APS Process and System Outcomes: Results from a National APS Evaluation

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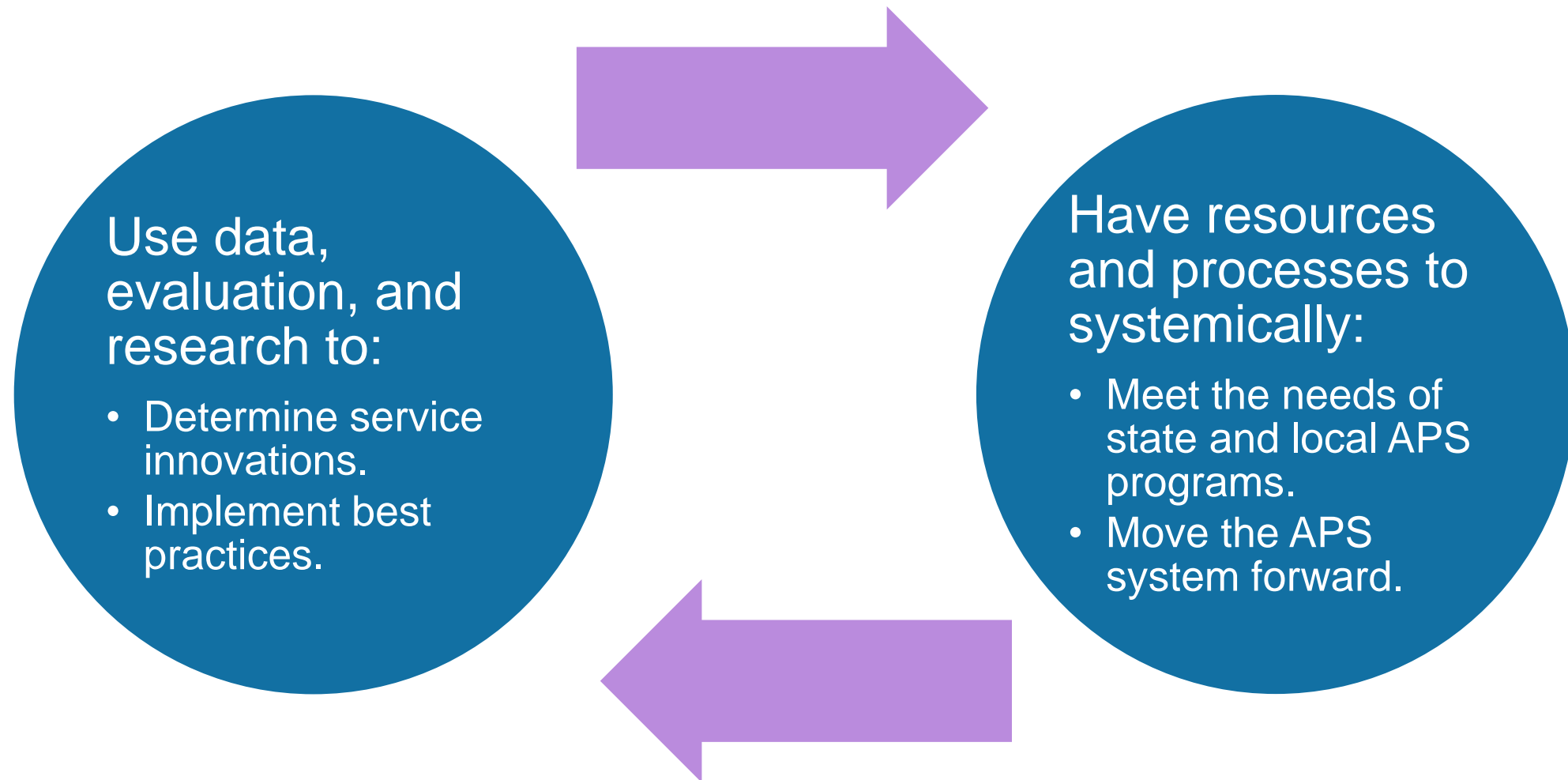
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Overview

The Adult Protective Services (APS) Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) is conducting the first-ever national **process evaluation** of the APS system.

- Why evaluate?
- How to evaluate?
  - Framework to define system outcomes and variables
  - Research steps and data sources
- What did we find and what does it mean?

Additional evaluation work will include a practice survey and a separate study on **client outcomes**.

APS TARC: A Resource for Enhancing APS Program Effectiveness Through Research and Evaluation

Use data, evaluation, and research to:

- Determine service innovations.
- Implement best practices.

