Section 14. Wyoming Goal Setting and Follow-up Policy

(effective January 2011 to July 2012)

14.1 Introduction

Adults seek adult education services for a variety of reasons – some are personal, such as becoming a citizen, working with their children or completing their General Educational Development (GED) Certificate; others are job related, reflecting the need to improve skills to obtain or retain a job; while others may be looking at furthering their education or skill training. A vital component to achieving goals is a positive goal setting experience.

From a recent persistence study, *As Long As It Takes* (John Comings, Sondra Cuban, Johannes M. Bos and Kristin E. Porter, 2003, MDRC, p. iii), we learn:

> "Students expressed two types of learning goals: specific 'instrumental' goals that must be reached in order to realize longer-term aspirations and broader 'transformational' goals that entail major life changes, such as taking on a new social role or work role."

Early lessons on goal setting found:

- "Encourage an ongoing, reflective dialogue with students about their goals, starting at intake and continuing throughout program participation" (ibid., p. 59).
- Student's motivation may become stronger if the ongoing discussion of goals leads to changes in instruction (ibid., p. 60).
- The greater the connection with students the more program enhancement occurred on multiple levels (ibid., p. 56).

Goal setting should be an interactive process between the learner and adult education staff. While the goals must be realistic and attainable, the process provides an opportunity for learners to identify their motivations for attending. An effective goal-setting process that focuses on instruction and learning is central to good educational practice. Setting goals allows adult education students to specify what they want to accomplish and provides a benchmark for both individual and program performance. It should be seen as a compliment to the instructional process, guiding decisions, and informing program planning. When students reach their goals, they achieve success, as does the program and ultimately the State.

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and the National Reporting System (NRS) require that all programs have a documented student goal setting process. It is expected that this goal setting process will assist students in setting realistic short-term and long-term goals. This will give local programs and the state greater program accountability and will impact results reported to OVAE under the requirements of the NRS. You may find the latest version *NRS*

Implementation Guidelines at www.nrsweb.org Additional information and goal setting guidance is available in the document *NRS Tips.*

The following goal-setting policies, relative to NRS Table 5, provide a detailed explanation of state and local program responsibilities for goal setting specific to the NRS.

14.2 Goal Setting Components

In developing a goal setting process, each program must ensure the following:

- Staff understands reporting requirements of the NRS and the implications effective student goal setting has on student persistence and program accountability.
- Staff understands the difference between NRS-related goals (a goal achievable within a program year) and instructional goals.
- A clear process (e.g. timeline, activities, responsible person, etc.) exists for intake, orientation, goal setting, and assessment and placement, including an effective method by which to convey this to students entering the program.
- Staff understands the implications that setting realistic, short-term student goals have on goal achievement within a program year and continues to pursue long-term goals. Strategies shall be developed to help set both.
- Staff understands the potential implications other factors (e. g. educational barriers, family obligations, experience, etc.) have on goal achievement and assist the student in setting realistic goals with these in mind.
- A time shall be designated for students to be assessed to ensure proper placement. Assessment results shall be communicated to the student in order to inform the goal setting process.
- When assisting students with the goal setting process, staff should review (1) each student's self stated goals(s); (2) each student's skill proficiency; and (3) professional knowledge and experience before offering a thoughtful recommendation, based on available data, for the best course of action.
- Staff assists students in developing an individual plan to work toward their goals.
- A process for revisiting goals for the purpose of refining existing goals and celebrating progress toward goal achievement must exist.
- Interim- and post-testing results are to inform instruction and the goal revisiting process.
- All staff understand the program services and goal setting process – and the importance that goal setting has on student persistence and achievement.
- The goal setting process should be an ongoing process of initially setting, informing curricula and instruction, revisiting, celebrating progress and refining. Instruction should be of sufficient intensity and duration to ensure student achievement.

14.3 Intake and Orientation Standards

The program has an intake and orientation process that enables potential students and staff to determine if there is an appropriate match between student goals and program services.

14.3.1 Intake and Orientation Standards

A. Agency ensures all staff members are welcoming and respectful, client-centered, and have knowledge necessary to provide accurate information regarding all program services.

B. Staff informs entering students of available support services (e.g. childcare, transportation)

C. Staff clearly informs entering students of responsibilities expected of them such as attendance and behavior codes.

D. Staff conducts intake interview and assessment, consistent with the programs' instructional approach and offerings, to guide placement.

