Follow Up Data:

Opening the Door to Better Results

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Workforce Development Agency

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Office of Adult Education

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Overview of NRS Requirements

The National Reporting System (NRS) established the reporting requirements for federally funded adult education programs authorized under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. The NRS defines the measures local programs must collect, the methodologies for collecting them, and state reporting requirements. While the NRS includes participant descriptive measures (e.g., participant age and ethnicity) and participation measures (e.g., contact hours), it is the participant **outcome measures** that have the greatest impact on the adult education delivery system. Exhibit 1 summarizes the NRS core outcome measures.

Exhibit 1
Core Measures

Topic	Measures	Definitions
Educational Gains	• **Educational gains**	Improvements in educational functioning levels in reading, writing, speaking and listening and functional areas
Follow-up Measures	• **Entered employment**	Learners who obtain a job by the first quarter after exit quarter
	• **Retained employment (*Includes Improved Employment*)**	Learners who entered employment who are employed in the third quarter after program exit
	• **Receipt of secondary school diploma or GED**	Learners who obtain a GED, secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent
	• **Placement in postsecondary education or training**	Learners who enroll in a postsecondary educational or occupational skills program building on prior services or training received

Along with the descriptive and participation measures, programs collect the educational gain measure while participants are enrolled in the program. However, programs must collect the NRS "**follow-up**" measures—Improve employment, retained employment and placement in postsecondary education or job training—after the participant has left the program. In addition, the follow-up measures are participant goal dependent—that is, **they apply only to participants who designate one of these goals as a primary or second goal for attending**. For example, the employment measures apply only to participants with a goal of obtaining a job and the enrollment in postsecondary education measure applies only to participants, who enter a local program with a goal of enrolling in postsecondary education.

The NRS allows two methodologies for collecting data on follow-up measures: data matching and surveys. Data matching relies on using other databases, such as unemployment insurance wage records, to obtain the measures by matching participant records and social security numbers with the information in the database. States can use this procedure to meet NRS reporting requirements for participants with employment-related, postsecondary, and GED goals. When this capability is not present, data on follow-up measures must be collected through a survey of learners. **Michigan's adult education programs currently use the survey method.**

The Workforce Development Agency, Office of Adult Education (WDA) continues to work with partnering agencies to develop agreements for data matching. We are hopeful that these agreements, and the accompanying computer programming that must be developed, can be accomplished for the employment and GED follow up measures in the future. If so, we will be able to give local programs the option of using data matching for these follow up measures. Given the difficult nature of locating participants after they exit local programs in addition to the labor-intensive task of conducting telephone interviews, data matching will be the most cost and labor effective method of follow up. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) is strongly encouraging all states to initiate data matching as soon as possible.

To determine the success of our efforts with adult learners, we need a follow up process that will provide accurate results. In addition, we are quickly approaching a point where our funding will be determined by our success at achieving USDOE performance benchmarks. The data we collect must be consistent, reliable, and valid. Therefore, it is critical that the procedures described in this manual be followed diligently.

Overview of This Document

This document presents the guidelines for conducting participant post program follow up surveys. It is designed to be used as a supplement to regional and state trainings that are provided to delve more deeply into the policies and procedures for conducting participant post program follow up.

The document:

- Explains what participants need to be surveyed and when,
- Outlines the process for conducting the telephone survey,
- Provides guidelines for selecting and training telephone interviewers, and
- Includes standardized forms and checklists for use in the student survey process.

Conducting the Participant Survey

Conducting a follow up survey is a complex activity that requires good organization and planning. This section describes the NRS procedures for planning and conducting the follow up survey, including identifying who is to be included in the survey, when to conduct the survey and the methodology for conducting it. The monitoring of the survey procedures, training of staff conducting the survey and reporting of findings is also addressed.

Getting Started

The follow up process begins at intake and continues well after the participant has left your program. Participants need to be notified about the follow up process upon registration. They need to understand what follow up is and that they will be asked to participate. Further, they need to know how the data will be used and that their specific answers will be confidential. The more information about follow up you can provide to your participants the more likely they will be to participate in the process.

How do I know what participants to survey and when?

Only participants who designate a short-term goal related to the follow up measures (enter employment, retain employment, improve employment, enroll in postsecondary education or job training, receive a GED or

a high school diploma) need to be surveyed. Exhibit 2 summarizes the participant population to include for each follow up measure and when to contact them to collect follow up data.

Exhibit 2: Participant Population and Collection Time for Follow Up Measures

Follow Up Measure	Participant Population to Include	Time Period to Collect Measure
Enter employment	Participants unemployed at entry with an employment goal that Separate Before Completion or Complete the Period of Enrollment and do NOT Plan to Return.	First quarter after exit quarter
Retain employment	Participants unemployed at entry with employment goal who obtain a job during enrollment or the first quarter after exit; ***and*** participants employed at entry with a goal of retained employment that Separate Before Completion or Complete the Period of Enrollment and do NOT Plan to Return.	Third quarter after exit quarter
Improve employment	Participants employed at entry with a goal of improve employment that Separate Before Completion or Complete the Period of Enrollment and do NOT Plan to Return.	Third quarter after exit quarter
Enroll in postsecondary education or training	Participants with a goal of entering postsecondary education or other training that Separate Before Completion or Complete the Period of Enrollment and do NOT Plan to Return. ***NOTE:*** *A College Transcript can be used to verify that the participant enrolled in post-secondary education.*	Any time after exit, but prior to **October 25** following the end of the program year.
Obtain a GED	Participants with a goal of obtaining their GED that Separate Before Completion or Complete the Period of Enrollment and do NOT Plan to Return. ***NOTE:*** *A GED Transcript can be used to verify that the participant did (or did not) obtain their GED.*	Any time prior to **October 25** following the end of the program year.
Obtain a high school diploma	Participants with a goal of obtaining a high school diploma that Separate Before Completion or Complete the Period of Enrollment and do NOT Plan to Return. ***NOTE:*** *A high school transcript can be used to verify that the participant did (or did not) obtain their diploma, or; a diploma can be used to verify the goal attainment.*	Any time prior to **October 25** following the end of the program year.

Identifying learners for the **retained employment** measure is more complex than the other measures because this measure applies to the unemployed participants who had a goal of “Obtain a Job” ***AND*** who obtained a job when contacted for follow up. It also applies to employed participants who had a goal of “Retain Employment.” Measurement of both employment-related measures – entered and retained employment – is complicated further by the fact that the participant must enter employment by the end of the first quarter after the exit quarter (defined as the quarter when the participant completes instruction or has not received instruction for 90 days and has no further instruction scheduled). **A job obtained while the learner is still enrolled may be counted but is reported in the first quarter after their exit quarter.** Retained employment is measured by determining whether the participant has a job in the third quarter after their exit quarter.

