



How to Eat an Elephant: The Path to Adult Protective Services (APS) Improvement

Social Services Institute 2022

August 3, 2022

Our Vision

The shared vision held by NC DAAS, county DSS, and key program stakeholders is to advance innovative solutions that foster and promote safety, independence, and the improvement of health and well-being for vulnerable adults served by APS.



Our Mission

The Division of Aging and Adult Services works to promote the independence and enhance the dignity of North Carolina's older adults, persons with disabilities and their families through a community-based system of opportunities, services, benefits and protections.



Why are Adult Protective Services Improvements Needed?

- Social work is challenging and important work and requires consistent and adequate investments in our infrastructure to protect vulnerable adults through sound social work practice
- Our policies and laws do not address the unique health and wellness challenges that vulnerable adults face at various stages of life
- A thorough review of funding that pays for protective services for vulnerable adults is needed

Why are Adult Protective Services Improvements Needed?



- Workforce capacity issues present a significant challenge to supporting an ever-increasing caseload size and complexity of needs and services required
- A lack of state and federal resources result in gaps to develop and administer an updated, consistent training curriculum to APS social workers
- More education is needed to inform local communities about the needs of vulnerable adults and APS services

Why are Adult Protective Services Improvements Needed?

- Work must be done to develop a more collaborative service delivery model across NC to address the unique needs to vulnerable adults
- Additional training is needed for law enforcement, emergency services personnel and emergency department and hospital staff
- Better collaboration and coordination with court systems are needed to ensure the rights and personal property of vulnerable adults are protected

Why are Adult Protective Services Improvements Needed?

North Carolina Population Change 2018 - 2038

Age	2018		2038		% Change 2018 - 2038
	#	%	#	%	
Total	10,389,148	-	12,799,658	-	23%
0-17	2,311,348	22%	2,633,159	21%	14%
18-44	3,689,649	36%	4,435,853	35%	20%
45-59	2,075,879	20%	2,334,589	18%	13% 
60+	2,312,272	22%	3,396,057	27%	47% 
65+	1,676,545	16%	2,696,529	21%	61%
85+	186,059	2%	397,328	3%	114%

- NC ranks 9th nationally, in total population and in the number of people over 65
- In 2018, 80 counties had more people 60 and over, than under 18 years
- In 2025, 1 in 5 people will be 65 and older

Why are Adult Protective Services Improvements Needed?

- Improving social determinants of health have a direct and positive effect on the health and well-being of individuals as they age
- Services such as APS, food security, health care, transportation, home and community-based services, as well as other supports promote healthy aging in their community
- Keeping individuals in their homes to prevent unnecessary institutionalization must be an Agency priority
- **71.9%** of APS Reports involve individuals age 60 and over



Some Common National Trends in APS

Thirty-five programs are fully state administered. Seven states' APS programs are administered by a State Unit on Aging and county managed; and eight programs are administered by HHS and county managed

According to NAMRS 2018 data, 42% of substantiated cases are for self-neglect. These are typically individuals with social, medical, or behavioral health needs and there is no perpetrator involved

National publications suggest the top three frequently asked questions posed by APS programs focus on funding, staff caseloads, and self-neglecting clients



Some Common National Trends in APS

In 2012 NAPSA and ADvancing States reported 35 states received some type of state appropriation to run their Adult Protective Services program