E. Staff provides informed referrals as needed.

14.3.2 Supporting evidence may include (but is not limited to):

A. Orientation of new staff

B. Documentation of student orientation process and materials

C. State intake form, completed and in student files

D. Written student handbook or program policies

E. Student interest, satisfaction and/or exit surveys

F. Documentation of placement into programs and classes

G. Staff knowledge of other adult education program and partnership offerings

14.4 Goal Setting Considerations to Use in Counseling

Helping students set realistic goals is critical to reporting program performance. Many students enroll in adult education programs with multiple long-range goals. Other learners have very specific goals which can help inform instruction – being able to maintain a checkbook, understand what a supervisor is saying or reading to a child. In addition, learners must identify one of the four core performance goals tracked by the National Reporting System (NRS):

- entering employment
- retaining employment
- obtaining a GED
- entering college or job training program

It is very important that a well-trained adult education administrator, teacher or counselor talk with each new student about setting realistic achievable goals. **All**

participants must have the goal of improving their educational functioning level. The four core performance goals tracked by the NRS should be designated **only when learners and educational staff members agree that the goals can realistically be attained during the current program year (July 1,xx to June 30, xx).**

Here are some considerations for determining realistic goals.

Goal	When to Set the Goal	Considerations for Counseling
Post-secondary or job skills training	If a student enters with a clear goal of entering post-secondary education or job skills training, the goal may be set from intake. Goal may be set at anytime before the student exits the program. If you find out after the student leaves that they entered postsecondary education or training through your follow-up, then the goal may be established and marked as "achieved" in LACES in order for it to be counted on TABLE 13. Remember : A goal is **Met** if it is established while the student is attending ABE. A goal is **Achieved** if you find out after the student has left the program.	• Entry level is at or near high adult secondary(11-12.9 grade level equivalency on TABE) for college enrollment • Entry level is at or near low adult secondary (9-10.9 grade level equivalency on TABE) for job skills training • Student expresses a desire for further education or training in class or during counseling sessions • Special learning needs are addressed and advocacy for college entrance information is shared • Proposed start date/schedule of postsecondary education or job training program • If the student has a long term goals to enter postsecondary education, the student should continue remediation until the student reaches a High ASE level as demonstrated on the TABE. If possible, programs should assist students until they can successfully enter credit-bearing college courses. • College readiness and/or transition programming should be considered as possible services to provide or partnerships developed for services.

Goal	When to Set the Goal	Considerations for Counseling
Obtain employment	If a student is unemployed, the goal for Obtain Employment should be set at intake. If the student indicates they are not employed and not able to work, they will not receive the goal of obtain employment. If the student decides later during a goal review session to get a job instead of going to postsecondary education or training, the goal may be set at that time. **After the student meets the Obtained Employment goal, a Retained Employment goal must be set.	• Programs should consider a pre-employment curriculum to integrate with basic skills such as KeyTrain or WIN. • Student is referred or connected to the local DWS office or other job placement services. • Student's prior work history is discussed and interests are considered • Does the student know what kind of job he/she wants? Are those jobs are available? Are there gaps between student's skills and job requirement skills. Work with career inventories. • Entry educational functioning levels are considered for goal setting • Special learning needs and advocacy information is available • Provide job readiness skills instruction directly or through partnerships regarding interviewing and/or application process • Be introduced and encouraged to complete the Career Readiness Certificate

Goal	When to Set the Goal	Considerations for Counseling
Retain Employment	Remember – this goal must follow having met the Obtained Employment goal. It is set at intake as a separate goal if the student is currently working. Reminder: If the student has a job, you want them to keep the job or move forward to a better job..	• What skills does the current or desired job require? • What is the gap between his/her skills and the required job skills? • Is passage of an employment exam required for job retention? • Can you customize your basic skills program to job specific tasks or the employment exam? • How much time do you have? • Entry employment functioning level • Special learning needs and how to advocate for himself or herself • Is the student currently employed in an unsubsidized job at the time the goal is entered into LACES?

Goal	When to Set the Goal	Considerations for Counseling
Earn a GED	The goal should be attainable within the program year. When a student enters the program during the last quarter, careful deliberation should be given to setting this goal based on considerations such as; hours of attendance, class schedule, and GED test schedule.	• Entry level at or near high adult secondary • Reach the ASE low level with a minimum of 9.0-10.9 grade equivalency as demonstrated by the TABE score and have a long-term goal of Obtain Employment, retain Employment. If the goal is to Enter Post-secondary they must reach the ASE high level with a minimum of 11.0 -12.9 grade level. To enter job skills training staff must determine the appropriate ASE level needed to perform successfully in that training. • Month of entry • Hours/week of attendance • Special learning needs or accommodations request needing approval • If a student's long-term goal requires a college degree, programs should assist students until they can successfully enter credit-bearing college courses. • Assessment scores which indicate the student is likely to pass the GED Test during the grant year should guide the decision to set the goal. Scores below the 8th grade level are more likely to take a longer period of preparation and/or remediation.