Have resources and processes to systemically:

- Meet the needs of state and local APS programs.
- Move the APS system forward.

APS is Difficult to Evaluate

Since there were no prior evaluation models to work with, we had to:

- Establish a theoretical framework.

- Agree upon system and client outcomes and how to define and measure them with limited data.

- Start with knowledge-building and progress to assess outcomes and interventions.

…Which still leaves challenging issues related to outcomes.

Measuring Client Outcomes is Challenging

- Can we ethically establish and use a "control" group?

- Most APS programs don't complete client assessments at the conclusion of services.

- Attribution of change in client conditions is difficult.

- Recidivism or recurrent cases is a useful but inadequate measure.

Achieving Positive Outcomes is Challenging

With limited resources, APS workers may have to address:
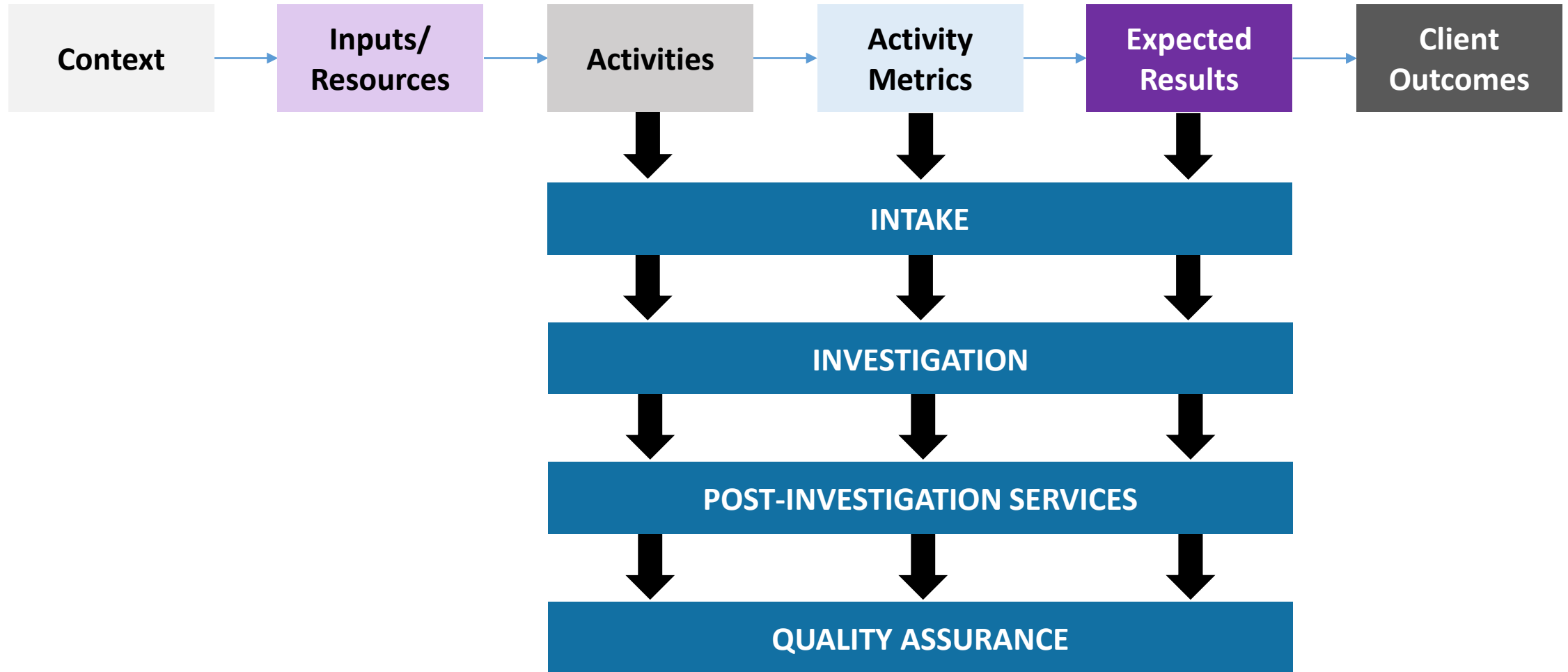
- Mental illness.
- Poverty.
- Social isolation.

While balancing protection and self-determination.

