NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

Adult Protective Services in New Jersey

Program Overview

Presented to:
Disability Mortality and Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee (DMAPAC)

APS ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Jennifer Mills, State Coordinator
Adult Protective Services, Division of Aging Services
September 18, 2026

Statutory Authority

New Jersey Adult Protective Services Act

N.J.S.A. 52:27D-406 et seq.

The Act establishes APS authority to:

- Receive and investigate reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Evaluate the need for protective services
- Provide or arrange protective services
- Obtain records needed for an APS evaluation
- Seek court intervention when statutory standards are met
- Report suspected criminal activity to law enforcement

Federal APS Regulations

45 C.F.R. Part 1324, Subpart D

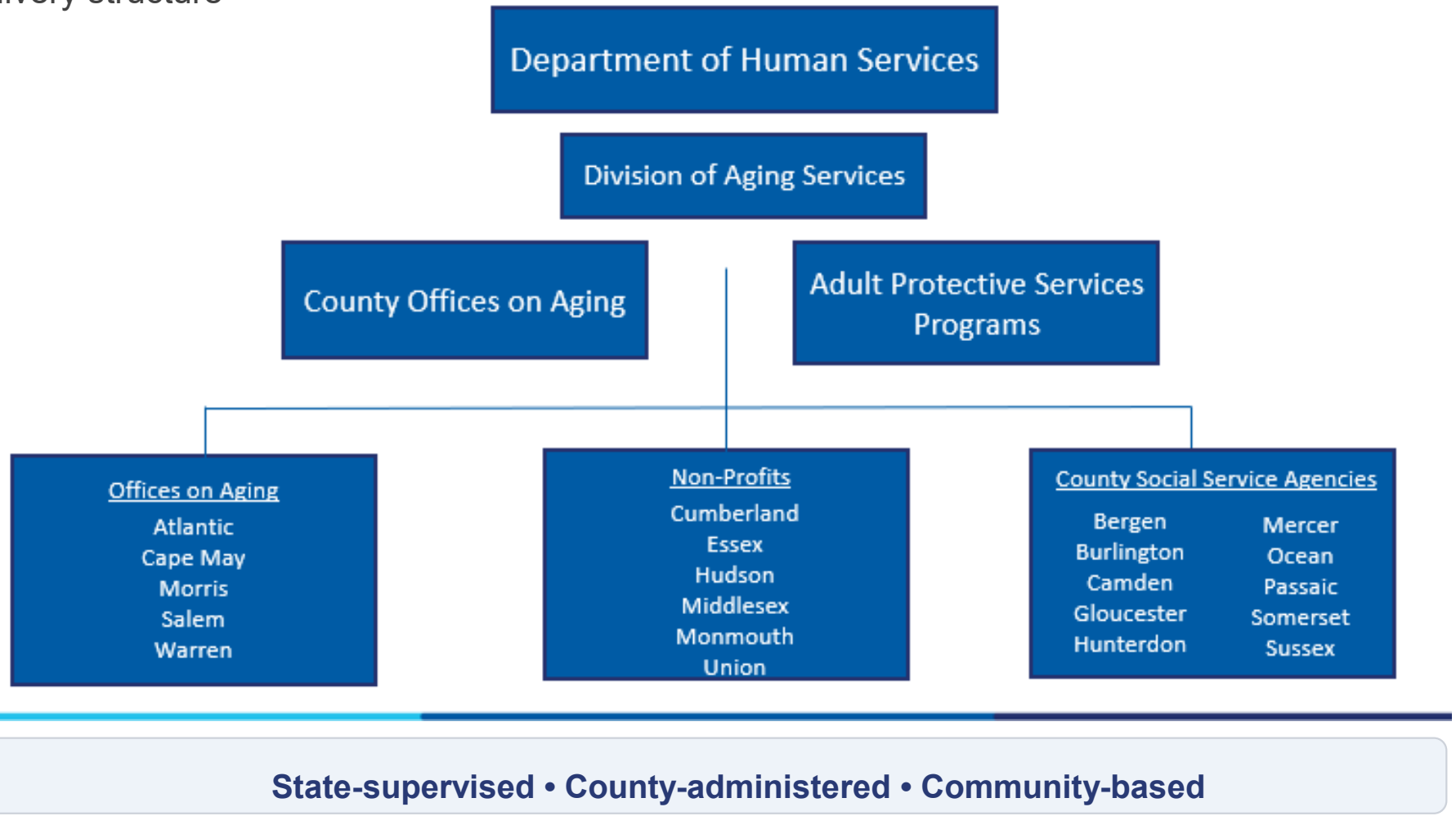
First federal regulations establishing national requirements for state APS programs; state compliance required by May 8, 2028.