The following guidelines will be used while assisting students in **setting goals**:

A. The **student's** stated initial goal is to be recorded as a long-term goal on the goal form provided during a student's intake process for their file.

B. The student is to be pre-tested using the TABE 9/10 or BEST tests.

C. The student is to be consulted as soon as possible after the pre-test, and ABE staff shall assist the student in breaking down his/her long term goal into a short-term goals. The short-term goals are interpreted into goals

matching the NRS requirement which are entered into LACES and the student's educational record.

D. The initial goals are to be set within 15 days of enrollment.

E. After receiving 60 hours of instruction, the student shall be post-tested. Then, if appropriate and in consultation with the student, a new short-term goal shall be determined in terms of the next step toward attaining the student's long-term goal. It is not necessary for students to understand NRS terminology i.e. achieving an educational functioning level. Keep it simple and relevant to the student.

F. Students may change their long-term goals at any time. The program staff may not change goals for a student in order to enhance the program's performance.

G. Short-term goals shall have a direct correlation to the student's long term goal.

Local programs are not required to collect **all** follow-up measures on all students but only on students who have the goal of achieving one or more of these outcomes. For example, the entered employment measure only applies to students who have the goal of getting a job, while the receipt of a GED credential measure only applies to learners who want to attain this outcome. These measures are defined at www.nrsweb.org in the *Guidelines for Implementation of NRS.*

All students must complete the Goal Setting Form. The plan must be placed in the permanent student file. Optimally revisiting goals will happen quarterly.

14.5 Process for Follow-up on Goals

To help ensure comparability of measures across states, the NRS has established procedures for collecting all the NRS Measures. The NRS has three methodologies for collecting measures. Two of the methodologies (local follow-up survey and data matching) are used for collecting the NRS core outcome measures of employment-related measures and placement in postsecondary education or skill training.

- Direct Program Reporting – local programs collect the information directly from the learner while the learner is enrolled and receiving instruction. The information is normally obtained as part of the intake process, through assessment or ongoing throughout the course of instruction. Measures collected with this methodology are the demographic, student status and student participation measures, as well as the educational gain measure and citizenship skill attainment.

- Local Follow-up Survey – This methodology employs a survey of learners who left the program during the program year. To conduct the survey,

programs must include all of the students in the program with one or more of the follow-up goals. Phone or mail surveys may be conducted.

- o Students with a goal of obtaining employment are to be surveyed at the beginning of the first quarter after leaving the program. Once the student met this goal, you must enter the goal of retained employment.
- o Students with retained employment must be surveyed in the third quarter after exit. You must include students who set the goal of obtaining employment and met it in this group.
- o Students with postsecondary or skill training as a goal can be surveyed at any time during the year

- Data Matching – this refers to the procedures whereby programs pool their data to identify outcomes. The state aggregates data to be matched with the UI wage records using Social Security numbers and dates of attendance for the appropriate calendar quarter. On the intake form each student gives permission for their data to be used for this process, with his/her signature.

14.5.1 Wyoming Collection Procedures

Core Outcome	Entity Responsible for Data Follow-Up	Method of Data Collections	Time Period for Data Collection
Obtain Employment	Local ABE Program and State	Data Match/ Survey**	First quarter after the exit quarter*
Retain Employment	Local ABE Program	Data Match /Survey	Third quarter after the exit quarter or third quarter after student obtains a job.
Earn a GED	Local ABE Program & GED testing centers	Data Match	Any time to the end of the Federal reporting period (December 31)***
Enter Post-secondary or job training	Local ABE Program	Survey	Any time to the end of the Federal Reporting period (December 31)***

*The exit quarter is the quarter when the learner completes instruction or has not received instruction for 90 days.

**Survey follow-up may include (but is not limited to) telephone calls, email, postcards, personal contact and or student follow-up questionnaire. State follow-up survey instructions should be followed.

***If goal is "met" in LACES after the data-freeze, then request must be made by the local program to have the fiscal year record updated.

NOTE: At a minimum 30% of your students will be post tested. WCCC will monitor program performance on goal setting and post testing rates. Performance directly effects the local funding formula and is a high priority.

