NRS
National Reporting System
for Adult Education

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education

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Division of Adult Education and Literacy

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IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

MEASURES AND METHODS FOR THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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CHAPTER I. HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM

The National Reporting System (NRS) is the accountability system for the federally funded, State-administered adult education program. It addresses the accountability requirements of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA—P.L.105–220). This document presents (1) the NRS measures that allow assessment of the impact of adult education instruction, (2) methodologies for collecting the measures, (3) reporting forms and procedures, and (4) training and technical assistance requirements to assist States in collecting and reporting the measures.

HISTORY OF THE NRS

The NRS was born in the 1990s, a decade known for its emphasis on accountability of Federal programs, when all publicly funded programs and agencies faced increasing pressures to demonstrate that they had met their legislative goals and had an impact on their client populations. The requirement to demonstrate program impact was mandated in 1993 through the Government Performance and Review Act (GPRA). GPRA required all Federal agencies to develop strategic plans to ensure that services were delivered efficiently and in a manner that best suited client needs and to develop indicators of performance to demonstrate their agency's impact.

In 1995, the U.S. Congress considered eliminating adult education as a separate delivery system by integrating the program into a general system of workforce development. Strong and convincing data on the impact of adult education at the State and Federal levels were demanded to demonstrate its importance as a separate education program. In response to these demands, the State directors of adult education asked the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) to work toward developing a national system for collecting information on adult education student outcomes.

To address these demands, DAEL devoted its March 1996 national meeting of State directors of adult education to developing a framework for program accountability. This framework specified the purposes of the adult education program and the essential characteristics of an accountability system and identified seven categories of outcome measures. At the March 1997 DAEL national meeting, a broad group of adult education stakeholders validated the framework, identified outcome measures for a new national reporting system, and discussed possible methodologies for the system. Based on these decisions, a project to design and develop the reporting system began in October 1997. The proposed voluntary nature of the NRS changed in August 1998 with the passage of WIA, which required an accountability system. The NRS mandate was then expanded to establish the measures and methods to conform to WIA requirements.

NRS Development Phases

The goals of the NRS project were to develop a national accountability system for adult education programs by identifying measures for national reporting and their definitions, establishing methodologies for data collection, developing standards for reporting to the U.S. Department of Education, and developing training materials and activities on NRS requirements and procedures. The development of the NRS proceeded in three phases.

The first phase, standardization, involved the development of standard measure definitions for State and local programs, standard data collection methodologies, and software standards for automated data reporting. In the summer of 1998, interim software standards were established, methodologies were identified for pilot testing, and draft definitions for use in the pilot test were distributed to adult education stakeholders.

The pilot test was the second phase of the project and was designed to have a small number of volunteer States and local programs test the draft measure definitions and proposed methodologies under realistic conditions. The pilot test assessed whether the draft measure definitions worked or needed to be refined. It also assessed costs, burden, and other difficulties in collecting the data using the proposed methodologies. The pilot test was completed in January 1999. Measures and methodologies were revised based on the pilot test.

The third phase of the project, training and technical assistance, which began in the summer of 1999, supported State and local program implementation of the NRS. The different types of assistance included instructional training packets for States to use in a "train the trainer" environment, technology-based materials for State and local staff that explained NRS measures and methods, and individual technical assistance to States that supported their implementation efforts.

An advisory board—consisting of State directors of adult education, representatives from volunteer provider agencies, directors of local adult education programs, and experts on accountability systems—guided the project and met three times between December 1997 and March 1999. The board made significant substantive contributions to the measure definitions and methodologies. Participants in the pilot test also provided advice and guidance on measures and methods.

DAEL released a draft of the NRS Implementation Guidelines in mid-1999 and another draft in June 2000, reflecting changes from State comments and early State experiences in implementing the requirements. The NRS formally went into effect on July 1, 2000, and DAEL issued a final guidelines document in March 2001.

Revised Guidelines

This revised edition of the *NRS Implementation Guidelines* has been reorganized and edited to explain requirements more clearly and to improve the guidelines usability. The following list summarizes the improvements made to this version of the guidelines over the previous one:

- ✓ **Definitions and methods organized by measure.** Unlike the previous edition of the guide, which had separate chapters on measure definitions and methodologies, the revised guide presents, by measure, definitions, coding categories, and procedures for collecting the measure.

- ✓ **Enhanced explanations on methods for ensuring uniform data collection.** The revised guide includes additional guidance on procedures for collecting measures to promote more standardized data collection across the State and to improve data quality.

- ✓ **Enhanced guidance on requirements for standardized assessments.** The revised guide contains more detailed explanations about procedures for administering standardized tests to measure educational gain and more specific criteria for States for evaluating the acceptability of an assessment to measure educational gain.

- ✓ **Revised instructions for table 5.** Instructions for completing table 5 have been simplified to promote more accurate completion of the table.

- ✓ **Additional test benchmarks.** New assessments have been added as test benchmarks for measuring educational gain. Exit criteria, using the BEST (Basic English Skills Test) Plus, has been defined for the high advanced English as a second language (ESL) level.

- ✓ **Changes to reporting tables.** A new table on local grantees has been has been added and will be required for the program year beginning July 1, 2005 (program year 2005). This table collects information on the number of local grantees directly funded by the state, the amount of federal and state funding they receive and the number of students they serve. In addition, two tables that are currently optional will become required for submission. Table 10 will be required for the program year beginning July 1, 2005 (program year 2005) and table 4B will be required for the program year beginning July 1, 2006 (program year 2006). Further, optional table 4A will be discontinued in the program year beginning July 1, 2005 (program year 2005).

It is anticipated that there will be another updated edition of the guidelines in mid-2006 and further revisions when the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act is reauthorized.

OVERVIEW OF THE NRS MEASURES AND METHODS

NRS Measures

The requirements of WIA, consensus among the stakeholders and advisory board members, and the need for uniform valid and reliable data were major factors guiding the development of NRS measures. Other factors affecting the development of the measures included the need to accommodate the diversity of the adult education delivery system and the need for compatible definitions between related adult education and training programs.

As a State-administered program, the nature of adult education service delivery varies widely across States in its goals, objectives, and the resources available to States to collect and report data. It is especially important that the definitions for outcome measures be broad enough to accommodate these differences, yet concrete and standardized sufficiently to allow the NRS to establish a uniform national database.

To accommodate the diverse delivery system and compatibility with related systems, NRS staff conducted a thorough review of measure definitions planned or in use by all States and all Federal employment and training programs. To identify State measures used, for example, NRS staff conducted an evaluability assessment of all States in early 1998 and obtained copies of measure definitions from States that had its own measures. In addition, NRS staff reviewed the existing measure definitions used for DAEL's annual statistical performance report and measures and definitions planned by the U.S. Department of Education for Title I of WIA. A full list of the main sources consulted in developing the measures and definitions is provided at the end of this chapter.

Exhibit 1.1 lists the *core* and *secondary* measures of the NRS. The core measures apply to all adult education students receiving 12 or more hours of service. There are three types of core measures:

Exhibit 1.1
Summary of NRS Measures and Definitions

TOPIC	MEASURES	CATEGORIES OR DEFINITIONS
Core Outcome Measures		
Educational gains	❖ Educational gains	❖ Educational functioning levels in reading, writing, speaking, and listening and functional areas
Followup measures	❖ Entered employment	❖ Learners who obtain a job by the end of the first quarter after the exit quarter
	❖ Retained employment	❖ Learners who obtain a job and remain employed in the third quarter after program exit
	❖ Receipt of secondary school diploma or GED	❖ Learners who obtain a GED, secondary school diploma, or recognized equivalent after exit.
	❖ Placement in postsecondary education or training	❖ Learners enrolling after exit in a postsecondary educational or occupational skills program building on prior services or training received
Core Descriptive and Participation Measures		
Demographics	❖ Ethnicity	❖ American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Black or African American (non-Hispanic), Hispanic or Latino, White (non-Hispanic)
	❖ Gender	❖ Male, female
	❖ Age	❖ Date of birth
Status and goals	❖ Labor force status	❖ Employed, not employed, not in labor force
	❖ Public assistance status	❖ Receiving or not receiving assistance
	❖ Rural residency	❖ Rural, not rural
	❖ Disability status	❖ Disabled, not disabled
	❖ Learner's main and secondary reasons or goals for attending	❖ Obtain a job, retain current job, improve current job, earn a secondary school diploma or GED, enter postsecondary education or training, improve basic literacy skills, improve English language skills, citizenship, work-based project learner goal, other personal goals

Exhibit 1.1 (Continued)
Summary of NRS Measures and Definitions

TOPIC	MEASURES	CATEGORIES OR DEFINITIONS
Student participation	❖ Contact hours	❖ Number of hours of instructional activity
	❖ Program enrollment type	❖ ABE, ASE,ESL, family literacy, workplace programs, homeless programs, correctional facilities, community corrections programs, other institutional programs
Secondary Outcome and Student Status Measures (Optional)		
Employment	❖ Reduction in receipt of public assistance	❖ Students whose welfare benefits or equivalent public assistance grant is reduced or eliminated due to employment
Work-based project learner achievement	❖ Met work-based project learner goal	❖ Achieved skills for work-based project learner activity (activity of at least 12 hours and no more than 30 hours of instruction related to a teach specific workplace skills)
Community	❖ Achieved citizenship skills	❖ Achieve the skills needed to pass the citizenship exam
	❖ Voting behavior	❖ Learner registers to vote or votes for the first time
	❖ General involvement in community activities	❖ Learner increases involvement in community activities
Family	❖ Involvement in children's education	❖ Learner increases help given for children's school work, contact with teachers to discuss education, and involvement in children's school
	❖ Involvement in children's literacy-related activities	❖ Learner increases the amount read to children, visits libraries, or purchases books or magazines for children
Student status	❖ Low-income status	❖ Low income, not low income
	❖ Displaced homemaker	❖ Displaced homemaker, not displaced homemaker
	❖ Single-parent status	❖ Single parent, not single parent
	❖ Dislocated worker	❖ Dislocated worker, not dislocated worker
	❖ Learning disabled adult	❖ Learning disabled, not learning disabled

- ***Outcome measures*** include educational gain, entered employment, retained employment, receipt of secondary school diploma or general education development (GED) certificate, and placement in postsecondary education or training.

- ***Descriptive measures*** include student demographics, reasons for attending, and student status.

- ***Participation measures*** include contact hours received and enrollment in instructional programs for special populations or topics, such as family literacy or workplace literacy.

Performance standards required by WIA will be set for the core outcome measures and awarding of incentive grants will be tied to these performance standards.

The NRS secondary measures include additional outcome measures related to employment, family, and community. Adult education stakeholders believe these are important to understanding and evaluating adult education programs. States are *not required to report on the secondary measures* and no performance standards are tied to them. The optional secondary measures are not used as a basis for incentive grant awards. There also are secondary student status measures that define target populations identified in WIA. These measures are provided for States that want to report on the services provided to these populations.

Core Outcome Measures

Student outcome measures are the central measures of the NRS. Although they are not the only measures that could be used to evaluate adult education programs, the outcome measures selected represent what a broad consensus of adult educators believe are appropriate measures for providing a national picture of program performance. The multiyear process employed by the NRS to identify and define the measures included input from State directors of adult education, Federal education officials, local education providers, representatives of volunteer literacy organizations, and experts in performance accountability systems.

The five NRS core outcome measures were selected to address the requirements for core indicators of performance in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of the WIA. Exhibit 1.2 shows how the measures relate to these requirements and goals for adult education stated in the legislation.

Educational gain, a key outcome in the NRS, provides a measure of student literacy gains resulting from instruction. This measure applies to all students in the program (except predesignated "work-based project learners," which is described below under "Secondary Measures"). To determine this measure, local programs assess students on intake to determine their *educational functioning level*. There are four levels for adult basic education (ABE), two for adult secondary education (ASE), and six levels of ESL. Each level describes a set of skills and competencies that students entering at that level can do in the areas of reading, writing, numeracy, speaking, listening, and functional and workplace areas. Using these descriptors as guidelines, programs determine the appropriate initial level at which to place students using a standardized assessment procedure (i.e., a test or a standardized performance-based assessment). The program decides the skill areas in which to assess the student based on the student's instructional needs and goals.

Exhibit 1.2
Goals and Core Indicators of the WIA Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and NRS Core Outcome Measures

Goals of Adult Education Described in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of WIA	Core Indicators Required by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of WIA	NRS Core Outcome Measures
Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency Assist parents to obtain the skills necessary to be full partners in their children's educational development	Improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language; numeracy; problemsolving; English-language acquisition; other literacy skills	Educational gains (achieve skills to advance educational functioning level)
	Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment, or career advancement	• Entered employment • Retained employment • Placement in postsecondary education or training
Assist adults in the completion of secondary school education	Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent	Receipt of a secondary school diploma or GED

After a predetermined amount of instruction or time period determined by each State, the program conducts followup assessments of students in the same skill areas and uses the functioning level descriptors to determine whether the students have advanced one or more levels or are progressing within the same level. The State has discretion to establish the standardized student assessment method used within the State, as well as procedures for progress assessment, and must develop a written statewide assessment policy describing assessments and procedures for approval from DAEL. All assessments and procedures must conform to standard psychometric criteria for validity and reliability as defined by DAEL. Upon DAEL approval, States may also use additional educational levels and skill area descriptors, as long as they are compatible with NRS levels and skills.

The remaining core outcome measures are *followup* measures that are reported some time after the student leaves the program. However, the followup measures apply *only* to students who enter the program with goals related to the measures. For unemployed students who enter the program with a goal of obtaining employment, there are two followup measures: entered employment (whether the student obtained a job by the end of the first quarter after leaving) and retained employment (whether the student still has the job in the third quarter after exit). This measure also applies to employed students who have a goal of improved or retained employment. For students whose goal is to advance to further education or training, there is a measure of entry into another such program. For students who entered with a goal of obtaining a secondary school diploma or GED, there is a measure of whether the student obtained the credential.

Descriptive and Participation Measures

The NRS *descriptive* measures are student demographics, status in several areas, and goals for attending. These measures allow for a description and understanding of who attends adult education programs and for what reasons. The measures also allow for analyses of the performance

of specific groups of students attending adult education programs, such as unemployed students or students receiving public assistance. The demographic measures include ethnicity, age, and gender; and status measures include employment status and whether the student has a disability or is on public assistance.

For the first time at the national level, the NRS requires collection of student goals for attending the program (both as main and secondary reasons). The goals designated are used to compute the proportion of students achieving the followup measures. Note that goal attainment itself is *not* an outcome measure in the NRS, although it could be computed from information in the NRS and used as an outcome.

Two *participation* measures—contact hours and program enrollment type—are collected for both descriptive and analytic purposes. These measures record the amount of instruction students receive and the number of students attending in areas such as family literacy and workplace literacy.

Secondary Measures

The NRS secondary measures are optional measures of student outcomes and status that States *are not required to use* and should not be used as a basis for assessing State performance under WIA. No performance standards will be tied to these measures and they will not be used to determine State eligibility for incentive awards under WIA. The NRS includes these measures because many stakeholders during the consensus-building process believed these measures were important to the identity of the program and the goals and purposes of adult education.

The secondary measures are in the areas of employment, community, and family. The employment measure indicates whether the student's public assistance grant was reduced or eliminated due to employment. This measure applies only to students receiving public assistance upon entry.

In the area of community, there are three measures covering citizenship, voting, and community involvement. For students enrolled in EL Civics and citizenship programs, there is a measure of whether students have achieved citizenship skills. Voting for the first time or registering to vote and more involvement in community groups or activities are the remaining measures. The family measures include increased involvement in children's literacy activities and in children's education.

A measure added to the NRS in 2000 is *completed work-based project learner activity*. Project learners are students enrolled in a class with 30 hours or less of scheduled instruction that has a goal of teaching specific workplace-related literacy skills. On enrollment, the learner and the program determine the specific skills to be learned and the method to assess the skill attainment. The assessment must employ a standardized test or be a performance-based assessment with standardized scoring rubrics. The assessment must conform to commonly accepted psychometric criteria for validity and reliability and meet standards for acceptable assessments, as defined by DAEL. Programs do not collect the core outcome measures on students designated as project learners, and these learners are counted separately. This measure is included within the NRS to allow States and programs to serve learners with a short-term learning need, without having a detrimental effect on core outcome measure performance.

Secondary student status measures of low-income status, displaced homemaker, and single-parent status are included, because these groups are specific target populations under WIA. States that must report their services to these populations can use these measures, which are defined identically to the U.S. Department of Labor definitions. There is also a secondary status measure to identify learning-disabled adults to assist programs in reaching these students.

NRS Methodologies

To help ensure comparability of measures across States, the NRS has established procedures for collecting all of the NRS measures. The NRS has three methodologies for collecting measures: direct program reporting, local followup survey, and data matching. With the *direct program reporting* methodology, local programs collect the information directly from the learner while the learner is enrolled and receiving instruction. The information is normally obtained as part of the intake process (through student assessment) or ongoing throughout the course of instruction. Measures collected with this methodology are the demographic, student status, and student participation measures, as well as the educational gain measure and the secondary measures of project learner completion and citizenship skill attainment.

Two methodologies, a follow-up survey or data matching, are offered for collecting the NRS core outcome measures that require followup—the employment-related measures, receipt of a secondary diploma or GED, and placement in postsecondary education or training. Followup methodologies also may be used to collect the optional secondary outcome measures. The *local followup survey* methodology employs a survey of learners who left the program during the program year. The local program, State, or third-party contractor may conduct the survey as long as it includes students from each local program. To conduct this survey, programs must include all of the students in the program with one or more of the followup goals. For the survey, in some cases, programs can draw from a statistically valid random sample of learners who achieved one or more of the goals. The procedures for conducting the survey are to be determined by the State but must follow accepted scientific practice for producing valid results. The State is required to establish a policy for followup for DAEL approval that clearly describes the procedures to be followed. Students with a goal of obtaining employment are to be surveyed at the beginning of the first quarter after leaving the program. Retained employment must be collected in the third quarter after exit, and the other measures can be collected at any time during the year after the student exits the program.

An alternative way to collect the followup measures is a *data matching* methodology. Data matching refers to the procedures whereby agencies serving common clients pool their data to identify outcomes unique to each program. Matching is achieved using student Social Security numbers and is typically done at the State level. For example, to determine whether students obtained employment after leaving the program, the State adult education agency would match the Social Security numbers and dates of attendance of students who had obtained employment in the State wage record database for the appropriate calendar quarter. States may use either followup method, or a combination of the two methods, to collect NRS followup measures.

NRS Guidebooks, Resources, and Revised Guidelines

Since the last edition of the *NRS Implementation Guidelines* in March 2001, DAEL has offered additional training and guidebooks to clarify NRS requirements and to assist States in the

collection and use of quality data for program management and improvement efforts. The following guidebooks were prepared by NRS project staff at the American Institutes for Research (AIR):

- The *Guide for Improving NRS Data Quality* explains in greater detail ways to standardize and improve data collection procedures for the NRS.
- *Using NRS Data for Program Management and Improvement* offers a data use and program change model and suggests ways to use NRS data.
- *NRS Data Monitoring for Program Improvement* explains the use of performance standards in program monitoring and suggests ways for States to effectively monitor local program performance.
- *Developing an NRS Data System* offers help to State and local adult education staff so that they can make informed decisions on the design and development of a data system for the NRS. It outlines a process for identifying requirements that reflect the range of needs from functional and operational perspectives.

Each guidebook has accompanying training materials, and State staff was trained in the use of the guides and materials at regional trainings shortly after the release of each guidebook.

There also are two NRS Web sites, NRSWEB (http://www.nrsweb.org) and NRSONLINE (http://www.nrsonline.org). NRSWEB is the NRS project Web site that includes comprehensive information about the NRS and links to NRS documents and other resources. NRSONLINE is a training site that has online courses about NRS requirements, data quality, and data use for State and local adult education program staff. AIR has developed all NRS documents, training courses, and Web sites under contract to the U.S. Department of Education.

OVERVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT

The remainder of this document presents NRS measures, methods, reporting requirements, and NRS data collection policies in greater detail. Chapter II presents definitions of all NRS measures and the methodologies for collecting them. Chapter III presents an overview of the NRS data collection framework and describes how information flows from the classroom and program to the State and Federal levels. Chapter III discusses the responsibilities of Federal, State, and local agencies in the data collection and reporting processes. Chapter IV discusses quality control procedures and recommendations for local student record systems to enable NRS reporting. There are three appendixes. Appendix A offers a sample followup survey and model methodologies, appendix B presents a copy of the Data Quality Standards Checklist, and appendix C provides the NRS reporting tables.

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CHAPTER II. NRS MEASURE DEFINITIONS AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The NRS includes *core measures* and *secondary measures*. The core measures are *required* and include outcome, descriptive, and participation measures that reflect the core indicator requirements of the WIA. States must report the required measures on *all students who receive 12 hours or more of service*. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) uses these measures to judge State performance, including eligibility for incentive grants. The secondary measures include additional, optional outcomes related to employment, family, and community that adult education stakeholders believe are important to understanding and evaluating adult education programs. States are not required to report on the secondary measures and no performance standards are tied to them. The optional secondary measures are not used as a basis for incentive grant awards. There also are secondary measures of student status that include target populations identified under WIA. These measures are included for States that want to report on services provided to these populations. The definitions are identical to those used by the U.S. Department of Labor, which aids in uniform reporting under both Title I and Title II of WIA.

This chapter presents the definitions for the all of the NRS measures, the applicable student population to which the measure applies, and Federal reporting requirements. Along with each measure is a discussion of the data collection policies and procedures that States and local programs should have in place to collect the measures. The chapter first presents the core outcome measures, followed by the required demographic, status, and participation measures. The chapter concludes with definitions and requirements for NRS secondary, optional measures.

CORE OUTCOME MEASURES

The NRS core outcome measures are: educational gain, entered and retained employment, receipt of a secondary credential, and entered postsecondary education. States set performance standards for these measures, and program effectiveness is judged in part by whether these standards are met. This section presents the definition, requirements, and methodology for each of these core measures.

Educational Gain

Educational gain measures the primary purpose of the adult basic education program: to improve the basic literacy skills of participants. This goal is the reason that all students are counted in the educational gain measure. The NRS approach to measuring educational gain is to define a set of *educational functioning levels* at which students are initially placed based on their abilities to perform literacy-related tasks in specific content areas. After a set time period or number of instructional hours set by the State, students are again assessed to determine their skill levels. If their skills have improved sufficiently to be placed one or more levels higher, an "advance" is recorded for that student. Exhibit 2.1 describes the educational functioning levels.

Definition: *Learner completes or advances one or more educational functioning levels from the starting level measured on entry into the program.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Exhibit 2.1
Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS			
Literacy Level	**Basic Reading and Writing**	**Numeracy Skills**	**Functional and Workplace Skills**
Beginning ABE Literacy Test Benchmark: TABE (7–8 and 9–10) scale scores (grade level 0–1.9): Reading: 367 and below Total Math: 313 and below Language: 392 and below CASAS scale scores Reading: 200 and below Math: 200 and below Writing: 200 and below ABLE scale scores (grade level 0–1.9): Reading: 523 and below Math: 521 and below	Individual has no or minimal reading and writing skills. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument. At the upper range of this level, individual can recognize, read, and write letters and numbers but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading. Can write a limited number of basic sight words and familiar words and phrases; may also be able to write simple sentences or phrases, including very simple messages. Can write basic personal information. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear, inconsistently uses simple punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks), and contains frequent errors in spelling.	Individual has little or no recognition of numbers or simple counting skills or may have only minimal skills, such as the ability to add or subtract single digit numbers.	Individual has little or no ability to read basic signs or maps and can provide limited personal information on simple forms. The individual can handle routine entry level jobs that require little or no basic written communication or computational skills and no knowledge of computers or other technology.
Beginning Basic Education Test Benchmark: TABE (7–8 and 9–10) scale scores (grade level 2–3.9): Reading: 368–460 Total Math: 314–441 Language: 393–490 CASAS scale scores Reading: 201–210 Math: 201–210 Writing: 201–225 ABLE scale scores (grade level 2–3.9): Reading: 525–612 Math: 530–591	Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety, but individual shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).	Individual can count, add, and subtract three digit numbers, can perform multiplication through 12, can identify simple fractions, and perform other simple arithmetic operations.	Individual is able to read simple directions, signs, and maps, fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write phone messages, and make simple changes. There is minimal knowledge of and experience with using computers and related technology. The individual can handle basic entry level jobs that require minimal literacy skills; can recognize very short, explicit, pictorial texts (e.g., understands logos related to worker safety before using a piece of machinery); and can read want ads and complete simple job applications.

Notes: The descriptors are *entry-level* descriptors and are illustrative of what a typical student functioning at that level should be able to do. They are not a full description of skills for the level. ABLE = Adult Basic Learning Examination; CASAS = Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System; SPL = student performance levels; and TABE = Test of Adult Basic Education.

Exhibit 2.1 (Continued)
Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS			
Literacy Level	**Basic Reading and Writing**	**Numeracy Skills**	**Functional and Workplace Skills**
Low Intermediate Basic Education Test benchmark: TABE (7–8 and 9–10) scale scores (grade level 4–5.9): Reading: 461–517 Total Math: 442–505 Language: 491–523 CASAS scale scores Reading: 211–220 Math: 211–220 Writing: 226–242 ABLE scale scores (grade level 4–5.9): Reading: 613–644 Math: 593–641	Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with a main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.	Individual can perform with high accuracy all four basic math operations using whole numbers up to three digits and can identify and use all basic mathematical symbols.	Individual is able to handle basic reading, writing, and computational tasks related to life roles, such as completing medical forms, order forms, or job applications; and can read simple charts, graphs, labels, and payroll stubs and simple authentic material if familiar with the topic. The individual can use simple computer programs and perform a sequence of routine tasks given direction using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer operation). The individual can qualify for entry level jobs that require following basic written instructions and diagrams with assistance, such as oral clarification; can write a short report or message to fellow workers; and can read simple dials and scales and take routine measurements.
High Intermediate Basic Education Test benchmark: TABE (7–8 and 9–10) scale scores (grade level 6–8.9): Reading: 518–566 Total Math: 506–565 Language: 524–559 CASAS scale scores Reading: 221–235 Math: 221–235 Writing: 243–260 ABLE scale score (grade level 6–8.9): Reading: 646–680 Math: 643–693 WorkKeys scale scores: Reading for Information: 75–78 Writing: 75–77 Applied Mathematics: 75–77	Individual is able to read simple descriptions and narratives on familiar subjects or from which new vocabulary can be determined by context and can make some minimal inferences about familiar texts and compare and contrast information from such texts but not consistently. The individual can write simple narrative descriptions and short essays on familiar topics and has consistent use of basic punctuation but makes grammatical errors with complex structures.	Individual can perform all four basic math operations with whole numbers and fractions; can determine correct math operations for solving narrative math problems and can convert fractions to decimals and decimals to fractions; and can perform basic operations on fractions.	Individual is able to handle basic life skills tasks such as graphs, charts, and labels and can follow multistep diagrams; can read authentic materials on familiar topics, such as simple employee handbooks and payroll stubs; can complete forms such as a job application and reconcile a bank statement. Can handle jobs that involve following simple written instructions and diagrams; can read procedural texts, where the information is supported by diagrams, to remedy a problem, such as locating a problem with a machine or carrying out repairs using a repair manual. The individual can learn or work with most basic computer software, such as using a word processor to produce own texts, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.

