



**NRS** National Reporting System  
for Adult Education

# 2015

## **NRS PRODUCT SHOWCASE**

An Overview of Selected NRS Products and Their Uses







## INTRODUCTION

### The National Reporting System (NRS) for Adult Education

The NRS is the accountability system for the adult education program. It defines measures for national reporting, establishes data collection methods, and sets requirements for reporting to the U.S. Department of Education (ED). NRS data describe adult education students—their characteristics and levels of participation in adult education programs and their performance improving literacy skills, getting and keeping a job, earning a GED or secondary credential, and entering postsecondary education.

### NRS Products

The following pages contain descriptions of the many products and services American Institutes for Research (AIR) has created to assist states meeting NRS requirements. For example, you will find references to *training materials* on using data for program improvement, *online courses* to orient new staff to the NRS, an online *database* to help you choose an appropriate assessment to measure educational gain, informational *briefs* that provide practical tips on a variety of adult education topics, and *reports* that analyze national and state data describing adult education students. To assist you in what you are looking for, we have organized the products and services into the following six areas:

- *Policy Guidance*—User-friendly publications and online courses to guide you through NRS policies and procedures.



- *Data Quality and Data Use*—Tools and training materials to help you better understand and use your data.
- *Monitoring*—Adaptable templates and guides to assist you in successfully monitoring local programs for compliance and performance.
- *Assessment*—A searchable database and important information to help you select an appropriate assessment.
- *Federal Data Reports*—Accessible reports providing you with data and analyses to better understand the characteristics and performance of the adult education population at the state and national levels.
- *Student Databases for NRS*—Reports and guides that explain the characteristics of effective databases, NRS requirements for student record systems, and states' experiences developing their NRS student record systems.

All of these products may be accessed via the *NRSWeb* site at [www.nrsweb.org](http://www.nrsweb.org). Many products not housed directly on the website may be provided upon request.



## PRODUCTS BY TOPIC

### Policy Guidance

States request and receive guidance from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) on the implementation of the national accountability system. NRS policy and procedures guidance comes in several user-friendly formats.

#### ***NRS Tips: Sampling for Follow-Up Surveys***

[http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/NRSTips\\_Sampling\\_FINAL\\_508.pdf](http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/NRSTips_Sampling_FINAL_508.pdf)

This *NRS Tips* describes the benefits of sampling, the procedures to follow when sampling, using sampling for state and national estimates, and how to determine cohort and sample sizes.

#### ***NRS Implementation Guidelines***

[http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/implementation\\_guidelines.aspx](http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/implementation_guidelines.aspx)

The *NRS Implementation Guidelines* provide basic guidance to state adult education programs to meet the federal requirements for data collection and reporting. The document is available for download in Microsoft Word, PDF, and online searchable formats.

#### ***NRS Tips: NRS Changes for PY 2012***

<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/tips/NRSChangesPY2012.pdf>

The *NRS Tips* highlight the major changes in the NRS Implementation Guidelines for the 2012 Program Year. The changes were developed collaboratively by state directors, adult education stakeholders, OCTAE, and NRS staff.

## **NRS Policy on Reporting Distance Education Students**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/NRSwork/program.aspx>

Read the guidance from OCTAE on the details of reporting distance education students.

## **Online Course: What is the NRS?**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/online.aspx>

This self-paced, online course provides an introduction to the basics of the NRS. The course takes approximately 30 minutes to complete and easily fits into a busy schedule.

## **State Assessment Policy Guidance**

[http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/related\\_documents.aspx](http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/related_documents.aspx)

All states must submit annually an assessment policy to OCTAE that meets NRS requirements. This guide for state staff, updated in January 2011, describes the key topics and information that must go into this policy.

## **NRS Test Benchmarks for Education Functioning Levels**

[http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/related\\_documents.aspx](http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/related_documents.aspx)

The *NRS Test Benchmarks* provide a quick reference to current test benchmarks for educational functioning levels.



## Data Quality and Data Use

Data Quality refers to the collection of relevant, accurate data that can help program staff answer questions about recruitment, retention, and effectiveness of their programs and components. Data Use refers to the use of quality data to improve program performance. This section includes examples of products to help you with data quality and data use.