Participants that have a follow up goal but an End of Enrollment Student Status (Exit Status) of *"Completed and Plans to Continue in 90 Days"* are exempt from follow up because they have not completed their instruction yet. However, if the Participant does not re-enroll at the local program within 90 days, then the local program is responsible for conducting post program follow up. Local programs need to monitor these participants to verify the re-enrollment that exempted the participant from follow up. They also need to determine a timetable for contacting participants that do not re-enroll that permits sufficient time for contacting the participant, conducting the follow up survey and then entering the data into MAERS before the October 25 data entry deadline.

Exhibit 3 provides an example of when programs must measure entered and retained employment.

Exhibit 3
Quarterly Schedule for Collecting Entered and Retained Employment

Exit Quarter	Contact Quarter	Report
July 1—September 30. 2010 *(First Quarter—PY 2010)*	October 1—December 31, 2010 *(Second Quarter—PY 2010)*	PY 2010
October 1—December 31, 2010 *(Second Quarter—PY 2010)*	January 1—March 31, 2011 *(Third Quarter—PY 2010)*	PY 2010
January 1—March 31, 2011 *(Third Quarter—PY 2010)*	April 1—June 30, 2011 *(Fourth Quarter—PY 2010)*	PY 2010
April 1—June 30, 2011 *(Fourth Quarter—PY 2010)*	July 1—September 30, 2011 *(First Quarter—PY 2011)*	PY 2010
July 1—September 30, 2011 *(First Quarter—PY 2011)*	October 1—December 31, 2011 *(Second Quarter—PY 2011)*	PY 2011
October 1—December 31, 2011 *(Second Quarter—PY 2011)*	January 1—March 31, 2012 *(Third Quarter—PY 2011)*	PY 2011
January 1—March 31, 2012 *(Third Quarter—PY 2011)*	April 1—June 30, 2012 *(Fourth Quarter—PY 2011)*	PY 2011
April 1—June 30, 2012 *(Fourth Quarter—PY 2011)*	July 1—September 30, 2012 *(First Quarter—PY 2012)*	PY 2011

Exhibit 3a
Quarterly Schedule for Collecting Retained and Improved Employment

Exit Quarter	Contact Quarter	Report
July 1—September 30. 2010 *(First Quarter—PY 2010)*	April 1—June 30, 2011 *(Fourth Quarter—PY 2010)*	PY 2010
October 1—December 31, 2010 *(Second Quarter—PY 2010)*	July 1—September 30, 2011 *(First Quarter—PY 2011)*	PY 2010
January 1—March 31, 2011 *(Third Quarter—PY 2010)*	October 1—December 31, 2011 *(Second Quarter—PY 2011)*	PY 2011
April 1—June 30, 2010 *(Fourth Quarter—PY 2010)*	January 1—March 31, 2012 *(Third Quarter—PY 2011)*	PY 2011
July 1—September 30, 2011 *(First Quarter—PY 2011)*	April 1—June 30, 2012 *(Fourth Quarter—PY 2011)*	PY 2011
October 1—December 31, 2011 *(Second Quarter—PY 2011)*	July 1—September 30, 2012 *(First Quarter—PY 2012)*	PY 2011
January 1—March 31, 2012 *(Third Quarter—PY 2011)*	October 1—December 31, 2012 *(Second Quarter—PY 2012)*	PY 2012
April 1—June 30, 2012	January 1—March 31, 2013	PY 2012

(Fourth Quarter—PY 2011)	*(Third Quarter—PY 2012)*	

Beginning with PY 2008-09, the Office of Adult Education has implemented the following policy:

> *All participants must have an employment related goal, which are: Enter Employment, Improve Employment or Retain Employment. It can be either the primary or a second goal. If the participant is "Unemployed" at entry, then their employment goal must be to Enter Employment. If the participant is "Employed" at entry, then their employment goal must be either Improve Employment or Retain Employment. If a Participant's employment status at entry is "Not in the Labor Force", then they are exempt from this policy. The participant declares their employment status at program entry and it is self-certified by the participant. The participant's employment status is recorded on the Adult Learning Plan, which is signed by the participant.*

Beginning with PY 2011-12, the Office of Adult Education has amended this policy as follows:

> *All participants should have a postsecondary or employment-related goal, which are: Enter Employment or Retain/ Improve Employment. If the participant is "Unemployed" at entry, then their employment goal should be to Enter Employment or Enroll in Postsecondary Education or Training. If the participant is "Employed" at entry, then their employment goal should be Retain/Improve Employment or Enroll in Postsecondary Education or Training. If a Participant's employment status at entry is "Not in the Labor Force", then they are exempt from this policy. The participant declares their employment status at program entry and it is self-certified by the participant. The participant's employment status is recorded on the Adult Learning Plan, which is signed by the participant.*

- **Enter, Improve** or **Retain Employment Goals** must be collected using the quarterly schedule listed in the second column of Exhibit 3. Improve and Retain Employment goals will be tracked across two program years beginning in PY 2010-11. To illustrate: Participants with an "Improve" or "Retain Employment" goal exiting in the third or fourth quarter of PY 2009-10 (January 1 thru June 30, 2010) AND exiting in the first or second quarter of PY 2010-11 (July 1 thru December 31, 2010) will be included on the PY 2010-11 NRS tables 5 and 5a. The MAERS Follow Up Selection, Participant Enrollment and Missing Data reports have been modified to include participants as described. Local program will need to accommodate this change into their follow up process.

  Participants that have employment goals must be contacted within their "Contact Quarter" (Listed in Exhibit #3 above) to have their follow up survey done. If a participant has an "Obtain Employment" goal, enrolls in September (July thru September Quarter) and exits your program at the semester break in January (January thru March Quarter) then they must be contacted during their contact quarter, which is the April thru June Quarter.

- Please refer to Exhibits #4, #5 and #6 below for more detail on Enter Employment, Improve and Retain Employment Goal data collection and Employment Goal reporting.

What are the procedures for conducting the participant survey?

There are three ways to conduct follow up surveys, which are: by mail, telephone, or through an in-person interview. The latter option is extremely costly and is not feasible for adult education programs. A mail survey, while inexpensive and easy to administer, normally produces an unacceptably low response rate – typically around 10 percent. **Consequently, Michigan's approved survey procedure requires that local programs conduct the follow up survey by telephone.** The telephone survey may be supplemented with

a mail survey and by information collected while the participant is enrolled. For example, programs can supply participants with a form during their enrollment to return when they have met their goal. The Office of Adult Education has developed a **Participant Follow-Up Survey form** (described below) for these purposes. You may NOT rely on mail surveys only, however, since a **50 percent response rate must be achieved**. (More explanation is provided later.)

By following the seven steps listed below, you will increase your chances of obtaining a 50% response rate.

Step 1: Select and train telephone interviewers.

Conducting a survey is highly labor intensive. Besides administering the survey, you must locate the participants, explain the survey to them, and obtain their cooperation. This work requires frequent callbacks to participants and careful record keeping. Your program should ensure that you have sufficient staff and time to conduct the survey. Due to a lack of resources, your program may use teachers or other program staff to conduct the survey. However, this approach may be inadequate if these staff members do not feel the work is a priority or if they do not have sufficient time to conduct the survey. A better approach might be to hire a part-time assistant or volunteer to conduct the telephone interviews.