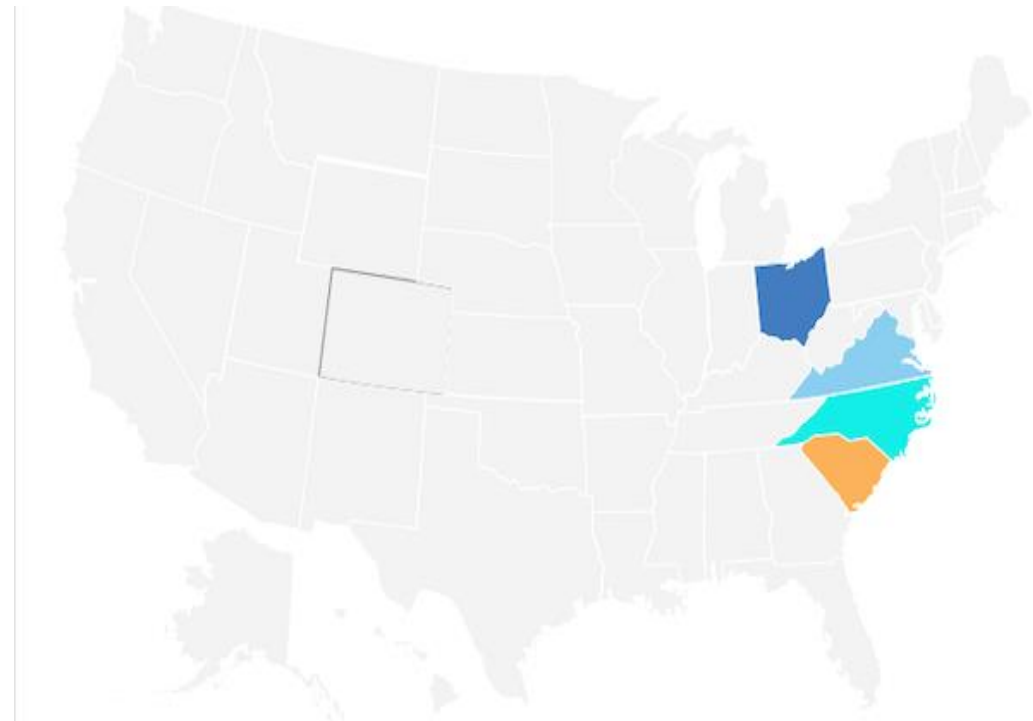
APS Programs collect more information about clients than perpetrators. Less than half of state submit at least one or more perpetrator demographic data elements to the national reporting system.

Over 75% of states/territories' intake models are centralized either at the state level or a combination of state and local.

A Look at NC and other state APS Programs

A comparison of North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia APS Programs

