

Chapter 8

Staff Development

In this chapter

- Introduction
- Staff Development Audience and Curriculum
- NRS Staff Development
- ALIES Staff Development
- Non-ALIES Users Staff Development
- Assessment Staff Development
- Staff Development Resources

Introduction

Staff development is a vital tool in delivering National Reporting System (NRS) information to programs. It provides a perfect venue for updates on New York State Education Department (NYSED) policy decisions, as well as a forum for knowledge sharing, status updates, technical skills development, and the generation of new ideas. Programs that frequently send staff members to Adult Literacy Information and Evaluation System (ALIES), NRS, and other data-oriented staff development sessions are consistently the most successful in reporting accurate NRS data.

Staff Development Audience and Curriculum

This chapter provides a comprehensive plan for training and supporting adult literacy professionals who are wrestling with issues of data management and reporting. NRS and other data-oriented staff development are designed to assist programs in:

- Recognizing the importance of electronic data collection and becoming acquainted with the systems available
- Preparing technically, functionally, and emotionally for the implementation of ALIES or an alternative data collection system
- Complying with the NRS and managing the data ramifications of policy changes
- Inputting data using forms and data entry screens to create an accurate “data picture”
- Using reports to extract data from the system, recognizing the data’s value, and learning how to use data to improve programs
- Successfully submitting NRS data to NYSED through the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC)

Staff Development Audiences

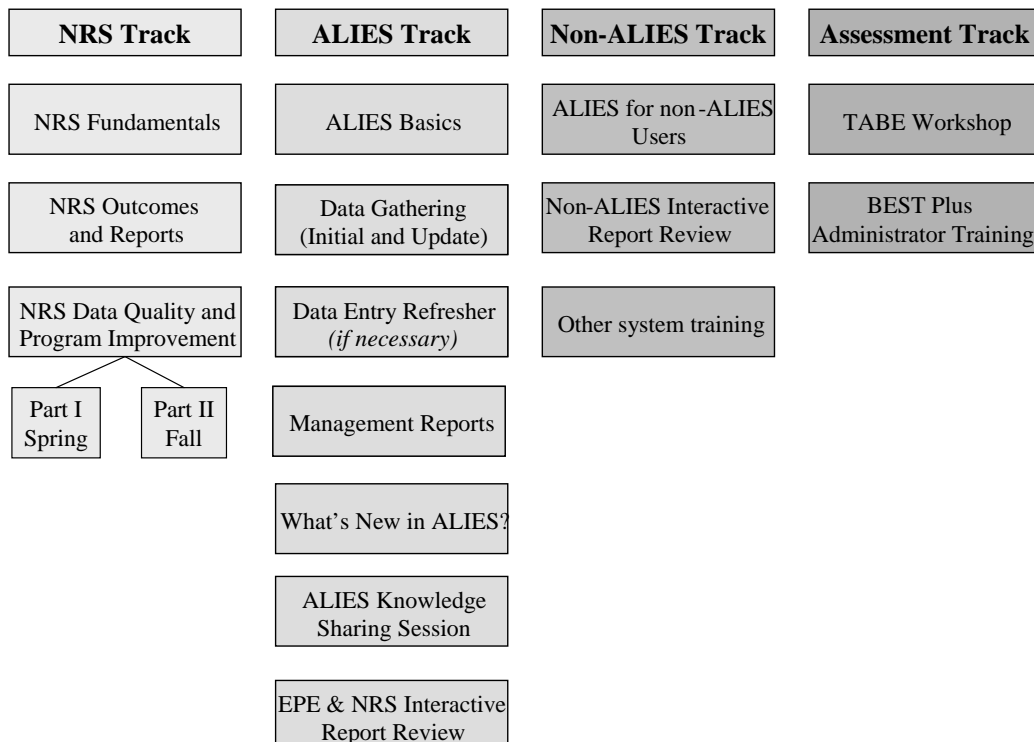
All adult literacy employees whose lives are touched by data are encouraged to attend NRS and other data-oriented staff development opportunities. Specifically, the trainings are designed for:

- Program directors—individuals who supervise adult literacy and possibly other programs within an organization
- Program managers—individuals who are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the adult literacy function in an organization
- Data entry staff—individuals who key program data into the system
- Teaching staff—individuals who work directly with students and gather data
- Other—individuals whose responsibilities overlap among the four categories mentioned above, or any individual who uses adult literacy data

Recommended Curriculum

Staff development opportunities for NRS data collection and reporting are divided into four tracks, as depicted below. Some tracks are designed for programs that use a specific data collection system. Others are intended to assist all programs, regardless of the system they use to collect data. These staff development opportunities can be provided by the local Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) or by the LAC.

