Texas Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Guide

For Program Year 2016–2017

I. Notice of Potential Inaccuracies Due to Pending Program Information

Pending Final WIOA Regulations

The following information found in this guide is currently pending final regulations from the Department of Education related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This information has been updated as of June 13, 2016.

1. NRS Core Outcome Measures for Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) (p. 17)
2. NRS Core Outcome Measures: Follow-Up Measures (p. 18)
3. Appendix B: Demographic and Status Measure Definitions
4. Appendix H: Collecting and Reporting Cohort-Designated Core Outcome Measures
5. Appendix I: Required Data Elements for Enrollment Forms
6. Amount Permissible for Progress Testing Too Early

Pending Final Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) Contracts, Procedures, and Rules

All references to *2014 GED®* throughout the Texas Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Guide (Assessment Guide) have been updated to "Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency" (TxCHSE). Two tests, in addition to the current 2014 GED®*,* have been approved for use in the state of Texas for achievement of high school equivalency: The Texas Assessing Secondary Achievement (TASC™) and the HiSET®. Final contracts and procedures for use of these tests have not yet been approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) at the time of publication of the Assessment Guide.

II. Contact Information

Texas Workforce Commission

E-mail

The Texas Workforce Commission(TWC) Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program:

- teams.technicalassistance@twc.state.tx.us (for questions related to data collection and TEAMS)
- adulteducation@twc.state.tx.us (all other Assessment Guide clarifications).

Phone

Local: 512-463-0540
Toll-free: 1-855-594-0012

Texas Professional Development Center

Texas Research-based Adult Instruction Network Professional Development Consortium (TRAIN PD) at the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning at Texas A&M University.

E-mail
TrainPD@tamu.edu

Phone
Toll-free: 1-800-441-7323
See **Appendix A** for a glossary of terms relevant to this document.

III. Other Resources

In addition to the Assessment Guide, programs should refer to the following other resources:

TEAMS Guide

The guide for using the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) is not currently published, but can be accessed by contacting your provider support specialist.

Program Crosswalks

Program crosswalks are available for many major grant implementation topics and were developed to:

- assist programs in easily navigating the contractual grant requirements;
- supply additional resources to better understand how to interpret and define those requirements; and
- provide an overview of TWC policy relating to the requirements.

To access the program crosswalks, please contact your provider support specialist.

National Reporting System

The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) is an outcome-based reporting system for the state-administered, federally funded adult education program.

The NRS website contains resources for better understanding the accountability system of the federally administered AEL program and the current guidance for measuring outcomes.

Website: http://www.nrsweb.org/

IV. Introduction to the 2016 AEL Assessment Guide

Whom Is the Guide Designed for?

This Assessment Guide must be used by TWC AEL grant recipients and their service providers funded under TWC request for proposals (RFP) number 320-14-10. Other TWC grantees funded under other RFPs, such as Accelerate Texas and Texas Adult Completion and Skills Initiative projects, may be directed to use all or portions of the Assessment Guide to direct assessment and testing processes. These grantees may also be required to use additional reporting guidance to meet the grant reporting requirements. This additional reporting guidance will be provided to these grantees either within the RFP, or upon project implementation.

What Is the Guide?

The 2016 Texas Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Guide (Assessment Guide) is based on the federal manual "Implementation Guidelines: Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education" (February 2016), as well as TWC AEL and Workforce Development (WD) Letters where noted.

The guidance below is a summary of the key aspects of the federal manual, which is available at: www.nrsweb.org. AEL and WD Letters are available at: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/workforce-policy-guidance.

Significant Changes Found in the 2016 AEL Assessment Guide

AEL staff should become familiar with the entire Assessment Guide and its appendices.

Table 1 describes clarifications made to certain sections of the Assessment Guide, and

Table 2 reflects notable changes in state assessment guidance.

Table 1: Clarifications Found in the PY'16–'17 Assessment Guide

CURRENT GUIDANCE Language clarification in 2016 Assessment Guide	EXPIRED GUIDANCE Comparative language from the previous Assessment Policy that is no longer compliant	PY'16-'17 Assessment Guide Page Number
Data must be entered monthly and *validated by the 20th of each month for data through the end of the previous month, unless it is the end of the quarter. See Table 3 for due dates.* Example: Data through July 31 must be validated by August 20.	Programs are required to keep data entry current. Programs must enter data at least monthly and complete a data sign-off quarterly.	p. 13
Programs must enter all students with a baseline test into TEAMS, regardless of number of contact hours.	Students with fewer than 12 hours will be counted on state tables/reports.	p. 17

CURRENT GUIDANCE **Language clarification** **in 2016 Assessment Guide**	**EXPIRED GUIDANCE** **Comparative language from the previous Assessment Policy that is no longer compliant**	**PY'16-'17 Assessment Guide Page Number**
All state-approved standardized tests must be put into TEAMS. *TABE®, GAIN®, BEST Plus, BEST Literacy,* and *TABE® CLAS-E* tests should not be used for "instructional purposes" (meaning given and not logged as an official test). There are no exceptions to this rule.	In addition to using required standardized tests for NRS reporting and accountability, programs use tests for instructional purposes. Programs are encouraged to *supplement* standardized tests with instructional-based, portfolio-based, and/or teacher-made tests.	p. 25
Programs must include all elements in the Assessment Guide Appendix I in their intake forms.	Programs must use the standard Student Enrollment Form available on the TWC website at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/adultlit/adult-basic-education.html. This form includes all the data elements and categories necessary for TEAMS data entry and for NRS reporting.	p. 36
All staff with access to TEAMS must have TEAMS training that is relevant to their job duties.	Programs are responsible for providing basic TEAMS and data collection training for all staff.	pp. 36, 37
All teachers are required to have access to TEAMS or regular and direct access to TEAMS data.	Program directors may assign "read-only" access to staff and teachers.	p. 36

Table 2: Changes found in the PY'15-'16 Assessment Guide

CURRENT GUIDANCE **NEW REQUIREMENTS** **in the 2016 Assessment Guide**	**EXPIRED GUIDANCE** **Comparative language from the previous Assessment Policy that is no longer compliant**	**PY'15-'16 Assessment Guide Page Number**
All students must be pre-tested prior to obtaining direct contact hours.	All students must be pre-tested using a state-approved standardized test at intake/orientation or within 12 hours of attendance; these 12 hours may be orientation hours, direct contact hours, or a combination of the two.	p. 14

CURRENT GUIDANCE **NEW REQUIREMENTS** **in the 2016 Assessment Guide**	**EXPIRED GUIDANCE** **Comparative language from the previous Assessment Policy that is no longer compliant**	**PY'15-'16 Assessment Guide Page Number**
Programs must administer all subject areas of the *TABE*®, *GAIN*® *BEST Literacy*, *BEST Plus*, or *TABE*® CLAS-E (as applicable for the population and test the program has adopted). Exceptions to this rule are: I. If a student is a referral from a college with a documented Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) score. In this circumstance, programs only need to give the content area for which the student has placed into the BASE Level on the TSIA (Levels 1-4). II. If a student has passed a section(s) of the TxCHSE exam, he or she is not required to receive a baseline test in the competencies he or she has passed. III. There is a documented reason for not providing a pre-test in one of the domains based on student goals and objectives; in this case, some form of test must be provided in the domains not tested to ensure instruction meets student needs. For example, student challenges with math, particularly complex math, often stem from poor reading skills. Programs must provide some type of test in the alternate domain to best support student success.	Programs may not decide program-wide to test in one subject or skill area. All subject areas of the *TABE*® and *GAIN*® test must be administered at pre-testing. For English language learner (ELL) students, all skill areas—reading, writing, speaking and listening—must be administered at pre-testing through the use of the *BEST Literacy*, *BEST Plus*, and/or *TABE*® CLAS-E. The only exception to the rule of administering all subject or skill areas with the approved test instrument group is if an individual student specifically requests to study one area as determined through the student goal-setting process.	pp. 17, 33

CURRENT GUIDANCE NEW REQUIREMENTS in the 2016 Assessment Guide	EXPIRED GUIDANCE Comparative language from the previous Assessment Policy that is no longer compliant	PY'15-'16 Assessment Guide Page Number
If a student has not had contact hours for more than 90 days, programs must provide some type of assessment, formal or informal, to determine if the student's baseline test is still valid.	It is recommended, but not required, that test scores older than six months not be rolled over.	p. 23
Programs are required to post-test each participant at least one time during the program year in their domain of significance (DOS) (with the exception of participants who pre-tested in High ASE); however, it is recommended that programs post-test participants as soon as possible after they have reached the minimum number of hours recommended by the publisher (as outlined in Table 7), and programs should not exceed 100 contact hours without a progress assessment unless there is a valid instructional reason for doing so. This reason should be documented in the student's file.	It is recommended that students be progress tested once they reach 100 contact hours.	p. 23

Table 3: Due Dates for Data Validation and Data Sign-off

Data for…	*Must be validated by…*
July	August 20
August	September 20
September	**October 15 – DSO**
October	November 20
November	December 20
December	**January 15 – DSO**
January	February 20
February	March 20
March	**April 15 – DSO**

Data for…	***Must be validated by…***
April	May 20
May	June 20
June	**July 15 – DSO**

V. Setting the State Context

Need for the State Assessment Guide

Assessment and testing are critical components of adult education and literacy (AEL) service delivery. Proper assessment and testing of the knowledge, skills, abilities, goals, and needs of AEL customers form the foundation of effective education, training, and employment strategies.

The terms *test* and *testing* are often used interchangeably with the words *assessment* and *assessing*. In Texas, AEL ***assessment*** refers to a larger, more inclusive process of collecting information about individuals, groups, or systems that relies upon a number of strategies, inputs and standardized instruments, one of which may be a test. Therefore, assessment is a more comprehensive testing. The terms ***test*** and ***testing*** refer specifically to a measuring device, instrument and associated procedures. Standardized tests are typically composed of questions or tasks designed to elicit predetermined behavioral responses or to measure specific academic content standards. A comprehensive performance accountability system is required of AEL grant recipients by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §805.4. This guide standardizes the process of determining participant placement, progress toward outcomes, and collection and reporting of data.

Every AEL grant recipient is responsible for following the Assessment Guide and held accountable for both the security and integrity of the data entered into the state's management information system—Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS). In addition to the Assessment Guide, grant recipients must ensure that program staff and partners that are associated with administering assessment processes or using assessment results are well trained and have access to state and federal policy and procedures, including the National Reporting System (NRS) Guidelines, TEAMS Guide, TWC AEL or Workforce Development (WD) Letters, and other resources related to testing, assessment, reporting, and protecting the personally identifiable information (PII) of customers.

Tests Permitted

Texas provides and requires tests to measure the achievement of literacy and language skills for adult participants. Approved tests in Texas are:

- Test of Adult Basic Education (*TABE®*) (Reading, Language, and Math)
- *Wonderlic©* General Assessment of Instructional Needs (*GAIN®*)
- *BEST Literacy (*Reading and Writing Skills)
- *BEST Plus* (Speaking and Listening Skills)
- Test of Adult Basic Education Complete Language Assessment System–English (*TABE®* CLAS-E) (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)

Purposes and Uses of Assessment

Quality assessment is a team effort shared by directors, instructional coordinators, teachers, data clerks, professional development staff, and others who play a role in program performance, data management, and participant success. Data should be used to:

- inform participants about their basic skills and abilities;
- help participants determine short- and long-term goals;

- place participants into the most appropriate instructional program;
- use results as a diagnostic guide to instruction;
- document progress;
- certify level completion;
- inform program improvement and planning;
- plan and develop professional development activities; and
- compare with other programs.

Assessment is much broader than test administration, and standardized test scores should be seen as only one element of a comprehensive assessment system. Programs are encouraged to supplement standardized tests with qualitative intake questions, instructional- or curriculum-based tests, participant portfolios, and teacher-developed tests and assessments. In other words, assessment is a holistic process with many components beyond test scores.

A full assessment profile includes consideration of work and educational experiences and career and educational goals. Assessment should take participant goals, strengths, interests, motivation, and outside support needs into account, in addition to academic development needs. This information can be collected through an interview conducted at program intake or in orientation by program intake personnel and/or by the participant's teacher. Supporting participant success is increasingly an interagency effort. Critical assessment information may also be collected by program partners or reside with partners that refer participants to AEL services. To reduce assessment duplication, grant recipients should establish information and data sharing agreements with program partners to reduce the assessment burden on participants.

Resources for Information and Assistance
Ensure staff and partners are knowledgeable about applicable resource and support research, policy and procedures:

Grant recipients are required to ensure that staff and partners who play a role in assessment and testing, program performance, data management, and security have access to and are well trained on the applicable state and federal policy and procedures.

For additional information about pre- and post-assessment, data collection, TEAMS, required documentation, privacy information, or any other assessment guide clarification, grant recipients should contact their assigned TWC contact or use the contact information outlined on page 2.

VI. Assessment Requirements

Updated Pending Final Regulations

This section contains performance measures currently found in the 2016 National Reporting System Requirements. These measures are anticipated to change under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, regulations that are pending at the time of approval and publication of this guide. Grant recipients should follow the requirements outlined in this guide until officially notified otherwise.

Federal Reporting

Minimum Instruction for Inclusion in NRS

All grant recipients receiving state and federal funds must report all participants who receive an NRS-approved pre-test and one or more direct contact hours in TEAMS. Participants who have 12 or more contact hours within a program year (July 1 to June 30) are considered enrolled by the NRS and are reported to the U.S. Department of Education and the Texas Legislative Budget Board.

All participants must be pre-tested prior to enrolling in direct contact hours, and all students with a baseline test must be enrolled in the Texas Educating Adult Management System (TEAMS).

Participant outcome measures are the central measures of the NRS; however, they are not the only measures that are used to evaluate AEL programs in Texas. For purposes of the NRS, the Core Outcome Measures and Secondary Outcome Measures, outlined below, are reported to the U.S. Department of Education each year.

NRS Core Outcome Measures for Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English as a Second Language (ESL)

Definition: Participant completes or advances one or more NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) from Pre-Test to Post-Test in their lowest competency, known in Texas as their domain of significance (DOS). See Table 2 for the Educational Functioning Levels and associated test scores for ABE/ASE and Table 3 for EFLs and associated test scores for ESL.

Applicable Population: All participants. This is the assumed goal of all individuals enrolled in AEL programs.

- **Denominator:** All participants
- **Numerator:** Those participants from the denominator who complete or advance one or more educational functioning levels from Pre-Test to Post-Test.

Collection Procedure: Grant recipients administer one of the standardized tests approved under this procedure and use the test score to determine the participant's Educational Functioning Level within the NRS score ranges listed in **Table 4** and **Table 5**.

- All domains of the *TABE®* and *GAIN®*—reading, math, and language—must be administered at pre-testing, with the following exceptions:
    - If a student is a referral from a college with a documented TSIA score. In this circumstance, programs only need to give the content area for which the student has placed into the BASE Level on the TSIA (Levels 1–4).
    - If a student has passed a section(s) of the TxCHSE exam, he or she is not required to receive a baseline test in the competencies he or she has passed.
    - There is a documented reason for not providing a pre-test in one of the domains based on student goals and objectives; in this case, some form of test must be provided in the domains not tested to ensure instruction meets student needs. For example, student challenges with math, particularly complex math, often stem from poor reading skills. Programs must provide some type of test in the alternate domain to best support student success.

- If a program uses the *TABE® CLAS-E for their ESL testing, all domains* of *TABE® CLAS-E* reading, writing, speaking, and listening must be administered at pre-testing;
- If a program uses the *BEST Literacy/BEST Plus* for ESL tests, the *BEST Literacy* should be administered to all limited English proficient students who take the *BEST Plus* tests, unless the student is unable to complete a screening tool. If a student cannot complete the screening tool, then he or she automatically takes the *BEST Plus* test. If the student can complete the screening tool, the student should be administered both the *BEST Literacy* and the *BEST Plus* to determine the student's DOS. For a sample screening tool, see **Appendix G.**

Frequency of Data Entry:

- All test scores must be entered into TEAMS twice a month at a minimum, with no more than a two-week delay between actual activity and activity reported in TEAMS.
- All contact hour data must be validated monthly. For a calendar of due dates, please see Section III. All test scores must be dated on the exact date the test was given.
- Test documentation must be maintained in a secured environment according to current TWC Personally Identifiable Information procedures and available in the participant's files and is subject to TWC monitoring and program review. Information on TWC Personally Identifiable Information Procedures is available in Attachment 1.

Table 4: Educational Functioning Levels for ABE and ASE

Functioning Level	Test Benchmark
Beginning ABE Literacy	*TABE®* (7–8; 9–10) scale scores: (grade level 0–1.9) • Reading 367 and below • Total Math 313 and below • Language 389 and below *Wonderlic© GAIN®* scale scores: • English: 200–406 • Math: 200–314
Beginning Basic Education	*TABE®* (7-8; 9-10) scale scores: (grade level 2–3.9) • Reading: 368–460 • Total Math: 314–441 • Language: 390–490 *Wonderlic© GAIN®* scale scores: • English: 407–525 • Math: 315–522

Functioning Level	Test Benchmark
Low Intermediate Basic Education	*TABE®* (7–8; 9–10) scale scores: (grade 4–5.9) • Reading: 461–517 • Total Math: 442–505 • Language: 491–523 *Wonderlic© GAIN®* scale scores: • English: 526–661 • Math: 523–669
High Intermediate Basic Education	*TABE®* (7–8; 9–10) scale scores: (grade level 6–8.9) • Reading: 518–566 • Total Math: 506–565 • Language: 524–559 *Wonderlic© GAIN®* scale scores: • English: 662–746 • Math: 670–775
Low Adult Secondary Education	*TABE®* (7–8; 9–10) scale scores: (grade level 9–10.9) • Reading: 567–595 • Total Math: 566–594 • Language: 560–585 *Wonderlic© GAIN®* scale scores: • English: 747–870 • Math: 776–854
High Adult Secondary Education	*TABE®* (7–8; 9–10) scale scores: (grade level 11–12.9) • Reading: 596 and above • Total Math: 595 and above • Language: 586 and above *Wonderlic© GAIN®* scale scores: • English: 871–1000 • Math: 855–1000

Table 5: Educational Functioning Levels for ESL

Functioning Level	Test Benchmark
Beginning ESL Literacy	*BEST Literacy*: 0-20 *BEST Plus*: 400 and below *TABE® CLAS-E* • Total Reading and Writing: 225–394 • Total Listening and Speaking: 230–407

Functioning Level	Test Benchmark
Low Beginning ESL	*BEST Literacy*: 21-52 *BEST Plus*: 401-417 *TABE® CLAS-E* • Total Reading and Writing: 395–441 • Total Listening and Speaking: 408–449
High Beginning ESL	*BEST Literacy*: 53–63 *BEST Plus*: 418–438 *TABE® CLAS-E* • Total Reading and Writing: 442–482 • Total Listening and Speaking: 486–525
Low Intermediate ESL	*BEST Literacy*: 64–67 *BEST Plus*: 439–472 *TABE® CLAS–E* • Total Reading and Writing: 483–514 • Total Listening and Speaking: 486–525
High Intermediate ESL	*BEST Literacy*: 68–75 *BEST Plus*: 473–506 *TABE® CLAS-E* • Total Reading and Writing: 515–556 • Total Listening and Speaking: 526–558
Advanced ESL	*BEST Literacy*: 76+ *BEST Plus*: 507-540 *TABE® CLAS-E* • Total Reading and Writing: 557–600 • Total Listening and Speaking: 559–600

Core Outcome Measures: Follow-Up Measures

Collection Procedure: Texas uses a data-matching methodology with other state data sources to calculate follow-up measures:

- Receipt of secondary school diploma or TxCHSE match with Texas Education Agency (TEA) data;
- Placement in postsecondary education or training match with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) data;
- Retained employment match with Unemployment Insurance (UI) data;
- Entered employment match with UI data.

Data matching refers to the procedures whereby state agencies serving common participants pool their data to identify outcomes unique to each program. Matching is achieved using participant Social Security numbers (SSNs) and is done at the state level. For example, to determine whether participants obtained employment after leaving the AEL program, the TWC AEL matches the SSNs and dates of attendance of participants who had obtained employment in the TWC UI wage record database for the appropriate calendar quarter.

TxCHSE data is also matched against name and date of birth. If an individual does not have an SSN, or if the SSN does not match between TWC and TEA, a "potential match" is created. The match is then verified in TEAMS by the grant recipient. This process is outlined in the TEAMS guide.

Due to data sharing agreements between state agencies, certain follow-up data (specifically, UI data and THECB data) cannot be disaggregated and provided back to local grant recipients.

Frequency of Data Match:

- TxCHSE data is matched nightly with TEA; however, there is still a lag between the administrator of the particular assessment and TEA in certain cases. Therefore, you may not see an individual's test information appear immediately.
- THECB data is matched once per year after the final data sign-off. The data is matched at a time when previous year higher education is available; however, there are circumstances in which the data for an individual who has just exited and entered postsecondary education is not available. There are other limitations to postsecondary education data:
  - Only Texas public institution data is available. THECB is currently working to expand their inclusion of proprietary school data, and TWC is also looking for ways to include this data through its own data systems.
  - For non-credit (continuing education) data, only programs greater than 244 clock hours, or that lead to a national credential, are required to be reported to the THECB; therefore, certain training programs that do not meet this criterion may not appear in the data match.

Table 6: Follow-Up Measures

Follow-up Measures	General Description
Receipt of secondary school diploma or TxCHSE	**Denominator:** Participants that take all TxCHSE exam tests or are enrolled in Adult High School who exit during the program year **Numerator:** Those participants from the denominator who obtain a state-recognized secondary credential.
Placement in postsecondary education or training	**Denominator:** Participants who exit during the program year AND who achieved a TxCHSE OR earned a secondary credential while enrolled in Adult Education OR who have a secondary credential at entry OR were enrolled in a class specifically designed for transitioning to postsecondary education. **Numerator:** Those participants from the denominator who enter a postsecondary education or occupational skills training or apprenticeship program that does not duplicate other services or training received.

Follow-up Measures	General Description
Entered employment	**Denominator:** Participants who exit during the program year and were both unemployed and in the labor force at entry to the program. **Numerator:** Those participants from the denominator who enter unsubsidized employment by the end of the 1st quarter after the quarter of exit.
Retained employment	**Denominator:** Participants who were: 1) both unemployed and in the labor force at entry to the program AND who entered unsubsidized employment by the end of the 1st quarter after the quarter of exit; OR 2) employed at entry to the program. **Numerator:** Those participants from the denominator who are employed in the 3rd quarter after the quarter of exit.

Further information on measuring Educational Functioning Level gains can be found later in this section, as well as in Section III.

Assessment of Distance Learning Participants

Participants enrolled in distance learning classes must be assessed according to the same policies and procedures as participants who are not enrolled in distance learning classes. All tests for distance learning participants shall be administered face-to-face following the publishers' guidelines.

The Distance Education Guidance is located in **Appendix C.**

Pre-Testing

Participant Orientation to Testing Procedures, Purposes, and Results

The testing process should be transparent and explained in advance to participants. Before testing, participants should be told why they will be tested and what the test results will be used for. After testing, participants should be informed of the test results as soon as possible and should be given a thorough explanation of their results and associated performance levels. Test results should inform other assessment activities, including goal setting. See **Appendix E** for basic practices to orient participants to the testing process.

Establishing Placement with a Baseline Assessment

Texas requires that participants be assessed before the participant may be enrolled in a class.

All domains of the *TABE®* or *GAIN®*—reading, math and language—must be administered at pre-testing, with the following exceptions:

- If a student is a referral from a college with a documented TSIA score. In this circumstance, programs only need to give the content area for which the student has placed into the BASE Level on the TSIA (Levels 1–4).
- If a student has passed a section(s) of the TxCHSE, he or she is not required to receive a baseline test in the competencies he or she has passed;
- If a program uses the *TABE® CLAS-E* for its ESL testing, *all domains of TABE® CLAS-E* reading, writing, speaking, and listening must be administered at pre-testing;
- If a program uses the *BEST Literacy/BEST Plus* for ESL tests, the *BEST Literacy* should be administered to all limited English proficient students who take the *BEST Plus* tests, unless the student is unable to complete a screening tool. If a student cannot complete the screening tool, then he or she automatically takes the *BEST Plus* test. If the student can complete the screening tool, the student should be administered both the *BEST Literacy* and the *BEST Plus* to determine the student's DOS. For a sample screening tool, see **Appendix G.**

See **Appendix D** for an explanation of how TEAMS calculates tests based on the testing date.

Placement by Lowest Functioning Level

Per NRS, participants are placed according to their lowest Educational Functioning Level. This level is referred to as the participant's domain of significance (DOS). The DOS is considered to determine educational gain in post-tests for federal reporting. TEAMS automatically calculates the DOS when the participant's test score is entered into TEAMS, which should be within two weeks of the test.

Baseline for Returning Participants

A returning participant's post-test from the previous program year may be brought forward into the new program year and considered the pre-test for the new program year. If a student has not had contact hours for more than 90 days after their baseline test, the program should administer some form of formal or informal assessment to determine if the student's baseline test is still valid.

Students Taking the GED Ready™

High ASE Participants Taking the GED Ready™

A participant who has a baseline score on the *TABE®* or *GAIN®* that places him or her in High ASE may be administered the GED Ready™ as an alternative to registering the participant for a class.

Orientation Hours for GED Ready™–Only Participants

Programs not enrolling the participant in a class may enter up to 12 orientation hours in TEAMS under the participant's profile in order to document hours spent in pre-tests, GED Ready™ administration, and subsequent referral to GED testing services, as appropriate. The hours for these participants, once they have received a GED, may be found in TEAMS Reports under "GED" and found in the report titled: *Participants Achieved GED® by Age and Functioning Level*.

Post-Testing

Post-Testing Requirements

Programs are required to post-test each participant at least one time during the program year in his or her DOS (with the exception of participants who pre-tested in High ASE); however, it is recommended that programs post-test participants as soon as possible after they have reached the minimum number of hours recommended by the publisher (as outlined in **Table 7**), and programs should not exceed 100 contact hours without a progress assessment unless there is a valid instructional reason for doing so. This reason should be documented in the student's file. Programs may not test participants prior to the minimum number of hours recommended by test publishers unless there is a justification for doing so (see the next section for examples of justifications). Orientation hours will count toward the minimum hours between pre-/post-test once the participant has acquired at least one direct contact hour.

See **Table 7** for a list of minimum hours of instruction established by test publishers. Note that the table alerts users to the necessary use of alternate test forms for post-testing.

Table 7: Publisher's Recommended Hours between Pre-/Post-Test

Testing Instrument	Publisher's Recommended Hours Note: For print-based tests, alternate forms must be used for pre- and post-tests.
TABE® 9 and 10	40 hours minimum for all levels except ASE 30 hours minimum for ASE participants only If the same form of the *TABE®* 9 or 10 test is administered, then 120 hours of instruction is required (Example: *TABE®* 9 Form D and *TABE®* 9 Form D).
GAIN®	60 hours minimum
BEST Plus	60 hours minimum
BEST Literacy	60 hours minimum
TABE® CLAS-E	50 hours minimum If the same form of *TABE® CLAS-E* test is administered then 100 hours of instruction is required (Example: Reading Form A and Reading Form A).

Individuals Tested before the Test Publisher's Recommendations

Participants who are tested before the minimum hours of instruction are documented in the TEAMS report titled: *Participants Tested with Less than Minimum Hours of Instruction.* TEAMS will capture all early post-tests on this report regardless of whether the test is a DOS or non-DOS test.

Programs are required to document justifications for early testing and maintain documentation in the participant file.

Exceptions to the above number of hours between pre- and post-test should be rare and limited.

Examples of Justifications for Testing a Participant before the Test Publisher's Recommendations

Justification must be kept on file for all participants tested before the test publisher's guidelines. Programs that have a total percentage of more than 10 percent of their participants tested before the publisher's guidelines are subject to a monitoring finding.

Examples of justifications include the following:

- Documentation via a teacher-created test that the participant, due to intensity of program or quality of instruction, has made progress more quickly than the publisher's recommended number of hours;
- Documentation via a teacher-created test that the participant is anticipated to leave the program prior to reaching the minimum number of recommended hours, but has made progress; and
- Documentation that a non-high-ASE participant is ready and intends to take the GED exam and not return to the program for progress testing.

Progress Testing Participants in High ASE

No progress test is available if the participant places in High ASE. The only educational outcome is passing the TxCHSE exam. Programs are encouraged to refer participants to Testing Services as soon as formative tests (e.g., GED Ready™) indicate that he or she is likely to pass.

Documentation of Post-Tests

All post-tests must be entered into TEAMS, regardless of if the participant made a gain. If a participant did not make a gain, use the information to determine where there may be an instructional gap.

Accommodating Participants with Disabilities or Other Special Needs

Participants with documented disabilities will be granted reasonable accommodations upon request during testing and instruction.

In the program intake and screening, programs must ensure that participants have the opportunity to identify needs that may require additional assessment supports and review, including, but not limited to, identified or suspected disabilities. If applicable, support needs, including needs of participants with disabilities, must be provided to ensure they have an equal opportunity to benefit from services.

Participants with documented disabilities who require accommodations may request test instruments in alternative formats and alterations in test administration procedures. Documented disabilities mean that the individual can present a formal document provided by a qualified professional (physician, educational counselor, psychologist, special education teacher, or a rehabilitation counselor), such as a doctor's report, a diagnostic test, or other formal record of disability that includes the following:

- A diagnosis of the disability, whether physical or cognitive;
- An evaluation of the educational implications of the diagnosis and the impact of the disability on areas of functioning;
- Recommendations for the specific strategies and accommodations in education required by the disability that are reasonable and necessary as provided by laws and regulations protecting individuals with disabilities; and
- The accommodations provided in the assessment, which should be the same accommodations used during instruction.

Test administrators must follow accommodations guidance provided by the test publisher. Additional guidance on testing accommodations can be found in **Appendix J**. Grant recipients should contact their TWC provider support specialist for additional support related to testing individuals with suspected or documented testing needs.

Modifications That Do Not Require Documentation

It is not uncommon for participants to have other testing needs that may not reach a level that would reflect a documented disability, such as having an out-of-date eyeglasses prescription or no eyeglasses at all.

The following interventions do not require disability documentation and may be provided during testing: use of a large-print version, use of a straight edge, use of colored overlays, request to sit near a window (away from fluorescent lights), use of graph paper, or taking individual tests on different days.

Tests Permitted

Approved tests in Texas are:

- Test of Adult Basic Education (*TABE®*) (Reading, Language, and Math)
- General Assessment of Instructional Needs (*GAIN®*) (English/Reading and Mathematics)
- *BEST Literacy (*Reading and Writing Skills)
- *BEST Plus* (Speaking and Listening Skills)
- Test of Adult Basic Education Complete Language Assessment System–English (TABE® CLAS-E) (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)

Meeting the NRS and Regulatory Requirements

All participants in TWC-funded AEL programs will be assessed with the state-designated tests listed above, and all tested participants are included in the state's NRS data submission. All participants must be pre-tested using a state-approved standardized test prior to enrolling in direct contact hours.

Tests must be administered and scored according to the guidance provided in Section III of this plan. Participants must be placed in Educational Functioning Levels based on the approved NRS score ranges. Further information regarding the current NRS Educational Functioning Levels, associated score ranges, descriptors, and other guidance can be found in the federal manual *Implementation Guidelines: Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education* (February 2016), as well as TWC AEL and Workforce Development (WD) Letters where noted. The guidance below is a summary of the key aspects of the federal manual, which is available at www.nrsweb.org. AEL and WD Letters are available at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/workforce-policy-guidance.

Training for Administering Tests

Texas requires that test administrators be properly trained before administering standardized tests. All programs must meet and comply with all training requirements established by the publisher of the test instrument, including education and other minimum requirements. Specific training requirements for each test are outlined in Section VII of this guide.

Local programs can train their staff as test administrators through the test publisher or by contracting with a certified or qualified test administration trainer. For a list of available contract trainers, contact the statewide adult education and literacy professional development provider via the contact information on page 2.

Local programs must maintain at least one test administrator for each test instrument in use at the program and should develop a plan to determine how many testers are required to pre- and post-test the maximum number of participants efficiently and effectively.

Local programs are responsible for maintaining records of staff trained to administer tests in their programs. Staff training records must be entered into TEAMS.

Participant Orientation and Goal Setting Procedure

Participant orientation and goal setting are central to participant assessment.

See **Appendix F** to view the Texas AEL Participant Orientation and Goal Setting Procedure.

VII. Guidelines for Test Administration

A brief description for each approved test is provided in this section.

Test of Adult Basic Education (*TABE®*)

TABE® is an NRS-approved test published by Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) for Adult Basic Education (ABE, grade levels 0–8) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE, grade levels 9–12) participants. Programs may choose to use either the *TABE®* Complete Battery or the *TABE®* Survey. The purpose of the *TABE®* is to assess adult basic skills in vocabulary, reading, language, language mechanics, mathematics, and spelling. *TABE®* subtest subject areas are Reading, Math, and Language.

The *TABE®* instrument group is composed of various skill areas or domains/component levels. The levels are the following:

- Literacy (L)* only available with the *TABE®* Complete Battery
- Easy (E)
- Medium (M)
- Difficult (D)
- Advanced (A)

TABE® Locator

Programs must use the *TABE® Locator Test* (*Locator*) in each subject area to determine the correct level of each sub-test to be administered to the participant. The *Locator* may indicate a different level test for each sub-test subject. If a participant is unable to complete the *Locator* (for example, the participant has no reading or writing skills), the following alternatives for test are available:

i. The *TABE® Literacy* from the *TABE® Complete Battery* should be administered to participants who are unable to read or write to complete the *TABE® Locator Test*. *TABE® Literacy* test scores are entered into TEAMS.
ii. The *TABE® Word List* from the *TABE® Survey* may be used for initial appraisal of test for participants who are unable to read or write to complete the Locator Test. Participants tested with the *TABE® Word List* are not reflected on the federal report unless another NRS-approved test is administered.

Parallel Forms

TABE® has two parallel forms, Forms 9 and 10, which must be used alternately to ensure valid results when retesting the same participant. A different form from that of the pre-test must be administered as a post-test.

Minimum Hours between Pre and Post

- Post-testing may not occur until one calendar day after the participant has accrued the appropriate hours as outlined in **Table 7**.
- For participants placed in ASE High, post-testing may not occur until one calendar day after 30 hours.

TABE® accommodations for participants with disabilities are listed in **Appendix J.**

Administering and Scoring the *TABE®*

TABE® may be administered individually or in a group setting and may be administered in paper-and-pencil form or by computer. *TABE®* is either locally hand scored, machine scored, or scored with *TestMate TABE®* software. Regardless of the type of administration, the raw scores must be converted to scale scores before entering score information into TEAMS. *TABE®* provides a norms book for paper-and-pencil scoring to convert the raw score or number correct into a scale score. The norms book is divided into sections for each form (*TABE®* 9 and *TABE®* 10) and by subject areas (e.g., Reading, Language, Math, etc.). With the number correct, testers can locate the scale score. See **Table 4** for *TABE®* 9 and *10* scale score conversion to NRS levels.

Table 8: *TABE®* 9 and 10: NRS Functioning Levels, Scale Score Ranges, and Participant Performance Levels

NRS Functioning Level	Grade Level Equivalent Range	Reading Scale Score Ranges	Total Math Scale Score Ranges	Language Scale Score Ranges
Beginning Adult Basic Education Literacy	0–1.9	0–367	0–313	0–389
Beginning Basic Education	2–3.9	368–460	314–441	390–490
Low Intermediate Basic Education	4–5.9	461–517	442–505	491–523
High Intermediate Basic Education	6–8.9	518–566	506–565	524–559
Low Adult Secondary Education	9–10.9	567–595	566–594	560–585
High Adult Secondary Education	11–12.9	596–812	595–775	586–826

Test Administrator Training

All staff administering the *TABE®* must complete six hours of training before administering the test. The local program is responsible for maintaining a record of all staff trained to administer the *TABE®.* Administrators should complete three hours of a training refresher every two years.

For information on *TABE®* trainers, programs can contact the statewide adult education and literacy professional development provider via the contact information on page 2.

The *BEST Literacy*

The *BEST Literacy* is an NRS-approved test designed for adult English language learners (ELLs) published by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). *BEST Literacy* assesses literacy skills for adult participants in reading and writing in authentic situations specifically geared for adult ELLs in the United States. Reading tasks include reading dates on a calendar, labels on food and clothing, bulletin announcements, and newspaper want ads. Writing tasks include addressing an envelope, writing a rent check, filling out a personal background form, and writing personal notes.

If a program uses the *BEST Literacy/BEST Plus* for ESL tests, the *BEST Literacy* should be administered to all limited English proficient students who take the *BEST Plus* tests, unless the student is unable to complete a screening tool. If a student cannot complete the screening tool, then they automatically take the *BEST Plus* test. If the student can complete the screening tool, the student should be administered both the *BEST Literacy* and the *BEST Plus* to determine the domain of significance of the student. For a sample screening tool, see **Appendix G.**

Literacy Locator Tool

The *BEST Literacy* test does not provide or require a locator test, although some adults entering an English language program may have limited knowledge of written English and will struggle with or be unable to complete a literacy test such as *BEST Literacy*. A literacy screening tool is an option and may be used to identify these individuals. A sample literacy screening tool is provided in **Appendix G.**

Parallel Forms

BEST Literacy is available in three parallel forms (B, C and D) for pre- and post-testing. Use different forms for pre-testing and post-testing.

Minimum Hours between Pre and Post

Post-testing must occur at least one calendar day after 60 hours.

BEST Literacy accommodations for participants with disabilities are listed in **Appendix J**.

Administering and Scoring the *BEST Literacy*

BEST Literacy **can** be administered individually or to groups of examinees generally in one hour or less. See **Table 9** for the *BEST Literacy* score conversion to NRS levels.

Table 9: *BEST Literacy* —NRS Functioning Levels, Scale Score Ranges, and Participant Performance Levels

NRS Educational Functioning Levels	Scale Score Ranges	Participant Performance Levels (SPL)

NRS Educational Functioning Levels	Scale Score Ranges	Participant Performance Levels (SPL)
Beginning ESL Literacy	0–20	0–1
Low Beginning ESL	21–52	2
High Beginning ESL	53–63	3
Low Intermediate ESL	64–67	4
High Intermediate ESL	68–75	5
Advanced ESL	76–78*	6

Test Administrator Training

The test publisher, the Center of Applied Linguistics (CAL), requires at least one person at a program to complete training before the program can purchase materials. The training consists of self-study of the test administration manual provided by CAL and 3–4 practice administrations, which include test scoring. Programs must internally train all test administrators. It is recommended that programs conduct internal training that focuses on inter-rater reliability for test items that are scored with rubrics. The local program is responsible for maintaining a record of all staff trained to administer the *BEST Literacy.* All test administrators are required to complete the CAL training as prescribed by the Texas professional development center contractor, and *BEST Literacy* test administrators should complete three hours of a training refresher every two years.

BEST Plus

The *BEST Plus*, published by CAL, is an NRS-approved test designed for adult ELLs and assesses interpersonal communication using everyday language. The test is delivered in an individual, face-to-face interview format.

BEST Plus 2.0

The *BEST Plus 2.0* will be approved for Texas program use beginning July 1, 2016. Programs may continue to use the current version of the *BEST Literacy* until June 30, 2016. Per OCTAE requirements, programs that pre-test on the current *BEST Plus* must also post-test on the current *BEST Plus*; therefore, programs should plan their progress assessments accordingly.

BEST Plus Locator

- In the **print-based** version of the *BEST Plus*, a brief locator test determines the level of test items (level 1, 2, or 3) that will be most appropriate for the ability level of the examinee. These items are arranged in fixed-form level tests.
- In the **computer-adaptive** version of the *BEST Plus*, items are selected by the computer program, choosing the most appropriate question for the examinee's demonstrated ability level; therefore, *BEST Plus* computer adaptive version does not have a locator test.

Parallel Forms

- The computer-adaptive version allows the computer to select the next test item, choosing items most appropriate for the examinee according to the scores entered for previous responses.

- The print-based version has three parallel forms (A, B, and C) for pre- and post-testing purposes. Different forms must be used for pre- and post-testing.

Minimum Hours between Pre and Post

Post-testing must occur at least 1 calendar day after 60 hours.

BEST Plus Accommodations for Participants with Disabilities are listed in **Appendix J.**

Administering and Scoring the *BEST Plus*

The BEST Plus is administered face-to-face for both the computer-adaptive version and the print-based version that comes in three forms (A, B, and C) for pre- and post-testing purposes. Informative score reports are generated for both the computer and print versions using the *BEST Plus Score Management Software.* See **Table 10** for the *BEST Plus* score conversion to NRS levels.

If a program uses the *BEST Literacy/BEST Plus* for ESL tests, the *BEST Literacy* should be administered to all limited English proficient students who take the *BEST Plus* tests unless the student is unable to complete a screening tool. If a student cannot complete the screening tool, then they automatically take the *BEST Plus* test. If the student can complete the screening tool, the student should be administered both the *BEST Literacy* and the *BEST Plus* to determine the domain of significance of the student. For a sample screening tool, see Appendix F.

Test Administrator Training

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) requires at least one-person minimum in a program to complete a six-hour training with a CAL-certified *BEST Plus* trainer before a program can purchase materials. Additionally, all staff that will administer the test must attend the six-hour training. All test administrators are required to complete the CAL training as prescribed by the Texas professional development center contractor, and *BEST Literacy* test administrators should complete three hours of a training refresher every two years. The publisher (CAL) certifies staff that completes the training as *BEST Plus* trainers. *BEST Plus* trainers must also sign and send in test administrator information to CAL before the test administrators may begin testing with the *BEST Plus*. Additionally, the local program is responsible for maintaining a record of all staff trained to administer the *BEST Plus.* For a list of certified *BEST Plus* trainers available in Texas, contact the statewide adult education and literacy professional development provider via the contact information on page 2.

Table 10: *BEST Plus*: NRS Functioning Levels, Scale Score Ranges, and Participant Performance Levels

NRS Functioning Level	*BEST Plus* Scale Score Ranges	Related Participant Performance Levels
Beginning ESL Literacy	0–400	0–1
Low Beginning ESL	401–417	2
High Beginning ESL	418–438	3
Low Intermediate ESL	439–472	4
High Intermediate ESL	473–506	5

NRS Functioning Level	*BEST Plus* Scale Score Ranges	Related Participant Performance Levels
Advanced ESL	507–540	6
Exit Criteria from NRS	541 and higher	7

TABE® Complete Language Assessment System—English (CLAS-E)

The *TABE® CLAS-E* is an NRS-approved test published by Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) that provides teachers with a reliable, easy-to-use system that accurately identifies the instructional needs of English as a second language participants. *TABE® Complete Language Assessment System—English* assesses English proficiency levels to accurately measure participants' reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. The speaking test is optional and gives instructors maximum flexibility in how they assess their participants.

TABE® CLAS-E Locator

TABE CLAS-E® Locator test ensures that adult participants start with the appropriate test level.

Parallel Forms

Pre- and post-tests are available at four levels to ensure that participants test within the correct range for their abilities. Different forms must be used for pre- and post-testing.

Minimum Hours between Pre and Post

Post-testing must occur at least one calendar day after 50 hours. There are no exceptions.

TABE® CLAS-E Accommodations for Participants with Disabilities are listed in **Appendix J**.

Administering and Scoring the *TABE® CLAS-E*

The TABE® Complete Language Assessment System—English provides the number correct and scale scores for each skill area: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking—and for the total battery of tests. Programs must convert the number correct to the scale score for each subtest and enter a scale score for each subtest into TEAMS. Additional scores include: National Reporting System (NRS) proficiency levels; objective mastery scores; and Participant Performance Levels (SPLs). *TABE® Complete Language Assessment System—English* also offers scoring with *TestMate TABE®*. See **Table 11** for the *TABE® CLAS-E* score conversion to NRS levels.

Table 11: *TABE*® CLAS-E (Forms A and B): NRS Functioning Levels, Scale Score Ranges, and Participant Performance Levels

Functioning Level	Reading Scale Scores	Writing Scale Scores	Listening Scale Scores	Speaking Scale Scores
Beginning ESL Literacy	250–392	200–396	230–389	231–425
Low Beginning ESL	393–436	397–445	90–437	426–460
High Beginning ESL	437–476	446–488	438–468	461–501
Low Intermediate ESL	477–508	489–520	469–514	502–536
High Intermediate ESL	509–557	521–555	515–549	537–567

Advanced ESL	558–588	556–612	550–607	568–594

Test Administrator Training

All staff administering the *TABE® CLAS-E* must complete six hours of training prior to administering the test. The local program is responsible for maintaining a record of all staff trained to administer the *TABE® CLAS-E.* For *TABE®* trainer contact information call the statewide adult education and literacy professional development provider via the contact information on page 2. Administrators should complete three hours of a training refresher every two years.

General Assessment of Instructional Needs (*GAIN®*)

General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN®) is an all in-one test developed by Wonderlic, Inc.© *GAIN®* is a testing and scoring platform for basic English and math proficiency test designed to streamline and optimize the participant and teacher experience. *GAIN®* assesses math and English skills. Each subject contains three books arranged by the NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) and then by *GAIN®* Review Topics (skills). *GAIN®* is a designated test for participants enrolling in Adult Basic Education (ABE) grade levels 0–8 and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) grade levels 9–12.

Sunset

The *GAIN®* is currently approved for use through the NRS through February 17, 2017. Programs using the *GAIN®* should pay attention to notifications regarding the approval of the test past February 17, 2017.

Locator

The *GAIN®* has no locator test.

Parallel Forms

The English and math tests have two forms each, Forms A and B, available in paper/pencil and web administration modes. The test items in paper/pencil- and web-enabled modes are identical and thus facilitate the use of one mode in pre-test situations and the other mode in post-test situations if desired. Different forms must be used for pre- and post-testing.

Minimum Hours between Pre and Post

Post-testing must occur at least one calendar day after 60 hours.

GAIN® Accommodations for Participants with Disabilities

The *GAIN®* administrator guide states as follows: "A reasonable accommodation should allow the test score to reflect the test taker's skills rather than reflect the test taker's impairment, and should allow the test taker with a disability (or disabilities) to demonstrate his or her skills and abilities more accurately than if no accommodations were allowed. Additionally, a major focus of the ADA is that reasonable accommodation is not effectively addressed by a general procedure; rather accommodations are best addressed only on a case-by-case basis." The *GAIN®* administrator guide provides the following examples of reasonable accommodations:

- Providing extra time to complete the *GAIN®*;
- Providing rest breaks for test takers; and
- Assuring that the test site is accessible to a person with a mobility issue.

Administering and Scoring the *GAIN®*

GAIN® can be administered in either a group or individual setting. *GAIN®* test administrators must be trained before administering the *GAIN®*. Wonderlic© provides certification and training free of charge. For training, contact the publisher toll free at 1-877-605-9496 or e-mail corporate instructors at training@wonderlic.com. *GAIN®* can be administered online by computer or in paper/pencil format. *GAIN®* is machine scored by Wonderlic© either online, fax-back, or by mailing in forms to Wonderlic© for machine scoring. See **Table 8** for the *GAIN®* score conversion to NRS levels.

Test Administrator Training

The publisher (Wonderlic©) requires completion of training and certification for all test administrators. Trainees complete and return *GAIN®* Test Administrator Certification Kits to Wonderlic© and Wonderlic© certifies the trainers. The local program is responsible for maintaining a record of all staff trained to administer the *GAIN®.*

Table 12: *GAIN®* English and Mathematics: Scale Scores for NRS ABE and ASE English Functioning Levels

NRS Educational Functioning Level	English Composite Scale Score Range	Mathematics Composite Scale Score Range	Grade Level Equivalents
ABE Beginning Literacy	200–406	200–314	0.0–1.9
ABE Beginning	407–525	315–522	2.0–3.9
ABE Low Intermediate	526–661	523–669	4.0–5.9
ABE High Intermediate	662–746	670–775	6.0–8.9
ASE Low	747–870	776–854	9.0–10.9
ASE High	871–1000	855–1000	11.0–12.0+

Purchasing Test Materials

TABE®

Direct *TABE®* ordering and support information can be found by contacting:

Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) at www.ctb.com, or:
Data Recognition Corporation – CTB
13490 Bass Lake Road
Maple Grove, MN 55311
Telephone: 800-538-9547

BEST Literacy and *BEST Plus*

- Programs may purchase *BEST Plus* and *BEST Literacy* materials through a CAL-certified *BEST Plus* Test Administrator only or through the TCALL (call toll free at 1-800-441-READ).
- Programs may directly order *BEST* through a CAL-certified *BEST Plus* Test Administrator, or

Center for Applied Linguistics
4646 40th Street NW
Washington, DC 20016-1859
Main number: 202.362.0700 | Fax number: 202.362.3740

E-mail info@cal.org | Online catalog: http://www.cal.org

GAIN®
Programs may purchase ***GAIN®*** testing materials through:

Wonderlic, Inc.©
400 Lakeview Parkway, Suite 200
Vernon Hills, IL 60061
1-877-605-949

VIII. Distance Education–Specific Assessment Guide

Please refer to **Appendix C** for the Distance Education–Specific Assessment Guide for Texas.

IX. Data Collection Quality, Policies and Procedures

Data Foundation and Structure

Requirements for Administering Standardized Tests in Texas

Please refer to Sections VI and VII for requirements for standardized tests in Texas.

Data Matching

Collecting, matching, and reporting cohorts for TxCHSE Obtainment, Entry into Postsecondary or Training, Employment Obtainment, and Employment Retention is performed according to the guidelines set up in the National Reporting System. See **Appendix H** for a list of Cohort-Designated Core Outcomes Measures.

Data Collection and Verification

State Management Information System

In Texas, grant recipients are required to track data in the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS). Data entry into TEAMS must happen at least biweekly, with no more than a two-week delay between actual activity and activity reported in TEAMS. All data must be validated monthly.

In order to support program performance, Program directors may assign "read-only" access to teachers and non-data entry staff in TEAMS. All teachers are required to have access to TEAMS or regular and direct access to TEAMS data.

Directors must also ensure that all staff has initial and ongoing training to use TEAMS. All TEAMS users must have training prior to using the system.

Information on getting access to TEAMS can be found on the adult education and literacy web page at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/adult-education-literacy#teams.

Data collection and verification requires the sharing of personally identifiable information (PII). Programs must develop procedures to ensure that data review procedures ensure protection of PII. See the Section called Protecting Personally Identifiable Information for more information.

Standard Forms for Collecting Data

Staff must collect, record, and secure information on locally developed intake and other data collection forms and ensure this information is entered into TEAMS in a timely manner. Required data elements are listed in **Appendix I**.

Class sign-in sheets must document class number, class name, date, class location, teacher name, teacher signature, participant names, participant signatures, and time in and time out.

Error Checking and Quality Control

Programs must have procedures for checking data for completeness and accuracy following a prescribed schedule with clear deadlines, and an appropriate number of staff should be assigned to perform these data checking functions explicitly. Staff assigned to review data should review all data forms as soon as possible for completeness and accuracy and should obtain error reports from the database to review immediately after data entry. To do their job, staff assigned to review data must have access to all staff—teachers, intake staff, data entry staff, and administrative staff—and the authority to obtain cooperation of this staff, as well as access to test information and participant data.

Analysis of Data for Program Monitoring and Improvement

For program monitoring and program improvement purposes, programs must review participant data and outcomes, including such variables as number of instructional hours received, length of enrollment, the instructors and classes enrolled, participant educational functioning level and Data Sign-Off. This type of analysis is available in TEAMS through a variety of reports.

Timely Data Entry

Program procedures for data entry should specify at least one person whose job it is to enter participant and class information into TEAMS. All staff should know this individual's role and he or she should have the authority to request clarification or resolution of errors. Part of the data entry procedure should also include a prompt, organized way to identify and resolve errors.

All data should be collected and entered at a minimum biweekly, with no more than two weeks between actual activity and activity reported in TEAMS. Contact hours must be validated monthly. A calendar of due dates is in section 1. Data Sign-Off (DSO) reports are due quarterly and require grant recipient directors to certify the validity of their data.

Staff Member Roles in Data Collection

Collecting, managing, and using participant assessment information and associated data involves every staff member in a program, and programs must provide staff development on the program Data Management and Documentation standard operational procedure to ensure all staff members have an understanding of their related roles and responsibilities. This staff development should ensure that all staff also has a clear understanding of what data is collected, how it is collected, how it is used, and how this data must be secured and transported to comply with PII requirements. Local procedures should include a written, precise definition for each data item that is compatible with the state definitions. To resolve ambiguities please refer to Improving NRS Data Quality, Chapter III: The Data Collection Process online at http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/dataquality.pdf.

Staff Development

Ongoing Training

State and federal test guidance is occasionally modified and enhanced year to year. With increasing attention to performance and accountability and expansion of guidance, AEL services to broader segments of eligible populations and new program models modifications should be expected. Program directors must ensure that all staff members associated with participant assessment, testing, and program performance receive no less than annual staff development on the TWC Assessment Guide, the National Reporting System Guidelines, associated AEL letters and guidance on performance, eligibility and accountability, data collection processes, definitions of measures, and test administration procedures based on available test publishers' staff development guidelines. Programs should contact their TWC assigned provider support specialist or the Professional Development and Support Center for information on accessing assessment guidance and professional development options.

Data collection procedures should result in valid and reliable data if staff understand and follow them. Therefore, part of the program's Data Management and Documentation standard operational procedures must include training of staff members on their roles and responsibilities, as well as the importance of data collection. Instructors should also have a clear understanding of not just the instruction-related aspects of testing and assessment but also related data reporting, performance, and privacy protection requirements. Programs are responsible for providing basic TEAMS and data collection and security training for all staff.

Analysis of Data for Program Monitoring and Improvement

For program monitoring and improvement, program staff must look at participant outcomes and demographics according to such variables as number of instructional hours received, length of enrollment, the teachers and classes enrolled, and participant educational functioning level. This type of analysis is available in TEAMS through a variety of reports.

As outlined in the section above, grant recipient directors must identify at least one individual who is responsible for reviewing monthly data to identify programmatic and performance issues. This individual should work with the grant recipient director and the professional development coordinator to develop strategies for addressing performance issues.

Test Score Reports

Original score sheets from tests and/or electronic score reports with results of participants' pre- and post-test scores must be stored and/or backed up on appropriate media or printed out and filed in hard copy for local, state, and federal auditing purposes.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

A-Di

ABE: Adult Basic Education

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (**AEFLA):** Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

Alternate Test Forms: any two comparable forms of the same test, e.g., Form B and Form C of the *BEST Literacy* or the Form 9 and Form 10 of the *TABE®.*

ASE: Adult Secondary Education

Assessment: An inclusive process of collecting information about individuals, groups, or systems that relies upon a number of strategies, inputs, and instruments, one of which may be a test. Therefore, assessment is more comprehensive than a *test*.

Baseline: The placement of a participant each new program year into an Educational Functioning Level (EFL).

Cohort Designation: Several NRS Core Outcome Measures apply to participants who exit and who are members of the cohort specific to that measure. See **Section V: Appendices** for additional information on Cohort Designated Core Outcome Measures.

Contact Hour: (NRS definition) Contact hour are the hours of instruction or instructional activity the participant receives from the program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to promote participant learning in the program curriculum such as classroom instruction, tutoring, or participation in a learning lab. A contact hour is the cumulative sum of minutes during which an eligible adult participant receives instructional, counseling, and/or assessment services by a staff member supported by federal and state adult education funds as documented by local attendance and reporting records. *See Direct Contact Hour.*

Core Outcome Measure: Measures that are required and include outcome, descriptive measures, and participation measures that reflect the core indicator requirements for Adult Education and Literacy. States must report the required measures on participants who receive 12 hours or more of service. The Department of Education will use these measures to assess program performance. There are five core outcome measures: (1) Educational Functioning Level gains, (2) Entered Employment, (3) Retained Employment, (4) Receipt of a Secondary School Diploma or Certificate of High School Equivalency, (5) Placement in Postsecondary Education or Training.

Direct Contact Hour: A direct contact hour is a contact hour that consists of content instruction (versus orientation time). In the context of Distance Learning, the 12 direct contact hours that must be accumulated may consist of direct contact hours, as defined here, or orientation hours. Direct contact hours are entered on the daily class contact hour page in TEAMS.

Figure 1: Direct Contact Hour Entry

Participant Name		03	05	10	12	17	19	24	26	Funding Source	Month Total
Mouse, Mickey	D									Regular Adult Ed (TWC St & Fed)	0
Snow, TR	D	6								TANF (TWC State & Federal)	6
Day Total		6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		6

Do-ESL

Domain Code: The abbreviation for the subject area of an assessment (e.g., RD, the abbreviation for Reading)

Domain: A subject area tested by a testing instrument. Examples: *TABE®* Reading, *TABE®* Language, *TABE®* Mathematics, *BEST Literacy* (reading/writing), *BEST Plus* (oral), *TABE® CLAS-E* Reading, *TABE® CLAS-E* Writing, *TABE® CLAS-E* Listening, *TABE® CLAS-E* Speaking, *GAIN®* English, and *GAIN®* Mathematics.

Domain of Significance (DOS): The domain (subject area) within which a participant has the most room for improvement (lowest placement) according to the tests administered before the participant's first instructional contact hours. The DOS is the domain or sub-test area in which the participant is placed and reported on the federal report (i.e., NRS Tables), and the post-test in the DOS determines if the participant completes the Educational Functioning Level. Tests administered in a particular instrument (e.g., *TABE®* or *BEST Plus*) are compared to determine the DOS.

Domain Level: The level of a subtest at which the participant was assessed.

Domain Name: The name of the subject area of test (e.g., reading, math, language, literacy, oral)

Domain Score: The scale score given to a participant in a specific domain (subject area) based on test.

ELL: English language learner.

Educational Functioning Level (EFL): Describes a set of skills and competencies that participants entering at that level can do in the areas of reading, writing, numeracy, speaking, listening, and functional and workplace areas. Four levels for adult basic education (ABE), two for adult secondary education (ASE), and six levels of English as a Second Language (ESL). The National Reporting System EFL Descriptors are included in the NRS Implementation Guidelines and available online at http://www.nrsweb.org.

Educational Gain: (Core Outcome Measure): Every participant registered in the adult education program has a goal to complete the level in which he or she is placed. The measure of participant literacy gain is a result of instruction. The participant completes or advances one or more educational functioning levels from starting level measured at entry into the program.

ESL: English as a Second Language. Under WIOA, this population/service is referred to as English Language Acquisition (ELA).

Ex-Pa

Exiter: As per NRS federal guidelines, an exiter is an enrolled participant who has not participated in **adult** education for 90 days and with no indication of intent to return the following program year. Additionally, if the participant leaves during the last 90 days of the program and gives reason for not returning, the participant is included as an exiter in the exit cohort.

Functional: The functional level descriptors describe what an entering participant “can do” in the areas of reading, writing, numeracy, speaking, listening and/or *functional* or workplace skills.

Functioning Levels: The NRS approach towards measuring educational *GAIN®* is to define a set of *educational functioning levels* in which participants are initially placed, based on their ability to perform literacy-related tasks in specific content areas.

GED Ready™: Reliable, authentic score prediction, from the exclusive distributor of the *GED Ready™*. This test was developed and normed side-by-side with the GED® Test.

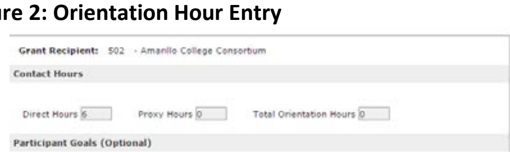
Grant recipient: Organizations funded under TWC request for proposals (RFP) number 320-14-10, Texas Adult Education and Literacy Programs.

Instructional session: A semester of time determined and published by the program delineating the beginning and ending of a teaching unit with predetermined objectives and outcomes being met. The session must allow enough time for movement of participants from one level to the next level as described in the National Reporting System (NRS) ESL, ABE, and ASE Functioning Level Descriptors.

National Reporting System (NRS): NRS is the accountability system for the federally funded adult education program, mandated by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The NRS includes participant measures to describe adult education participants, program participation and assessment of the impact of adult education instruction, methodologies for collecting the measures, reporting forms and procedures, and training and technical assistance activities to assist states in collecting the measures. The goal of the NRS is to produce a set of measures that describe adult education participants and the outcomes they achieve due to their participation.

Orientation Hour(s): Orientation hours are not considered direct contact hours, unless they are being used to count toward the required 12 hours of instruction for a distance learning participant. Orientation hours count toward a participant’s total contact hours once the participant has earned one direct contact hour. Orientation hours are documented in the participant profile for a particular year in TEAMS.

Figure 2: Orientation Hour Entry



Participant: An individual enrolled in an AEL program who has 12 or more contact hours within a program year (July 1 to June 30). Participants are reported to the U.S. Department of Education and the

Texas Legislative Budget Board. All participants must be pre-tested prior to enrolling in direct contact hours.

Po-Te

Post-assessment: Also called a post-test; Progress or subsequent test administered after at least the minimum hours of instruction recommended in the publishers' guidelines.

Pre-assessment: Also called a pre-test; test administered to place a participant into an educational functioning level generally before instruction takes place.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII): PII is information that identifies an individual. Not all PII is sensitive and/or confidential by law. For examples of PII versus sensitive PII, please see the section on Personally Identifiable Information.

Program Year (PY): the Federal Program Year (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act: AEFLA Funded) begins July 1 and ends June 30. The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) year begins September 1 and ends August 31.

Rolling Forward Scores: The practice of using previous program year's post-test scores for the new program year's pre-test scores for particular or all participants.

Skill Areas: Educational Functional Levels.

Participant Performance Levels (SPLs): *BEST* Test levels and benchmarks as described in the *BEST* and *Best Plus* test administrator's manual.

Individualized Training, Education, and Career Plan: Locally designed plan that captures participant goals for education, training, and career.

Participant Portfolio: Locally designed individual participant record keeping at the local program level organized to allow analysis of participant. Data collected and maintained in the portfolio should be accurate for data entry to insure data integrity for state-required reports. Goal setting worksheets (if applicable) are maintained in the participant portfolio.

Standardized Test: A test constructed of items that are appropriate in level of difficulty and discriminating power for the intended examinees, and that fit the preplanned table of content specifications. The test is administered in accordance with explicit directions for uniform administration and is interpreted using a manual that contains reliable norms for the defined reference groups.

Test Forms: Parallel or alternate versions of a test that are considered interchangeable, in that they measure the same constructs, are intended for the same purposes, and are administered using the same directions.

Test: A measuring device, instrument, and associated procedures. Educational tests are typically composed of questions or tasks designed to elicit predetermined behavioral responses or to measure specific academic content standards.

TEAMS*:* Texas Educating Adults Management System—the official database for Texas adult education and literacy data.

TSIA – W

Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA): College placement assessment and diagnostic tool designed to help institutions of higher education in Texas determine if students are 1) academically ready for college-level course work in the general areas of reading, writing, and mathematics; 2) academically ready for developmental education courses offered by the institution; or 3) require additional remediation through developmental education courses or other coursework offered by the institution.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA): Federal legislation that authorizes Adult and Family Literacy Education (Pub. L 113-128, 29 U.S.C. § 3101 et seq.).

Appendix B: Demographic and Status Measure Definitions

This section contains performance measures currently founding the 2016 National Reporting System Requirements. These measures are anticipated to change under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, regulations that are pending at the time of approval and publication of this guide. Grant recipients should follow the requirements outlined in this guide until officially notified otherwise.

Demographic Measures

Demographic Measure #1: Race/Ethnicity: Racial or ethnic category to which the participant self-identifies, appears to belong to, or is regarded in the community as belonging.

When collecting data, program staff is to first ask about a participant's ethnicity (i.e., Hispanic/Latino or not) and then select one or more races with which the participant identifies. Programs report data by counting participants in only one of the following seven aggregate racial/ethnic categories:

- **American Indian or Alaska Native**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains a tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic/Latino of any race:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term *Spanish origin* can be used in addition to *Hispanic/Latino or Latino*.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
- **Two or more races:** A person having origins in two or more race categories and not Hispanic/Latino.

Participants who identify themselves as Hispanic/Latino are reported only in that category.

Demographic Measure #2: Gender: Whether the participant is male or female.

Demographic Measure #3: Age: Years since participant's date of birth.

Participant Status Measures

Participant Status Measure #1: Labor Force Status: Whether the participant is employed, not employed, or not in the labor force at time of entry into the adult education program, according to the following criteria:

- **Employed**—Participants who work as paid employees, work at their own business or farm, or work 15 hours or more per week as unpaid workers at a farm or business operated by a member of their family. Also included are participants who are not currently working but who have jobs or businesses from which they are temporarily absent.

- **Unemployed**—Participants who are not employed but are seeking employment, make specific efforts to find a job, and are available for work.

- **Not in the Labor Force**—Participants who are not employed and are not seeking employment.

Participant Status Measure #2: Public Assistance Status: Participant is receiving financial assistance from federal, state, or local government agencies, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or equivalent general assistance, food stamps, refugee cash assistance, old-age assistance, and aid to the blind or totally disabled. Social Security benefits, unemployment insurance, and employment-funded disability are not included in this definition.

Participant Status Measure #3: Disability Status: Participant has a record of, or is regarded as having any type of physical or mental impairment, including a learning disability that substantially limits or restricts one or more major life activities (e.g., walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, and working).

Participant Status Measure #4: Rural Residency Status: Participant resides in a rural area; that is, a place with a population of less than 2,500 that is not near any metropolitan area with a population greater than 50,000, or in a city with adjacent areas of high density.

Participant Status Measure #5: Highest Degree or Level of School Completed: The highest number of years of formal schooling the participant has completed or the highest credential or degree the participant has achieved. Schooling in the U.S. or abroad is included.

Applicable Population: All participants.

Federal Reporting: Total number of participants completing the highest grade level or credential is reported for schooling either in the U.S. or abroad.

Teacher Status Measures

Teacher Status Measure #1: Total Years of Adult Education Teaching Experience: Total number of years a teacher has taught in adult education.

Teacher Status Measure #2: Teacher Certification: The credential or equivalent education achieved by the teacher, as defined in the following categories:

- **Adult Education Certification**—a state-recognized credential that focuses on teaching adult education participants.
- **K–12 Certification**— a state-recognized credential that focuses on teaching children.

- **Special Education Certification**— a state-recognized credential that focuses on teaching children or adults with disabilities or special needs.
- **TESOL Certification**— a state-recognized credential that focuses on teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Appendix C: State Guidance for Distance Learning

Definition

Distance learning is formal learning activity in which participants and instructors are separated by geography, time or both for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials come in a variety of media, including but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs, and other online technology. Teachers support distance participants through the following methods, including but not limited to, communication via mail, telephone, e-mail, online technologies and software, or face-to-face instruction.

Distance Learning Participant Versus Participant with Proxy Hours

For a participant to be counted as a distance learning participant in a program year for federal reporting purposes, the preponderant amount of instruction must be delivered through distance learning. A distance learning participant is a participant who has more proxy hours than direct hours. NRS Table IVC reports distance learning participants.

Requirement for Direct Contact Hours

Participants in distance learning must have at least 12 hours of direct contact with the program before they can be counted for federal reporting purposes. Direct contact hours involve interaction between the participant and program staff. This can be a combination of direct face-to-face contact as well as contact through telephone, video, teleconference, or online communication, in which the identity of the participant can be verified. Live online discussions, telephone conference calls, monitored labs, and live video broadcasts to remote locations are examples of direct contact hours that are countable under this definition. Direct contact hours, for the purposes here, may be orientation hours and/or direct contact hours as defined in the glossary.

Proxy Contact Hours

In addition to direct contact hours, programs may also report proxy hours to track time participants spend on distance learning activities. Proxy hours differ from direct contact hours in that the identity of the participant and/or the exact amount of time spent on a learning activity cannot always be verified directly.

A **participant with proxy hours** is a participant who engages in distance learning and has completed at least one proxy hour. A participant with proxy hours will not be counted as a distance learning participant unless the total number of proxy hours exceeds the total number of direct hours.

Distance Learning Curriculum Models

In order to determine a participant's proxy hours a program must use an approved distance learning curriculum and one of the following models:

- *Clock Time Model:* Assigns proxy hours based on the time that a participant is connected to or engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.
- *Teacher Certification Model:* Assigns a fixed number of proxy hours for each activity in a distance curriculum based on teacher verification of the extent to which a participant engaged in or completed the assignment.

- *Learner Mastery Model*: Assigns a fixed number of proxy hours based on participant mastery of each lesson in the distance curriculum as demonstrated by passing a test with a high percentage (usually 70 percent to 80 percent) of correct answers.

Curriculum Approval Process

Each curriculum employed for distance learning delivery must be approved by the state office before using and before proxy hours can be reported. The Approved List Distance Learning Curricula for Texas Adult Education with associated models used for calculating proxy hours is posted on the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning's (TCALL) website at http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/initiatives/distcurriculum.html.

Each new curriculum for which proxy hours potentially are to be calculated must be reviewed and approved by the AEL State Office with input from a statewide distance learning advisory committee. The advisory committee, appointed by the AEL State Office, shall be chaired by AEL State Office staff and consist of no fewer than three instructors, two program administrators, and one professional development expert who have extensive experience implementing distance learning curricula with adult education participants.

The approval of a new curriculum for distance learning purposes begins with a request from a program manager who has completed a pilot of the curriculum. The program director initiates the request by emailing adulteducation@twc.state.tx.us with the request. AEL staff in turn sends the local program director the request form, which is submitted back upon completion to adulteducation@twc.state.tx.us.

Assessment

All participants engaged in distance learning courses will be post-tested after the same amount of instructional time as other participants, according to the approved Assessment Guide. Both direct contact hours and proxy contact hours are counted to calculate the amount of instructional time. Participants must appear in person at a proctored program site for baseline tests and any subsequent post-tests. Assessments must be conducted through face-to-face interaction with a trained test administrator in a secure setting using only state and NRS approved tests.

Distance Learning Models

In order to determine a participant's proxy hours, a program must use an approved distance learning curriculum and one of the following models:

a. Clock Time Model: Assigns proxy hours based on the time that a participant is connected to or engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.
b. Teacher Certification Model: Assigns a fixed number of proxy hours for each activity in a distance curriculum based on teacher verification of the extent to which a participant engaged in or completed the assignment.
c. Learner Mastery Model: Assigns a fixed number of proxy hours based on learner mastery of each lesson in the distance curriculum as demonstrated by passing a test with a high percentage (usually 70 percent to 80 percent) of correct answers.

Proxy hours calculated through the Clock Time Model must use curricula that electronically track time the participant spends interacting with instructional material and disconnects after a preset period of inactivity. Publishers must assure that a maximum of 15 minutes of inactivity occurs before disconnection.

Teacher Certification and Learner Mastery Models must justify program recommendations for assigning proxy hours based on participant pilot(s) of the curriculum. Both models involve a pilot of the curriculum by at least one teacher with a minimum of 10 participants who, on average, use the curriculum at least 10 hours. For both models, an activity must be completed by at least five participants in order to be considered for proxy hour calculation. During the pilot, participants may work on the curriculum either during class or outside of class. A participant log or computerized print-out must track how long participants work on each assignment. After participants complete the curriculum, the teacher will collect the participant logs and submit them to the Distance Learning Advisory Committee for proxy hour determination.

- Teacher Certification: Proxy hours are awarded based on the teacher's certification of participant's completion of assignments. Teachers may award full proxy hour credit if the assignment is completed and demonstrates competence in the teacher's professional judgment. Teachers may award half of the full proxy hour credit if the assignment is only partially completed but still demonstrates competence. Assignments that do not demonstrate competence must be resubmitted by the participants in order to be counted for proxy hour time.
- Learner Mastery: Proxy hours are awarded based on a passing score on a test over a particular assignment, lesson, or unit. The passing rate will be set at a minimum of 70 percent unless otherwise recommended during the curriculum approval process.

Registration and Assignment

All of the required NRS data elements will be recorded in TEAMS for distance learning participants and participants with proxy hours. For data to be reported on NRS Table IV or Table IVC, 12 or more direct hours and a baseline test are required.

When creating a distance learning class in TEAMS, it will be necessary to identify the curriculum and the model used for calculating proxy hours. Once identified as a distance learning class in TEAMS, participants can be assigned and both direct hours, and proxy hours can be recorded.

a. Proxy hours in the Clock Time Model are tracked electronically.
b. Proxy hours in the Teacher Certification Model are awarded for various activities completed by the participant and verified by the instructor. These proxy hours are predetermined for each activity.
c. Proxy hours in the Learner Mastery Model are awarded when the participant passes a test demonstrating mastery of the course content. These proxy hours are predetermined.

If the Teacher Certification or Learner Mastery Model is chosen, any direct contact hours of instruction from the same curriculum may not be counted since total proxy hours have already been assigned.

However, any direct contact hours for registration, orientation, assessment, or instruction that are not part of the distance curriculum may still be counted.

Reporting Hours

Programs will report all instructional hours into the state database (TEAMS). Classes that have been identified as distance learning classes in TEAMS will permit programs to record proxy hours and direct hours separately.

Distance Learning Program Plan

All programs offering distance learning classes will develop and maintain a distance learning plan, which should be available for review at the request of TWC. The plan is written during participation in required distance learning training for programs new to distance learning. Program administration will revise the plan to accommodate changes in the delivery of distance education, including the addition of new distance learning curriculum.

Required and Other Training

Training on distance learning is required for key administrative and instructional staff.

If the program director or teacher/coordinator/instructional aide/etc. is:

- **New** to distance learning in AEL programs, he or she must complete required training;
- **Not** new to distance learning in AEL programs, no training is required, if the director has experience with AEL distance learning before July 1, 2015.

Training consists of two sections. The first is an introductory course that explains the distance learning procedure in Texas and how distance learning is tracked, documented, and entered into TEAMS. The second section covers best practices in the development and implementation of a distance learning program for AEL participants. By the end of the distance learning training, programs will have completed a draft of their Distance Learning Local Provider Plan.

Appendix D: TEAMS Determination of Domain of Significance (DOS) and Baseline versus Progress

The administration date each subtest of the standardized test instrument used must be prior to the first contact hour in a class. Tests administered in all sub-test areas within 30 days of each other are compared to determine the placement of the participant.

Establishment of the Domain of Significance

1. The closest test administered **before** the first calendar day for which class contact hours are acquired is first considered.
2. Tests administered up to 30 days before the test that was located in step 1 are compared next.
3. The lowest educational functioning level determined by the tests compared during the pre-test determines the domain of significance (DOS) and placement in TEAMS. If a participant has the same scale score for two different subtests/domains, TEAMS will look at the maximum score for each functioning level. The subtest/domain with the highest score differential is the lowest, and thus TEAMS will select it as the DOS.

Determination of the Progress Tests

For a test to be considered a progress test, and for the hours of a participant to be counted toward the total hours between pre-/post-tests, the test must be given *one calendar day* after the final contact hour being used for the test.

For a test to be considered a *new baseline test* in a new program year, the test must be given *one calendar day* before the first contact hour.

TEAMS will consider a test from a previous program year up to *one calendar year* after that test as a pre-test, therefore, if no test is given at the beginning of the program year before contact hours are acquired in that program year, the last test given in the previous program year will count as the baseline test for the new program year.

Figure 3: Test Considered a New Baseline

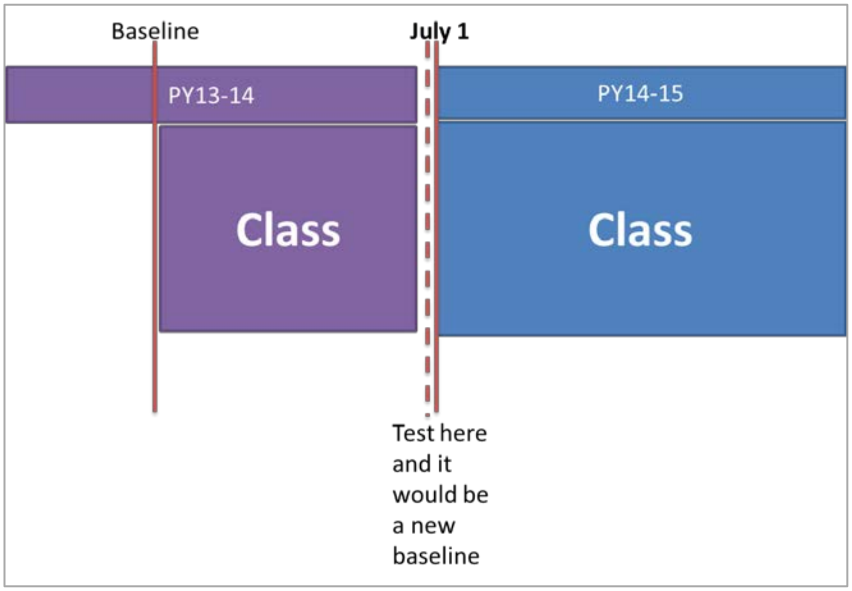
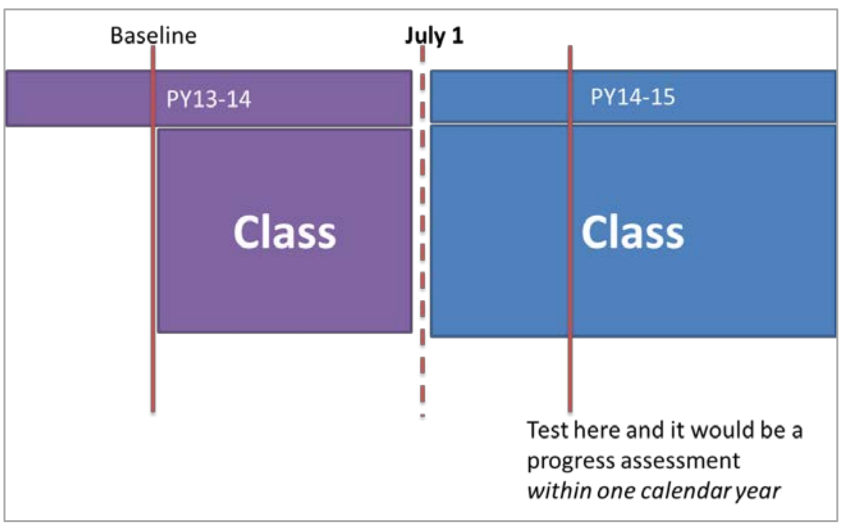


Figure 4: Test Considered a Progress Test



Example Scenarios:

a) *TABE®* 9 Math M is administered on August 3, *TABE®* 9 Reading M is administered on August 14, and *TABE®* Language M is administered on August 20. The first contact hour was recorded on August 17. All three subtests will be compared to determine the DOS. All subtests are within 30 days of the Reading Test, which was the test closest to the first contact hour and before the first contact hour. The Math test was within the 30 days of the Reading subtest. The Language subtest was within 30 days of the Reading and Math subtests and within 10 days after the first contact hour.

b) *TABE®* 9 Math M is administered on July16, *TABE®* 9 Reading M is administered on August 14, and *TABE®* Language M is administered on August 20. The first contact hour was *recorded* on August 3.

Only two subtests, Reading and Math, will be compared to determine the DOS. The Math subtest is within 30 days of the Reading Test, which was the test closest to the first contact hour and before the first contact hour. The Math test was within the 30 days of the Reading subtest. The Language subtest was not within the first 10 days of class, nor is it within 30 days of the Math and Reading subtests.

c) *TABE®* 9 Math M is administered on July 1, *TABE®* 9 Reading M is administered on August 14, and *TABE®* Language M is administered on August 20. The first contact hour was recorded on August 17. According to the 30/10 day rule, two subtests (Reading and Language) will be compared to determine the DOS. The Math subtest was not used for the comparison since it was administered outside the 30 days of the Reading subtest, which was before and closest to the first contact hour (day). The Language sub-test was used in the comparison since it was within 30 days of the Reading sub-test.

d) *TABE®* 9 Math M is administered on July 1, *TABE®* 9 Reading M is administered on July14, and *TABE®* Language M is administered on August 20. The first contact hour was recorded on August 17. According to the 30/10 day rule, two subtests (Reading and Math) will be compared to determine the DOS. The Math subtest was used for the comparison since it was administered within the 30 days of the Reading subtest, which was before and closest to the first contact hour (day). The Language subtest was not used in the comparison since it was not within 30 days of the Reading subtest.

e) If the subtests being compared by TEAMS show the same scale scores in the same EFLs, TEAMS subtracts the scale score from the maximum scale score possible in the EFL. For example, if a participant scores a 470 *TABE®* Reading (low intermediate basic education) and 470 *TABE®* Math (low intermediate basic education), TEAMS subtracts 470 from 517 to get 47 (Reading difference), and 470 from 505 to get 35 (Math difference); the greatest difference is 47, which is for the *TABE®* Reading. Therefore, *TABE®* reading would be selected as the DOS.

Appendix E: Participant Orientation to the Testing Process

The goal of assessment is to assist participants in exploring their strengths and gaining an understanding of where their strengths lie and what areas may need further development in order to transition to a training program or college or meet their employment goals. A full assessment profile includes background information on work and educational experiences, interests, dedication, and outside support needs. The assessment process includes testing, along with the collection of other information, including participant's life, work, and educational experiences, their educational and employment goals, and their current support needs. Whenever possible, an interview should be conducted with the participant by program intake personnel and/or by the participant's instructor.

The testing process should be transparent and explained in advance to participants. Before testing, participants should be informed of the reason and purpose for the tests. Participants should know how long the tests will take and the number and frequency of breaks they will be allowed. Participants should be able to obtain their scores in a timely manner, so it is important to let them know when their results will be made available. Once test scores are obtained, it is best to schedule one-on-one time to go over test results with participants and explain the scores in the context of the participants' goals and objectives. This can be accomplished through mini-conferences held during regular class time.

Always explain to participants that test scores and their participant files are kept confidential. Explain that designated program staff will have access to test scores, but scores will be kept secure and shared on a need-to-know basis. Explain that participant information is entered into statewide database system, but it is kept confidential and only program and state office staffs have access to the database information.

It is important that before testing, participants feel at ease. Participants should be given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the test environment and testing instruments. For example, participants need basic mouse and keyboard review if they are taking a computer-based test. Participants should be allowed to enter the room well before the test; research indicates that familiarity with the room and plenty of time to "settle in" improves test performance.

Building rapport with participants before the test will help many participants feel at ease during the test. Addressing typical areas of participant concern will assist participants in feeling more at ease. Questions that may be brought up by participants and suggested responses appear below:

- ***Will I get into the program?*** Almost all participants will qualify for placement in an adult education and literacy program. The only participants who will not qualify are participants who already have a high school diploma or a TxCHSE AND whose test scores in all areas are above 12.9 grade level. Additionally, participants who are trying to get into specialized career pathways programs within an adult education program may be especially nervous; let these participants know that placement into career pathways is based on several factors, including test scores. If participants do not qualify based on test scores, they can enroll and attend standard AEL classes to help them better prepare for the test, thus providing an opportunity to retest.
- ***Will I "pass"?*** Explain that the test is not a pass or fail test. Rather, it is intended to be used as part of other information and background to provide program staff with a better understanding of the

participant's strengths and weaknesses, insuring that placement is best suited to assist in meeting the participant's goals and objectives.

- ***I have not been in school for years. I have forgotten a lot.*** Explain that this happens to everyone. Tell participants to do the best that they can. Explain that if they are placed in a class and realize that it is too easy for them, they can always talk to the program staff about being placed in a different course.

Furthermore, some participants may not have taken a test in 10 or 20 years, some participants may have never taken a standardized test, and many participants have had bad experiences with testing in the past. Below are sample questions to ask participants to gauge their comfort level, along with suggested assistance that test administrators can provide:

Table 13: Sample Questions for Test Administrators

Question to the group	Assistance for the group
Can everyone hear and see the board?	Discuss accommodation options. These may include: -Turn off any distracting noises (like a loud air conditioner) while you explain things -Have people move close to the front of the room -Large-print versions (if allowed by the publisher) -Test individuals alone -Segment testing into shorter time periods as allowed by the publisher
It might have been a long time since you were in school or taken a test, I'm going to take some time to explain the testing process so you are as well as possible.	Share your own testing experiences and explain the test process participants will undergo.
(*If applicable*) Would it be useful to review how to take a multiple-choice test?	As applicable, distribute the score sheets and review the form. Explain and check for comprehension the following: -The concept of multiple choice -There is "only one right answer" unless the tests specifically says to select one or more responses -How to fill in machine-scored answer sheets if applicable -How to correct mistakes -How to eliminate answers

Appendix F: Participant Orientation and Goal Setting Procedure

Pre-testing, along with participant orientation and goal setting, are central to participant assessment.

Participant Orientation

AEL grant recipients are required to provide an orientation of at least three but not more than 12 hours to all participants. Orientation hours should be recorded from a participant sign-in sheet designated for "testing and orientation" and entered into the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) in the participant's profile. *(See Glossary, Orientation Hours)*

During the orientation, programs should include, at a minimum, information about program and collaborating organization services, attendance policy, class participation, participant support services, emergency evacuation procedures, grievance procedures, rights and responsibilities of participants, and program code of conduct in a written participant handbook or syllabus. Programs should also ensure that all participants, including English language learners and those with disabilities, understand and have access to program information.

Programs should also use their orientation as a time to provide participants with learning strategies, information about learning styles, and success skills. The orientation should act as a part of the entire assessment process, assessing not only participants' academic skills, but their personal, academic, and employment strengths, as well as possible information, supports, and resources that might facilitate success in meeting their goal and objectives.

Finally, the orientation should establish a set of short- and long-term goals for the participant in a process outlined in the next section.

Goal Setting Procedure

Programs must have a goal setting process whereby participants meet with teachers or an intake counselor to help identify and set goals for instruction and revisit and update goals on a regular basis.

Individual Training, Education and Career Plan (ITEC Plan)

Programs are required to include goal setting within their assessment and placement, orientation, and instructional delivery processes. The goal setting process must lead to the development of an ITEC Plan within the first few weeks of instruction for all participants reported in TEAMS. The goal of the ITEC Plan is to delineate and prioritize long-term and short-term academic and career goals. Following are examples of ITEC Plan topics:

- Management of home, life, child care, and transportation needs;
- Access to AEL services, including counseling, tutoring, technology, and distance learning;
- Access to support services;
- Occupational assessment;
- Establishment of career goals;
- Access to college/training services;
- Access to internships/on-the-job training; and
- Job development and employment search.

Program directors who need to arrange training for staff on goal setting should contact the statewide AEL professional development provider via the contact information on page 2.

Accommodations

Participants who self-identify a given physical, mental, or emotional disability and can provide professionally certified documentation must be provided appropriate accommodations for completing goals.

Appendix G: Sample Literacy Screen Tool

Participants should be asked to fill in the information indicated on the form to screen the participant for basic reading and writing literacy skills. If the participant is unable to complete the form, indicating a lack of basic literacy (reading and writing) skills, an oral English proficiency test such as *BEST Plus* may be a more appropriate test and the *BEST Literacy Test* should not be administered.

[***BEST Literacy Test Manual, 2006]***

Name:

Address:

Date of birth:

Signature:

Today's date:

Appendix H: Collecting and Reporting Cohort-Designated Core Outcome Measures

This section contains performance measures currently found in the 2016 National Reporting System Requirements. These measures are anticipated to change under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regulations, which are pending at the time of approval and publication of this guide. Grant recipients should follow the requirements outlined in this guide until officially notified otherwise.

Table 14: Summary for Cohort-Designated Core Outcome Measure Populations and Timelines

Core Outcome Measure	Participant Populations Included	Time Period for Data Match
Entered employment	Participants unemployed at entry with employment goal who exited	First quarter after exit quarter*
Retained employment	Participants unemployed at entry with employment goal who exit and obtain a job during first quarter after exit; and participants employed at entry with a goal of retained or improved employment who exit	Third quarter after exit quarter
Placement in postsecondary education or training	1. Exited participants who exit who earned a secondary credential while enrolled 2. Had a secondary credential at entry 3. Are enrolled in a class specifically designed for transition to postsecondary education	Any time after exit through the end of the program year (June 30) following the year of program exit.
Receipt of secondary diploma or its recognized equivalent	Exited participants who take all TxCHSE exam tests or are enrolled in adult high school at the high ASE level.	Any time after exit to the end of the reporting period (December 31)

*For all measures, exit quarter is the quarter when the participant completes instruction or has not received instruction for 90 days and has no instruction scheduled. A job obtained while the participant is enrolled can be counted but must be reported and measured during the first quarter after exiting the program if the participant remains employed in that quarter.

Follow-up Measure #1: Entered Employment

Definition: Participant enters employment by the end of the first quarter after the program exit quarter. Employment is working in a paid, unsubsidized job or working 15 hours or more per week in an unpaid job on a farm or business operated by a family member or the participant. The exit quarter is the quarter in which instruction ends; the participant terminates or has not received instruction for 90 days, and is not scheduled to receive further instruction. A job obtained while the participant is enrolled can be counted for entered employment and is reported if the participant is still employed in the first quarter after exit from the program.

Applicable Population: Participants who are not employed at time of entry and in the labor force who exit during the program year.

Federal Reporting: States report the total number of unemployed participants in the labor force who enter employment and exit during the program year and the total number of participants in the labor force who are unemployed at entry who exit during the program year. Entered employment rate is computed by dividing these numbers.

Follow-up Measure #2: Retained Employment

Definition: Participant remains employed in the third quarter after exit quarter.

Applicable Population: Participants who, at time of entry, were not employed and in the labor force, who are employed in the first quarter after exit quarter, and participants employed at entry.

Federal Reporting: States report the total number of participants in the applicable population (see above) who are employed in the third quarter after program exit and the total applicable population (i.e., the number of participants in the labor force who were unemployed at entry, and who entered employment; and participants who are employed at entry). The retained employment rate is computed by dividing the number of participants who retain employment by the total applicable population.

Follow-up Measure #3: Receipt of a Secondary School Diploma

Definition: The participant obtains certification of attaining passing scores on TxCHSE exam subtests, or the participant obtains a diploma or state-recognized equivalent, documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies (high school or adult high school diploma).

Applicable Population: All enrolled participants who take all TxCHSE exam subtests, or are enrolled in adult high school at the high ASE level, who exit during the program year.

Federal Reporting: States report the total number of participants in the applicable population (see above) and the number of participants who pass all TxCHSE exam subtests or obtain secondary school diplomas who exit. To compute a rate or percentage of attainment, the number of participants receiving a secondary school diploma or pass the TxCHSE exam subtests is divided by the total number of participants in the applicable population who exit during the program year. If a state has a procedure officially recognizing attainment of a foreign language TxCHSE as receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, the state may also report attainment of a foreign language TxCHSE in the NRS for adult literacy. A passing score on the TxCHSE exam is defined by the state and must be consistent with state policies relating to the issuance of a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Follow-up Measure #4: Entered Postsecondary Education or Training

Definition: Participant enrolls in a postsecondary educational, occupational skills training program, or an apprenticeship training program that does not duplicate other services or training received, regardless of whether the prior services or training were completed.

Applicable Population: All participants who passed the TxCHSE exam subtests or earned a secondary credential while enrolled in adult education, or have a secondary credential at entry, or are enrolled in a class specifically designed for transitioning to postsecondary education who exit during the program year. A transition class is a class that has a specific purpose to prepare participants for entry into postsecondary education, training, or an apprenticeship program.

Federal Reporting: The total number of participants who enter postsecondary education or a training program and the total number of participants in the applicable population (see above) who exit during the program year are reported. Entry into postsecondary education or training can occur any time from the time of exit until the end of the following program year. To compute a rate of placement, the number of participants enrolling in postsecondary education or training, through the end of the program year following the year of program exit, is divided by the total number of learners in the applicable population who exited during the program year.

Appendix I: Required Data Elements for Enrollment Forms

On July 22, 2015, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the joint information collection request for performance reporting to fulfill the requirements under section 116 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This represents a collaborative effort among staff from the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration; the Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education; and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The information collection request included WIOA common data elements, known as the Joint Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL), with common definitions and data elements, to be used by states for reporting purposes. These common data elements are anticipated to be included in upcoming versions of the NRS Implementation Guidelines. The final ICR and related reporting regulations have not been released at the time of the publication of this guide. The information outlined below is current as of June 13, 2016, but may be revised pending release of final reporting regulations.

More information on WIOA reporting can be found at http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/wioa.htm.

The following common data elements are required to be collected from participants by all Texas grant recipients and their providers:

- Items marked with a ^{P} are considered Personally Identifiable Information (PII).
- Items marked with ^{SP} are considered sensitive PII[1] and must be protected.
- Items marked with a ^{*SP} are only considered sensitive PII when they are paired with an individual's last name and first initial.
- For more information on protecting PII, please see **Attachment 1.**

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Identifying Information	Enrollment Date	Date that individual is beginning service in the adult education and literacy program	MM/DD/YYYY	Yes

[1] Sensitive PII that is not tied to an individual's last name and first initial is considered sensitive when it is combined with other information that can identify the individual. See Attachment 1 for more information.

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Identifying Information	Participant Name [P]	Salutation, last, first name, and middle initial of participant	Salutation • Mr. • Ms. • Mrs. • Dr. Last name [P] First name [P] Middle Initial [P]	Yes
Identifying Information	Document Type (one only) [P]	Type of document being used to capture an identifying number for the participant	• Social Security Number (preferred) • Driver's License • Locally Assigned Number • Other	Yes
Identifying Information	Document Number [SP]	Number corresponding to the document type	User-entered number (open-entry)	Yes
Identifying Information	Mailing Address [P]	Participant mailing address	• Street • City • State • Zip	Yes
Identifying Information	Phone Number [P]	Phone number	• Mobile telephone # • Work telephone number • Home telephone number	Yes
Identifying Information	E-mail Address [SP]	E-mail address	E-mail address	Yes
Equal Opportunity Information	Date of Birth [*SP]	Date of birth of the participant	MM/DD/YYYY	Yes
Equal Opportunity Information	Gender	Gender indicated by participant	• Male • Female • Participant did not self-identify	Yes with some changes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Equal Opportunity Information	Individual with a Disability*SP	Whether the participant indicates that he/she has any "disability," as defined in Section 3(2)(a) of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102). Under that definition, a "disability" is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-disclose	Yes with some changes
Equal Opportunity Information	Category of Disability*SP	Category of disability	(Select all that apply) • Physical/Chronic Health Condition • Physical/Mobility Impairment • Mental or Psychiatric Disability • Vision-related disability • Hearing-related disability • Learning Disability • Cognitive/Intellectual • Participant did not disclose type of disability • No disability	No
Equal Opportunity Information	Learning-Disabled Adult*SP	Whether the individual indicates that he/she has a learning disability, as defined as a learner with an IQ in the low-average and above level (70+ to any level) who has deficits (related to neurological impairments) in capacity in defined limited learning areas; this can include dyslexia (reading disability), dysgraphia (writing disability), and dyscalculia (math disability). The learner also has a history of previous educational efforts.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-disclose	Yes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Equal Opportunity Information	Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latino	Whether the participant indicates that he/she is a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture in origin, regardless of race.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-identify	Yes
Equal Opportunity Information	Race: American Indian/Alaskan Native	Whether the participant indicates that he/she is a member of an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688) [43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.], which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-identify	Yes
Equal Opportunity Information	Race: Asian	Whether the participant indicates that he/she is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent (e.g., India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan). This area includes, for example, Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-identify	Yes
Equal Opportunity Information	Race: Black/African American	Whether the participant indicates that he/she is a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-identify	Yes
Equal Opportunity Information	Race: Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Island	Whether the participant indicates that he/she is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-identify	Yes
Equal Opportunity Information	Race: White	Whether the participant indicates that he/she is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-identify	Yes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Veteran Characteristics	Veteran Status *SP	Whether the participant is a person who served on active duty in the armed forces and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable. Record 0 if the participant does not meet the condition described above.	• Yes • No • Participant did not self-disclose	No
Veteran Characteristics	Eligible Veteran Status *SP	• Whether the participant is a person who served in the active U.S. military, naval, or air service for a period of less than or equal to 180 days, and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable; **(select Yes, <=180)** or • Whether the participant served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days and was discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge; or was discharged or released because of a service-connected disability; or as a member of a reserve component under an order to active duty pursuant to section 167(a), (d), or (g), 673 (a) of Title 10, U.S.C., served on active duty during a period of war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized and was discharged or released from such duty with other than a dishonorable discharge; **(select Yes, eligible veteran)** or • Whether the participant is: (a) the spouse of any person who died on active duty or of a service connected disability, (b) the spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who at the time of application for assistance under this part, is listed, pursuant to 38 U.S.C 101 and the regulations issued there under, by the Secretary concerned, in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for more than 90 days: (i) missing in action; (ii) captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or (iii) forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power; or (c) the spouse of any person who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service connected disability or the spouse of a veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence. **(Select Yes, other eligible person).**	• Yes, <=180 days • Yes, eligible veteran • Yes, other eligible person • No	No

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Veteran Status	Campaign Veteran *SP	*May be removed for AEL participants* Whether the participant is an eligible veteran (i.e., coding value 1 in Element #301) who served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge or expeditionary medal has been authorized as identified and listed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). A current listing of the campaigns can be found at OPM's website: http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vgmedal2.asp.	• Yes • No	No
Veteran Status	Disabled Veteran *SP	• Whether the participant is a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces and who is entitled to compensation regardless of rating (including those rated at 0 percent); or who but for the receipt of military retirement pay would be entitled to compensation, under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); or was discharged or released from activity duty because of a service-connected disability (**indicate Yes)**. • Whether the participant is a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces and who is entitled to compensation (or who, but for the receipt of military retirement pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the DVA for a disability, (i) rated at 30 percent or more or, (ii) rated at 10 or 20 percent in the case of a veteran who has been determined by DVA to have a serious employment handicap (**indicate Yes, special disabled)**.	• Yes • Yes, special disabled • No	No
Veteran Status	Date of Actual Military Separation *SP	Date on which the participant separated from the active duty with the U.S. armed forces	MM/DD/YYYY	No

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Employment and Education Information	Employment Status at Program Entry	• Whether the participant (a) did any work at all as a paid employee, (b) did any work at all in his or her own business, profession, or farm, (c) worked as an unpaid worker in an enterprise operated by a member of the family, or (d) is one who was not working, but has a job or business from which he or she was temporarily absent because of illness, bad weather, vacation, labor-management dispute, or personal reasons, whether or not paid by the employer for time-off, and whether or not seeking another job **(Select Employed)**; or • Whether the participant is a person who, although employed, either (a) has received a notice of termination of employment or the employer has issued a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) or other notice that the facility or enterprise will close, or (b) is a transitioning service member (i.e., within 12 months of separation or 24 months of retirement **(Select Employed but Received notice of Termination or Military Separation)**; or • Whether the participant is not in the labor force (i.e., those who are not employed and are not actively looking for work, including those who are incarcerated.) **(Select not in labor force)**; or • Whether the participant does not meet any one of the conditions described above **(Select Not Employed)**	• Employed • Employed, but Received Notice of Termination • Not in labor force • Not Employed	Yes with some changes
Employment and Education Information	Long-Term Unemployed	Whether the participant has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks at program entry.	• Yes, Unemployed ≥ 27 consecutive weeks • No	No
Employment and Education Information	Hours Employed per Week	If the participant has identified that they are employed, or not unemployed, the number of hours per week that participant, on average, works.	Number	Yes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Employment and Education Information	Reason not Looking for Work	For participants identified as "not in the labor force", the reason the participant is not actively seeking employment.	• Full-time caregiver/parent • Disabled • Incarcerated • Ineligible to work • Dependent • Institutionalized • Other	Yes
Employment and Education Information	Type of Community	Whether the participant resides in a location with less than 2,500 inhabitants and located outside urbanized areas **(Select Rural)**.	• Rural • Urban	

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Employment and Education Information	Highest School Grade Completed	The highest grade completed by the participant **at program entry.**	• First Grade Completed • Second Grade Completed • Third Grade Completed • Fourth Grade Completed • Fifth Grade Completed • Sixth Grade Completed • Seventh Grade Completed • Eight Grade Completed • Ninth Grade Completed • Tenth Grade Completed • Eleventh Grade Completed • Twelfth Grade Completed • One college, or full-time technical or vocational school years completed • Two college, or full-time technical or vocational school years completed • Three college, or full-time technical or vocational school years completed • Bachelor's degree or equivalent • Education beyond the Bachelor's Degree • Attained High School Diploma • Attained GED or Equivalent • Attained Certificate of Attendance/Completion • Attained Other Postsecondary Degree or Certification • Attained Associate's Diploma or Degree • No school grades completed	Yes with some changes
Employment and Education Information	Location of Highest Grade Completed	Location where the individual completed their highest level of education	• In the United States • Outside the United States	Yes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Public Assistance Information	On Public Assistance*[SP]	Whether the participant is receiving financial assistance from federal, state, or local government agencies, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or equivalent general assistance, food stamps, refugee cash assistance, old-age assistance, and aid to the blind or totally disabled. Social Security benefits, unemployment insurance, and employment-funded disability are not included in this definition.	• Yes • No • Did not disclose	Yes
Public Assistance Information	Expanded Eligibility for TANF*[SP]	Whether the individual is eligible for TANF services, per AEL 01-15c1.	• Yes • No • Did not disclose	Yes
Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Characteristics	Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Status	• Whether the participant is a low-income individual (i) who for the 12 consecutive months out of the 24 months prior to application for the program involved, has been primarily employed in agriculture or fish farming labor that is characterized by chronic unemployment or underemployment; and (ii) faces multiple barriers to economic self-sufficiency **(Select Seasonal Farmworker)**; or • Whether the participant is a seasonal farmworker and whose agricultural labor requires travel to a job site such that the farmworker is unable to return to a permanent place of residence within the same day **(Select Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker)**; or • Whether the participant is a dependent (as defined in 20 CFR 685.110) of the individual described as a seasonal or migrant seasonal farmworker above **(Select A dependent of a seasonal, or migrant and seasonal farmworker)**.	• Seasonal Farmworker • Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker • A dependent of a seasonal, or migrant and seasonal farmworker • No	Yes with some changes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Additional Youth Characteristics	Foster Care Youth*[SP]	Whether the participant is a person who is currently in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, or has been in the foster care system at any point during his or her lifetime.	• Yes • No	No

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Homeless Individual, Homeless Children and Youths, or Runaway Youth*SP	Whether the participant: (a) Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; this includes an individual who: (i) is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; (ii) is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations; (iii) is living in an emergency or transitional shelter; (iv) is abandoned in a hospital; or (v) is awaiting foster care placement; (b) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; (c) Is a migratory child who in the preceding 36 months was required to move from one school district to another due to changes in the parent's or parent's spouse's seasonal employment in agriculture, dairy, or fishing work; or (d) Is under 18 years of age and absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her family (i.e., runaway youth). This definition does not include an individual imprisoned or detained under an Act of Congress or state law. An individual who may be sleeping in a temporary accommodation while away from home should not, as a result of that alone, be recorded as homeless.	• Yes • No	Yes with some changes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Low Income*[SP]	Whether the participant: (a) Receives, or in the six months prior to application to the program has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months prior to application to the program has received: (i) Assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et seq.); (ii) Assistance through the temporary assistance for needy families program under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601 et seq.); (iii) Assistance through the supplemental security income program under Title XVI of the Social Security Act (42 USC 1381); or (iv) State or local income-based public assistance. (b) Is in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level; (c) Is a youth who receives, or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 USC 1751 et seq.); (d) Is a foster child on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made; (e) Is an individual with a disability whose own income is the poverty line but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement; (f) Is a homeless individual or a homeless child or youth or runaway youth (see Data Element #700); or (g) Is a youth living in a high-poverty area.	• Yes • No	No

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Additional Reportable Characteristics	English Language Learner	Whether the participant is a person who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and also meets at least one of the following two conditions (a) his or her native language is a language other than English, or (b) he or she lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.	• Yes • No	No
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Cultural Barriers*[SP]	Whether the participant perceives him- or herself as possessing attitudes, beliefs, customs, or practices that influence a way of thinking, acting, or working that may serve as a hindrance to employment.	• Yes • No	No
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Immigrant*[SP]	Participant was not born in the United States but currently resides within the country.	• Yes • No • Did not disclose	Yes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Displaced Homemaker	Whether the participant has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who— (A)(i) has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; or (ii) is the dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty (as defined in section 101(d)(1) of title 10, United States Code) and whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment (as defined in section 991(b) of title 10, United States Code, or pursuant to paragraph (4) of such section), a call or order to active duty pursuant to a provision of law referred to in section 101(a)(13)(B) of title 10, United States Code, a permanent change of station, or the service-connected (as defined in section 101(16) of title 38, United States Code) death or disability of the member; and (B) is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.	• Yes • No	Yes
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Single Parent	Whether the participant is single, separated, divorced, or a widowed individual who has primary responsibility for one or more dependent children under age 18 (including single pregnant women).	• Yes • No	Yes with some changes
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Dislocated Worker	Whether the participant has received notice of pending or actual layoff from a job, or an individual who receives a publicly announced notice of pending or actual layoff.	• Yes • No	Yes
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Parent of Child(ren) ages 0–5	Parent of Child(ren) ages 0–5	• Yes • No	Yes
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Parent of Child(ren) ages 6–10	Parent of Child(ren) ages 6–10	• Yes • No	Yes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Parent of Child(ren) ages 11–13	Parent of Child(ren) ages 11–13	• Yes • No	Yes
Additional Reportable Characteristics	Parent of Child(ren) ages 14–18	Parent of Child(ren) ages 14–18	• Yes • No	Yes
Corrections and Institutional Funded Participants	In Correctional Facility	Whether the individual is incarcerated in a state or federal penal institution for criminal offenders. This includes prisons, jails, and other correctional detention centers.	• Yes • No	Yes
Corrections and Institutional Funded Participants	In Community Corrections	Whether the participant is in a community-based rehabilitation facility or halfway house.	• Yes • No	Yes
Corrections and Institutional Funded Participants	Other Institutionalized Setting	Whether the participant is in any other medical or special institution not included in previous categories.	• Yes • No	Yes
Corrections and Institutional Funded Participants	On Parole	Whether the individual is currently on parole.	• Yes • No	Yes
Corrections and Institutional Funded Participants	On Probation (Community Supervision)	Whether the individual is currently on probation.	• Yes • No	Yes
Referral Type	One-Stop Center Referral	Whether the individual is a referral from a Workforce Solutions Office.	• Yes • No	Yes
Referral Type	TANF Referral*[SP]	Whether the individual is a referral from the designated TANF agency.	• Yes • No	Yes
Referral Type	Referral from College	Whether the individual is a referral from a college or other eligible institution, placing into eligible levels based on the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) test, per AEL 06-15.	• Yes • No	No

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Goals	Participant Goals	Goals of the participant at entry into the program	(Select all that apply) • Obtain High School Diploma • Obtain GED • Obtain a Job • Retain Job or Advance in Job • Enrollment in College or Other Training • Leave Public Assistance*SP • Achieve Citizenship Skills • Greater Involvement in Children's Education • Greater Involvement in Children's Literacy Activities • Greater Involvement in Community Activities • Register to Vote or Vote for First Time • Improve Basic Skills • Make Progress in English (LEP) • Obtain U.S. Citizenship • General Involvement (Volunteering) • Obtain/Improve: Parenting • Obtain/Improve: Health Care*SP • Obtain/Improve: Occupational Skills • Obtain/Improve: Government and Law • Obtain/Improve: Community Resource • Obtain/Improve: Consumer Economics • Other ___________________	Yes

Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Item Options	Was item collected prior to 2016? (Yes, Yes with some changes, No)
Self-Reported Achievements	Participant Achievements	Achievements reported by the program prior to the close of the particular program year.	(Select all that apply) • Obtained High School Diploma • Obtained GED • Obtained Employment • Retained Job or Advanced in Job • Enrolled in College or Other Training • Left Public Assistance*SP • Achieved Citizenship Skills • Gtr. Involvement in Children's Education • Gtr. Involvement in Children's Literacy Activities • Gtr. Involvement in Community Activities • Registered to Vote or Voted for First Time • Improved Basic Skills • Made Progress in English (LEP) • Received U.S. Citizenship • General Involvement (Volunteering) • Obtained/Improved: Parenting • Obtained/Improved: Health Care * • Self-Reported Achievements • Obtained/Improved: Occupational • Knowledge • Obtained/Improved: Government and Law • Obtained/Improved: Community Resource • Obtained/Improved: Consumer Economics • Achieved Reason for Enrollment	Yes

Appendix J: Guidance on Testing Accommodations

Participants with documented disabilities will be granted reasonable accommodations upon request during testing and any program services.

In the program intake and screening, programs must ensure that participants have the opportunity to identify needs that may require additional assessment supports and review, including, but not limited to, identified or suspected disabilities. If applicable, support needs, including needs of participants with disabilities, must be provided to ensure that they have an equal opportunity to benefit from services.

Accommodations from CTB/McGraw-Hill for *TABE®*:

TABE® 9/10 is available in large print and audio. Additionally, *TABE®* outlines a framework with test accommodations in three categories.

- Category 1 accommodations are not expected to influence examinee's performance in a way that alters the interpretation of either criterion or norm-referenced test scores. Scores from examinees in this category should be interpreted and reported in the same way as scores of examinees who take the test under standard conditions. No notation is necessary. Example Category 1 accommodation: Take the test alone or in a study carrel.
- Category 2 accommodations may have an effect on examinee's performance that should be considered when interpreting and reporting scores. Example Category 2 accommodation: Use extra testing time for a timed test.
- Category 3 accommodations may also have an effect on examinee's performance that should be considered when interpreting and reporting scores. Example Category 3 accommodation: Use a calculator for a mathematical computation test.

For additional information on these categories, refer to the CTB/McGraw-Hill document "*TABE®* 9/10 Survey Test Directions" booklet or http://www.ctb.com.

Q. When administering *TABE®*, can we offer accommodations for participants with special needs?

A testing accommodation is a change made to the test administration procedure to provide equal access for participants with disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. If an accommodation is employed, it is important that the selected accommodation minimize any advantage or disadvantage of completing the test. In particular, if the accommodation under consideration is not used in instruction, then it should not be used in the testing situation.

TABE® -PC is appropriate for some participants who have difficulty taking paper-and-pencil tests. Some *TABE®* administrators have made other accommodations such as allowing extra time to complete the test or letting participants mark answers in test booklets rather than on separate answer sheets. Additional accommodation suggestions are available in CTB/McGraw-Hill's Assessment Accommodations Checklist (#53682); order online or call Customer Services at (800) 538-9547.

Q. May I administer *TABE®* as an untimed test?

If you use different time limits than were used in the standardization process, it compromises the interpretation of the norms. However, CTB recognizes that time extensions may be warranted to accommodate persons with certain disabilities, or when *TABE®* is being used exclusively to diagnose the learning objectives an individual still needs to master.

Q. Are there special editions of *TABE®* for people with visual disabilities?

Yes. Large-print, Braille, and audio editions of *TABE®* Forms 9 and 10 are available from CTB/McGraw-Hill and may be ordered by calling Customer Services toll-free at (800) 538-9547 or via website at www.ctb.com.

Q. How should we interpret scores when we administer *TABE®* under non-standard conditions?

Whenever non-standard directions and time limits are utilized, norm-referenced comparisons should be treated with great caution, since the only norms available are those based on test administrations using standard directions and time limits. Nonetheless, CTB/McGraw-Hill believes that information about instructional strengths and participant needs can be obtained from a non-standard test administration. This is best done by focusing on the curriculum-referenced or objective mastery information the test can provide. For more information, consult CTB's publication, *Guidelines for Using the Results of Standardized Tests Administered Under Non-Standard Conditions*. Obtain your free copy by calling Customer Services at (800) 538-9547.

TABE® CLAS-E Accommodations for Participants with Disabilities

TABE® CLAS-E provides large-print editions to accommodate examinees with special needs:

- Large-Print Edition Locator Test
- Large-Print Edition Language Proficiency Tests, Forms A and B
- Expository Writing Folios are incorporated in Large-Print Edition test books.

Accommodations from the Center for Applied Linguistics for *BEST Plus* and *BEST Literacy*

According to the test publisher, programs administering *BEST Plus* and *BEST Literacy* are responsible for providing accessible services and for making sure that requests for accommodations are considered and handled in a manner consistent with applicable laws and regulations. Program and test administrators may provide and allow accommodation in test administration procedures or in the testing environment for individuals with disabilities, provided that the accommodation does not compromise the purpose of the test. Testing environment accommodations for either test might include frequent breaks or individual administration of *BEST Literacy*.

In the case of *BEST Literacy*, the purpose of the test is to obtain a measure of reading and writing in English. Permissible accommodations related to *BEST Literacy* test administration include the use of eyeglasses or magnifying glasses, earplugs, color overlays, or rulers.

The purpose of *BEST Plus* is to obtain a measure of listening and speaking in English. Permissible accommodations related to *BEST Plus* include the use of hearing aids. *BEST Plus* is not designed to assess the communicative language skills of hearing- or speech-impaired participants, nor should it be used with visually impaired participants, as some of the questions depend on a photographic stimulus.

It is not an appropriate accommodation for a test administrator to read *BEST Literacy* test questions to an examinee with sight impairment as *BEST Literacy* is a test of reading. Similarly, it is not an appropriate accommodation for a *BEST Plus* test administrator to allow an examinee to read the on-screen prompts as *BEST Plus* is a listening—not a reading—test.

Accommodations from Wonderlic Inc.© for *GAIN*®

The GAIN Administrator Guide states as follows: “A reasonable accommodation should allow the test score to reflect the test taker’s skills rather than reflect the test taker’s impairment, and should allow the test taker with a disability (or disabilities) to demonstrate his or her skills and abilities more accurately than if no accommodations were allowed. Additionally, a major focus of the ADA is that reasonable accommodation is not effectively addressed by a general policy; rather accommodations are best addressed only on a case-by-case basis.” The GAIN Administrator Guide provides the following examples of reasonable accommodations:

- Providing extra time to complete the GAIN;
- Providing rest breaks for test takers; and
- Assuring that the test site is accessible to a person with a mobility issue.

Appendix K: Protecting Personally Identifiable Information

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.

AEL grant recipients are required to comply with minimum requirements outlined in TWC Privacy Policy and, as applicable, best practices for protecting PII as established by TWC Workforce Development or AEL Letters. Policies and procedures related to PII are to be followed by every TWC contractor, grantee, employee, agent, and consultant that handles PII on behalf of TWC. Agency policy requires that these individuals:

- collect sensitive PII only as authorized
- classify data
- limit use of sensitive PII
- minimize proliferation of sensitive PII
- secure sensitive PII
- report suspected privacy incidents and violations or breaches of PII.

Violation of this policy may result in termination of business relations in the case of contractors or consultants, dismissal of temporary staff, or other corrective action. Additionally, individuals are subject to loss of TWC Information Resources access privileges, as well as possible civil and criminal prosecution.

Examples of PII

PII is information that identifies an individual. Not all PII is sensitive and/or confidential by law. For example, the following is PII that is not sensitive or confidential:

- Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and place of work on a business card
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers in a public phone directory
- Names of attendees at a public meeting
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of stakeholders who subscribe to a TWC listserv or distribution list
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of attendees at a conference
- Lists of agency employee names (separate from an employer tax report or other confidential report)
- Names available through a public or open commercial means
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers, or other identifying information available through the Texas Public Information Act

What Is Sensitive PII?

Sensitive PII is ***information that alone or in combination with available information can identify an individual, which if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.***

Examples of Sensitive PII: An individual's last name and first initial in combination with one or more of the following:

- Social Security number (SSN)

- Driver's license number
- TWC-issued employer tax account number
- citizenship or immigration status
- personal health medical information (diagnosis, treatment, or payment for medical or health-related conditions or services of an individual) (See definition in HIPAA for more details)
- alien verification number
- passport number
- full date of birth
- password or authentication information such as mother's maiden name or portions of SSNs such as last four digits
- financial information such as account numbers
- biometric identifiers (e.g., fingerprint, iris scan, voice print)
- other data created by TWC to identify or authenticate an individual's identity, such as a fingerprint identification number (FIN) or Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) identification number.

Examples of Sensitive PII that Identify Individuals Indirectly: If an individual is identifiable from descriptions or a combination of information, that information is also Sensitive PII. For example, participant success story published in a program newsletter that describes a specific participant and includes information that confidential, such as a story that describes a specific participants by first and last name and identifies that the individual in in a TxCHSE class at a specific correctional institution or is a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participant or receives services from the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

Context Matters—How Context Impacts Sensitive PII: PII that is available to the public can still be considered Sensitive PII in certain circumstances. If PII is combined with other information, it can change the PII to Sensitive PII or confidential information. For example, an individual's address might be available in a public record maintained in an open source such as voter registration lists or as part of an open court document. However, the same home address belonging to a participant receiving TANF is Sensitive PII and confidential if the source is TEAMS.

The context in which the PII is collected or held may determine whether the PII is sensitive or confidential. For example, a list of persons who are victims of domestic violence is protected by a specific law and would be sensitive. The names of the same individuals in a different context without referencing the individual as a victim may be open to the public, such as a listing in the telephone book, which is merely PII and not sensitive.

Requirement: All TWC information holders, whether TWC employees, contractors, or others, must maintain Sensitive PII consistent with the law applicable to the context in which the TWC information was collected or held. This requires knowing the source of information handled on behalf of TWC and the context in which that information is held.

When developing enrollment and other forms, as outlines in **Appendix I**, grant recipients must develop the form so that Sensitive PII is easily separated and secured from information that may be transferred to the instructor for instruction in a less-secure manner.

Test Security

- The local adult education program's Data Management and Documentation standard operational procedures must address test security.
- Displays, questions, or answers that appear on any test may not be used for instruction.
- Test materials must be safeguarded, including test administration manuals, actual participant paper-based or electronic tests, and answer sheets that contain marks or responses or participant digital test results.
- If test materials become defaced or not usable, contact the publisher for instructions for disposal.
- No duplication of any test form or any portion of any test form is permitted unless explicit permission to do so is in writing from the test publisher.
- In addition to the above, program staff must adhere to all test security procedures and policies provided by the test publisher.
- Original score sheets from tests and/or electronic score reports with results of participants' pre- and post-test scores must be stored and/or backed up on appropriate media or printed out and filed in hard copy and be made available for local, state, and federal audit purposes.