Keep in mind that you could be surveying ESL participants. The survey may need to be translated into the most common languages your participants speak and using interviewers with the ability to speak and understand those languages.

Once the telephone interviewers are selected, appropriate training is essential. Training should include:

- How to use the script on the follow up surveys, including what to say to participants to introduce the survey and get their cooperation;
- Ways to avoid refusals;
- How to ask the survey questions;
- How to record responses; and
- How to answer participant questions about the survey.

During the training, you should go over every question in the survey to ensure that staff understands the purpose of the question, what is being asked, and what responses are desired. The training should also include mock interviews and other practice. Staff should be thoroughly familiar with all questions and procedures before beginning. It may be desirable to develop your own local follow up training (after you have been trained by the State) to ensure understanding and standardization of procedures.

Appendix C contains strategies and procedures for training your interviewers.

Step 2: Determine your telephone survey schedule.

As described previously, the employment-related goals are time sensitive and must be collected using the quarterly schedule in Exhibit 2.

NOTE: If the telephone survey confirms that a participant with a goal for Entering Employment was indeed employed by the end of the first quarter after their exit, that participant will need to be contacted and surveyed again at the end of the third quarter after their exit to determine if he/she is still employed for the job retention (Retain Employment) measure.

Because of the quarterly structure of the employment goal follow-up process, the simplest time to conduct telephone surveys is quarterly. Further, timing of the follow up telephone call is important. If you call too

soon, the participant may not have had sufficient time to find a job. If you wait too long, you may not be able to contact the participant before the follow up contact window closes. Subsequently, correct timing of the follow up telephone survey is critical.

The local program should determine the optimal time to collect the Entry into Postsecondary Education, Obtain a GED and Obtain a High School Diploma follow up data. For example, it may be advisable to collect the Entry into Postsecondary Education measure during the fall quarter or September – October (following the program year) when most participants enter community college. For GED completion, local programs may want to wait until this time period as well to allow participants the maximum amount of time (prior to the October 25 reporting deadline) to take and pass the GED tests. However, local programs need to understand that the longer a participant has been away from their program the more difficult it becomes to contact the participant. Local programs will have to consider these (and other factors affecting follow up) and determine a local contact schedule that will yield the highest survey response rate for the local program.

Step 3: Inform participants of the survey.

It is very important to the success of the survey that participants know they will be contacted later and asked about their post program outcomes (follow up goals). The main challenge in conducting the survey is finding the participants after they leave the program. For this reason, programs should inform participants with follow up goals about the follow-up process upon program entry. In addition, participants should be reminded about the follow up process several times during their enrollment period.

At intake, all participants need to be informed about the follow up process by providing them with the Office of Adult Education Follow Up Notice (Appendix B). This notice explains the follow up process, requests their participation, and provides the participant’s permission to be contacted by a member of your staff for follow-up. Participants should be reminded about this notices several times during the enrollment period. Also, participants that enroll later in the program year should be provided this notice as well.

The Follow-Up Notice also gives the program permission to verify GED completion with the state or local GED testing examiner. Program staff must ensure that participants understand the follow-up process. In addition, participants can (and frequently do) change their goals during their enrollment period. This information can be queried during when participants are reminded about the follow up notice during the enrollment period and any goal changes can be updated in the ALP and in MAERS. **Participants that change their goal after program entry to a goal requiring follow-up must be notified about the follow-up process as soon as possible.**

During the enrollment period, you need to remind participants about the follow up process and its importance. If possible, you should introduce participants to your staff members who will be conducting the follow up survey. This will increase the likelihood that a participant will respond when called and that they will complete the follow up survey. Participants will be more likely to talk to people who they know and have met, which is why it is extremely important to introduce participants to the staff that will be making the follow up telephone calls. It is also very helpful for staff conducting the follow up process to meet with participants and explain the follow up process to them.

Some programs provide students with a follow up postcard and ask them to return it to the program if they meet their follow-up goal after they exit the program. This process is optional and can be used **in addition** to the Program Survey, **but not as a substitute** for it.

Step 4: Ensure accurate contact information.

Local programs are strongly encouraged to collect alternative contact information from the participant, such as addresses and phone numbers of relatives or others who may know of the participants' whereabouts after exit. The alternative contact information can then be used to help you contact the participant once he/she leaves your program. The **Follow Up Contact Information Form** is located in Appendix C. The alternative contacts can be input into MAERS in the **Update Alternative Contact** screen (Appendix E). Local programs should collect as much alternative contact information from the participant as possible at intake. This information should be updated two or more times during the enrollment period. In addition, local program may wish to conduct a post enrollment exit interview process. Contact information can be updated during the exit interview process.

In addition, participants should be encouraged to provide new addresses and phone numbers when they move. Programs should implement procedures to update this information periodically while the participant is enrolled. Further, email is becoming a method of contact that is yielding improving response rates with younger participants in urban areas. Participants can easily access Hotmail and Yahoo email accounts (which are free) at their friends, Libraries and mobile phones. For many participants their email changes less frequently than their phone number.

Step 5: Identify survey respondents.

It is critical that data be input into MAERS at least on a quarterly basis. By doing so, MAERS will be able to generate a **Follow Up Selection Report.** This report will list participants that need to be contacted for follow up and when they need to be contacted. This should greatly assist your scheduling efforts.

Step 6: Conduct the telephone survey.

The **Program Survey** (Appendices D1 – D6) is conducted through telephone interviews. A separate Program Survey has been developed for each follow up measure: D1 – GED, D2 - high school diploma completion, D3 – enter employment, D4 – retain employment, D5 - improve employment, and D6 – enter postsecondary education/job training. The telephone interviewer only need use the survey that matches the individual participant's goal. If a participant selects two goals that require follow up, then two follow up surveys (one for each goal) must be conducted.

The follow up survey is divided into sections. Section 1 contains general participant information. Section 2 relates to the individual's follow up goal. Section 3 requests participant feedback and recommendations. **The interviewer must ask the questions in Section 2 <u>exactly as they appear in the survey</u>. Programs may adapt the questions and information in Sections 1 and 3 to fit their own local program requirements.**

When calling a participant, follow-up staff should ask for the individual by first name or nickname. This will help to increase the likelihood of the participant accepting the survey phone call. If the participant's teacher cannot conduct the telephone survey, then follow up staff should say they are calling on behalf of the participant's teacher. Again, this is designed to increase the likelihood of the participant accepting the call and responding to the survey questions. Participants will be most comfortable talking with their teacher or someone who they know from the local program. This will help to increase your follow up response rate.

The state-approved **Contact Log** (Appendix F) must be used to record contacts during the follow up process. The Contact Log must be kept for federal and state monitoring. Follow-up staff must attempt four contacts per participant. If there is no answer to the follow-up call after four attempts, then the participant is considered a non-respondent. If the participant is contacted on the fourth phone call or before and answers the <u>primary survey questions</u>, the participant is counted as a respondent.

