

**New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce
Development**

Workforce Readiness & Literacy

***WIA Title II
Goal Setting Policy and Procedures***



New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Adult Basic Skills/English as a Second Language

WIA Title II Goal-Setting Policy and Procedures

Introduction

Students in adult basic education, GED or English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes can often articulate a reason for enrollment such as learn to speak English better, get a GED, read with their children or get a better job. What they lack though, is a timeline with measurable, shorter-term outcomes that are realistic, achievable and are stepping stones toward the larger stated goal or goals.

Language acquisition is a lengthy process for adult students. It is unrealistic, for example, for a recent immigrant to learn perfect English in a six-month or one-year program. The instructors and counselors need to create individual learning plans that are in the “comfort zone” for students, motivate students to make learning a pursuit both inside and outside the classroom, and give students the tools to succeed.

For WIA Title II program participants, realistic and achievable goals will be measured and reported under the U.S. Department of Education’s National Reporting System (NRS). NRS requires the designation of primary and secondary goals for each student. The number one core outcome measure is educational gain as defined by advancing in educational functioning level measured by a standardized assessment. Other core follow-up measures include entered employment, retained employment, obtained a GED, and entered post-secondary education or training.

Goal Setting Procedure

Prior to entering an Adult Basic Education, GED or ESL program, the student should be assessed using a standardized testing instrument. The preferred instrument for Adult Basic Education students is the TABE 9&10 assessment and for ESL the BEST Plus assessment. The results from these tests together with informal assessment tools and student articulated goals should guide the instructor and counselor in developing realistic and achievable goals for a defined period of instruction. The goals should be incorporated into the individual learning plan and reviewed by the student, instructor or counselor within the first 12 hours of student’s entering the program.

Follow-up measures are required as part of goal setting. The distinction to be made is whether the goal represents a students’ specific reason for entering a program, or whether the goal is part of a future plan that is not necessarily related to the student’s enrollment. The NRS requires collection of student goals—both a main and a secondary reason—for

attending the program. The designated goals are used to compute the proportion of students who achieve the following measures. Listed below is a roster of learner's reasons for attending the class or program, as defined in the following categories:

- **Obtain a Job**—Obtain full- or part-time paid employment.
- **Retain Current Job**—Upgrade skills to enable retention of current job.
- **Earn a Secondary School Diploma or Achieve a GED Certificate**—Achieve sufficient skills and credit hours to earn a State-accredited secondary diploma or pass GED tests.
- **Enter Postsecondary Education or Job Training**—Achieve skills to enable enrollment in a postsecondary education program or job training program.
- **Improve Basic Literacy Skills**—Improve overall basic literacy skills.
- **Improve English Language Skills**—Improve overall skills in the English language (e.g., speaking, reading, and writing).
- **Obtain Citizenship Skills**—Obtain skills to pass the U.S. citizenship test.
- **Achieve Work-Based Project Learner Goals**—Obtain the skills needed to complete a project learner activity (i.e., a course of 12–30 hours duration designed to teach specific workplace skills).
- **Other Personal Goals**—Any other goal related to instruction with a clearly definable outcome, such as passing a driver's test or improving reading ability.

Applicable Population: All learners.

Federal Reporting: Total number of learners for each type of goal is reported. For reporting the employment, postsecondary education or training, and credential attainment measures, the number of learners in each category is used as the denominator when calculating the percentages of goal achievement.

Additional Guidance on Goal Setting

Within the NRS framework, *all students* are assumed to have at least one goal: development of literacy skills. That is, all students are assumed to be in the program to improve their literacy skills, and thus have the default goal of either improving literacy skills or improving English language skills. This assumed goal is the reason that all students are counted in the educational gain measure. Students often have other goals, but only four are directly relevant to NRS accountability requirements: obtaining employment, retaining employment, achieving a GED or high school credential, and entering postsecondary education. Note that the default goal of educational gain remains, regardless of whether the student designates any of the additional goals.