

Administration for Community Living Office of Performance and Evaluation

ACL DATA COUNCIL – Framework

FINAL

*Prepared for: Administration for Community Living
Office of Performance and Evaluation*

Submitted by: New Editions Consulting, Inc.

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Background

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is committed to the principle that “All people, regardless of age or disability, should be able to live independently and participate fully in their communities. Every person should have the right to make choices and to control the decisions in and about their lives. This right to self-determination includes decisions about their homes and work, as well as all the other daily choices most adults make without a second thought”.¹ To achieve this ACL “provides national leadership and direction to plan, manage, develop, and raise awareness of comprehensive and coordinated systems of long-term services and supports that enable older Americans and individuals with disabilities, including intellectual, developmental, physical, and other disabilities, to maintain their health and independence in their homes and communities. ACL programs support strong state, tribal, and local community networks designed to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities, older Americans, and their families through advocacy, research, systems change and capacity building to ensure 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.”²

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the ACL Data Council (the Council) is to support ACL’s mission by improving the coordination of ACL’s data governance, including the development of improved processes and standards for defining, collecting, reviewing, certifying, analyzing, and presenting data ACL collects through its evaluation, grant reporting, and administrative performance measures. In addition, the Council will help the Office of Performance and Evaluation (OPE) meet its mission to provide and promote high quality, transparent information to support sound decision-making.

To achieve these objectives, the members of the Council will periodically assess key risks and challenges for ACL’s data; prioritize the identified risks and challenges while balancing resources needed to address them and potential benefits; identify potential approaches to address high-priority risks and challenges; and propose products providing solutions, such as white papers or guidelines. The main focus will be on addressing the “causes rather than the symptoms” of data risks and challenges. The graphic below, highlights this approach, which will be applied periodically for the entire duration of the Council.

The improvements recommended by the Council will enhance ACL’s ability to strengthen the evidence available about the value of our programs to individuals, families, and communities and the efficiency of our programs. With better data we can improve ACL’s performance reporting, evaluation, and other research planning, and work more collaboratively with key stakeholders such as grantees, advocacy groups, and Congress.

¹ Administration for Community Living. About Community Living. Retrieved from <https://acl.gov/about-community-living>.

² Federal Register. Statement of Organization, Functions, and Delegations of Authority; Administration for Community Living. Retrieved from <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/06/02/2015-13351/statement-of-organization-functions-and-delegations-of-authority-administration-for-community-living>



Scope

The activities of the Council will focus on data and processes (i.e., usability, availability, understandability, and quality), rather than systems. However, the Council's solutions and recommendations may inform changes to existing systems and technology as well as the development of new systems (moving from direction to implementation). In addition, it is not the Council's intention to address specific data sets or variables, but rather larger questions that affect multiple datasets or stakeholder groups.

At this time, the Council is funded by OPE and thus, the Council will initially focus on risks and challenges related to Older Americans Act (OAA) data, including evaluation approaches and State Program Reports (SPR), National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Reporting System (NORS), Title VI Services for Native Americans, and National Survey of Older Americans Act (OAA) Participants. However, the overall goal of the Council is to address broader questions and identify solutions that can be applied across ACL datasets and data collection activities. In addition, pending additional funding, the Council may broaden its focus to encompass risks and challenges related to data from additional ACL sources such as the Administration on Disabilities, the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), and the Center for Integrated Programs (CIP).

ACL's Evidence Building Environment

The Council must operate within current data standards, including existing government-wide, HHS, and ACL standards, and consider these standards when determining the risks and challenges that should be addressed. Specifically, the Council should consider the following:

- Federal guidance and requirements (e.g., Federal Data Strategy; Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, including the OPEN Government Data Act)
- Required performance reporting (e.g., GRPA Modernization Act of 2010, budget justifications)
- ACL's [learning agenda](#)/evidence building plan (e.g., [performance strategy](#), evaluation plan, [evaluation policy](#))
- Data security and accessibility requirements
- Data and network capacity of ACL and grantees
- Perceptions and concerns of "end-users"; e.g.,

