

National Core Indicators for Aging and Disabilities Project Overview

National Core Indicators-Aging and Disabilities (NCI-AD) is a consumer experience survey that collects and maintains valid and reliable person-reported data about the impact that states' publicly funded long-term services and supports (LTSS) have on the quality of life and outcomes of consumers. NCI-AD is a collaborative effort between ADvancing States and Human Services Research Institute (HSRI); staff from ADvancing States and HSRI comprise the NCI-AD national project team and work together on all aspects of the program.

Data for the NCI-AD project are gathered through annual surveys administered by state agencies, or their subcontractors, to a sample of at least 400 older adults and adults with physical disabilities receiving LTSS from a variety of public program funding sources, including skilled nursing facilities, Medicaid waivers, Medicaid state plans, and/or state-funded programs, as well as Older Americans Act programs. The NCI-AD project team interprets each state's data and produces reports that can be used to support state efforts to strengthen LTSS policy, inform quality improvement activities, and compare their system performance with other states and national norms.

State Responsibilities

States are responsible for implementation of the NCI-AD survey. State implementation responsibilities include:

- Project planning at the state level (with help from the NCI-AD project team);
- Where applicable, coordinating with the state's Medicaid, Disability, and Aging agencies on all aspects of the project;
- Working with aging and disability stakeholder groups to inform and prepare for the rollout of NCI-AD;
- Preparing a random sample with a target of at least 400 completed surveys (with help and consultation from the NCI-AD project team);
- Collecting predetermined demographic and service-related information on each individual interviewed, using administrative data sources to the extent possible;

- Conducting NCI-AD surveys, or contracting with an entity to conduct the surveys;
- Providing project-compliant data to the NCI-AD project team for analysis; and
- Reviewing draft state and national reports for accuracy.

Project Timeline

Prior to beginning the first year of surveying and data collection, new NCI-AD states must participate in at least six (and up to twelve) months of technical assistance and planning with the NCI-AD project team – referred to as the Technical Assistance (TA) Year of the project. States that have completed their TA Year may begin conducting NCI-AD surveys on or any time after the annual data collection cycle begins. This cycle runs from June 1 through May 31 of the following year. Data must be submitted to the NCI-AD project team by May 31.

NCI-AD Timeline	
New States	Continuing States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA Year June 1, 2021 – May 31, 2022 • First year of data collection June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection year June 1, 2021 – May 31, 2022
Reports	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021-2022 State-Specific Reports – Fall/Winter 2022 • 2021-2022 National Report – Spring 2023 	

Cost to Participate

Newly participating states are assessed a \$25,000 fee for NCI-AD membership during the TA Year, covering the costs of technical assistance and project planning. Each year thereafter, states pay a \$25,000 fee to cover the costs of project direction and management, data management, analysis, and reporting.

The internal costs of conducting NCI-AD surveys can vary. Typically, the more surveys a state targets for their sample, the more states should budget for conducting the surveys. States should also budget at least .25 FTE for state office staff to provide oversight to the project.

Note: Few states decide to combine their TA Year and Survey Year in to one 12-month period. The NCI-AD Project Team can discuss and work with your state if that is of interest. In those cases, fees for the TA and Survey Years are combined for a total of \$50,000.

What Your NCI-AD Fees Buy

Technical Assistance and Project Planning

Each new NCI-AD state's TA Year is a critical time for project planning and technical assistance. Prior to beginning data collection, the NCI-AD project team works with each newly joining state to prepare for project implementation and successful data collection. Assistance offered is tailored to each state's needs and includes:

- Helping states to claim Medicaid match and other federal funding;
- Working to design an appropriate sampling strategy and size based on the state's populations of interest;
- Preparing state-specific NCI-AD survey materials;
- Preparing and distributing interviewer training materials;
- Conducting training with the state's surveyors;
- Working with states to ensure consistency of definitions regarding data elements;
- Preparing additional data collection protocols as necessary;
- Assisting with stakeholder engagement at the state and local levels; and
- Hosting monthly or bi-monthly technical assistance meetings with the NCI-AD project team.

After the TA Year, the NCI-AD project team continues closely working with states as they implement and conduct NCI-AD surveys. For each year of data collection, the NCI-AD project team provides participating states with the benefits of centralized project direction (including continued assistance with the state's survey sample population), data management, analysis and reporting.

Project Direction and Management

The NCI-AD project team provides general oversight of all NCI-AD activities. The team consults and collaborates with state agency partners on project operations, materials content, data management, analysis and report development, research, outreach, dissemination, and other related project activities. Additional project management activities include:

- Regularly reviewing and updating all NCI-AD project documents and materials and making them available to participating states;
- Testing and refining the NCI-AD survey tool and protocol to ensure reliability and validity;
- Developing project guidelines as needed for state participants;
- Developing and monitoring project timelines, goals and outcomes;

- Providing standardized surveyor training;
- Updating and customizing the project's data entry system for states' use;
- Conducting periodic check-ins on status of data collection;
- Maintaining a data warehouse of all NCI-AD data collected;
- Furnishing raw and analyzed state data files to participating states as requested;
- Developing report and presentation templates;
- Developing and disseminating analytical and interpretative guidelines;
- Maintaining the NCI-AD website; and
- Preparing NCI-AD Data Spotlights, the annual NCI-AD Data Snapshot! resource, and hosting webinars/meetings with other participating NCI-AD states throughout the year.

Data Analysis, Management, and Reporting

The NCI-AD project team annually prepares and distributes state-specific and national reports and works with participating NCI-AD states to examine implications and best utilization of data, prepare publications, and participate in research opportunities. Specific activities include:

- Data management – includes tracking and reviewing state data for completeness and data errors, cleaning raw data to identify and correct data entry errors and discard invalid surveys, formatting individual state data files to ensure comparability, and merging state data into aggregate national datasets;
- Analysis – includes recoding and creating analysis variables, calculating statistical weights, developing basic descriptive and summary statistics, performing risk-adjustment, and testing for significant differences;
- Report preparation – includes creating tables and graphs containing detailed survey results, describing project implementation and context, providing descriptions and explanations of analysis methodology, distributing draft reports to states for review and comment, incorporating state feedback, and publishing reports on the NCI-AD website.

States interested in further exploration of their NCI-AD data and/or alternative reports may request additional analysis from the NCI-AD project team. Depending on the type and intensity of analysis involved, these requests may incur additional costs.

Interested States States interested in joining NCI-AD are encouraged to contact the project's directors, April Young (ayoung@advancingstates.org) and Stephanie Giordano (sgiardano@hsri.org) to discuss next steps.