How Evaluate APS: A Stepwise Plan

	Component 1 Review of APS State Policies	Component 2 Inventory of State Practices and Service Innovations	Component 3 Understanding APS Outcomes in a State Context
Objectives	To document the policy framework for state APS programs	To establish a baseline of understanding about APS program practices	To create an analytical framework to examine state patterns and relationships of APS program and demographic characteristics, key policies and practice, and APS system outcomes.
Methods	Review, compile, and analyze state extant policy documents and NAMRS data analysis	Conduct online survey	Establish data base and conduct analysis of relationship between dependent and independent variables

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Structure of APS Logic Model

Context → Inputs/Resources → Activities → Activity Metrics → Expected Results → Client Outcomes

INTAKE

INVESTIGATION

POST-INVESTIGATION SERVICES

QUALITY ASSURANCE

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Component 1: State Policy Profiles

Research a series of **policy questions** in each area of the APS Logic Model – Context, Intake, Investigation, Post-investigation, and Quality Assurance – **such as**….

- Is the APS program state or county-administered?
- Does APS investigate providers? If yes, what types?
- Is the APS investigation information confidential? If yes, what are the exceptions to the confidentiality?
- Are there priority levels for reports of abuse? If yes, what are the categories and associated requirements?
- What does state policy require for a systematic client assessment?
- Does APS provide services to alleged victims, confirmed and unconfirmed?
- What is state policy regarding the role of the APS program supervisor in reviewing and approving an investigation or completed case prior to closure?

Component 2: State Practice Survey

Series of **practice questions** in each area of the APS Logic Model – Context, Intake, Investigation, Post-investigation, and Quality Assurance – **such as**….

- Barriers and innovations in each area.
- Staffing practices (e.g., intake/hotline staff, specialized investigation staff).
- Use of assessment/decision-making tools (e.g., assessing client needs).
- Partnerships.
- Specialized processes (e.g., MDTs).
- Resources.
- Supervisor responsibilities.
- QA processes (e.g., documentation, case review).

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Component 3 Variables

Independent Variables				
APS Administration and Structure	Administrative Location	Geographic Structure	Intake Structure	
APS Policies and Practices Related to Reporting	Mandatory Reporting Requirements	Eligibility	Definition of Maltreatment	Maximum Response Time
APS Policies and Practices Related to Investigation	Use of Standard, Statewide Tools	Standard of Evidence	Emergency Protective Orders	Investigation Completion Time	Ratio of Accepted Reports to Workers

Dependent Variables			
Reports Per 1,000 Eligible Adults	% of Reports Accepted	% of Clients Found to be Victims	% Victims Receiving Services

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Component 3 Data Sources

NAMRS Agency

- For example: Number of reports, investigations.

NAMRS Case and Key Indicators

- For example: number of clients with substantiated allegation.

Policy Profiles

- For example: eligibility classification of population served by APS programs.

Census Population Data

Formula for Reports
Per 1,000 APS Eligible Adults

$$\frac{\text{Count of Accepted Reports (from the NAMRS Agency File)}}{\text{Customized State Population Based on State APS Eligibility (from U.S. Census Data)}} \times 1{,}000$$
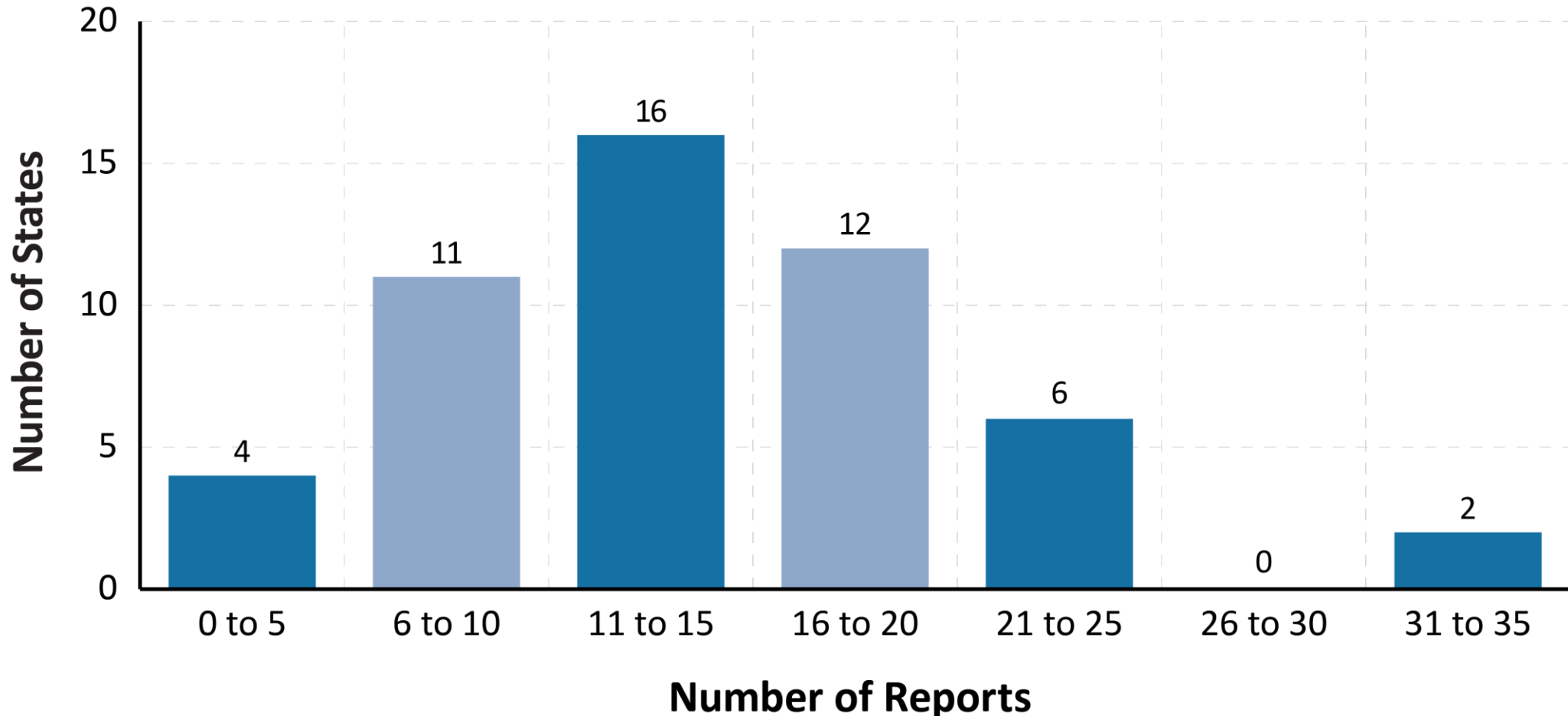
Count of Accepted Reports

