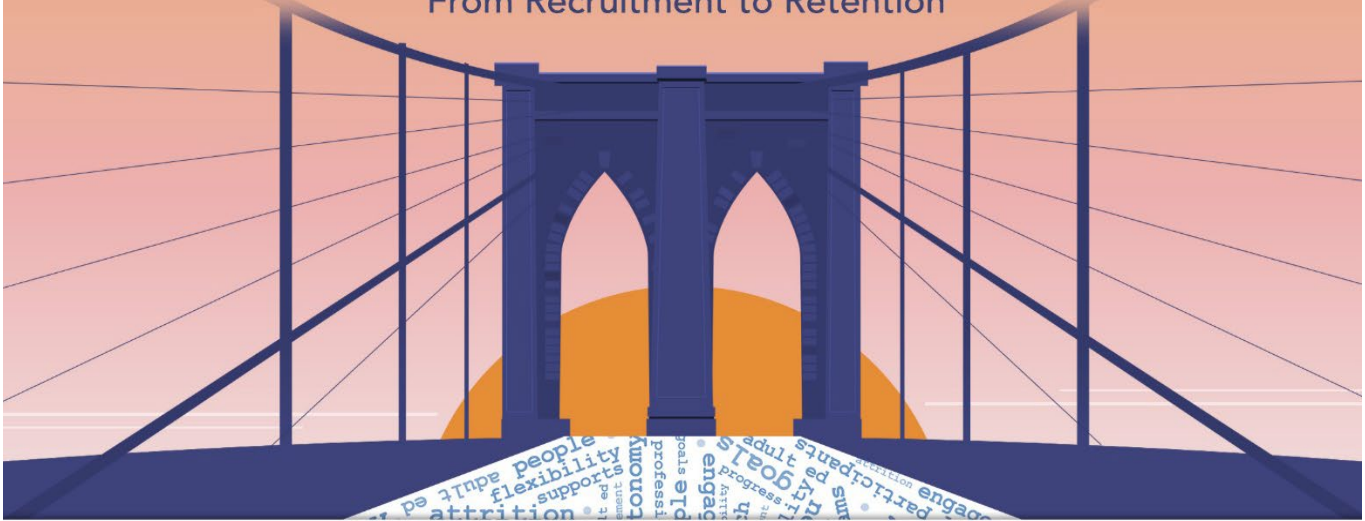


# the JOURNEY CONTINUES

From Recruitment to Retention



NATIONAL  
REPORTING SYSTEM  
for Adult Education

U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

# The Journey Continues: From Recruitment to Retention

## NRS Trainers' Guide

### About This Resource

The National Reporting System (NRS) trainers' guides are intended to support state adult education leadership and professional development specialists. This guide, which describes the overall training approach, highlights key themes and provides supporting resources to inform the planning and delivery of NRS training for state and local adult education professionals.

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# Training Overview

## Training Purpose

From June through July 2023, the NRS Support Project, managed by the American Institutes for Research, held the annual regional training for state directors of adult education and their teams in three locations: Austin, Texas; Arlington, Virginia; and San Diego, California. The NRS Support Project developed this training in response to the changing landscape of adult education and the direct and indirect impacts of those changes on student and teacher retention. The training guided states in using data to understand their challenges with student and teacher retention and exploring new strategies for analyzing and addressing these challenges.

## Training Objectives

- Understand and review data patterns of learner and teacher retention.
- Explore learner-centered strategies to support and improve learner persistence.
- Draft a state-specific plan to articulate strategies to support teacher retention.

## Training Focus

NRS facilitators presented considerations for understanding the student/teacher retention landscape through data and alignment with the three Ps: people, programs, and policy. The training featured group discussions on issues affecting student/teacher retention and provided opportunities for states to learn and share retention strategies that considered both state and local program perspectives. States also had the opportunity to begin drafting a teacher retention plan that explored challenges, goals, and strategies for retaining high quality instructors. The major products of the training were the following:



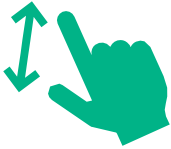
- Common data points—Using the “Data Bridge” template, state teams engaged in an activity where they considered data sources that best inform student retention at both the state and local levels.
- Teacher retention plans—States took the first steps in developing a teacher retention plan. Teacher retention plans are a comprehensive, forward-thinking, and holistic process that outline the recruitment and retention of teachers.
- Strategy workbook activity responses—Training participants recorded their responses to guiding questions.

## Format

NRS Support Project facilitators delivered three in-person training events over several weeks. The in-person training events included two parts: (a) a 2-week online pre-session and (b) a 3-day in-person training session (totaling 16 hours). As part of the pre-session, participants completed assignments individually and with their state teams. During the in-person sessions, participants continued to work with their state teams and other state teams to explore and draft student/teacher strategies and exchange feedback.

