
SAMPLE LOCAL FOLLOW-UP SURVEY FOR CORE MEASURES

ADAPTED FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Implementation Guidelines

Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education

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**Division Of Adult Education And Literacy
Office Of Vocational And Adult Education
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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE SURVEYS

SAMPLE LOCAL FOLLOW-UP SURVEY FOR CORE MEASURES

A. ENROLLMENT

Hello. My name is _____. I work for _____. We're calling people who have recently attended classes at our adult education program to find out what happens to them after they leave us. We want to know how you liked the classes you took and how adult education classes have affected you, your family, and your job.

It should take no longer than 10 minutes to answer my questions. Do you have time now for me to ask these questions? (*Reassure the respondent that any information given to us will be strictly confidential.*)

First, I'd like to make sure I have the correct information about the class you took.

A-1. I understand that you were in (TEACHER'S NAME)'s class at (LOCATION). Is that correct?

- Yes
- No [*Obtain correct information*]

A-2. Did you attend teacher's class until it ended or did you leave before it ended?

- Completed [*Proceed to Question B-1*]
- Left before it ended [*Proceed to Question A-3*]

A-3. During what month did you stop attending the class or program?

Month _____

B. OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

B-1. Since the end of your class or program, have you enrolled in any other educational or training programs?

- Yes
- No [*Proceed to Question C-1*]

B-2. Where are you enrolled?

- Other (Specify)_____

B-3. In what type of class or classes are you now enrolled? [Do not read choices to respondent. Check all that apply.]

- English Language Skills
- GED/High School
- Vocational/Job Training
- Community College/College Level
- Citizenship
- Family literacy
- Other (Specify)_____
- Don't Know/Refused

C. SECONDARY CREDENTIAL

C-1. Did you receive any diplomas, certificates, or degrees at the end of your class or since you left (TEACHER'S) class, such as the GED? (NOT REQUIRED SINCE WE MATCH ALL GED DATA FOR TESTING IN MA GED CENTERS, WILL NEED RESULTS FROM TESTING CENTERS OUTSIDE OF MA)

- Yes
- No [Proceed to Question D-1]
- Don't Know/Refused [Proceed to Question D-1]

C-2. What type of diploma/certificate/degree did you receive? [Do not read choices to respondent. Check all that apply.] (REQUIRED FOR ADP SINCE NO MATCHING IS AVAILABLE)

- GED
- High School Diploma
- Certificate of Competence
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Other_____
- Don't Know/Refused

D. EMPLOYMENT

D-1. When you first enrolled in the class or program were you: [Read choices.]

- Employed at a paying job [Proceed to Question D-4]
- Not employed at a paying job and looking for a job [Proceed to Question D-2]
- Not employed and not looking for a job [Proceed to E-1]
- Don't Know /Refused [End interview]

D-2. While you were taking (TEACHER'S)'s class, did you get a paying job?

- Yes

If yes: What was the name of your employer? _____ [Proceed to Question D-4]

- No

D-3. Since you stopped taking the class, have you gotten a paying job?

- Yes

If yes: What is the name of your employer? _____
When did you first get a job after leaving the program?

- No [Proceed to Question E-1]

D-4. Do you still have that job or do you now have a different job?

- Still have same job

- Have different job

What is the name of your current employer? _____

- Lost job, unemployed

- Don't Know/Refused

CLOSING

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questions. Your answers will be very helpful. The information you gave me will be used to help make adult education programs better and more useful to people like you who have attended or would like to attend such a program.

E-1. Is there anything that I didn't ask about that you'd like to say?

MODEL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING THE LOCAL FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

This section describes model procedures for conducting a telephone survey designed to collect the NRS follow-up measures. The model is offered as guidance to States in designing and conducting the follow-up survey. *These procedures are not required, however, and States may develop its own procedures for conducting the survey, as long as the survey meets the NRS requirements described in this document.*

The crucial activities to conducting a telephone survey that produces valid data are to:

1. Reach the students and obtain the information.
2. Train telephone interviewers so that all interviewers ask the survey questions correctly and reliably.

Survey Procedures

As you conduct the survey, it is very important to the integrity of the data collected to know how many people were not reached, how many refused to participate, and what the reasons for refusal were. For this reason, maintain a calling log during the survey. Entries in the log should contain the date and time of each call, the name of the caller, and information about the call, including: the name of the respondent, whether the person was reached, messages left, whether the interview occurred, and explanations for why it did not. The logs should be checked daily to identify respondents who need to be recalled. The log should also be checked against the list of learners in the sample to make sure all members of the sample are being called and contacted. Callers should promptly make a log entry for every telephone call they make, whether or not the adult learner was reached. This Appendix includes a sample calling log.

The validity of the survey depends on reaching all or at least a majority of the students. There will be many difficulties, however, in reaching all of the students. The following section describes some of the most common difficulties in reaching people for a telephone survey and offers guidance on how to resolve these problems.

Problems Reaching Learners on the Telephone

In most data collection activities, there are predictable kinds of problems that may be encountered. Interviewers may be unable to reach the correct person, and the learner may not want to speak to the caller, or he or she may have a protective family. Additionally, learners may not want to answer some or all survey items; they may be hostile, confused, or just harried. Furthermore, callers may be required to answer questions that they are not equipped to answer.

Interviewers should have a resource person available who can assist with difficult interviews or respondents and complicated questions. This person should have thorough familiarity with the NRS and the procedures used to conduct telephone interviews. He or she should monitor interviewer telephone logs, provide general oversight during the interviewing process, and could also be responsible for the training.

