NRS Basics Activity Packet

National Reporting System (NRS)
Targeted Training, 2020

Contents

Page

NRS Basics Activity Packet....1
Overview....1
Uses for NRS Basics Activity Packet....1
Contents of the NRS Basics Activity Packet....2
Back to Basics....3
Let's Talk Strategy....8
Keeping Records Complete....12
What Do the Numbers Mean?....14
Answer Key....Key-1
Answer Key: Back to Basics....Key-2
Answer Key: Let's Talk Strategy....Key-7
Answer Key: What Do the Numbers Mean?....Key-11

NRS Basics Activity Packet

Overview

The *NRS Basics Activity Packet* is a collection of training activities for use when working with local program staff. The purpose of the activities in the packet is to (1) increase staff understanding of the key principles and requirements of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and National Reporting System (NRS) reporting, and (2) explore the concepts and strategies for how to collect and record performance data successfully.

Uses for NRS Basics Activity Packet

Each activity can be used as is; however, the activities can be tailored to your state and program needs to maximize their effectiveness.

The materials are designed to be adaptable for many formats, such as in-person meetings and trainings, webinars, online courses, and reference documents. Following are some ways they can be used in these formats:

Face-to-Face Meetings and Trainings. Some activities can be completed independently and shared in a larger group. Some can be completed in small program teams. Other activities can be used for group brainstorming to find solutions, develop protocols, or conduct program planning.

Webinars. Worksheets can be completed prior to a webinar, and answers reviewed during the webinar; Polls can be used to see how many people select one answer over another; breakout rooms can be used for small group discussion. Questions can be submitted prior to a webinar, and answers provided during the webinar.

Online Courses. These activities can be added to your state's online courses with modified instructions. The activities can be completed by groups using synchronized or asynchronous common workspaces.

Reference Documents. The content within these activities can be compiled into frequently asked questions or problem sets.

Contents of the NRS Basics Activity Packet

The packet includes a variety of activities to familiarize staff with the basics of the NRS. Each activity includes directions, and can be printed, shared as a training handout, or uploaded to a web-based platform.

Activity	Purpose
1. Back to Basics	This activity provides multiple-choice, short-answer, and discussion questions about general concepts and performance related to WIOA and the NRS. Users can check understanding and explore topics with colleagues about requirements and how to conduct data collection and continuous improvement.
2. Let's Talk Strategy	This activity provides a series of prompts about data collection strategies to engage staff from within and across programs in thinking about what they are currently doing and how they might make improvements.
3. Keeping Records Complete	This tool provides a checklist of the steps and procedures for comprehensive records and reporting.
4. What Do the Numbers Mean?	Sample data are provided to calculate performance on postexit indicators. Discussion questions provide opportunities to analyze the programs' performance.

Activity 1

Fundamentals

Below are multiple-choice, short-answer, and discussion questions about general concepts related to WIOA and the NRS. Check your understanding and explore topics with your colleagues about requirements and how to conduct data collection and promote continuous improvement.

Multiple-Choice Questions:

1. What are the three primary federal agencies that partner to fulfill WIOA's goals of providing opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services to adults and youth?

- ☐ a. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
- ☐ b. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- ☐ c. Department of Labor
- ☐ d. Department of Health and Human Services
- ☐ e. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration

2. What measures do states have to report on through the NRS? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ a. Performance indicators
- ☐ b. State ranking
- ☐ c. Descriptive measures
- ☐ d. Number of IET [integrated education and training] programs offered
- ☐ e. Participation indicators

3. What is the role of periods of participation (PoPs) in the NRS? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ a. The purpose of PoPs is to improve states' ability to track participants.
- ☐ b. PoPs are periods of service for reporting purposes.
- ☐ c. PoPs are used to calculate performance on all core outcome measures under WIOA (except median earnings).
- ☐ d. PoPs are 90-day periods when students attend classes.
- ☐ e. PoPs encourage students to stay in programs longer.

4. When is a participant's exit date?

- [ ] a. The day they take their posttest.
- [ ] b. The last day they are in class for a full day.
- [ ] c. The day they receive their GED.
- [ ] d. The last date of service, after confirming that the student received no services and has no further planned services for 90 days.