(from the NAMRS Agency File)

x 1,000

Customized State Population

Based on State APS Eligibility

(from U.S. Census Data)

The rate of reports to APS per 1,000 eligible adults in the population ranged from 1.4 to 34.9 reports, with an average of 14. (N = 51)

Bar chart titled "Number of States" (y-axis) versus "Number of Reports" (x-axis):

Number of Reports	Number of States
0 to 5	4
6 to 10	11
11 to 15	16
16 to 20	12
21 to 25	6
26 to 30	0
31 to 35	2

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Formula for Percent of Reports Accepted

Reports Accepted for Investigation

NAMRS Agency File Field 9

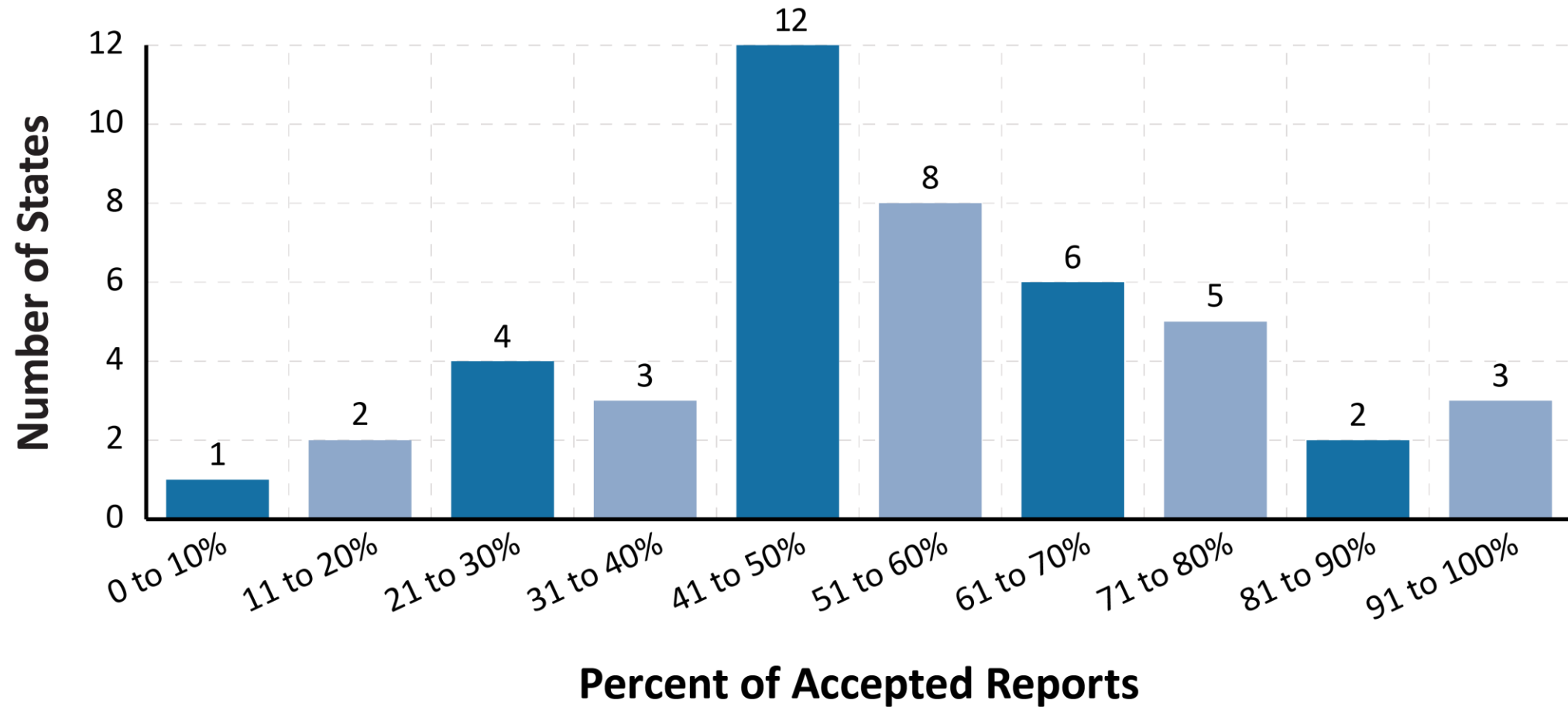Reports Accepted for Investigation
NAMRS Agency File Field 9