Exhibit 2.1 (Continued)
Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS			
Literacy Level	**Basic Reading and Writing**	**Numeracy Skills**	**Functional and Workplace Skills**
Low Adult Secondary Education Test benchmark: TABE (7–8 and 9–10): scale scores (grade level 9–10.9): Reading: 567–595 Total Math: 566–594 Language: 560–585 CASAS scale scores Reading: 236–245 Math: 236–245 Writing: 261–270 ABLE scale scores (grade level 9–10.9): Reading: 682–697 Math: 694–716 WorkKeys scale scores: Reading for Information: 79–81 Writing: 78–85 Applied Mathematics: 78–81	Individual can comprehend expository writing and identify spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors; can comprehend a variety of materials such as periodicals and nontechnical journals on common topics; can comprehend library reference materials and compose multiparagraph essays; can listen to oral instructions and write an accurate synthesis of them; and can identify the main idea in reading selections and use a variety of context issues to determine meaning. Writing is organized and cohesive with few mechanical errors; can write using a complex sentence structure; and can write personal notes and letters that accurately reflect thoughts.	Individual can perform all basic math functions with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions; can interpret and solve simple algebraic equations, tables, and graphs and can develop own tables and graphs; and can use math in business transactions.	Individual is able or can learn to follow simple multistep directions and read common legal forms and manuals; can integrate information from texts, charts, and graphs; can create and use tables and graphs; can complete forms and applications and complete resumes; can perform jobs that require interpreting information from various sources and writing or explaining tasks to other workers; is proficient using computers and can use most common computer applications; can understand the impact of using different technologies; and can interpret the appropriate use of new software and technology.

Exhibit 2.1 (Continued)
Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS			
Literacy Level	**Basic Reading and Writing**	**Numeracy Skills**	**Functional and Workplace Skills**
High Adult Secondary Education Test benchmark: TABE (7–8 and 9–10): scale scores (grade level 11–12): Reading: 596 and above Total Math: 595 and above Language: 586 and above CASAS scale scores Reading: 246 and above Math: 246 and above Writing: 271 and above ABLE scale scores (grade level 11–12): Reading: 699 and above Math: 717 and above WorkKeys scale scores: Reading for Information: 82–90 Writing: 86–90 Applied Mathematics: 82–90	Individual can comprehend, explain, and analyze information from a variety of literacy works, including primary source materials and professional journals, and can use context cues and higher order processes to interpret meaning of written material. Writing is cohesive with clearly expressed ideas supported by relevant detail, and individual can use varied and complex sentence structures with few mechanical errors.	Individual can make mathematical estimates of time and space and can apply principles of geometry to measure angles, lines, and surfaces and can also apply trigonometric functions.	Individual is able to read technical information and complex manuals; can comprehend some college level books and apprenticeship manuals; can function in most job situations involving higher order thinking; can read text and explain a procedure about a complex and unfamiliar work procedure, such as operating a complex piece of machinery; can evaluate new work situations and processes; and can work productively and collaboratively in groups and serve as facilitator and reporter of group work. The individual is able to use common software and learn new software applications; can define the purpose of new technology and software and select appropriate technology; can adapt use of software or technology to new situations; and can instruct others, in written or oral form, on software and technology use.
Beginning ESL Literacy Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 180 and below Listening: 180 and below Oral BEST: 0–15 (SPL 0–1) BEST Plus: 400 and below (SPL 0–1) Literacy BEST: 0–7 (SPL 0–1)	Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or phrases.	Individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument.	Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology.

Exhibit 2.1 (Continued)
Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS			
Literacy Level	**Basic Reading and Writing**	**Numeracy Skills**	**Functional and Workplace Skills**
Beginning ESL Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 181–200 Math: 181–200 Writing: 200 and below Oral BEST 16–41 (SPL 2–3) BEST Plus: 401–438 (SPL 2–3) Literacy BEST: 8–46 (SPL 2–4)	Individual can understand frequently used words in context and very simple phrases spoken slowly and with some repetition. There is little communicative output and only in the most routine situations and little or no control over basic grammar. Survival needs can be communicated simply, and there is some understanding of simple questions.	Individual can recognize, read, and write numbers and letters but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading; can write a limited number of basic sight words and familiar words and phrases; may also be able to write simple sentences or phrases, including very simple messages. Can write basic personal information. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear, uses inconsistent simple punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks), and contains frequent errors in spelling.	Individual functions with difficulty in situations related to immediate needs and in limited social situations; has some simple oral communication abilities using simple learned and repeated phrases; may need frequent repetition; can provide personal information on simple forms; can recognize common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as labels and product names; can handle routine entry level jobs that require only the most basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. There is minimal knowledge or experience using computers or technology.
Low Intermediate ESL Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 201–210 Math: 201–210 Writing: 201–225 Oral BEST: 42–50 (SPL 4) BEST Plus: 439–472 (SPL 4) Literacy BEST: 47–53 (SPL 5)	Individual can understand simple learned phrases and limited new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with frequent repetition; can ask and respond to questions using such phrases; can express basic survival needs and participate in some routine social conversations, although with some difficulty; and has some control of basic grammar.	Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety but shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).	Individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs, and maps; can fill out simple forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; and can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication but in which job tasks can be demonstrated. Individual can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).
High Intermediate ESL Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 211–220 Math: 211–220 Writing: 226–242 Oral BEST: 51–57 (SPL 5) BEST Plus: 473–506 (SPL 5) Literacy BEST: 54–65 (SPL 6)	Individual can understand learned phrases and short new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly and with some repetition; can communicate basic survival needs with some help; can participate in conversation in limited social situations and use new phrases with hesitation; and relies on description and concrete terms. There is inconsistent control of more complex grammar.	Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.	Individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction, and has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects; can write messages and notes related to basic needs; can complete basic medical forms and job applications; and can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.

Exhibit 2.1 (Continued)
Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS			
Literacy Level	**Basic Reading and Writing**	**Numeracy Skills**	**Functional and Workplace Skills**
Low Advanced ESL Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 221–235 Math: 221–235 Writing: 243–260 Oral BEST 58–64 (SPL 6) BEST Plus: 507–540 (SPL 6) Literacy BEST: 66 and above (SPL 7)	Individual can converse on many everyday subjects and some subjects with unfamiliar vocabulary but may need repetition, rewording, or slower speech; can speak creatively but with hesitation; can clarify general meaning by rewording and has control of basic grammar; and understands descriptive and spoken narrative and can comprehend abstract concepts in familiar contexts.	Individual is able to read simple descriptions and narratives on familiar subjects or from which new vocabulary can be determined by context and can make some minimal inferences about familiar texts and compare and contrast information from such texts but not consistently. The individual can write simple narrative descriptions and short essays on familiar topics, such as customs in native country and has consistent use of basic punctuation but makes grammatical errors with complex structures.	Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and can communicate on the telephone on familiar topics; can interpret simple charts and graphics; and can handle jobs that require simple oral and written instructions, multistep diagrams, and limited public interaction. The individual can use all basic software applications, understand the impact of technology, and select the correct technology in a new situation.
High Advanced ESL Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 236–245 Math: 236–245 Writing: 261–270 Oral BEST 65 and above (SPL 7) BEST Plus: 541–598 (SPL 7) Exit Criteria: BEST Plus 599 and higher (SPL 8)	Individual can understand and participate effectively in face-to-face conversations on everyday subjects spoken at normal speed; can converse and understand independently in survival, work, and social situations; can expand on basic ideas in conversation but with some hesitation; and can clarify general meaning and control basic grammar but still lacks total control over complex structures.	Individual can read authentic materials on everyday subjects and can handle most reading related to life roles; can consistently and fully interpret descriptive narratives on familiar topics and gain meaning from unfamiliar topics; and uses increased control of language and meaning-making strategies to gain meaning of unfamiliar texts. The individual can write multiparagraph essays with a clear introduction and development of ideas; writing contains well formed sentences, appropriate mechanics and spelling, and few grammatical errors.	Individual has a general ability to use English effectively to meet most routine social and work situations; can interpret routine charts, graphs, and tables and complete forms; has high ability to communicate on the telephone and understand radio and television; can meet work demands that require reading and writing and can interact with the public. Individual can use common software and learn new applications; can define the purpose of software and select new applications appropriately; and can instruct others in use of software and technology.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners who complete a level during the program is reported, and a rate or percentage of level completion is computed. The number who continue in the program after completing a level, the number who fail to complete a level and leave the program, and the number who remain in the same level are recorded to obtain a fuller picture of student flow and retention.

Educational Functioning Levels

The NRS divides educational functioning into six levels for both ABE and ESL. The levels for ABE are beginning literacy, beginning basic education, low and high intermediate basic education, and low and high adult secondary education. Each ABE level has a description of basic reading, writing, numeracy, and functional and workplace skills that can be expected from a person functioning at that level. The six ESL levels are beginning literacy, beginning ESL, low and high intermediate ESL, and low and high advanced ESL. The ESL levels describe speaking and listening skills and basic reading, writing, and functional workplace skills that can be expected from a person functioning at that level. The skill descriptors illustrate the types of skills students functioning at that level are likely to have. The descriptors do not provide a complete or comprehensive delineation of all of the skills at that level but provide examples to guide assessment and instruction. States and local programs may use additional or different skills and levels if desired, as long as these skills and levels can be matched to NRS levels and skills and can be measured with assessments that meet standard psychometric criteria for validity and reliability. State and local skill levels must be collapsed into NRS levels for Federal reporting.

At the low and intermediate levels, the basic reading and writing skills are identical for both ABE and ESL. At the higher levels (secondary level for ABE, advanced level for ESL), the reading and writing skills are designed to be slightly higher for ABE than for ESL, because the adult secondary level is designed to be the highest level. The functional and workplace skills for ABE and ESL also differ somewhat by having a stronger second language focus for ESL. Speaking and listening skills are only described for ESL, and numeracy is only described for ABE to reflect common instructional practice. Programs, however, may apply the numeracy descriptors to ESL students and the speaking and listening descriptors to ABE students if the students' needs and the program's instruction warrant this approach.

- The descriptors are *entry-level* descriptors and are illustrative of what a typical student functioning at that level should be able to do. They are not a full description of skills for a particular level. When a student has skills at one or more levels above the placement level, he or she has completed that level and can advance to the next level.

- Students do not need to be assessed in all of the areas described in the level descriptors. The local program must decide, in accordance with State guidelines, the skill areas most relevant to each student's needs or the program's curriculum and assess students in these areas. At a minimum, students must be assessed in basic reading, writing or math.

- If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different abilities in different areas, the program should place the student according to the *lowest* functioning level. For example, if a student is at the beginning level in reading and the low intermediate level in numeracy, then the student would be placed in the beginning level. The lowest functioning level also should be used to determine educational gain in subsequent assessments.

State Responsibilities in Assessing and Measuring Educational Gain

To measure educational gain within the NRS, States are required to have a written assessment policy for its local programs. The assessment policy must identify (1) the tests to be used to measure educational gain for both ABE and ESL students, (2) when pre- and posttests are to be administered, and (3) how tests scores are to be tied to the NRS educational functioning levels for initial placement and for reporting student advancement across levels. The assessments allowed by the State must conform to standard psychometric criteria for validity and reliability and must meet the standards provided by DAEL.

For the educational functioning levels to be meaningful, assessments need to be administered in a standardized and consistent way by all programs in each State. When these procedures are not followed correctly or consistently, the determination of educational functioning level is invalid and not comparable across programs or possibly even within programs, making the data validity questionable. The following guidelines help ensure valid and reliable assessment and measurement of education gain within the State.

Standardized Assessment

To ensure comparability of the meaning of the educational functioning levels across all programs in the State, all programs must use *standardized assessment procedures* that conform to the State's assessment policy when determining students' educational functioning levels. The assessment procedure must be a standardized test or a standardized performance-based assessment with a standardized scoring rubric. If performance-based assessment is used, then the assessment must meet standard psychometric criteria for validity and reliability, including scoring rubrics that are based on objective, observable criteria. States should consult the NRS document *Developing Performance Assessments for Adult Learners: A Summary* (available at http://www.nrsweb.org) for further guidance on developing performance-based assessments. Program staff should be trained in test administration and scoring to ensure that the measures are valid and reliable across programs and students.

States must require local programs to measure educational gain with standardized assessments that are appropriate for measuring educational gain within the NRS framework and conform to accepted psychometric standards for validity and reliability, as described by the National Academy of Sciences and similar sources (see for example, Mislevy, R.J. & Knowles, K.T. (Eds.). (2002). *Performance Assessments for Adult Education: Exploring the Measurement Issues.* National Academy Press: Washington, DC). Assessments for measuring educational gain for the NRS must be evaluated using the following criteria.

Intended purpose of the instrument

When evaluating assessments for use in measuring educational gain, States should assess what the assessment was originally intended to measure and its purpose. Generally speaking, tests or other assessment instruments are not inherently valid or invalid; rather, their validity hinges on how they are used. Assessments that measure educational gain should be designed to measure the development of basic English literacy and language skills through pre- and posttesting. This is not to say that tests developed and validated for one purpose can never be used for different purposes, only that the converse should not be taken for granted either. Moreover, it is usually true that the greater the difference between the intended purpose underlying the development of a given instrument and

that associated with the needs of the NRS, the less likely that the instrument will be suitable for the NRS, regardless of its validity with respect to its original purpose.

Procedures used to develop/maintain the instrument

Relevant information associated with the development process includes such details as the nature of the sample to whom the assessment was administered for the pilot or field testing (e.g., how many examinees were administered each item? Were any measures taken to ensure the motivation of the examinees? From what population were the samples drawn?), and what steps were taken to ensure the quality of the items (e.g., how are items screened for fairness and sensitivity? How are they screened for psychometric quality?). With respect to the former, it is of particular relevance to ascertain the similarity of the samples used to develop the instrument with that of the adult education population. The greater the similarity between the samples used in developing the instrument and the population of interest to the NRS, the greater the likelihood that the results associated with those samples will generalize to that population.

Other information associated with the processes used to maintain the assessment that States should consider include the rate at which new forms are developed, the steps taken to ensure their comparability with existing forms, and the extent to which security is maintained. It is essential that multiple forms of each instrument be available, that scores associated with these forms be equivalent in meaning, and that the security of the forms be maintained at all times.

Matching instrument content to NRS educational functioning level descriptors

Validity is concerned with the *accuracy* of measurement; in other words, the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. *Content validity* of an assessment is the extent to which the items/tasks of the instrument cover the domain of interest. For the NRS, the domain of interest is comprised of the skills used to describe the educational functioning levels for ABE and ESL. To establish the content validity with respect to the requirements of the NRS, there must be evidence that the items/tasks of that instrument measure the skills associated with the educational functioning levels (and, by the same token, do *not* measure skills *not* associated with the levels).

Typically, content validity is established via the judgments of *subject matter experts* (SMEs). For instance, a panel of such experts might be asked to judge the extent to which the items/tasks of a given instrument require the types and levels of skills described for a particular educational functioning level. In general, the greater the judged overlap between the content of the instrument and the skills associated with a given level descriptor, the greater the content validity of the instrument with respect to its use as a measure of educational attainment at that level. It is important to point out that the content validity of a given instrument may vary with respect to different educational functioning levels; that is, it may provide adequate coverage of the skills associated with some levels but less than adequate coverage of the skills associated with other levels. Finally, it should be noted that the usefulness of content validity evidence is directly proportional to the quality of the judgments provided. Consequently, the test publisher should establish the credentials of the SMEs whose judgments were obtained, including their familiarity with adult education and the NRS levels, along with information regarding the number of experts used and the degree of agreement among them, both by skill and level.

Matching scores on the instrument to NRS educational functioning levels

The assessment must provide a way to translate scores on the assessment to the NRS educational functioning levels and the method used to establish this translation. States also should review the adequacy of the procedures used to establish the translations and the degree of uncertainty (or error) associated with them. The process used to identify the level of performance on a given instrument that is associated with a given level of achievement in some domain is generally referred to as *standard setting*. Although there are many different approaches to standard setting, most rely heavily on the judgments of SMEs. It is important for the test publisher to report the credentials of the experts making the standard setting judgments and the number of the experts used and their degree of agreement. The latter information is directly related to the degree of error associated with the final translations and indicates the extent to which the cut scores to the NRS might be expected to differ if they had been established by a different (though similar) panel of experts. The greater the degree of agreement is among experts, the greater the amount of faith that can be placed in the resulting translations.

Reliability/classification consistency

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency in performance on an assessment; that is, the extent to which an examinee would be expected to perform similarly across multiple administrations of the instrument or under different conditions. An important condition that can differ across administrations of a particular instrument to be used for the NRS is the form of the instrument administered. More specifically, because educational gain is determined as a function of the difference between an examinee's pre- and posttest performance *as measured on different forms of the instrument*, it is essential to review the test publisher's information regarding the expected similarity of performance across forms in the absence of instruction or other external interventions. The greater the similarity in performance across forms, the greater the *alternate forms reliability* of the instrument and the stronger the inference that improvements in performance between pre- and posttesting is attributable to something other than measurement error associated with differences across forms.

Note that alternate forms reliability information should be provided for both the raw (or number correct) scores associated with the assessment being reviewed and the translated NRS educational functioning level classifications. It is the consistency with which examinees are classified into the educational functioning levels that is the most important consideration for determining the appropriateness of the instrument for use in the NRS, because it is movement across the classifications that forms the basis for evaluating educational gain. Also, because the consistency of performance measurement may vary with respect to educational functioning levels, information regarding classification consistency should be reported for each level that the instrument is being considered for use in measuring educational gain. Last, it is important for the test publisher to provide information regarding the nature of the sample used to estimate the reliability of the instrument because the greater the differences between the sample and the target population (e.g., ABE students), the less generalizable the reliability estimates will be.

Construct validity

Other types of validity information that are important in determining the appropriateness of a given instrument for measuring educational gain for the NRS fall under the global heading of *construct validity*.

Convergent validity concerns the extent to which the scores on the instrument are related to scores on other instruments designed to measure the same or very similar constructs. States should review information provided by test publishers regarding the degree of relationship between examinee performance on their instrument and performance on one or more other measures currently approved for measuring educational gain in the NRS. This information should be provided with respect to the raw scores associated with the assessment and with the corresponding NRS educational functioning level classifications. Likewise, information should be provided regarding the nature of the sample from which the data were collected to determine the extent to which the results are likely to generalize to the population of interest.

Other types of information States should consider to evaluate construct validity of an assessment include evidence regarding the extent to which scores on that instrument are free from sources of variance not relevant to the skills the assessment measures, such as practice effects or cultural-based knowledge, and the extent to which performance on the assessment is related to other variables that it should be related to, such as hours of instruction or other important outcome measures (e.g., attainment/retention of employment and acquisition of academic credentials).

The foregoing is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the types of information that might be provided by a test publisher in support of the validity of a given instrument, nor is it meant as a list of information that must be provided. Rather, this guidance is intended to suggest to States the kinds of information that would be considered relevant in determining whether a particular instrument is appropriate, valid, and reliable for measuring educational gain as a result of participation in an adult education program. Exhibit 2.2 summarizes the guidance for evaluating assessments.

Placing Students in Educational Functioning Levels

To assist in placement decisions, test benchmarks are provided for the levels. Tests included for ABE are CASAS; TABE (forms 7–8 and 9–10), reading and total math scale scores and grade equivalents (ABLE, form E–F), reading and math, and WorkKeys: Reading for Information, Writing, and Applied Mathematics (for high intermediate ABE and above only). For ESL, the test benchmarks include CASAS and scores on BEST, BEST Literacy, the oral BEST, and the BEST Plus. SPL tied to the BEST and BEST Plus also are included. These benchmarks are provided as examples of how students functioning at each level would perform on the tests. The tests should not be considered equivalent, however, and do not necessarily measure the same skills. In addition, the inclusion of these tests does not imply that they must or should be used in the determination of educational functioning levels or that they are the only tests that States can use.

The NRS requires that local programs assess and place all students into an educational functioning level at intake and *at least one other time* during the program year. Programs should administer the initial assessment at intake or within a short period thereafter and administer followup or posttest assessments according to State policy. The followup assessment should occur after a set instruction time, either in hours (e.g., after 50 hours of instruction) or months (e.g., the last 2 weeks of November or the last week of instruction), and should conform to the test publisher's guidelines for the amount of time needed for a student to show a meaningful gain. If more than one assessment is administered, then the program should use the last assessment given as the basis for determining the educational level.

Use of different assessment forms

Assessments designed for multiple administrations on the same students, such as for pre- and posttesting, have different but equivalent versions or *forms*. Pre- and posttesting must use different forms. In addition, some tests, such as TABE, have different forms for student proficiency levels, designated as "easy" and "hard," for example. When using such a test, programs *must* follow the test publisher's guidelines in selecting the correct test form for each student.

Pretest administration time

The initial assessment is the basis for placing students in an entering educational functioning level according to NRS or State definitions. It is the baseline on which programs measure student learning gains. Programs should administer the initial assessment to students at a uniform time shortly after enrollment. This time should be set by State policy and apply to all students to improve test comparability among students. If available, programs should administer a locator test for guidance on the appropriate pretest to use.

Placement policy based on initial assessment

Using the results of the initial assessment, programs should place students at the appropriate NRS educational functioning level or the equivalent State level. States should provide to local programs the criteria for placing students at each educational functioning level, using test scores or the educational level descriptors. Not all of the skill areas described in the level descriptors needs to be used to place students, but the skills used should be the areas most relevant to the students' needs and the program's curriculum. If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has differing abilities in each area, however, NRS policy requires that the program place the student according to the lowest skill area (as discussed earlier in this report).

Established time for postassessment

Just as programs should administer the initial assessment to students at a uniform time, the State also should establish a time for posttesting. This time may be after a set number of instructional hours or months of instruction and should be long enough after the pretest to allow the test to measure gains, as determined by the test's publisher or another reliable source. As noted earlier, local programs must conduct posttests with the parallel form of the same assessment used to place the student.

Level advancement policy based on postassessment

Educational gain is determined by comparing the student's initial educational functioning level with the educational functioning level measured by the followup assessment or posttest. To allow local programs to determine gain, the State must use the educational functioning level definitions and correlate assessment scores to specific levels. It is important to note that *if a student is not posttested, then no advancement can be determined for that student.* The student must remain in the same level as initially placed for NRS reporting.

Exhibit 2.2
Guidance for Evaluating Assessments Used for Measuring Educational Gain

What is the intended purpose of the instrument?

a. What does the instrument's technical manual say about the purpose of the instrument, and how does this match the requirements of the NRS? (The NRS needs instruments that allow examinees to demonstrate their standing on skills represented in the educational functioning level descriptors. It also needs instruments for which multiple parallel forms exist, so that gains in educational functioning can be demonstrated.)

What procedures were used to develop and maintain the instrument?

b. How was the instrument developed? (How similar was the sample[s] of examinees used to develop/evaluate the instrument to the population of interest to the NRS? What steps, if any, were taken to ensure their motivation while responding to the instrument? To what extent have items/tasks on the instrument been reviewed for fairness and sensitivity? To what extent have they been screened for adequacy of psychometric properties? Does the instrument have multiple forms?)

c. How is the instrument maintained? (How frequently, if ever, are new forms of the instrument developed? What steps are taken to ensure the comparability of scores across forms? What steps are taken to maintain the security of the instrument?)

Does the assessment match the content of the NRS educational functioning level descriptors?

d. How adequate are the items/tasks on the instrument at covering the skills used to describe the NRS' educational functioning levels? Are aspects of a given descriptor not covered by any of the items/tasks? Are there items/tasks not associated with any of the descriptors? (Note: it is possible for an instrument to be appropriate for measuring proficiency at some levels but not at others.)

e. What procedures were used to establish the content validity of the instrument? How many SMEs provided judgments linking the items/tasks to the educational functioning level descriptors, and what were their qualifications? To what extent did their judgments agree?

Can the scores on the assessment match the NRS educational functioning levels?

f. What standard setting procedures were used to establish cut scores for transforming raw scores on the instrument to estimates of an examinee's NRS educational functioning level? If judgment-based procedures were used, how many SMEs provided judgments, and what were their qualifications? To what extent did their judgments agree?

g. What is the standard error of each cut score, and how was it established?

Is there evidence of reliability and classification consistency?

h. What is the correlation between raw scores across alternate forms of the instrument? What is the consistency with which examinees are classified into the same NRS educational functioning level across forms?

i. How adequate was the research design that led to these estimates? (What was the size of the sample? How similar was the sample used in the data collection to that of the adult education population? What steps were taken to ensure the motivation of the examinees?)

Has construct validity of the assessment been demonstrated?

j. To what extent do scores (and/or educational functioning classifications) associated with the instrument correlate (or agree) with scores or classifications associated with other instruments already approved by ED for assessing educational gain? To what extent are they related to other relevant variables, such as hours of instruction or other important process or outcome variables? How adequate were the research designs associated with these sources of evidence?

k. What other evidence is available to demonstrate that the instrument measures gains in educational functioning resulting from adult education and not some other construct-irrelevant variables, such as practice effects?

Staff training on administration of assessments

The State should ensure that all local program staff who administers assessments receives training on proper administration procedures. Such training should be provided on an ongoing basis to accommodate new staff and as a refresher to staff who had earlier training. These procedures include the steps outlined above (i.e., use of the correct form of the assessment and administration at the proper time) and also include following the publisher's procedures for giving directions to students, timing the assessment, and not providing help to students. Assessments also should be administered under good conditions (e.g., in a well-lit, quiet room).

Exhibit 2.3 summarizes assessment guidelines for measuring educational gain for the NRS.

Exhibit 2.3
Summary of Assessment Guidelines for Measuring Educational Gain

• Designate standardized assessments.
• Designate use of different forms or versions of the assessment at each administration.
• Establish a uniform time to administer the initial assessment.
• Develop procedures for student placement based on the initial assessment.
• Establish a uniform time for posttest based on test publisher's guidelines.
• Develop a level advancement policy based on the posttest or followup assessment.
• Train staff in administrating the assessments.

FOLLOWUP OUTCOME MEASURES

The NRS followup measures are outcomes that students may achieve at some time following participation in adult education. These measures are:

- Entered employment—whether the student obtained a job.
- Retained employment—whether the student remained in the job.
- Receipt of a secondary school diploma or GED certificate.
- Entered postsecondary education or training.

States are not required to collect all of the followup measures on all students but only on students who have the goal of achieving one or more of these outcomes. For example, the entered employment measure only applies to students who have the goal of getting a job, while the receipt of a secondary school credential measure only applies to learners who want to attain this outcome. These measures are defined in this section, and the procedures for collecting them are presented.

Followup Measure #1: Entered Employment

Definition: *Learner enters employment by the end of the first quarter after the program exit quarter. Employment is working in a paid, unsubsidized job or working 15 hours or more per week in an unpaid job on a farm or business operated by a family member or the student. The exit quarter is the quarter when instruction ends, the learner terminates or has not received instruction for 90 days, and is not scheduled to receive further instruction. A job obtained while the student is enrolled can be counted for entered employment and is reported on exit from the program.*

Applicable Population: Learners who are not employed at time of entry and who have a goal of obtaining employment on exiting during the program year.

Federal Reporting: States report the total number of learners who enter employment and the total number of learners in the relevant population (i.e., number of learners in the workforce who are unemployed at entry and have a goal of obtaining employment) who exit during the program year. Entered employment rate is computed by dividing these numbers.

Followup Measure #2: Retained Employment

Definition: *Learner remains employed in the third quarter after exit quarter.*

Applicable Population: Learners who, at time of entry, are not employed and have a goal of obtaining employment, who enter employment by the first quarter after the exit quarter, and who are employed at entry and have a goal of improved or retained employment.