Short-Answer or Discussion Questions:

1. Is a student who attends a 6-hour orientation and does not return considered a reportable individual? Why or why not?

2. Can a PoP continue from one program year to the next, or does the participant have to be exited at the end of the first program year and qualify again at the beginning of the second program year?

3. Barriers to employment are descriptive measures. Should these be reported one time per participant or for each PoP? Why are barriers to employment important to collect?

4. What impact does the focus on employment and credentials have on programming, service delivery, and data collection in your program and in your state?

Indicators of Performance

Below are multiple-choice, short-answer, and discussion questions about performance related to WIOA and the NRS. Check your understanding and explore topics with your colleagues about how to measure and track student performance.

Multiple-Choice Questions:

1. Educational functioning level (EFL) gain is a measurement of performance used for which indicator?

- ☐ a. Credential indicators
- ☐ b. Measurable skill gains (MSGs)
- ☐ c. Employment indicators
- ☐ d. Barriers to employment
- ☐ e. NRS Table 2

2. How do you measure EFL gain for NRS reporting? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ a. Completions of Carnegie Units in an adult high school program
- ☐ b. Student portfolios
- ☐ c. Pre- and posttesting using assessments approved for NRS reporting
- ☐ d. End-of-term grades
- ☐ e. Enrollment into postsecondary education or training during the program year

3. Which performance indicators are used to measure state performance? (Select all that apply.)

- [ ] a. MSGs
- [ ] b. Employment indicators
- [ ] c. Total number of contact hours across all programs
- [ ] d. Credential indicators
- [ ] e. Pre- and posttest rates

Short-Answer or Discussion Questions:

1. List at least three data sources or methods you can use to track employment during the second and fourth quarters after exit. Have you used these sources before, and, if so, what was your experience?

2. What data sources can you use to track credential data?

3. How many MSGs can be reported per participant per PoP? How do you determine which MSGs to report?

4. Can you count fourth-quarter employment as a postexit indicator if the participant is employed in the fourth quarter but is not at the same job they held at the end of the second quarter?

5. A participant attends programming for 100 hours in October and November, makes an EFL gain through posttesting, and does not return until January. She then attends an additional 10 contact hours, obtains her High School Equivalency (HSE), and then exits the program. Explain how many total PoPs she has and describe the MSGs you would report.

6. A participant is a National Guard member. She attends your program for 60 hours but is called away for 5 months of active duty before she posttests. Explain how you would you report this participant in your data.

7. A participant completes 60 contact hours at Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 5, and leaves the program after obtaining an HSE in June 2018. He immediately obtains a job as a waiter at a restaurant and is still working at this restaurant job 16 months after exiting the program, making $7,000 per quarter. How would you report data on this participant?

Activity 2

The prompts below are provided to reflect on current data collection practices and strategies, and to consider new ones you may want to adopt. Think through the questions independently, and then share your responses so there can be cross-role and cross-program understanding of processes, procedures, and views on best practices. Space is provided so you can take notes on what other staff and programs are sharing.

Intake and Enrollment

1. What strategies is your program using to capture Social Security numbers (SSNs) for tracking? Why is it important to capture this information?

Ideas from other staff/programs:

2. What strategies is your program using to collect barriers to employment? Why is it important to collect this information?

Ideas from other staff/programs:

3. What strategies is your program using to ensure that you maintain up-to-date contact information for each participant?

Ideas from other staff/programs:

Ongoing Data Collection

1. Data tracking can be difficult with long time lags before postexit indicators can be recorded. What challenges has your program encountered, and how does your program manage this process?

Ideas from other staff/programs:

2. It is recommended to run data matches monthly or quarterly. Explain why this practice is beneficial.

Ideas from other staff/programs:

Exit and Postexit

1. What strategies are we using to ensure that we have complete records on students before they leave the program?

Ideas from other staff/programs:

2. What strategies are we using to ensure that we are posttesting learners?

Ideas from other staff/programs:

3. What strategies are we using to follow up on employment?

Ideas from other staff/programs:

4. What strategies are we using to follow up on credential attainment?

Ideas from other staff/programs:

Keeping Records Complete

Activity 3

Data collection, maintenance, and tracking are complex processes that require planning and monitoring. This checklist can be used to map out the steps and procedures that will ensure comprehensive records and reporting. It can be revised as needed to reflect state policy.