Refer to the [training agenda](#) for an overview of the key training activities and their sequencing.

## How to Customize This Training

 <p><b>Audience</b></p>	<p>The NRS facilitators designed this training for state adult education leadership and professional development specialists. Trainers at the state and local levels can customize all or parts of this training by tailoring it to the following stakeholders in the recruitment and retention process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• local adult education providers,</li><li>• partner organizations, and</li><li>• adult learners.</li></ul> <p>Trainers also can bring together various stakeholders to discuss student/teacher retention trends in their state, review strategies, develop a teacher retention plan, and consider the resources needed for discussed strategies.</p>
 <p><b>Format</b></p>	<p>Trainers can deliver this training and its components entirely online, in person, or in a blended approach.</p> <p>The training delivery formats should be supportive of data gathering, analysis, and teamwork.</p> <p>Many of the activities can be enhanced by participant collaboration and thought partnership.</p>
 <p><b>Key Topics and Areas of Focus</b></p>	<p>The NRS facilitators organized the training around discussions and activities that helped states better understand their student/teacher retention landscape. The discussions and activities can be repeated by following the steps described in this section and by using the training resources. As necessary, the training can be customized and adapted.</p> <p><i>Student Retention</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Step 1. Understand what data sources inform student retention considerations.</li><li>• Step 2. Review and discuss student retention strategies that may improve retention outcomes.</li><li>• Step 3. Consider what is needed to support student retention at the state and local levels.</li></ul> <p><i>Teacher Retention</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Step 1. Understand trends in teacher retention.</li><li>• Step 2. Review and discuss teacher retention strategies that may improve retention outcomes.</li><li>• Step 3. Draft a teacher retention plan that outlines the recruitment and retention of teachers.</li></ul>

## **Student Retention**

### **Step 1—Understand What Data Sources Inform Student Retention Considerations**

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of this step is to help participants learn about data sources that can be used to better understand student retention trends on a state or local level.

#### *Actions: A Data Bridge: Common Data Points for Consideration*

- The data bridge template asks participants to consider data points for both student enrollment and retention and asks participants to identify where enrollment and retention datapoints overlap.
- The data bridge template asks participants to consider student enrollment and retention data in the following categories:
  - Student/learner participation
  - Instruction and support services
  - Student perception and understanding
  - Partnerships
  - For each data source, participants reflect and note what considerations need to be reviewed to better understand student retention.

### **Step 2—Review and Discuss Student Retention Strategies that May Improve Retention Outcomes**

#### *Purpose*

- The purpose of this step is to reflect on student retention challenges and explore strategies to overcome these challenges.

#### *Actions: Retention Strategies*

- Review and discuss student retention strategies in a group setting to help participants identify potential ways to increase retention and persistence.
- Participants should be encouraged to consider the possibility that they may not have tried everything, may have tried things that need to be done differently, or may need more time to determine whether a strategy is effective.
- Participants should reflect on any patterns regarding retention challenges across their state and identify any notable outliers.
- Participants should be collaborative in terms of determining what retention strategies they have tried and what strategies have been effective.
- When discussing new strategies, participants should describe what that strategy might look like if implemented in their state. Participants should also discuss how they can support these strategies in their state.

### **Step 3—Consider What is Needed to Support Student Retention at the State and Local Levels**

#### *Purpose*

- The purpose of this step is to discuss ways state teams can support local providers in implementing retention strategies.

#### *Actions*

- Consider program design elements that include evidence-based and promising practice strategies. For example, what local level staffing needs are required to effectively implement the strategy?
- Consider what state-level partnerships can support these strategies and what networking opportunities are available to share practices and lessons learned.
- Reflect on the different types of data that can be used to provide guidance on follow-up outreach for separated and reportable participants.
- Consider how professional development opportunities can be used to train teachers on relevant strategies.

## **Teacher Retention**

### **Step 1—Understand Trends in Teacher Retention**

#### *Purpose*

- To understand and explore what data can be used to understand trends in teacher turnover.

#### *Actions: Who Teaches Adult Education? (Template)*

- The Who Teaches Adult Education template helps participants identify teacher characteristics that may impact teacher retention (e.g., degree achieved, certifications, professional development).
- Reflect and note the various local, state, and federal agencies that can provide information on each teacher characteristic.
- Discuss and note how each teacher characteristic may impact teacher retention and student performance.
- Reflect on and identify any key themes and highlight any outliers.

### **Step 2—Review and Discuss Teacher Retention Strategies That May Improve Retention Outcomes**

#### *Purpose*

- The purpose of this step is to reflect on student retention challenges and explore strategies to help retain current teachers.

