

Chapter 5

Follow-up Method

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Introduction

One of the most significant changes the National Reporting System (NRS) has made to existing adult education reporting procedures is the establishment of the five core outcome measures and the methodologies for gathering follow-up data on these measures. Four of the five core outcome measures require follow-up. The NRS core outcome measures include:

- Educational gain
- Entered employment
- Retained or improved employment
- Receipt of secondary school diploma or GED
- Placement in postsecondary education or training

In addition to these five core outcome measures, there are several secondary measures that may be included as part of follow-up. Secondary measures can be collected while students are still involved with instruction if they report the outcome directly to program staff. These measures include:

- Reduction in receipt of public assistance
- Voting behavior
- Achieved citizenship skills
- Involvement in children's education
- Involvement in children's literacy-related activities
- Involvement in community activities

Follow-up is the most difficult part of the NRS. It requires programs to gather information from students after they have left the program. Because the population of most adult education programs tends to be transient, locating students for follow-up surveys can be a challenge. In addition, once students are located, they are frequently hesitant to provide information, especially information pertaining to employment. However, all New York State programs that have students who set one or more of the four core measures as goals are required to collect follow-up data.

- ✓ Programs cannot avoid the follow-up requirements by not asking goal related questions. (See Chapter 3.)

This chapter will define the core and secondary outcome measures, identify the students to whom these measures apply, and highlight the methods for conducting follow-up surveys.

Follow-up Methods

The U.S. Department of Education identifies three methodologies for collecting measures: direct program reporting, local follow-up survey, and data matching.

Direct Program Reporting

With the direct program reporting methodology, programs collect information directly from students while they are still enrolled and receiving instruction. This data collection method applies to the first core measure, educational gain, which is determined by testing a student while he or she is still attending class. In addition, if a student attains one of the other four follow-up measures while he or she is still receiving instruction, programs can gather that information and enter it into the data collection system; however, the information will not be reported until the student exits the program.

Data Matching

If social security numbers (SSN) are available for all students in a state system, the SSN can be crossed with the state wage record system to identify individuals who were employed in each quarter.

- ✓ New York State Education Department (NYSED) policy dictates that SSNs will not be collected for students in the system. This is true for K-12 students as well as adults. As a result, data matching cannot be done in New York State.

Local Follow-up Survey

According to U.S. Department of Education guidelines, the survey is the other acceptable method for collecting follow-up information. When conducting local follow-up surveys, programs are allowed to survey either a universal or a random sample of students after they have exited the program.

- ✗ The survey sample must include students from each local program.
- ✓ In New York State, every agency receiving state or federal literacy funding must survey students to gather core outcome data.
- ✓ Surveys may be done by phone, by mail, or both.

Programs can use a survey to collect data on the follow-up measure required for the NRS—i.e., entered employment, retained or improved employment, receipt of secondary school diploma or GED, placement in a postsecondary education or training. The follow-up survey can be used to collect information on the secondary outcome measures.

In New York State, agencies must receive approval from the NYSED in order to implement a random sample survey of students—i.e., a survey that reviews only a portion of students (as opposed to all students) who have exited the program. Agencies wishing to use a sample survey must apply to the NYSED to ensure that the methodology they use for selecting the sample is acceptable.

- ✓ In order to implement a random sample survey, there must be at least 300 students in the population—i.e., individuals who have identified one of the four follow-up measures as a goal. For example, to sample students with entered employment as a goal, programs must have more than 300 students with the goal of entering employment who have exited the program.
- ✓ The method for selecting the sample must be consistent with the directions found in the U. S. Department of Education document, *Guidelines for Conducting the Follow-up Survey*.

Follow-up Requirements

According to federal guidelines, core measures apply to all adult education students who receive 12 or more hours of service. The core outcome measures include educational gain, entered employment, retained or improved employment, receipt of secondary school diploma or GED, and placement in postsecondary education or training. The secondary measures include additional outcome measures related to employment, family, and community activity.

- ✓ New York State requires all adult education programs to report on the secondary measures.

The following table outlines both core and secondary measures as defined by the NRS.

