Channeling Change With Data-Informed Decision Making
Considering Options for Program Accountability

| June 11–13 | June 25–27 | July 9–11 |
| New Orleans, LA | Phoenix, AZ | Crystal City, VA |

Channeling Change With Data-Informed Decision Making

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 2024, 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: New Orleans, Louisiana; Phoenix, Arizona; and Crystal City, Virginia. The NRS Support Project developed this training in response to new alternative placement options that provide states with flexibility in how they assess and place learners into adult education programs. The training guided states in considering different approaches for exploring and identifying alternative placement options.

Training Objectives

- Analyze data to evaluate options for implementing alternative placement in programs designed to result in measurable skill gains (MSGs) other than pre- and posttest approaches.

- Review steps for decision making that may help inform approaches to alternative educational placement and performance accountability.

- Consider and explore the potential significance and challenges of comprehensive strategies for program implementation.

Training Focus

NRS facilitators presented considerations for exploring different approaches to alternative placement through data and alignment with the three *P*'s: people, programs, and policy. The training featured group discussions on alternative placement ideas and strategies and provided opportunities for states to learn and share how they would tailor alternative placement to meet the unique needs of their learners.

States developed draft decision-making models to identify their state's potential options, outcomes, and impacts related to alternative placement. The major products of the training were the following:
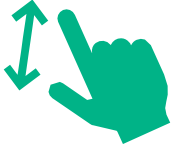
- Conceptualizing the whys: Using the *Conceptualize the Whys* handout, state teams examined current state data, existing processes, and resources to consider when determining if alternative placement was right for their adult education in part or all of their state.

- Decision-making model: States used decision-making tools to identify potential options for alternative placement. The two decision-making tools used during the training were a decision tree model and a root cause analysis using the 5 Whys approach.

- Impact and action: Using the Action Brainstorm template, training participants recorded and explored their next action regarding their decision on alterative placement.

Format

NRS Support Project facilitators delivered three in-person training events over several weeks. The in-person training events included two parts: (a) an online presession and (b) a 3-day in-person training session (totaling 16 hours). As part of the presession, 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 alternative placement approaches and exchange feedback.

Refer to the training agenda for an overview of the key training activities and their sequence.

How to Customize This Training

Audience	NRS facilitators designed this training for state adult education leadership. Trainers at the state and local levels can customize all or parts of this training by tailoring it to the following stakeholders interested in considering and exploring alternative placement: • local adult education providers, • partner organizations, and • adult learners. Trainers also can bring stakeholders together to discuss alternative placement in their state, review approaches and strategies, develop decision-making models, and consider action steps.

Format	Trainers can deliver this training and its components entirely online, in person, or through a blended approach. The delivery formats should be supportive of data gathering, analysis, and teamwork. Many of the activities can be enhanced by participant collaboration and thought partnership.

Guiding Framework and Approach	NRS facilitators organized the training around discussions and activities that helped states better understand approaches to alternative placement. 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. • Step 1: Consider and conceptualize the whys by exploring the reasons a state may pursue alternative placement. • Step 2: Develop a decision-making model to identify the potential options, outcomes, and impact of alternative placement. • Step 3: Analyze information and determine the options for your state. • Step 4: Take action by determining next steps.

Step 1: Conceptualize the Whys by Considering the Reasons for Pursuing Alternative Placement

Purpose

The purpose of this step is to review and consider the reasons participants may or may not pursue alternative placement.

Action: Conceptualize the Whys

- The *Conceptualize the Whys* handout asks participants to consider their reasons for change. Specifically, the handout asks participants to consider the following when thinking about alternative placement:
  - Reasons for making or not making a change
  - Current data for the state
  - Current and projected teacher and student population
  - Current or projected programs
  - Existing or potential mandates (e.g., agency, partners, legislation)
  - Existing or potential processes and resources

Step 2: Develop a Decision-Making Model to Identify Alternative Placement's Potential Options, Outcomes, and Impact

Purpose

- The purpose of this step is to develop a decision-making process or model to identify possible outcomes or paths regarding alternative placement.

