California Department of Education
Adult Education Office

NRS Webinar Questions
April 19, 2012

Employment Cohorts

1. **Are we to assume that all students that are unemployed upon entry are in the cohort of "Get a Job"?**

   Yes—learners who are unemployed at entry automatically qualify for the Entered Employment cohort upon their exit from the program.

2. **How does a student's outcome of getting a job get counted if they have not left the program?**

   It won't—only students who left program will be included in these follow-up cohorts.

3. **What about an ESL Student who meets all criteria for a particular cohort, but whose assigned goal is to improve English skills? Will that student still be placed in the core performance cohort anyway?**

   Students' assigned primary and secondary goals will no longer be used as a way to identify students for the WIA, Title II Core Follow-Up Measures.

   The student described in question #3 will be placed in the core performance cohort(s) for which he/she meets criteria upon exit from the program.

   For example, if a student is not employed at entry into program and exits the program during the program year, that student will automatically qualify for the entered employment cohort irrespective of the primary or secondary goal selected by the student.

4. **What are the elements to be matched in the employment data match since we are not collecting social security numbers?**

   The CDE data match only applies to learners in the Secondary Credential cohort for obtaining a GED® certificate, not to learners in the employment or the postsecondary cohorts. Learners in the Secondary Credential cohort for obtaining a High School Diploma will be verified by (a) TOPSpro Update record field 9 "Earned high school diploma" and

(b) local school district certified list of high school graduates.

The employment and the postsecondary outcome measures will be collected using the survey method.

5. **Slide 7: Just to confirm, are there two ways to qualify for the Retained Employment cohort? Do we need to follow up on students who are not employed but in labor force upon enrollment, but eventually employed at the end of the quarter?**

   Yes—there are two different ways to meet the requirements for the Retained Employment cohort:
   1) Learners who are unemployed at entry, but who then get a job while still in program and then exit program or who are employed by the first quarter after exit quarter. 2) Learners who are employed at time of entry and exit program during the program year.

Secondary Cohort

6. **Doesn't TOPSpro automatically assign the NRS level based on the student's pretest score?**

   Yes. All learners are placed in the NRS Federal table Educational Functioning Levels according to their pretest score.

   For the secondary credential cohort please refer to slides 10-12 of the CDE Webinar. The secondary credential cohort includes learners:
   - who take all five GED® tests, or
   - are in enrolled in an adult high school instructional program (for high school diploma) and place into the Adult Secondary Education (ASE) High level, either by enrolling with enough credits for 11th or 12th grade level, or by entry EFL of high ASE (minimum pretest score of 246). Indicate placement into this cohort by marking ASE High on Entry Record field 18.
   - All learners must exit during the program year.

7. **Can agencies record follow-up outcomes for the enter college or training cohort by obtaining a copy of college/university or training registration form?**

   Determination of outcome attained by learners in the entered postsecondary cohort will be done through survey of [selected] learners in that cohort. Agencies may use all reasonable methods to verify accuracy of survey results.

8. **For the data match, does the GED ID starts with the letter E and is then followed by 9 numbers?**

   Yes, this is GED ID number that agencies should input in TOPSPro to meet the GED data match.

9. **Do agencies need to manually input GED scores on the Update Record? What about the CAHSEE exams? Do we need to input the CAHSEE scores if we have them available?**

   To record GED attainment, agencies only need to mark "Passed GED" on field 9 of the Update Record. Reporting GED subsections (on Update field 14) high school credits (field 15) and CAHSEE scores (field 15) are strictly optional.

10. **Slide 12: How is the data about GED testing going to be carried from year to year? Will it be one of the TOPS Enterprise functions?**

    GED outcomes will be determined annually by the CDE GED match.

11. **When will the CDE GED data match be accomplished? After our final data submission on August 15th? What happens if a discrepancy is discovered?**

    The CDE GED data match is typically conducted each fall, after the End of Year data submission, as mentioned. The official deadline is August 15, but generally this is not finalized until September 15—so it is usually sometime in October or early November that the GED data match is completed.