Contact Information

- ☐ Collect student contact information during initial contact (in person, by phone, or electronically [including e-mail and social media]).
- ☐ Collect and confirm contact information during the enrollment process.
- ☐ Collect family member contact information.
- ☐ Inform students that they or family members may be contacted after leaving to ask them about their successes, employment credential attainment, and further education.

Social Security Numbers

- ☐ Collect and verify SSNs during initial contact (in person, by phone, or electronically).
- ☐ Confirm SSNs during enrollment process.
- ☐ Confirm SSNs at pretest.
- ☐ Confirm SSNs at posttest.

Barriers to Employment

- ☐ Use the protocol, examples, and definitions to capture barriers to employment data.
- ☐ Explain to students why information is collected; ensure confidentiality.
- ☐ Use forms and follow procedures that explain the barriers to students in simple language and why they are important.
- ☐ Update students over the course of programming.

Employment

- ☐ Record current employment during enrollment.
- ☐ Record employer contact information during enrollment.
- ☐ Verify employment during participation.
- ☐ Verify employment at exit.
- ☐ Identify which participants should be tracked based on exits and likelihood or knowledge of postexit employment.
- ☐ Maintain contact with participants via electronic communications, so they are accustomed to hearing from your organization and receiving requests for information.
    - ○ Conduct surveys.
    - ○ Collect self-employment worksheets.
- ☐ Access databases, such as the following:
    - ○ Unemployment Insurance

- ○ Federal employment records
- ○ Military employment records
- ○ U.S. Postal Service employment records
- ○ State new hire registries
- ○ State departments of revenue or taxation; employee/employer quarterly tax payment forms
- ○ Railroad Retirement System

☐ Follow up using other sources, such as the following:

- ○ One-stop records on income-based program eligibility (e.g., TANF, SNAP)
- ○ Signed letter from employer
- ○ Detailed case notes verified by employer

Credential Attainment

☐ Record student co-enrollments.

☐ Identify which students should be tracked based on exits and likelihood to enter secondary or postsecondary education.

☐ Maintain contact with participants via electronic communications, so they are accustomed to hearing from your organization and receiving requests for information.

- ○ Conduct surveys.

☐ Use databases, such as the following:

- ○ Community colleges and other postsecondary institutions
- ○ National Student Clearinghouse
- ○ Institute for Higher Education Policy
- ○ Federal Student Aid
- ○ Other postsecondary service providers

Data-Tracking Practices During Participation

☐ Use state-issued intake forms, and monitor updates to forms.

☐ Check quality of attendance records.

☐ Monitor hours to identify when to posttest.

☐ Run data matches monthly or quarterly.

☐ Use state and program data reports for program management and improvement.

☐ Maintain contact with participants via electronic communications, so they are accustomed to hearing from your organization and receiving requests for information.

☐ Track students through established relationships with partners and other service organizations.

☐ Establish relationships with local employers to access the employment status of participants more easily.

Activity 4

This worksheet provides one completed sample with data and calculations for Program A, and four sets of data to practice calculating postexit indicators. Use the data provided for Programs B–E to determine postexit employment and credential performance. There are blank sheets to conduct calculations and discussion questions to analyze the data results.

Program Sample Data

	Program A	Program B	Program C	Program D	Program E
Employment					
Total Exited Participants (PoPs)	310	383	675	455	1,400
Number of Participants Who Fall in Excluded Categories	10	0	7	13	25
Data Match for Employed During Second Quarter After Exit	150	189	350	290	650
Data Match for Employed During Fourth Quarter After Exit	125	150	375	290	350
Credentials					
Number of Exited Participants (PoPs) Who Entered Without a Secondary Credential and are Receiving Secondary-Level Instruction	108	70	150	130	250
Number of Exited Participants Co-Enrolled in Adult and Postsecondary Education or Training	50	30	45	39	400
Number of Participants (PoPs) in Both Credential Groups	8	10	25	15	100
Number of Participants Who Obtained Both a Postsecondary and Secondary Credential and Were Employed Within 1 Year of Exit	2	8	20	13	70
Attained Secondary School Diploma/ Recognized Equivalent and Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training Within 1 Year of Exit	12	20	25	30	50
Attained Secondary School Diploma/ Recognized Equivalent and Employed Within 1 Year of Exit	40	35	45	50	100
Attained a Postsecondary Credential While Enrolled or Within 1 Year of Exit	10	12	17	10	20

Note: These sample data are provided only to illustrate computation of the indicators. Actual data reported in Table 5 would come from different cohorts and program years. For example, the total number of participants used to calculate second- and fourth-quarter employment would differ. Secondary credential data in the table are unduplicated unique counts in this sample data, which may not be the case in actual data.