### NRS Targeted Training: Defining Adult Education Under WIOA: Messaging With Infographics

This guide and its related training seek to provide an overview of WIOA, focusing on the role of partnerships between adult education; the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Education, and the Rehabilitative Services Administration; and other agencies identified within WIOA. The goal of the guide and the training is to help states define their adult education programs as valuable and central partners in implementing education and training through the WIOA framework.



### The Power of Data Visualization: Advanced Presentations of NRS Data

This guide and its related training seek to bring the NRS into the world of data visualization. The training focuses on two popular and powerful visualization tools: data dashboards and infographics. The training promotes the use of these tools to convey more powerful and effective messages about state or local programs using NRS data.

### NRS Myth Busters: The Truth About Adult Education

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/MBusters2013.aspx>

This collection of tools enables states to use NRS data to address an evaluation or research topic that will inform practice and improve programs. This training promotes the quality and use of data collected under the National Reporting System for Adult Education.

### NRS Evaluation Learning Community (ELC)

In 2011, project staff organized the NRS Evaluation Learning Committee (ELC), a group of states committed to conducting research using NRS data. The states, selected through a competitive application process, developed research plans, conducted research and analyses, and presented their findings to the field. During the year-long ELC, states collaborated to share information, approaches, and findings. ELC training materials and links to ELC member presentations on their work can be found online.

## **Diving Deep Into the Local NRS Pool: Attendance, Educational Gain, and Transition Outcomes**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/>



[DivingDeepTraining2010.aspx](#)

This collection of tools allows state and local program administrators to analyze the core NRS outcome measure of educational gain, the four follow-up transition measures, and student attendance. Additional materials support planning for program improvement.



## **The Local Connection: Building a Data Use Learning Community**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/eNotes/>

[LocalConnectionTraining2009.aspx](#)

Learn about the characteristics and essential elements of data use learning communities at the state and local levels. Training materials include a companion guide to the training, learning community pre- and post-needs assessment surveys, and other resources.

## **Building and Sustaining Quality in NRS Data: Strategies for Program Improvement**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/NRSDataQualityTraining2008.aspx>

A guide, training materials, and useful tools create a four-step continuous program improvement process for building and sustaining change.

## **Data Quality Guide, Training, and Self-Assessment Checklist**

[http://www.nrsweb.org/NRSwork/data\\_quality.aspx](http://www.nrsweb.org/NRSwork/data_quality.aspx)

A guide and training materials are available to help state and local programs clarify the data collection process and ensure the collection of quality data. We also offer an online course (<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/online.aspx>) that helps the user understand what goes on at each level of the NRS.

## **NRS Data Flow Online Course**

[http://www.nrsonline.org/training/2\\_data\\_flow/index.html](http://www.nrsonline.org/training/2_data_flow/index.html)

Learn who does what with the NRS Data, where it comes from, where it goes, and how it gets there. Upon completion of this course, you should be able to give a detailed account of what goes on at each level of the NRS. Users will be required to log in to access this course.

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## NRS Data Detective Templates, Training, and Guide

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/2006smmr.aspx>

Learn to be a Data Detective with materials from this training, which provide guidance on the policies and procedures for collecting and using data as well as tools that help state and local staff question and analyze data in three areas: assessment, setting goals, and achieving goals.

## NRS Learning to Be an NRS Data Detective Online Course

[http://www.nrsonline.org/training/6\\_data\\_detective/a\\_intro/](http://www.nrsonline.org/training/6_data_detective/a_intro/)

Continue learning about data use and data searching by participating in this online course based on the topics and concepts found in the NRS Guide to Learning to be an NRS Data Detective.

## NRS Tips: Employment Reporting

[http://www.nrsweb.org/Tips/EmploymentReporting/NRSTips\\_Employment\\_Reporting.pdf](http://www.nrsweb.org/Tips/EmploymentReporting/NRSTips_Employment_Reporting.pdf)

Entered and retained employment—whether students obtained their goals of getting a job and keeping that job—are central follow-up measures in the NRS. This *NRS Tips* explains how to report these measures to OCTAE to meet NRS requirements and was updated in 2015 to include additional reporting years.

