

Recording Primary and Secondary goals

All funded agencies should work with students at intake and determine their reasons for enrolling in adult education and ensure each student's selected class and program supports these objectives moving forward. Providers are also encouraged to continue to support students throughout the process, check in with each student regularly to verify progress, and ensure assigned instruction is contributing to student goals.

The available goals in TE are listed below, with the official definition from the 2026-27 Data Dictionary, and some tips for when that goal may be appropriate. There are also some typical student enrollment examples with some suggestions for selecting goals that match student needs, and some guidance for distinguishing primary goal from secondary goal.

Agencies can determine locally how to assign goals and differentiate primary goal from secondary. ***The CDE recommends using primary goal for short-term accomplishments that may be attained within the program year, and secondary goal for long term objectives.***

Goal		Definition and Suggestions
Improve Basic Skills	=	Improve overall basic literacy skills. Not “required” but generally this should be either the primary or secondary goal for ABE enrollees.
Improve English Skills	=	Improve English literacy skills (speaking, listening or writing) to enable better communication with others. Not “required” but generally this should be either the primary or secondary goal for ESL enrollees.
High School Diploma / GED	=	Achieve sufficient skills and credit hours to earn a state accredited secondary diploma or pass the GED examination. - Not “required” but generally this should be the primary goal for HSE and HS diploma enrollees. - This may also be a long term (secondary) goal for ABE and ESL learners.
Get a Job	=	Obtain full or part-time paid employment. - Mark whenever this is part of the student's short- or long-term planning. - Can distinguish short term vs long term priorities by assigning goal as either Primary or Secondary.

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Retain Job	=	Upgrade skills to enable retention of current job or increase opportunities for promotion. • Mark this goal if the student is content with employer or career but wants to advance. Select if student needs basic skills or workplace skills for a promotion. • Distinguish this goal from “Get Better Job” based on student’s satisfaction with current job.
Get a Better Job	=	Upgrade skills to increase opportunities for promotion or get a new job with more pay or responsibility. • Select if student needs basic skills or workplace skills for a promotion. • Distinguish this goal from “Retain Job” based on student’s satisfaction with current job. • Mark this goal if the student clearly wants to change employer or career.
Enter College or Training	=	Achieve skills to enable enrollment in a postsecondary education program or job training program. • This goal applies to “post-secondary” – that is, to both enrollment in academic colleges and in certificated workforce training. • Select this goal whenever a student is referred to adult education from a college or in a dual enrollment program such as AB 554. • Select when a student is referred from the local WIOA workforce partner or AJCC.
Work-Based Project	=	Obtain the skills needed to complete a project student activity (a course of 12-30 hours duration designed to teach specific workplace skills). • This goal was important for WIA reporting but is no longer used for WIOA (which replaced WIA at the federal level in 2016). • this goal for less intensive non-certificated training or for workforce preparation. • Use this goal informally for when a student enrolls in a short-term class required for specific enrollment, such as Title I workforce training, IET, or EL Healthcare Pathways..
Family Goal	=	Meet a defined family goal related to instruction with a clearly definable outcome (such as increased involvement in children’s education, reading more to child, or similar goal.) • Mark this for students enrolled in Special Programs = Family Literacy. • This goal is useful to assign when any of the results under “Family/Community” apply to the student.

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U.S. Citizenship	=	Obtain skills to pass U.S. citizenship test. • Mark this for students enrolled in EL Civics Citizenship Preparation.
Military	=	Obtain requirements for entry into military service. • Mark this when student has specific plans to enlist in the U.S military or National Guard. • This may also apply when a student is referred to adult education to improve literacy skills needed to qualify for enlistment.
Personal Goal	=	Meet a defined personal goal related to a clearly definable outcome (such as pass a driver's test or open a checking account). • Mark when a student is clear about their priorities but selects something unrelated to any of the listed goals. • Distinguish from "Other" by determining whether the topic relates specifically to instruction, or to a personal, family, or community activity. • Select <i>Personal Goal</i> when the issue relates to a (personal) family or community activity.
None	=	No secondary reason for enrollment. • All enrollees should select at least one Primary Goal and should have a Secondary Goal in most cases. • Mark "<i>None</i>" only when student does not give a secondary reason after prompting for this information (<i>that is if the student "refuses" to answer.</i>)
Other	=	Any other goal related to instruction with a clearly definable outcome. • Mark when a student is clear about their priorities but selects something unrelated to any of the goals listed. • Distinguish from "Personal Goal" by determining whether the topic relates specifically to instruction, or to a personal family or community activity. • Select <i>Other</i> when the (unlisted) issue relates to the learner's assigned instruction.

Goal Setting Examples

Examples for Employed Students:

1. Student has a good job and is looking to improve English conversation to be more employable and promotable.
Primary: English skills Secondary: Retain Job
2. Student gets a promotion and needs to pass a written exam to earn it.
Primary: Retain Job Secondary: English Skills
3. Student is employed but wants a different job with better work hours.
Primary: Get a Better Job Secondary: English Skills

Examples for Unemployed Students:

4. Student is unemployed but needs to improve English in order to be employable in preferred career.
Primary: English skills Secondary: Get Job
5. Student needs to improve math skills in order to qualify for enrollment in workforce training.
Primary: Basic Skills Secondary: Get Job
6. Student is enrolled in workforce training but also enrolled in ABE math class to ensure success.
Primary: Get Job Secondary: Basic Skills
7. Student enrolls in ESL class in order to qualify for an Associate's Degree program in the field they studied in their home country.
Primary: English Skills Secondary: Enter College or Training

Family Literacy Examples

8. ESL Student is enrolled in "Parents Supporting K12 Success" class that supports child's K-12 education.
Primary: English Skills Secondary: Family goal
9. Student is enrolled in "Parents Supporting K12 Success" class to increase involvement in child's school activities. S/he is not enrolled in any other program.
Primary: Family goal Secondary: Basic Skills
10. Student enrolls in ESL class to "keep up" with their spouse and children who all have better English skills.
Primary: English Skills Secondary: Family goal

Personal Goal Examples

11. Student enrolls in ABE math to improve skills in budgeting and money management.

Primary: Other goal

Secondary: Basic Skills

12. Student enrolls in ESL class to increase involvement in social activities at the local church.

Primary: English Skills Secondary: Personal goal

13. Student enrolls in ESL class to improve English conversation skills in order to maintain involvement in Older Adults classes.

Primary: Other goal

Secondary: English Skills