Summary of NRS Measures and Definitions

Topic	Measure	Categories or Definitions
Core Outcome Measures		
Educational Gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational functioning levels in reading, writing, numeracy, speaking, listening, functional, and workplace areas
Follow-Up Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entered employment • Retained or improved employment • Receipt of secondary school diploma or GED • Placement in postsecondary education or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who obtain a job by the end of the first quarter after exit quarter • Students who remain employed or improve employment in the third quarter after exit quarter • Students who obtain a GED, secondary school diploma, or recognized equivalent • Students who enroll in a postsecondary educational or occupational skills program building on prior services or training received
Secondary Outcome and Student Status Measures		
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in receipt of public assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student whose TANF or equivalent public assistance grant is reduced or eliminated
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved citizenship skills • Voting behavior • General involvement in community activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who achieve the skills needed to pass the citizenship exam • Students who register to vote or vote for the first time • Students who increase their involvement in community activities
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in children's education • Involvement in children's literacy-related activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who increase involvement in the education of dependent children under a their care • Students who increase involvement in the literacy-related activities of dependent children under a their care

Key Follow-up Requirements

- It is not necessary to collect every follow-up measure on every student. A student's goals will determine which follow-up measures apply. That is, programs are only required to survey those students who have set the core outcome measures as goals.
- Educational gain is determined by testing while the student is still attending class. It is the only core indicator for which success is reported while the student is in the program.
- The four follow-up measures are reported after the student exits the program.
- Even if a student attains a goal while in the program, it will not be reported until after he or she exits the program.
- 📄 Programs can enter a student's outcome into the Adult Literacy Information and Evaluation System (ALIES) while the student is still enrolled; however, ALIES will not include the outcome in the NRS report until the student has exited the program.
- If a student attains a goal while still attending classes, there is no need to perform a follow-up survey after the student exits the program. The information can be gathered using the direct program reporting method.

Core Outcome Measures

The five NRS core outcome measures (educational gain, entered employment, retained or improved employment, receipt of a secondary school diploma or GED, and placement in postsecondary education or training) were selected to address the core indicators of performance required by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II) of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

Educational Gain. This NRS core outcome measure determines students' literacy advancements resulting from instruction. This measure applies to all students who enroll in a program.

- ✓ New York State policy and procedures for collecting and reporting data in the area of educational gain are outlined in Chapter 4.

Follow-up Measures. The remaining four NRS outcome measures—entered employment, retained or improved employment, placement in postsecondary education or training, and receipt of secondary diploma or GED—are referred to as follow-up measures.

- ✓ To meet the reporting requirement for adult education programs in the WIA, New York State must collect four measures on students from every program (after the students have left the program). These four measures are entered employment, retained or improved employment, placement in postsecondary education or training, and receipt of secondary diploma or GED.

The four follow-up measures must be reported after students exit the program. (It is important to note that each follow-up measure will not necessarily apply to each student.) Programs are only required to report follow-up measures for students who identified the measures as goals.

- ✗ Exit quarter is the quarter when the student 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 is reported in the first quarter after exit quarter.
- ✓ It is important to note that these measures are collected only from students who designate these outcomes as their goals.
- ✓ These outcomes are counted and reported by the local programs only after these students have left the program.
- ✓ New York State has set performance targets in each of the five core outcome measures. (See Chapter 7.)

Educational Gain

Definition: Educational gain refers to the improvements a student makes in educational functioning levels in reading, writing, numeracy, speaking, listening, functional, and workplace areas.

Applicable Population: Educational gain applies to all students with 12 or more hours.

Documentation: Programs should assess educational gain by comparing a student's post-test score to his or her pre-test score. In order to demonstrate educational gain, a student's post-test score must be greater than the score that defines the upper limit of the level in which the student's pre-test score placed him or her. Programs are required to use New York State-approved standardized tests to assess educational gain. (See Chapter 4.)

- ☐ ALIES will calculate educational gain automatically by comparing the lowest valid pre-test score with the highest post-test score of the same test type entered for a student.

Follow-up Measures

Entered Employment

Definition: Entered employment refers to students who obtain a job by the end of the first quarter after exit quarter.*

*Quarter	Dates	*Quarter	Dates
First	July 1–Sept. 30	Third	Jan. 1–Mar. 31
Second	Oct. 1–Dec. 31	Fourth	Apr. 1–June 30

Applicable Population: Entered employment applies to students who are unemployed when they enter a program, who identify finding a job as a goal for the program year, and who exit during the program year.