+

Reports Not Accepted for Investigation
NAMRS Agency File Field 9.1

The percent of reports accepted by APS ranged from five% to 98%, with an average of 53.2%. N = 46.

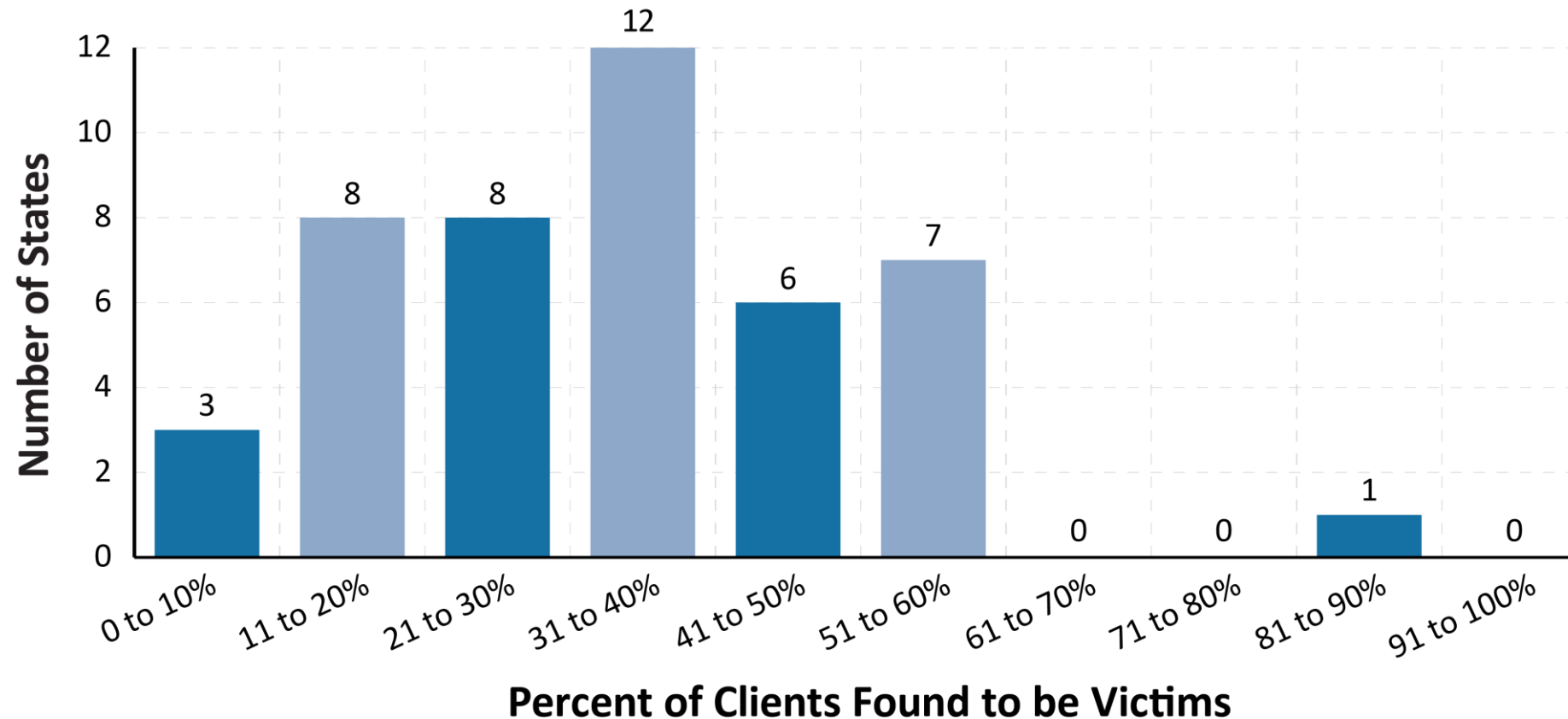# Formula for Percent of Clients Who Are Found to be Victims