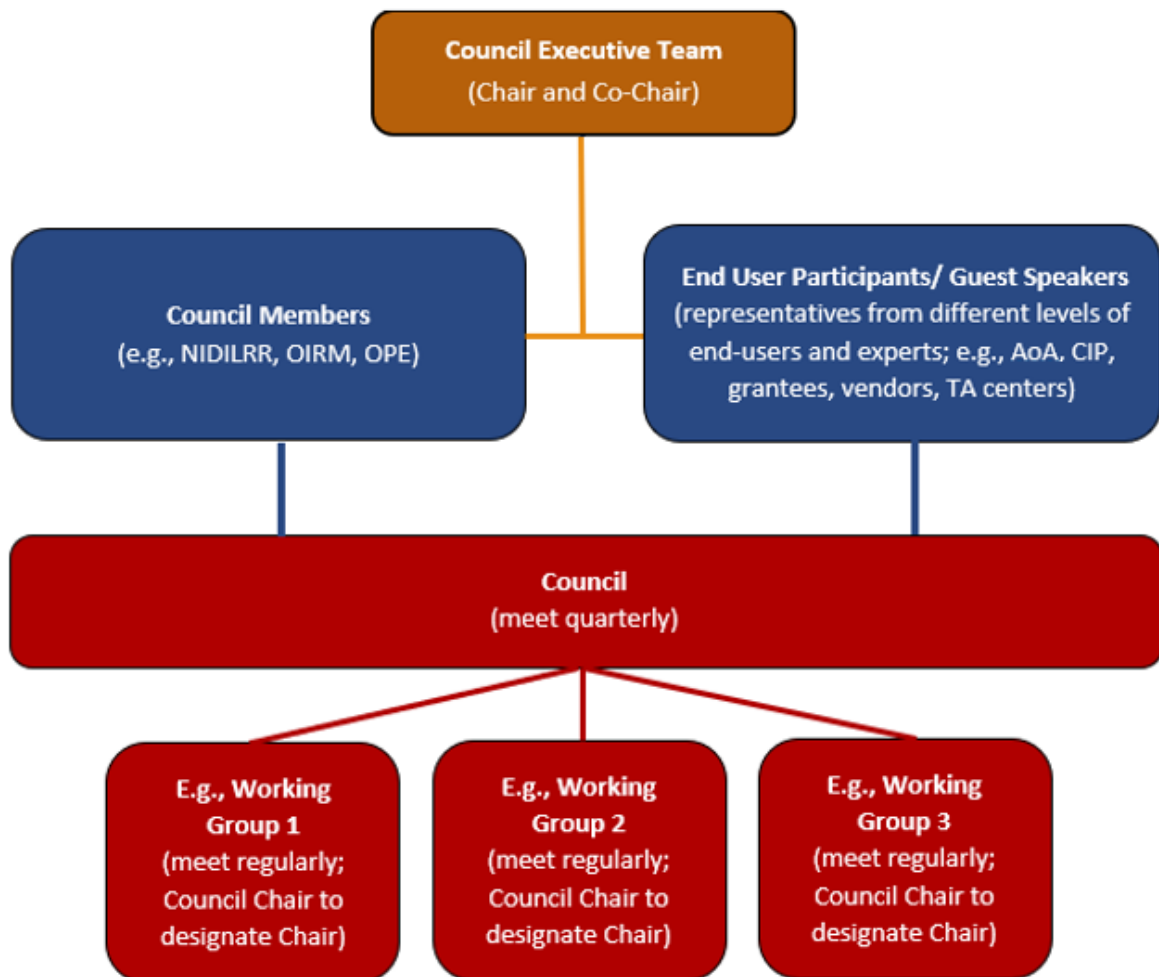
- Benefits of having data council and having more access to data
- Potential concerns around data use
- Realistic burden to ACL staff and grantees
- Policy and funding changes

Council and Working Group Topic Areas

Data standards developed by the Council and working groups will only be effective if they tie directly to the goals ACL programs and initiatives seek to accomplish and if they reflect the needs and capacity of the end-users. Thus, at the beginning of each year, the Council will canvas key ACL stakeholders to (1) obtain insights from the field about their challenges and needs concerning ACL data and (2) inform prioritization of topics for the Council and working groups for the year. ACL stakeholders may include federal/state/local program staff, leadership, regional staff, and grantees.

Council Structure and Participants

The graphic below represents the structure of the Council, including type of participants and meetings.



Council Executive Team

- The Council will be led by the Council Executive Team (ET), consisting of the Council Chair and co-chair. The Chair will be the Director of the Office of Performance and Evaluation and the co-chair will be the Chief Information Officer and Director Office of Information Resources Management. Both members will serve on a permanent basis for the duration of the Council.

Council Members

- The Council will consist of 1-2 permanent ACL members from each participating ACL Center including the ET, as well as additional non-ACL experts as needed. Additional staff from relevant ACL Centers may also participate in Council meetings as needed and as identified by the permanent members. The permanent members shall be appointed by ACL Center Directors in collaboration with the Council ET. Members must have broad knowledge of: the data relevant to their Center; and good data management practices that support usability, availability, understandability/documentation, and quality within a context of sound data security and privacy protection. If a vacancy occurs, the Council Chair shall make an appointment to fill such vacancy within 30 days from the date the vacancy occurs. Changes to membership shall be made in writing to the ET.

Council Working Groups

- Working groups, each composed of 5-8 members from the parent Council, may be established to address specific issues and to provide the Council with background study, proposals for consideration and action, and draft reports, plans, or recommendations about particular topics. Members of the parent Council may volunteer for working groups based on their expertise and interest. In addition, the Council Chair may recommend members for specific working groups. Some Council members may participate on several working groups. The Council Chair shall designate a Chair for each working group.
- At the formation of each working group, the Council Chair should provide clear guidance regarding the questions that led to the formation of the working group, as well as the timing and scope of activities and products expected of the working group.