Program A—Completed Example

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

150	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP	=	50%	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
300	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

125	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP	=	42%	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
300	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

60*	Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit	=	40%	Credential rate (percent)
150**	Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program			

*Total all participants who obtained any credential (62); subtract those who obtained both credentials (2) = 60.

**Total all participants in both cohorts (158); subtract duplicates (8) = 150.

Calculations

Program B

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

☐ Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP		☐	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
☐ Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

☐ Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP		☐	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
☐ Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

☐ * Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit		☐	Credential rate (percent)
☐ ** Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program			

Program C

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

☐ Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP		= ☐	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
☐ Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

☐ Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP		= ☐	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
☐ Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

☐ * Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit		= ☐	Credential rate (percent)
☐ ** Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program			

Program D

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

☐ Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP		=	☐ %	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
☐ Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)				

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

☐ Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP		=	☐	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
☐ Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)				

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

☐ * Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit		=	☐	Credential rate (percent)
☐ ** Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program				

Program E

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

☐ Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP		☐	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
☐ Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)	=		

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

☐ Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP		☐	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
☐ Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)	=		

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

☐ * Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit		☐	Credential rate (percent)
☐ ** Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program	=		

Questions About the Data Calculations

1. Program E has been collecting SSNs for about 50% of participants. What are the possible implications of missing SSNs for this program and the state?

2. What differences do you notice about Programs A–E in terms of enrollment and performance? Which programs are performing well on postexit performance indicators? What are the implications?

3. You don't know all the facts about these programs—data are missing on local conditions, the programming they offer, EFLs, pre- and posttesting rates, and so forth. But given what information you have, and thinking about these other factors, what suggestions might you give these program directors to improve their performance? What would you want them to consider?

4. These five programs are all the programs in the state. Aggregate the data and calculate the postexit indicators. How does the overall state performance compare with the individual programs' performance? If you were the state director, how would these results influence decisions you make about technical assistance and support?

Answer Key

Answer Key: Back to Basics

Activity 1

Fundamentals

Below are multiple-choice, short-answer, and discussion questions about general concepts related to WIOA and the NRS. Check your understanding and explore topics with your colleagues about requirements and how to conduct data collection and promote continuous improvement.

Multiple-Choice Questions:

1. What are the three primary federal agencies that partner to fulfill WIOA's goals of providing opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services to adults and youth?
   a. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
   b. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
   c. Department of Labor
   d. Department of Health and Human Services
   e. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration

2. What measures do states have to report on through the NRS? (Select all that apply.)
   a. Performance indicators
   b. State ranking
   c. Descriptive measures
   d. Number of IET [integrated education and training] programs offered
   e. Participation indicators

3. What is the role of periods of participation (PoPs) in the NRS? (Select all that apply.)
   a. The purpose of PoPs is to improve states' ability to track participants.
   b. PoPs are periods of service for reporting purposes.
   c. PoPs are used to calculate performance on all core outcome measures under WIOA (except median earnings).
   d. PoPs are 90-day periods when students attend classes.
   e. PoPs encourage students to stay in programs longer.

4. When is a participant's exit date?
   a. The day they take their posttest.
   b. The last day they are in class for a full day.
   c. The day they receive their GED.
   d. The last date of service, after confirming that the student received no services and has no further planned services for 90 days.

Short-Answer or Discussion Questions:

1. Is a student who attends a 6-hour orientation and does not return considered a reportable individual? Why or why not?

   Yes; this person should be described as a reportable individual. A reportable individual has received fewer than 12 hours of services and shows intent to use the program services.

2. Can a PoP continue from one program year to the next, or does the participant have to be exited at the end of the first program year and qualify again at the beginning of the second program year?

   If there is no exit across a program year, the PoP continues into the next program year. An exit is determined when 90 days have elapsed since the person last received services and there are no future services planned. So, if the person does not exit before the end of the program year, the PoP will continue.

