

Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan
Office of Adult Education
Goal Setting Policy
Effective July 1, 2012

I. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The intent of the goal setting guidelines is to provide local adult education programs with guidance that leads to participants effectively setting and achieving primary and secondary goals. This requires that educational services be designed and delivered to meet participant goals.

“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.” – NRS Goal Setting Tips

Beginning 2012-13, the National Reporting System (NRS) discontinued the use of goal-setting as a means to identify participants to track attainment of the follow-up outcomes. Instead, NRS requires states to automatically report the follow-up measures for all participants who meet specific criteria for each measure. This automatic cohort designation will vary according to each follow-up measure.

II. GOAL SELECTION

Goals should be selected that are appropriate to the educational level of the participant at program entry, and additional goals would be added as needed throughout the registration period. These guidelines align goal selection with the Office of Adult Education’s Assessment Policy, which requires local programs to provide educational services to the participant as determined by their assessment tests. Goals should align with the participant’s instructional area.

III. COLLABORATIVE GOAL SETTING PROCESS BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANT AND THE LOCAL PROGRAM STAFF

Goal selection is a collaborative process between the participant and local program staff. Participants need to select their own primary and secondary goals, however, they also need the expertise, guidance, and counseling of local program staff.

Goal counseling is done by local program staff with participants during the creation of the participant’s ALP and periodically during the registration period to ensure that goals are achievable.

Local program staff must ensure that the educational services needed to achieve participant goals are provided.

“Students often do not know their goals when asked about them, or respond with very broad or unrealistic goals. Programs need to work collaboratively with students to help them develop goals that guide learning and participation. Collaborative goal setting allows program staff members to contribute knowledge of what the program has to offer and to share experiences working with other students in similar situations. Students share their needs and aspirations—the sources of their goals.” – NRS Goal Setting Tips

“Programs should have a goal-setting process whereby students meet with teachers or an intake counselor to help identify and set goals for instruction. The best time for this process to occur is when the learner first enters the program. The goal-setting process should help learners set both a realistic timeline for attaining each goal and a means for determining whether the goal is achieved. Since learners often change their goals after they begin instruction, it is often advisable to extend goal setting over additional orientation sessions during the first few weeks of class.” – NRS 2011, Page 48

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IV. PARTICIPANT GOALS

A. PRIMARY GOALS

1. Educational Gain: Improve Basic Literacy Skills/Improve Basic English Skills (Required Goal for all Participants)

- Educational gain is a required goal for all participants. Improve Basic Literacy Skills (ABE/GED/HSC) or Improve Basic English Skills (ESL) would be identified within MAERS according to the participant's instructional area
- Achievement of this goal is advancement of one or more educational functioning levels based upon state approved assessment scale scores on pre- and post-test

“Within the NRS framework, all students are assumed to have at least one goal: development of literacy skills. That is, all students are assumed to be in the program to improve their literacy skills, and thus have the default goal of either improving literacy skills or improving English language skills. This assumed goal is the reason that all students are counted in the educational gain measure. Note that the default goal of educational gain remains, regardless of whether the student designates any of the additional goals.”

– NRS 2011, page 48

2. Function At or Above 9th Grade Level (ABE only)

- This goal applies only to participants assessed below the 9th grade level in Reading, Math or Language as determined by an Office of Adult Education-approved assessment (pre-test), and placed in an ABE instructional area
- To achieve this goal, the participant must score at or above the 9th grade level in all subject areas that the participant received instruction, as determined by an Office of Adult Education-approved assessment (post-test)
- Achievement of this goal indicates that the participant is ready to move into a GED Preparation or High School Completion (HSC) program of enrollment, as applicable

3. Achieve English Language Proficiency (ESL only)

- This goal applies only to participants who lack English Literacy skills as determined by an Office of Adult Education-approved assessment, and are placed in the ESL instructional area
- To achieve this goal, the participant must score 236 or higher in Reading, 236 or higher in Listening and 231 or higher in Writing (as available) on the CASAS assessment test

4. Pass One or More Official GED Tests

- This goal applies to participants who are assessed at or above the 9th grade level in Reading, Math or Language, and/or placed in GED Preparation courses
- This goal is selected for participants on a path toward obtaining a GED

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5. Attain High School Diploma Credits

- This goal applies to participants who are assessed at or above the 9th grade level in Reading, Math or Language, and/or placed in local board approved High School Completion courses
- This goal is selected for participants on a path toward obtaining a High School Diploma

6. Obtain a GED

- This goal applies to participants who are assessed at or above the 9th grade level in reading, math or language, and/or placed in GED preparation courses
- This goal is selected for participants on a path toward obtaining a GED
- The participant obtains certification of attaining passing scores on all five GED tests, by achieving an average score of 450 or higher

7. Obtain a High School Diploma

- This goal applies to participants who are assessed at or above the 9th grade level in reading, math or language, and/or placed in local board approved high school completion courses
- This goal is selected for participants on a path toward obtaining a high school diploma
- The participant obtains a local school board approved diploma documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies

8. Enroll in Postsecondary Education

- This goal applies to participants wanting to enroll in postsecondary education
- The participant 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

9. Obtain Employment

- This goal applies to participants who are unemployed and are actively seeking employment
- The participant enters employment by the end of the first quarter after the program exit quarter. Employment is working in a paid, unsubsidized job or working 15 hours or more per week in an unpaid job on a farm or business operated by a family member or the participant. The exit quarter is the quarter when instruction ends, the learner terminates or has not received instruction for 90 days, and is not scheduled to receive further instruction. A job obtained while the participant is enrolled can be counted for “entered employment” and is reported if the participant is still employed in the first quarter after exit from the program.

10. Retain/Improve Employment

- This goal applies to participants who are employed
- The participant remains employed in the third quarter after their exit quarter

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B. SECONDARY GOALS

Participants may select any of the following secondary goals which apply.

- 1. Reduction in Receipt of Public Assistance:** Participant's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or equivalent public assistance is reduced or eliminated due to employment or increased income.
- 2. Achieve Citizenship Skills:** Participant attains the skills needed to pass the U.S. citizenship exam.
- 3. Voting Behavior:** Participant registers to vote or votes for the first time during the program year.
- 4. General Involvement in Community Activities:** Participant increases involvement in the following community activities:
 - Attending or organizing meetings of neighborhood, community, or political organizations
 - Volunteering to work for such organizations
 - Contributing to the support of such organizations
 - Volunteering to work on community improvement activities
- 5. Involvement in Children's Education:** Participant increases involvement in the education of dependent children under their care, including:
 - Helping children more frequently with their school work
 - Increasing contact with children's teachers to discuss children's education
 - Having more involvement in children's school, such as attending school activities and parent meetings and volunteering to work on school projects
- 6. Involvement in Children's Literacy Related Activities:** Participant increases involvement in the literacy-related activities of dependent children under their care, including:
 - Reading to children
 - Visiting a library
 - Purchasing books or magazines for children
- 7. Achieve Work-Based Project Learner Goals:** Participant acquires the skills taught in a short-term learning course designed to teach specific work-based skills. A short-term course is an instructional program of at least 12 hours but no more than 30 hours in duration. Project learners are not counted for the educational gain measure and are not assigned an educational functioning level. No core outcome measures are reported for project learners.