Federal Reporting: The total number of learners who retain employment is reported and is used to compute a rate or percentage by dividing this total by the total relevant population (i.e., the number of learners in the workforce who are unemployed at entry, have a goal of obtaining employment, and who enter employment; and learners who are employed at entry with a goal of improving or retaining employment). *This measure is not reported for learners exiting in the third or fourth quarters of the program year if the local survey is used (see Survey Guidance, below).*

Followup Measure #3: Receipt of a Secondary School Diploma or GED Certificate

Definition: *The learner obtains certification of attaining passing scores on GED tests, or the learner obtains a diploma or State-recognized equivalent, documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies (high school or adult high school diploma).*

Applicable Population: All learners with a goal of passing the GED tests or obtaining a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent) who exit during the program year.

Federal Reporting: States report the total number of learners who obtain GED certificates and secondary school diplomas and the number of learners with this goal, who exit during the program year. To compute a rate or percentage of attainment, the number of students receiving a secondary school diploma or GED is divided by the total number of learners who had a goal of secondary credential attainment who exit during the program year. Note that if a State has a policy officially recognizing attainment of a foreign language GED as receipt of a secondary school diploma or its

recognized equivalent, the State may also report attainment of a foreign language GED in the NRS for adult literacy.

Followup Measure #4: Entered Postsecondary Education or Training

Definition: *Learner enrolls in a postsecondary educational or occupational skills training program that does not duplicate other services or training received, regardless of whether the prior services or training were completed.*

Applicable Population: All learners with a goal of placement in postsecondary education or training who exit during the program year.

Federal Reporting: The total number of learners who enter postsecondary education or a training program and the total number who had this goal who exit during the program year are reported. To compute a rate of placement, the number of students enrolling in postsecondary education or training is divided by the total number of learners with a goal of advancing to postsecondary education or training who exit during the program year.

GUIDANCE FOR COLLECTING THE FOLLOWUP MEASURES: SURVEY METHOD

The NRS offers two methodologies for collecting the followup measures: a local program followup survey and data matching. The local followup survey is conducted on all or a random sample of learners in each of the State's adult education programs. For the employment measures, local programs, the State, or a third-party contractor conduct(s) the survey on learners whose goal is to obtain employment in the first quarter after the exit quarter. Retained employment is collected in the third quarter following exit. The other followup measures may be collected at any time up to the reporting deadline (December 31). States also can use the local survey to collect the secondary outcome measures.

The second methodology is data matching. Under this approach, agencies serving common adult education clients, such as education, labor, human service, and higher education, pool their data, and student records are matched on the pooled databases using Social Security numbers. The matched data can identify which adult education students achieved the core followup outcomes.

Within the NRS, *States may use either methodology, or a combination of both, to collect followup measures*. For example, measures of GED attainment could be collected by data matching and the remaining measures could be collected by survey. The following section describes the general requirements and procedures for employing the two methods. Appendix A also contains model surveys and guidance on how to conduct a survey.

Conducting the Local Followup Survey

Section 231(e)(2) of WIA requires that States assess local program performance on the core WIA indicators, which are the four NRS core followup measures. Consequently, *States must obtain these measures on students in each of their adult education programs.* States electing to collect followup measures through a local survey (as opposed to data matching) should follow the

procedures summarized below. Consult *Guidelines for Conducting the Follow-up Survey* (available at http://www.nrsweb.org) for more details on survey procedures.

Universe or Sample Survey

It is advisable to include all students in a followup survey; that is, programs should include the *universe* of learners. For programs serving large numbers of students with followup outcome goals, however, the NRS does allow States the option to include a sample of the program learners in the survey.

Sampling a group of students can be much less expensive than a universe survey, but it creates a degree of uncertainty or error in the findings from the survey, which is known as sampling error. This error becomes quite large if the response rate is low. Consequently, the lower the response rate, the more difficult it is to make an estimate of the true value of the outcome measure for all students. Since the response rate for adult education students is usually low, including the universe of learners in the survey rather than a sample is advantageous because there will be no sampling error. Since most States and adult education programs have minimal resources to conduct a survey, however, the number of students involved needs to be kept to a minimum, making sampling attractive for large programs.

With these considerations in mind, the NRS guidelines are for programs *not* to sample students, but to *survey all students for each outcome goal that has 300 or fewer students who exit during the program year.* That is, all students should be identified by goal area (enter employment, retain or improve employment, enter postsecondary education, obtain secondary credential), and if the total number of students who exit during the year for any outcome is 300 or less, then *all* students in that group should be included in the survey to determine whether they have achieved the appropriate outcome. If the program has from 301 to 5,000 exiting students in any outcome area, then the minimum sample size must be 300 for that group. If the program has more than 5,000 exiting students in any outcome area, then the minimum sample size should be 1,000 for that group.

For example, if a program has 200 students who have the goal of obtaining employment, all of these students who exit should be followed to determine whether they obtain employment in the first postexit quarter. If that same program has more than 300 students who exit from other followup goal areas, then the program has the option to survey all of these students or to draw a sample of at least 300 students. In both cases, the program must achieve at least a 50-percent response rate.

Time Period for Conducting the Survey

The survey may be conducted by the State, local programs, or a third-party contractor, as long as a program-specific sample is used. The entered employment measure must be collected from students who leave the program by the end of the first quarter after they exit. A job obtained while the student is enrolled can be counted for the entered employment measure, but it is still measured and reported in the first quarter after the student exits. Retained employment must be collected on students who have an employment goal and obtain a job by the end of the first quarter after exit (including students who obtain a job while enrolled). An employed student who exits the program with job retention as a goal is surveyed in the third quarter after the exit quarter to verify continued employment.

Note that when the survey method is used, retained employment cannot be reported for students exiting in the third or fourth quarter of the program year (i.e., quarters ending March 31 and June 30). Since retained employment is measured in the third quarter after exit, there is insufficient time in the reporting period (ending December 31) to survey such students. States should report data only for the first two quarters. The percentage of retained employment found in these two quarters is assumed to reflect the entire year (see Methodology section below for further explanation).

Exhibit 2.4 summarizes the times at which data are to be collected and the student population to which each core followup outcome measure applies. Students who enroll with a goal of obtaining a job must be surveyed in the first quarter after the exit quarter to determine whether they obtained a job. These students who obtain a job and students who are employed at enrollment and have a goal of improved or retained employment must then be surveyed in the third quarter after exit to determine whether they are still employed. There are no time periods tied to the other followup measures, thus they may be collected at any time until the end of the reporting period (December 31).

Exhibit 2.4
Student Population and Collection Time for Core Followup Measures

Core Outcome Measure	Student Population To Include	Time Period To Collect Measures
Entered employment	Learners unemployed at entry with employment goal	First quarter after exit quarter*
Retained employment	Learners unemployed at entry with employment goal who obtain a job during first quarter after exit; and learners employed at entry with a goal of retained or improved employment	Third quarter after exit quarter or third quarter after student obtains a job, if job is obtained while enrolled Not measured for students exiting the third or fourth quarter of the program year
Placement in postsecondary education or training	Learners with a goal of entering postsecondary education or other training	Any time to the end of the reporting period (December 31)
Receipt of secondary diploma or GED	Learners with a goal of obtaining a secondary diploma or GED certificate	Any time to the end of the reporting period (December 31)

* Exit quarter is the quarter when the learner completes instruction or has not received instruction for 90 days and has no instruction scheduled. A job obtained while the student is enrolled can be counted but must be reported and measured during the first quarter after exiting the program.

Since the entered and retained employment measures are tied to calendar quarters, the simplest time to conduct the survey is quarterly. If quarterly collection is conducted, the survey should begin no sooner than the last month of the quarter and be completed within 3 months (one quarter). Attaining measures for postsecondary credential and entering postsecondary education is not time bound. Although such data can be collected at any time during the reporting period, the easiest option is to collect it by quarter. The program or State should determine the optimal time to collect these measures. For example, it may be advisable to collect the entry into postsecondary measure in the fall quarter when most students enter community college. If there are scheduled times when GED tests are given, then the program could measure that outcome of the secondary credential goal in concurrence with that time. It is recommended that equal numbers of students be surveyed each quarter. For example, if 300 students are to be surveyed, about 75 students should be surveyed each quarter.

Quarterly data collection is strongly recommended, especially for the employment measures, but States may survey more frequently, if the time period is more convenient or cost efficient. For example, the program could conduct continuous, ongoing, or monthly surveys. For the other followup measures, quarterly data collection is recommended but could also be conducted at the end of semesters or instructional periods (such as in December and June) to correspond more closely to GED testing dates or community college enrollment times. The time lag to contact students after they exit the program, however, should be as short as possible: The longer the time, the lower the response rate (since some students will move) and the greater the likelihood of less valid data.

Most programs and States consider conducting the followup survey the most difficult aspect of NRS data collection. It is difficult to conduct a survey in a way that produces valid and reliable results. The process includes determining which students you must include in the survey; sampling students, if necessary; locating them and securing their cooperation; and administering the survey. Finding the students and getting them to cooperate in the survey is critical to its success since the response rate—the proportion of students you reach—largely determines the validity of the information. Locating adult education students is especially difficult, given the transient nature of many adult education students. The procedures described below will assist States in conducting a valid survey.

Exhibit 2.5
Quarterly Periods for Collecting Entered and Retained Employment

Exit Quarter	Collect Entered Employment by the End of:	Collect Retained Employment by the End of:
First Quarter (July 1–September 30)	Second Quarter	Fourth Quarter
Second Quarter (October 1–December 31)	Third Quarter	First Quarter, Next Program Year
Third Quarter (January 1–March 31)	Fourth Quarter	Not Reported for Survey Method
Fourth Quarter (April 1–June 30)	First Quarter, Next Program Year	Not Reported for Survey Method

Method for Identifying Followup Students

The local program's database must have the ability to identify students who should be followed, including (1) all students with a goal of obtaining a job who exit, (2) students with a goal of keeping or improving their current job who exit, (3) students with a goal of obtaining a secondary diploma or GED certificate who exit, and (4) students with a goal of entering postsecondary education or training who exit. The report or output produced by the local program's database should include student identification and contact information, the student's followup goal for employment measures, and the date that the student left the program. This information needs to be retrievable quarterly or according to the time when surveys are to be administered.

State Survey Instrument

In any survey, how the questions are asked may influence the responses. Therefore, it is important that the survey questions asked do not bias or affect responses. For comparability of data

among programs in the State, it is also highly advisable that all programs in the State use the same or equivalent survey instruments. The State should provide all programs with a standard survey questionnaire that is short and simple. It is not necessary to have a long or complicated survey to collect NRS measures. For example, it is only necessary to ask if the person got a job or passed the GED. In addition, the survey should be translated into the most common languages spoken by students in local programs. Appendix A provides model surveys designed to collect NRS followup measures. The models are offered to guide States in designing and conducting the followup survey and are *not* required.

Local Resources To Conduct Surveys

Conducting a survey is labor intensive. Besides administering the survey, students must be located, the survey needs to be explained to them, and their cooperation must be obtained. This work requires frequent callbacks to students and careful recordkeeping. States should ensure local programs have sufficient staff and time to conduct the survey. Another approach is to have the survey conducted for all programs centrally at the State level, either by State staff or by contract to a third party. Although costly, this approach is desirable because it removes much of the burden from local programs.

Staff Trained on Surveying

Like any other data collection effort, staff must follow a uniform set of procedures to collect data in a valid and reliable manner. Staff conducting the survey must be trained in its administration, including what to say to students to introduce the survey and get their cooperation, ways to avoid refusals, how to ask the survey questions, how to record responses, and how to answer student questions about the survey. Staff should be thoroughly familiar with all questions and procedures before beginning.

Procedures To Improve Response Rate

The validity of a survey depends largely on the response rate—the proportion of people who respond to the survey out of the total number targeted for the survey. The NRS requires a minimum response rate of 50 percent. Getting a good response rate is probably the most difficult part of conducting a survey, and it may be especially hard for adult education students because many are transient and may not have telephones.

To help improve response rate, it is very important that students know they may be contacted later and asked about their outcomes. Programs should inform students at program entry about the survey and collect extensive contact information about them, such as addresses and phone numbers of relatives or others who may know the students' whereabouts over time. In addition, students should be encouraged to provide new addresses and phone numbers when they move, and programs should implement procedures to update this information periodically while the student remains enrolled. These procedures can greatly assist in locating students months later when the survey is conducted. States should provide local programs with additional guidance to improve response rates, such as that contained in the NRS documents *Guidelines for Conducting the Follow-up Survey* and *Guide for Improving NRS Data Quality* (available at http://www.nrsweb.org).

Database and Procedures for Survey Reporting

The State or local programs need a database to keep track of which students are to be contacted for the survey, which students have been reached, and whether the students achieved the outcomes. This information is needed to conduct the survey and track response rates. The State needs the information so it can aggregate the data among programs for NRS reporting. The State must report to ED the overall State percentage of students who achieved each of the followup outcomes.

To compute the State overall measures for each outcome, the State has to aggregate each of the measures from every local program to compute an average. Each local program must report the following information to the State to enable computation of the State average:

- Total number of students in each outcome group that exited during the year.
- The total number of students sampled, if the program sampled.
- Number of students who responded to the survey (the realized or actual sample size) and the response rate.
- The percentage of students who achieved each outcome.

Exhibit 2.6 summarizes the guidelines for conducting the followup survey.

Exhibit 2.6
Summary of Followup Survey Guidelines

1.	Develop a method for identifying students to contact for followup.
2.	Establish State sampling procedures, if appropriate.
3.	Conduct the survey at a proper time.
4.	Ensure that the State has a uniform survey instrument.
5.	Train staff to conduct the survey.
6.	Identify local resources available to conduct the survey.
7.	Implement procedures to improve response rates.
8.	Ensure that the State has a database and procedures for survey reporting.

GUIDANCE FOR COLLECTING FOLLOWUP MEASURES: DATA MATCHING

A second method States can use to collect NRS followup measures is *data matching*. Data matching refers to the procedure where two or more State agencies pool and share data on a common group of participants. The data consist of individual student records collected by each of the agencies that can be linked through a common identifier, typically a Social Security number.

Matching the pooled data using the common identifier produces a new individual student record or an aggregated data report containing data from one or more of the additional agencies. Each agency can use the new, pooled data records or reports to understand the impact of its program on participants and to obtain data to meet its reporting and accountability requirements.

Data matching methods are particularly well suited for studying outcomes that occur some time after program participation. For example, wage record information systems are used to study the outcomes of vocational education and employment programs. The WIA requires job training programs funded under Title I to use a data matching methodology to obtain the required employment outcomes. Although not required by WIA for Title II programs (adult education), the data matching methodology is an efficient way to collect the core followup measures.

Several reasons make data matching attractive. The first major advantage of data matching is that it is significantly less costly than the local survey methodology. The costs of conducting a survey—drawing a sample, training interviewers, making phone calls—are replaced with the much-reduced cost of combining, cleaning, and analyzing the data. Further, this cost can be divided among the participating agencies.

The second major advantage of data matching is reduced data collection burden. At the local program level, staff no longer needs to conduct survey procedures. Local programs collect only the demographic, participation, and educational functioning level information. Matching is then done at the State level.

Finally, matched data are likely to be more valid than those collected through surveys, which are self-reported data. For example, the wage or unemployment record database would reveal whether students have actually worked. In addition, response rates for surveys are typically low, limiting the amount of information available on a substantial percentage of students. With data matching, considerably fewer students are missed, provided each agency has valid Social Security numbers. However, the need for Social Security numbers makes data matching problematic in some States because of confidentiality issues. Some States have laws against interagency sharing of Social Security numbers, and some students are reluctant to give such information to Government agencies.

Data Matching Models

Under a data matching system, each participating agency collects a common core of demographic and descriptive information on their participants, dates of program participation, a common identification number (Social Security number), and the outcome measures specific to its program. All measures that are shared among the agencies need to have common definitions for the resulting analyses and reports to be meaningful for agencies.

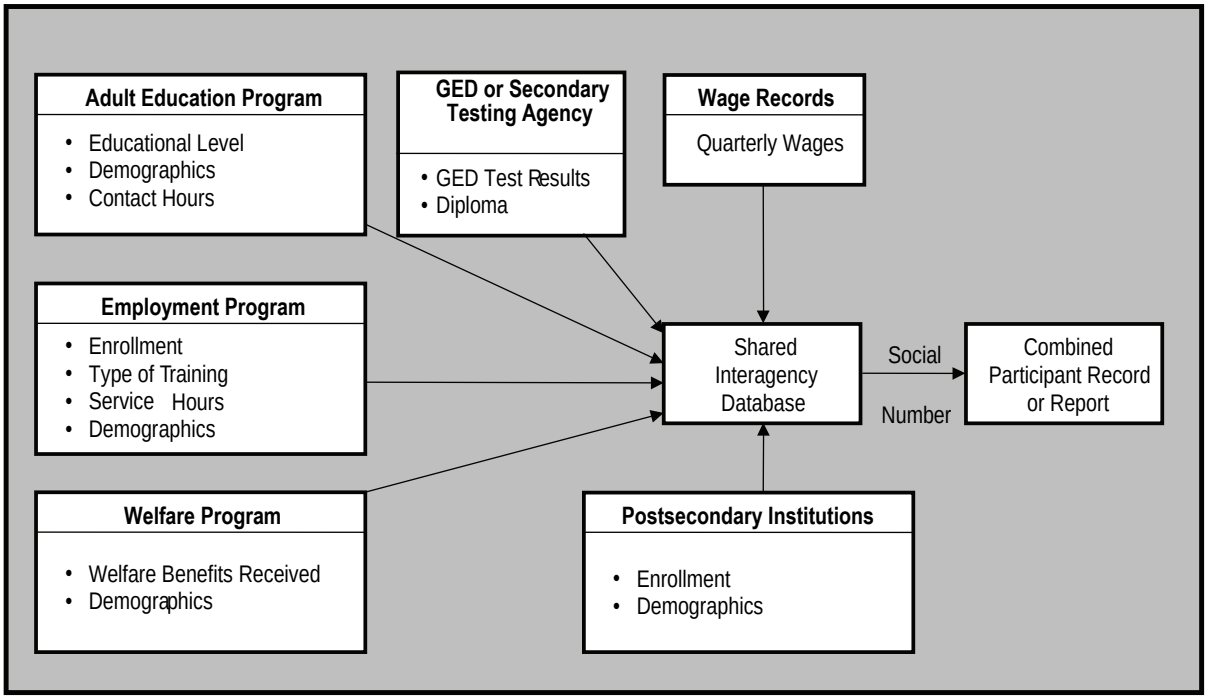
There are two data matching models. Under the central data processing or *data warehousing* model, each agency submits to a central source (either a contractor or in-house agency) its individual client records containing the data to be shared. This central agency combines the information into a single data pool and eliminates record duplication using Social Security numbers. This data pool is then available to the individual agencies, which can request specific tables and reports. The reports are usually in aggregate form at the State, program, and site levels, although individual data reporting can be produced. Local program providers can also request reports through their agencies. Exhibit 2.7 shows the data warehouse model. Under a second, decentralized or *data harvesting* model of data matching, each agency maintains its own data records and each separate agency requests matches

from the agency with the needed data. To match with an outside agency, the requesting agency sends to the other agency the records containing Social Security numbers and other data needed for the analysis, along with the format of the data tables needed. The other agency makes the matches and reports the data in the requested format.

For example, to obtain the GED test results of students, the State could send to the State agency that does GED testing the program information and Social Security numbers and demographic information of students who have a goal of passing the GED tests. The testing agency matches the records to produce a report on the number and characteristics of students who have passed the GED tests. The State could then use this information in its annual NRS reporting.

For both types of data matching, incorrect or missing Social Security numbers affect the availability of data. This problem can be substantial if students refuse to provide their Social Security numbers or provide incorrect numbers. Legal barriers to collecting Social Security numbers also pose a significant barrier to this methodology. Another serious problem affecting data analyses with data matching is the time lag from the end of the reporting period to the point at which the data are available. It often takes two or more quarters for all of the data to be available. In States using data matching, the time lag ranges from one quarter to a year. For example, if a student leaves the program in February, the entered employment outcome would need to be measured in the next quarter (April–June). If the time lag is two quarters, however, that student's entered employment cannot be determined until the first quarter of the following calendar year.

Exhibit 2.7
Example of Shared Interagency Database—Data Warehouse



Implementing Data Matching

Several States currently use data matching procedures to collect outcomes on adult education students. This section provides a discussion of some of the major issues that need to be addressed to develop data matching to collect NRS followup measures. Further information on developing data matching is available in the *Report on the Pilot Test of the National Reporting System*, available at http://www.nrsweb.org.

Data matching arrangements are difficult to establish and require considerable time to implement. For States using data matching, it took from 2 to more than 5 years to implement the process. Crucial to the implementation of the methodology is an interagency planning process with individuals committed to system development. This process is successful when political concerns are kept out of planning and development. Another essential ingredient is for each agency to have an automated, individual participant record system. It is not necessary, however, that each agency use the same record system or software, only that the software used by each agency produce information in a common format to allow data matching.

Beyond these basic planning and infrastructure needs, there are three conceptual problems that need to be surmounted to develop shared data arrangements:

- Common outcome and measure definitions.
- Concerns about data confidentiality.
- Training and technical assistance.

The management information system (MIS) must have common definitions for measures that are shared. Agencies with jurisdiction over different types of programs (e.g., U.S. Departments of Labor and Education) must provide data that are based on common understandings of the measures. Furthermore, agencies within a single department (e.g., community colleges and local education agencies) must also use common definitions. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that the definitions agreed upon maintain their fidelity with the mission of the program. If common agreement on common definitions cannot be reached, each agency must understand what the other definitions are and must be able to accommodate these differences in interpreting the data. For example, if program completion is a common data element, each agency must use the same definition or must have an understanding of what the other definitions are and interpret the data accordingly.

The issue of confidentiality looms large over data matching procedures. States using data matching have to resolve the prohibition about sharing Social Security numbers among agencies. States have resolved these difficulties by (1) defining the data matching as research, (2) allowing only aggregated reporting so that individual students cannot be identified, and/or (3) obtaining a waiver or permission from students. Many States have laws against not only sharing Social Security numbers but also against sharing educational records. These barriers must be resolved legally before data matching can become a widely used methodology for the NRS.

Finally, a great deal of training and technical assistance at the local level is needed to develop a system that produces valid and reliable data. Training needs to be provided on measure definitions, data collection and reporting, and data use. Such training also produces buy-in to the whole data collection and analysis process and can help “convert” teachers, local staff, and other stakeholders who might be skeptical about the usefulness of the system. The training also can supply local

providers with an idea of how the data are used at the State level, and how they can use it to improve their programs.

Technical Guidance for Data Matching

Data matching is a technical process that requires the data system to produce specific data in a required format. To conduct this process, the State or local programs must have a database able to perform the functions described in this section.

Procedures To Collect and Validate Social Security Numbers

Data matching works by pairing records from different databases for the same student using a common identifier—a Social Security number. Consequently, a valid Social Security number must be obtained for all students whose data is in the data matching pool. This number is usually collected at intake, and in some States and localities, students need to be informed about the use of their numbers for this purpose. Some States may require written permission. It is critical to obtain Social Security numbers, because without it, data cannot be matched and no outcomes can be reported. Similarly, there must be a process to verify the validity of Social Security numbers for matching. The State or local program database must be able to produce a report to identify students with missing, erroneous, or duplicate Social Security numbers.

Common Format for Matching

There are several ways to perform data matching, and all techniques rely on software to link multiple databases and produce the number of matches for each outcome area. To perform these operations, the software requires State and local data to be in a specific format that includes the location, size, and name of each variable, as well as the technical format in which the local program database is to write the data. States must ensure that program databases can produce the data according to States' specifications and that programs submit data in this format or in a way that it can be converted to this format.

Time Period for Data Matching

The State should have a standard time period for data submission, such as quarterly or annually. Data submitted for matching should include the exit data and be for the correct exit quarters according to NRS definitions. There also should be checks to ensure that local data do not include students who are still enrolled or students who exited in other time periods.

Data System Produces Individual Students Records

Successful data matching requires individual student records with three pieces of information: (1) a Social Security number, so that data can be linked across databases; (2) the student goal (e.g., obtain employment) or separate files for students with each goal on which data will be matched, so that the student can be matched with the correct database; and (3) the exit quarter for employment outcomes because the NRS requires entered employment to be measured in the first quarter after the exit quarter. Retained employment must be measured during the third quarter after exit quarter. The database must be capable of producing records with at least this information and in the State's required format, as discussed previously.

CORE DEMOGRAPHIC, STATUS, AND PARTICIPATION MEASURES

The NRS includes required descriptive measures, which are student *demographics*, student *status* in several areas, and *goals* for attending. These measures allow for a description and understanding of who attends adult education programs and for what reasons. The measures also facilitate analyzing the performance of students attending adult education, such as unemployed students or students receiving public assistance. The demographic measures include ethnicity, age, and gender. The status measures include employment status and whether the student has a disability or is on public assistance. The NRS requires collection of student goals—both a main and a secondary reason—for attending the program. The designated goals are used to compute the proportion of students who achieve the followup measures.

There are two *participation* measures—contact hours and program enrollment type—collected for both descriptive and analytic purposes. These measures record the amount of instruction that students receive and the number of students who attend in areas such as family literacy and workplace literacy. This section provides definitions of these measures and guidelines for collecting them.

Demographic and Status Measure Definitions

Adult education programs always collect NRS demographic and status measures. Program staff either collects these measures from the student at intake into the program, or the student directly reports these measures, as defined below.

Demographic Measure #1: Ethnicity

Definition: *Ethnic category to which the learner self-identifies, appears to belong to, or is regarded in the community as belonging. The ethnic categories are:*

- **American Indian or Alaskan Native**—A person who has origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

- **Asian**—A person who has origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent (e.g., China, India, Japan, and Korea).

- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander**—A person who has origins as a native of the Hawaiian Islands or the other islands of the Pacific, such as the Philippine Islands and Samoa.

- **Black or African-American**—A person who has origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa but not of Hispanic culture or origin.

- **Hispanic or Latino**—A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

- **White**—A person who has origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East but not of Hispanic culture or origin.

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners by ethnic group is reported.

Demographic Measure #2: Gender

Definition: *Whether the learner is male or female.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners by gender is reported.

Demographic Measure #3: Age

Definition: *Years since learner's date of birth.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners by age is reported using the following age categories: 16–18 years, 19–24 years, 25–44 years, 45–59 years, and 60 years and older.

Student Status Measure #1: Labor Force Status

Definition: *Whether the learner is employed, not employed, or not in the labor force at time of entry into the adult education program, according to the following criteria:*

- **Employed**—Learners who work as paid employees, work at their own business or farm, or who work 15 hours or more per week as unpaid workers at a farm or business operated by a member of their family. Also included are learners who are not currently working but who have jobs or businesses from which they are temporarily absent.

- **Unemployed**—Learners who are not working but are seeking employment, make specific efforts to find a job, and are available for work.

- **Not in the Labor Force**—Learners who are not employed and are not seeking employment.

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners by category is reported.

Student Status Measure #2: Public Assistance Status

Definition: *Learner is receiving financial assistance from Federal, State, or local government agencies, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or equivalent general assistance, food stamps, refugee cash assistance, old-age assistance, and aid to the blind or totally disabled. Social Security benefits, unemployment insurance, and employment-funded disability are not included in this definition.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners receiving assistance is reported.

Student Status Measure #3: Disability Status

Definition: *Learner has a record of, or is regarded as having, any type of physical or mental impairment, including a learning disability that substantially limits or restricts one or more major life activities (e.g., walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, and working).*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of disabled learners is reported.

Student Status Measure #4: Rural Residency Status

Definition: *Learner resides in a rural area; that is, a place with a population of less than 2,500 that is not near any metropolitan area with a population greater than 50,000, or in a city with adjacent areas of high density.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners living in rural areas is reported.