3. Barriers to employment are descriptive measures. Should these be reported one time per participant or for each PoP? Why are barriers to employment important to collect?

   The 11 barriers to employment may affect placement of the participant in unsubsidized employment and are self-identified by the participant at entry into each PoP. Individuals' circumstances can change and should be determined at entry into each PoP.

   It is important to collect data on barriers to employment in order to:

   - *Uncover obstacles that can impede students' full participation or eligibility.*
   - *Gain an increased understanding of the needs of student subgroups through analyses.*

   These and other participant demographics will be factored into a statistical model to adjust the state's performance on indicators.

4. What impact does the focus on employment and credentials have on programming, service delivery, and data collection in your program and in your state?

This could include:

- *Increase in follow-up with students*
- *Additional partnerships to conduct data matching*
- *Increase in relationship building with local employers*
- *Increase in goal setting with students to outline strategies for continued education and employment*
- *Increase in workforce education services and training*
- *Addition of case managers to staff*
- *Revamping of the data system*

Indicators of Performance

Below are multiple-choice, short-answer, and discussion questions about performance related to WIOA and the NRS. Check your understanding and explore topics with your colleagues about how to measure and track student performance.

Multiple-Choice Questions:

1. Educational functioning level (EFL) gain is a measurement of performance used for which indicator?

   a. Credential indicators

   (b.) Measurable skill gains (MSGs)

   c. Employment indicators

   d. Barriers to employment

   e. NRS Table 2

2. How do you measure EFL gain for NRS reporting? (Select all that apply.)

   (a.) Completions of Carnegie Units in an adult high school program

   b. Student portfolios

   (c.) Pre- and posttesting using assessments approved for NRS reporting

   d. End-of-term grades

   (e.) Enrollment into postsecondary education or training during the program year

3. Which performance indicators are used to measure state performance? (Select all that apply.)

   a. MSGs

   b. Employment indicators

   c. Total number of contact hours across all programs

   d. Credential indicators

   e. Pre- and posttest rates

Short-Answer or Discussion Questions:

1. List at least three data sources or methods you can use to track employment during the second and fourth quarters after exit. Have you used these sources before, and, if so, what was your experience?

   - *Copies of quarterly tax payment forms or pay stubs*
   - *Signed letter from employer*
   - *Detailed case notes verified by employer*
   - *One-stop operating systems' administrative records*
   - *Self-employment worksheets*

2. What data sources can you use to track credential data?

   - *Data sharing with community colleges*
   - *Searching national-level databases, such as the National Student Clearinghouse, Institute for Higher Education Policy, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, and Federal Student Aid*
   - *Conducting surveys*

3. How many MSGs can be reported per participant per PoP? How do you determine which MSGs to report?

   If a participant achieves more than one type of MSG in a reporting period, only one can be reported, which is the most recent gain.

4. Can you count fourth-quarter employment as a postexit indicator if the participant is employed in the fourth quarter but is not at the same job they held at the end of the second quarter?

   Yes, the participant does not need to have the same job they held in the second quarter during the fourth quarter to get credit for this postexit indicator.

5. A participant attends programming for 100 hours in October and November, makes an EFL gain through posttesting, and does not return until January. She then attends an additional 10 contact hours, obtains her High School Equivalency (HSE), and then exits the program. Explain how many total PoPs she has and describe the MSGs you would report.

   She was in the program for one PoP because she did not exit after her absence in December. You would report the HSE credential because it is the most recent MSG she achieved.

6. A participant is a National Guard member. She attends your program for 60 hours but is called away for 5 months of active duty before she posttests. Explain how you would you report this participant in your data.

   *If she exits the program because she is a member of the National Guard (or other reserve military unit of the armed forces) and is called to active duty for at least 90 days, she **can be** excluded from the WIOA primary indicators of performance.*

7. A participant completes 60 contact hours at Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 5, and leaves the program after obtaining an HSE in June 2018. He immediately obtains a job as a waiter at a restaurant and is still working at this restaurant job 16 months after exiting the program, making $7,000 per quarter. How would you report data on this participant?