Action: Develop a Decision-Making Model

- Select a decision-making process and related model for your alternative placement consideration, topic, or issue. This training used two: a decision tree and root cause analysis (5 Whys process).
- To inform the model, draw from NRS and non-NRS data, which may include MSGs, assessment types, and participant demographics.
- On a flipchart, plot the responses to one of the selected decision-making models.
- Once this model is complete, do the following:
  - If a decision tree model was initially chosen, take a node from that decision tree and conduct a root cause analysis on that node.
  - If a root cause analysis was initially chosen, take one of the whys and adapt it to develop a decision tree.
- After finishing a decision-making model, consider potential options, outcomes and impacts. As part of your consideration, include (a) the parts of the analysis outside your control and (b) the data that inform each step.

Step 3: Analyze and Determine Your State's Options

Purpose

- The purpose of this step is to determine whether you should move forward with alternative placement, maintain the status quo, and/or seek additional information to inform your decision.

Action: Reflect on Your Options and Make a Decision

- Reflect on your decision-making model.
- Consider which key pieces of state data may inform your final decision.
- Identify which key pieces of data are missing or needed.
- Make a final decision.
- If too many data are missing or if additional approval or vetting by other stakeholders is needed to make a final decision, then consider two recommendations that you would make to inform your final decision.

Step 4: Take Action by Determining Next Steps

Purpose

- The purpose of this step is to determine what action you will take next regarding your decision.

Action: Determine Next Steps

- Based on the results of the decision-making model, consider what action step may be taken next.
- Reflect on why this is the right action step to take. Consider the purpose, intended impact, results, or goals behind this action.
- Reflect on who would play the primary role in leading this action.
- Consider the anticipated start and completion timeline for the action.
- Consider what resources are needed for this action to take place.

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:
	
	● Presession team activities:
	    – Review the presession overview
	    – Gather data for decision making
	    – Describe NRS flexibility in your own words
	    – Select areas of focus for the training
	● Training workbook
	● 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., Rasmussen, J., Cronen, S., Brown, D., & Dominguez, A. (2024). *Channeling change with data-informed decision making: Considering options for program accountability*. 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 presession 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 sequencing presentation content and activities and determining delivery methods.

Presession activity objectives
2 weeks online; self-paced; Moodle
- Review the NRS presession overview on channeling change with data-informed decision making.   - Gather the data needed for decision making.   - Describe NRS flexibility in your own words.   - Select areas of focus for the training.

Day 1
6 hours live; in person
- Welcome, introductions, and agenda   - Icebreaker   - The data landscape   - Presentation of national data relevant to the topic   - Channeling change: A guiding framework   - Review framework steps   - Break   - Activity: Step 1: Consider and conceptualize   - Break   - Channeling change: Options and alternatives   - Overview of pre- and posttest and alternative assessments   - Activity: Comparative analysis/state-to-state exchange   - Break   - Activity: Comparative analysis/state-to-state exchange (continued)   - Reconvene for share out   - Is change right for you? Decision-making tools (overview)   - Root cause analysis using the 5 Whys   - Decision tree   - Wrap up Day 1 and preview Day 2

Day 2
6 hours live; in person

- Welcome back; recap of Day 1; overview of Day 2
- State teams: Develop your decision-making model
  - Part 1: States pick one model and their topic, then develop model/content to answer questions/inform decision on their topic
- Break
- State teams: Develop your decision-making model (continued)
  - Part 2: States take an element from their primary model and use it for the second model
  - Wrap-up activity with reflections
- State-to-state exchange: Share your draft model
- Break
- Debrief developing the decision-making model
- Finalize decision model and hang in gallery
- Wrap up Day 2 and preview Day 3

Day 3
4 hours live; in person

- Welcome; recap of Day 2; overview of Day 3
- Gallery Walk, Part 1
- Gallery Walk, Part 2
- Impact and action
- Wrap up Day 3