Step 7: Record the results.

The Program Survey must be filed in the participant’s file. If the participant is a non-respondent to the Program Survey, a blank survey should be kept in the participant’s file. The incomplete survey should clearly indicate that the participant could not be contacted or refused to participate.

Follow-up results should be posted to the **Update Follow Up i**nformation screen in MAERS on a regular basis (at least quarterly).

To assist programs in tracking individual participant follow up, a **Participant Follow-Up Checklist** (Appendix G) has been developed. This checklist can be adapted to best serve the purposes of the local program’s tracking efforts.

Exhibit 4

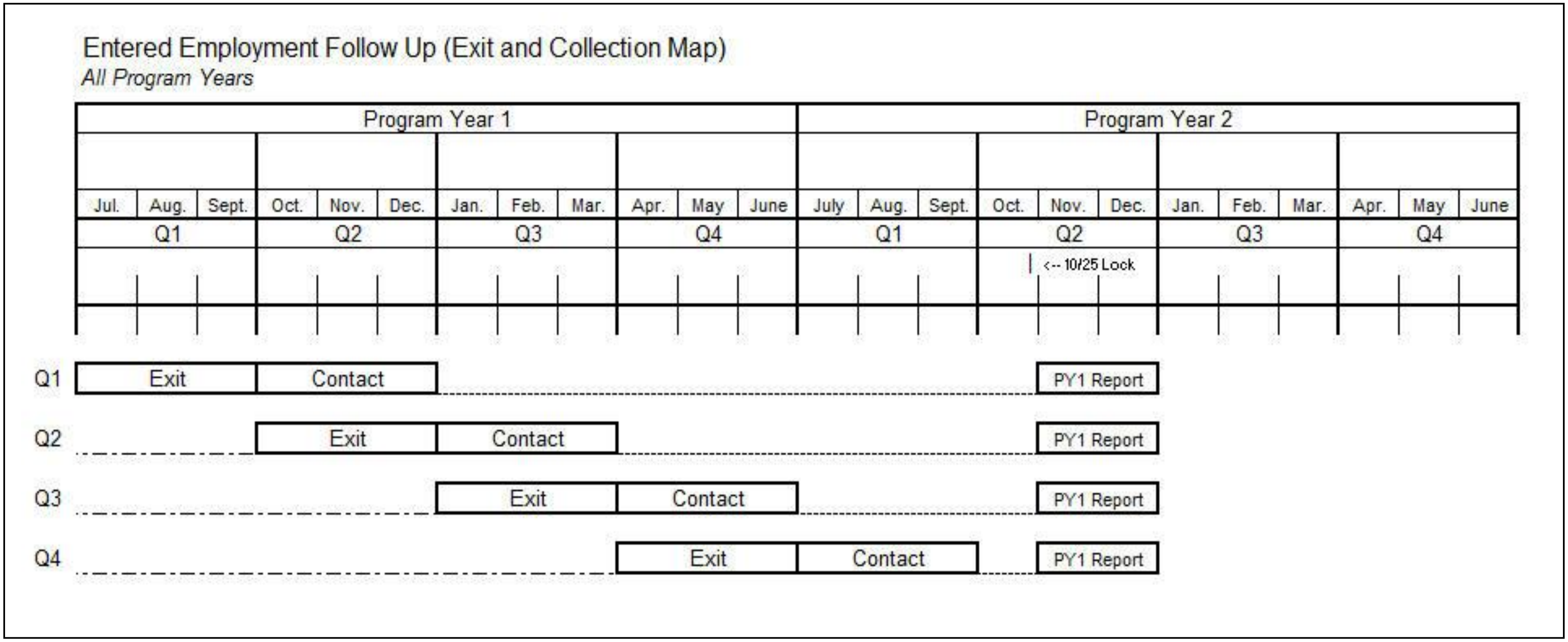

Entered Employment Follow Up (Exit and Collection Map)
All Program Years
Program Year 1
Program Year 2
Jul.
Aug.
Sept.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May
June
July
Aug.
Sept.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May
June
Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4
Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4
<-- 10/25 Lock
Q1
Exit
Contact
PY1 Report
Q2
Exit
Contact
PY1 Report
Q3
Exit
Contact
PY1 Report
Q4
Exit
Contact
PY1 Report