## Online Facilitated Course: 21st Century Learning: Building an Online Adult Education Program in Your State

Online education is a promising method of delivering instruction to meet the needs of adult education learners. This 8-week course is intended for states that want to expand or revise their existing distance learning or online learning programs. As part of the course, state education staff will review the NRS distance learning policy, learn about how some states have implemented online distance learning programs, and create a plan for delivering online distance learning in their state. This course was fine-tuned using feedback from the pilot and offered in the fall of 2014.



## Monitoring

State administrators have an obligation to monitor local programs for performance and compliance with state and federal policies and procedures. NRS products for program monitoring help with performance data review to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and to identify areas for improvement.

### Smart Fiscal Management for Adult Education Programs

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/SmartFiscalManagement2011.aspx>

This guide and accompanying training materials are designed for state directors of adult education and other state staff responsible for managing the adult education grant budget and expenditures. This guide focuses on fiscal management but maintains the goal of improving state data quality—in this case, financial data—for NRS reporting.

### Desk Monitoring: Improving Program Performance

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/DeskMonitoringTraining2007.aspx>

Using a quantitative desk monitoring tool reduces the burden on state staff and supplements qualitative information gathered through onsite monitoring visits. The guide and training explain the monitoring process and how a desk monitoring tool fits in the larger process. The monitoring tool is a template for state and local staff designed to determine what can be measured and how to evaluate programs using their data system.

### Demonstrating Results: Developing State and Local Report Cards for Adult Education

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/2007ReportCardTraining.aspx>

Report cards can be powerful and effective tools for accountability and program improvement. States and local programs can develop attractive, easy-to-understand report cards to evaluate quality, identify levels of performance, and provide information to people so they can make informed choices.

## Developing Report Cards

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/2007ReportCardTraining.aspx>

Learn to develop your own state or local report card in this four-part self-directed course based on the NRS Guide *Demonstrating Results: Developing State and Local Report Cards for Adult Education* (<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/2007%20Report%20Card/DevelopingReportCards2007.pdf>). This course provides an overview of how report cards are used in adult education and the five steps for developing a report card.

## NRS Tips: Desk Monitoring

<http://www.nrsweb.org/Tips/TipsMonitoring.asp>

Desk monitoring is an effective and efficient way to assist states in meeting their monitoring needs. *NRS Tips* provides an approach to reviewing and tracking program performance by using quantitative data that serves as a supplement to onsite monitoring.

## Assessment

Assessment provides a measure of student educational gain and is central to program accountability and program improvement. The NRS has several products to help in selecting and using the appropriate assessment.

### State Assessment Policy Guidance

<http://www.nrsweb.org/NRSwork/assessment.aspx>

All states must submit annually an assessment policy to the Division of Adult Education and Literacy that meets NRS requirements. This guide for state staff describes the key topics and information that must inform state policy.

### The NRS Assessment Database: How Do Tests Compare?

[http://www.nrsweb.org/NRSwork/database/assessment\\_table.asp](http://www.nrsweb.org/NRSwork/database/assessment_table.asp)

With so many tests available for adult education students, how can you decide which test to choose? The NRS has developed a database to compare more than 20 key features of tests used in adult education settings, including summaries, training required, test administration time, and other features.

## Federal Data Reports

The NRS is a repository of data collected by the U.S. Department of Education. Several reports analyze program performance data, characteristics of the adult education population, and related topics.

### Federal Report to Congress on State Performance

[http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/congress\\_report.aspx](http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/congress_report.aspx)

The annual *Report to Congress on State Performance* provides the Federal government and the public with an overview of the adult education program, including data on student enrollment and demographics and a summary of student outcomes over time. State-by-state statistics are provided in tables and graphs with data sheets in the appendix for further analysis.



### State Snapshots

[http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/state\\_snap.aspx](http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/state_snap.aspx)

Learn about what other states are doing with the NRS. State Snapshots provide a quick look at states' NRS data collection, staff, and interesting NRS facts. Several Snapshots also include brief videos of state directors or NRS leaders describing the impact of the NRS in their states and their strategies to obtain and use quality data effectively.