End-User Participants/Guest Speakers

- The Council and working groups will engage stakeholders from the aging network (other stakeholder groups may be identified at a later time) who represent different levels of end-users as well as other experts as needed. Potential end-users include ACL grantees who are ACL data producers/providers (e.g., ACL grantees, vendors or technical assistance centers that support data collection and submission). These stakeholders may not be permanent Council members, but will be invited to join Council meetings and/or working groups, based on their background and level of expertise, to provide insights from the field.

Contractor

- The contractor will provide meeting support (i.e., schedule and host calls, maintain membership roster, develop meeting agendas and summaries), distribute documents, collect comments/feedback, conduct research, draft products, etc. The contractor will consult with and/or interview subject matter experts (SMEs) as needed to inform Council work on different topics. SMEs may be recommended by the Council Chair or other council members, but the contractor will also be prepared to identify SMEs for particular topics. SMEs may provide

expertise on specific topics through interviews or meeting with/presenting to the Council or working groups, or through reviewing and providing feedback on research summaries or other Council products.

Meetings

Council Meetings

- The ET of the Council will call the Council meetings to order and will determine the location of the meetings. The full Council shall meet at least quarterly.
 - *Orientation meeting:* at the beginning of each contract year, all Council members will meet for an orientation/re-orientation. The purpose of this meeting is to bring together all existing and new council members to discuss topics suggested by ACL stakeholders and help prioritize topics for the year; determine working groups; and in year two, discuss progress to date, and new focus areas. (Note: During the first year, the initial Council Orientation meeting will precede collection of input from non-federal stakeholders.)

Working Group Meetings

- Working groups shall meet on a schedule determined by the working group members based on the specific need for which the group was convened. Working group meetings shall be held at the call of each working group Chair, who shall also develop the agenda. Meetings may take place in person or virtually. At the recommendation of the Council members, end-user participants/guest speakers may be invited to participate and present virtually at working group meetings.
 - The first working group will be a ‘technical group’ focused on identifying and developing definitions for use by all Council member and participants.

Stakeholder Webinars

- The Council will convene stakeholders from the aging network twice a year via virtual webinars to obtain additional insights from the field and share information about Council activities, findings, and recommendations from the Council. Webinars will be announced via the ACL website and listserv, and via targeted outreach to the aging network.

Roles and Responsibilities

Council Executive Team

- Sets the agenda for Council meetings; the Chair provides final approval for the agenda
- Determines date and location for Council meetings
- Hosts and leads Council meetings
- Works to promote effective coordination, collaboration, and communication among Council members
- Reports to ACL Principal Deputy Administrator and Center Directors on Council activities, progress, and outcomes
- Reviews and approves reports, plans, and recommendations drafted by Council members

Working Group Chairs

- Set the agenda for working group meetings

- Determine dates and locations (in-person or virtual) for working group meetings
- Invite stakeholders to participate and present as needed
- Host and lead working group meetings
- Report back to the Council ET on working group activities, progress, and outcomes
- Coordinate and communicate with working group members to develop reports, plans, and recommendations

Permanent Council Members

- Actively participate in Council and working groups meetings
- Obtain input/background from their centers as needed to help inform Council activities and recommendations; report back to center staff as needed
- At direction of the Council Chair and working group chairs, develop draft content for reports, plan, and recommendations

End-User Participants/Guest Speakers

- When invited, present at Council meetings or working groups (voluntary) on identified topic; presentations will be virtually
- On voluntary basis, participate in virtual stakeholder meetings to provide information or viewpoints from the field relevant to the Council/working group topics

Council Support Contractor

- Provide support to the ET and working group chairs for scheduling meetings, drafting agendas, disseminating meeting invitations and associated materials, compiling draft documents using member input, creating and disseminating meeting notes, circulating drafts for Council members' review and comment, incorporating Council member feedback and recirculating drafts/final products, administering surveys to federal staff, etc.

Compensation

Permanent members of the Council will be full-time federal employees and therefore will not receive an honorarium. Honoraria will be considered for subject matter experts and end-users from the aging network who are invited to present or participate in Council meetings or working groups. In addition, in rare cases where in-person attendance is requested, stakeholders may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem, in the same manner as such expenses are authorized by Section 5703, Title 5, U.S. Code, for employees serving intermittently.

Products

As an outcome of the Council meeting and working groups, the Council will develop several types of products, such as data governance recommendations and technical assistance materials. The specific content and format for each product will be determined by the Council members. Potential topics could include the following:

- What are standards for OAA performance data submission acceptance?
- What level of year-to-year data variance is acceptable?
- What types of “notes” or “warnings” should be added to the data portal to help stakeholders use the public ACL data responsibly?

Reporting Relationships

The Council working group chairs will submit draft products (i.e., reports, plans, and recommendations) to the Council ET, which in turn will report to the ACL Principal Deputy Administrator and Center Directors. After review and deliberation, the Council ET will forward its final report(s) and recommendation(s) to the ACL Principal Deputy Administrator and Center Directors for decision.

Duration

Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to its expiration, the framework for the ACL Data Council will expire on October 1, 2021.