- These four states APS programs are state supervised and county administered
- NC uses a decentralized intake model. The other three use a combination of state and local call centers for APS reports
- NC has a recommended tool for intake. SC and OH have statewide tools. VA uses a county-based tool
- Over 60% of all types of allegations received are accepted for an APS evaluation





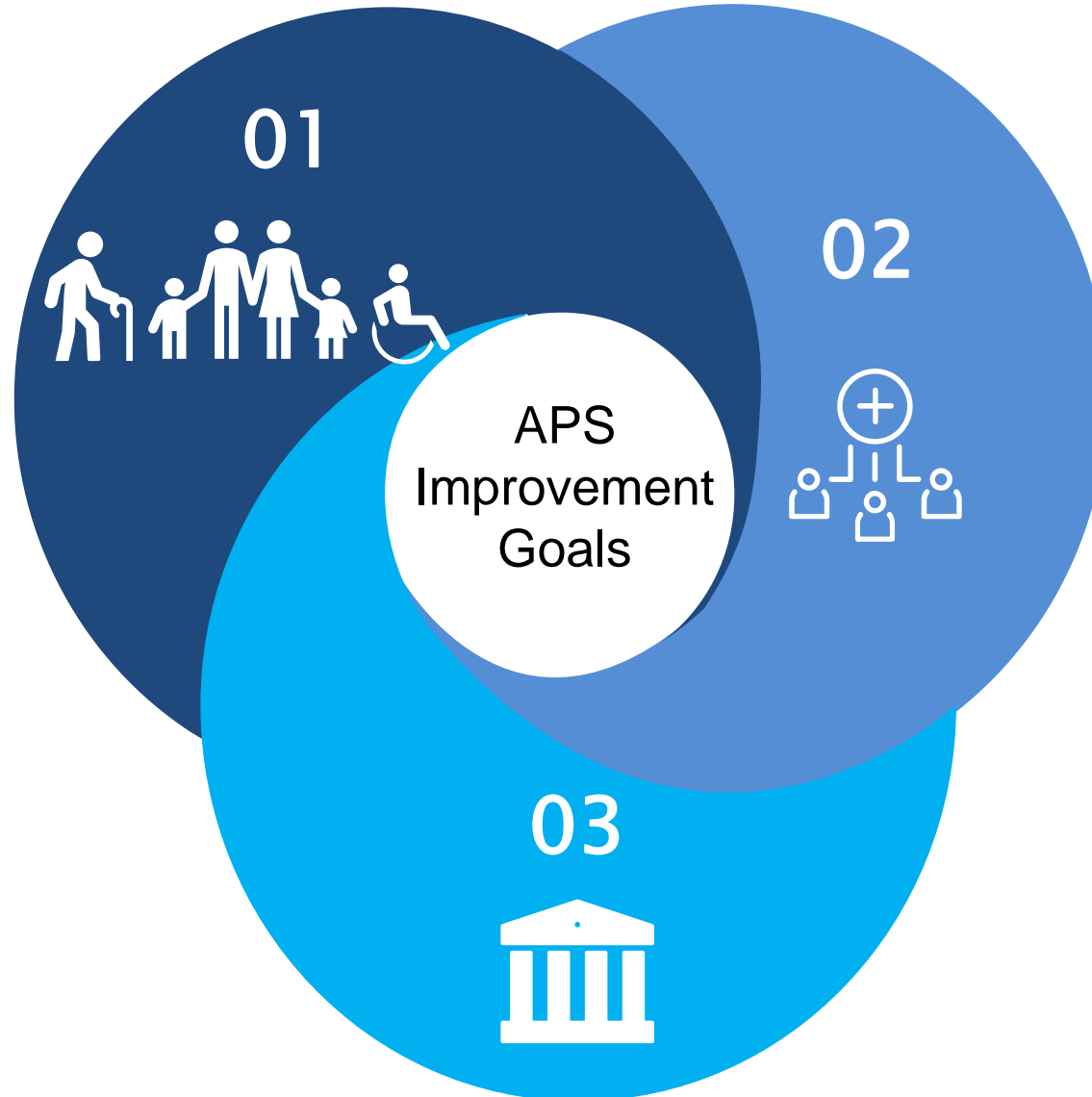
A Look at NC and other state APS Programs