Student Status Measure #5: Learner Goals for Attending

Definition: *Learner's reasons for attending the class or program, as defined in the following categories:*

- **Obtain a Job**—Obtain full- or part-time paid employment.
- **Retain Current Job**—Upgrade skills to enable retention of current job.
- **Earn a Secondary School Diploma or Achieve a GED Certificate**—Achieve sufficient skills and credit hours to earn a State-accredited secondary diploma or pass GED tests.
- **Enter Postsecondary Education or Job Training**—Achieve skills to enable enrollment in a postsecondary education program or job training program.
- **Improve Basic Literacy Skills**—Improve overall basic literacy skills.
- **Improve English Language Skills**—Improve overall skills in the English language (e.g., speaking, reading, and writing).
- **Obtain Citizenship Skills**—Obtain skills to pass the U.S. citizenship test.
- **Achieve Work-Based Project Learner Goals**—Obtain the skills needed to complete a project learner activity (i.e., a course of 12–30 hours duration designed to teach specific workplace skills).
- **Other Personal Goals**—Any other goal related to instruction with a clearly definable outcome, such as passing a driver's test or improving reading ability.

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners for each type of goal is reported. For reporting the employment, postsecondary education or training, and credential attainment measures, the number of learners in each category is used as the denominator when calculating the percentages of goal achievement.

Additional Guidance on Goal Setting

Within the NRS framework, *all students* are assumed to have at least one goal: development of literacy skills. That is, all students are assumed to be in the program to improve their literacy skills, and thus have the default goal of either improving literacy skills or improving English language skills. This assumed goal is the reason that all students are counted in the educational gain measure. Students often have other goals, but only four are directly relevant to NRS accountability requirements: obtaining employment, retaining employment, achieving a GED or high school credential, and entering postsecondary education. Note that the default goal of educational gain remains, regardless of whether the student designates any of the additional goals.

Goal-Setting Process

Programs should have a goal-setting process whereby students meet with teachers or an intake counselor to help identify and set goals for instruction. The best time for this process to occur is when the learner first enters the program. The goal-setting process should help learners set both a realistic timeline for attaining each goal and a means for determining whether the goal is achieved. Since learners often change their goals after they begin instruction, it is often advisable to extend goal setting over additional orientation sessions during the first few weeks of class.

Identify Attainable Short- and Long-Term Goals

Setting the timeline and evidence of achievement will help the learner realize whether the goal is short or long term and whether it is achievable. For example, when learners enter a program, many of them state very broad goals, such as attaining a GED or getting a job. Breaking the goal down into discrete steps—with short- and long-term milestones along the way—establishes a series of goals that help learners and teachers design instruction and identify the appropriate goals for NRS purposes.

When a student has one of the followup goals, the program is held accountable for helping the student attain the goal. The program or State must obtain information on whether the student achieved the goal after he or she leaves the program. For this reason, not only is it important that the student attain the goal during the program year but also that the program's instruction and services be oriented toward helping the student achieve the goal. For example, a student with a goal of GED attainment should be at a literacy level that makes passing the GED tests likely within the year. The student also should receive instruction that helps him or her acquire the additional skills needed for passing the tests. Similarly, if the student's goal is to obtain a job, the program should provide instruction and services to help the student acquire the skills needed to obtain employment.

While setting a realistic goal is important for accountability, students' long-term goals should not be ignored simply because they are not obtainable during the NRS reporting period. States should ensure that local programs set goals appropriately and do not avoid setting goals because they do not want to follow up with learners. Poor goal-setting procedures do a disservice to the learner,

and good instructional practice requires assisting learners to achieve their goals. In addition, ignoring long-term goals denies the State the opportunity to demonstrate that it can help learners achieve such goals.

Student Participation Measures

Student Participation Measure #1: Contact Hours

Definition: *Hours of instruction or instructional activity the learner receives from the program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to promote student learning in the program curriculum, such as classroom instruction, assessment, tutoring, or participation in a learning lab.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of hours is reported.

Student Participation Measure #2: Program Enrollment Type

Definition: *Learner is enrolled in the following programs or institutions:*

- **Adult Basic Education Program**—A program of instruction designed for adults who lack competence in reading, writing, speaking, problemsolving, or computation at a level necessary to function in society, on a job, or in the family.

- **Adult Secondary Education Program**—A program of instruction designed for adults who have some literacy skills and can function in everyday life but who are not proficient or do not have a certificate of graduation or its equivalent from a secondary school.

- **EL Program**—A program of instruction designed to help adults with limited English proficiency achieve competence in the English language.

- **Correctional Education Program**—A program of ABE, ASE, or EL instruction for adult criminal offenders in correctional institutions.

- **Family Literacy Program**—A program with a literacy component for parents and children or other intergenerational literacy components.

- **Workplace Literacy Program—**A program designed to improve the productivity of the workforce through improvement of literacy skills needed in the workplace by:

    - Providing adult literacy and other basic skill services and activities, including basic computer literacy skills.

    - Providing adult secondary education services and activities that may lead to the completion of a high school diploma or its equivalent.

    - Meeting the literacy needs of adults with limited English proficiency.

- **Program for the Homeless**—A program designed for homeless adults. Homeless adults lack a fixed, regular, nighttime residence or have a residence that is (1) a publicly supervised or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), (2) an institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or (3) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. The term *homeless adult* does not apply to any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an act of the Congress or a State law.

- **Correctional Facilities**—Any prison, jail reformatory, work farm, detention center, or any other similar Federal, State, or local institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

- **Community Corrections Programs**—A community-based rehabilitation facility or halfway house.

- **Other Institutional Programs**—Any other medical or special institution.

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners in each program or category is reported. The number of learners in each program type can be used to analyze the performance of these participants separately from the overall adult education population.

SECONDARY STUDENT STATUS AND OUTCOME MEASURES (OPTIONAL)

The NRS secondary measures are optional measures of student status and outcomes that States are not required to collect and that are not used as a basis for assessing State performance under WIA. The NRS includes these measures because many stakeholders during the consensus building process believed that these measures would be important to the goals and purposes of adult education.

Secondary student *status* measures of low income, displaced homemaker, and single parent status are included, because these groups are specific target populations under WIA. States that are required to report their services to these populations can use these measures, which are identically defined by the U.S. Department of Labor. There also is a secondary status measure to identify learning-disabled adults to assist programs in reaching these students.

The secondary *outcome* measures are in the areas of employment, community, and family. The *employment* measure is whether the student's public assistance grant is reduced or eliminated due to employment. This measure applies only to students receiving public assistance upon entry and can be collected through data matching or survey methods. In the area of *community*, there are three measures covering citizenship, voting, and community involvement. For students enrolled in citizenship programs, there is a measure of whether the student achieves the skills to pass the citizenship exam. Voting for the first time or registering to vote and more involvement in community groups or activities are the remaining measures. The *family* measures include increased

involvement in children's literacy activities and in children's education. Voting and family measures should be collected through survey methods or from direct reports of learners.

Another optional measure for national reporting is whether a student completed a *work-based project learner activity*. Project learners are students enrolled in a class with 30 hours or less of scheduled instruction with a goal of teaching specific workplace-related literacy skills. On enrollment, the learner and the program determine the specific skills to be learned and the method to assess the attainment of the skills. The assessment must employ a standardized test or be a performance-based assessment with standardized scoring rubrics. Programs do not collect the core outcome measures on students designated as project learners, and these learners are counted separately. This measure is included in the NRS to allow States and programs to serve learners with a short-term learning need without having a detrimental effect on performance of the core outcome measures.

Optional Student Status Measures

The following five *optional* student status measures target special populations identified under WIA. Information should be obtained through observation, learner self-report, or appropriate documentation on whether any status applies to learners.

Secondary Student Status Measure #1: Low-Income Status

Definition: *The learner receives or is a member of a family who receives a total family income in the 6 months prior to enrollment of 70 percent of the income level standard for a family of that size, or the learner is receiving or is a member of a family who is receiving cash assistance payments from Federal or State agencies or food stamps, or the learner can be designated as homeless under the McKinney Act.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of low-income learners is reported.

Secondary Student Status Measure #2: Displaced Homemaker

Definition: *Learner has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home, has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income, and is unemployed or underemployed and experiencing difficulty obtaining or upgrading employment.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of displaced homemakers is reported.

Secondary Student Status Measure #3: Single Parent Status

Definition: *Learner has sole custodial support of one or more dependent children.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of single parents is reported.

Secondary Student Status Measure #4: Dislocated Worker

Definition: *An individual who receives an individual notice of pending or actual layoff from a job, or an individual who receives a publicly announced notice of pending or actual layoff.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of dislocated workers is reported.

Secondary Student Status Measure #5: Learning-Disabled Adult

Definition: *Learner with an IQ in the low-average and above level (70+ to any level) who has deficits (related to neurological impairments) in capacity in defined limited learning areas; this can include dyslexia (reading disability), dysgraphia (writing disability), and dyscalculia (math disability). The learner also has a history of previous educational efforts.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learning-disabled adults is reported.

Secondary Outcome Measures

Secondary Employment Outcome Measure: Reduction in Receipt of Public Assistance

Definition: *Learner's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Grant or equivalent public assistance is reduced or eliminated due to employment or increased income.*

Applicable Population: Learners who are receiving a TANF Grant or equivalent public assistance at the time of enrollment in the program.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners whose grant is reduced or eliminated is reported, and a rate or percentage can be computed by dividing this total by the total relevant population (number of learners on public assistance at program entry). Grant reduction may be reported at any time during the program year.

Secondary Community Measure #1: Achieved Citizenship Skills

Definition: *Learner attains the skills needed to pass the U.S. citizenship exam.*

Applicable Population: All learners with a main or secondary goal of obtaining citizenship skills.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners who obtain skills to pass the citizenship exam is reported. A proportion or rate can be computed by dividing this total by the total relevant population (number of learners who enrolled in citizenship classes or who had a main or secondary goal of citizenship).

Additional Guidance on Achieved Citizenship Skills Measure

This measure is included to document learning gains of students who are enrolled in classes designed to give them the literacy skills and substantive knowledge to pass the citizenship exam. These students should have "obtain citizenship skills" designated as their primary goal for attending. To determine whether students achieve these skills, program staff should administer a State-approved test that measures the relevant skill areas—such as a practice citizenship test, sample forms, and speaking tests—at the conclusion of the citizenship class. If this measure is to be reported, it is the State's responsibility to ensure that programs use an appropriate test, establish the standards for passing this test, and train and monitor local staff in its use.

Secondary Community Measure #2: Voting Behavior

Definition: *Learner registers to vote or votes for the first time anytime during the program year.*

Applicable Population: All learners who at time of enrollment, are not registered to vote or who have never voted.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners who register to vote or vote for the first time is reported.

Secondary Community Measure #3: General Involvement in Community Activities

Definition: *Learner increases involvement in the following community activities:*

- Attending or organizing meetings of neighborhood, community, or political organizations.
- Volunteering to work for such organizations.
- Contributing to the support of such organizations.
- Volunteering to work on community improvement activities.

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners who increase community involvement in any measure is reported.

Secondary Family Measure #1: Involvement in Children's Education

Definition: *Learner increases involvement in the education of dependent children under his or her care, including:*

- Helping children more frequently with their school work.
- Increasing contact with children's teachers to discuss children's education.

- Having more involvement in children's school, such as attending school activities and parent meetings and volunteering to work on school projects.

Applicable Population: All learners enrolled in programs that include a focus on family literacy.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners who increase involvement in any area is reported. A rate or percentage can be computed by dividing this total by the total relevant population (number of learners in programs that include a family literacy focus).

Secondary Family Measure #2: Involvement in Children's Literacy-Related Activities

Definition: *Learner increases involvement in the literacy-related activities of dependent children under his or her care, including:*

- Reading to children.
- Visiting a library.
- Purchasing books or magazines for children.

Applicable Population: All learners enrolled in programs that include a focus on family literacy.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners who increase involvement in any area is reported. A rate or percentage can be computed by dividing this total by the total relevant population (number of learners in programs that include a family literacy focus).

Work-Based Project Learner Outcome Measure: Completed Work-Based Project Learner Activity

Definition: *Learner acquires the skills taught in a short-term learning course designed to teach specific work-based skills. A short-term course is an instructional program of at least 12 hours but no more than 30 hours duration.*

Applicable Population: Learners enrolled in a short-term course and designated at entry as work-based project learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners who complete a work-based project learner activity is recorded. A rate or percentage can be computed by dividing this total by the total relevant population (number of work-based project learners). Project learners are not counted for the educational gain measure and are not assigned an educational functioning level. No core outcome measures are reported for project learners.

Additional Guidance on Work-Based Project Learners Measure

Work-based project learners are enrolled in an instructional or training course that has at least 12 hours and no more than 30 hours of scheduled instruction. The course must be designed to teach work-based literacy skills. The skills the student learns, and the method for assessing these skills and standards for achievement, must be explicitly stated prior to beginning the course. To be recognized

as completing the activity, the learner must demonstrate achievement of the skills at the level of the agreed-upon standard. As with other student assessments of the NRS, the assessment must either be a standardized test or performance-based assessment with standardized scoring rubrics. It is the State's responsibility to establish and monitor the assessment process and train staff on the use of the assessment procedures.

Work-based project learners should designate "achieve work-based project learner goals" as their primary goal for attending. Once a student is designated as a work-based project learner, the student is not assigned an educational functioning level and no additional outcomes are collected on that learner. The learner is reported on the NRS reporting tables (in the optional *secondary outcomes table*).

Work-based project learning should not be confused with workplace literacy programs, which also are designed to teach workplace skills. Workplace literacy programs have a longer duration, are open ended, and generally teach a broader range of literacy skills (see definition). Students enrolled in workplace literacy programs are counted under the required core outcome measures.

CHAPTER III. THE NRS DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The NRS produces a set of measures that describes adult education students, their participation, and the outcomes that they achieve. These measures are used at the State and national levels to demonstrate whom the adult education program serves and its impact on learners' educational and employment-related outcomes. At the local level, programs collect data and train staff according to policies and procedures set by the State for program management and improvement activities and to report on performance. This chapter describes the flow of data from the local programs through States to the ED. It also summarizes the roles and responsibilities of local programs and States in relation to their specific data collection processes and to the operation and maintenance of the NRS at the Federal level.

THE NRS DATA FLOW FRAMEWORK

The development of a national database for adult education requires the close collaboration among the ED, State education agencies, and local programs. Each entity has an essential role in the operation and maintenance of the system that helps ensure the collection of valid and reliable data from programs and States.

- At the *Federal* level, ED supports a national database for adult education by developing the framework and measures for the NRS. The Federal role is to establish NRS measures, methods, and reporting requirements; ensure valid and reliable data; provide assistance to States in understanding and implementing these requirements; negotiate performance levels with States; monitor the system to ensure that it is producing valid and reliable measures; report the data to Federal agencies; decide on State incentive awards based on NRS data; and maintain the national database of measures.

- *States* are responsible for implementing NRS measures, methods, and requirements in a way that meets Federal guidelines; setting State performance standards; providing resources, training, and support for data collection to local programs; monitoring local programs using quality control procedures to ensure data validity; maintaining a database that includes data from all local programs; establishing a written policy for collecting followup measures; and implementing data matching procedures when data matching is used as the followup methodology. In addition, States must have a written assessment policy to ensure that measures of educational gains are meaningful by establishing a standardized assessment system based on tests or authentic performance. States are to use NRS measures to promote continuous improvement based, in part, on their performance on NRS measures.

- *Local programs* are responsible for allocating sufficient resources to collect NRS measures and reporting them according to State requirements. Local programs have primary responsibility for collecting these measures using valid, uniform procedures to ensure comparability among programs and must maintain these data in an individual student record system. To ensure that educational gains are standardized, programs must have common methods for assessing students at intake and following instruction. In States using the survey followup methodology, programs also must conduct a followup survey on students.

Exhibit 3.1 shows the general data flow framework envisioned for the NRS by following the movement of data at each of these three levels (Federal, State, and local). At the local program level, each of the program's instructional sites collects measures from students at three time periods, including intake, update, and followup. Upon a student's *intake* into the program, local staff collect descriptive measures—demographic information, student goals, and status measures—and conduct an assessment of the student's educational functioning level for placement. During the course of instruction, program staff (typically teachers) provides at least two additional measures about the student: contact hours or attendance and a progress assessment. The progress assessment is usually administered at a time established by State policy and may be at the end of the course of instruction, at the end of the program year, or after a set number of instructional hours.

In States using the survey methodology, local programs also are required to collect the core *followup* measures on students. These measures include employment-related measures, measures on placement in postsecondary education or training, and obtainment of a GED or other secondary credentials. NRS followup procedures require program staff to collect the employment measures through a student survey in the first and third quarters after students' exit quarters or by matching procedures. In States that use the data matching methodology, the collection of followup data becomes a State responsibility.

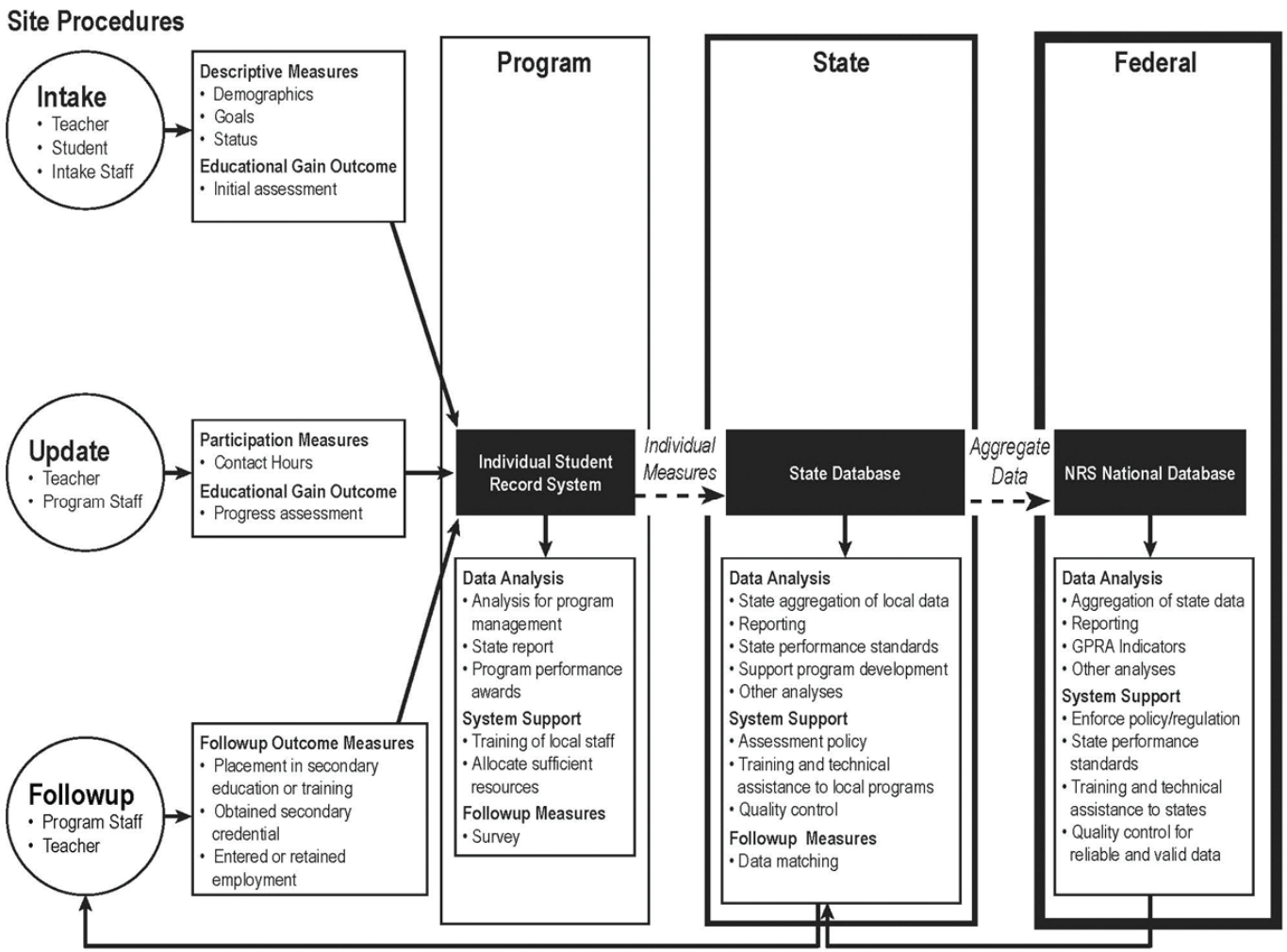
Local programs must combine all of the measures collected at each instructional site into an *individual student record system*. This type of system is essential to the NRS, because it allows local programs to conduct analyses of outcomes for specific student groups for reporting and program management. For example, only an individual record system allows analysis of such issues as whether specific types of students (such as students with employment-related goals) achieved their goals or the number of instructional hours needed by groups of students to advance an educational level. The NRS does not specify the software or design of the student record system and leaves this to local and State discretion.

Exhibit 3.1 also shows the movement of NRS data from the local program to the State level. Each local program must submit its data to the State education agency to enable the State to develop a statewide adult education database. At the end of the program year, States must submit data in aggregated data tables to ED, which maintains a national database. This submission is required to be in electronic form, using software developed for this purpose by ED.

Data Collection: The Federal Role

At the Federal level, ED's role is to establish the NRS procedures through an inclusive process that addresses Federal legislation, responds to State and local concerns, and coordinates with Federal partner agencies. ED developed and pilot tested the methodology and definitions for the reporting system and produced corresponding guidelines. In addition, ED monitors the implementation of the NRS, conducts quality control of State procedures, and provides ongoing technical assistance and training to States. This training supports State efforts to train staff and implement the NRS to produce valid, uniform, and reliable data. Learning to use data more effectively for program improvement and accountability is another focus of training as a means to enhance the value of the NRS and to encourage adoption and support of the system. Technical assistance materials are provided to States on issues such as local program quality control, assessment procedures, and program monitoring.

Exhibit 3.1
National Reporting System Data Flow Framework



All States are required to submit their aggregate data to ED annually using NRS data tables. ED then creates a national report and submits this report to the U.S. Congress and other audiences. Prior to creating the national report, ED reviews each State's data tables for errors and inconsistencies and asks for corrected data tables from States, as needed. In turn, States may need to review again local program data to correct data problems and contact local program directors for corrections. Local staff then needs to identify problems, correct errors, and resubmit data to the State, which then provides corrected tables to ED. ED uses the data collected from States to determine State performance incentives.

Data Collection: The State Role

The NRS requirements present a common framework that provides standards and consistency for national data collection. However, States have the responsibility for developing policies and implementing procedures that meet NRS requirements and work within the State's environment and delivery system to produce valid and reliable data.

Assessment Policy

One critical area where the Federal–State interface occurs is in the measurement of learning gains within the educational functioning levels. To accommodate State variation in instructional emphasis, goals, and assessment polices, the NRS allows States to establish its own procedures for student placement and assessment to measure learning gains. Each State must have an assessment policy that describes the assessment's local programs and the timeframe for pre- and posttesting students. The assessments may be standardized tests or an alternative assessment if the assessment meets accepted psychometric standards for valid and reliable assessment, including empirically validated scoring rubrics with high interrater reliability. (See the NRS document, *Developing Performance Assessments*, available at http://www.NRSWeb.org.) Unvalidated rubrics and checklists and locally developed tests do not meet these criteria and are not acceptable. However, it is acceptable for a State to have more than one assessment, such as one test for ESL students and a different test for ABE students, as long as there are clear procedures for when to use each test. The State policy also should designate when programs should pretest students and the calendar time or instructional hours when programs should posttest students. The policy also should clearly state that programs are to use a different form of the same assessment for pre- and posttesting. Chapter II of this document presents greater details of these requirements.

Followup Methodology

The State must determine a methodology for collecting the NRS followup measures of entered employment, retained employment, attainment of a secondary credential, and entry into postsecondary education. States must use data matching, a followup survey, or a combination of these methods to collect these measures. For example, a State may use the survey for employment measures and data matching to determine which students passed the GED tests. The survey must include all local programs, although the State or a third party may conduct the survey. See Chapter II for more information on these requirements.

Secondary (Optional) Measures

If a State decides to collect any or all of the NRS optional measures, State policy should clearly identify these measures and define them consistently with NRS definitions. The policy also should state the methodologies for collecting these optional measures, which may include survey, data matching, or direct reporting from students while they are enrolled.

Data Reporting Timelines and Formats

The State must have requirements for local programs to report data according to a fixed, regular schedule. Programs submit data to a central source, such as the State or district, according to this schedule. The reporting periods for local programs must be monthly or quarterly in order to minimize incomplete reports and potentially false data that result from longer time periods between report cycles. Another reason for frequent reporting is that errors or problems may be identified and corrected on an ongoing basis. If data are reported only once or twice a year, it is not possible to identify errors before it is too late to correct them. The State also should specify the technical format in which data are to be submitted so that it is consistent with State reporting software.

A System of Quality Control

To verify the validity of data and to ensure local program compliance with State data collection policies, the State should conduct frequent reviews of data immediately after local programs submit them. Monitoring procedures also should include regular discussions with local data collection staff, either at State meetings or by telephone and e-mail, to discuss problems. To be most effective, monitoring should be proactive, nonpunitive, and presented as a form of technical assistance. With this approach, local staff are less likely to hide problems and cover up mistakes. Monitoring also should include at least occasional onsite auditing of data. Quality control is described in more detail in Chapter IV.

The WIA requires States to evaluate local program performance on NRS core measures as one condition of local funding. States may use any other indicators of their choosing in evaluating programs and making funding decisions. The NRS core measures do not limit or preclude use of other measures. Indeed, the inclusion of secondary, optional measures in the NRS framework is intended to provide States with additional options on such measures. For example, States that wish to place a greater emphasis on family literacy or community involvement could include the secondary measures in these areas in their evaluation of local programs and fund them according to performance on these measures. Similarly, States wanting to emphasize serving students on public assistance could use the measure of welfare reduction in local performance evaluations.

Software or Technical Standards for Local Data Collection and Reporting

To meet NRS reporting requirements, the State must have software that is capable of aggregating NRS data from all local programs and producing the seven required data tables for Federal reporting. To report data to the State, local programs must have an individual student record database in a relational format. Each State must establish a State database system for local programs or provide programs with uniform technical standards for database development to allow State reporting. All software should have the ability to produce “edit reports” and possess error checking capabilities to identify missing and inconsistent data. These requirements for data collection are the

minimum—additional data and reporting from local programs may be required to meet needs of the State.

Ongoing Training and Technical Assistance to Local Programs

Because local adult education program staff collects NRS data, they must fully understand policies and procedures if they are to produce quality data. Thus, it is critical to the success of the NRS that States provide training to teachers and other local staff involved in collecting and reporting data. This training should be ongoing so that training is available for new staff. Critical topics for training include definitions of measures, completing reporting forms, conducting assessments, and followup methods. While training should cover the general procedures and methods of the NRS, additional training on the importance of data and how to use it is likely to increase data quality. When local staff can see how to use data for their own purposes, their data collection activities become more meaningful and they are likely to take more care in collecting data.

Exhibit 3.2 presents a summary of the policies and procedures that States must have in place for the NRS.

Exhibit 3.2
Summary: State NRS Policies and Procedures

• Statewide assessment policy is established.
• Followup methodology is established.
• Policy on NRS optional measures is established.
• State has ongoing training and technical assistance to local programs on data collection, reporting, and use.
• Data reporting timelines and formats are established.
• A quality control system is in place to monitor and audit local data collection.
• State has software or technical standards for local data collection and State reporting.