Number of Victims

NAMRS Case Component or Key Indicators

_____

Number of Clients (Alleged Victims)

NAMRS Case Component or Key Indicators

The percent of clients who were found to be victims ranged from 2.6% to 100% with an average of 35.8% (N = 45)
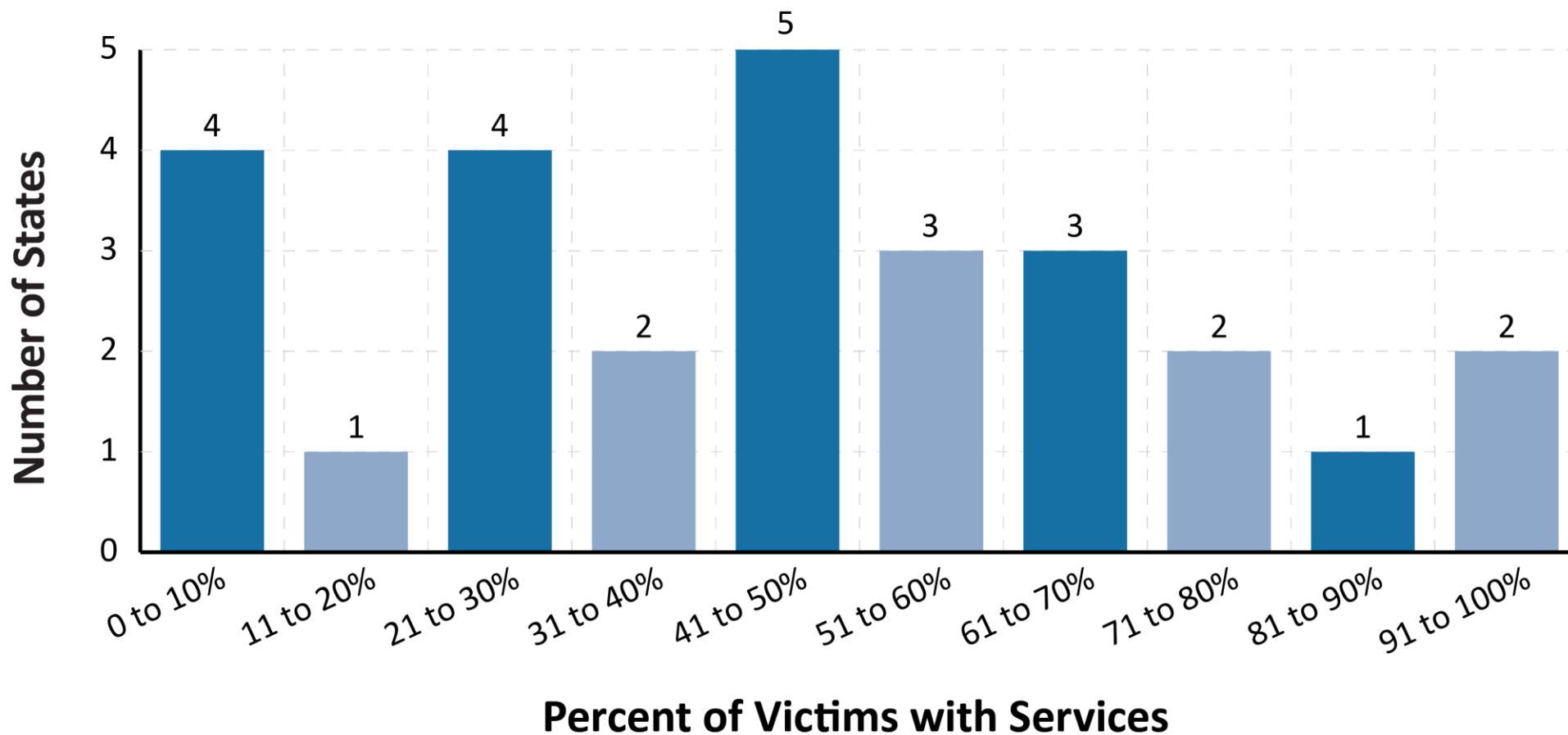
Formula for Percent of Victims Who Receive Post-investigation Services