   - *He earned an HSE for the credential indicator.*
   - *He was employed during the second and fourth quarters after exit, so you would record second- and fourth-quarter employment.*
   - *His $7,000 quarterly salary would be factored into the median earnings calculation for the program.*

Answer Key: Let's Talk Strategy

Activity 2

The prompts below are provided to reflect on your current data collection practices and strategies, and to consider new ones you may want to adopt. Think through the questions independently, and then share your response so there can be cross-role and cross-program understanding of processes, procedures, and views on best practices. Space is provided for you to take notes on what other staff and programs are sharing.

Intake and Enrollment

1. What strategies is your program using to capture Social Security numbers (SSNs) for tracking? Why is it important to capture this information?

If they do not mention these strategies, suggest they consider the following:
It is important to collect SSNs because they are needed to track students for postexit indicators. There should be:

- *Clear messaging to staff that collecting SSNs is important for postexit performance measures and targets set for collecting SSNs.*
- *Transparent communication with students about the importance and confidentiality focus on how and why to capture SSNs through staff orientation, webinars, and professional development training sessions.*
- *Regular reminders to students who did not provide an SSN while enrolled.*
- *Reminders to collect SSNs at intake through online intake.*
- *Follow-up with students who did not provide an SSN through technology, such as automated text messages and phone apps.*
- *Communication with partners, such as data system sharing and case manager notes.*
- *Communication with employers.*

2. What strategies is your program using to collect barriers to employment? Why is it important to collect this information?

If they do not mention these strategies, suggest they consider the following:

- *Design intake processes so that any of the 11 barriers to employment can be identified.*
- *Use questioning protocols with terminology, examples, explanations, and context, so intake specialists can capture the most accurate information.*
- *Train staff to use the protocols and employ observation and questioning techniques to elicit information from students.*
- *Communicate with case managers.*

3. What strategies is your program using to ensure that you maintain up-to-date contact information for each participant?

If they do not mention these strategies, suggest they consider the following:

- *Collect student contact information during initial contact (in person, by phone, or electronically) and intake.*
- *Collect and confirm contact information during enrollment and at exit, where possible.*
- *Collect family member contact information.*
- *Inform students that they or family members may be contacted after leaving to ask them about their successes, employment credential attainment, and further education.*
- *Share records with partners.*
- *Communicate with employers.*

Ongoing Data Collection

1. Data tracking can be difficult with long time lags before postexit indicators can be recorded. What challenges has your program encountered, and how does your program manage this process?

If they do not mention these strategies, suggest they consider the following:

- *Identify which participants should be tracked based on exits and the likelihood or knowledge of postexit employment or education.*
- *Obtain SSNs.*
- *Determine exit dates, postexit quarters, and periods of participation.*
- *Develop data systems that flag time periods that apply to postexit indicators.*
- *Maintain contact with exited students to increase success in surveying, checking in, and requesting updates.*

2. It is recommended to run data matches monthly or quarterly. Explain why this practice is beneficial.

- *To catch data errors and data gaps before end-of-year submissions.*
- *To be able to use data for decision making on a more regular basis.*
- *To avoid including participants who are still enrolled or those who exited in other time periods.*
- *To be able to monitor postexit indicators in the second and fourth quarters.*

Exit and Postexit

1. What strategies are we using to ensure that we have complete records on students before they leave the program?

   If they do not mention these strategies, suggest they consider the following:
   - *Conduct thorough intake procedures.*
   - *Perform regular check-ins with students to update information or fill in missing information.*
   - *Conduct regular data error checks.*
   - *Ensure regular monitoring by program and state leadership to discuss challenges and solutions.*

2. What strategies are we using to ensure that we are posttesting learners?

   If they do not mention these strategies, suggest they consider the following:
   - *Train staff on test administration.*
   - *Send electronic notices when students have met the contact hour requirement for testing.*
   - *Communicate with students about the role of posttesting to measure their progress and evaluate program success.*
   - *Have scheduled testing sessions.*
   - *Make plans for remote testing.*

3. What strategies are we using to follow up on employment?

   If they do not mention these strategies, suggest they consider the following:
   - *Record current employer and contact information during enrollment.*
   - *Verify employment during participation.*
   - *Verify employment at exit.*
   - *Identify which participants should be tracked based on exits and likelihood or knowledge of postexit employment.*
   - *Maintain contact with participants via electronic communications, so they are accustomed to hearing from your organization and receiving requests for information.*
   - *Conduct surveys.*
   - *Collect self-employment worksheets.*
   - *Access employment databases.*
   - *Access resources from partners or other sources within the program, such as one-stop records on income-based program eligibility (e.g., TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families], SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program]), a signed letter from the employer, or detailed case notes verified by the employer.*