Data Collection: The Local Role

Local programs are on the front lines of the data collection system and they must allocate sufficient resources, including both staff and funds, to collect information from students—the descriptive, participative, and outcome measures that comprise the database. For these data to be meaningful on a statewide and national basis, data collection procedures must be standardized among all programs in each State; that is, the data must be defined and collected in the same way by all programs to make it comparable. The role of local programs is central to data collection efforts. To achieve standardization of data collection, program staff need ongoing training and assistance in:

- Understanding the definitions of each measure and having clear guidelines on how to record these measures, including how to handle missing or incomplete data.
- Understanding of and compliance with the State-defined procedures for assessing students for placement into educational functioning levels and assessing progress.
- Following procedures for implementing the followup survey, if it is conducted by the program.
- Understanding how to correctly record and report data to the State.

It is the State's responsibility to provide training and technical assistance to local programs to achieve these competencies.

With adequate resources and proper training, local program staff collect data to report to the State. This collection process must produce reliable and valid data in order to be useful to the programs and the State. Data are *reliable* to the extent that they are collected in the same way, by different people, and at different times. In other words, no matter who collects the data or when data are collected, the same data collection procedures are consistently implemented in the same way. Data are *valid* only to the extent that they represent what they are intended to represent. For example, if the program reports that 40 percent of students have gained a level according to test scores, those test scores (if they are valid) will accurately convey the score and interpretation intended by the test's publisher.

There are three components to collecting valid and reliable data: (1) a well-planned, effective *process*; (2) *resources* to implement the process; and (3) clearly defined *procedures* for collecting each measure. Next is a discussion about the data collection process that contains these three components and a method for evaluating the process.

Model Data Collection Process

Like other processes, data collection requires planning, constant attention, oversight, and fine-tuning through monitoring, error checking, and training. With a sound, well-planned process, sufficient resources, and oversight, the program can have a data collection system that produces valid and reliable data to assist program management and promote improvement.

The specifics of individual approaches to data collection vary among programs, but Exhibit 3.3 presents a model data collection process, starting with student intake and tracing the process to the end goal—submission of State and Federal reports. This model illustrates the key components of a good data collection system and staff roles at each step. A discussion of the key components follows.

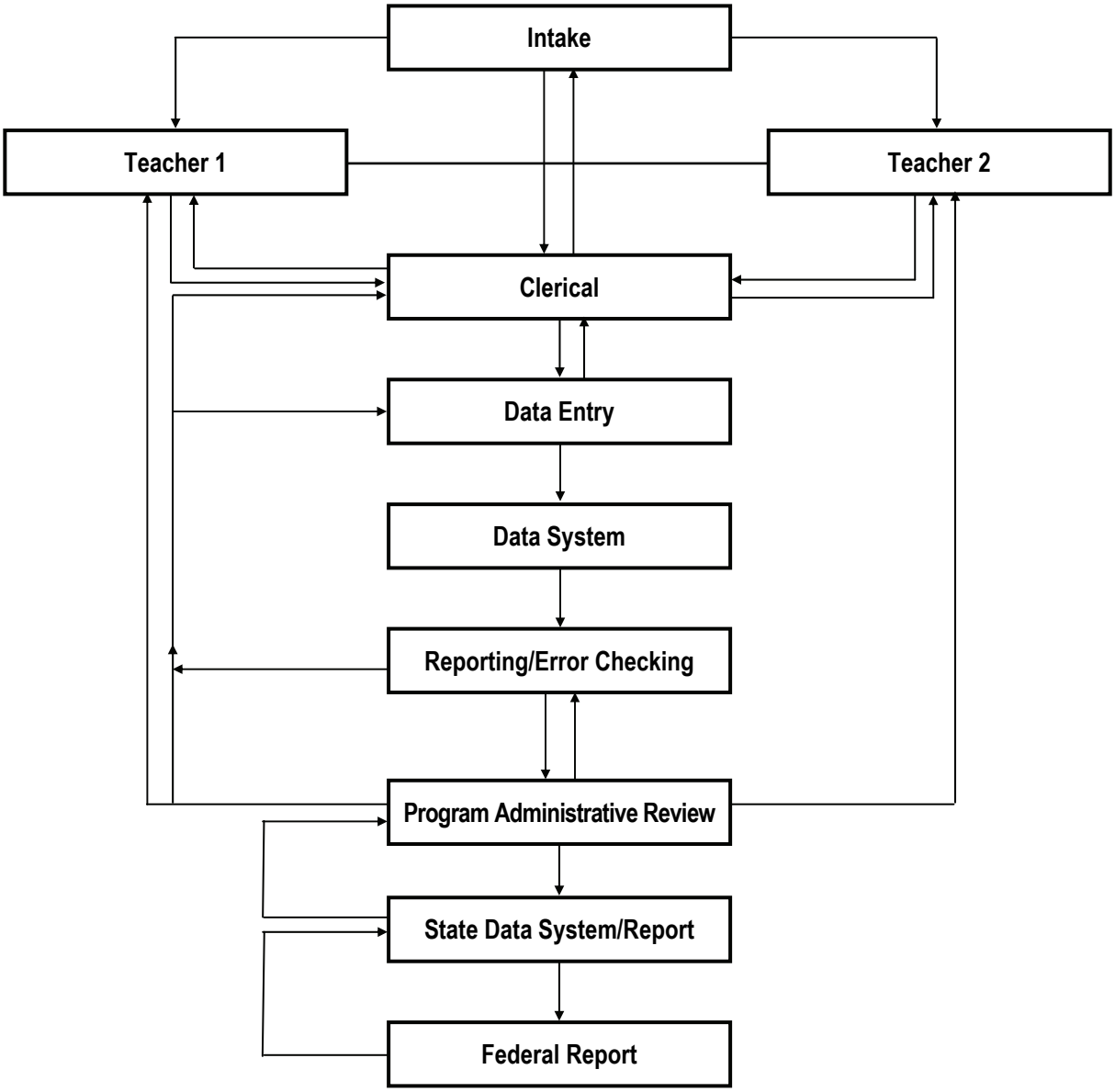
Intake

When students enter the program, intake staff collect NRS measures, including age, ethnicity, race, and gender. Intake often includes a goal-setting process where students, with staff guidance, decide on short- and long-term goals for attending class. If a student selects an NRS followup goal, then the intake process should allow for recording of this information. If the program uses a followup survey, then the process should include procedures for informing students that they may be contacted after they leave class. Intake staff complete an intake form and send the form to clerical staff and/or teachers.

Teachers

Teachers have a large role in data collection in most programs. Teachers must report student attendance or contact time, assess students, report test scores, and help students set goals. In addition, teachers who have direct contact with students are often asked to provide student information that was missing or incorrect at other stages of the data collection process. Teachers complete forms and, ideally, have a role in reviewing data and reports.

Exhibit 3.3
Local Data Collection: A Model



Clerical and error checking staff

The data collection process results in a high volume of paper—forms, test scores, attendance records, and surveys—that clerical staff receive and track. Clerical staff must develop an organized system for managing this paper flow that includes receiving forms from other staff for checking and correcting. After error checkers correct forms, clerical staff then submit forms for data entry.

Data entry and data system

One or more staff must enter information into the program's database. Data entry may occur at an instructional site, or the program may have a central data entry point to which all sites submit their forms for entry. Programs should have an individualized student database that is organized to allow the program to examine relationships among student and program variables, attendance, and student outcomes. After forms are keyed, data entry staff should review error reports promptly and resolve errors and missing data by returning forms to the staff members who collected the problem data.

Reporting and error checking

An essential feature of the data collection process is regular and frequent review of data entered into the data system. The data system should have preprogrammed error reports that allow for a review of inconsistent, out-of-range, and missing data. Data entry and clerical staff should regularly review these reports and should return them to teachers, intake workers, and clerical staff to clarify problems and obtain the missing data. Corrections should then be sent to data entry staff for entry into the database.

Program administrative review

The process should include a regular opportunity for the program director and other program leaders to review data reports. As the person most responsible, the director may often be the only person in the program who can see the big picture and thus, brings a different perspective to the data review process. This review may raise further questions about data integrity, requiring another round of data checking and verification among the staff. The program director may share data reports with staff as a means to identify problems, track progress, and receive staff buy-in into the data collection process by demonstrating how data can be used for program management and improvement.

Local Data Collection Policies and Procedures

In addition to following a clear model of data collection, local programs must establish policies and procedures for data collection that comply with State NRS requirements. This section presents the policies and procedures that local programs need to have in place.

Staff roles and responsibilities for data collection

Every staff member in an adult education program plays a role in the data collection process. Intake staff collect student demographic data and goals, teachers report attendance and may administer tests and report other outcomes, administrators must review and make decisions based on data tables, and administrative staff may be involved in checking forms and data entry. The State must ensure that every local program has clear written descriptions of the data collection process and

the role of each individual in that process. In fact, local program job descriptions should incorporate the data collection responsibilities of the job, and performance reviews should consider how well staff fulfill these functions.

Clear definitions of measures

Local programs' policies and procedures should include a written, precise definition for each data item that is compatible with the State definition. Some programs and States, for example, have a data dictionary that defines all measures and categories within measures. Although some measures may seem straightforward—ethnicity or sex, for example—others, such as student goal setting, may require detailed explanation. Even seemingly simple definitions can sometimes require elaboration. For example, States should clarify the definition of how to classify the ethnicity of a student who claims to be part Asian and part White. Potential ambiguities show how helpful it is to customize definitions to the particular circumstances of State programs and to include examples of how to resolve ambiguities.

Standard forms for collecting data

Staff must record information on intake and other data forms. Then, administrative staff key the information from these forms into the program database. Consequently, the program should use standard forms for data collection that include all the data elements and categories that are referenced in the database system. Staff should not need nor be allowed to enter their own codes or variables, because this will cause data entry errors and hurt reliability and validity. Some States with uniform State database systems have standard forms used statewide for this reason.

Error checking and quality control systems

Data collection is a complex activity—mistakes and missing data are inevitable. For example, staff may fail to complete forms fully because of high workload or simple oversight, or the required information may not be available when it is needed. The data collection system must have procedures for checking data for completeness and accuracy at several points during the process. Data checking should follow a regular, prescribed schedule with clear deadlines. More than one staff person should be assigned to perform these data checking functions, and these functions should be made explicit in the staff job descriptions and throughout the program. Data checkers should review all data forms as soon as possible for completeness and accuracy and should receive error reports from the database to check immediately after data entry. To do their job, data checkers must have access to all staff—teachers, intake staff, counselors, and administrative staff—and the authority to obtain cooperation from them.

Ongoing training on data collection

Staff must understand and follow data collection procedures to ensure valid and reliable data. To this end, training should be provided to staff to clarify their roles and responsibilities and to highlight the importance of data collection. The program should provide this training to all staff, and training should be offered several times during the year, if possible, to accommodate new staff and to allow existing staff to take followup training. Regularly scheduled staff meetings or inservice trainings on data issues also provide staff with opportunities to discuss problems and issues that arise during data collection. Addressing these issues promptly helps the program avoid more serious data

problems later. (More detailed guidance on data collection training for staff is provided later in this chapter.)

Student-level, relational database system

To use data for program improvement, staff must be able to look at outcomes and demographics for individual students according to such variables as the number of instructional hours received, length of time of enrollment, the teachers and classes enrolled, and the student's educational functioning level. This type of analysis requires a database that stores information by individual students and links the different pieces of data for each student in reports or other output—a system known technically as a *relational* database.

Clear and timely data entry procedures

The procedures for data entry should specify at least one person whose job it is to enter the information from data collection forms into the program's database. All staff members should know this person's role, and he or she should have the authority to request clarification and to resolve errors. In addition, data entry should be scheduled at frequent, regular intervals, such as weekly or monthly. Without frequent data entry, the program may end up with a large backlog of forms to enter and staff may not become aware of errors and missing data on forms until it is too late to correct them. Part of the data entry procedures should also include a prompt, organized way to identify and resolve errors. For example, soon after data are entered, staff should be able to print out an error report for review. Staff should then use the error report to resolve missing data issues and correct errors as soon as possible after data entry.

Timely or direct access to database

Local program staff members must have access to data for use in program improvement and management. The database system should have the capability for local program staff to access their data in useful ways. It is best if this access is direct, so that staff at the local level can query the database to print a report locally. Access through a third party or through the State also is useful if staff can request and receive data in a timely fashion. The usefulness of the data is limited when there is a great time lag between the request and receipt of data.

Regular data reviews

The program's data collection procedures should include a regular data review by staff soon after entry into the database. Regular data reviews allow staff to identify errors, missing data, and other data that don't make sense. Data reviews are also useful as a staff development opportunity to examine problems and issues in support of program improvement. Data can help staff understand issues such as the impact of instructional arrangements, learner retention, and learner progress. This will not only foster program improvement, but it may also improve data quality, as staff recognizes the importance of data collection to produce accurate and valuable information.

Exhibit 3.4 summarizes local program policies and procedures.

Exhibit 3.4
Summary: Local Program Data Collection Policies and Procedures

• Staff have a clear description and understanding of their roles and responsibilities for data collection.
• Clear definitions for each measure are established.
• Program uses standard forms, tied to the program database, for collecting data.
• Program has an error checking and quality control system for identifying missing and inaccurate data.
• Program has ongoing training on data collection.
• Program has a student-level, relational database system.
• Data entry procedures are clear and timely.
• Staff have timely or direct access to information from the database.
• Staff regularly review data.

Local Staff Training Policies and Procedures

To ensure that the data collected are of high quality, local programs should implement ongoing staff training on NRS procedures. Without training, staff will not know or understand the policies and procedures, and they will implement procedures in incomplete or haphazard ways that can impair data reliability and validity.

The State should support training on data collection, and the local program also may provide training directly to staff on the specific procedures at each site. Staff training in data collection policies and procedures should include content on good professional development practices, as summarized below.

Training on NRS policy and data collection procedures

All program staff should be trained and fully knowledgeable of NRS policy, accountability policies specific to the State and locality, and the program's data collection process. Training on data collection should cover each individual's job in the process and include a review of others' roles and how these roles and activities are connected, including the flow of data. (See exhibit 3.3 as a model for the flow of data collection at the local level.) The training must be specific and detailed, addressing such mundane topics as completing forms, data entry procedures, error checking, the program's database system, and general accountability requirements. A schedule should be established to train new staff members and provide followup and ongoing training for existing staff.

Continuous professional development on data collection

One-shot trainings on any topic generally do not have lasting impact. Staff forget procedures, misunderstand some part of the training, or think some procedures do not work effectively and do not follow them. A continuous system of professional development helps resolve these problems. Given the often high turnover among adult education staff, a continuous training

protocol also gives local programs an ongoing mechanism to train new staff. Regularly scheduled trainings throughout the year that employ different modalities of training to improve effectiveness and impact on data collection procedures are best. For example, the program might schedule general workshops, individual peer mentoring, shadowing, or project-based learning activities throughout the school year.

Training addresses staff needs

Although all staff should receive initial general training on data collection, State accountability, and NRS requirements, the training should be designed according to the needs of local program staff. Using a periodic formal or informal needs assessment, collaborative planning process, or review of procedures, such as those outlined in this guide, the program can identify areas where staff need or want further training. Using this input to design training will make it more relevant to staff, thereby increasing interest and the likelihood that the training will result in improved data collection procedures.

Use effective trainers and methods

The trainers who provide training to local staff are almost as important as the content of the training. Staff should have respect for the trainers who should be knowledgeable about the data collection process. Ideally, trainers are articulate, well organized, and encourage the contributions and input of participants in the training. In addition, the training is likely to be more effective if it employs interactive, hands-on activities, rather than just a lecture. An interactive training may involve asking staff to analyze actual data tables and then having them troubleshoot problems on their own.

Training results in learning and improved practice

The goal of professional development is to change staff behavior. For training on data collection, the desired outcome is that staff learn and then correctly follow all procedures. Although it is difficult to determine a cause–effect relationship between professional development, learning, and behavioral change, general patterns in data or observations of staff behavior at work may provide an indication of training effectiveness. For example, after training on assessment, staff may be observed as they administer tests or review student assessment records. Trainers may follow up by examining the assessment data produced by individual staff members to examine procedural differences. The professional development approach should include ways to verify staff learning and implementation of procedures that staff have learned.

Exhibit 3.5 summarizes the local program training policies and procedures.

Exhibit 3.5
Summary: Local Staff Training Policies and Procedures

• Staff receive training on NRS policy and data collection procedures.
• A system of continuous professional development on data collection is in place.
• Training addresses staff needs.
• Trainers effectively use interactive and hands-on activities to lead training.
• Training results in learning and improved practice.

CHAPTER IV. QUALITY CONTROL AND REPORTING

The data used for NRS are only useful if they are *valid* (i.e., measure what they are supposed to measure) and *reliable* (i.e., collected in the same way by different people and at different locations). To obtain valid and reliable data, data collectors at the State and local levels must understand the measures and follow the proper procedures for collecting the measures at all times with all people. States are responsible for promoting data quality and implementing training and quality control procedures for NRS measures. This chapter provides a brief overview of quality control methods that can be implemented prior to data collection, during data collection, and following data collection. The chapter also presents NRS reporting requirements, including student record software requirements and the required and optional NRS tables that States must submit annually to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

DATA QUALITY CHECKLIST

To allow the U.S. Department of Education to assess the quality of NRS data, States must complete the NRS data quality checklist. States are to submit this checklist with their annual NRS data submission. The checklist describes State NRS policies and the data collection procedures that local programs follow to collect NRS data. It provides an organized way for DAEL to understand and evaluate NRS data quality by defining data quality standards in four areas. State eligibility for incentive awards under WIA is contingent upon having superior quality ratings on the checklist.

Data Foundation and Structure

This content area addresses whether the State has in place the foundation and structures for collecting quality data that meet NRS guidelines. Standards measure whether the State has policies for assessment, follow up, and goal setting; whether local programs know these policies; and whether the State conducts validity studies to ensure processes are working to produce accurate and reliable data.

Data Collection and Verification

This area measures whether the State collects measures according to NRS guidelines using procedures that are likely to result in high reliability and validity. Standards also address whether data are collected in a timely manner, are systematically checked for errors, and whether the State also has processes for verifying the validity of the data.

Data Analysis and Reporting

The quality standards in this content area include whether the State has systems for analyzing and reporting data, including appropriate databases and software. The standards also address whether analyses and reports are produced regularly, are used to check for errors and missing data, meet NRS and State needs, and are useful to State and local staff for program management and improvement.

Staff Development

The standards under this area address whether the State has systems for NRS professional development for State and local staff, including whether the State provides training on data collection, measures, assessment, goal setting, and followup procedures. Standards also focus on whether the training is ongoing and continuous, meets the needs of State and local staff, and is designed to improve data quality.

Levels of Quality and Quality Improvement

Within each area there are three levels of quality that reflect whether the State has policies and procedures likely to improve the reliability and validity of data. Based on the checklist, DAEL classifies States' NRS data procedures into one of these levels each year. To be eligible for incentive awards under WIA, States must meet standards at the superior level or higher.

- **Acceptable Quality.** State policies and procedures for implementing the NRS meet the essential requirements for NRS implementation as described in the *NRS Implementation Guidelines* and the *Guide for Improving NRS Data Quality*.

- **Superior Quality.** State procedures go beyond the minimum to promote higher levels of data validity and reliability through more rigorous definitions, regular oversight of data collection methods, ongoing assistance to local programs on NRS data issues, and procedures for verifying the accuracy of data.

- **Exemplary Quality.** The State has procedures and systems that promote the highest levels of data validity and reliability, including systems for verifying data accuracy from local programs, systems for monitoring data collection and analyses, and corrective systems to improve data on an ongoing basis. State procedures indicate a focus on continuous improvement of the quality and accuracy of data.

States have to meet all of the standards within a quality level to be considered at that level. In addition, the scoring is *cumulative,* so that to score at the superior level, a State has to meet all of the standards for that level *and* all standards for the acceptable quality level. To rank at the exemplary level, States have to meet all of the standards for all quality levels. Appendix B includes a copy of the checklist.

IMPROVING DATA QUALITY

The data quality checklist defines data quality in the NRS and provides guidance to States on how to improve quality. This section summarizes how States can improve quality in three ways: training local staff, improving local data collection, and local monitoring and data audits.

Training

Within the NRS, data collectors are local program staff. Therefore, it is critical to NRS's success that teachers and other local staff involved in collecting and reporting data receive both preservice and inservice training on the NRS. Critical topics for training include definitions of measures, completing reporting forms, conducting assessments, and followup methods.

Understanding and correctly using State assessment procedures are critically important to NRS data quality, given the central importance of the educational gain measure. Accurate reporting of this measure requires local staff to implement the State assessment methods for intake and progress assessment. For example, progress assessment must be administered at the appropriate time, as determined by the State and staff, and must follow standardized procedures. Failure to follow the correct procedure for administering a standardized test invalidates the test results.

Training should cover the general procedures and methods of the NRS, but additional training on the importance of data and how to use it is likely to increase data quality. When local staff can see how to use data for their own purposes, their data collection activities are more meaningful and they are likely to take more care in conducting them.

Quality of data also is enhanced when resources are available, including State or other local staff to consult when questions or difficulties arise. Through the NRS, DAEL developed NRS Online (http://www.nrsonline.org), a Web-based training site, to assist States in training local staff. Training materials also are available on the NRS project Web site (http://www.nrsweb.org).

Local Data Collection

During the data collection process, States and local programs can implement four mechanisms to help ensure data quality. First, data collection procedures need to be explicitly organized. Program staff should establish specific, concrete procedures for data collection and data reporting. These procedures should state what is to be collected, when it is collected, and who is responsible for collecting it. The time when the information should be collected and reported also should be determined. Incorporating these procedures formally into staff job responsibilities enhances the likelihood that staff performs them.

The second critical factor to collecting quality data is devoting sufficient resources—time, staff, and money—to data collection. Providing resources shows staff that data collection is a valued and important activity, not something that is done as an afterthought or when there is time. At least one staff member in a program should have explicit responsibility for ensuring data are collected and reported.

Reporting data in a timely manner according to a fixed, regular schedule is the third factor for promoting data quality. Data should be reported to a central agency, such as the State or district, frequently and at fixed time periods. At the local level, information should be entered into the program's MIS as frequently as possible. For example, attendance should be reported weekly or monthly. For reporting to the State, monthly or quarterly reporting is highly preferred. If the time lag for reporting data is too long, then the data is not reported completely, as staff has a tendency to put off data reporting until the deadline. The result is a high degree of missing and possibly false data. Another reason for frequent reporting is that errors or problems can be identified and corrected on an ongoing basis. If data are reported only once or twice a year, errors may go unnoticed before it is too late to correct them.

Finally, frequent contact with data collection staff and spot checking their data assists in ensuring quality data. A State or local staff member knowledgeable in reporting and data collection should provide regular, ongoing monitoring of data collection through scheduled contact with local staff. Samples of data collection forms should be examined periodically. To be most effective,

monitoring should be proactive and nonpunitive and viewed as a form of technical assistance. With this approach, staff is less likely to try to hide problems or cover up mistakes.

Local Monitoring: Data Reviews and Data Auditing

One of the simplest ways to audit local programs is to review local data. A data review should examine disaggregated data from all local programs. Aggregated State data (i.e., summary data from all local programs combined) may mask important details and clues about what the data reflect. Types of data to examine include:

- The number and percentage of students who are pre- and posttested by type of student and date of posttesting.
- The percent of students who advance by level.
- The number and percent of students who achieve goals.
- Students' average attendance hours and number of hours it took students to advance and achieve goals.

Critical review of these data may identify patterns that raise questions or seem improbable with numbers that seem unrealistically high or low, for example. Data reviews also can be used to study local adherence to State policies and differences by types of students and programs.

A more formal way to investigate local program adherence to State policies and to study data quality is to conduct a local program data audit. Like a financial audit, a data audit involves an onsite review of the actual data forms and files and verification of the accuracy and validity of the information on the forms. Often, an independent third party conducts the audit, such as an accounting firm or a compliance review agency from the State government. States should perform at least occasional data auditing of a sample of programs because this type of review is the most accurate way to assess data validity at the local level. Findings from the audit can help identify technical assistance and training needs and prevent future problems.

The auditing process should include at least four procedures. First, the auditor should interview program staff involved in data collection regarding the procedures they follow, particularly regarding how staff deals with missing and incomplete information, data entry procedures, and reporting times. The auditor also should review the program's assessment and followup procedures to ensure that they comply with State policy.

Second, the auditor should examine a random sample of student records for completeness and accuracy. The sample size must be large enough to make inferences about the program overall and to accommodate the expected high percentage of students whom the auditor is unable to reach. The auditor should compare the written records and information on the selected students' forms with information that is in the program's MIS to ensure correspondence between the sources. This review informs the auditor about whether staff completes forms fully and accurately and whether there are problems transferring information from the forms to the program's database.

Next, the auditor should contact the sample of students by telephone to obtain verification on key variables such as:

- Attendance—Ask students to recall dates of active enrollment and approximate frequency of attendance.
- Tests and assessments—Ask students to recall whether they took tests and assessments and when they took them, what goals were set, and why they attended classes
- Goals met.
- Satisfaction with services.

To minimize interviewer bias, States should prepare a formal protocol and standard script for auditors to follow when making these calls.

As a fourth step in the auditing process, the auditor should verify attainment of followup goals with a secondary source, especially if the program uses a survey methodology. Compared to data matching, surveys are more likely to elicit socially desirable responses. For example, students may inaccurately claim to have obtained a job or passed the GED tests because they may believe that attaining these goals is expected of them. The auditor should (1) contact a sample of employers to verify that the student is or was employed, (2) review GED data to verify the claims of those students who claim to pass the tests, and (3) check enrollment at community colleges to see whether students who claim to enter postsecondary programs are actually enrolled.

DATA SYSTEMS AND NRS REPORTING

NRS data collection produces a rich source of information about adult education students and their outcomes. States and local programs can use these data for program accountability, to identify effective programs and instruction, and to foster program improvement. Sections 212(c), 231(e)(2), and 212(a) of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) explicitly identify these purposes in stating the reasons and uses for the program accountability system. States must report their performance levels on the core measures to ED and use the measures to assess the effectiveness of local programs and to promote continuous program improvement.

This section provides general guidance on establishing a statewide student reporting system that allows States to meet NRS requirements. The guidance includes a brief summary of the software needs and requirements, a description of the information that must be entered into the student record system, and the types of outputs or reports that States and local programs should be able to produce. Concluding this chapter are tables for reporting NRS data at the Federal level.

General Software and Architecture Requirements

To meet NRS requirements, *each local program must use an automated, individual student record system* to enter NRS data. The software for this system must have a *relational database structure*, whereby information on individual students can be related to other variables in the database and data can be aggregated and analyzed for specific subgroups. The software also must be capable of aggregating data to produce the required Federal reporting tables, or the data must be able to be imported into other software that produces the Federal tables.

The NRS does *not* require any specific software product or system beyond these requirements. States should carefully consider not only NRS reporting requirements but also their reporting needs and the needs and capabilities of local programs when selecting software. Training and technical support issues related to software also should be factors when deciding what software to use, as should the overall cost of developing and maintaining the system.

States also should consider the system's architecture or general structure. There are generally two choices: onsite systems and Web-based systems. An onsite system provides separate copies of the software individually to each local program. Programs enter the data for their sites into a computer located onsite, and all functions are available locally, including reports. The program sends its data to a central State computer for reporting. A Web-based system provides access to a single, centrally maintained system via the Internet. The system can be used by anyone with an Internet connection, browser, and possibly a small piece of software known as an applet. Centralized approaches make changes and enhancements to the software easy to implement and eliminates local reporting because data are directly entered into a central computer. Exhibit 4.1 offers guidance on selecting software.