### NRS FastFacts

[http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/fast\\_facts.aspx](http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/fast_facts.aspx)

The *NRS FastFacts* present different statistics about adult education at the national level with state highlights, such as attendance rates and age groups.



## Student Databases for NRS

NRS support project staff have established guidance on developing student databases that meet NRS requirements for reporting and using NRS data for program improvement. The guidance provides tips for developing new database systems and evaluating and updating currently used systems.

### **Going Longitudinal: Building an Adult Education Longitudinal Data System**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/events/SLDS2012.aspx>

This collection of tools allows state and local program administrators to bring the adult education program into the world of state longitudinal data systems (LDS) and create a plan for developing an adult education longitudinal data system independently or in collaboration with existing systems.

### **Developing an NRS Data System: Putting the Pieces Together**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/DevelopingNRSTogether2004.pdf>

This guide is designed to help state and local adult education staff to make informed decisions on the design and development of a data system. It outlines a process for identifying requirements that reflects the range of needs from functional and operational perspectives.

### **NRS Tips: Planning an NRS Data System**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/tips/DataSys.pdf>

This edition of *NRS Tips* outlines a process to plan and build a successful data system.

### **NRS Tips: Creating a Longitudinal Data System**

<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/tips/longdata.pdf>

This edition of *NRS Tips* describes some benefits of and elements necessary to create a quality longitudinal data system.

## TYPE OF PRODUCTS FOUND AT *NRSWeb*

### Training & Guides

- Defining Adult Education Under WIOA: Messaging with Infographics (2015)
- The Power of Data Visualization: Advanced Presentations of NRS Data (2014)
- NRS Myth Busters Evaluation Research Guide (2013)
- NRS Guide to State Longitudinal Data Systems (2012)
- Evaluation Research Planning Model for the Evaluation Learning Community (2011)
- Diving Deep Into the Local NRS Pool: Attendance, Educational Gain, and Transition Outcomes (2010)
- The Local Connection: Building a Data Use Learning Community (2009)
- Building and Sustaining Quality in NRS Data: Strategies for Program Improvement (2008)
- Desk Monitoring: Improving Program Performance (2007)
- Demonstrating Results: Developing State and Local Report Cards for Adult Education (2007)
- Guide to Learning to be an NRS Data Detective: The Five Sides of the NRS (2006)
- Guide to Developing an NRS Data System: Putting the Pieces Together (2004)

### Online Courses

- What is the NRS?
- Data Quality Guide Training Courses
- NRS Data Flow
- NRS Data Systems
- Using NRS Data
- Scenarios (extended courses for local administrators)

- Data Use Guide Training Courses
- Learning to Be an NRS Data Detective
- Myth Busters: The Truth About Adult Education Course
- **Coming Soon!** Dashboards Online Course

## NRS Tips

- Sampling for the Follow-Up Surveys
- NRS Changes for PY 2012
- Employment Reporting
- Desk Monitoring
- Planning an NRS Data System
- Creating a Longitudinal Data System



## Other Resources

- NRS Implementation Guidelines
- NRS Policy on Reporting Distance Education Students
- State Assessment Policy Guidance
- NRS Test Benchmarks for Education Functioning Levels
- NRS Assessment Database
- *NRS Report to Congress on State Performance*
- NRS Resource Guide to Data Systems
- Guide to Developing an NRS Data System
- State Data Systems: Who Else Uses...?
- State Snapshots
- *NRS FastFacts*

For more information, please contact us at [nrs@air.org](mailto:nrs@air.org).





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## **About American Institutes for Research**

Established in 1946, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., American Institutes for Research (AIR) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally. As one of the largest behavioral and social science research organizations in the world, AIR is committed to empowering communities and institutions with innovative solutions to the most critical challenges in education, health, workforce, and international development.



## Contact NRS

[www.nrsweb.org](http://www.nrsweb.org)

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

Division of Adult Education and Literacy

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/index.html>