Survey Timeline: Programs should survey students during the first quarter following the exit quarter and may survey up until the final NRS data is due to the NYSED via the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC).

Follow-up Details: A student must obtain his or her job during the first quarter after exit or prior to that period. For example, if a student exits between July 1 and September 30, he or she must obtain a job no later than December 31, the last day of the quarter following the exit quarter. If a student obtains a job while enrolled, programs are allowed to record employment at that time (and are therefore not required to follow-up with that student during the next quarter). However, the student's outcome will not be counted in the NRS Report until he or she exits the program. The date the outcome is achieved must be the first quarter after the student has exited or any date prior to that period. The date of the survey does not matter, except that the presence of a value indicates that the survey has been conducted. Surveys may be conducted by mail or by phone, and the results of the survey should be documented. It is important that programs document both positive and negative results.

- ✘ Programs are expected to reach at least 50 percent of students who have a stated goal of obtaining employment. If this is not the case, students should be surveyed again.

Exit Quarter	Students Must Enter Employment by the End of:
First Quarter July 1 – September 30	Second Quarter October 1 – December 31
Second Quarter October 1 – December 31	Third Quarter January 1 – March 31
Third Quarter January 1 – March 31	Fourth Quarter April 1 – June 30
Fourth Quarter April 1 – June 30	“Fifth” Quarter (First Quarter of new program year) July 1 – September 30

Retained or Improved Employment

Definition: The NRS defines retained or improved employment as remaining employed or improving employment in the third quarter after the exit quarter.

Applicable Population: Retained or improved employment applies to:

- Students who are employed when they enter a program, who identify retaining or improving employment as a goal, and who exit during the first two quarters of the year.
- Students who are not employed when they enter a program, who identify entering employment as a goal, who enter employment by the end of the first quarter after their exit quarter, and exit during the first two quarters of the year.

Survey Timeline: Programs should survey students during the third quarter after the exit quarter. This outcome is not measured for students exiting in the last two quarters of the program year—i.e., the third or fourth quarters. Programs may survey up until the final NRS data is due to the NYSED via the LAC.

Follow-up Details: Students must achieve this outcome by the third quarter following the date of their exit. Programs are required to survey only those students who exit during the first two quarters of the fiscal year. Students exiting in the third and fourth quarters do not have to be surveyed. Surveys may be conducted by mail or by phone. The presence of a survey date in the NRS data indicates that the survey has been conducted; a survey date that has been entered too early (i.e., before three quarters after exit) will indicate an invalid result. It is important that programs document both positive and negative results.

- ✘ Programs are expected to reach at least 50 percent of students who have a stated goal of retaining or improving employment.

Exit Quarter	Students Must Retain Employment until at Least the:
First Quarter July 1 – September 30	Fourth Quarter April 1 – June 30
Second Quarter October 1 – December 31	“Fifth” Quarter (First Quarter of new program year) July 1 – September 30
Third Quarter January 1 – March 31	Not Reported
Fourth Quarter April 1 – June 30	Not Reported

Receipt of Secondary School Diploma or GED

Definition: This measure applies to students who obtain a GED, a secondary school diploma, or a recognized equivalent.

Applicable Population: This measure applies to students who identify passing the GED test or earning their secondary school diploma as a goal and who exit during the program year. It applies to students whose pre-test places them in NRS BE level 6 and who exit during the program year.

Survey Timeline: Programs may survey up until the final NRS data is due to the NYSED via the LAC.

Follow-up Details: The outcome must take place within the four quarters of the fiscal year. A survey may be conducted at anytime during the year, including the “fifth” quarter; however, a student’s outcome will not be counted in the NRS Report until he or she has exited the program. The date of the survey does not matter, except that the presence of a value indicates that the survey has been conducted. Surveys may be conducted by mail, by phone, or in person.

Placement in Postsecondary Education or Training

Definition: This measure refers to students who enroll in a postsecondary educational or occupational skills program building on prior services or training received.

Applicable Population: This measure applies to students who identify enrolling in a postsecondary educational or training skills program as a goal and who exit during the program year.

Survey Timeline: Programs may survey up until the final NRS data is due to the NYSED via the LAC.