Data Structure and Inputs

The software system should allow local programs to enter and retrieve their own data for individual students. To be most useful, the data should be organized by site and class. Exhibit 4.2 shows the recommended data structure for NRS reporting and analysis. This structure allows programs to examine student outcomes by individual class, site, and for the program overall, and thus provides the greatest ability to examine the relationship among instruction and other program components and student outcomes.

The State and local systems must include at a minimum, the NRS core measures and their applicable coding categories and should include basic functions to allow the inputting and reporting of these data. Exhibit 4.3 summarizes the basic data elements and functions needed for the NRS. The NRS guide, *Developing an NRS Data System* (available at http://www.nrsweb.org) contains more information about developing a data system for the NRS.

Basic Data System Functions

In addition to the core measures, States that use the secondary measures should include these measures and categories along with any other measures the State needs for its own uses. States and local programs also may add coding categories for any core and secondary measures as long as the NRS categories can still be reported. For example, States may use additional functioning levels or categories for ethnicity or student goals. To use NRS data to evaluate program performance and promote program improvement, the system also must include other measures, such as information about classes, instructors, and program staff.

Exhibit 4.1
Guidance for Selecting Student Record Software To Meet NRS Requirements

Issues in Choosing Software
Consider the choices for student record software:

- The overall design of the software.
- The training and support offered by the software's vendor.
- The methods used to enter data into the software.
- The various ways that the software allows the program to use data, including reporting, data analysis, and program planning functions.

System Design

- Software issues:
  - What is the cost of the software?
  - Does the software rely on any other software packages in order to function (e.g., Microsoft Access)? Do local programs have this software?
  - What operating system environment is most appropriate for the software? Is this the system that local programs use?
- Architecture issues:
  - Does the State want a stand-alone system where every location runs a separate copy of the software and all functions are available locally?
  - Does the State want a Web-based system where users access the system through the Internet with a Web browser?
- Hardware issues:
  - Do local programs and sites have computers that are powerful enough and have enough memory to run the software?
  - Is the software available for IBM-compatible or Macintosh computers or both? Are the datasets interchangeable in a mixed environment setting?

Usability Issues

- Is the software user-friendly or intuitive?
- Do potential users appreciate the appearance of the software?
- Can the software be customized to meet the program's needs?
- Does the software include the *specific* measures, coding categories, and data elements needed by the program?
- Can the software be used for multiple years—are its archives accessible from year-to-year, or are only the current year's records available?
- Can the software be used in a network environment?
- Does the software allow security, such as by limiting access or functionality to specific types of users (e.g., password protection, ability to hide sensitive data elements)?

Training and Support

- Does the vendor offer training and/or support? What mechanisms of training and support are available?
- What is the cost of training or support?
- Does the software have documentation, such as a user's manual? Is the manual helpful and easy to understand? Does it provide useful information?
- Are there planned upgrades for the software? Are software upgrades made available free of charge, and are users notified when they become available?

Data Input
The ease of entering data into the software also can be an effective way of differentiating among software packages.

- Are data keyed in manually or can it be scanned into the system?
  - Is any extra hardware or software necessary for scanning? Can these be leased, or must they be purchased? Do all workstations operating the system need these add-ons?
  - What scanning mechanism does the software system support (e.g., scantron/bubble forms, text scanning).
- What does the software use for a student ID number (e.g., Social Security numbers or program-defined numbers)? Can this number be changed if necessary?
- Does the software support multisite data entry at the individual program level? Can site-level data be aggregated to the program level?
- Can data be imported from other software packages (e.g., spreadsheets or other databases)? What formats are required by the software for imports?

Using the Data
Consider how you plan to use data (i.e., for accountability, program improvement, or program evaluation) and whether the software addresses these needs.

- Does the software come with built-in reports appropriate for the program's uses?
- How difficult is it to create reports or modify existing reports as needs arise? Is additional software needed to create new reports?
- Does the software allow users to search the database for specific records or conduct queries to locate different classes of records?
- What are the analytic capabilities of the software?
- Does the software allow users to conduct analyses at the individual student level?
- Can data be exported to other software packages (e.g., spreadsheets or other databases)? What format does the software use for exports?

Exhibit 4.2
Recommended Data Structure for NRS Reporting and Analysis

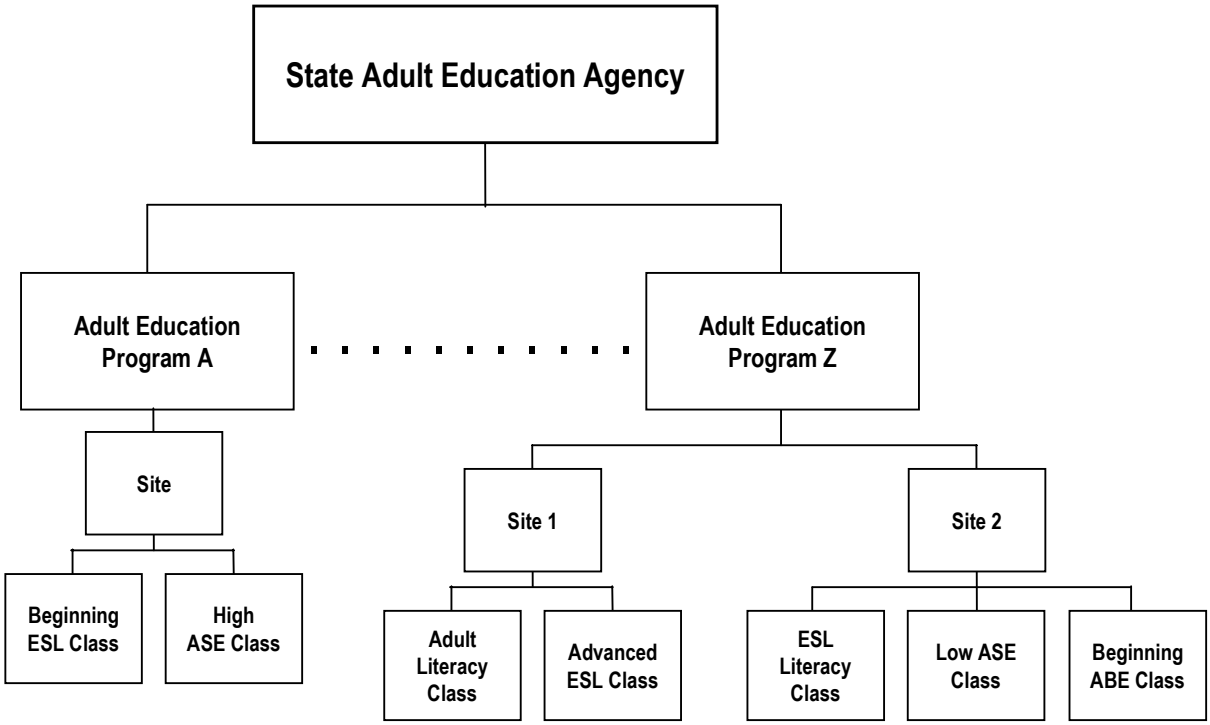


Exhibit 4.3
Basic Data Elements and Functions for the NRS

BASIC DATA ELEMENTS	
STUDENT INFORMATION ▪ Name ▪ Address ▪ Phone ▪ E-mail ▪ Date of birth ▪ Gender ▪ Ethnicity ▪ Functioning levels ▪ Test scores and dates ▪ Program type: • ABE • ASE • ESL ▪ Environment: • Family literacy • Workplace literacy • Homeless • Work-based project learner • Correctional ▪ Secondary status measures: • Low income • Displaced homemaker • Single parent • Displaced worker • Learning disabled ▪ Enrollment date ▪ Separation date ▪ Attendance hours/dates (weekly/monthly) ▪ Goals for attending ▪ Disability information ▪ Employment status ▪ Public assistance ▪ Community type: • Rural • Urban	**OUTCOME INFORMATION** ▪ Core achievements: • Entered employment • Retained employment • Got GED • Placed in postsecondary education ▪ Secondary achievements: • Achieved work-based project learner goal • Left public assistance • Achieved citizenship goals • Increased involvement in child's education • Increased involvement in child's literacy activities • Voted or registered to vote • Increased involvement in community affairs **STAFF INFORMATION** ▪ Function • Teacher • Counselor • Paraprofessional • Local administrator • State-level administrator ▪ Status • Full time • Part time • Volunteer
FUNCTIONS	
PROGRAM/SITE FUNCTIONS	**DESCRIPTION**
▪ Add program	▪ Set up information for program
▪ Add site	▪ Set up information for site associated with program
▪ Add class	▪ Set up information for class associated with site
▪ Move sites/classes	▪ Ability to move one or more classes to a different site or sites to a different program (merge)
▪ Class attendance	▪ Enter attendance information for all students in class
STUDENT FUNCTIONS	
▪ Intake	▪ Enter demographics, needs, goals, etc., at intake
▪ Enrollment	▪ Enroll/drop student in class
▪ Attendance	▪ Maintain attendance information for students
▪ Assessment	▪ Enter student test scores
▪ Leveling	▪ Student level based on test scores (automatic)
▪ Separation	▪ Enter separation information
STAFF FUNCTIONS	
▪ Staff profile	▪ Maintain information about staff members
▪ Contact hours	▪ Enter actual contact hours by week or month
REPORTING FUNCTIONS	
▪ NRS tables	▪ Generate NRS tables
SYSTEM MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS	
▪ Assessment/leveling information	▪ Maintain information about test scores and levels
▪ Goals/achievements	▪ Maintain information about standardized goals/achievements

Reporting Capabilities

Equally important to the system's data structure and inputs is the system's capability to output or *report* information. For Federal reporting, the NRS requires that each State annually submit aggregated summary tables of descriptive and performance data on the core measures. Each local program's software must have the capability to create these reports and submit an aggregated report to the State, or local programs must be able to submit their individual student data to the State for aggregation.

Although Federal reporting requirements are relatively simple, WIA requires States to use NRS data for more extensive purposes. For WIA, States need to evaluate each local program's performance on the outcome measures and address the needs of specific subpopulations, such as low-income students or adults in family literacy programs. To obtain this information, the software system must have the capability to report by individual program and by student population.

Even more detailed reporting is needed to use NRS data to address program improvement needs. Among the most powerful uses of NRS data is the capability to understand the program and instructional factors related to successful student outcomes. To study these issues, States and local programs need the ability to examine data by site, class, and student characteristics and to relate outcomes to such variables as contact hours, teacher characteristics, and curriculum. While most software systems commonly include such data elements, the reporting of this information in a form amenable to program performance evaluation can be problematic unless this capability is initially built into the system.

Exhibit 4.4 presents examples of the types of tables the software should be capable of producing. The first three tables in the exhibit show educational advancement by incoming educational level, program area, and class. State and local administrators can use these tables to assess program performance standards on this measure and to examine which types of students in which classes advance at higher rates. The fourth table in the exhibit offers an example of the type of report needed to examine individual class data. In this example, student performance is compared with full- and part-time instructors and whether the instructor has had staff development. The NRS guide, *Using Data for Program Management and Improvement* (available at http://www.nrsweb.org) contains more information on the many uses of data.

Federal Reporting Tables

NRS data are to be reported annually to DAEL by each State in aggregate form. DAEL has developed reporting tables for this purpose. These tables—included in appendix C—have been revised by DAEL and reviewed and cleared by the Federal Government. Instructions on completing each table are included with that table.

Several optional reporting tables are provided to allow for separate reporting about special populations on the core indicators. For example, tables for workplace and family literacy participants provide a picture of how the participants performed on core and secondary measures. States are encouraged to examine the performance of other target subpopulations separately. Table 10, which describes outcomes for participants of correctional education programs was an optional table, but effective the program year beginning July 1, 2005 (program year 2005), this table will be *required*.

Exhibit 4.4
Sample Tables for Examining Program Improvement and Program Effectiveness

Educational Advancement Information			
Initial Class Level	**Number Recommended for Advancement**	**Percentage of Students Advancing by Level**	**Average Contact Hours Per Student Before Advancement**
Beginning Literacy	21	12 %	61
Beginning ABE	41	17 %	48
Low Intermediate ABE	51	36 %	39
High Intermediate ABE	47	43 %	40
Low ASE	23	38 %	38
High ASE	12	60 %	50
All Levels	**195**	**26 %**	**46**

Educational Advancement by Program Area			
Program	**Number Enrolled (all levels)**	**Number Recommended for Advancement**	**Percent**
ABE	225	58	26 %
GED	265	84	32 %
ESL	197	33	17 %
Family Literacy	49	7	14 %
Workplace Literacy	86	13	15 %
All Programs	**822**	**195**	**24 %**

Educational Advancement by Class			
Class	**Percent Advancing**	**Pretest Score Range**	**Average Contact Hours Per Student Before Advancement**
Beginning Literacy Class 1	14%	162–204	60
Beginning ABE Class 1	17%	199–214	51
Beginning ABE Class 2	24%	201–212	59
Low Intermediate Class 1	22%	209–222	44
Low Intermediate Class 2	31%	212–219	39
High Intermediate Class 1	26%	219–233	42
All Classes	**22%**	**162–233**	**49**

Exhibit 4.4 (Continued)
Sample Tables for Examining Program Improvement and Program Effectiveness

Instructor (Class)	Low Intermediate Level				Instructor		Participated in Professional Development in Reading		Observed Using New Strategies	
Name	Pretest	Posttest	Gain	Hours Attended	Full time	Part time	Yes	No	Yes	No
Barbara Acosta (Class #1)					☒		☒		☒	
Angeles, January	212	220	+8	87						
Arrendondo, Myra	215	221	+6	90						
Cassat, Mary	214	218	+4	84						
Cheswick, Jennifer	211	208	-3	72						
Dietrich, Greta	211	216	+5	84						
Farrar, Allison	213	220	+7	78						
Fox, David	211	214	+3	90						
Galvan, Bertha	217	222	+5	87						
Gibson, Corey	215	223	+9	87						
Hadji, Hassan	214	214	—	81						
James, Brad	212	209	-3	75						
Martinez, Juan	214	220	+6	87						
Mulligan, Ivor	218	228	+10	93						
Simone, Michael	216	225	+9	81						
Average	**213.8**	**218.4**	**+4.4**	**84.7**						
Stephanie Cronen (Class #2)						☒	☒			☒
Azzam, Rima	213	217	+4	81						
Bashir, Lubna	218	223	+5	84						
Burnaska, Kristine	211	214	+3	84						
Carl, Brad	216	220	+4	75						
Escudero, Jaime	215	218	+3	84						
Hernandez, Maria	215	213	-2	72						
Patapis, Vicky	217	223	+6	90						
Portal, Natalie	219	224	+5	87						
Rhodes, David	212	210	-2	78						
Rodriguez, Hector	216	215	-1	78						

Exhibit 4.4 (Continued)
Sample Tables for Examining Program Improvement and Program Effectiveness

Instructor (Class)	Low Intermediate Level				Instructor		Participated in Professional Development in Reading		Observed Using New Strategies	
Name	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Gain**	**Hours Attended**	**Full time**	**Part time**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Sauti, Christina	214	213	-1	72						
Soden, David	217	221	+4	81						
Thompson, Terry	211	216	+5	84						
Average	**214.9**	**217.5**	**+2.5**	**80.8**						
Ben Martinez (Class #3)					ŏ		ŏ		ŏ	
Carras, Peter	215	221	+6	87						
Cross, Kevin	215	220	+5	90						
Gibson, Freddy	214	218	+4	84						
Gilles, Alexander	217	225	+8	90						
Hawkins, Calvin	213	219	+6	90						
Menendez, Fernando	211	211	+7	81						
Naval, Maricris	216	222	+6	84						
Perez, Maria	212	215	+3	87						
Pescador, Molly	213	211	-2	87						
Sussman, Tara	216	220	+4	78						
Voight, Janet	212	213	+1	84						
Woodruff, Darren	211	214	+2	93						
Average	**213.8**	**217.4**	**+4.2**	**86.3**						
Karen Hunt (Class #4)						ŏ		ŏ		
Aladjem, Daniel	219	220	+1	78						
Best, Clayton	213	213	—	84						
Cole, Mark	216	221	+5	87						
Cullen, Andrew	211	212	+1	84						
Diaz, Rafael	217	221	+4	81						
Ferrara, Steve	214	215	+1	81						
Flores, Bernardo	212	211	-1	75						
Gomez, Rosa	215	215	—	78						

Exhibit 4.4 (Continued)
Sample Tables for Examining Program Improvement and Program Effectiveness

Instructor (Class)	Low Intermediate Level				Instructor		Participated in Professional Development in Reading		Observed Using New Strategies	
Name	Pretest	Posttest	Gain	Hours Attended	Full time	Part time	Yes	No	Yes	No
Gonzales, Jesus	213	211	-2	75						
Gruner, Allison	212	215	+3	78						
Mejia, Brenda	211	211	—	75						
Siegel, Janna	211	210	-1	81						
Snow, Stephanie	214	212	-2	84						
Weidler, Danielle	213	217	+4	87						
Average	**213.6**	**214.6**	**+0.9**	**80.6**						
DeWan Lee (Class #5)						✓	✓		✓	
Cohen, Crecilla	215	224	+9	90						
Cruz, Michelle	213	211	-2	75						
DelBorello, David	213	220	+7	90						
Dowling, Erinn	214	220	+6	93						
Jiang, Tao	211	217	+6	84						
Miller, Patricia	216	215	-1	81						
Nesbitt, Daphne	212	218	+6	87						
Quinones, Sherrie	212	220	+8	84						
Ramirez, Kevin	215	217	+2	83						
Rivera, José	215	215	—	78						
Sims, Anthony	212	211	-1	78						
Taylor, Jessica	218	223	+5	90						
Average	**213.8**	**217.6**	**+3.8**	**84.4**						
Feng Yu (Class #6)						✓	✓			✓
Braswell, James	215	215	—	78						
Carpenter, Daniel	215	221	+6	90						
Garcia, Anna	212	216	+4	87						
Hall, Pamela	213	212	-1	78						
Harper, Sterlina	216	220	+4	81						
Lopez, Mario	215	219	+4	83						
Mesmer, Eric	214	214	—	81						
Olson, Krista	219	222	+3	81						

Exhibit 4.4 (Continued)
Sample Tables for Examining Program Improvement and Program Effectiveness

Instructor (Class)	Low Intermediate Level				Instructor		Participated in Professional Development in Reading		Observed Using New Strategies	
Name	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Gain**	**Hours Attended**	**Full time**	**Part time**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Rodi, Chad	213	216	+3	84						
Sanchez, Anthony	218	222	+4	87						
Tanaka, Laurel	217	221	+4	78						
Wagner, Susan	211	216	+5	87						
Young, Eboni	211	216	+5	84						
Average	**214.5**	**217.7**	**+3.2**	**83**						
Jennifer Lewis (Class #7)					✓			✓		
Baldi, Stephane	211	211	—	78						
Dwyer, Kevin	211	213	+2	87						
Honegger, Steven	212	215	+3	87						
Johnson, Tony	215	217	+2	90						
Pisacane, Kerry	215	223	+8	81						
Rudick, Sherrie	216	221	+5	84						
Weidberg, Suzanne	213	219	+6	87						
Yoon, Kwang	213	218	+5	78						
Average	**213.3**	**217.1**	**+3.8**	**84.8**						
Arlinda Morris (Class #8)						✓		✓		
Busch, Melissa	216	218	+2	78						
Etheridge, Gretchen	218	219	+1	82						
Huang, Yun (Ellen)	213	214	+1	83						
Jones, Tarsha	211	211	—	72						
Millstone, Ken	216	216	—	75						
Paley, Belen	214	215	+1	78						
Rodriguez, Carlos	212	216	+4	81						
Spears, Eric	211	212	+1	84						
Woodford, Alix	214	217	+3	81						
Average	**213.9**	**215.3**	**+1.4**	**79.9**						

Other optional tables include table 4A (added at the request of several States), which allows States to record the number of students who advanced more than one level during the program year. However, this table will be *eliminated* effective the program year beginning July 1, 2006 (program year 2006). Table 4B was developed to allow DAEL to examine level completion and advancement separately for students who receive both pre- and posttests during the program year. In contrast to the required table 4 that includes all students, States may report data in table 4B only on students who take *both* a pre- and posttest. These data allow DAEL to compare the impact of including all students with only pre- and posttested students on educational gain performance levels. Table 4B also includes the aggregate number of contact hours by level for the group of pre- and posttested students who advanced. These data provide an indication of the average amount of instructional time it takes for students to advance each level. Table 4B will be *required* effective the program year beginning July 1, 2006 (program year 2006).

In addition to data tables, DAEL requires States to submit a narrative report and a financial report detailing expenditures. States receiving funds under the EL Civics program must complete a separate financial report for the funds. Forms and instructions for both of these financial reports also are in the following section.

States are required to submit the reporting tables 6 months after the end of the program year (December 31), using DAEL's electronic submission Web site.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE SURVEYS

SAMPLE LOCAL FOLLOW-UP SURVEY FOR CORE MEASURES

A. ENROLLMENT

Hello. My name is _____. I work for _____. We're calling people who have recently attended classes at our adult education program to find out what happens to them after they leave us. We want to know how you liked the classes you took and how adult education classes have affected you, your family, and your job.

It should take no longer than 10 minutes to answer my questions. Do you have time now for me to ask these questions? *(Reassure the respondent that any information given to us will be strictly confidential.)*

First, I'd like to make sure I have the correct information about the class you took.

A-1. I understand that you were in (TEACHER'S NAME)'s class at (LOCATION). Is that correct?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No *[Obtain correct information]*

A-2. Did you attend teacher's class until it ended or did you leave before it ended?

- ❑ Completed *[Proceed to Question B-1]*
- ❑ Left before it ended *[Proceed to Question A-3]*

A-3. During what month did you stop attending the class or program?

Month _____

B. OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

B-1. Since the end of your class or program, have you enrolled in any other educational or training programs?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No *[Proceed to Question C-1]*

B-2. Where are you enrolled?

- ❑ Other (Specify)_____

B-3. In what type of class or classes are you now enrolled? [Do not read choices to respondent. Check all that apply.]

- ❑ English Language Skills
- ❑ GED/High School
- ❑ Vocational/Job Training
- ❑ Community College/College Level
- ❑ Citizenship
- ❑ Family literacy
- ❑ Other (Specify)_____
- ❑ DK/Refused

C. SECONDARY CREDENTIAL

C-1. Did you receive any diplomas, certificates, or degrees at the end of your class or since you left (TEACHER'S) class, such as the GED?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No *[Proceed to Question D-1]*
- ❑ DK/Refused *[Proceed to Question D-1]*

C-2. What type of diploma/certificate/degree did you receive? [Do not read choices to respondent. Check all that apply.]

- ❑ GED
- ❑ High School Diploma
- ❑ Certificate of Competence
- ❑ Associate's Degree
- ❑ Bachelor's Degree
- ❑ Other_____
- ❑ DK/Refused

D. EMPLOYMENT

D-1. When you first enrolled in the class or program were you: [Read choices.]

- ❑ Employed at a paying job *[Proceed to Question D-4]*
- ❑ Not employed at a paying job and looking for a job *[Proceed to Question D-2]*
- ❑ Not employed and not looking for a job *[Proceed to E-1]*
- ❑ DK/Refused *[End interview]*

D-2. While you were taking (TEACHER'S)'s class, did you get a paying job?

- ❑ Yes
  If yes: What was the name of your employer? _____*[Proceed to Question D-4]*
- ❑ No

D-3. Since you stopped taking the class, have you gotten a paying job?

- ❑ Yes
  If yes: What is the name of your employer? _____
  When did you first get a job after leaving the program? _____
- ❑ No *[Proceed to Question E-1]*

D-4. Do you still have that job or do you now have a different job?

- ❑ Still have same job
- ❑ Have different job
  What is the name of your current employer? _____
- ❑ Lost job, unemployed
- ❑ DK/Refused

CLOSING

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questions. Your answers will be very helpful. The information you gave me will be used to help make adult education programs better and more useful to people like you who have attended or would like to attend such a program.

E-1. Is there anything that I didn't ask about that you'd like to say?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

CALLING LOG

Interviewer: _____

Date & Time	Name	Contact (who, nature of conversation, any messages left, etc.)	Status (interview completed, scheduled recall)

NRS

National Reporting System
for Adult Education

Sample Followup Survey
for Core, Secondary, and Other Measures

SAMPLE FOLLOWUP SURVEY FOR CORE, SECONDARY, AND OTHER MEASURES

Hello. My name is _____. I work for _____. We're calling people who have recently attended our classes at our adult education programs to find out what happens to them after they leave us. We also want to know how you liked the classes you attended and how adult education classes have affected you, your family, and your job.

It should take no longer than 15 minutes to answer my questions. Do you have time now for me to ask these questions? *(Reassure the respondent that any information given will be strictly confidential.)*

ATTENDANCE/OBJECTIVES

A-1. I understand that you were in (TEACHER'S NAME)'s class at (LOCATION). Is that correct?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No *[Obtain correct information]*

A-2. During what month and year did you enroll in this program?

Month _____ Year _____

A-3. Did you attend the class/program until it ended?

- ❑ Yes *[Proceed to question B-1]*
- ❑ No *[Proceed to question A-4]*

A-4. During what month did you stop attending the class or program?

Month _____

A-5. What was the *main* reason you stopped attending the class or program? *[Do not read choices to respondent. Check category that is most closely related to response.]*

- ❑ Achieved reason for enrollment
- ❑ Completed class
- ❑ Illness/Incapacity
- ❑ Lack of child care
- ❑ Lack of transportation
- ❑ Family problems
- ❑ Time or location of services not feasible
- ❑ Lack of interest
- ❑ Instruction not helpful
- ❑ Instructor was not good
- ❑ Program didn't satisfy personal goals
- ❑ Not satisfied with program
- ❑ Moved
- ❑ Entered employment
- ❑ Entered other education or training program
- ❑ Other (Specify:_____)
- ❑ DK/Refused

SECONDARY CREDENTIAL

B-1. Did you receive any diplomas, certificates, or degrees since you took this class, such as a GED?

- ❑ Yes *[Proceed to question B-2]*
- ❑ No *[Proceed to question C-1]*
- ❑ DK/Refused *[Proceed to question C-1]*

B-2. What type of diploma/certificate/degree did you receive? ***[Do not read choices to respondent. Check all that apply.]***

- ❑ GED
- ❑ High School Diploma
- ❑ Certificate of Competence
- ❑ Associate's Degree
- ❑ Bachelor's Degree
- ❑ Other_____
- ❑ DK/Refused

OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

C-1. Since you stopped attending the class or program, have you enrolled in any other educational or training programs?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No *[Proceed to question D-1]*

C-2. Where are you enrolled?

- ❑ Other (Specify)_____

C-3. In what type of class or classes are you now enrolled? ***[Do not read choices. Check all that apply.]***

- ❑ English Language Skills
- ❑ GED/High School
- ❑ Vocational/Job Training
- ❑ Community College/College Level
- ❑ Citizenship
- ❑ Family Literacy
- ❑ Other (Specify)_____
- ❑ DK/Refused

EMPLOYMENT

D-1. While you were enrolled in the class or program, were you receiving any type of public assistance, such as food stamps or welfare benefits?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No *[Proceed to question D-3]*
- ❑ DK/Refused *[Proceed to question D-3]*

D-2. Are you currently receiving this type of public assistance?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ DK/Refused

D-3. When you first enrolled in the class or program, were you: ***[Read choices.]***

- ❑ Employed at a paying job *[Proceed to question D-6]*
- ❑ Not employed at a paying job and looking for a job *[Proceed to question D-4]*
- ❑ Not employed and not looking for a job *[Proceed to question E-1]*
- ❑ DK/Refused [*Proceed to question E-1*]

D-4. While you were taking this class, did you get a paying job?