- **NRS Track.** Program staff members who are responsible for NRS reports are strongly encouraged to attend three NRS trainings. The first training, NRS Fundamentals, provides a foundation for understanding the NRS. The second training, Troubleshooting NRS Reports, covers how to troubleshoot the NRS reporting tables. Based on a national effort to recognize the value of NRS data, the third training, NRS Data Quality and Program Improvement, addresses how to use the data to improve programs.
- **ALIES Track.** These trainings and support opportunities are specifically designed for ALIES software users. All programs that plan to implement ALIES software are required to attend ALIES Basics. Management Reports and Data Gathering are for experienced ALIES users. What’s New in ALIES? covers software changes per fiscal year. Knowledge Sharing Sessions and Interactive Report Reviews are opportunities for ALIES users to share information in a hands-on setting.
- **Non-ALIES Track.** Programs that use an electronic data collection system other than ALIES are offered two training and support opportunities. ALIES for Non-ALIES Users covers the LAC’s NRS data submission requirements. The Interactive Report Review provides a hands-on exploration of non-ALIES data in the NRS format. In addition, developers of other systems offer trainings specific to their own software.
- **Assessment Track.** Both the LAC and the RAEN offer workshops to assist programs in implementing the NYSED approved assessments—Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and BEST Plus. These workshops cover how to use the assessments, as well as how to apply the assessment results correctly.



NRS Staff Development

While implementing a data collection system is critical to NRS compliance, it is important to understand the NRS and its impacts on program data. Both the LAC and the RAEN offer three NRS staff development opportunities: NRS Fundamentals is offered throughout the year, Troubleshooting NRS Reports is offered directly prior to year-end reporting deadlines to help programs prepare for NRS year-end reports, and NRS Data Quality and Program Improvement is being offered in conjunction with the release of this manual. Each NRS staff development opportunity is described in more detail below.

NRS Fundamentals

Description: This workshop provides an overview of the history, purpose, and value of the NRS. Participants learn that the NRS is more than just a reporting system that generates additional paperwork and data entry. From intake procedures to instruction, assessment to student goal setting and accomplishments, NRS is a tool designed to improve all programs levels. Participants explore in detail the intake and goal setting processes from the perspective of an adult educator.

Audience: Program staff members responsible for generating year-end NRS reports who have not already attended an NRS training.

Classroom time: 1 day (6 hours).

Troubleshooting NRS Reports

Description: This training helps prepare programs for troubleshooting NRS Reports. The training begins with a general overview of the NRS Report tables, fields and calculations. However, the primary focus of this training is to apply the ALIES data check reports to troubleshoot NRS data. A step-by-step process for determining “Why this student does not show up on my report” will be highlighted. NRS Fundamentals or the equivalent knowledge is a prerequisite for this training.

Audience: Program managers, data entry staff, and those responsible for NRS data and reporting.

Classroom time: 4 hours.

NRS Data Quality (Part 1) and Program Improvement (Part 2)

Description: Based on a national training initiative, this session focuses on improving the quality of NRS data and using NRS data to enhance programs. Core features include the *NRS Manual*, intake, goal setting, surveying, and how to use the data to improve programs.

Audience: All program managers

Classroom time: Part 1 day (6 hours), Part 2 TBD

ALIES Staff Development

Programs can learn about ALIES through trainings sponsored by their local RAEN or by the LAC. These trainings are delivered via a Train-the-Trainer method; all instructors receive training and certification from the ALIES team at the LAC. ALIES trainings are provided in each of the following regions: West, Mid-West, Mid-State, Hudson Valley, East, New York City, and Long Island. If a specific training is not available in a program’s region, the staff is welcome to attend trainings in a different region or at the LAC. In addition to formal trainings, the LAC offers supplementary learning opportunities: ALIES Knowledge Sharing Sessions, forums for ALIES users to present feedback to members of the ALIES staff; and NRS and EPE Interactive Report Reviews, where users can troubleshoot their reports with ALIES staff. Each of the ALIES training opportunities is described in detail below.