Follow-up Details: The outcome must take place within the four quarters of the fiscal year. A survey may be conducted at anytime during the year including the fifth quarter; however, a student's outcome will not be counted in the NRS Report until he or she has exited the program. The date of the survey does not matter, except that the presence of a value indicates that the survey has been conducted. Surveys may be conducted by mail, by phone, or in person.

Secondary Measures

All of these measures can be achieved and collected while the student is in the program.

Employment

Reduction in Receipt of Public Assistance

Definition: The NRS defines this outcome as the elimination or reduction of a student's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) grant or an equivalent public assistance grant as a result of employment or increased income.

Applicable Population: This measure applies to all students who receive public assistance. It does not have to be explicitly identified as a goal.

Special Note: It is assumed that all students who are on public assistance have the reduction or elimination of public assistance as a goal.

Community

Voting Behavior

Definition: This measure refers to students who register to vote or vote for the first time.

Applicable Population: This measure applies to all students who are not registered to vote or had not voted upon entry into the program. It does not have to be explicitly identified as a goal.

Achieved Citizenship Skills

Definition: The NRS defines this outcome as the attainment of the skills needed to pass the U.S. citizenship exam.

Applicable Population: This measure applies to students who identify passing the citizenship exam as a goal.

General Involvement in Community Activities

Definition: The NRS defines this outcome as increased involvement in any of the following community activities: attending or organizing neighborhood, community, or political meetings; volunteering to work for such organizations; contributing to the support of such organizations; and volunteering to work on community improvement activities.

Applicable Population: This measure applies to all students. It does not have to be explicitly identified as a goal.

Family**Involvement in Children’s Education**

Definition: This measure refers to increased involvement in the education of dependent children under a student’s care and includes the following: helping children more frequently with school work, increasing contact with children’s teachers to discuss children’s education, getting more involved in children’s school, and volunteering to work on school projects.

Special Notes:

- It is assumed that all students involved in family literacy programs have involvement in children’s education as a goal.
- This outcome can be collected for all students, not just those in family literacy programs.

Involvement in Children’s Literacy-Related Activities

Definition: This measure refers to increased involvement in the literacy-related activities of dependent children under a student’s care and includes the following: reading to children, visiting a library, and purchasing books or magazines for children.

Special Notes:

- It is assumed that all students involved in family literacy programs have involvement in children’s literacy-related activities as a goal.
- This outcome can be collected for all students, not just those in family literacy programs.

Procedures for Conducting Surveys

Surveys should be conducted by mail, by telephone, or both. A mail survey, while inexpensive and easier to administer, often produces an unacceptably low response rate.

- ☞ It is recommended that local programs conduct follow-up surveys by phone, and use mail surveys as a supplement if needed.
- ✗ Programs can use either type of survey as long as they receive a 50 percent response rate. For example, if 100 students who have identified “obtaining a job” as a goal exit a program, the program is required to attempt to survey all 100 students. However, only 50 students need to respond.

NYSED does not require programs to use a specific survey format. However, programs are required to collect several critical pieces of information prior to surveying students and during the actual follow-up survey.

- 📄 Programs can collect all of this information using any variation of the ALIES Turnaround Document D.

Required Information

Prior to the survey, programs must collect:

- The student’s core goal(s)
- The fiscal year to which the core goal applies
- The student’s exit date (if this data is not available, it can be obtained during the survey)

During the survey, program must collect:

- The date of the survey
- The student's outcome status—i.e., did the student achieve or not achieve the outcome? (It is critical that programs record both positive and negative results.)
- The fiscal quarter in which the outcome was achieved (if the student achieved the outcome)
- The fiscal year to which the core outcome applies
- The student's exit date (if it was not available prior to survey)

Note. Secondary outcomes require only the documentation of the goal and the outcome achieved; this data may be gathered during program participation or in a follow-up survey as applicable.

Sample Survey Results

Name	Goals	Exit	Outcome	Quarter	Survey Date	Fiscal year
Dale Dew	Obtain Job	6/5/2004	Entered employment	4	8/15/2004	2004
John Adams	Earn GED	6/15/2004	Did not earn GED		8/15/2004	2004
Megan Car	Enter Training	6/30/2004	Placed in training	4	8/15/2004	2004