4. What strategies are we using to follow up on credential attainment?

   If they do not mention these strategies, suggest they consider the following:
   - *Record student co-enrollments.*

- *Identify which students should be tracked based on exits and likelihood to enter secondary or postsecondary education.*
- *Maintain contact with participants via electronic communications, so they are accustomed to hearing from your organization and receiving requests for information.*
- *Maintain relationships with community colleges and other postsecondary institutions where students attend.*
- *Contact state agencies or external testing vendors.*
- *Use education databases, such as the following:*
  - *Community colleges and other postsecondary institutions*
  - *National Student Clearinghouse*
  - *Institute for Higher Education Policy*
  - *Federal Student Aid*
  - *Other postsecondary service providers*

Answer Key: What Do the Numbers Mean?

Activity 4

This worksheet provides one completed sample with data and calculations for Program A, and four sets of data to practice calculating postexit indicators. Use the data provided for Programs B–E to determine postexit employment and credential performance. There are blank sheets to conduct calculations and discussion questions to analyze the data results.

Program Sample Data

	Program A	Program B	Program C	Program D	Program E
Employment					
Total Exited Participants (PoPs)	310	383	675	455	1,400
Number of Participants Who Fall in Excluded Categories	10	0	7	13	25
Data Match for Employed During Second Quarter After Exit	150	189	350	290	650
Data Match for Employed During Fourth Quarter After Exit	125	150	375	290	350
Credentials					
Number of Exited Participants (PoPs) Who Entered Without a Secondary Credential and are Receiving Secondary-Level Instruction	108	70	150	130	250
Number of Exited Participants Co-Enrolled in Adult and Postsecondary Education or Training	50	30	45	39	400
Number of Participants (PoPs) in Both Credential Groups	8	10	25	15	100
Number of Participants Who Obtained Both a Postsecondary and Secondary Credential and Were Employed Within 1 Year of Exit	2	8	20	13	70
Attained Secondary School Diploma/ Recognized Equivalent and Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training Within 1 Year of Exit	12	20	25	30	50
Attained Secondary School Diploma/ Recognized Equivalent and Employed Within 1 Year of Exit	40	35	45	50	100
Attained a Postsecondary Credential While Enrolled or Within 1 Year of Exit	10	12	17	10	20

Note: These sample data are provided only to illustrate computation of the indicators. Actual data reported in Table 5 would come from different cohorts and program years. For example, the total number of participants used to calculate second- and fourth-quarter employment would differ. Secondary credential data in the table are unduplicated unique counts in this sample data, which may not be the case in actual data.

Program A—Completed Example

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

150	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting foreach PoP	=	*50%*	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
300	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

125	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP	=	*42%*	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
300	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

*60**	Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit	=	*40%*	Credential rate (percent)
*150***	Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program			

*Total all participants who obtained any credential (62); subtract those who obtained both credentials (2) = 60.
**Total all participants in both cohorts (158); subtract duplicates (8) = 150.

Calculations

Program B

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

189	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP	=	*49%*	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
383	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

150	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP	=	*39%*	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
383	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

*59**	Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit	=	*66%*	Credential rate (percent)
*90***	Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program			

*Total all participants who obtained any credential (67); subtract those who obtained both credentials (8) = 59.
**Total all participants in both cohorts (100); subtract duplicates (10) = 90.

Program C

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

350	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP	= *52%*	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
668	Total number of PoPs (less excluded) of exited participants		

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

375	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP	= *56%*	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
668	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)		

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

*67**	Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit	= *39%*	Credential rate (percent)
*170***	Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program		

*Total all participants who obtained any credential (87); subtract those who obtained both credentials (20) = 67.
**Total all participants in both cohorts (195); subtract duplicates (25) = 170.