❑ Yes
If yes: What was the name of your employer? _____*[Proceed to Question D-6]*

❑ No *[Proceed to question D-5]*

D-5. Since you stopped taking this class, have you gotten a paying job?

❑ Yes
If yes: What is the name of your employer? _____*[Proceed to Question D-6]*

When did you first get a job after leaving the program? _____

❑ No *[Proceed to E-1]*

D-6. Do you still have the same job, have a different job, or have no current job?

❑ Still have the same job
❑ Have a different job
What is the name of your current employer? _____
❑ Have no job, unemployed
❑ DK/Refused

COMMUNITY IMPACT

E-1. Compared to before you attended the class, have you increased your attendance or activities in any of the following: *[Read choices. Check all that apply.]*

❑ Neighborhood meetings
❑ Meetings of political groups
❑ Volunteer work or meetings for community organizations
(List: _____)
❑ Do not got to meetings or volunteer
❑ DK/Refused

E-2. Did you register to vote or vote for the first time since you attended the class?

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ DK/Refused

FAMILY

F-1. Do you live with children who are 12 years old or younger?

❑ Yes
❑ No *[Proceed to question G-1]*

F-2. Since you attended the class, how much do you read with your children compared to before you attended the class? Do you:

- ❑ Read with children about the same as before
- ❑ Read with children more than before
- ❑ Read with children less than before
- ❑ Do not read with children at all
- ❑ DK/Refused

F-3. How often do you visit the library with your child/children now compared to before attending the program? Do you:

- ❑ Go more often
- ❑ Go the same amount
- ❑ Go less often
- ❑ Not go at all
- ❑ DK/Refusal

F-4. Is/are the child/children in your home attending school?

- ❑ Yes *[Proceed to question F-5]*
- ❑ No *[Proceed to question G-1]*

F-5. Compared to before you attended the class, how much time do you spend helping the school-aged children in your home with homework? Do you:

- ❑ Help about the same
- ❑ Help more than before
- ❑ Help less than before
- ❑ Not help at all
- ❑ DK/Refused

F-6. Compared to before you attended the class, how many of your children's school activities, including parent/teacher conferences and school assemblies, have you gone to?

- ❑ Attend about the same
- ❑ Attend more activities
- ❑ Attend fewer activities
- ❑ Do not attend activities
- ❑ DK/Refused

SATISFACTION WITH PROGRAM

G-1. What is your general opinion of the quality of the class you attended? Is it unacceptable, not very good, satisfactory, or excellent?

- ❑ Unacceptable
- ❑ Not very good
- ❑ Good
- ❑ Excellent
- ❑ DK/Refused

G-2. Did (TEACHER'S NAME)'s class meet the expectations you had for it before you enrolled in it?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ DK/Refused

G-3. Are you not at all likely, somewhat likely, or extremely likely to attend another class or program offered by *(PROGRAM/CLASS ORGANIZER)*?

- ❏ Not at all likely
- ❏ Somewhat likely
- ❏ Extremely likely
- ❏ DK/Refused

G-4. What did you like about this class or program? *[List all responses.]*

_____
_____
_____
_____

G-5. What did you not like about this class or program? *[List all responses.]*

_____
_____
_____
_____

CLOSING

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questions. Your answers are very helpful. The information you gave me will be used to help make adult education programs better and more useful to people like you who have attended or would like to attend such a program.

H-1. Is there anything that I didn't ask about that you'd like to say?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

MODEL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING THE LOCAL FOLLOWUP SURVEY

This section describes model procedures for conducting a telephone survey designed to collect the NRS followup measures. The model is offered as guidance to States in designing and conducting the followup survey. *These procedures are not required, however, and States may develop its own procedures for conducting the survey,* as long as the survey meets the NRS requirements described in this document.

The crucial activities to conducting a telephone survey that produces valid data are to:

1. Draw a sample of students that reflects the students who attend your program with one or more of the four core outcomes as main or secondary goals.

2. Reach the students sampled and obtain the information from a large majority of them so as not to invalidate the sample.

3. Train telephone interviewers so that all interviewers ask the survey questions correctly and reliably.

Selecting the Sample

The procedures below present a method for randomly selecting a sample of 300 students who left the program.

1. Generate a list from your database of names, with telephone numbers and contact information, of students who have left the program, and organize the list based on the four core followup measures. Use students' stated main or secondary goals to identify the groups. You should also have the exit quarter for students with employment goals. You may use separate lists for each of the four followup measures or a single list with all students.

2. Go through the list to identify any individuals who do not have a telephone number or any contact information. Cross these names off your list.

3. We want to compute a *sampling fraction* that will give us a 300 student sample. The sampling fraction is computed by dividing the total number of students to be sampled by the desired sample size. If we have 600 students, the sampling fraction is 600/300 = 2. If the sampling fraction is not a whole number, it should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

4. From your list, count down the number of students determined by the sampling fraction and include that student in the sample and continue this way throughout the entire list. For example, if the sampling fraction is 2, then include the second student on the list and every other student thereafter. When you are finished, you will have a sample of 300 students. This is your *primary* sample.

5. Create a *backup* sample of 50 percent more students than your primary sample. Randomly select the backup sample in the same way as the original sample. Compute the sampling fraction by dividing the number of students you need by the number of students remaining on the list. Use this number to select every n^{th} student from the list. Make sure you have a backup sample sufficient for each of the four core outcome measures. The backup sample is used to replace students from the primary sample who cannot be reached after four attempts (see below). If there are fewer students remaining on your list than you need for the backup sample after you have selected your primary sample, then all of these students will be included in the backup sample.

Survey Procedures

Once you have your sample, you can begin calling students and administering the survey. Call each person on your primary sample list. If you cannot reach a person despite your best efforts, then replace that student with a student from the backup sample.

As you conduct the survey, it is very important to the integrity of the data collected to know how many people in the sample were not reached, how many refused to participate, and what the reasons for refusal were. For this reason, maintain a calling log during the survey. Entries in the log should contain the date and time of each call, the name of the caller, and information about the call, including: the name of the respondent, whether the person was reached, messages left, whether the interview occurred, and explanations for why it did not. The logs should be checked daily to identify respondents who need to be recalled. The log should also be checked against the list of learners in the sample to make sure all members of the sample are being called and contacted. Callers should promptly make a log entry for every telephone call they make, whether or not the adult learner was reached. This Appendix includes a sample calling log.

The validity of the survey depends on reaching all or at least a majority of the students in the sample. There will be many difficulties, however, in reaching all of the students in the sample. The following section describes some of the most common difficulties in reaching people for a telephone survey and offers guidance on how to resolve these problems.

Problems Reaching Learners on the Telephone

In most data collection activities, there are predictable kinds of problems that may be encountered. Interviewers may be unable to reach the correct person, and the learner may not want to speak to the caller, or he or she may have a protective family. Additionally, learners may not want to answer some or all survey items; they may be hostile, confused, or just harried. Furthermore, callers may be required to answer questions that they are not equipped to answer.

Interviewers should have a resource person available who can assist with difficult interviews or respondents and complicated questions. This person should have thorough familiarity with the NRS and the procedures used to conduct telephone interviews. He or she should monitor interviewer telephone logs, provide general oversight during the interviewing process, and could also be responsible for the training.

Accommodation for other languages. Because the sample may include ESL students and other non-native English speakers, interviewers are likely to encounter a language barrier in the course of data collection. Every effort must be taken to collect information from all non-English

speakers included in the sample. Accomplishing this may require the program to translate the survey and use interviewers who are fluent in the languages that may be encountered during the interviews. The NRS has Spanish and Vietnamese versions of the model survey that are available on request.

When the student cannot be reached immediately. A gatekeeper is a person or situation that stands between you and the person with whom you need to talk. Common gatekeepers are family members and answering machines.

- *Reaching a family member or other person*
  - ✓ Leave a message. The message should be as follows:
    - Interviewer's name.
    - Calling from (name of program).
    - Calling in reference to the adult education program the person attended.
    - Interviewer will call back at another time.
  - ✓ Ask a few questions:
    - When is the learner expected back?
    - What and when is the best way to reach him/her?
  - ✓ Wait for no more than 2 days between callbacks.
  - ✓ If multiple messages (more than 3 or 4) have been left, but the learner has not been contacted, then the learner should be officially listed as a nonrespondent on the calling log sheet and replaced with a learner from the backup sample.
- *Reaching voicemail or an answering machine*
  - ✓ Leave a message. The message should be as follows:
    - Interviewer name and where interviewer is calling from (name of program).
    - Calling in reference to the adult education program the person attended.
    - Interviewer will call back at another time.
  - ✓ Wait no more than 2 days between callbacks.
  - ✓ If multiple messages (more than 3 or 4) have been left, but the learner has not been contacted, then the learner should be officially listed as a no-respondent on the calling log sheet and replaced with a learner from the backup sample.
- *Reaching a non-working number or a number that just rings*

- ✓ Non-working number should be noted on the calling log sheet as not working.
- ✓ If the number just rings, then the day and time the interviewer called should be noted on the log sheet and the learner should be called at a different time. If multiple calls (more than 3 or 4) are made at different times of the day and there is still no answer, then the learner should be officially listed as a nonrespondent on the calling log sheet and replaced with a learner from the backup sample.

Dealing with refusals. The goal of telephone interviews is to obtain information from all the people contacted. However, some interviewees may be initially reluctant to participate in the survey. The interviewer should try to "convert" refusals whenever possible; callers should, however, never become belligerent or upset or insist that a person complete the survey.

The best way to handle a refusal is for the caller to present himself or herself as confident and proud of the work that he or she is doing. The interviewer should indicate that this survey is an important way of providing information to the State Department of Education and the adult education program, and decisions about adult education will be made based on this information.

There are several points in the interview when callers may encounter refusals or reluctance. The following examples provide ways to handle this.

Initial refusal. When learners are first reached, they may not be prepared to speak with the interviewer. They may be very busy. If this is the case:

- Ask about the timing: I'm sorry we reached you at a bad time. When might be a more convenient time to reach you? Possible solutions include offering to call them a week later, a month later, etc., as long as this is recorded so that the followup call is made.
- When the learner has been reached but absolutely refuses to participate, a complete description should be recorded on the calling log and given to the resource person for further attempts.

Confusion-based refusal. Adult learners who are contacted may be confused or wary about how the information collected in the interview will be used. For this reason, they may refuse to take part in the interview.

- If the learner wants to know why the survey is being conducted, the interviewer should explain the purpose of the study, emphasizing that the information collected has important implications for the national adult education program and for the program she or he attended.
- If the learner wants to know how his or her information will be used, the interviewer should assure the learner that the data will be compiled to find out how well adult education programs are performing throughout the country and to improve program services. Furthermore, all of the answers that the learners give will be kept confidential, and no names or other identifying information will be associated with their answers. Learners should also be assured that they were chosen randomly from the pool of adult learners in the State.

Time- or burden-based refusal. This type of refusal can occur early in the interview or at a later point. Interviewees may be pressed for time and may try to terminate the interview. If this is the case:

- The interviewer should point out that the survey will only take 10–15 minutes, acknowledge that the learner's time is really important, and tell them that their responses to the survey questions will be really helpful: I understand that your time is important. We really appreciate your input on this issue. It is important to get the perspective of adult education students.

- The interviewer should tell learners about the sampling process: Of the [number] students that attended the adult education program, you have been selected as one of only [number] to represent the program. Your help is important to us.

If the respondent is still reluctant, one other strategy may be helpful:

- The interviewer should try to arrange an alternate time: Might there be a better or more convenient time to contact you?

If none of these strategies are successful, then the interviewer should NOT try to persuade the learner further. The learner should be thanked for his or her patience and told that the caller appreciates all the demands on their time. The interviewer should then record a complete description on the calling log contact sheet, and the student should be replaced with a learner from the backup sample.

Training

Staff members who will be conducting the telephone interviews should be trained to ensure the integrity of the data collected. To collect valid and reliable data, interviewers must be thoroughly familiar with both the process of interviewing and the materials to be used for collecting data. The actual training can be characterized as having two components: the process of conducting telephone interviews and the purpose and structure of the NRS. This section provides suggestions on appropriate training activities.

Focus of Training

Regardless of the survey, any errors, biases, or inconsistencies on the part of the interviewer result in some degree of survey error. It should be a goal to minimize this error. Trained interviewers are much more likely to accomplish this goal. The desired result is high quality data, so that data are comparable from one interview to another and from one State to another. The following guidelines should help minimize survey error and should be conveyed to the interviewers during their training:

1. The interviewing process should be standardized. To ensure that this occurs, interviewers must read the questions exactly as written and follow the instructions on the survey instrument.

APPENDIX B
NRS DATA QUALITY CHECKLIST

National Reporting System
for Adult Education

A Project of the U.S. Department of Education

NRS STATE DATA QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

Instructions for Completing the Checklist

States use this checklist to rate their implementation of the data quality standards in their NRS data collection procedures. States also describe details of their data collection policies and procedures for some standards. States must also include with the checklist, a plan for data quality improvement. The director of the administrative State agency where the Federal adult education and literacy program resides must certify the checklist, and the checklist must be submitted with the annual NRS data performance report.

Reporting on Standards

The checklist presents the standards for each content area and quality level. States are to report whether they have the policy process or procedure described by the standards by indicating "yes" if the standard has been met or "no" if it has not been met. Some standards apply only to the survey or data matching followup methodologies for collecting NRS outcome measures. If the State does not use one of the methods, then it should report "not applicable" (NA) for the standard. Please note that because your State may meet some of the standards in all categories (e.g., some under the acceptable level and some under the superior level), it is important to complete the *entire* checklist.

To report that the State has met the standard (i.e., "yes"), the State must meet *all* of the criteria for the standard. For example, for the standard concerning written State assessment policy, the policy must include all of the topics listed in the standard. Otherwise the State must indicate "no" for the standard and address the problem in the data quality improvement plan.

Narrative Detail

Some standards require the State to provide additional information, such as the name of assessment used, the State's followup method, or a narrative description with more detail. For example, if a State has a system of technical assistance on data quality to local providers, then the State must describe the system. All narrative descriptions should be brief but sufficient enough to convey the information requested. No more than a few sentences are necessary.

Data Quality Improvement Plan

If a State fails to meet acceptable standards in any area, then the State's performance will be considered unacceptable, and the State must include a brief data quality improvement plan that describes how it will move toward acceptable quality within the next year (for December 2003 data submission). The plan must address all standards that the State did not meet, describe what new policies or procedures it will put in place to meet the standards, and identify barriers to moving to a

higher quality level and the technical assistance needed to implement the plan. For areas at acceptable quality, the State may optionally submit a data quality improvement plan to describe how the State will move toward superior quality within the next 2 years (December 2004 data submission). DAEL will offer technical assistance to States that fail to meet acceptable or superior quality levels.

Submission and Certification

States are to complete the checklist for the program year for the NRS data due on December 31 of each year. The last page of the checklist is a certification page, where the State director of adult education or head of the administrative State agency where the Federal adult education and literacy program resides must certify to the accuracy of the information in the checklist. The director or agency head must sign this page. Because DAEL cannot accept electronic signatures, a copy of the original page with signature must be submitted with the checklist.

NRS

National Reporting System
for Adult Education

A Project of the U.S. Department of Education

NRS STATE DATA QUALITY CHECKLIST

State: _____ **Date:** _____

Completed by (name and title): _____

A. Data Foundation and Structure

Acceptable Quality

1. State has written assessment policies that specify: Yes ☐ No ☐

   - Standardized assessments to use for accountability that are valid and appropriate for adult students.
   - Time periods (in hours or weeks) for when to pre- and posttest.
   - Score ranges tied to educational functioning levels (EFL) for placement and for reporting gains for accountability.
   - Appropriate guidance on tests and placement for special populations (e.g., students who are unable to be tested due to language or disability).
   - Unacceptable methods of assessment for EFL placement.

   1a. List up to three of the most of commonly used assessments permitted for ABE and ESL.

   ABE Assessments:

   ESL Assessments:

2. State has written policies for followup that explain: Yes ☐ No ☐

   - Goal setting procedures.
   - Followup methodology (survey or data match) for each measure that meets NRS requirements.
   - Which students are to be followed.
   - Difference between goal setting for NRS and goals for instruction.

2a. Indicate your followup methods for each measure.

Entered employment:	Survey ☐	Data match ☐	Both (explain)☐
Retained employment:	Survey ☐	Data match ☐	Both (explain)☐
Obtain GED:	Survey ☐	Data match ☐	Both (explain)☐
Enter postsecondary:	Survey ☐	Data match ☐	Both (explain)☐

3. If State uses survey followup method for any measure, check NA, and skip to the next item if survey is not used: NA ☐

   - Local programs or State can produce a list of students to survey, according to NRS requirements. Yes ☐ No ☐
   - Survey is conducted with a State provided, standard survey instrument. Yes ☐ No ☐
   - State has a regular schedule (e.g., quarterly) for submission of survey data or student names from local programs. Yes ☐ No ☐

4. If State uses data matching for any measure, check NA, and skip to the next question if data matching is not used: NA ☐

   - Local or State data system can produce files for matching that include exit dates and goal and employment status for each student. Yes ☐ No ☐
   - State has established a procedure for collecting Social Security numbers, including how to deal with missing numbers. Yes ☐ No ☐
   - State has set a regular schedule for data submission from local programs and for data matching with external agencies. Yes ☐ No ☐

5. State has provided to all local programs a copy of the assessment policy and an explanation of the policy. Yes ☐ No ☐

6. State has provided to all local programs the written State policies, procedures, and requirements for student followup and an explanation of the procedures. Yes ☐ No ☐

7. The State has written definitions for all measures (including demographic measures and contact hours) that are defined according to NRS requirements and has provided them to all programs. Yes ☐ No ☐

Superior Quality

1. The State has a comprehensive data dictionary that defines all measures on State student data forms and in the State data system and has provided it with an explanation to all local programs. Yes ☐ No ☐

2. State has standards or requirements for the percentage of students to be pre- and posttested. Yes ☐ No ☐

   2a. **If yes,** indicate the standards or requirements.

3. State has made available to local programs on a continuous basis additional technical assistance and resources on assessment, data collection, and followup procedures (e.g., site visits, contact persons, manuals, and online resources). Yes ☐ No ☐

   3a. **If yes,** briefly describe the assistance and how it is provided.

4. If State uses survey followup method for any measure, the State has taken steps (e.g., through data review, discussion with staff, or observation) to verify that the survey is being conducted according to NRS guidelines. (Check NA and skip to the next item if survey is not used.) NA ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

   4a. **If yes,** briefly describe verification procedures.

5. If State uses survey followup method, the State has provided written guidance or assistance on how to improve response rates to survey staff. (Check NA and skip to the next item, if survey is not used.) NA ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

6. If State uses data matching, the State has written procedures on how to conduct data matching that comply with NRS guidelines. (Check NA and skip to the next item if data matching is not used.) NA ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

Exemplary Quality

1. State has a system for verifying that local programs are following State data policies and procedures through program reviews, auditing, or a certification process.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

   1a. **If yes,** briefly describe verification procedures.

2. State has conducted or reviewed reports of the validity, reliability, and comparability studies of its assessments and other data collection instruments.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

   2a. **If yes,** briefly describe how these studies are conducted.

Data Collection and Verification

Acceptable Quality

1. The State has an electronic management information system (MIS), used by all programs, that has individual student records within a relational database structure. The MIS incorporates NRS measures using common definitions and categories.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Database has error checking functions (e.g., that identify out-of-range values and missing data) used by State and/or local programs. .
   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. State has standardized forms (electronic or paper) for collecting student information (e.g., intake, attendance, goal setting) that include all NRS measures and have correct NRS definitions and categories. Yes ☐ No ☐

4. All programs are required to use State student data forms.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

5. State has provided to local programs guidelines or procedures for recording contact hours that conform to NRS requirements.Yes ☐ No ☐

6. All or most local programs have staff with clear responsibility for data collection and data entry. Yes ☐ No ☐

7. State staff checks data for errors after submission by local programs.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

   7a. **If yes,** explain error checking process, including what data are checked and how often.

Superior Quality

1. Programs and/or State enter data at least quarterly into MIS.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. State staff reviews local data at least quarterly for errors, missing data, out-of-range values, and anomalous data and has a system to resolve them and to identify program improvements and accomplishments. Yes ☐ No ☐

3. State has timely (e.g., quarterly) followup with local programs to have them correct missing and erroneous data. Yes ☐ No ☐

4. State has documented procedures for correcting errors and resolving missing data that programs use. Yes ☐ No ☐

   4a. **If yes,** briefly explain the data review and error correction system.

5. State provides additional technical assistance to local programs with poor data, as needed.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

Exemplary Quality

1. State has a regular system for verifying, through software, onsite auditing, and contact with local staff, that local programs are following State data collection procedures.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

1a. **If yes,** briefly describe the methods used for verification, including using correct assessments and assessment forms, reporting accurate score ranges for placement and for advancement for accountability.

2. State verifies data have been corrected in State or local database after errors have been found. Yes ☐ No ☐

3. State has procedures for regular contact with local staff on data issues to identify problems and provide assistance. Yes ☐ No ☐

   3a. **If yes,** specify procedures and type of contact.

4. If State uses survey followup method, State tracks survey response rates on at least a quarterly basis and takes corrective action if problems are identified. (Check NA and skip if survey is not used.) NA ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

Data Analysis and Reporting

Acceptable Quality

1. The State MIS can produce NRS required reports for the State, including Federal NRS tables. Yes ☐ No ☐

2. NRS tables are calculated accurately to include error checks and prevent double counting. Yes ☐ No ☐

3. State staff (or designee) checks NRS reports for errors and missing data and obtains corrected data from local program reports. Yes ☐ No ☐

4. The MIS is capable of reporting disaggregated data by subpopulation (e.g., student age, race, sex) and program. Yes ☐ No ☐

Superior Quality

1. State staff person familiar with the data but not directly involved with collection and data entry, reviews NRS data reports for errors and accuracy. Yes ☐ No ☐

2. State staff uses data for program management and improvement.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

3a. **If yes,** provide at least one example using data for this purpose in the past year.

3. Local programs can access data reports that are useful for program management and improvement. Yes ☐ No ☐

   4a. **If yes, briefly** describe the usefulness of two reports produced by your system.

4. Local staff uses data for program management and improvement.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

Exemplary Quality

1. State has a system of regular contact with local programs on data analysis issues and reporting needs to identify technical assistance needs.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

   2a. **If yes,** specify method and frequency of contact.

2. State has documented procedures for dealing with analysis problems and deviations.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. State compares data among programs and with prior years' data to identify discrepancies, reasonableness, and trends in good and bad performance.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

4. State has procedures to verify that local reports accurately reflect data collected (e.g., through review of local program documentation, onsite auditing).
   Yes ☐ No ☐

   5a. **If yes,** describe the report verification process.

Staff Development

Acceptable Quality

1. Local programs and state staff have been provided training on general NRS requirements, including assessment policy and procedures, followup policies, and goal-setting procedures. Yes ☐ No ☐

   1a. **If yes,** briefly describe when the most recent training occurred, its duration, and about what percent of local providers attended.

2. Local staff has received training on data collection procedures.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. State and local staff have been trained on data entry into the State or local MIS.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Local staff has had training on how to produce and/or interpret reports produced by the MIS. Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Training has been provided on conducting followup survey or data matching procedures to State or local staff involved in survey or matching.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

6. State provides at least one additional training annually to local programs on NRS issues, MIS data entry, or data analysis issues. Yes ☐ No ☐

6a. **If yes,** briefly describe when the most recent additional training occurred, its duration, and about what percent of local providers attended. This training should not be the same as the one described above in item number 1.

Superior Quality

1. There is planned, continuous training (at least one training annually) on data collection and NRS issues. Yes ☐ No ☐

   1a. **If yes,** briefly describe frequency, duration, and content of trainings.

2. NRS training is planned and delivered based on needs of local staff and evaluations of previous trainings. Yes ☐ No ☐

   2a. **If yes,** briefly describe the needs assessment process.

3. State has ongoing technical support, such as collecting the data and setting goals, to local programs to improve data matching and/or survey followup procedures. Yes ☐ No ☐

   3a. **If yes,** describe support and how it is provided.

Exemplary Quality

1. State has developed and is implementing a plan for ongoing staff development on NRS and data use issues to promote continuous improvement. Yes ☐ No ☐

1a. **If yes,** briefly describe the plan.

2. State has a system for continuous training of local staff on NRS issues, data collection, and data reporting through regularly scheduled training sessions or other resources.

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. State has timely intervention strategies to identify data problems as they occur and to provide training to programs to correct the problems.

Yes ☐ No ☐

3a. **If yes,** briefly describe the process.

NRS

National Reporting System
for Adult Education

A Project of the U.S. Department of Education

DATA QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The State *must* submit a quality improvement plan for each content area that does not meet all of the standards within the acceptable level. A separate plan must be completed for each content area. *Optionally*, the State may submit a plan for content areas that meet acceptable level standards but not superior level. The plans should not exceed one page and should include the following information.

1. Content area (e.g., data foundation and structure and staff development) and specific standard(s) not met.

2. For each standard not met, describe your planned approach to implementing changes that will allow you to meet the standard.

3. Describe the barriers or problems you anticipate, if any, to implement these plans.

4. Describe any technical assistance you might need to implement these planned changes.

5. If you believe you will be unable to meet any standard, please explain why.

NRS

National Reporting System
for Adult Education

A Project of the U.S. Department of Education

NRS DATA QUALITY CHECKLIST CERTIFICATION

Note: The State director of adult education or head of the State administrative agency in which the Federal adult education program resides must sign this certification.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this document is true and correct and accurately reflects the State's data collection policies and procedures for collecting and reporting data for the U.S. Department of Education's National Reporting System for adult education.

_____

Signature

_____

Name and Title

_____

Date

Seal

APPENDIX C
NRS REPORTING TABLES

REPORTING TABLES

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1830-0027. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 110 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. **If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to:** Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202–4651. **If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:** Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202–4651.

Table 1
Participants by Entering Educational Functioning Level, Ethnicity, and Sex

Enter the number of participants* by educational functioning level, ethnicity,*** and sex.**

Entering Educational Functioning Level (A)	American Indian or Alaskan Native		Asian		Black or African-American		Hispanic or Latino		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		White		Total
	Male (B)	Female (C)	Male (D)	Female (E)	Male (F)	Female (G)	Male (H)	Female (I)	Male (J)	Female (K)	Male (L)	Female (M)	(N)
ABE Beginning Literacy													
ABE Beginning Basic Education													
ABE Intermediate Low													
ABE Intermediate High													
ASE Low													
ASE High													
ESL Beginning Literacy													
ESL Beginning													
ESL Intermediate Low													
ESL Intermediate High													
ESL Low Advanced													
ESL High Advanced													
Total													

*A participant is an adult who receives at least twelve (12) hours of instruction. Work-based project learners are not included in this table.
**See attached definitions for educational functioning levels.
***A participant should be included in the racial/ethnic group to which he or she appears to belong, identifies with, or is regarded in the community as belonging.
OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 2
Participants by Age, Ethnicity, and Sex

Enter the number of participants by age,* ethnicity, and sex.