Number of Victims Who Receive Services

Either Provided by APS or Referred by APS

NAMRS Case Component or Key Indicators

_____

Number of Victims

NAMRS Case Component or Key Indicators

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The percent of victims who received post-investigation services ranged from one to 100%, with an average of 33.3%.

Chart: Number of States (y-axis, 0 to 5) by Percent of Victims with Services (x-axis)

Percent of Victims with Services	Number of States
0 to 10%	4
11 to 20%	1
21 to 30%	4
31 to 40%	2
41 to 50%	5
51 to 60%	3
61 to 70%	3
71 to 80%	2
81 to 90%	1
91 to 100%	2

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Independent Variables with Statistically Significant Relationships

Independent Variables	Reports Received ($n = 47$)	Reports Accepted ($n = 45$)	Percentage of Clients Found to Be Victims ($n = 45$)	Services Provided ($n = 47$)
Ratio of Reports per APS Worker	$F = 4.7^*$			
Eligible Population		$F = 2.7^{\dagger}$		
Maltreatment Definition Comprehensiveness		$t = 3.1^{**}$		
Standard of Evidence			$F = 3.5^*$	

Note: $^{\dagger}p<.10$, $^*p<.05$, $^{**}p<.01$, $^{***}p<.001$

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Reporting Rate per 1,000 APS Eligible Adults by Ratio of Accepted Reports Per Investigator
n=47

r = .55, p<.001

Reporting Rate Per 1,000 Eligible Adults

Ratio of Accepted Reports Per Investigator
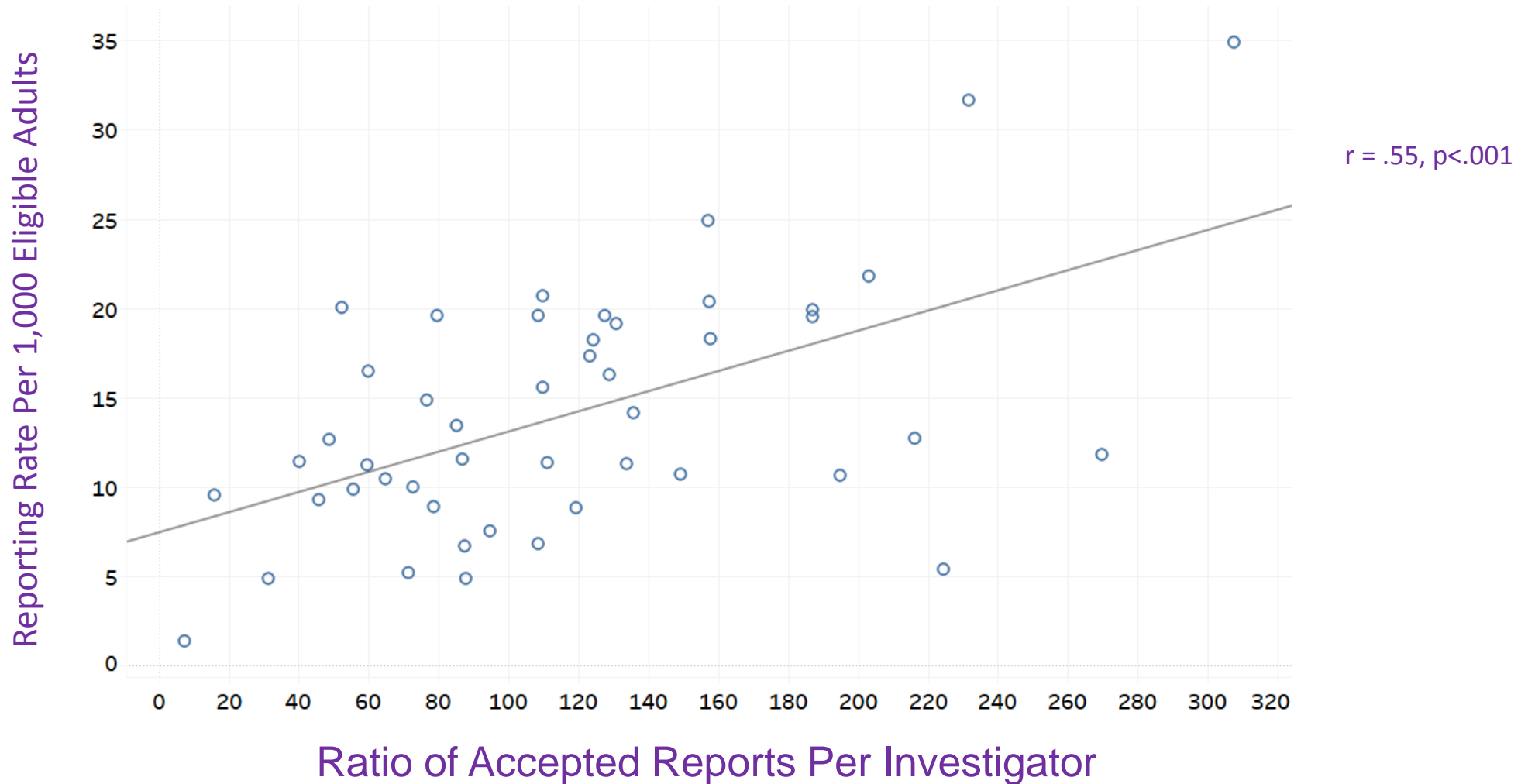
APS Client Outcomes Study