A comparison of North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia APS Programs

- NC and OH have an average response time of 72 hrs. SC and VA's response times are 24 hours.
- The mean completion time from start to evaluation to the end is 36.75 days.
- All states accept and evaluate exploitation, neglect, physical abuse, and self neglect (NC does not distinguish sexual or emotional abuse)
- Only OH collects perpetrator data.

Community Stakeholder Engagement and Education

- In collaboration with County DSS and AAA's, develop and provide training to service providers, health care personnel, first responders, members of the judicial system, advocates, and community partners
- Develop a social media strategy to educate citizens statewide around issues of adult maltreatment
- Expand activities around World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- Implement MDTs in all counties to increase stakeholder engagement to improve client outcomes
- Work in partnership with UNC SOG to provide support and training to county DSS on enhanced community engagement
- Host quarterly interactive community forums to engage the citizens in preventing maltreatment of vulnerable adults Elder Abuse Awareness Committee)



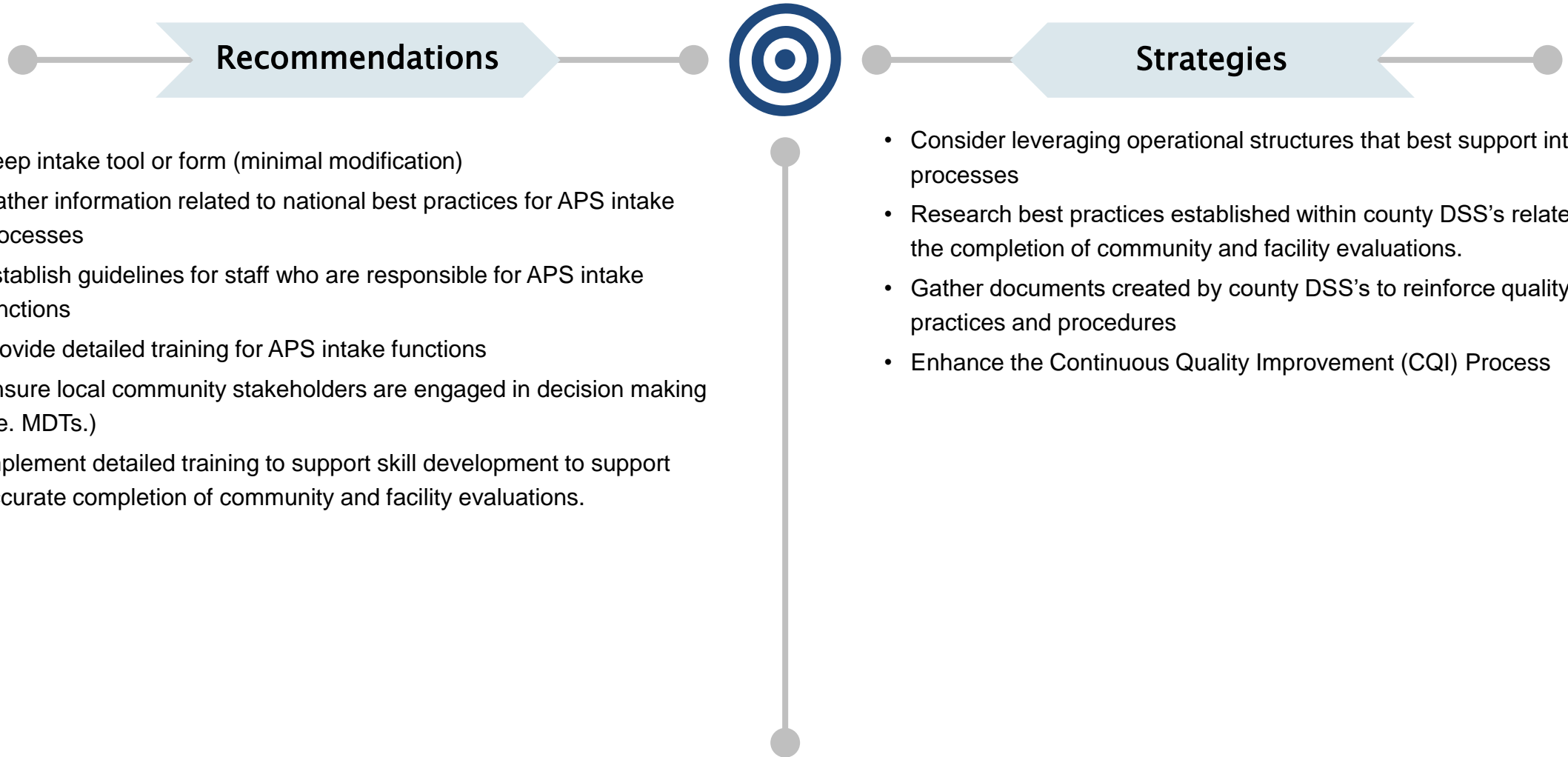
Consistency of Practice

- Research best practice models in NC and nationally
- Establish staffing and training standards for APS
- Review and recommend best intake practice models
- Develop requirements for standardized APS tools
- Leverage an e-training platform with specialized trainings
- Establish a comprehensive CQI Process

APS Statutory Improvement

- Seek an executive order to implement a task force to study and facilitate APS statutory improvement
- Task Force will advise on legislative and non-legislative aspects of the APS program
- Consider statutory amendments in 2023 legislative session
- Budget considerations should be a part of APS statute improvement to include State administration and funding

