

Response: ACL in coordination with ACL’s grantee, the National Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC) created in-depth training and training manuals on all aspects of NORS reporting, including examples of narratives for both complaint examples and systems issues and does not believe that additional guidance is necessary. See https://ltombudsman.org/omb_support/nors.

The Maryland Ombudsman program also recommended the addition of a new complaint code in Facility Policies, Procedures and Practices (Code J) for emergency planning complaints. The Maryland Ombudsman program noted that there have been many instances of facilities needing to temporarily or permanently relocate residents for a variety of reasons from disasters to lack of appropriate staff in the building, facility closure, or the facility did not have an appropriate plan or did not have a plan at all.

Response: ACL will not add a new complaint code, but will modify complaint code J01 “Administrative Oversight” to be inclusive of emergency planning.

One recommendation was to include the addition of a county field (e.g., Federal Information Processing Standard code). The commenter noted that although looking at differences/variation between states is important and valuable, having the ability to look at differences/variation within each state would be immensely beneficial for the conduct of ACL’s functions and

would allow for analytics to be shared with state ombudsmen and other programs nationwide.

Response: ACL does not accept this recommendation because of the level of burden necessary to gather and report this level of data.

NASOP made recommendations to broaden the types of activities reported on systems issues work performed by the State Long-Term Ombudsman, the Office and local Ombudsman entities. NASOP asserts that this reporting element would provide needed depth and clarity about whether a State Long-Term Care Ombudsman has the necessary independence and resources to perform systems advocacy as required by the Older Americans Act. NASOP proposes that data collected as narrative examples of Systems Issues is insufficient and does not have practical utility without additional data collection to explain the scope of a state’s work on systems advocacy. “By only collecting two examples of a systems issue from each state, ACL has no objective means of determining a state’s compliance with the Act nor the independence of the Office. With our proposed addition data collection in Table 3, ACL will collect and provide the public with a more accurate picture of whether a state program is fulfilling the requirements of the Act.”

Response: ACL does not agree with NASOP’s assessment of the current data collection on systems advocacy for several reasons. First, the FY 2020 data is not yet final and ACL has not been

able to share systems advocacy data. Additionally, while NORS is one part of measuring program effectiveness it is not the only way that ACL determines compliance with the Older Americans Act. ACL provides continuous technical assistance on matters of compliance, conducted in-depth review of states compliance with the Ombudsman program regulation, and worked with states to develop compliance plans. ACL also has an on-going project to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ombudsman program and has gathered in-depth data on both state and local level Ombudsman program’s ability to conduct systemic advocacy. See <https://acl.gov/programs/program-evaluations-and-reports>. In addition, the proposed data collection would be very burdensome on state and local programs to collect and report because the two recommended data elements include a sub-set of 10 possible elements to select and to keep track of the number of instances of each sub-set ultimately resulting in 20 new data elements. This type of data would not add meaningful information that would benefit ACL considering the level of effort required of states to train on this type of data collection, adapt software and report.

Estimated Program Burden

ACL estimates the burden associated with this collection of information as follows: Approximately 11,154 hours, with 52 state Ombudsman programs responding annually.

Respondent/data collection activity	Number of respondents	Responses per respondent	Hours per response	Annual burden hours
Total	52	1	214.5	11,154

Dated: July 23, 2021.

Alison Barkoff,

Acting Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Community Living

Notice of Federal Review of the Missouri Protection and Advocacy System (P&A)

AGENCY: Administration for Community Living, HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Representatives of the Administration on Disabilities (AoD), Administration for Community Living (ACL), will be conducting a federal review of the Missouri Protection and Advocacy System (P&A) on September 13–17, 2021. AoD is soliciting comments from interested parties on your experiences with the program, and strategies employed by P&A in meeting the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in Missouri. You are encouraged to share your experiences by way of email or telephone.

DATES: Comments must be submitted electronically or via telephone by September 22, 2021, 11:59 p.m. (EST) in order to be included in the final report.

Email: Katherine.Cargill-Willis@acl.hhs.gov.

Telephone: 202–795–7322.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Dated: July 23, 2021.

Alison Barkoff,

Acting Administrator & Assistant Secretary for Aging.

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