*Actions: Retention strategies*

- Review and discuss teacher retention strategies in a group setting to help participants identify potential ways to retain current teachers.
- Participants should be encouraged to consider the possibility that they may not have tried everything, may have tried things that need to be done differently, or may need more time to determine whether a strategy is effective.
- Participants should reflect on how their state can support teachers and how they can help local programs attract promising new teachers. They should also reflect on what professional development opportunities currently exist and are needed to support teachers.
- Participants should reflect on how engaging current and former teachers may help inform potential teacher retention strategies and professional development.
- Participants should discuss the different types of teachers that may need mentoring (e.g., new teachers, teachers without certifications) and what data they can use to identify those teachers.

**Step 3—Draft a Teacher Retention Plan That Outlines the Recruitment and Retention of Teachers**

*Purpose*

- The purpose of this step is to begin drafting a teacher retention plan that outlines the recruitment and retention of teachers.

*Actions: Teacher recruitment and retention plan templates*

- The teacher retention plan templates will help participants develop a plan that is proactive, detailed, data-driven, and targeted in a way that addresses all program stakeholders.
- Participants should consider emerging trends in adult education, including the ebbs and flows of federal initiatives, geographic changes, and available resources.
- Participants should think through what is needed to increase qualified prospective candidates and what strategies will help retain high-quality instructors.
- Participants should make sure their teacher retention plan is rooted in data that can be used to inform decision making, target resources and incentives, and determine where additional support may be needed
- Participants should establish goals that address the needs of all stakeholders including teachers, students, and the community.





## Primary Resources

State adult education leadership and professional development specialists can access the primary resources developed for this training on [NRSWeb](#). The training resources include the following:

- Pre-session team activities:
  - Review of data to understand enrollment trends and areas for development.
  - Development of profiles for potential learners and staff involved in the recruitment journey.
- Training workbook (includes key terms)
- PowerPoint slide decks
- [Training agenda \(see next section\)](#)

When using or referring to the materials on the [NRSweb.org](#) website, please use the following citation:

Neloms, G., Causey, C., Brown, D., Rasmussen, J., Cronen, S., & Movit, M. (2023). *The journey continues: From recruitment to retention*. National Reporting System for Adult Education Regional Training. Produced for the Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Contract No. GS-00F-347CA.

# Training Agenda

The following is the training agenda for virtual pre-session activities and the 3-day, in-person training. The training may be replicated in whole or in part using this agenda as a guide to sequence presentation content and activities and to determine delivery methods.

## Pre-session Activity: Review Data and Identify Retention Challenges

2 weeks online; self-paced; Moodle

- Review the NRS introduction to the importance and impact of retention.
- Consider and gather your student and teacher retention data.
- Identify three challenges each for student and teacher retention.
- Share your insights from completing the pre-session activity with other state teams and the NRS facilitators.

## Day 1: Student Retention Challenges and Strategies

6 hours live; in-person

- Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda
- Icebreaker
- Student Retention: Why It Matters and What the Data Tell Us
  - Activity: A Data Bridge: Common Data Points for Consideration from Enrollment to Retention
  - Report Out
  - Resources: New and Updated
- Break
- Student Retention: Challenges and Strategies
  - Activity: Strategy Roundtables
  - Share Out and Key Takeaways
- Break
- State-Level Considerations to Support Student Retention
- Student Retention: Challenges and Strategies (continued)
  - Part 1: State Teams: What Impact Does Student Retention Have in My State?
- Break
  - Part 2: State-to-State Thought Partnering
- State Teams Report Out
- Wrap-Up of Day 1

## Day 2: Teacher Retention Challenges and Strategies

6 hours live; in-person

- Welcome, Recap of Day 1, and Overview of Day 2
- Teacher Retention: Why It Matters and What the Data Tell Us
- Presentation: State Teacher Retention Story
- Break
- Teacher Retention Strategies
- State Planning Time: Teacher Recruitment and Retention Plan, Part 1
- Break
- State Planning Time: Teacher Recruitment and Retention Plan, Part 1 (continued)
  - – Part 1: Volunteer Report Out
- State-to-State Feedback: Teacher Recruitment and Retention Plan, Part 2
- Break
- State Planning Time: Teacher Recruitment and Retention Plan, Part 3
- Gallery Posting and Walk
  - – Post to and Review Gallery
- Gallery Walk: Individual States Report Out, Part 1
- Wrap-Up of Day 3

## Day 3: State Role in Supporting Local Programs

4 hours live; in-person

- Welcome, Recap of Day 2, and Overview of Day 3
- Gallery Walk: Individual States Report Out, Part 2
- Break
- Large Group Discussion: State Role to Support Local Providers
- Using Data to Inform Retention Strategy and Monitor Progress
- Break
- Next Steps and Considerations
  - Activity: State Teams Rapid Response
- Next Steps and Considerations
- Wrap-Up of Day 3