APS Client Outcomes Study OVERVIEW

PURPOSE
To examine if and how APS programs make a difference in the lives of clients with regard to their safety/risk, well-being, and satisfaction.

PARTNERSHIP

- Funding from the ACL Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services.

- Designed and conducted by New Editions Consulting, Inc.

APS Client Outcomes Study

Approach

Mixed Methods

- Client questionnaire and client data form (de-identified client data form filled out by worker).

- Site visits: interviews with APS clients and APS leaders, and a focus group with APS workers.

- Analysis of NAMRS data.

All Study Tools can be found at:
https://acl.gov/about-acl/public-input

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APS Client Outcomes Study

Site Selection

- Study sample will include a total of nine states, three counties per state.

- Selection by stratified random sampling procedure based on three factors:

  - State- or county-administered APS.

  - Where the APS program is housed in state government (e.g., aging or other).

  - Percentage of rural population in state.
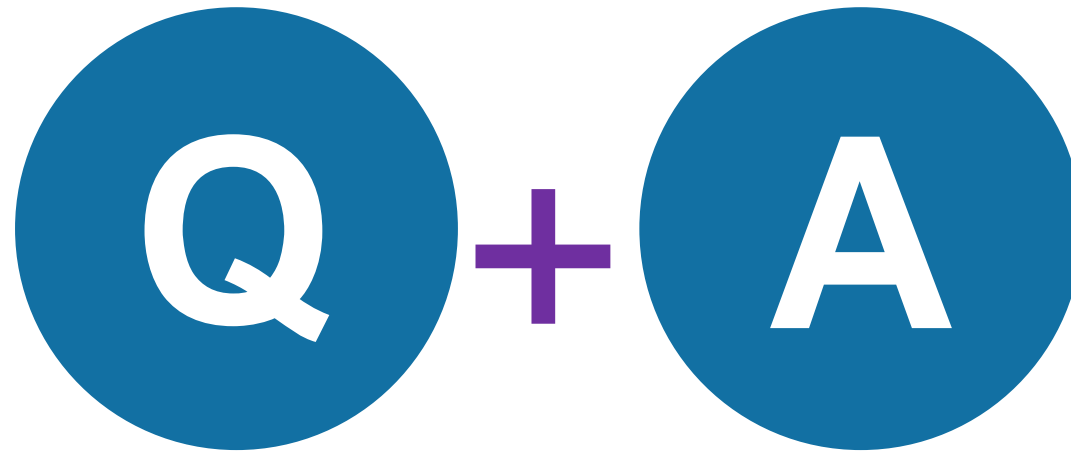
Next Steps and Timeline

Next Steps

- APS Program Recruitment (February – April 2020).

- Data Collection (April – November 2020).

- Data Analysis (October 2019 – January 2021).

- Reporting and Dissemination (February 2021 – September 2021)

Conclusion: What are the Results Thus Far?

- Established framework for future analysis with Logic Model and study variables.
- Need to better understand lack of consistency in policy and practice.
- Important to continue efforts to improve data quality and analysis.
- Making progress in defining and assessing the efficacy of APS programs.

Questions and Answers