14.6 NRS Definitions of Primary Core Goals

14.6.1 Follow-up Measure 1 – Entered Employment

A. Definition: Learner enters employment by the end of the first quarter after the program exit quarter. Employment is working in a paid unsubsidized job, or working 15 hours or more per week in an unpaid job on a farm or business operated by a family member or the student. 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 student is enrolled can be counted for entered employment and is reported on exit from the program.

B. Applicable Population: Learners who are not employed at time of entry and who have a goal of obtaining employment on exiting during the program year.

C. Federal Reporting: States report the total number of learners who enter employment and the total number of learners in the relevant population (i.e., number of learners in the workforce who are unemployed at entry and have a goal of obtaining employment) who exit during the program year. Entered employment rate is computed by dividing these numbers.

Students obtaining employment after they enter the program are not identified as having met the employment goal until the quarter after they exit the program. Then you enter the Retained Employment goal.

14.6.2 Follow-up Measure 2 – Retained Employment

A. Definition: Learner remains employed in the third quarter after exit quarter.

B. Applicable Population: Learners who, at time of entry, are not employed and have a goal of obtaining employment, who enter employment by the first quarter after the exit quarter; and learners who are employed at entry and have a goal of improved or retained employment.

C. Federal Reporting: The total number of learners who retain employment is reported and is used to compute a rate or percentage by dividing this total by the total relevant population (i.e., the number of learners in the workforce who are unemployed at entry, have a goal of obtaining employment and who enter employment; and learners who are employed at entry with a goal of improving or retaining employment).

14.6.3 Follow-up Measure 3 – Receipt of a Secondary School Diploma or GED Certificate

A. Definition: The learner obtains certification of attaining passing scores on GED tests, or the learner obtains a diploma or state-recognized equivalent, documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies (high school or adult high school diploma).

B. Applicable Population: All learners with a goal of passing the GED tests or obtaining a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent) who exit during the program year.

C. Federal Reporting: States report the total number of learners who obtain GED certificates and secondary school diplomas and the number of learners with this goal, who exit during the program year. To compute a rate or percentage of attainment, the number of students receiving a secondary school diploma or GED is divided by the total number of learners who had a goal of secondary credential attainment who exit during the program year. Note that if a state has a policy officially recognizing attainment of a foreign language GED as receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, the state may also report attainment of a foreign language GED in the NRS for adult literacy.

14.6.4 Follow-up Measure 4 – Entered Postsecondary Education or Training

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

B. Applicable Population: All learners with a goal of placement in postsecondary education or training who exit during the program year.

C. Federal Reporting: The total number of learners who enter postsecondary education or a training program and the total number who had this goal who exit during the program year are reported. To compute a rate of placement, the number of students enrolling in postsecondary education or training is divided by the total number of learners with a goal of advancing to postsecondary education or training who exit during the program year.

14.7 NRS Definitions of Secondary Goals

14.7.1 Secondary Community Measure 1 – Achieved Citizenship Skills *quoted from NRS Implementation Guidelines*

A. Definition: Learner attains the skills needed to pass the U.S. citizenship exam. *Clarification – ABE does not teach citizenship classes but is an adjunct to classes provided by homeland security for that purpose. What ABE does is help adult students acquire the skills and knowledge*

through contextualized instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation and US history and government. The reason why is for our students to become active and informed parents, workers, and community members.

B. Applicable Population: All learners with a goal of obtaining citizenship skills.

C. Federal Reporting: Total number of learners who obtain skills to pass the citizenship exam is reported. A proportion or rate can be computed by dividing this total by the total relevant population.

Additional Guidance on Achieved Citizenship Skills Measure

This measure is included to document learning gains of students who are enrolled in classes designed to give them the literacy skills and substantive knowledge to pass the citizenship exam. These students should have "obtain citizenship skills" designated as their goal for attending. To determine whether students achieve these skills, program staff should administer a State-approved test that measures the relevant skill areas—such as a practice citizenship test, sample forms, and speaking tests—at the conclusion of the citizenship class. If this measure is to be reported, it is the State's responsibility to ensure that programs use an appropriate test, establish the standards for passing this test, and train and monitor local staff in its use.

NOTE: Students may not have the "obtain citizenship skills" goal as their only goal.   Primarily the student is attending class for literacy skills.

14.8 Appendices

14.8.1 NRS Goal Setting information is online at www.nrsweb.org

14.8.2 ABE Goal Setting Form - local

14.8.3 ABE Goal Worksheet - local