Accommodation for other languages. Because the sample may include ESL students and other non-native English speakers, interviewers are likely to encounter a language barrier in the course of data collection. Every effort must be taken to collect information from all non-English speakers included in the sample. Accomplishing this may require the program to translate the survey and use interviewers who are fluent in the languages that may be encountered during the interviews. The NRS has Spanish and Vietnamese versions of the model survey that are available on request.

When the student cannot be reached immediately. A gatekeeper is a person or situation that stands between you and the person with whom you need to talk. Common gatekeepers are family members and answering machines.

- Reaching a family member or other person*
 - ✓ Leave a message. The message should be as follows:
 - Interviewer's name.
 - Calling from (name of program).
 - Calling in reference to the adult education program the person attended.
 - Interviewer will call back at another time.
 - ✓ Ask a few questions:
 - When is the learner expected back?
 - What and when is the best way to reach him/her?
 - ✓ Wait for no more than 2 days between callbacks.
 - ✓ If multiple messages (more than 3 or 4) have been left, but the learner has not been contacted, then the learner should be officially listed as a nonrespondent on the calling log sheet and replaced with a learner from the backup sample.
- Reaching voicemail or an answering machine*
 - ✓ Leave a message. The message should be as follows:
 - Interviewer name and where interviewer is calling from (name of program).
 - Calling in reference to the adult education program the person attended.
 - Interviewer will call back at another time.
 - ✓ Wait no more than 2 days between callbacks.
 - ✓ If multiple messages (more than 3 or 4) have been left, but the learner has not been contacted, then the learner should be officially listed as a no-respondent on the calling log sheet and replaced with a learner from the backup sample.
- Reaching a non-working number or a number that just rings*
 - ✓ Non-working number should be noted on the calling log sheet as not working.
 - ✓ If the number just rings, then the day and time the interviewer called should be noted on the log sheet and the learner should be called at a different time. If multiple calls (more than 3 or 4) are made at different times of the day and there is still no answer, then the learner should be officially listed as a nonrespondent on the calling log sheet and replaced with a learner from the backup sample.

Dealing with refusals. The goal of telephone interviews is to obtain information from all the people contacted. However, some interviewees may be initially reluctant to participate in the survey. The interviewer should try to “convert” refusals whenever possible; callers should, however, never become belligerent or upset or insist that a person complete the survey.

The best way to handle a refusal is for the caller to present himself or herself as confident and proud of the work that he or she is doing. The interviewer should indicate that this survey is an important way of providing information to the State Department of Education and the adult education program, and decisions about adult education will be made based on this information.

There are several points in the interview when callers may encounter refusals or reluctance. The following examples provide ways to handle this.

Initial refusal. When learners are first reached, they may not be prepared to speak with the interviewer. They may be very busy. If this is the case:

- Ask about the timing: I’m sorry we reached you at a bad time. When might be a more convenient time to reach you? Possible solutions include offering to call them a week later, a month later, etc., as long as this is recorded so that the followup call is made.
- When the learner has been reached but absolutely refuses to participate, a complete description should be recorded on the calling log and given to the resource person for further attempts.

Confusion-based refusal. Adult learners who are contacted may be confused or wary about how the information collected in the interview will be used. For this reason, they may refuse to take part in the interview.

- If the learner wants to know why the survey is being conducted, the interviewer should explain the purpose of the study, emphasizing that the information collected has important implications for the national adult education program and for the program she or he attended.
- If the learner wants to know how his or her information will be used, the interviewer should assure the learner that the data will be compiled to find out how well adult education programs are performing throughout the country and to improve program services. Furthermore, all of the answers that the learners give will be kept confidential, and no names or other identifying information will be associated with their answers. Learners should also be assured that they were chosen randomly from the pool of adult learners in the State.

Time- or burden-based refusal. This type of refusal can occur early in the interview or at a later point. Interviewees may be pressed for time and may try to terminate the interview. If this is the case:

- The interviewer should point out that the survey will only take 10–15 minutes, acknowledge that the learner’s time is really important, and tell them that their responses to the survey questions will be really helpful: I understand that your time is important. We really appreciate your input on this issue. It is important to get the perspective of adult education students.
- The interviewer should tell learners about the sampling process: Of the [number] students that attended the adult education program, you have been selected as one of only [number] to represent the program. Your help is important to us.

If the respondent is still reluctant, one other strategy may be helpful:

- The interviewer should try to arrange an alternate time: Might there be a better or more convenient time to contact you?

If none of these strategies are successful, then the interviewer should NOT try to persuade the learner further. The learner should be thanked for his or her patience and told that the caller appreciates all the demands on their time. The interviewer should then record a complete description on the calling log contact sheet, and the student should be replaced with a learner from the backup sample.

Training

Staff members who will be conducting the telephone interviews should be trained to ensure the integrity of the data collected. To collect valid and reliable data, interviewers must be thoroughly familiar with both the process of interviewing and the materials to be used for collecting data. The actual training can be characterized as having two components: the process of conducting telephone interviews and the purpose and structure of the NRS. This section provides suggestions on appropriate training activities.

Focus of Training

Regardless of the survey, any errors, biases, or inconsistencies on the part of the interviewer result in some degree of survey error. It should be a goal to minimize this error. Trained interviewers are much more likely to accomplish this goal. The desired result is high quality data, so that data are comparable from one interview to another and from one State to another. The following guidelines should help minimize survey error and should be conveyed to the interviewers during their training:

1. The interviewing process should be standardized. To ensure that this occurs, interviewers must read the questions exactly as written and follow the instructions on the survey instrument.