    If the data match is able to identify GEDs earned by students that the agency did not record, it will credit the GED to the student; likewise, if the data match cannot verify one that the agency did record, it will not credit that outcome. In order to facilitate the GED data match process agencies are advised to enter the GED ID number in TOPSpro.

Post-Secondary Cohort

12. **May a learner who exits a transition class designed for community college/training be counted as attaining the entered postsecondary**

outcome if the program to which he transfers is within an adult school?

Yes, assuming the learner exited a transition class meeting the NRS definition for such classes and entered a program within an adult school that meets the definition of a postsecondary program commensurate with postsecondary programs in other settings, such as the community college.

13. **Will it be mandatory for agencies to provide designated Transition classes?**

    No, these classes are provided at agency discretion.

14. **Can an ESL class be designated as a transition class?**

A transition class for NRS reporting purposes is defined as one appropriate for equipping a student to transition to a community college, apprenticeship program, or technical training program, and is designed for students who will actually be entering a community college, apprenticeship program or a technical training program. If an ESL class meets that definition, then it could be designated as a transition class.

15. **Can an ESL class in a non-credit community college program be designated as a transition course?**

See answer for question #14. The class design must meet the criteria for supporting successful transition into a community college, apprenticeship program, or technical training program.

Survey Sampling

16. **If you cannot contact a student chosen as a part of the sample, will the student be replaced by another choice?**

    No. A precondition for implementing survey sampling is that all participants must be generated randomly. So the randomly created list that an agency first obtains when generating the Core Performance report must serve as that agency's "official list" for follow-up reporting purposes and cannot be generated multiple times.

17. **Will the percentage of program sampling be the same for each agency or different? What is the rationale for making it different for each agency?**

The NRS has provided specific sampling guidelines that states must follow. CDE is following the Sample Size chart provided by the NRS to determine the sample size based on the total number of students in the statewide cohort for each outcome measure. The size for each cohort will be estimated from prior years' data.

To ensure fair, equal participation across all agencies the NRS has also provided guidelines to compute local agency estimates. The sample number of students for each outcome measure that an agency will follow-up will be proportional to the number the agency contributed to the total cohort. CDE will follow the steps below as outlined in the NRS guidelines:

- Estimate the total size of each cohort within the state
- Determine the sample size for each cohort
- Estimate the proportion of students in each cohort in each local agency
- Draw a random sample for each agency

Let's hypothetically assume that 10,000 students qualified for a statewide cohort for an outcome measure. Let's also assume an agency has 500 learners eligible for this cohort—so the agency contributes 5% of the overall statewide total. If the number of students the state must survey in the sample is 1,000 then the agency will survey 5% of 1000 i.e. 50 students.

Table 7 Teacher Qualifications

18. If the teacher information will accept multiple credentials, then the number on the chart will not really be the number of staff members that you have, it will be the number of credentials held, right?

The upper portion of Table 7 on slide 34 indicates the number of part-time and full-time personnel (teachers) that an agency has, broken out by varying years of experience. A total number of teachers could be calculated from that portion of the table.
The lower portion of Table 7 reflects the total number of credentials of a given type held (or not reported) by the teachers, and since some teachers may hold multiple credentials, the total number of credentials may not match the actual number of teachers.

19. On Table 7 under certifications, there needs to be a field that relates to community college requirements for teaching, such as a MA in TESOL or BA plus TESOL certification, community college credential, or California secondary teaching credential.

Similar to the four follow-up cohorts, the NRS has provided a specific format for reporting Table 7 outcomes that all states are required to use. States are required to report the outcomes specified by the NRS.

Addressing this question more specifically, many examples such as those you provide correspond to the listed NRS outcomes. TOPS Enterprise will include additional teacher qualification selections so that there are options that pertain to all of the different provider entities included in WIA Title II.

20. **For Table 7, are we now only listing teachers - no other personnel such as clerical and administrators?**

    Much of the data that has always been included in Table 7 will remain included under these new guidelines—the teacher credential and experience information is in addition to what has been collected previously, not in place of it.