Exhibit 5

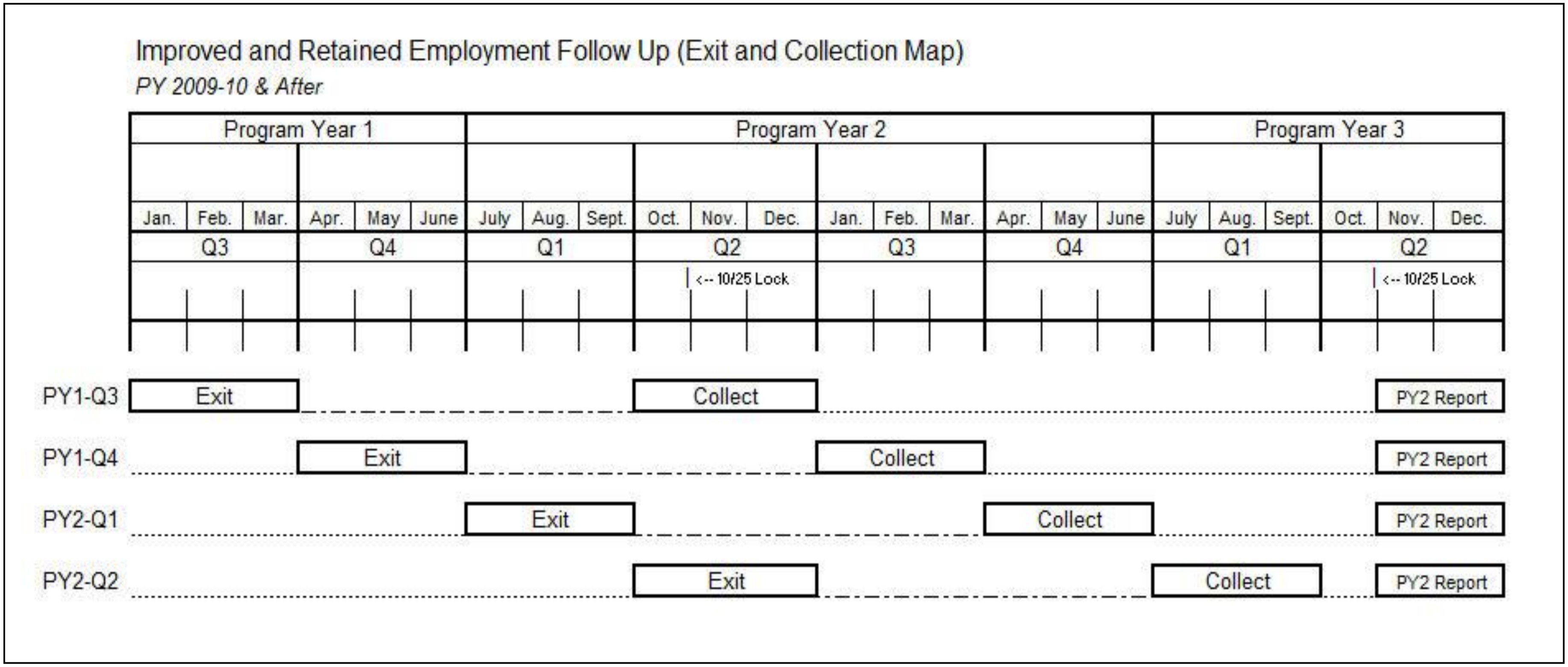
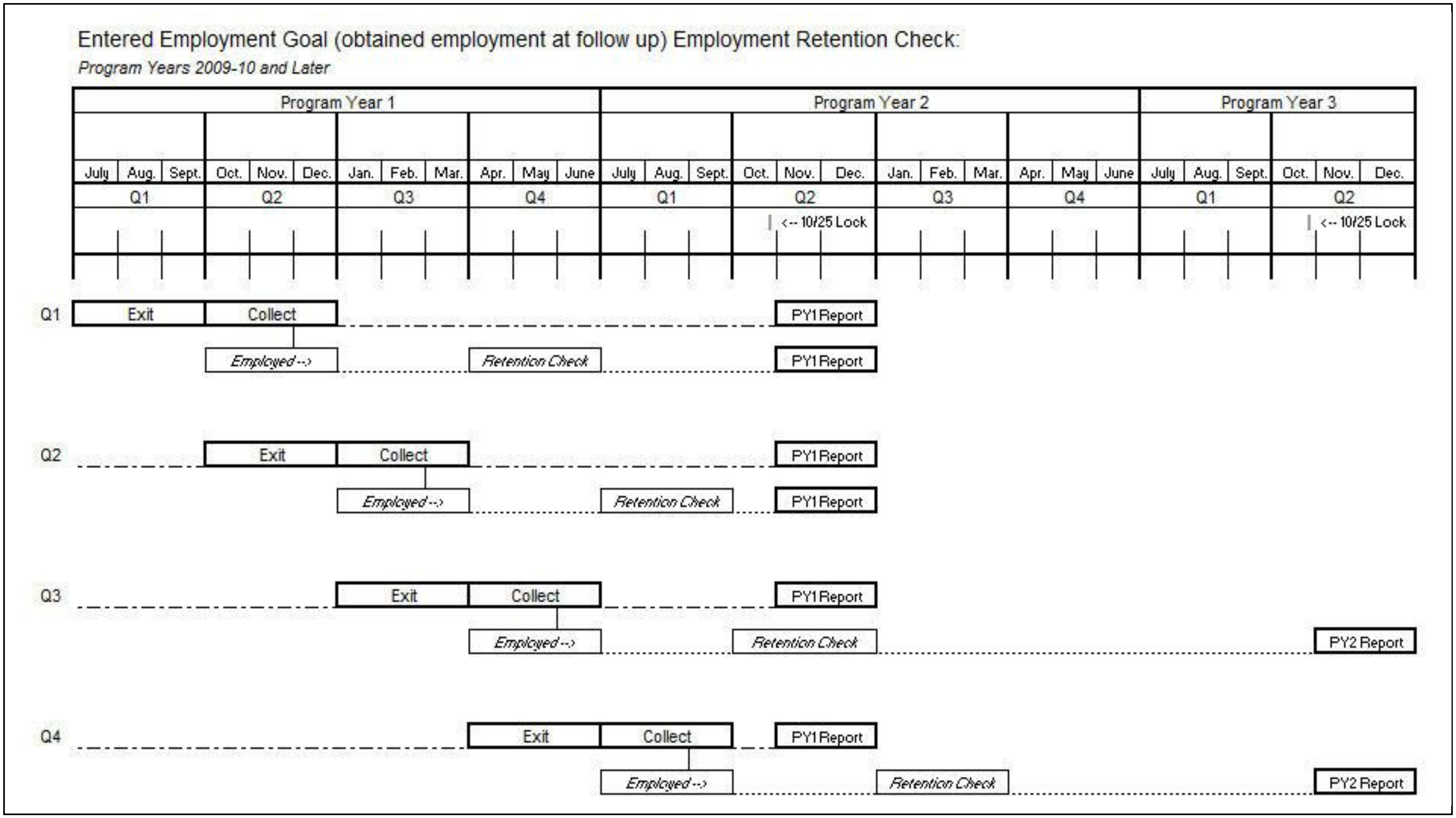

Improved and Retained Employment Follow Up (Exit and Collection Map)
PY 2009-10 & After
Program Year 1
Program Year 2
Program Year 3
Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.
Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2
<-- 10/25 Lock
<-- 10/25 Lock
PY1-Q3 Exit Collect PY2 Report
PY1-Q4 Exit Collect PY2 Report
PY2-Q1 Exit Collect PY2 Report
PY2-Q2 Exit Collect PY2 Report

Exhibit 6


Entered Employment Goal (obtained employment at follow up) Employment Retention Check:
Program Years 2009-10 and Later
Program Year 1
Program Year 2
Program Year 3
July
Aug.
Sept.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May
June
Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4
<-- 10/25 Lock
Exit
Collect
Employed -->
Retention Check
PY1 Report
PY2 Report

References

Guidelines For Conducting The Follow-Up Survey, March 2001, United States Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

National Reporting System for Adult Education, Implementation Guidelines, March 2010**,** United States Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

National Reporting System for Adult Education, Implementation Guidelines, July 2007**,** United States Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

West Virginia ABE Teacher Handbook, 2005, West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development

Data Quality Guide: Follow Up: Employment, GED, and Postsecondary Education, NRS Online, http://www.oei-tech.com/nrs/training/4_data_quality_guide/f_followup/follow_up/1.html

Training for Telephone Interviewers

Staff members who will be conducting the telephone interviews must 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, therefore, 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 as well as from one local program to another. The following guidelines should help minimize survey error and should thus 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.
2. Interviewers should avoid biasing answers by not showing criticism, surprise, approval, disapproval, and/or annoyance at any response; recording answers promptly and accurately; and probing for clarification when necessary.
3. Interviews should be completed in the time promised to the respondents. The interview is designed to take 10 minutes or less.
4. Interviewers must be familiar with the material, including the meaning of individual questions and the definitions of words and phrases contained in the survey instrument.
5. Administrative issues should be attended to as soon as possible, including making a record of EVERY call made, even if the interviewers reached a wrong number, if nobody answered, or if a message was left.
6. Interviewers should have a thorough understanding of the purpose and structure of the NRS.

Conducting the Training

Training interviewers can take many forms, including workshops and meetings. There are, however, a few techniques, which will make the training more meaningful, and thus make the data collected more useful and comparable between participants, local programs and within the state. Among these techniques are:

- **Going over the survey protocol question-by-question.** This will give interviewers a familiarity with the questions and answers they are likely to get during their telephone calls. It will also allow them to become comfortable with the decisions that must be made as the interview begins.
- **Conducting mock interviews with adult education office staff or teachers.** This simulates real world conditions, giving interviewers valuable practice on how to conduct interviews. It also allows adult education office staff to identify issues that were not made clear earlier in the training process and to identify problems with the data collection procedures in place.
- **Conducting a mini-pilot test with a few participants.** This activity will identify previously unconsidered issues and provide the most realistic training for the interviewers. It is an excellent last step prior to officially collecting follow up data.

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, the learner may not want to speak to the caller, or they may have a protective family. Additionally, learners may not want to answer some or all survey questions; they may be hostile, confused, or just busy. Further, 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 should also be responsible for the training.

Accommodations for other languages. Since many local programs serve ESL participants and other non-native English speakers, interviewers are likely to encounter a language barrier during the survey process. Every effort must be taken to collect information from all non-English speakers. 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.

When the participant 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 even 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 her/him?
    - Wait for no more than two days between callbacks and call at a different time of day.
    - If multiple messages (a minimum of 4) have been left, but the learner has not been contacted, the learner should be officially listed as a non-respondent on the follow-up contact log.

- *Reaching voice mail 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 for no more than two days between callbacks and call at a different time of day.
    - If multiple messages (at least 4) have been left, but the learner has not been contacted, the learner should be officially listed as a non-respondent on the follow-up contact log.

- *Reaching a non-working number or a number that just rings*
    - Non-working numbers should be noted on the follow-up contact log as not working.
    - If the number just rings, the day and time the interviewer called should be noted on the contact log, and the learner should be called at a different time. If multiple calls (at least 4) have been made at different times of the day, and there is still no answer, the learner should be officially listed as a non-respondent on the contact log.
    - The interviewer should also check to see if Alternative Contact information had been collected for the participant and then try those phone number(s) before listing the participant as a non-respondent.

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; interviewers 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 interviewer to present himself or herself as confident and proud of the work they are doing. The interviewer should indicate that this survey is an important way of providing information to the adult education program and decisions about services will be made based on this information. There are several points in the interview when callers may encounter refusals or reluctance.

Initial refusal. When participants 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 two days, a week, a month later, etc., as long as this is recorded and so that the return call is before the end of the follow up period.
- When the participant has been reached, but absolutely refuses to cooperate, a complete description should be recorded on the participant's follow up survey, noted on the follow up contact log and given to the resource person for further attempts. (Given the layout of the Contact Log, Interviewers may need to attach additional sheets.)

Confusion-based refusal. Adult participants 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 participant 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 local adult education program he or she attended.
- If the participant wants to know how their information will be used, the interviewer should assure the participant that the data will be used to determine how well adult education programs are performing and to improve program services. Further, all of the answers that the participant gives will be kept confidential and that no names or other identifying information will be associated with their answers. Participants should also be assured that all participants are being contacted.

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 5 to 10 minutes, acknowledge that the participant's time is very important, and tell them that their responses to the survey questions would be really helpful: *"I understand that your time is important. We really appreciate your help on this issue. It is important to get the opinion of adult education participants."*
- 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 time to contact you?"*

If none of these strategies is successful, the interviewer should NOT try to persuade the learner further. The learner should be thanked for their patience, and told that the caller appreciates all the demands on their time. The interviewer should then record a complete description on the participant's follow-up survey and note the non-response on the contact log.

Appendix B

Participant Follow Up Notice

We need your help!

After you leave our program, someone from our office will be contacting you to see how you liked our program and if you have any suggestions for improving it. They will also ask if you achieved the goals (Finish your High School Diploma, Earn a GED, Obtain Employment, etc.) you wanted to when you enrolled. This contact after you leave our program is called a "Follow-Up Survey." You are being asked to participate voluntarily. During your instruction, you will be asked to update your contact information. This will help us contact you after you leave our program.

As part of your registration process, you will be asked to provide contact information for some family members or friends, which is called "Alternative Contact Information." We will use this information to assist us in contacting you after you leave our program. When you are contacted, **the survey will only take a few minutes of your time and your answers are confidential <u>but extremely important!</u>**

Signing below indicates that you have received a copy of this notice, that the information has been explained to you, and that you grant permission for a program representative to contact you for the Follow-Up Survey. If your goal was to obtain your GED, you also grant us permission to confirm your successful completion of the GED with your GED Testing Center or the State of Michigan, Office of Adult Learning.

Thank you for your help!

____ __________________
Signature Date

____ __________________
Registrar/Program Staff Date

Appendix C

Alternative Contact Information Form

This form is part of the Follow-Up Survey process we notified you about at registration. The information you provide will help us contact you after you leave our program. Please provide us with your current address and phone number if it has changed since you first enrolled. Also, please provide (or update) Alternative Contact Information for two people we may contact for your Follow-Up Survey. The Alternative Contact Information will help us locate you after you leave our program.

***** This information is confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of our agency! *****

Current Address and Phone Number (if different from what you gave when you enrolled):

Street Address: ____

____

City: ______________________________ ST: ________ Zip: _______________

Phone #1: _________________________ Phone #2____________________________

Alternative Contact #1:

Name: ____

Street Address: ____

City: ______________________________ ST: ________ Zip: _______________

Phone #1: _________________________ Phone #2: ____________________________

Alternative Contact #2:

Name: ____

Street Address: ____

City: ______________________________ ST: ________ Zip: _______________

Phone #1: _________________________ Phone #2: ____________________________

____ _________________________

Registrar/Program Staff **Date**

- ☐ Survey completed
- ☐ Participant refused to participate
- ☐ Unable to contact after four attempts

Appendix D1

GED Follow-Up Survey

(Data entry into MAERS is required by October 25 following the end of the program year.)

Participant's Name: ____ Contact Date: _______________

Program: ____________________________________ Teacher: _______________________________

Local Participant Number: _____________________ Interviewer's Name: ________________________

Section 1: General Information (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

Hello! My name is _______________________, and I am calling on behalf of ___________________. We are calling people who 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 your life. This information will help us improve our services in the future.

This survey should take no longer than five to ten minutes. Your answers are completely confidential.

a.) Do you have time to answer some questions? (If yes, go to #1.) Yes No

b.) If no, can I call you again? Yes No

b1.) If yes to "b", what date and time would be good for you? _______________________________

b2.) If no to "b", thank you for your time!

Note to Interviewer: You must record items a thru b2, as appropriate, on your contact log. If you reach the participant and he/she refuses to participate (b2), indicate that on the Contact Log and file the survey in the participant's folder.

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

1. Did you complete the class, or did you leave before it ended?
   - ☐ Completed
   - ☐ Left before it ended

   If you left your program before it ended, may I ask why?

   ____

   ____

Section 2: Goal Attainment (Question must be asked exactly as written.)

2. As a result of the education you received, did you earn your GED? Yes No

If yes, on what date? ________________ Where? ____
(Attainment Date)

Section 3: Suggestions (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

3. Do you have any suggestions that would improve the adult education classes you took with (teacher's Name)? Yes No

If yes. ____

____

____

____

____

- ☐ Survey completed
- ☐ Participant refused to participate
- ☐ Unable to contact after four attempts

Appendix D2

HSD Follow Up Survey

(Data entry into MAERS is required by October 25 following the end of the program year.)

Participant's Name: ____ Contact Date: _______________

Program: ____________________________________ Teacher: _______________________________

Local Participant Number: _____________________ Interviewer's Name: ________________________

Section 1: General Information (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

Hello! My name is _______________________, and I am calling on behalf of ___________________. We are calling people who 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 your life. This information will help us improve our services in the future.

This survey should take no longer than five to ten minutes. Your answers are completely confidential.

a.) Do you have time to answer some questions? (If yes, go to #1.) Yes No

b.) If no, can I call you again? Yes No

b1.) If yes to "b", what date and time would be good for you? _______________________________

b2.) If no to "b", thank you for your time!

Note to Interviewer: You must record items a thru b2, as appropriate, on your contact log. If you reach the participant and he/she refuses to participate (b2), indicate that on the Contact Log and file the survey in the participant's folder.

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

1. Did you complete the class, or did you leave before it ended?
   - ☐ Completed
   - ☐ Left before it ended

   If you left your program before it ended, may I ask why?

   ____

Section 2: Goal Attainment (Question must be asked exactly as written.)

2. As a result of the education you received, did you earn your high school diploma after you completed your classes? Yes No

   If yes, on what date? ________________ Where? ____________________________
   (Attainment Date)

Section 3: Suggestions (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

3. Do you have any suggestions that would improve the adult education classes you took with (teacher's Name)? Yes No

   If yes. ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

- ☐ Survey completed, participant employed, schedule a job retention follow up contact
- ☐ Survey completed, participant not employed, no further follow up required
- ☐ Participant refused to participate
- ☐ Unable to contact after four attempts

Appendix D3

Enter Employment Follow Up Survey

(Follow quarterly contact schedule)

Participant's Name: ____ Contact Date: _______________

Program: ____________________________________ Teacher: _______________________________

Local Participant Number: _____________________ Interviewer's Name: ________________________

Section 1: General Information (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

Hello! My name is _______________________, and I am calling on behalf of ___________________. We are calling people who 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 your life. This information will help us improve our services in the future.

This survey should take no longer than five to ten minutes. Your answers are completely confidential.

a.) Do you have time to answer some questions? (If yes, go to #1.) Yes No

b.) If no, can I call you again? Yes No

b1.) If yes to "b", what date and time would be good for you? ______________________________

b2.) If no to "b", thank you for your time!

Note to Interviewer: You must record items a thru b2, as appropriate, on your contact log. If you reach the participant and he/she refuses to participate (b2), indicate that on the Contact Log and file the survey in the participant's folder.

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

1. Did you complete the class, or did you leave before it ended?
   - ☐ Completed
   - ☐ Left before it ended

   May I ask why you left your program?

   ____

   ____

Section 2: Goal Attainment (Question must be asked exactly as written.)

***Note to Interviewer**: If the participant has obtained a job during the designated quarter, he/she will need to be contacted again to determine if they were working during the third quarter after their exit quarter. This is for the "Job Retention" check, which is a USDOE requirement for the follow up of participants with this goal. This section is divided into two parts.*

Part A questions must be asked during the first telephone survey (during first quarter after exit) to determine if the participant obtained a job. (The last day a person can be contacted for follow up for question #2 below is printed on the Follow Up Selection Report.)

Part B questions must be asked during the second telephone survey (during third quarter after exit) to determine if the participant is still employed.

Part A: Obtain a Job—Performed for the first quarter after exit

2. Did you get a job while you were attending classes or before _______________? Yes No

   Date Employed: __________________________________? (Job Attainment Date)

   If yes, please tell me the following about your employment:

   Employer: ____

   Address: ____

   City: _______________________________________ ST: ________ Zip: _______________

   Contact: ____ Ph: ________________________

Part B: Retain a Job—Performed the third quarter after exit

3. Are you still working? Yes No

4. If yes, please tell me the following about your employment:

   Employer: ____

   City: _______________________________________ ST: ________ Zip: _______________

   Contact: ____ Ph: ________________________

   ☐ Lost job/unemployed ☐ Don't know/refused to answer

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Section 3: Suggestions (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

5. Do you have any suggestions that would improve the adult education classes you took with (teacher's Name)? Yes No

   If yes. ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

☐ Survey completed
☐ Participant refused to participate
☐ Unable to contact after four attempts

Appendix D4

Retain Employment Follow-Up Survey

*** Only for participants employed at entry**

(Follow quarterly contact schedule)

Participant's Name: ______________________________ Contact Date: ____________

Program: ____________________________ Teacher: ________________________

Local Participant Number: ________________ Interviewer's Name: ___________________

Section 1: General Information (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

Hello! My name is ______________________, and I am calling on behalf of __________________. We are calling people who 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 your life. This information will help us improve our services in the future.

This survey should take no longer than five to ten minutes. Your answers are completely confidential.

a.) Do you have time to answer some questions? (If yes, go to #1.) Yes No

b.) If no, can I call you again? Yes No

b1.) If yes to "b", what date and time would be good for you? ________________________

b2.) If no to "b", thank you for your time!

Note to Interviewer: You must record items a thru b2, as appropriate, on your contact log. If you reach the participant and he/she refuses to participate (b2), indicate that on the Contact Log and file the survey in the participant's folder.

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

1. Did you complete the class, or did you leave before it ended?
   - ☐ Completed
   - ☐ Left before it ended

   May I ask why you left your program?

   ____

   ____

Section 2: Goal Attainment (Question must be asked exactly as written.)

2. If you had a job when you started your classes, were you still working at any time between _(Begin Date of Third Quarter after Exit Quarter)_ and _(End Date of Third Quarter after Exit Quarter)_? Yes No

If yes, please tell me the following about your employment:

Employer: ____

Address: ____

City: ____ ST: _______ Zip: ____________

Contact: ____ Ph: ____________________

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Section 3: Suggestions (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

3. Do you have any suggestions that would improve the adult education classes you took with (teacher's Name)? Yes No

   If yes. ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

- ☐ Survey completed
- ☐ Participant refused to participate
- ☐ Unable to contact after four attempts

Appendix D5

Improve Employment Follow Up Survey

*** Only for participants employed at entry**

(Follow quarterly contact schedule)

Participant's Name: ______________________________ Contact Date: ____________

Program: ______________________________ Teacher: ______________________________

Local Participant Number: ____________________ Interviewer's Name: ______________________

Section 1: General Information (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

Hello! My name is ______________________, and I am calling on behalf of __________________. We are calling people who 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 your life. This information will help us improve our services in the future.

This survey should take no longer than five to ten minutes. Your answers are completely confidential.

a.) Do you have time to answer some questions? (If yes, go to #1.) Yes No

b.) If no, can I call you again? Yes No

b1.) If yes to "b", what date and time would be good for you? ______________________________

b2.) If no to "b", thank you for your time!

Note to Interviewer: You must record items a thru b2, as appropriate, on your contact log. If you reach the participant and he/she refuses to participate (b2), indicate that on the Contact Log and file the survey in the participant's folder.

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

1. Did you complete the class, or did you leave before it ended?
   - ☐ Completed
   - ☐ Left before it ended

   May I ask why you left your program?

   ____

Section 2: Goal Attainment (Question must be asked exactly as written.)

2. If you had job when you started your classes, did you get a better job, promotion or wage increase between _(Begin Date of Third Quarter after Exit Quarter)_ and _(End Date of Third Quarter after Exit Quarter)_? Yes No

If yes, please tell me the following about your employment:

Employer: ____

Address: ____

City: ____ ST: ________ Zip: ______________

Contact: _______________________________________ Ph: _______________________

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Section 3: Suggestions (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

3. Do you have any suggestions that would improve the adult education classes you took with (teacher's Name)? Yes No

If yes. ____

____

____

____

____

- ☐ Survey completed
- ☐ Participant refused to participate
- ☐ Unable to contact after four attempts

Appendix D6

Enter Postsecondary Education/Job Training Follow Up Survey

(Data entry into MAERS is required by October 25 following the end of the program year.)

Participant's Name: ____ Contact Date: _______________

Program: ____________________________________ Teacher: _______________________________

Local Participant Number: _____________________ Interviewer's Name: ________________________

Section 1: General Information (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

Hello! My name is ______________________, and I am calling on behalf of __________________. We are calling people who 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 your life. This information will help us improve our services in the future.

This survey should take no longer than five to ten minutes. Your answers are completely confidential.

a.) Do you have time to answer some questions? (If yes, go to #1.) Yes No

b.) If no, can I call you again? Yes No

b1.) If yes to "b", what date and time would be good for you? _______________________________

b2.) If no to "b", thank you for your time!

Note to Interviewer: You must record items a thru b2, as appropriate, on your contact log. If you reach the participant and he/she refuses to participate (b2), indicate that on the Contact Log and file the survey in the participant's folder.

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

1. Did you complete the class, or did you leave before it ended?
   - ☐ Completed
   - ☐ Left before it ended

   May I ask why you left your program?

   ____

   ____

Section 2: Goal Attainment (Question must be asked exactly as written.)

2. Have you enrolled in a college, vocational education or job-training program since you completed your classes? Yes No

   If yes, please tell me the following about your employment:

   School: ____

   Address: ____

   City: ______________________________ ST: ________ Zip: ________________

   Contact: ______________________________ Ph: ______________________

   Date Enrolled: ______________________

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Section 3: Suggestions (Wording may be adapted by local program.)

3. Do you have any suggestions that would improve the adult education classes you took with (teacher's Name)? Yes No

   If yes. ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

Update Alternative Contact

Participant Information

Name: FLAPPERS, FRITA F.

Address & Phone: 213 Any Avenue
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 335-4556

Participant Contact Information

Relation to Participant:	Spouse
FIRST NAME:	FRED
LAST NAME:	FLAPPER
Middle Initial:	F
Address:	333 WALNUT
Additional Address:	ROOM D
City:	LANSING
State:	MI
Zip:	4891:
Phone:	(111) 222-3333
Other Phone:	(444) 555-6666
Email:	EMAILFRED@EMAILME.COM

Contact Notes

Notes: Home mornings.

*** Warning: System will accept up to 400 characters only (about 5 sentences) ***

Record Information

Status:	Active
Status Changed on:	09/16/2005 03:27:49 PM
Created By User:	SMITHD3
Record Created On:	09/16/2005 03:27:49 PM
Last Changed By User:	SMITHD3
Last Changed On:	09/16/2005 03:30:47 PM

Appendix F

Follow Up Contact Log

Interviewer: ____

Date & Time:	***Name:***	***Contact:*** *(Who contacted, nature of conversation, any messages left, etc.)*	***Status:*** *(Interview completed or scheduled recall)*

Appendix G

Participant Follow Up Checklist

(Developed to help you track the status of individual participant follow up)

Participant Name: ____

Follow Up Goal: ____

Follow Up Activity:	Yes	No
Follow Up Notice Signed?		
Alternative Contact Information Collected?		
Participant Survey Provided *(Optional)*?		
Participant Listed on MAERS Follow Up Selection Report?		
Participant Contacted for Follow Up?		
Telephone Survey or Verification in Participant's File?		
Survey Results Data Entered into MAERS?		

Participant Name: ____

Follow Up Goal: ____

Follow Up Activity:	Yes	No
Follow Up Notice Signed?		
Alternative Contact Information Collected?		
Participant Survey Provided *(Optional)*?		
Participant Listed on MAERS Follow Up Selection Report?		
Participant Contacted for Follow Up?		
Telephone Survey or Verification in Participant's File?		
Survey Results Data Entered into MAERS?		

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Can we use official GED transcripts for verification of receipt of a GED without doing a telephone survey?**
   Yes, but you must maintain a copy of those transcripts in the participant's file. Be sure you have the participant's written permission/release in their file.

2. **Can we verify receipt of a high school diploma through the school office that issues the Adult Education high school diploma?**
   Yes, but you must maintain an official verification of school records within the participant's file.

3. **Can we add questions to Section 3, *Suggestions* of the follow up survey?**
   Yes, by all means. Feel free to customize Sections 1 and 3 to best meet your needs. Section 2, however, MUST remain unchanged to ensure the standardization of the survey statewide.

4. **Several other states are using data match for GED, employment, and post secondary follow up. Why doesn't Michigan do that? It would be a lot easier on local programs.**
   Yes, it would be a lot easier on local programs. That is why we are currently in the process of trying to establish such a process for GED and Employment data. At the present time, Michigan does not have a central database of postsecondary Enrollments, so we will need to continue to do follow up surveys for that goal until such a database is developed.

5. **We're collecting social security numbers now. Can we do data match on our participants instead of telephone surveys?**
   The infrastructure needed to conduct data match does not currently exist. We hope to begin development of this functionality sometime in the future.

6. **Can local programs use a mail survey? If so, in what situations can it be used?**
   Local programs may use a mail survey to supplement the telephone survey but not as the only method of follow up. For example, you may send out 100 follow up surveys in the mail and receive 20 of them back. You will still need to conduct telephone surveys with the remaining 80 participants.

7. **How many of my follow up participants do I need to actually reach? You know how difficult it is to contact our participants after they leave the program.**
   Yes, we understand the significant hardships in attempting to contact our adult learners. USDOE requires a 50% response rate.