ALIES Basics

Description: ALIES Basics provides the knowledge required to get statewide programs up and running on the ALIES software. The training covers three core content areas: ALIES management, ALIES data entry and update, and ALIES reporting. This training is mandatory for any agency that wishes to use the ALIES software.

Audience: Inexperienced ALIES programs including new program staff members who plan to use ALIES.

Classroom Time: 2.5 days (15 hours).

Initial Data Gathering

Description: This workshop provides an overview of the forms used to gather ALIES initial start-up data. Participants practice using the forms to document agency, site, personnel, and class schedule information, as well as the NYSED standard Individual Student Record Form (ISRF).

Audience: Both experienced and inexperienced ALIES programs including administrators and/or data entry staff members who record program and student intake data.

Classroom Time: 4 hours.

Update Data Gathering

Description: This workshop provides instruction in the nuances of completing the turnaround documents, including the rationale for every column. Highlights include how to document student activity, demographics, test scores, contact hours, and outcomes; the rules for gathering data; and a discussion of the importance of collecting accurate data.

Audience: Both experienced and inexperienced ALIES programs including teachers and/or administrators who gather student update data.

Classroom Time: 4 hours.

Management Reports

Description: This hands-on training offers an overview of the various types of ALIES reports and explains how to apply these reports in “real world” scenarios. The training includes a discussion of how programs can make better use of ALIES reports to improve management. Highlights include Data Management Reports for student and class information, Ad-Hoc Reports, NRS Data Check Reports Turnaround Documents, and Mailing Labels.

Audience: Experienced ALIES users who want to learn more about reports.

Classroom Time: 4 hours.

Data Entry Refresher

Description: This training provides a step-by-step, in depth introduction to the ALIES software and the data entry process, from ALIES Install through ALIES Reporting. Highlights include installing and upgrading the ALIES software; inputting agency, site, instructor, class, and student data from standard forms; updating test scores, contact hours, instructional activity, demographics, goals, and outcomes; generating data management reports; and using the Ad-Hoc Reports and the NRS Data Check Reports.

Audience: New data entry staff or experienced users who need a refresher

Classroom Time: 2 days (10 hours).

What's New in ALIES?

Description: Offered at the beginning of each fiscal year, this workshop demonstrates new features of the ALIES software. It introduces new data entry features and the changes that have been made to existing features. It demonstrates new reporting features and the changes that have been made to existing reports. It concludes with a discussion of the data that will be carried over from the previous fiscal year, followed by a question and answer period.

Audience: All ALIES users.

Classroom Time: 3 hours

ALIES Knowledge Sharing Sessions

Description: ALIES Knowledge Sharing Sessions are participant-directed meetings for ALIES users to share information, discuss problems, and answer each other's questions. At least one LAC staff member facilitates each session. The sessions run approximately three to four hours and involve demonstrations of ALIES issues, as well as their resolutions. They include tips and tricks for easier data entry, policy discussions, and opportunities to brainstorm ways to improve the software. The sessions are ideal for.

Audience: Experienced ALIES users at the data entry and manager/director level, as well as program staff who have attended ALIES training but only recently implemented the ALIES software at their site.

Additional Information: Knowledge Sharing Sessions are offered at least three times per fiscal year in each region. ALIES users can contact their local RAEN director or the LAC to find out about Knowledge Sharing Sessions in their region. Those attending a Knowledge Sharing Session should bring a list of questions or issues.

NRS and EPE Interactive Report Reviews

Description: Interactive Report Reviews are opportunities for programs to bring their data to a central site where they can work with ALIES staff members to troubleshoot NRS Reports or EPE Claim Forms. An ALIES user support specialist and a programmer are on hand at each Report Review to work one-on-one with individual program's NRS or EPE data. These reviews are a unique opportunity for the LAC staff to work directly with ALIES users to improve the quality of an individual program's data, as well as the ALIES software, based on real data applications. The LAC has learned from experience that programs that work closely with the ALIES staff have far less trouble reporting NRS and EPE data, and make better use of the data.