21. **What if a teacher attained the Voc Ed credential? Does this count for federal reporting? Where do we record it in our data?**

    This credential is not included in the NRS guidelines, so for federal reporting purposes, this credential does not "count." Each state only reports achievements specified in the NRS guidelines.

22. **WIA-funded colleges in California use minimum qualifications rather than certification to determine teacher eligibility. Teaching in the High School Diploma program with a Master's in math, for example is sufficient and does not necessarily require "certification." Why wasn't non-credit** mentioned during the teleconference at all?

    As explained in the response to question #19, the NRS has provided a specific format for reporting Table 7 outcomes that all states are required to use.

Planning for Changes

23. **Just to confirm: there are no changes to the definition of what constitutes "leaving the program," right?**

    Correct. The NRS has retained the same policy regarding exiting program.

24. **Will CASAS be working with third party attendance programs so that they can re-program their systems and modify the registration forms that agencies use?**

CASAS has been working with third party attendance vendors to keep them informed of these new federal changes. CASAS sent a memo in the fall to alert them of these new changes, and then sent them a follow up notice this spring with more detailed specifications.

If your agency uses a system from a large vendor such as Schoolhouse or ASAP, you can be assured that they have been informed of these changes. If you use a smaller vendor, and/or use system your agency developed internally, please e-mail capm@casas.org so we can ensure they receive this same information.

25. **Based on the new changes to the NRS for the upcoming school year, are we going to need new Entry and Update Record forms?**

    Though most fields on these forms will remain the same, CASAS is developing modified Entry and Update Records to reflect these new changes. The new forms will be available at the start of the 2012-13 Program Year.

26. **Our agency uses our own registration forms to document learner enrollment instead of the Entry and Update Records. Are there any other changes we should be aware of while revising our own form?**

    If an agency uses its own registration form, yes—you should modify the form to ensure it meets the NRS changes. This is an issue we will address in detail during the Q & A sessions, and all TOPSpro meetings over the next month will also address this issue.

27. **Now that students will be assigned cohorts, will the new TOPS forms still include student attainable goals?**

    Yes, Entry Record field #12 will continue to record a learner's primary and secondary goals. These goals will no longer affect accountability reporting, but agencies should still establish goals with each learner upon enrollment.

28. **Would you consider having a session/panel discussion for agencies to brainstorm how they will fund these strategies?**

    CDE is open to the idea of a session/panel discussion for agencies regarding strategies to implement the NRS changes. At this time, there is no incentive funding or additional funding dedicated to supporting the task of follow-up for attainment of outcomes.

In the meantime, CASAS is hosting online Q & A discussions about this topic every Monday morning from April 30, 2012 to June 4, 2012, and will host further online opportunities in the summer and fall. There will also be opportunities to discuss this topic at your regional TOPSpro and WIA II network meetings, as well as additional discussions at the CASAS Summer Institute.

29. Mondays at 11:00 is not a good time for my agency to attend Q and A sessions. Many coordinators teach class, for example, and many support staff only work in the afternoon.

CASAS is adding two sets Q & A sessions to Wednesday afternoon, with back to back meetings at 1 pm and 2 pm on May 23 and May 30. Check the CASAS Web site for the modified schedule.

General Questions

30. In jail education programs our students often leave without notice and reenter back into the community. Contact with ex-offenders is difficult if not impossible. Are there any provisions that will take into account the unique nature of jail programs and the students they serve?

Jail programs, may record students as “Not employed/not seeking work”—which ensures that they are not included in either employment cohort.

For incarcerated students who may meet the criteria for either of the other two cohorts, coordination with parole offices may be an option to determine the status of exited students who were formerly incarcerated.

31. Will we be able to access EDD's files with signed student waivers?

At this time CDE has no agreement with the Employment Development Department (EDD) with respect to access of EDD’s employment files. Local arrangements that agencies may already have or choose to pursue are within the discretion of the agencies.

32. If a student does not meet the criteria for placement into any of the cohorts for outcome measures, will their CASAS tests and EL Civics still produce payment points?

Yes. The cohort designations per NRS are a separate issue from the earning of payment points for student gains, which is a part of the state policy for administering subgrantee awards.