Recommendations for improving consistency of practice across NC



Recommendations for improving community stakeholder engagement and education

Recommendations

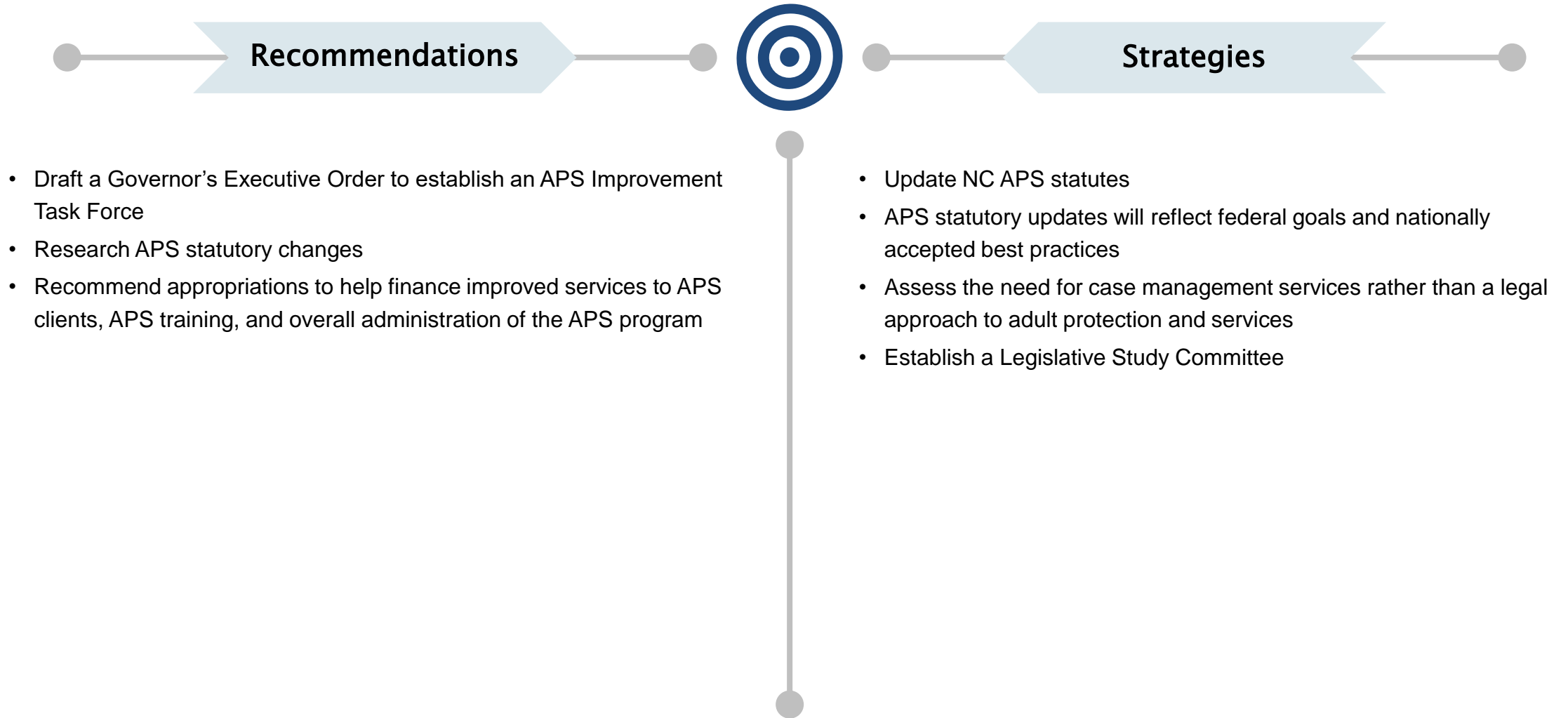
- Leverage MDTs to collaborate and provide services to the elderly and vulnerable adult population
- Engage and collaborate with community stakeholders to identify support needs including strategies on how to share best practices or proven strategies
- Develop training content based on input from service providers, community stakeholders, and multidisciplinary team members
- Provide educational training to stakeholders about adult protective services
- Implement an outreach and education action plan with targeted campaigns to specific groups
- Identify and track exploitation scams that target vulnerable adults and leverage existing communication channels to promote awareness
- Identify common gaps in information associated with how a vulnerable adult can receive preventative services and provide education to community partners



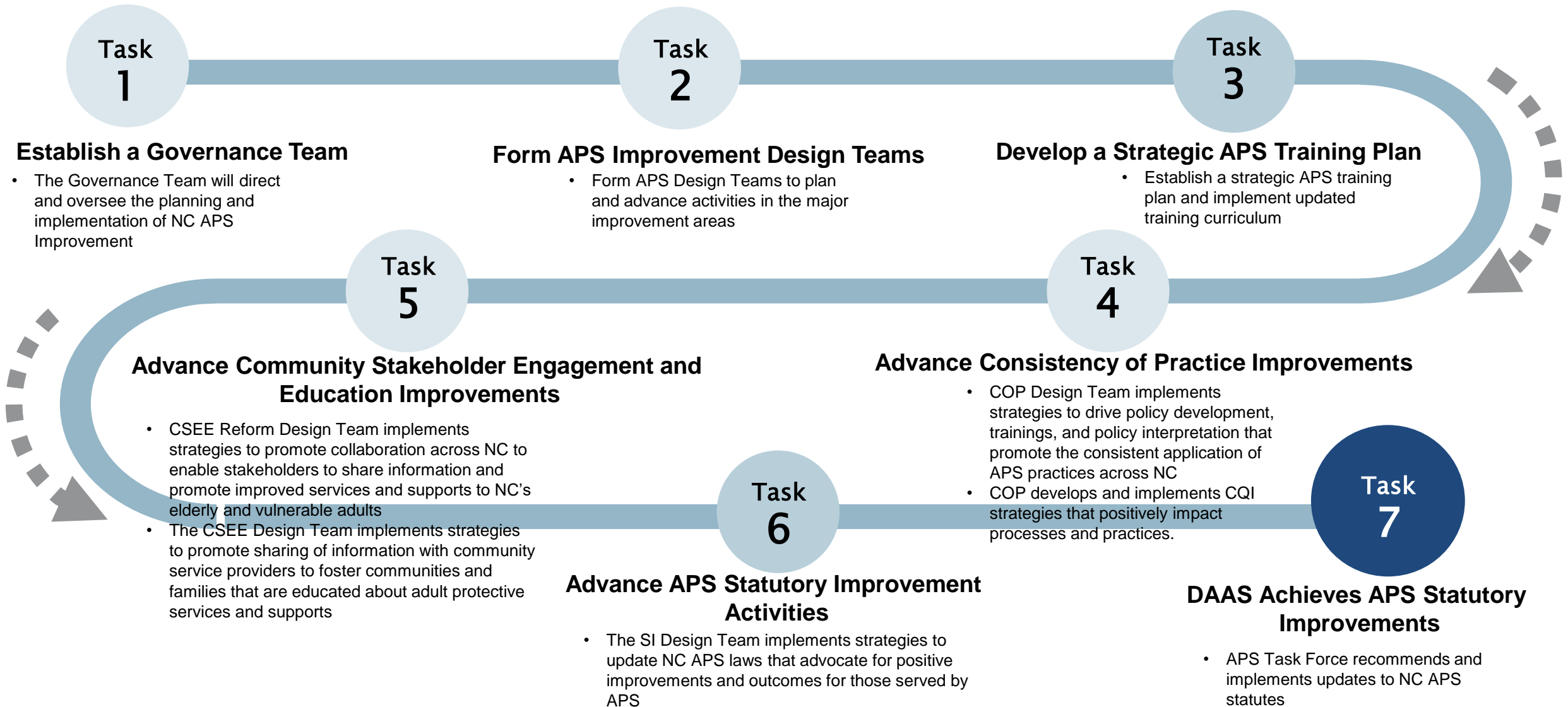
Strategies

- MDTs will be used to engage partners, first responders, and stakeholders, build local teams, share information, and solve problems
- Explore the use of confidentiality agreements and memorandums of understandings for the purpose of sharing sensitive APS information
- Implement training for DSS staff and DSS attorneys around confidentiality laws and requirements. Highlight types of information that can and cannot be shared with community partners and stakeholders
- Leverage technology and social media platforms to engage and educate families and younger vulnerable adults about NC's APS program and services
- Identify and engage in existing forums and structured communication channels throughout the community to conduct community outreach and education
- Develop targeted communication strategies
- Distribute brochures through senior services to provide education about APS
- Designate and train a staff member to serve as a point person to coordinate and or conduct community education activities

Recommendations for APS statutory improvement

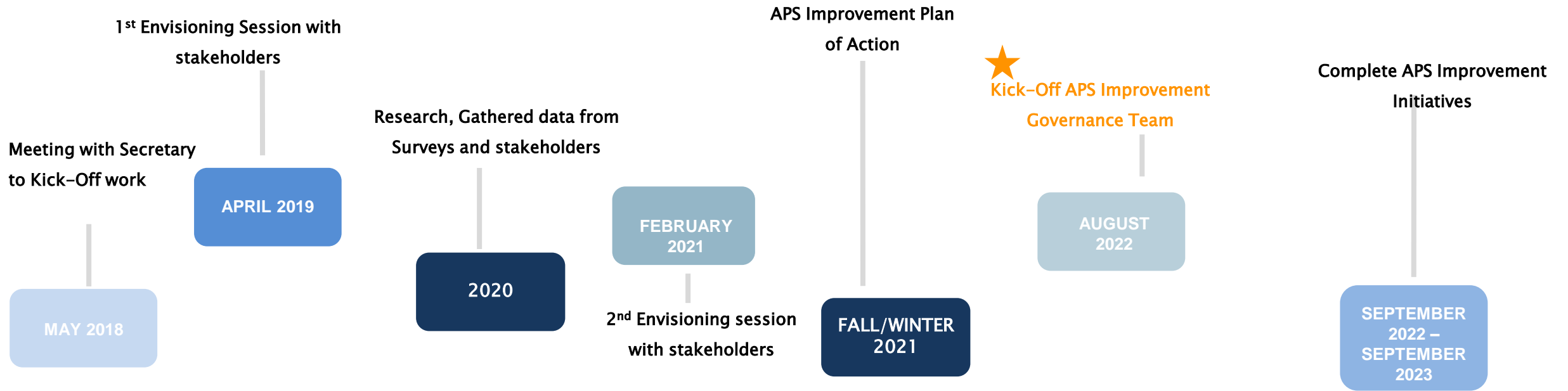


A proposed path to advance our vision for APS improvement



Project Timeline

NC Adult Protective Services Improvement Plan



ONGOING Project and Risk Management April 2022 – September 2023

Be a Part of the Action!

Design teams will be created to advance activities in the major APS improvement areas.

- Consistency of Practice Design Team
- Leadership Team for Community Stakeholder Engagement and Education Design.
- Statutory Improvement Design Team.



How will Design Teams Function?

- Each team will receive their mission from the APS Governance Team
- Teams will be led by County DSS and DAAS
- At its first meeting each team will review its mission and develop a charter
- Teams will be expected to meet a minimum of once per month and team members will need to complete work between meetings

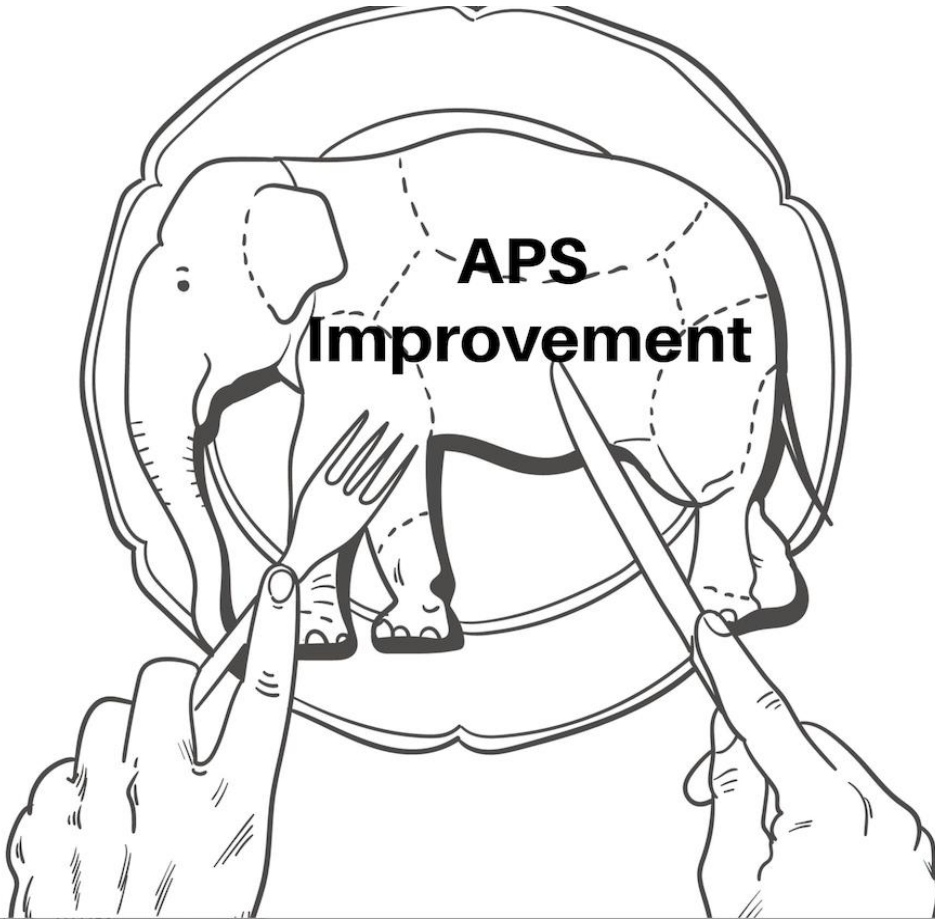


Design Team Participation

- Complete the brief online interest form that will be sent out soon
- More information about considerations for design team selection and nomination deadlines will accompany the interest form
- **WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOU HEARING FROM YOU!**



Questions?



Thank you!