarded to 13 states](#) to enhance statewide APS systems, improve practices and data collection, and interface with ACL's [National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System \(NAMRS\)](#). The funding doubles the number of states receiving APS enhancement grants since ACL [awarded the first-ever federal grants for state APS](#)

[systems](#) last year.

APS systems play a critical role in supporting older adults and adults with disabilities facing abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation. State APS systems investigate reports of abuse and exploitation, provide support and case-management, and connect those facing abuse to a variety of protective, emergency, and support services.

Because APS is designed and administered at the state or local level, there is wide variation in APS services and practices between, and even within, states. Nationally, this results in a fragmented and unequal system that can hinder coordination and result in an absence of critical supports for some experiencing abuse.

ACL believes that all older Americans and people with disabilities should have similar protections and access to services, regardless of where they live. The guidelines, state grants, innovation grants, and development of NAMRS represent the first federal investment to support states in developing effective APS systems.

The EJCC brings together leaders from across the federal government to address issues of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. During the meeting, federal leaders reflected on the EJCC's many accomplishments since it was formed in 2012, future directions for federal elder justice efforts, and the role of elder justice in transition planning as agencies prepare for a new administration.

The EJCC also heard from experts on the impact of federal efforts on topics including mail fraud, planning for diminished capacity, guardianship, public awareness, APS, financial exploitation by fiduciaries, and the elder shelter model.

Presenters' written statements will be posted on the [Elder Justice Coordinating Council](#) website later this week and a video will be posted later this month.

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