Program D

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

290	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP	=	*66%*	Second-quarter employment rate (percent)
442	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

290	Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP	=	*66%*	Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)
442	Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)			

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

*77**	Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit	=	*50%*	Credential rate (percent)
*154***	Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program			

*Total all participants who obtained any credential (90); subtract those who obtained both credentials (13) = 77.
**Total all participants in both cohorts (100); subtract duplicates (15) = 154.

Program E

Second-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Second-Quarter Employment Rate

650 — Number of exited participants employed at any time in the second quarter after exiting for each PoP

1375 — Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)

= 47% — Second-quarter employment rate (percent)

Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

Calculate Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate

350 — Number of exited participants employed at any time in the fourth quarter after exiting for each PoP

1375 — Total number of PoPs of exited participants (less excluded)

= 25% — Fourth-quarter employment rate (percent)

Credential Rate

Calculate Credential Rate—Obtained a secondary diploma and enrolled in postsecondary education or training within 1 year of exit, and obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

100* — Participants in the denominator who attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or were employed within 1 year of exit, and participants who obtained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within 1 year of exit

550** — Participants who entered without a secondary credential and were enrolled in a secondary-level program who exited adult education, and participants who were dually enrolled in adult and postsecondary education and exited from the postsecondary education program

= 18% — Credential rate (percent)

*Total all participants who obtained any credential (170); subtract those who obtained both credentials (70) = 100.
**Total all participants in both cohorts (650); subtract duplicates (100) = 550.

Questions About the Data Calculations

1. Program E has been collecting SSNs for about 50% of participants. What are the possible implications of missing SSNs for this program and the state?

   The number of postexit employment outcomes for the program could have been much higher. The program can follow up on employment using the least labor-intensive method—the SSN—for, at most, 50% of full program enrollment. It is possible that there were more exited participants who were employed during the second and/or fourth quarters after employment, but it is more difficult to track those students and requires more staff resources. For example, maybe the program was able to find out where 50 students without SSNs were employed during the second quarter after exit because of program connections to an employer. But if 25 of those students leave and find employment somewhere else and the program staff cannot track them, then those employment outcomes will be lost.

2. What differences do you notice about Programs A–E in terms of enrollment and performance? Which programs are performing well on postexit performance indicators? What are the implications?

   Program C had a higher second-quarter employment rate than fourth-quarter employment rate. It is possible that they provided case management, employment counseling, job readiness services, or resume assistance that helped those who exited find work.

   Program D had the same employment rates in the second and fourth quarters. It is possible that they are following up with students to support them in their current jobs so that they maintain employment.

   Program E had a dramatic decline in fourth-quarter employment rates. It is possible that their students are not well prepared for employment and are having difficulty maintaining their positions. The director of Program E should speak with the directors at Programs C and D to see how they are preparing their learners for employment success.

   Program B has high the highest credential rate, but the fourth-quarter after-exit employment is one of the lowest. It is possible that students don't have enough support after they leave the program or maybe the job market is difficult in the area where the program is located.

   Program E has a credential rate below the state target.

3. You don't know all the facts about these programs—data are missing on local conditions, the programming they offer, EFLs, pre- and posttesting rates, and so forth. But given what information you have, and thinking about these other factors, what suggestions might you give these program directors to improve their performance? What would you want them to consider?

   - *They could check their intake procedures to be sure they are collecting SSNs and contact information for each participant.*
   - *They could consider whether they have enough staff to conduct postexit follow-up.*
   - *They could examine the support systems available to students after they exit. Maybe learners are having challenges with child care, transportation, housing, or other issues that are affecting their job retention.*

- *They could examine their curriculum to see if they are aligning it with in-demand jobs in their communities.*
- *They could evaluate whether they are preparing students for employment with both hard and soft skills.*

4. These five programs are all the programs in the state. Aggregate the data and calculate the postexit indicators. How does the overall state performance compare with the individual programs' performance? If you were the state director, how would these results influence decisions you make about technical assistance and support?

State Performance:

- *Second-Quarter Employment Rate = 51%*
- *Fourth-Quarter Employment Rate = 41%*
- *Credential Rate = 33%*

Program E is the largest in the sample, and its low performance on the postexit employment and credential indicators is pulling the state performance down. I would focus efforts on identifying the areas that need improvement, such as staffing, intake and exit procedures, curriculum, and follow-up.

I also would identify what is working in the other programs and why they are having success to see what could be applied to Program E.

Clear Form