Audience: The LAC recommends both the ALIES data entry person and a manager attend these sessions.

Additional Information: Interactive Report Reviews are offered throughout the state during the fourth and "fifth" quarters of the fiscal year. Programs can contact either their RAEN director or the LAC to find out about Interactive Report Reviews in their region. Those attending an Interactive Report Review should bring both an ALIES data backup and the supporting documentations, such as class rosters, test logs, and student intake forms. This allows programs to check their data against paper documents to determine where errors lie.

Non ALIES Users Staff Development

Programs using data collection systems other than ALIES are required to submit NRS data to the LAC twice per fiscal year. The LAC and the RAEN offer two types of professional development opportunities to help programs submit accurate data. These sessions are described below.

ALIES for Non-ALIES Users

Description: ALIES for Non-ALIES Users provides a synopsis of the data submission process for programs using a data collection system other than ALIES. Highlights include an overview of the NRS required data, the submission process, and the format required to submit data to the LAC. The session includes a discussion of issues of privacy, followed by a question and answer period with LAC staff.

Audience: Non-ALIES program managers, as well as technical staff members who are concerned about submitting NRS data to the LAC.

Classroom time: 1 day (6 hours).

Non-ALIES Users Interactive Report Review

Description: Similar to the ALIES Interactive Report Reviews, the Non-ALIES Users Interactive Report Reviews are opportunities for programs that do not use ALIES to bring their data to a central site where they can work with ALIES staff members to troubleshoot NRS data that has been exported from their system. An ALIES user support specialist and a programmer are on hand at each Report Review to work one-on-one with individual programs' NRS data. These reviews are a unique opportunity for the LAC staff to work directly with programs that do not use the ALIES system to improve the quality of the programs' exported NRS data and to ensure that the files already exported from the alternative electronic data collection system are accurate. The LAC has learned from experience that programs that work closely with the ALIES staff have far less trouble reporting NRS data and generate more accurate reports.

Audience: The LAC recommends that both the non-ALIES data person and a program manager attend these sessions.

Additional Information: The Non-ALIES Users Interactive Report Reviews are offered during the fourth quarter of each fiscal year. Programs can contact their RAEN director or the LAC to find out about the Non-ALIES User Interactive Report Reviews offered. Those attending a Non-ALIES Users Interactive Report Review should bring NRS data, which should be exported in the ALIES format as specified at the training and the supporting documentations, such as class rosters, test logs, and student intake forms. This allows programs to check their data against paper documents to determine where errors lie.

Other System Training

Alternative electronic data collection system providers may offer trainings to assist programs in using their products for student data tracking, program management, and NRS reporting. Information pertaining to systems other than ALIES can be found at the alternative system providers' websites.

Assessment Staff Development

Student assessment results are a critical component of NRS reporting. Programs administer an initial assessment—or pre-test—to lay a foundation for future evaluations. Throughout the year, programs offer additional assessments—or post-tests—to determine educational gain. The NRS, as interpreted by the NYSED, approves several different assessment instruments for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL), including the TABE and the BEST Plus.

Nuts and Bolts of the TABE

Description. This workshop introduces the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). The TABE is the main test used by NYSED-funded programs to place students in adult basic education classes and to measure educational gain. Highlights include a test overview, effective test administration, using TABE scores for placement, and a discussion of the broader issues related to the formal testing of adult learners.

Audience. Program managers, teachers, and assessment proctors

Classroom Time. 4 hours

BEST Plus Administrators Training

Description. This workshop introduces the BEST Plus to place students in an ESL class and to measure educational gain. The BEST Plus is the NYSED-recommended assessment instrument. Highlights include a test overview, effective test administration, using BEST Plus scores for placement, and a discussion of the broader issues related to the formal testing of adult learners.

Audience. Program managers, teachers, and assessment proctors

Classroom Time. TBD

Staff Development Resources

There are three different resources for staff development in New York State:

- The Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN)
- The Literacy Assistance Center (LAC)
- The New York State Education Department (NYSED)