APS authority is defined by statute and depends on the circumstances of each case.

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

NJ Adult Protective Services

Statewide delivery structure



State-supervised • County-administered • Community-based

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

NJ Adult Protective Services at a Glance

APS Reports & Response

REPORTS THAT MEET APS CRITERIA

Age 18+
Community-based setting
Inability to protect self
Abuse, neglect, or exploitation

REPORT TYPES

Abuse • Neglect Exploitation • Self-neglect

INVESTIGATIVE

Evaluates reports, gathers information and determines findings.

SERVICE-ORIENTED

Provides, arranges or recommends protective services and connects adults with supports.

APS is both investigative and service-oriented.

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

The APS Practice Framework

PERSON-CENTERED

The individual's circumstances, needs, preferences and goals are central to assessment and planning.

AUTONOMY & CHOICE

Adults retain their rights and may accept or decline protective services.

LEAST INTRUSIVE

APS uses the least intrusive intervention appropriate to the circumstances, risk and available evidence.

APS does not independently remove an adult, change a living arrangement or impose restrictions; involuntary intervention requires appropriate legal authority.

Specialized APS Authority & Legal Intervention

APS has statutory tools beyond ordinary social-service case management.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Authority to obtain records reasonably necessary to complete an APS evaluation.

ACCESS FOR EVALUATION

APS may seek a court order when prevented from conducting an evaluation.

LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORTING

Required reporting when APS has reason to believe a criminal act was committed.

COURT OPTIONS

- **Order to Conduct an APS Evaluation**
- **Order to Prevent Interference**
- **Emergency Protective Services Order**
- **Protective Services Order**
- **Guardianship**
- **Conservatorship**
- **Civil Commitment**
- **Other Appropriate Legal Action**

Legal intervention requires evidence that the applicable legal standard has been met and court authorization.

What Happens After a Report?

APS generally has about 30 days to investigate, assess and determine the appropriate response.

1 REPORT & SCREEN

Determine whether the report meets APS criteria and assess urgency.

2 INVESTIGATE

Conduct a social-service investigation: meet with the adult, gather collateral information and determine whether allegations are substantiated or not substantiated.

3 ASSESS

Assess risks and needs, and consider the individual's preferences and circumstances.

4 PLAN & CONNECT

With the individual's participation, develop a plan, arrange protective services and connect to appropriate resources.

5 STABILIZE / CLOSE

Stabilize the situation, take protective or legal action when needed, and close when the APS role is complete.

APS Is Investigative AND Service-Oriented

APS performs both functions — an important distinction from systems that may be primarily investigative or primarily service-based.

INVESTIGATIVE ROLE

- Interview the vulnerable adult
- Gather collateral information
- Obtain records as appropriate
- Evaluate allegations
- Determine whether allegations are substantiated or not substantiated (preponderance of evidence)

SERVICE-ORIENTED ROLE

- Assess risks and needs
- Develop a protective-service plan
- Provide, arrange or recommend services
- Connect the adult with other programs and supports
- Coordinate with other systems when appropriate

Protective services are voluntary unless the applicable legal standard for court intervention is met.

APS Within the Larger System

APS may investigate, coordinate services, and work alongside systems with different roles and authority.

DDD

SERVICE / SUPPORT OVERLAP
APS may coordinate with DDD and Support Coordination when the adult also needs disability services or supports.

DCF

TRANSITION / AUTHORITY DIFFERENCE
DCF serves children and has different authority. APS may become involved after age 18 when APS criteria are met.

BGS

GUARDIANSHIP OVERLAP
APS may coordinate with BGS when guardianship services are already involved or may be relevant for an eligible individual.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION OVERLAP
APS may report and coordinate with law enforcement while continuing its own social-service investigation and protective role.

OTHER SYSTEM PARTNERS

SERVICE / RESOURCE COORDINATION
Aging Network • Medicaid • DMHAS • health care • housing • legal services • community providers and other supports.

APS may be one part of the response — investigation, services and legal authority may be divided across different systems.

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

NJ APS: The Big Picture



INVESTIGATIVE + SERVICE-ORIENTED

PERSON-CENTERED + VOLUNTARY

DEFINED LEGAL AUTHORITY

APS addresses an immediate protective concern, works to reduce risk and connect the adult with appropriate supports, and closes when the APS role is complete.

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

New Jersey Adult Protective Services

State APS information, county contacts and resources

STATE APS WEBPAGE

APS.NJ.GOV

Program information • County APS directory • Resources

REPORT A CONCERN / APS INFORMATION

855-TELL-APS • 855-835-5277

For emergencies requiring immediate response, call 911 or local law enforcement.

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES