ARKANSAS ADULT EDUCATION ASSESSMENT POLICY AND DISTANCE EDUCATION GUIDELINES

Arkansas Adult Education Section

July 1, 2020- June 30, 2021

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In order to abide by Federal and State requirements, Adult Education programs are required to be familiar with and follow the policy and guidelines outlined in this document.

INTRODUCTION

The Arkansas Assessment Policy and Distance Learning Guidelines is based on the federal manual "Technical Assistance Guide for Performance Accountability under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act" by the National Reporting System (NRS) for Adult Education (August 2019) in addition to Arkansas Adult Education Policies. In addition, the Policy outlines state policies as determined by the Arkansas Adult Education Section (AES).

The NRS is the accountability system for the federally funded, State-administered adult education program and addresses the accountability requirements of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The assessment policy describes the NRS measures that 1) assess the impact adult education instruction; 2) methods for collecting the measures; 3) reporting forms and procedures; and, 4) training and technical assistance in collecting and reporting the measures.

The NRS measures are reported through the performance indicators presented in "[s]ection 116 of WIOA [which] establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by... "the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) [1].

VALID AND RELIABLE STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

The following section is excerpted from NRS Technical Assistance Guide, August 2019.

All programs must use state approved standardized assessment procedures that ensures the "comparability of meaning of the EFLS across all programs" in Arkansas. To that end, the development and use of the assessment instruments are aligned and maintained

Validity: *Matching Instrument Content to NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors*
"Validity is concerned with the *accuracy* of measurement; in other words, the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. *Content validity* of an assessment is the extent to which the items and tasks of the instrument cover the domain of interest. For the NRS, the domain of interest is comprised of the skills used to describe the EFLs for ABE and ESL. To establish the content validity with respect to the requirements of the NRS, there must be evidence that the items and tasks of that instrument measure the skills associated with the EFLs (and, by the same token, do not measure skills not associated with the levels).

"Typically, content validity is established via the judgments of subject matter experts (SMEs). For instance, a panel of such experts might be asked to judge the extent to which the items and tasks of a given instrument require the types and levels of skills described for a particular EFL. In general, the greater the judged overlap between the content of the instrument and the skills associated with a given level descriptor, the greater the content validity of the instrument with respect to its use as a measure of educational attainment at that level. It is important to point out that the content validity of a given instrument may vary with respect to different EFLs; that is, it may provide adequate coverage of the skills associated with some levels but less than adequate coverage of the skills associated with other levels. Finally, it should be noted that the usefulness of content validity evidence is directly proportional to the quality of the judgments provided. Consequently, the test publisher should establish the credentials of the SMEs whose judgments were obtained, including their familiarity with adult education and the NRS levels, along with information regarding the number of experts used and the degree of agreement among them, both by skill and level.

Reliability/Classification Consistency

"Reliability refers to the degree of consistency in performance on an assessment; that is, the extent to which an examinee would be expected to perform similarly across multiple administrations of the instrument or under different conditions. An important condition that can differ across administrations of a particular instrument to be used for the NRS is the form of the instrument administered. More specifically, because educational gain is determined as a function of the difference between an examinee's pre- and post-test performance *as measured on different forms of the instrument*, it is essential to review the test publisher's information regarding the expected similarity of performance across forms in the absence of instruction or other external interventions. The greater the similarity in performance across forms, the greater the *alternate forms reliability* of the instrument and the stronger the inference that improvements in performance between pre- and post-testing is attributable to something other than measurement error associated with differences across forms."

This document will focus on the guidelines, process, and procedure for collecting and reporting data for the performance indicator **Measurable Skill Gains** (MSGs) of participants in programs as well as outlining the Follow-up Measures and collection periods.

See Appendix A for a complete list of approved assessments.

SECTION 1. ADMINISTERING ASSESSMENTS

All students must be administered an NRS-approved assessment within 12 hours of attendance. Any instructional hours completed prior to pre-testing will not be counted toward the number of hours needed for post-testing.

1.1 Approved Assessments

Program	Assessment	Subject Area
ABE/ASE	TABE 11/12	Language Mathematics Reading
ESL	BEST Literacy	Reading/Writing
	BEST Plus 2.0	Listening/Speaking
	CASAS	Listening Math Reading
	TABE CLAS-E	Listening Reading Speaking Writing

1.2 Entering Subject Areas

ABE/ASE participants may pre-test in Language, Math, and/or Reading of the Test of Adult Basic Education Assessment (TABE) and choose to focus his/her studies on 1, 2 or all 3 subject areas. Programs are encouraged to assess students in all subject areas and enter all subject scores into the state- approved data management system.

The lowest entering score becomes the participant's Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the program year. For example, if the participant has been assessed at Level 2 in Reading and Level 3 in Math, the overall EFL is Level 2. The participant will appear in the ABE Level 2 row Table 1, 4, and 4B for the program year.

The participant must show an EFL gain with a post-test in any of the subject areas that have a pre-test. For example, if a participant pre-tests in Language Level 4, Reading Level 4, and Math Level 3. The participant's entering EFL is Level 3 (determined by the Math pre-test). The student post-tests in Reading and makes a gain to Level 5. The participant will be recognized on Table 4 and 4B with an EFL gain.

All ABE/ASE participants' advancements and completions will be tracked in the data management system and reflected on Table 4 and 4B. Federal tables are de-duplicated and will, therefore, only reflect one MSG per participant per period of participation (PoP) within the program year.

Additional gains in multiple subject areas and/or EFL levels with post-testing, will be recognized as "Multiple Gains" at the state level and can be used in future program funding (See "Level Gains" report in LACES).

Overall EFL is determined by the lowest level subject areas of the assessment. In order to meet Table 4 requirements and the negotiated benchmark targets, a participant must make a gain through a post-test in any of the subject areas with a pre-test.

ESL participants can be administered the BEST Literacy and/or BEST Plus 2.0; *TABE CLAS-E,* or *CASAS* in one or multiple subject areas may also be administered. Programs are encouraged to assess students in multiple and enter the scores into the state- approved data management system.

A participant may be pre-tested with the *TABE CLAS-E* in any combination of the four skill areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and/or Listening. Participants may be assessed in only one, two, three, or all four skill areas. Each skill area score must be entered separately in the data management system.

A participant may be pre-tested with the *CASAS* in any combination of the three skill areas: Reading and Listening. Participants may be assessed in one, two or all three skill areas. Each skill area score must be entered separately in the data management system.

A participant may be pre-tested with the *Best Literacy* to assess Reading and Writing and pre-tested with the *BEST Plus 2.0* to assess Speaking and Listening. A participant may be assessed with both or one of the *BEST* assessments. Each *BEST* assessment score must be entered separately in the data management system.

The lowest entering score becomes the participant's Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the program year. For example, a participant is pre-tested with the TABE CLAS-E in Reading at Level 3, Writing at Level 2 and Listening at Level 3. The entering EFL is ESL Level 2. The participant is post-tested in all areas and makes a gain in Reading to Level 4 and Listening to Level 4. The participant has made a MSG on table 4 with a total of 2 multiple gains.

If a participant enters the program year as an ESL participant and chooses to pursue ABE/ASE content areas, s/he should be administered the TABE Locator and 11/12 and entered in the state-approved data management system. The participant will continue to appear in the lowest Entering EFL as an ESL participant on Federal Tables 1, 4, and 4B. The participant will also be eligible for an MSG after a TABE pre- and post-test or earning a secondary school diploma.

All ESL participants' advancements and completions will be tracked in the data management system and reflected on Table 4 and 4B. Federal tables are de-duplicated and will, therefore, only reflect one MSG per participant per period of participation (PoP) within the program year.

Additional gains in multiple subject areas and/or EFL levels with post-testing, will be recognized as "Multiple Gains" at the state level and can be used in future program funding (See "Level Gains" report in LACES).

1.3 NRS- APPROVED ABE/ASE ASSESSMENTS
Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11/12

The TABE is comprised of three content areas (Reading, Language, and Mathematics) and is appropriate for all levels of adult basic education and literacy participants, from non-readers to learners preparing to take a secondary school diploma or equivalent.

Programs should administer TABE 11/12 online only. Paper-based administration should be limited to environments that lack technological requirements, such as a correctional setting. Prior approval by AES to use paper-based TABE 11/12 is required. Participants are not required to be assessed in all content areas (Reading, Language, and Math). The local program must decide the skill areas most relevant to each participant's needs or the

program's curriculum and assess participants in these areas. (*See 3.1 Entering Subject Areas page 10*).

The TABE Locator Test must be used to determine the TABE level to be administered: Literacy, Easy, Medium, Difficult, or Advanced levels (L, E, M, D, or A). The locator may indicate a learner should be administered different levels in one or more of the content areas.

> **For example**: The Locator may determine the learner should be administered Level D for Reading and Language and Level M for Mathematics. The learner would be post-tested at the same level as the pre-test in an alternating form.

Programs may administer the automated or paper administered Locator. Best practices should be used for paper administered Locator. Learners with very low literacy skills who cannot complete the Locator Test should be administered the TABE Literacy Level (L).

The pre-test and post-test must be alternating forms. The same level should be used for pre and post-tests; however, if a student will likely score out of range on the same level post-test, a program may administer a different level. The form should still alternate.

> For example: A learner is located and pre-tests with an 11M and scores in top range within the valid score range. The learner receives the required minimum hours of instruction and has shown progress. Based on the learner's demonstrated knowledge, the program determines the student would likely attain an invalid score on a level M, so the learner is administered a 12D. If the student achieves an educational level gain, it will be reflected on Table 4 and/or the Level gains report.

Please refer to the publisher's guidelines TABE test times below:

	Number of Items	Allowable Time	Locator Time
Language	40	0:55:00	20 mins
Mathematics	40	1:05:00	20 mins
Reading	40	1:40:00	35 mins
Practice Items		15 minutes	10 minutes
Total	120	3:55:00	1:25:00

If the learner is functioning in different educational levels in different subject areas (reading, language, math), the **lowest** functioning level will be the basis for the NRS Entering EFL placement. **To be eligible for an educational gain, the participant must be post-tested** with a different form of the same level **and show a gain in any subject area that has a pre-test.**

> **For example**: A participant's TABE Locator reading score indicates the appropriate level is M. The participant is then given the TABE **Form 11, Level M** reading pre-test. After a period of instruction (based on test publisher's guidelines), the participant must be post-tested with TABE **Form 12, Level M**. If the participant shows gain, then the participant <u>may</u> be tested in the future with a higher level TABE, for example Level D.

> Advancement(s) will be recorded in Table 4 and a *minimum* of one educational gain per year is necessary to meet the NRS core indicators of performance. If the participant does <u>not</u> show progress, then the participant needs to receive further instruction and be post-tested again according to the test publisher's guidelines. The program needs to alternate the testing forms (TABE 11 and TABE 12) at each assessment.

NOTE: Do not post-test with the same form.

<u>TABE Versions</u>
Programs are only to administer the **TABE 11/12** series during the 2019-2020 program year.

<u>Allowable TABE Accommodations</u>
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 through Data Recognition Corp (DRC) (formerly McGraw-Hill/CTB) online or at Customer Service 1-800-826-2368.

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, DRC 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 11/12 are available from DRC and may be ordered by calling Customer Services toll-free at (800) 538-9547 or through the website at www.datarecognitioncorp.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, DRC 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.

1.4 APPROVED NRS ESL ASSESSMENTS
When ESL participants score above the Advance ESL NRS Level score range on any ESL assessment, s/he should be given the TABE in order to be able to show educational progress.

Participants do not need to be assessed in all of the content areas. The local program must decide the skill areas most relevant to each participant's needs or the program's curriculum and assess participants in these areas. Assessments should also be in the area(s) in which instruction will be focused. Programs may choose which ESL assessment to use; however,

programs are responsible for and required to complete the appropriate training for the ESL assessment administered.

TABE Complete Language Assessment System-English (TABE CLAS-E™)

The TABE CLAS-E™ must be administered within 12 hours of program entry for all ESL/ELL participants. The paper-based TABE CLAS–E™ tests are available for Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing in 4 levels.

Listening (20 minutes)   Writing (47 minutes)
Speaking (15 minutes)   Multiple Choice (20 minutes)
Reading (25 minutes)   Expository Writing (27 minutes)
                                                           [3 Tasks] (Levels 2-4 only)

A participant may be assessed in any or all of the subject areas. For example, a participant may be assessed only in Reading or may choose to be assessed in all four subject areas. **If a participant is pre-and post-tested in 1-4 subject areas and makes a gain in any, s/he will show an EFL gain on Table 4 and 4B as well as being eligible for multiple gains**.

Note: A student administered Levels 2-4 Writing assessment must be administered both the multiple choice and expository writing parts.

A locator interview should be administered to determine the correct test level. Each level has alternating forms: A and B, which must be alternated for pre- and post-tests. The locator, writing, and speaking assessments each have a corresponding rubric.

Administrators of the TABE CLAS-E™ must complete training using the DRC/CTB's *Staff Development* DVD and Workbook or attend state-provided training.

Test Level	Attainable NRS ESL Educational Functioning Level	Corresponding SPL
1	0-1, 2, 3, 3+ (Beginning to High Beginning)	0-1, 2, 3, 3+
2	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 4+ (Beginning to Low Intermediate)	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 4+
3	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5+ (Beginning to High Intermediate)	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5+
4	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5+ (Beginning to Advanced)	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Basic English Skills Test (BEST)

The BEST Literacy and/or BEST Plus 2.0 must be administered within 12 hours of program entry for all ESL/ELL participants. The BEST tests are available for the listening/speaking content areas (BEST Plus 2.0) and reading/writing content areas (BEST Literacy).

The BEST Literacy is a paper-based assessment only. The BEST Plus 2.0 is a computer-based assessment requiring a trained-administrator.

It is ***highly recommended that programs use both the BEST Plus 2.0 and BEST Literacy assessments in order to fully assess participants in all skill areas*** (listening, speaking, reading, writing) to plan instruction and accurately show EFL gains and ELL progress. Participants will show multiple gains if they are assessed using both the BEST Plus 2.0 and BEST Literacy.

Note: Participants who are pre or post-tested at ESL Level 6 with the BEST Literacy should be administered the TABE 11/12. There is no exit score for BEST Literacy; therefore, a participant with a score of 76+ is unable to show EFL advancement or completion with further testing.

Allowable Test Accommodations for BEST Plus 2.0 and BEST Literacy

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), programs administering BEST Plus 2.0 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 2.0 is to obtain a measure of listening and speaking in English. Permissible accommodations related to BEST Plus 2.0 include the use of hearing aids. BEST Plus 2.0 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 2.0 test administrator to allow an examinee to read the on-screen prompts as BEST Plus 2.0 is a listening, not a reading, test.

Comprehensive Adult Participant Assessment System (CASAS)

The CASAS must be administered within 12 hours of program entry for all ESL/ELL participants. Adult Education programs and Literacy Councils may use CASAS for ESL participant assessment. CASAS assessments are valid and reliable for both native and non-native speakers of English and assess the modalities of reading, math, listening, speaking and writing. CASAS tests can be administered on paper, by computer, and via the Internet. In addition to certifying basic skills attainment, CASAS measures learner progress on a standardized scale that ranges from the lowest literacy skills to high school exit and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Allowable CASAS Accommodations

Accommodations in testing alter the conditions for administering a test or change the nature of an assessment instrument, allowing test takers with disabilities to demonstrate their skills and abilities more accurately. Proper accommodations meet the needs of examinees without changing what a test is intended to measure.

Local test administrators may provide or allow some accommodations in test administration procedures or environment for documented disabilities without contacting CASAS.

Accommodations procedures are applicable to all CASAS tests and include:
- accommodations in test time
- giving supervised breaks
- or providing a sign language interpreter for test administration directions only
- testing in an alternate room

- using a colored overlay
- large print test booklets and answer sheets
- allowing extended time

Additionally, CASAS test forms that may be appropriate for learners with a disability include CASAS eTests, computer-adapted and computer-based tests, and large-print tests. CASAS large-print tests include Beginning Literacy Reading Assessment, ECS test booklets, Life and Work test booklets, and Secondary Level Assessment test booklets in math. Large-print answer sheets are also available. A Life and Work test form in Braille format measures basic literacy skills for learners who are blind or have a visual impairment. It is not an appropriate accommodation in test administration procedures to read a CASAS reading test to a learner with low literacy skills or blindness.

The paper *Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities* provides more detailed information on providing accommodations. This document is available at www.casas.org.

1.5 GUIDELINES FOR PRE- AND POST- TESTING

An NRS-approved assessment must be administered within 12 hours of program entry.

Programs must follow the test publisher's guidelines regarding test administration and selecting the correct test level for each participant's assessment.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of participants that are pre-tested must be post-tested by the end of the program year. To find the **post-test rate**, divide the total number of participants from Table 4B, Column B by the total number of participants from Table 4, Column B. To see the educational gains made by pre- and post-tested participants, refer to Table 4B. ***All post-tests must be within one calendar year of the pre-test.*** After one calendar year, the assessment is invalid and a participant should be assessed, which will be designated as a pre-test.

Note: Every participant should be encouraged to make as many EFL gains as possible. Do not stop after one EFL gain is achieved. Every administration of an assessment test must be recorded in the data management system. Failure to follow post-testing guidelines could result in a reduction or elimination of funding.

For students continuing from one program year to another (or "rolling over"), if the last assessment was administered within **90 days**, it may be pushed forward to the new year. The lowest subject will become the new entry EFL for the new program year. Local Programs must ensure that all participant demographic information is correct and updated in the data management system to accurately reflect roll-over participants on reports.

Exceptions to Minimum hours for Post-testing

Exceptions to the minimum post-testing hours should be limited. Factors that may be used to determine if early post-testing is warranted are: intensity/duration of instruction, participant goals and motivation, class setting, and/or participant leaving the program due to outside circumstances.

Exceptions to the post-test guidelines must be **pre-approved** by the Adult Education Senior Management Team and documentation must be provided. Documentation may include, but not limited to, a completed waiver, portfolio, informal assessments, and/or curriculum/lesson plans. The approval must be documented as a Case Note in the data management system.

Complete and submit the early post-testing waiver (see Appendix B) to adulted@arkansas.gov prior to the administering the post-test or before a class begins (i.e. workplace class).

No more than 8% of a program's students may be early post-tested. Programs that exceed this limit or do not receive prior approval for early post-testing may be penalized.

Time Frame for Pre- and Post-testing

NRS Test	Recommended Number of Instructional Hours Between Pre-Test and Post-test
TABE 11 & 12 Alternate Form (Paper-based or Online)	**50-60 hours** of instruction is recommended for post-testing with an alternate form (i.e. 11M to 12M) for participants that test into NRS Levels 1-4 (ABE). **Minimum of 40 hours** **30-59 hours** of instruction is recommended for post-testing with an alternate form (i.e. 11M to 12M) for participants that test into NRS Levels 5-6 (ASE). **Minimum of 30 hours**
TABE 11 & 12 Same Form Testing (Paper-based or Online)	**60-80 hours** of instruction is recommended when post-testing with the same form (i.e. 11M to 11M). **Minimum of 60 hours**
TABE CLAS-E™ Alternate Form Testing	**60-95 hours** of instruction is recommended when post-testing with an alternate form (i.e. A2 to B2). (This assessment is used for ESL Participants). **Minimum of 40 hours**
TABE CLAS-E™ Same Form Testing	**100-140 hours** of instruction is recommended when post-testing with the same form (i.e. A2 to A2). (This assessment is used for ESL Participants). **Minimum of 50 hours.**
CASAS Alternate Form Testing	**70-100** hours of instruction is recommended when post-testing with an alternate form (i.e. R2.3 A to R2.3 B). **Minimum of 40 hours**.
Basic Education Skills Test (BEST) Literacy & BEST Plus 2.0	**80 – 100** hours of instruction is recommended before post-testing. **Minimum of 60 hours.**

1.6 SPECIAL POPULATIONS
Sixteen and Seventeen-Year-Old Participants
Before a program may enroll a 16 or 17-year old participant, proper documentation and assessment-determined grade level must be presented. Acceptable documentation includes a Home-School Waiver, Public-School Waiver or a Court Order. The documentation must be presented to the program before an assessment is administered.

In addition, the potential participant must be administered a TABE in all subject areas and score a 535 in all subject areas.

A 16 or 17-year old may be enrolled with a score below a 535 only with a Court Order. No other exceptions apply.

Programs with participants who are 16 and 17 years old must follow the guidelines outlined in Arkansas Act 1659 of 2001 and Act 604 of 2003. Refer to the *Arkansas Adult Education Program Policies* for further information on serving 16 and 17-year-old participants.

English Language Learners
Programs with English language learners should have their Intake Form and their class schedule of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes available in the most common foreign languages of the program's community. Programs should assess ESL participants with an NRS and state-approved assessment (BEST Literacy, BEST plus 2.0, CASAS or TABE CLAS-E™) before the participants receive 12 hours of instruction.

The Adult Education Section highly recommends that ESL participants be assessed in all four skill-areas (Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing) in order to provide the most appropriate services to participants.

Participants with Disabilities:
Participants with documented disabilities will be granted reasonable accommodations upon request during testing and instruction. The audiocassette or CD format of TABE (Levels E–A) and the Locator are valid substitutes for the paper format and are available through the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242).

All programs must begin the process of screening for learning disabilities during participant intake. The process, administered by trained personnel, includes the use of a validated learning disabilities screening tool, follow-up interview to review results of the screening tool, and appropriate further steps for investigating diagnostic referrals as warranted by the screening process. For further information regarding learning disabilities, accommodations, and training in administering a learning disabilities screening tool, programs should contact Ms. Wendy Bryant, the state Disabilities Project Manager (479-232-5760, or 800-569-3539).

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.

1.7 TRAINING
Local Programs are responsible for ensuring staff administering assessments have been trained and maintain up to date records of transcripts and/or certificates. Local Programs are required to have had at least one staff member with applicable training within the last two (2) years. New staff members need to attend the appropriate training prior to administering assessments. Previously trained staff should attend refresher courses (every 2-3 years) to become familiar with any assessment updates.

Training on test administration is available from the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) on a regular basis. Contact AALRC for the most current calendar of training events (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242) www.aalrc.org. The AALRC maintains records (sign-in sheets, certificates (if applicable), and the ESC Web online registration system) for all persons trained for each assessment conducted at AALRC. AALRC also maintains records of the trainers who conduct each workshop.

According to Data Recognition Corp (formerly McGraw-Hill/CTB):

> Adult educators who have a general knowledge of measurement principles and are willing to abide by the assessment standards of the American Psychological Association may administer TABE. These professional standards require TABE administrators to follow specific guidelines, such as keeping tests in a secure place and administering them only as directed. For additional information, see the Purchaser's Qualification Statement in the back of the Data Recognition Corp Assessment Products and Services Catalog. TABE: www.datarecognitioncorp.com

TABE CLAS-E training will be given at the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) on a regular basis (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242). Adult Educators may also complete training through publisher provided materials.

Only trained personnel, who are _certified_ by the Center for Applied Linguistics, may administer the BEST Plus 2.0 assessment. Trainings on BEST Plus 2.0 test administration will be given at the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) on a regular basis (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242). Refresher courses on the BEST Plus will also be held at AALRC on a regular basis. It is recommended that BEST Plus 2.0 examiners take a refresher course every one to two years.

The Center for Applied Linguistics does not require training to administer *BEST Literacy*. Program administrators, test administrators, and test scorers should thoroughly review the *BEST Literacy Test Manual - 2008 Edition* in order to become familiar with proper testing and scoring procedures. The *BEST Literacy Test Manual - 2008 Edition* provides comprehensive information about administering and scoring the three forms (B, C, and D) of the test as well as information for interpreting the results and technical information. BEST: www.cal.org/aea.

CASAS requires agencies to complete a training workshop before ordering and administering most tests. Training is available at the annual CASAS National Summer Institute in June, through regional training workshops, in a distance-training format, at the CASAS San Diego office, and on-site at your agency. Training is necessary to maintain the integrity and quality of the assessment process. CASAS: www.casas.org

1.8 ADDITIONAL NOTES ON ASSESSMENTS

Other assessments, such as the Wide Range Achievement Test, Slosson Oral Reading Test, and Jordan Oral Screening Test, and teacher-generated assessments, may be given to help **inform instruction**; however they may **not** be used to place a participant in an EFL or to determine educational gain or EFL advancement. If a participant is not pre-tested and post-tested with an NRS and state-approved testing instrument, educational gain cannot be determined for that participant.

Note: If a participant is given a test other than an NRS and State approved testing instrument to help inform instruction, the time should be recorded as instruction.

SECTION 2. DATA QUALITY AND COLLECTION

2.1 DATA QUALITY

A program's reliable and valid data are essential to maintaining the integrity of NRS and Arkansas' data. The reported assessment data are used to measure not only the educational progress of participants, but also the performance of all programs and the state.

The pre- and post-testing of participants using approved assessments is the method used to measure the completion of an educational functioning level. This data is used to assess a program's performance and used in future funding; therefore, the reliability and validity of data collection is essential.

In order to ensure all data is reliable and valid, programs must consistently administer assessments according to publisher and state guidelines as well as entering data accurately. Documentation of data entered, including assessments and scores, must be kept in participants' folders and accessible upon request. In addition, programs should have a system of quality control to catch potential errors.

2.2 COLLECTING AND REPORTING DATA

All adult education and literacy programs receiving federal and state funds through the Arkansas Adult Education Section must report participant data for both **reportable individuals** and **participants** using the state-approved data management system.

> **Reportable Individuals:** Individuals who show intent to receive services from adult education and literacy programs and meet eligibility requirements, such as completing an intake form or meeting with program staff. *All Reportable Individuals should be entered into the database management system.*

> **Participants:** Individuals who meet eligibility requirements and receive 12+ contact hours within a program year (Jul 1- June 30). *Individuals should be pre-tested with a state-approved assessment before they have acquired 12 hours of instruction.*

> Data to be entered in the state- approved data management system include, but not limited to:
> Demographic Information
> Attendance Hours
> Assessment Scores (pre and post- tests with or without an EFL gain and GED®s)
> Manual Outcomes for Follow-up Measures

In addition to following a clear model of data collection, local programs must establish policies and procedures for data collection that comply with State NRS requirements. The following section presents the policies and procedures that local programs need to have in place.

> ### Staff Roles and Responsibilities for Data Collection
> Every staff member in an adult education program plays a role in the data collection process. Intake staff collects student demographic data, teachers report attendance and may administer tests and report other outcomes, administrators must review and make decisions based on data tables, and administrative staff may be involved in checking forms and data entry. Each local program must have clear <u>written</u> descriptions of the data collection process and the role of each individual in that process.

> ### Standard Forms for Collecting Data
> Staff must record information on intake and other data forms. Then, administrative staff keys the information from these forms into the program database. Consequently, the program should use standard forms for data collection that include all the data elements and categories

that are referenced in the database system. Staff should not need nor be allowed to enter their own codes or variables because this will cause data entry errors and hurt reliability and validity.

Error Checking and Quality Control Systems
Data collection is a complex activity—mistakes and missing data are inevitable. For example, staff may fail to complete forms fully because of high workload or simple oversight, or the required information may not be available when it is needed. The data collection system must have written procedures for checking data for completeness and accuracy at several points during the process. Data checking should follow a regular, prescribed schedule with clear deadlines. More than one staff person should be assigned to perform these data checking functions, and these functions should be made explicit in the staff job descriptions and throughout the program. Data checkers should review all data forms as soon as possible for completeness and accuracy and should receive error reports from the database to check immediately after data entry. To do their job, data checkers must have access to all staff—teachers, intake staff, counselors, and administrative staff—and the authority to obtain cooperation from them.

Ongoing Training on Data Collection
Staff must understand and follow data collection procedures to ensure valid and reliable data. To this end, training should be provided to staff to clarify their roles and responsibilities and to highlight the importance of data collection. The program should provide this training to all staff, and training should be offered several times during the year, if possible, to accommodate new staff and to allow existing staff to take follow-up training. Regularly scheduled staff meetings or in-service trainings on data issues also provide staff with opportunities to discuss problems and issues that arise during data collection. Addressing these issues promptly helps the program avoid more serious data problems later.

Student-level, Relational Database System
To use data for program improvement, staff must be able to look at outcomes and demographics for individual students according to such variables as the number of instructional hours received, length of time of enrollment, the teachers and classes enrolled, and the student's educational functioning level. This type of analysis requires a database that stores information by individual students and links the different pieces of data for each student in reports or other output—a system known technically as a relational database.

Clear and Timely Data Entry Procedures
The written procedures for data entry should specify at least one role to enter the information from data collection forms into the program's database. All staff members should know this person's role, and s/he should have the authority to request clarification and to resolve errors. In addition, data entry should be scheduled at frequent, regular intervals, such as weekly or monthly. Without frequent data entry, the program may have a significant backlog of information, and staff may not be aware of errors and missing data on forms until it is too late to correct them. Part of the data entry procedures should include a prompt, organized way to identify and resolve errors. For example, soon after data are entered, staff should be able to print out an error report for review. Staff should then use the error report to resolve missing data issues and correct errors as soon as possible after data entry.

Timely or Direct Access to Database
Local program staff members must have access to data for use in program improvement and management. The data management system has the capability for local program staff to access their data in useful ways.

Regular Data Reviews
The program's data collection procedures should include a regular data review by staff soon after entry into the database. Regular data reviews allow staff to identify errors, missing data, and other anomalies that don't make sense. Data reviews are also useful as a staff development opportunity to examine problems and issues in support of program improvement. Data can help staff understand issues such as the impact of instructional arrangements, learner retention, and learner progress. This will not only foster program improvement, but it may also improve data quality, as staff recognizes the importance of data collection to produce accurate and valuable information.

2.3 GUIDELINES FOR ENTERING DATA IN THE STATE APPROVED DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- All participant data must be entered by the 15th of each month for the previous month's data.
- All participant data must be **reviewed and verified** by the 22nd of each month for the previous month's data.
- All attendance and assessment scores must be dated (not necessarily entered on) the exact date of the corresponding documentation, which must be accessible and available upon request during desk audits and onsite visits/reviews.
  - o Attendance must be recorded via dated sign-in sheets with the **participant's first and last names and times in and out in the participant's own signature**. (**Ink is required**)
  - o Attendance for Distance Learning classes must be documented through Distance Learning approved methods (i.e. software records, textbook exercises, etc....)

Note: Programs are required to have a written Data Entry Process that includes step by step procedures and specific checks and balances to ensure the accuracy of data.

All data for a program year must be entered and reviewed by August 1st. No further data entry will be possible.
  - o **2019-20 PY- Thursday, August 1, 2020**
  - o **2020-21 PY Friday, July 31, 2021**

According to Adult Education Section Assurances signed at the time of adult education grant award, all programs that receive adult education funds agree to submit participant data according to schedules set by the Adult Education Section (see #13). If programs are missing data in the state-approved data management system, or have data with errors or deviations, they will be notified by a program advisor and will be required to correct the problem within one month. The Adult Education Section may reduce funding or terminate agreements in part or whole if it has been determined that a program has failed to comply with the assurances (see #33).

SECTION 3. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

One method to measure the effectiveness of instruction in adult education programs is standardized assessments. Attaining a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) is a performance indicator measured at the program and state level.

3.1 MEASURABLE SKILL GAIN (MSG)

A MSG is attained when:

1. A participant completes or advances one or more NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) with a state approved post-test in any of the subject areas.

<div align="center">OR</div>

2. The participant receives a secondary school diploma or equivalent within the program year.

The **EFL is set by the first pre-test in the first Period of Participation of the program year (PY)**. The entering EFL cannot be changed within a PY.

All NRS participants are recorded on **Table 4** when s/he has 12+ contact hours and a pre-test and on **Table 4B** when s/he has 12+ contact hours, a pre-test and post-test.

Programs must post-test a minimum of **65%** of participants who have pre-tested.
Note: Post-test rates can be determined by dividing the total number of participants on Table 4 by the total number of participants on Table 4B.

Programs are required to meet each of the negotiated benchmarks related to MSGs including the average as determined by OCTAE to be considered Effective and Efficient:

Core Indicators Negotiated Benchmark	2020-21*
ABE/ASE	
ABE Level 1	**44%**
ABE Level 2	**43%**
ABE Level 3	**47%**
ABE Level 4	**55%**
ABE Level 5	**54%**
ABE Level 6-	**52%**
ESL	
ESL Level 1	**46%**
ESL Level 2	**52%**
ESL Level 3	**53%**
ESL Level 4	**52%**
ESL Level 5	**45%**
ESL Level 6	**30%**
Average	**48%**

*subject to change based on federal negotiations.

3.2 PERIODS OF PARTICIPATION

A Period of Participation (PoP) begins on the day of enrollment and ends when a participant has not received or scheduled services from any Adult Education program for 90 days, and has no intention or plans to return or receive additional services. A MSG, or lack of, is reported for each Period of Participation, and at least once per program year on the federal tables. *The **exit date** is not determined until 90 days after the last date of services. A participant is not separated in the data management system until 90 days have elapsed and the **participant has no scheduled services.***

A second (or third) PoP begins when a participant returns to any program after 90 days of receiving no services and completes another 12 hours of attendance.

A "roll over" participant whose PoP crosses program years does not need to re-qualify to be considered a participant in the new PY. To be a participant in the new program year, an assessment must be rolled over or administered.

Example 1: Participant A attends a program, achieves an EFL gain and separates after receiving no services for 90+ days. *(Please note some columns have been removed for example purposes only.)*

EFL Name (A)	Total Number Participants (B)	Total Attendance Hours (D)	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain (E)	Number who attained a secondary school diploma/ equivalent (F)	Percentage Achieving Measurable Skill Gains (I)	Total number of Periods of Participation (J)	Total number of Periods of Participation with EFL Gain (K)	Total number of Periods of Participation achieving secondary school diploma/ equivalent (L)	Percentage of Periods of Participation with Measurable Skill Gains (M)
Level 3	1	45	1	0	100%	1	1	0	100%

Example 2: Participant A returns to the same program after 90 days and begins a 2nd PoP and achieves a GED. *(Please note some columns have been removed for example purposes only.)*
Note: Table 4 will only reflect one MSG per participant; therefore, a participant may appear in Column E after making an EFL gain and then shift to Column F after attaining a secondary diploma. Column H (as show on Table 4 in LACES) reflects the 1st PoP only.

EFL Name (A)	Total Number Participants (B)	Total Attendance Hours (D)	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain (E)	Number who attained a secondary school diploma/ equivalent (F)	Percentage Achieving Measurable Skill Gains (I)	Total number of Periods of Participation (J)	Total number of Periods of Participation with EFL Gain (K)	Total number of Periods of Participation achieving secondary school diploma/ equivalent (L)	Percentage of Periods of Participation with Measurable Skill Gains (M)
Level 3	1	45	1	0	100%	2	1	1	100%

Example 3: Participant B attends a program, does not achieve an EFL gain and separates after receiving no services for 90+ days; Participant B returns after 90 days and begins a 2nd PoP and achieves a EFL gain. *(Please note some columns have been removed for example purposes only.)*
Note: Columns K, L and M reflect all Periods of Participation.

EFL Name (A)	Total Number Participants (B)	Total Attendance Hours (D)	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain (E)	Number who attained a secondary school diploma/ equivalent (F)	Percentage Achieving Measurable Skill Gains (I)	Total number of Periods of Participation (J)	Total number of Periods of Participation with EFL Gain (K)	Total number of Periods of Participation achieving secondary school diploma/ equivalent (L)	Percentage of Periods of Participation with Measurable Skill Gains (M)
Level 3	1	45	0	0	0%	2	1	0	50%

An MSG from post-testing or HSE achievement may be achieved in a PoP based on post-testing in a subsequent PoP under the following scenarios:

1. A participant exits, has enough hours to posttest (according to assessment policy guidelines) but does not complete a posttest. The individual returns to the program and is tested on entry. This test may be used as the pretest for the 2nd PoP and an EFL gain (if achieved) is applied to her/his 1st PoP.

2. A participant exits, does not have enough hours to post test, and is not post-tested. The participant returns and begins a 2nd PoP and is tested after receiving enough instructional hours (combined from the 1st and 2nd PoPs) to posttest and achieves an EFL gain. The test serves as the pretest for the 2nd PoP and the EFL gain may be counted for the 1st PoP. For the participant to achieve an EFL gain the 2nd PoP, s/he will require another posttest after the required number of instructional hours.

3. A participant exits and is not post-tested. The participant returns and achieves a HSE, with or without additional instructional hours. The MSG will be applied to all PoPs.

Note: The PoPs in the above scenarios must be within the same Program Year. MSGs cannot be applied to a prior program year.

Note: The State's Table 4 reflects unduplicated statewide data while a local program's Table 4 reflects a singular program's data. Therefore, Table 4 will reflect a participant's attendance, MSGs, and PoPs across the state, including what s/he did at other programs. Table 4 will reflect only the participant's attendance, MSGs, and PoPs within that program. A program's Table 4 is used in the funding process and performance evaluation.

3.3 FOLLOW-UP MEASURES
Note: Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) did not set benchmarks for the Follow-up measures below until 2019-2020 PY; however, data was collected and reported federally during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 PYs in order to set the benchmarks.

Data Collected during the 2019-2020 Program Year will be used in calculating state funding and performance.

Follow-up Measure #1: Employment 2nd Quarter
Definition: Number of participants who exited during the reporting period who are employed during the second quarter after exit. 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 when instruction ends; the learner 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 second quarter after exit from the program.

Applicable Population: All participants who exit during the program year. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

Federal Reporting: States report the total number of ***participants*** who are employed two quarters after exiting the program and the total number of ***participants*** who exit during the program year. —Second quarter employment rate is computed by dividing these numbers.

Follow-up Measure #2: Employment 4th Quarter

    Definition: Number of participants who exited during the reporting period who are employed during the fourth quarter after exit. 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 when instruction ends; the learner 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 fourth quarter after exit from the program.

    Applicable Population: All participants who exit during the program year. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

    Federal Reporting: States report the total number of *participants* who -are employed four quarters after exiting the program year and the total number of *participants* who exit during the program year. Fourth quarter employment rate is computed by dividing these numbers.

Follow-up Measure #3: Median Earnings

    Definition: Median Earnings of participants who are employed in the second quarter after exit and who exited during the reporting period. Median earnings are the midpoint of wages between lowest and highest wage in the second quarter.

    Applicable Population: All participants who exit during the program year and are employed the second quarter after exit. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

    Federal Reporting: States report median earnings of participants employed in the second quarter after exit.

Follow-up Measure #4: Credential Attainment

Definition The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who attained a recognized **postsecondary** credential or a **secondary** school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program

Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent <u>AND</u> Enrolled Postsecondary Education or Training OR Gain Employment

    Definition: Participants who obtain a secondary school diploma, or recognized equivalent, and enroll in postsecondary education or training OR employment within one year of exit.

    Applicable Population: All participants who exit during the program year who did not possess a secondary credential at entry and who were enrolled in a secondary level (assessed at ABE Level 5 or 6 as measured with an approved NRS assessment),. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

    Federal Reporting: All participants who did not possess a secondary credential at entry who enrolled in a secondary level program at some point during the program year who exit from adult education during the program year and who obtained a secondary diploma and either enrolled in postsecondary education or a training program or were employed within a year of exiting.

Attained a Post-Secondary Credential

    Definition: Participants attained a state-recognized postsecondary credential while enrolled or within one year of exiting the reportable program year.

Applicable Population: All participants who were dually enrolled in a post-secondary or training program, such as an Integrated Education and Training (IET) program who exit the postsecondary education or training program during the program year. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

Federal Reporting: All participants who exit during the program year and who dually enrolled a postsecondary or training program leading to a postsecondary credential.

Follow-up Measure #5: Indicators of Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Definition: The total number of establishments, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Earnings and Waged program (QCEW), that received a service, if it is ongoing an activity, are continuing to receive a service or other assistance during the reporting period.

Applicable Population: The total number of establishments, as defined by BLS QCEW, located within the state during the reporting period.

Federal Reporting: Retention with the same employer and employer penetration rate are the two approaches being piloted in Arkansas for 2018-2019 PY. Based on information received, Department of Labor and Department of Education a single approach will be determined for the 2019-2020 PY.

3.4 COLLECTION FOR FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

The entered employment measure must be collected from participants who leave the program by the end of the second and fourth quarter after they exit. A job obtained while the participant is enrolled can be counted for the entered employment measure, but it is still measured and reported in the second and fourth quarter after the participant exits. The Post-Secondary follow-up measures may include participants who enter postsecondary education/training up to the end of the *next* Program Year (June 30).

Core Outcome Measures, Participant Population and Collection Times as reflected on Table 5

Core Outcome Measure	Participant Population to Include	Time Period to Collect Measures
2nd Quarter employment	All participants who exit during the program year.	Second quarter after exit quarter*
4th Quarter employment	All participants who exit during the program year.	Fourth quarter after exit quarter*
Median Earnings	All participants who exited during the program year and were employed in the second quarter	Second quarter after exit quarter*
Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent and Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training **OR** Employed within one year of exit	All participants who exited during the program year who were enrolled in secondary program at the ninth-grade equivalent or higher.	Within one year of program exit*

Attained a Post- Secondary Credential	All participants who exited during the program year and who were dually enrolled in a post-secondary program (i.e. IET program).	While enrolled or within one year of program exit*
Indicators of Effectiveness of Serving Employers	The total number of establishments located within the state during reporting period.	1. Retention with the Same Employer. 2. Employer Penetration Rate

**For all measures, exit quarter is the quarter when the learner completes instruction or has not received instruction for 90 days and has no instruction scheduled. The exit date will reflect the date the participant last attended or received services. 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.

Quarterly Periods for Collecting and Eligibility for Employment 2nd Quarter and 4th Quarter after Exit

Exit Quarter	Collect Entered Employment by the End of:
First Quarter (July 1–September 30)	Third Quarter and First Quarter, Next Program Year
Second Quarter (October 1–December 31)	Fourth Quarter and Second Quarter, Next Program Year
Third Quarter (January 1–March 31)	First Quarter, Next Program Year and Third Quarter, Next Program Year
Fourth Quarter (April 1–June 30)	Second Quarter, Next Program Year and Fourth Quarter, Next Program Year

Exclusions
*Participants are **excluded** from Accountability Measures if*
- the participant exits the program because he or she has become incarcerated in a correctional institution or has become a resident of an institution or facility providing 24-hour support such as a hospital or treatment center during the course of receiving services as a participant;
- the participant exits the program because of medical treatment and that treatment is expected to last longer than 90 days and precludes entry into unsubsidized employment or continued participation in the program;
- the participant is deceased;
- the participant exits the program because the participant is a member of the National Guard or other reserve military unit of the armed forces and is called to active duty for at least 90 days; or,
- a Title II AEFLA participant, who is a criminal offender in a correctional institution, receives services under sec.225 of WIOA. When these participants remain incarcerated after exit from the program, they are **excluded** from the calculation of the following WIOA indicators of performance only:
  - o Employment rate – 2nd quarter after exit; Employment rate – 4th quarter after exit; Median earnings – 2nd quarter after exit; and Credential Attainment
  - o *All sec. 225 participants are **included** in the Measurable Skill Gains indicator. (Table 4)*

SECTION 4. DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY

This policy defines distance education for adult education programs in Arkansas and provides guidelines by which programs can report adult learners' distance education hours to the National Reporting System (NRS). The goal of this policy is to describe the types of activities and the distance-learning platform the state has mandated for distance education and outline the requirements and procedures for reporting distance education activities to NRS.

4.1 ADMINSITERING DISTANCE EDUCATION CLASSES

Adult education programs must follow the steps and processes outlined below to teach, design coursework, and report distance education classes and related participant attendance in the state approved data management system.

Definition of Distance Education

The federal Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) defines distance education for adult education programs as follows:

Distance education is a formal learning activity where participants and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for the majority of the instructional period.* Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, television broadcasts, computer software, web-based interaction, and other online technologies. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail, or other web-based technologies or software.

Distance education, especially delivered through networked computer technologies or other high-tech delivery methods, can provide adults with a convenient and effective way to increase their language, reading, writing, and math skills, and helps them develop the skills needed to fully participate in the 21st Century workplace. While access to networked computer technology has been a significant barrier for adults interested in distance education, it is less of a factor today due to the increased accessibility of smartphones, tablets, and computers that have broadband Internet connections in their home.

Increasingly, employers expect, even require, employees to have the ability to use common computer technologies and productivity software, as well as to possess the skills to use these tools to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems. By participating in distance education, adults have the opportunity to develop skills using these tools, making them better prepared to enter into or advance within the modern workforce.

Another benefit of offering distance education is the opportunity to reduce or reallocate program costs, especially during times of fiscal limits and reduced budgets. By providing motivated and prepared adult learners opportunities to participate in distance education, often independently and at their own pace, programs may be able to devote more resources to participants who need classroom or individualized support.

4.2 INSTRUCTION
Resources for Technical Assistance and Professional Development

For the local programs to administer distance education services, directors and instructors will be required to receive state- provided training along with continued professional development. Trainings will include face-to face meetings, conference calls, webinars, as well as submission of an independent assignment. Trainings will focus on the designated competencies expected for overseeing and/or delivering distance education programs. The Arkansas Adult Education Section will provide information to local programs about required training to be certified to conduct distance

education classes. Additional training, including periodic recertification trainings for existing distance educators, may be required and will be communicated to all participating programs at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Integrating distance education opportunities into a program's services requires thorough planning and professional development. Teaching in a distance education format requires different skills and competencies than those required in an exclusively face-to-face, classroom-based program. Program staff may request further technical assistance and training from either the Arkansas Adult Education Section or the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center.

A detailed description of each resource is listed at http://www.arcareereducation.org/about/adult-education under the *Policies* tab. However, when designing the course, any resources available to the public may be used to enhance the learning process.

Training and Professional Development Requirements
Initial Distance Learning (DL) Certification will be as follows:
1. Successful completion of the Distance Learning and Technology training
2. Successful completion of an online technological skills assessment with a passing score
3. CANVAS training
    a. Teachers who wish to design their own courses in Canvas and submit them for approval to be used as a standalone distance learning class, must also attend a Canvas training.

Distance Learning (DL) Continued Certification
1. Participation in a minimum of two (2) "Quarterly DL Conference Calls"
2. Participation in at least one DL training/professional development (state provided workshops, webinars, conferences, etc.)
    a. Contact the Distance Learning Coordinator to verify a non-state provided training meets the requirement.

Directors and teachers who do not complete the above trainings will not be DL certified until they have completed the required training and earned a passing score on the skills assessment.

Best Practices
In both roles, those designated to design and develop the course and those who will only be teaching are required to use best practices for course designers and online instructors. Best practices for design and development include:

1. Maintaining consistency throughout course (Pages should mirror each other)
2. The use of media used should help support the learning process and not distract
3. Incorporating the following pages:
    a. Home page (Includes a picture of the instructor, description of the course and expectations
    b. Syllabus – Assignment weeks or days, a brief description of each assignment, and due dates
    c. Discussions (An introduction discussion as the first assignment in the course)
    d. Modules for each week the course is in session
4. Include photograph of the instructor and invite participants to do the same.
5. Citing of sources.

Best practices for online instruction best practices include:
1. Being present and involved with participants at all times.
2. Creating a supportive online course community

3. Sharing a set of very clear expectations for your participants and for yourself as to (1) how you will communicate and (2) how much time participants should be working on the course each week
4. Asking for informal feedback on "How is the course going?" and "Do you have any suggestions?"
5. Preparing Discussion Posts that Invite Questions, Discussions, Reflections and Responses
6. Focusing on content resources, applications and links to current events and examples that are easily accessed from learner's computers
7. Planning a good closing and wrap activity for the course

4.3 DISTANCE LEARNERS
Definition of Adult Education Learners
Each adult basic education participant will be identified in our reportable educational system as one of two types of learners:

> **Traditional learners**: Traditional learners are participants who receive a majority or 51% of their instruction through traditional, face-to-face instruction.

> **Distance learners**: Distance learners are participants who receive a majority or 51% of their instruction through approved distance education services.

Note: For NRS reporting purposes, a participant will only appear on Table 4C if 51% of attendance hours are entered under distance learning classes.

Identify Each Participant as a Traditional or Distance Learner
A participant is classified as a distance learner if the majority of the participant's hours earned in a program year are derived by his or her participation in distance learning activities. However, a participant's hours in both distance and classroom activities must be reported into the state-approved data management system.

Qualifications to enroll in Distance Learning Coursework
Distance education will not be the right approach for every adult education learner. There are certain competencies that are required prior to any participant enrolling in distance education. For adults to be successful using distance education, they require the appropriate language, reading, mathematics, and writing skills that will enable them to follow written directions, work independently, and communicate effectively. The selected distance education curricula must also be appropriate for the targeted learner population both in content and level of technical complexity. In order for a participant to be approved for distance education, they must successfully pass the *distance learning survey and complete a distance learning agreement* prior to being admitted into distance learning classes. Additional evaluation to determine the participant's computer skills and ability to work independently on online coursework through the state-supported Learning Management System (LMS), may also be included to evaluate a participant's suitability for Distance Learning.

The following personal competencies should be considered when evaluating the appropriateness of distance education for adult learners. While these competencies are not as easily measured as reading, math, and language skills, they may be ascertained through a thorough and comprehensive intake/interview process.

*A level of academic maturity	*Network of support
*Motivation	*Telephone and Internet access
*Self-direction	*High comfort level working with computer
*Time management and organizational skills	software

Requirements to enroll in Distance Learning Coursework
Grade level minimums: There is no set minimum grade level for participants to participate in Distance Education Classes; however, participants must earn at least 6 face-to-face hours of instruction before beginning Distance Education, and the curriculum chosen for that participant should be appropriate for the participant's educational function level.
Hours to maintain: 12 hours monthly
Contact to maintain: weekly

Note: Participants who are 16/17 years old may participate in Distance Learning Classes as long as they are meeting the requirements outlined in the current Arkansas Adult Education Program Policies. Their Distance Learning Hours will not be counted towards the minimum 20 hours of weekly attendance for 16/17 year-olds, or the minimum 10 hours for 16/17 year olds employed for 30 or more hours each week. *Exceptions to the minimum 20 hours a week attendance policy for 16/17 year olds will be made on a case-by-case basis and will need to be approved by the state office in advance and include supporting documentation.* (*See 3.5 Special Populations on page 17*).

Required Technological Knowledge
The following technological knowledge should be considered when evaluating the appropriateness of distance education activities mediated by technology.

- Demonstrated ability with the use of basic technology, such as sending and replying to e-mail, using a Web browser, downloading, opening, and saving electronic files, and filling out Web-based fields and form
- Regular access to computer technology with Internet access through the use of a personal or publicly available computer
- Active E-mail account that is checked regularly

4.4 ASSESSMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION LEARNERS
All potential distance education participants must be given an approved assessment and meet all of the policy guidelines as identified in the Arkansas Assessment Policy & Distance Education Guidelines.

All assessments must be administered in a proctored setting.. Pre-tests must be administered within the *first twelve hours of instruction*. Post-tests must be administered according to the testing specifications of the assessment as identified by the test publisher.

4.5 APPROVED DISTANCE EDUCATION HOURS
There are two types of participant contact hours that may be counted for reporting purposes: face-to-face hours and proxy hours.

Contact Hours
Contact hours are defined as time spent interacting with the learner. Contact hours for distance education participants can be a combination of actual face-to-face contact and contact by telephone, video, teleconference, or other online communication where participant and program staff are able to interact and through which learner identity is verifiable. A distance learner may be reported in the NRS data system once six (6) face-to-face hours have been completed.

1. **FACE-TO-FACE**

Face-to-face interaction includes participant intake & orientation, assessment, goal setting, counseling, and classroom-based skills training.

2. PROXY HOURS

Proxy hours are defined as the time distance education participants spend engaged in approved distance education activities as part of the coursework required in their Canvas classroom. The hours for each approved activity are calculated using one of three models:

Clock-time: This model assigns contact hours based on the elapsed time that a learner is connected to or engaged in an online or standalone software program that tracks time.

Learner Mastery: This model assigns a fixed number of hours of credit based on the learner's demonstrated mastery of the content of a lesson. This model requires previous engagement by the participant on curriculum and materials related to the test. A high percentage of correct responses on the mastery test earn the credit hours attached to the material.

Teacher Verification: This model assigns a fixed number of hours of credit for each assignment based on the teacher's determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in, or completed, the assignment.

Canvas courses designed by teachers to be used for distance learning must include:
1. Welcome page with the instructor's name and contact information
2. Syllabus with course expectations/outline
3. Program specific Distance Learning policy and Distance Learning Contract
4. At least 2 modules, divided by week, lesson, unit, etc. depending on the nature of the course
5. Links to all required material for each module (documents, PowerPoints, external URLs, videos, etc.)
6. Detailed lesson descriptions with clear, student-centered learning objectives
7. Documentation of how Proxy Hours will be awarded for each lesson – either Teacher Verification* or Learner Mastery**
8. College and Career Readiness (CCR), Employability, Digital Literacy, and Financial Literacy standards embedded

For courses to be considered for approval, the Program Name, Instructor Name, and Course Name should be sent to the Distance Learning Coordinator over email. Upon approval via email, instructors should keep documentation of course approval to be provided when requested by the Distance Learning Coordinator, program advisor(s), Program Coordinator, Associate Director, and Director of the Adult Education Section.

*When determining the amount of time an assignment/module/course is worth using the Teacher Verification method of calculating Proxy Hours, determine the amount of time it would take the instructor to complete an assignment, double that time, and then round to the nearest quarter hour.
Example: If an assignment takes the instructor 47 minutes to complete an assignment, the instructor would take their time (47 minutes), double it (94 minutes; or 1 hour and 34 minutes), and round to the nearest quarter hour (90 minutes; or 1.5 hours). That assignment would then be worth 1.5 hours upon student completion.

**When using the Learner Mastery method of calculating Proxy Hours, clearly document how learner mastery will be assessed in the lesson description (certain percentage on a

quiz, grade on an assignment, number of correct problems solved, etc.). See guidance regarding determining the amount of time an assignment/module/course is worth, above.

4.6 ACCOMMODATING LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES OR OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS

Learners with professionally certified documentation, issued prior to program registration, who self-disclose a given physical, mental, or emotional disability must be provided appropriate accommodations for participating in a distance education program.

If a learner self-identifies a disability, it is the responsibility of the distance education program to provide reasonable accommodations. Programs may not deny or prevent access to services based on a learner's disability. Under certain conditions, the program may be required to absorb the costs related to the accommodation(s). By not providing appropriate accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities programs, could be in violation of federal law.

> *NOTE: Arkansas Rehabilitation Services is available to assist with some costs related to accommodations.*

When designing coursework, the designer must attempt to use videos that are closed captioned enabled. In addition, any audio file should have a transcript provided as well.

4.7 APPROVED DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORTING

Report All Distance Learner NRS Required Data in State-Approved Data Management System

All participant hours earned using a Distance Learning Resource must be marked "Instruction-Distance Learning" in the state's data management system. A participant is classified as a distance learner if the majority of contact hours earned in a program year are derived from proxy hours. Non-proxy and proxy contact hours will be recorded in separate fields in the NRS Web-based data system. The designation of the participant's status as a classroom or distance learner will be made at the end of the year when a participant's proxy and non-proxy hours are compared. If a learner has 51% of the instructional hours reported as proxy, he or she will be identified as a distance learner. The participant's hours in both distance and classroom programs will be included in the NRS reports.

With the reporting of distance education activities, two NRS tables are available. Both of these tables will be generated demonstrating the program's performance each fiscal year specific to distance education activities. Descriptions of these tables follow.

Table 4C reports educational gains for distance learners. This table is identical to Table 4 with the exception that only participants identified as distance education learners (i.e., those who have a majority of hours as proxy hours) will be reported. No traditional participants will be reported on this table.

Table 5A reports follow-up outcomes for distance learners. This table is identical to Table 5 with the exception that only participants identified as distance education learners will be reported. No traditional participants will be reported on this table.

Additional reports on distance learning hours may be generated by local programs. In the state's data management system, an "All Hours" report filtered for distance learning hours can be generated to calculate all distance learning hours earned by students regardless of the percentage of face to face or distance learning hours.

Distance Education Auditing Requirements

For auditing purposes, programs must keep documentation proving a participant's distance learning achievements and proxy hours claimed. Some acceptable measures of documentation include:

- Printed participant screen shots;
- Printed software-generated reporting tables; and
- Teacher-signed participant logs.

The documentation must:

- List the specific module(s) the participant completed or mastered;
- Show that a participant completed and/or mastered the module according to standards; and
- Include a date of completion.

In the case of an audit, if a program cannot provide the distance learning documentation for proxy hours entered, the program may be required to pay back state and federal money earned through the undocumented proxy hours.

SECTION 5: COVID-19 GUIDELINES
Due to the widespread effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the following guidelines are being provided to assist local programs as they work to continue services to their students.

5.1 COVID-19 EXCEPTIONS TO POST-TESTING
In addition to the exceptions outlined in section 1.5, local programs unable to conduct on-site instruction due to the widespread effect of the COVID-19 pandemic may be able to administer early post-tests to approved students if testing is available.

> For example, a participant on track to earn the minimum post-testing hours requirement is unable to continue instruction due to classroom restrictions brought on by COVID-19. If testing is available, a waiver may be submitted to the Adult Education Section for approval.

Programs should document students that are unable to post-test in the state's data management system by using the additional comment type of "COVID-19 – Unable to post-test" in the student's Student Data tab in the comments panel. For additional information regarding the documentation of students unable to pre/post-test, please refer to guidance provided by the Arkansas Adult Education office.

5.2 VIRTUAL ASSESSMENTS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS
In addition to traditional, proctored, face-to-face testing, local programs may implement virtual test proctoring using the assessments identified in this policy, in accordance with the test publisher's procedures for virtual testing.

Local programs unable to administer an NRS-approved test to a distance learning participant due to the widespread effect of the COVID-19 pandemic may exempt that student from testing. Local programs that exempt participants from NRS tests should put procedures in place to identify students who were not tested due to an inability to conduct testing, so that the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak can be appropriately tracked. Programs should document students that are unable to post-test in the state's data management system by using the additional comment types of "COVID-19 – Unable to post-test"; "COVID-19 – Unable to pre-test"; and/or "COVID-19 – Unable to enroll in Post-Secondary..." in the student's Student Data tab in the comments panel. For additional information regarding the documentation of students unable to pre/post-test, please refer to guidance provided by the Arkansas Adult Education office.

5.3 GUIDELINES FOR EXITING STUDENTS

Local programs should continue to provide participants with the services they need and must continue to exit participants unless there is a plan to provide future services. In light of this, local programs have a few options for serving and exiting participants, despite challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These options include the following:

1. Continue to provide services through distance learning.

2. Schedule future planned services for participants whose services have been disrupted due to COVID-19. For example, if a local program cancels adult education classes for the remainder of the program year but plans to resume classes in the fall, the fall classes for these participants can be considered "future planned services," and the program would not have to exit the participant.

3. Exit participants who no longer are in need of services and do not have ongoing services or future planned services.

Arkansas Adult Education Section
Telephone: (501) 682-1970   Fax: (501) 682-1706
Web site: http://arcareereducation.org/

Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC)
Telephone: (501) 907-2490   Fax: (501) 907-2492
Web site: http://www.aalrc.org/

Appendix A: Assessment Charts

National Reporting System for Adult Education
Educational Functioning Level Score Ranges

Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Levels		
Level 1 Grade Range: K -1.9 TABE 11/12 scale scores* Reading: 300-441 Total Math: 300-448 Language: 300-457	**Level 2** Grade Range: 2-3.9 TABE 11/12 scale scores Reading 442-500 Total Math: 449-495 Language: 458-510	**Level 3** Grade Range: 4-5.9 TABE 11/12 scale scores Reading: 501-535 Total Math: 496-536 Language: 511-546
Level 4 Grade Range: 6-8.9 TABE 11/12 scale scores: Reading: 536-575 Total Math: 537-595 Language: 547-583	**Level 5** Grade Range: 9-10.9 TABE 11/12 scale scores: Reading: 576-616 Total Math: 596-656 Language: 584-630	**Level 6** Grade Range: 11-12.9 TABE 11/12 scale scores: Reading: 617-800 Total Math: 657-800 Language: 631-800

*Refer to publisher guidelines for more accurate score ranges determined by Form (11/12)
  and Version (L, E, M, D, A)
TABE or TABE Online = Test of Adult Basic Education (Standard or Online format)
Note: Grade Ranges are approximate and for reference purposes only

English as a Second Language (ESL) Levels					
Level 1 SPL 0-1		**Level 2** SPL 2		**Level 3** SPL 3	
BEST* Literacy	0-20	BEST Literacy	21-52	BEST Literacy	53-63
BEST Plus 2.0	361<	BEST Plus 2.0	362-427	BEST Plus 2.0	428-452
CASAS**	Listening & Reading 180<	CASAS	Listening 181-189 Reading 181-190	CASAS	Listening 190-199 Reading 191-200
TABE CLAS-E***	Reading: 250-392 Writing: 200- 396 Listening: 230- 389 Speaking: 231- 425	TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 393- 436 Writing: 397- 445 Listening: 390-437 Speaking: 426-460	TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 437- 476 Writing: 446- 488 Listening: 438-468 Speaking: 461-501
Level 4 SPL 4		**Level 5** SPL 5-6		**Level 6** SPL 6	
BEST Literacy	64-67	BEST Literacy	68-75	BEST Literacy	76+ **Exit Criteria: none**
BEST Plus 2.0	453-484	BEST Plus 2.0	485-524	BEST Plus 2.0	525-564 **Exit Criteria: 565+**
CASAS*	Listening 200-209 Reading 201-210	CASAS	Listening 210-218 Reading 211-220	CASAS	Listening 219-227 Reading 221-235 **Exit Criteria: 228+ & 236+**
TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 477- 508 Writing: 489- 520 Listening: 469- 514 Speaking: 502- 536	TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 509- 557 Writing: 521- 555 Listening: 515- 549 Speaking: 537-567	TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 558-588 **Exit Criteria: 589+** Writing: 556 -612 **Exit Criteria: 613+** Listening: 550-607 **Exit Criteria: 608+** Speaking: 568-594 **Exit Criteria: 595+**

SPL = Participant Performance Level in Reading, Speaking, and Writing

*BEST = Basic English Skills Test

**CASAS = Comprehensive Adult Participant Assessment System – approved assessments for Listening and Reading: *Employability Competency Skill (ECS) (Listening, Reading, and Math); Life & Work (Listening and Reading); Life Skills (Listening, Reading, and Math); Citizenship; eTest*

***TABE CLAS-E = Test of Adult Basic Education Complete Language Assessment – English.

Refer to the publisher's scoring materials for individual subject area score ranges for SPL.

Appendix B:

Please use the electronic form (https://www.arcareereducation.org/about/adult-education) and submit the typed form to adulted@arkansas.gov

2020-2021 Early Post-Testing Waiver			
Submit this waiver to request post-testing before the required hours have been met. If the request is for a class, such as a workplace class, the request must be submitted before the class begins. Submit to Adulted@arkansas.gov. *No more than 8% of a program's students may be early post-tested. Programs that exceed this limit or do not receive prior approval for early post-testing may be penalized.*			

Date		**Director**	
Program Name		**2018-19 Enrollment**	
Requested by		**Position Title**	

Participant or Class Name		**LACES ID**	
Entry EFL		**Assessment Type**	
Subject Area(s) to be Early Post-Tested		**Assessment Level**	

Last Assessment Score for each subject area and subject area to be early post-tested	**Subject Area**	**Scaled Score**	**Current EFL**

Current Instructional Hours		**Expected Instructional Hours at Post-Test**	

Why does the participant(s) need to be early post-tested?		**Additional Information/ Explanation (as needed)**	

Duration and Intensity of Instruction- Describe the average hours per week and number of weeks that participant has attended the program		**Describe how the instruction has been sufficient and may lead to a gain**	

By providing an electronic signature, the Adult Education Director has approved this request and understands the requirements and limitations of the early-post-testing waiver. Submit to Adulted@arkansas.gov		Director's Name/Initials	

For Office Use Only			
Approved		Approved By	
Not Approved		Title	

REFERENCES

1. PROGRAM MEMORANDUM OCTAE 17-2 Johan E. Uvin /s/ Deputy Assistant Secretary,

    Delegated the Duties of the Assistant Secretary. December 19, 2016
2. NRS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE. December 2017.
    http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/implementation_guidelines.aspx
3. Department of Education. Federal Register/Notices. Pages 89920- 89922. Vol. 81 No. 239.
    Tuesday, December 13, 2016.
4. NRS State Assessment Policy Guidance (508). Updated July 20, 2016.