Age Group (A)	American Indian or Alaskan Native		Asian		Black or African-American		Hispanic or Latino		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		White		Total (N)
	Male (B)	Female (C)	Male (D)	Female (E)	Male (F)	Female (G)	Male (H)	Female (I)	Male (J)	Female (K)	Male (L)	Female (M)	
16–18													
19–24													
25–44													
45–59													
60 and Older													
Total													

*Participants should be classified based on their age at entry. Participants entering the program prior to the current program year should be classified based on their age at the beginning of the current program year. Work-based project learners are not included in this table.
The totals in Columns *B–M* should equal the totals in Column *B–M* of Table 1. Row totals in Column *N* should equal corresponding column totals in Table 3.
OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 3
Participants by Program Type and Age

Enter the number of participants by program type and age.

Program Type (A)	16–18 (B)	19–24 (C)	25–44 (D)	45–59 (E)	60 and Older (F)	Total (G)
Adult Basic Education						
Adult Secondary Education						
English-as-a-Second Language						
Total						

The total in Column *G* should equal the total in Column *N* of Table 1.
The total in Columns *B–F* should equal the totals for the corresponding rows in Column *N* of Table 2 and the total in Column *N* of Table 1.
OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 4
Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level

Enter number of participants for each category listed, total attendance hours, and calculate percentage of participants completing each level.

Entering Educational Functioning Level (A)	Total Number Enrolled (B)	Total Attendance Hours (C)	Number Completed Level (D)	Number who Completed a Level and Advanced One or More Levels (E)	Number Separated Before Completed (F)	Number Remaining Within Level (G)	Percentage Completing Level (H)
ABE Beginning Literacy							
ABE Beginning Basic Education							
ABE Intermediate Low							
ABE Intermediate High							
ASE Low							
ASE High*							
ESL Beginning Literacy							
ESL Beginning							
ESL Intermediate Low							
ESL Intermediate High							
ESL Low Advanced							
ESL High Advanced							
Total							

The total in Column *B* should equal the total in Column *N* of Table 1.
Column *D* is the total number of learners who completed a level, including learners who left after completing and learners who remained enrolled and moved to one or more higher levels.
Column *E* represents a subset of Column *D* (Number Completed Level) and is learners who completed a level and enrolled in one or more higher levels.
Column *F* is students who left the program or received no services for 90 consecutive days and have no scheduled services.
Column *D* + *F* + *G* should equal the total in Column *B*.
Column *G* represents the number of learners still enrolled who are at the same educational level as when entering.
Each row total in Column *H* is calculated by using the following formula: $H = \frac{ColumnD}{ColumnB}$

Work-based project learners are not included in this table.
*Completion of ASE high level is attainment of a secondary credential or passing GED tests.
OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 4A (Optional—This table to be eliminated in program year beginning July 1, 2006)
Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level, with Completion Breakdown

Enter number of participants for each category listed, total attendance hours, and calculate percentage of participants completing each level and advanced levels.

Entering Educational Functioning Level (A)	Total Number Enrolled (B)	Total Attendance Hours (C)	Number Completed Level (D)	Number who Completed One Level and Advanced (E1)	Number who Completed Two or More Levels and Advanced (E2)	Number Separated Before Completed (F)	Number Remaining Within Level (G)	Percentage Completing Level (H)
ABE Beginning Literacy								
ABE Beginning Basic Education								
ABE Intermediate Low								
ABE Intermediate High								
ASE Low								
ASE High*								
ESL Beginning Literacy								
ESL Beginning								
ESL Intermediate Low								
ESL Intermediate High								
ESL Low Advanced								
ESL High Advanced								
Total								

The total in Column *B* should equal the total in Column *N* of Table 1.
Column *D* is the total number of learners who completed a level, including learners who left after completing and learners who remained enrolled and moved to one or more higher levels.
Columns *E1* and *E2* are subsets of Column *D* (Number Completed Level). Column *E1* is learners who completed one level and enrolled in a higher level; Column *E2* is learners who completed two or more levels and enrolled in a higher level.
Column *F* is students who left the program or received no services for 90 consecutive days and have no scheduled services.
Column *D* + *F* + *G* should equal the total in Column *B*.
Column *G* represents the number of learners still enrolled who are at the same educational level as when they entered.

Each row total in Column *H* is calculated using the following formula: $H = \frac{ColumnD}{ColumnB}$.

Work-based project learners are not included in this table.
*Completion of ASE high level is attainment of a secondary credential or passing GED tests.
OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 4B (Optional—This table to be required in program year beginning July 1, 2006)
Educational Gains and Attendance for Pre- and Posttested Participants

Enter number of pre- and posttested participants for each category listed, calculate percentage of posttested participants completing each level, and enter total attendance hours for posttested completion.

Entering Educational Functioning Level (A)	Total Number Enrolled Pre- and Posttested (B)	Total Attendance Hours (C)	Number Completed Level (D)	Number who Completed a Level and Advanced One or More Levels (E)	Number Separated Before Completed (F)	Number Remaining Within Level (G)	Percentage Completing Level (H)
ABE Beginning Literacy							
ABE Beginning Basic Education							
ABE Intermediate Low							
ABE Intermediate High							
ASE Low							
ASE High*							
ESL Beginning Literacy							
ESL Beginning							
ESL Intermediate Low							
ESL Intermediate High							
ESL Low Advanced							
ESL High Advanced							
Total							

Include in this table only students who are both pre- and posttested.
Column *D* is the total number of learners who completed a level, including learners who left after completing and learners who remained enrolled and moved to one or more higher levels.
Column *E* represents a subset of Column *D* (Number Completed Level) and is learners who completed a level and enrolled in one or more higher levels.
Column *F* is students who left the program or received no services for 90 consecutive days and have no scheduled services.
Column *D* + *F* + *G* should equal the total in Column *B*.
Column *G* represents the number of learners still enrolled who are at the same educational level as when they entered.

Each row total in Column *H* is calculated using the following formula: $H = \frac{ColumnD}{ColumnB}$

Work-based project learners are not included in this table.
*Completion of ASE high level is attainment of a secondary credential or passing GED tests.
OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 5
Core Followup Outcome Achievement

Core Followup Outcome Measures	Number of Participants With Main or Secondary Goal	Number of Participants Included in Survey Sample	Number of Participants Responding to Survey or Used for Data Matching	Response Rate or Percent Available for Match	Number of Participants Achieving Outcome	Percent Achieving Outcome
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
Entered Employment*						
Retained Employment**						
Obtained a GED or Secondary School Diploma***						
Entered Postsecondary Education or Training****						

Instructions for Completing Table 5

* Report in Column B the number of participants who were unemployed at entry and who had a main or secondary goal of obtaining employment and who exited during the program year. Do not exclude students because of missing Social Security numbers or other missing data.

** Report in Column B: (1) the number of participants who were unemployed at entry and who had a main or secondary goal of employment **who exited in the first and second quarter** and who entered employment by the end of the first quarter after program exit and (2) the number of participants employed at entry who had a main or secondary goal of improved or retained employment who exited in the first and second quarter. ***Exclude from this total all participants who exited in the third and fourth quarters of the program year, if survey method is used.***

*** Report in Column B the number of participants with a main or secondary goal of passing GED tests or obtaining a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who exited during the program year.

**** Report in Column B the number of participants with a main or secondary goal of placement in postsecondary education or training who exited during the program year.

If survey is used, then the number in Column C should equal the number in Column B *unless random sampling was used.* If one or more local programs used random sampling, then enter in Column C the total number of students included in the survey. *If data matching is used*, then Column C should be left blank.

If survey is used, then the number in Column D should be less than Column C, unless there was a 100-percent response rate to the survey. *If data matching is used*, then the number reported in Column D should be the total number of records available for the data match. That number is normally less than the number in Column B. (If the numbers in these two columns are equal, then it means that all Social Security numbers are valid and that there are no missing Social Security numbers.)

Column E $= \frac{ColumnD}{ColumnB}$, *unless one or more programs used random sampling*. If random sampling was used, see Appendix C of the *NRS Survey Guidelines* for further instructions on reporting.

In Column F, the number should be equal to or less than the number in Column D.

Column G is the number in Column F divided by the number in Column D. Column G should never be greater than 100 percent. If the response rate is less than 50 percent (Column E), then the percent reported in Column G is not considered valid.

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Table 6
Participant Status and Program Enrollment

Enter the number of participants for each of the categories listed.

Participant Status on Entry into the Program (A)	Number (B)
Disabled	
Employed	
Unemployed	
Not in the Labor Force	
On Public Assistance	
Living in Rural Area*	
Program Type	
In Family Literacy Program**	
In Workplace Literacy Program**	
In Program for the Homeless**	
In Program for Work-based Project Learners**	
Institutional Programs	
In Correctional Facility	
In Community Correctional Program	
In Other Institutional Setting	
Secondary Status Measures (Optional)	
Low Income	
Displaced Homemaker	
Single Parent	
Dislocated Worker	
Learning Disabled Adult	

*Rural areas are places with less than 2,500 inhabitants and located outside urbanized areas.

**Participants counted here must be in a program specifically designed for that purpose.

OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 7
Adult Education Personnel by Function and Job Status

Enter an unduplicated count of personnel by function and job status.

Function (A)	Adult Education Personnel		Unpaid Volunteers (D)
	Total Number of Part-time Personnel (B)	Total Number of Full-time Personnel (C)	
State-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services			
Local-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services			
Local Teachers			
Local Counselors			
Local Paraprofessionals			

In Column *B*, count one time only each part-time employee of the program administered under the Adult Education State Plan who is being paid out of Federal, State, and/or local education funds.

In Column *C*, count one time only each full-time employee of the program administered under the Adult Education State Plan who is being paid out of Federal, State, and/or local education funds.

In Column *D*, report the number of volunteers (personnel who are not paid) who served in the program administered under the Adult Education State Plan.

OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 8
Outcomes for Adults in Family Literacy Programs (Optional)

Enter the number of participants in family literacy programs for each of the categories listed.

Core Followup Outcome Measures (A)	Number of Participants With Main or Secondary Goal (B)	Number of Participants Included in Survey (Sampled and Universe) (C)	Number of Participants Responding to Survey or Used for Data Matching (D)	Response Rate or Percent Available for Match (E)	Number of Participants Achieving Outcome (F)	Weighted Average Percent Achieving Outcome (G)
Completed an Educational Functioning Level *						
Entered Employment						
Retained Employment						
Obtained a GED or Secondary School Diploma						
Entered Postsecondary Education or Training						
Increased Involvement in Children's Education						
Helped more frequently with school						
Increased contact with children's teachers						
More involved in children's school activities						
Increased Involvement in Children's Literacy Activities						
Reading to children						
Visiting library						
Purchasing books or magazines						

* Report in Column *B* for this row all family literacy program participants who received 12 or more hours of service. Column *F* should include all participants reported in Column *B* who advanced one or more levels.

Compute Column *G* for this row using the following formula: $G = \frac{ColumnF}{ColumnB}$

Follow instructions for completing Table 5 to complete the remainder of this table. However, include only family literacy program participants in Table 8.

Achievement of one or more of the increased involvement in children's education or children's literacy activities measures should be counted only once per participant. However, the specific outcome should be recorded in the subcategory and more than one outcome may be reported, so that the total for the three subcategories may be greater than the total reported for the overall category. For example, a participant who helped more frequently with schoolwork and increased contact with child's teachers would be recorded in both categories but would be counted only once in the overall category of "increased involvement in children's education."

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Table 9
Outcomes for Adults in Workplace Literacy Programs (Optional)

Enter the number of participants in workplace literacy programs for each of the categories listed.

Core Followup Outcome Measures (A)	Number of Participants With Main or Secondary Goal (B)	Number of Participants Included in Survey (Sampled and Universe) (C)	Number of Participants Responding to Survey or Used for Data Matching (D)	Response Rate or Percent Available for Match (E)	Number of Participants Achieving Outcome (F)	Weighted Average Percent Achieving Outcome (G)
Completed an Educational Functioning Level*						
Entered Employment						
Retained Employment						
Obtained a GED or Secondary School Diploma						
Entered Postsecondary Education or Training						

* Report in Column *B* for this row all workplace literacy program participants who received 12 or more hours of service. Column *F* should include all participants reported in Column *B* who advanced one or more levels.

Compute Column *G* for this row using the following formula: $G = \frac{ColumnF}{ColumnB}$

Follow instructions for completing Table 5 to complete the remainder of this table. However, include only workplace literacy program participants in Table 9.

OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 10
Outcomes for Adults in Correctional Education Programs (This table to be required in the program year beginning July 1, 2005)

Enter the number of participants in correctional education programs for each of the categories listed.

Core Followup Outcome Measures (A)	Number of Participants With Main or Secondary Goal (B)	Number of Participants Included in Survey (Sampled and Universe) (C)	Number of Participants Responding to Survey or Used for Data Matching (D)	Response Rate or Percent Available for Match (E)	Number of Participants Achieving Outcome (F)	Weighted Average Percent Achieving Outcome (G)
Completed an Educational Functioning Level*						
Entered Employment						
Retained Employment						
Obtained a GED or Secondary School Diploma						
Entered Postsecondary Education or Training						

* Report in Column *B* for this row all correctional educational program participants who received 12 or more hours of service. Column *F* should include all participants reported in Column *B* who advanced one or more levels.

Compute Column *G* for this row using the following formula: $G = \frac{ColumnF}{ColumnB}$

Follow instructions for completing Table 5 to complete the remainder of this table. However, include only correctional educational program participants in Table 10.

OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 11
Secondary Outcome Measures (Optional)

Enter the number of participants for each of the categories listed.

Secondary Outcome Measures (A)	Number of Participants With Main or Secondary Goal or Status (B)	Number of Participants Obtaining Outcome (C)	Percentage Achieving Outcome (D)
Achieved Work-Based Project Learning Goal			
Left Public Assistance			
Achieved Citizenship Skills			
Increased Involvement in Children's Education*			
Increased Involvement in Children's Literacy Activities*			
Voted or Registered To Vote			
Increased Involvement in Community Activities			

Each row total In Column *D* Is calculated using the following formula: $D = \frac{ColumnC}{ColumnB}$

* Enter the total number of participants who achieved this goal regardless of whether the participant was in a family literacy program. Use Table 8 to enter achievements of family literacy participants. The number reported here may be higher than reported in Table 8 because it includes all participants who achieved this goal.

OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 12 (Optional)
Work-based Project Learners by Age, Ethnicity, and Sex

Enter the number of work-based project learners by age,* ethnicity, and sex.

Age Group (A)	American Indian or Alaskan Native		Asian		Black or African-American		Hispanic or Latino		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		White		Total (N)
	Male (B)	Female (C)	Male (D)	Female (E)	Male (F)	Female (G)	Male (H)	Female (I)	Male (J)	Female (K)	Male (L)	Female (M)	
16–18													
19–24													
25–44													
45–59													
60 and Older													
Total													

Only participants designated as work-based project learners should be included in this table. These participants should not be included in Tables 1–5.

The total in Column *N* should equal the number of work-based project learners reported in Table 6.

*Participants should be classified based on their age at entry.

OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 13 (Optional)
Core Followup Outcome Achievement for Prior Reporting Year and for Unintended Outcomes

For Column B, enter the number of participants for each of the outcome categories for outcomes not reported in the prior reporting period. For Column C, enter the number of participants achieving each outcome who did not have the outcome as a goal.

Core Followup Outcome Measures (A)	Number of Participants With Main or Secondary Goal Who Achieved Outcome but Were Not Reported in the Prior Reporting Period (B)	Number of Participants Achieving Outcome in Current Year Who Did Not Have the Outcome as a Goal (C)
Entered Employment		
Retained Employment		
Obtained a GED or secondary school diploma		
Placed in postsecondary education or training		

For Column *B,* report the number of participants who had the core outcome as a primary or secondary goal and who achieved that outcome according to the core outcome definitions (see Table 5) but *were not reported in the prior program year.*

For Column *C,* report the number of participants who achieved the outcome in the current reporting year but *did not have the outcome as a main or secondary goal.*

OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

Table 14
Local Grantees by Funding Source

Enter the number of each type of grantee (see attached definitions) directly funded by the state, and the amount of federal and state funding they receive.

Provider Agency (A)	Total Number of Providers (B)	Total Number of Sub-Recipients (C)	WIA Funding		State Funding	
			Total (D)	% of Total (E)	Total (F)	% of Total (G)
Local Education Agencies						
Public or Private Nonprofit Agency						
Community-based Organizations						
Faith-based Organizations						
Libraries						
Institutions of Higher Education						
Community, Junior or Technical Colleges						
Four-year Colleges or Universities						
Other Institutions of Higher Education						
Other Agencies						
Correctional Institutions						
Other Institutions (non-correctional)						
All Other Agencies						

1. In Column (B), report the number of providers receiving a grant award or contract for instructional services from the eligible agency.
2. In Column (C), report the total number of each entity receiving funds as a sub-recipient. *(Entities receiving funds from a grantee as part of a consortium are to reported in column (C).*
3. In Column (E), the percentage is to be calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Column D}}{\text{Column D + Column F}} = \text{Col (E)}$$

4. In Column (F), report total amount of state funds contributed. This amount need not necessarily equal the non-federal expenditure report on the Financial Status Report.
5. In Column (G), the percentage is to be calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Column F}}{\text{Column D + Column F}} = \text{Col (G)}$$

OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/08.

GRANTEE DEFINITIONS FOR TABLE 14

Local Education Agencies are publicly funded entities designated to administer and provide primary and secondary education instruction and services within a city, county, school district, township or region.

Community-based Organizations (CBOs) are private nonprofit organizations of demonstrated effectiveness that are representative of a community or significant segment of a community.

Faith-based Organizations (FBO) are non-profit organizations associated with a faith community or multiple faith ministries.

Libraries are public state and community funded institutions that offer education and community services in addition to providing access to print, audio-visual and technology resources.

Community, Junior or Technical Colleges are public institutions of higher education that offer associate's degree and certificate programs but, with few exceptions, award no baccalaureate degrees.

Four Year Colleges or Universities are a public or private non-profit institution of higher education that primarily offers baccalaureate degree programs.

Other Institution of Higher Education is a public or private non-profit institution that is not a community, junior, or technical college or a four-year college or university.

Correctional Institutions refer to state or federal penal institutions for criminal offenders. These include prisons, jails, and other correctional detention centers.

Other Institutions (Non-Correctional) are any medical or special institutions not designed for criminal offenders.

All Other Agencies include other public (federal, state, local) agencies not listed in the categories above.

INSTRUCTIONS
FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT
OMB Number 1830-0027, Expires 10/31/2008

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998
Basic Grants to States—CFDA 084.002

A separate set of Financial Status Report (FSR) forms are to be used for each Federal Funding Period as reported in Block 8 of the FSR for Adult Education.

Instructions for Completing the FSR.

Block

1. This block is preprinted.

2. PR/Award numbers as indicated in Block 5 of the Grant Award Notifications for the Basic Grants to States.

3. Grant recipient submitting report.

4. Enter DUNS/SSN Identifying number in Block 8 of the Grant Award Notification.

5. For optional use for those agencies needing cross-reference identification.

6. Check **Yes** if this is the **Final** report for a grant award and there are no amounts reported in column **h** (unliquidated obligations). The report is final when there are no additional outlays or obligations against the grant award and all existing obligations have been liquidated.

7. Identify the accounting basis used by the Grantee. If the modified accrual basis is used, it should be so indicated by adding the word "modified" in this block.

8. Enter Federal Funding Period based on information obtained in Block 6 of the Grant Award Notification.

9. Enter the beginning and ending dates of the period in which you are reporting the financial activity of the grant. A first year report will cover the first 15 months of the grant period e.g., July 1, 2002 through September 30, 2003. The final report will cover the entire 27 months, which grantees have to obligate their funds e.g., July 1, 2001 through September 30, 2003.

10. The Columns **(a)** through **(f)** contain preprinted headings for reporting expenditures. The following are explanations of what expenditures should be reported in each column.

Column (a). State Administration. Report State administrative expenditures authorized Section 222 (a)(3) of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

Column (b). State Leadership. Report expenditures authorized in section 222 (a)(2) and described in section 223 of AEFLA.

Columns (c) and (d), Programs of Instruction. Report all expenditures made by local eligible providers in conducting basic education and English literacy (column c), and secondary education programs of instruction (column d), including expenditures for institutionalized persons.

Column (f). Institutionalized. Report expenditures for programs for institutionalized persons. These expenditures will also appear in columns (c) and (d).

10a. In the first year report of the grant award, this column must be zero. In the final report, the amount reported should be the same as the amount reported on line 10e of the first year report made for the same grant award. If there has been an adjustment of the amount shown previously, attach explanation. For reports made on a cash basis, outlays are the sum of actual cash disbursements for goods and services, the amount of indirect expense charged, the value of in-kind contributions applied, and the amount of cash advances and payments made to contractors and subgrantees. For reports prepared on an accrued expenditure basis, outlays are the sum of actual cash disbursements, the amount of indirect expense incurred, the value of in-kind contributions applied, and the net increase (or decrease) in the amounts owed by the recipient for goods and other property received and for services performed by employees, contractors, subgrantees, and other payees, and **other** payees, and other amounts becoming owed under programs for which no current services or performances are required, such as annuities, insurance claims, and other benefit payments.

10b. Total outlays, including any state and local outlays, for the report period indicated in Item 9.

10c. Program credits must be included on this line and are to be used to reduce total outlays.

10d. Line b minus line c.

10e. Line a plus line d.

10f. Enter amount of non-federal outlays reported in line b.

10g. Line e minus line f.

10h. All unliquidated obligations as of the end of the reporting period.

10i-j. Unliquidated obligations are—

Cash basis—obligations incurred but not paid

Accrued expenditure basis—obligations incurred but for which an outlay has not been recorded.

Do not include any amounts that have been included on Lines a through g. Include unliquidated obligations to subgrantees and contractors.

If the report is final, it should not contain any unliquidated obligations.

10k. Line g plus line j.

10l. The amount of Federal funds awarded, per the cumulative amount in Block 7 of the Grant Award Notification.

10m. Line l minus line k.

11a. Self-explanatory

11b. Enter the indirect cost rate in effect during the reporting period. If more than one rate was applied during the reporting period, include a separate schedule showing the bases against which the indirect cost rates were applied.

11c. Enter amount of the base to which the rate was applied.

11d. Enter total amount of indirect cost charged during the reporting period.

12. Include any remarks necessary to explain any specifics in the report. Attach additional information if needed.

13. The Executive Officer, or designee, of the Grant recipient, as appropriate, must certify the report.

Financial Status Reports are due on December 31 of each year. Reports should be submitted electronically to Gloria Shade — Gloria.Shade@ed.gov with a cc to Joyce Irving – Joyce.Irving@ed.gov. A paper copy with original signatures must be mailed to Gloria Shade at the following address:

Accountability Team
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Potomac Center Plaza, Room 11159
Washington, DC 20202-7240

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT (FINAL REPORT - TOTAL ALLOCATION)	1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element to Which Report is Submitted U.S. Department of Education Division of Adult Education and Literacy	2. Federal Grant or Other Identifying Number	OMB Approved No. 80-R0180	Page of Pages
3. Recipient Organization *(Name and complete address, including ZIP code)*	4. Employer Identification Number	5. Recipient Account Number or Identification Number	6. Final Report Yes No	7. Basis Cash Accrual
	8. Project/Grant Period (See Instructions)		9. Period Covered by This Report	
	From *(Month, day, year)*	To *(Month, day, year)*	From *(Month, day, year)*	To *(Month, day, year)*

Status of Funds

			Programs of Instruction				
10. Programs/Functions/Activities	(a) State Administration	(b) State Leadership	(c) Programs of Instruction (0-8)	(d) Programs of Instruction (9-12)	(e) Institutionalized Persons	(f) Total	RESULT OF COL. F
a. Net outlays previously reported						$ -	
b. Total outlays this report period					$ -	$ -	
c. Program income credits						$ -	
d. Net outlays this report period *(Line b)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
e. Net outlays to date *(Line a plus line d)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
f. *Less:* Non-Federal share of outlays						$ -	
g. Total Federal share of outlays *(Line e minus line f)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
h. Total unliquidated obligations						$ -	
i. *Less:* Non-Federal share of unliquidated obligations shown on line h						$ -	
j. Federal share of unliquidated obligations						$ -	
k. Total Federal share of outlays and unliquidated obligations *(Line g plus line j)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
l. Total cumulative amount of Federal funds authorized						$ -	TRUE
m. Unobligated balance of Federal funds *(Line l minus k)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	

11. Indirect Expense	a. Type of Rate *(Place "X" to the left of the appropriate item)*			13. Certification I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that this report is correct and complete and that all outlays and unliquidated obligations are for the purposes set forth in the award documents.	Signature of Authorized Certifying Official	Date Report Submitted
	Provisional Predetermined Final Fixed					
	b. Rate	c. Base				
	d. Total Amount	e. Federal Income			Typed or Printed Name and Title	Telephone *(Area code, number and extension)*
12. Remarks: *Attach any explanations deemed necessary or information required by Federal sponsoring agency is compliance with governing legislations.*						

			$ -		
RESULT OF ROW I	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE

Financial Reporting Requirements for EL-Civics Funding

States expending EL-Civics funds under the conditions outlined in Program Memorandum 2000-19, issued by Ronald S. Pugsley on May 16, 2000, shall report those expenditures as follows:

In addition to submitting an annual FSR reporting all Federal and non-Federal expenditures, including those for EL-Civics, a separate FSR for EL-Civics expenditures is also required. This EL-Civics FSR, which represents a sub-total of the overall report, will provide the necessary information to determine that EL-Civics expenditures were in compliance with existing statutory requirements. A specially identified EL-Civics FSR is included for your use.

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT (EL CIVICS)	1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element to Which Report is Submitted **U.S. Department of Education** **Division of Adult Education and Literacy**	2. Federal Grant or Other Identifying Number	OMB Approved No. 80-R0180	Page of Pages
3. Recipient Organization *(Name and complete address, including ZIP code)*	4. Employer Identification Number	5. Recipient Account Number or Identification Number	6. Final Report Yes No	7. Basis Cash Accrual
	8. Project/Grant Period (See Instructions)		9. Period Covered by This Report	
	From *(Month, day, year)*	To *(Month, day, year)*	From *(Month, day, year)*	To *(Month, day, year)*

Status of Funds

			Programs of Instruction				
10. Programs/Functions/Activities	(a) State Administration	(b) State Leadership	(c) Programs of Instruction (0-8)	(d) Programs of Instruction (9-12)	(e) Institutionalized Persons	(f) Total	RESULT OF COL. F
a. Net outlays previously reported						$ -	
b. Total outlays this report period					$ -	$ -	
c. Program income credits						$ -	
d. Net outlays this report period *(Line b)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
e. Net outlays to date *(Line a plus line d)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
f. *Less:* Non-Federal share of outlays						$ -	
g. Total Federal share of outlays *(Line e minus line f)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
h. Total unliquidated obligations						$ -	
i. *Less:* Non-Federal share of unliquidated obligations shown on line h						$ -	
j. Federal share of unliquidated obligations						$ -	
k. Total Federal share of outlays and unliquidated obligations *(Line g plus line j)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
l. Total cumulative amount of Federal funds authorized						$ -	TRUE
m. Unobligated balance of Federal funds *(Line l minus k)*	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
11. Indirect Expense	a. Type of Rate *(Place "X" to the left of the appropriate item)* Provisional Predetermined Final Fixed			13. Certification I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that this report is correct and complete and that all outlays and unliquidated obligations are for the purposes set forth in the award documents.	Signature of Authorized Certifying Official	Date Report Submitted	
	b. Rate	c. Base					
	d. Total Amount	e. Federal Income			Typed or Printed Name and Title	Telephone *(Area code, number and extension)*	
12. Remarks: *Attach any explanations deemed necessary or information required by Federal sponsoring agency is compliance with governing legislations.*							
			$ -				
RESULT OF ROW I	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE		