

Introduction

This document includes guidelines and requirements for ASCII files needed to support electronic submission of data for the National Aging Program Information System (NAPIS) to the Office of Services to the Aging's (OSA) Aging Information System (AIS). Agencies providing services reimbursed by Title III/VI funds are required to comply with OSA and regional Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) policies regarding NAPIS federal reporting requirements. Such organizations, with the concurrence and authorization of their local AAA, may exercise the option to submit data electronically from existing information systems, provided such submissions comply with the following specifications. Electronically submitted files will be imported into the AIS database by regional Area Agency on Aging system administrators, who will provide reports of errors and other problems identified by the import process to the submitting agent.

Purpose

The purpose of the electronic submission process is to facilitate a means for submitting NAPIS data electronically from automated information systems at service-providing organizations as a substitute for completing and submitting paper forms. Early in the design process of Michigan's NAPIS data operations, it was identified that for better acceptance by end-users that there should be provisions for those service vendors who already had an automated data system to export the data from their systems and not require them to complete and submit Client Registration forms.

Because of the wide range of systems used and the inevitable spectrum of capabilities to produce data in an acceptable format (both technical proficiency and system capability), a generic approach was determined to be the most appropriate. It was thought that most automated systems, if they provided any inherent export capability, would be able to produce ASCII text files – either through the system's basic features or through an ability to produce user specified report output, which then could be directed to a file.

Input

File Transfer

All files will be transferred to the Area Agency on Aging through an upload to a secure website.

Format and Content

In general, the ASCII file must contain comma-delimited (also known as comma-separated), variable length records.

Each character field has a maximum length as specified in the file specifications. Data that exceeds the maximum field length will be truncated. Fields that include an

imbedded comma must be enclosed in double quotes (""); however, imbedded commas are not expected in NAPIS data. Data fields enclosed in quote marks are allowed, but are not required. If quotes are used, they must be supplied in pairs, surrounding the datum. Field values and ranges are described in more detail in the section entitled "ASCII File Specification Layout". These specifications must be adhered to strictly.

All fields must be represented in the ASCII file whether or not the field contains a value (i.e. there are a required number of fields in each record). All fields, character or numeric, for which a default value or a value representing "Not Available" or "Not Given" must not be left blank or null, but must be supplied with the value representing "Not Available" or "Not Given".

Blank or missing data in character fields for which there is not a default or specified value for "Not Available" or "Not Given" will be represented by a comma followed by either a blank space or no character data. In the following two excerpts, there are five fields of data in a series, with the third field missing. The first line shows the use of a blank space character and the second shows the use of no character data.

```
...character data,character data, ,character data,character data,...  
...character data,character data,,character data,character data,...
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Numeric blank fields (which are different from numeric fields with a value of 0 (zero)) in which there is not a default, "Not Available" or "Not Given" value, will be represented by a comma followed by no numeric data in the following manner:

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...character data,numeric data,,numeric data,numericdata,...
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All date fields must be provided with four digit years.

Records will be terminated by a carriage-return and line-feed (i.e., each record will appear on a separate line in the ASCII file). Although not required in all character fields at this time, it is recommended that all character fields be represented by capital or upper case letters. No comments or record number indicators are permitted in the ASCII file. The file should contain only data fields, except for the header record (if supplied), and every record should be of the same format (i.e., there is not a special code or character that denotes a remark or comment line in the ASCII file). There should be no blank records or lines in the ASCII file.

Initial and Ongoing Quality Assurance

Data sets will be monitored and evaluated. ASCII file data sets will be constantly monitored for completeness of data elements. As in the AIS client/server processing, there are few "Required" fields in NAPIS data. To discourage abuse of the system by putting in dummy data or consistently not collecting certain data elements, tolerance or threshold reports will be run on each submitted data set, and on Submitting Agents submissions overall to isolate and identify neglected data elements. Consistently

neglected data elements or trends toward incomplete data sets will result in exception reports being issued and will be treated as cause for re-evaluation of certification status.

Records Processing

Electronic Records Preparation and Submission

Electronic submission of NAPIS data is supported for three basic types of information:

1. Client registration information, including name, address, and demographic and assessment information (such as activities of daily living).
2. Services enrollment information, including any service from the three clusters and the date that service was started.
3. Units of service provided to a given client for a given period of time (for cluster I services only).

Client registration and enrollment information is included in a single file specification, while client-specific units of services are included in a separate file format. The client registration and enrollment record layout closely matches the NAPIS Client Registration Form (OSA 201).

- **Client Registration and Enrollment Data**

When a new client is enrolled by an organization, all client registration information required for NAPIS reporting purposes (as defined by all data included on OSA form 201) must be collected and entered into a local automated system. The system must also track which services will be provided to each client, with a start date for certain Cluster I services. At pre-established intervals, as stipulated with the respective Area Agency on Aging, data records for new clients will be exported into a file which meets the attached data layout specifications, including both registration and enrollment information.

When an existing client will begin to receive any service in addition to the services identified in the original record (the one submitted following initial enrollment), another complete record will be exported with the same registration information and with an identification of the new service the client will start to receive.

- **Client-Specific Units of Service**

In a separate file creation process, details of the number of units of services which were provided to each client receiving Cluster I services will be exported and submitted for electronic processing. This is typically performed on a monthly basis. This record type of file must also meet the requirements of the units of service file specification.

Records Processing Logic

The records processor which imports data into the system will read the data contained in the file submitted and attempt to add new records to the state database system. In general, there are separate approaches taken for the various types of information submitted electronically.

- *Client Registrations*

Persons are entered into the state system only once. The first time information for an individual is entered into the NAPIS database; a new record will be created. If another registration is processed for a person already stored in the system, the records processor will not replace the existing records with the new one, but append the additional data to the existing record.

- *Service Enrollments*

Clients are enrolled in the system for one or more services provided by the organization who registers them. Each service that the client will be provided is reported separately. All services planned for an individual as part of their initial intake are reported in the original submission. Separate records must be submitted to report additional services which the client begins to receive at a later date.

- *Units of Service*

Units of service are reported for specific clients based on their Social Security number provided with the registration information. The system will attempt to locate the client with a given Social Security number and confirm that he/she is enrolled in the corresponding service category. If a match of client and enrollment is found, the system will add the units of service for the time period indicated in the file. An error occurs if no such client and services enrollment can be located.

The import process will review all records in the file. Upon completion of the review process, certain records may have been rejected for reasons of validity. It will not be possible to store selected records – the import process will either store all records in a file or none of the records. This raises the possibility that data files may need to be re-submitted with certain, problematic fields corrected.

Verification of Valid Values

The data file import process will perform verification of the validity of data fields included in the submitted file prior to saving it in the database. These measures are intended to ensure the quality of information stored in the NAPIS database.

There are a number of methods for determining whether or not a given data value is a valid and acceptable response for any given field. One example of this method would be a "Yes, NO, Not Given" field type would have only three possible values. In this case, any other response in this data element would be considered invalid. Where there is a list of valid values for a specific data element, those lists are supplied in this document. An example of this would be the State abbreviation field, where there would

be a secondary table whose key would be the State abbreviation and an attribute field would be the description of the State name. The other method would involve implied or expressed valid values for the specific field. These are noted in the "Values Representing" column of the ASCII file specification document.

Special processing is necessary for a client Social Security number (which is a required field for registration entry) when a registered client refuses or is unable to provide a valid number. The NAPIS system will generate a "dummy" Social Security number unique to each person to serve as a substitute for the missing Social Security number. The numbers created will be reported back to the vendor after each month's import and should be entered by the vendor into their own database. It is strongly recommended to secure a valid SSN from each and every client.

Rejected Records

Reject exceptions are errors in records from which the import process on the record(s) cannot continue, but the import process for the remainder of the file is not aborted. Reject errors will be identified for two types of transactions: client registrations and service enrollments.

1. Client Registration

A Reject Exception occurs for a client registration when required registration data elements are missing or improperly formatted. The system will not be able to store client registrations without valid data for all seven required fields: Vendor ID, Vendor Site ID, Region ID, Intake date, Social Security number, Client last name, and Client date of birth.

2. Service Enrollment

A Reject Exception occurs for a service enrollment when required service data fields are missing or improperly formatted or when the client registration portion of the record has been rejected (see above). The system will not be able to store service enrollments without valid data for all required fields. Valid data must be included in the respective Yes/No field for one or more services for which the data submitting agency is configured in the system. And, for Cluster I services only, a valid start date should be included.

Terminate

Termination of records processing may occur if the format of the ASCII file submitted for processing does not strictly adhere to the current version of file submission standards. This may result from a number of causes:

- If the ASCII file was not prepared correctly, processing cannot continue.
- If proper formatting of the file was not observed, commas not properly placed to separate fields, invalid number of fields, etc., processing cannot continue.

- If the correct placement of fields is not observed or an excessive number of blank or invalid values in specific fields, processing will be terminated.

If records processing is terminated for any of these reasons, the ASCII file will be returned as received to the submitting agency with an error message regarding the termination. No further record level Warning or Reject message will be returned once processing is terminated and any records which may have passed prior to the termination will not be added or updated to the database. In effect, the entire data set is void.

Output from Import Process

Submitting Agent Feedback

For each submitted data set, the submitting agency will receive specific feedback as to the results of import processing. If the data set was able to be processed (without termination), the submitting agency will be provided a report which itemizes any rejected records.

Re-Enrollment Procedures

Special Process for Electronic Submission of Re-enrollment Records

The vendor must prepare a special import file with an enrollment record for all clients who were open on October 1 of the new fiscal year. The original client registration information would be included with an enrollment record indicating all services (if more than one) that the client will receive on and after October 1. The start date for each of these enrollment records must be October 1 of the new fiscal year.

Note: the import file can include both clients who received services in the previous fiscal year and need to be re-enrolled as well as new clients enrolled by the vendor since the beginning of the new fiscal year.

ASCII File Specifications Layout

The following charts outline the ASCII file specifications for electronic submission for NAPIS information to the AIS. Each chart includes the following columns:

Field #	This represents the sequential order of data elements in each record.
Field Name	this represents a brief description of the data element.
Field Type	this represents the format or type of information expected in the current data element, using the following conventions: An = Alpha Numeric Character where n denotes the maximum length or number of characters allowed in the field. D = Date in the form of Month/Day/Year (mm/dd/yyyy) field.

N = Numeric data representing the number of units of service, with one decimal place.

***** = Required field.

Data Key This is a list (if applicable) of valid values for the current data element.

Two different file specifications are included: one for Client Registration/Enrollment data file and one for Units of Service received by client registered for Cluster I services.