



U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration

Back to Basics

An Overview of Data Collection and Program Reporting

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Back to Basics

Why performance accountability?



What it means for your journey.

Accountability - Introduction

Establishing a Foundation

DOL Accountability

➤ *To the Congress,
Customers and
American Taxpayers*

- Operating Framework
- Report Format and Instructions
- Guidance, Assistance and Oversight

Grantee Accountability

➤ *To ETA, the Public and
Stakeholders*

- Compliance with Parameters in Grant Agreement
- Systems and Processes to Support Compliance
- Complete / Accurate Reporting

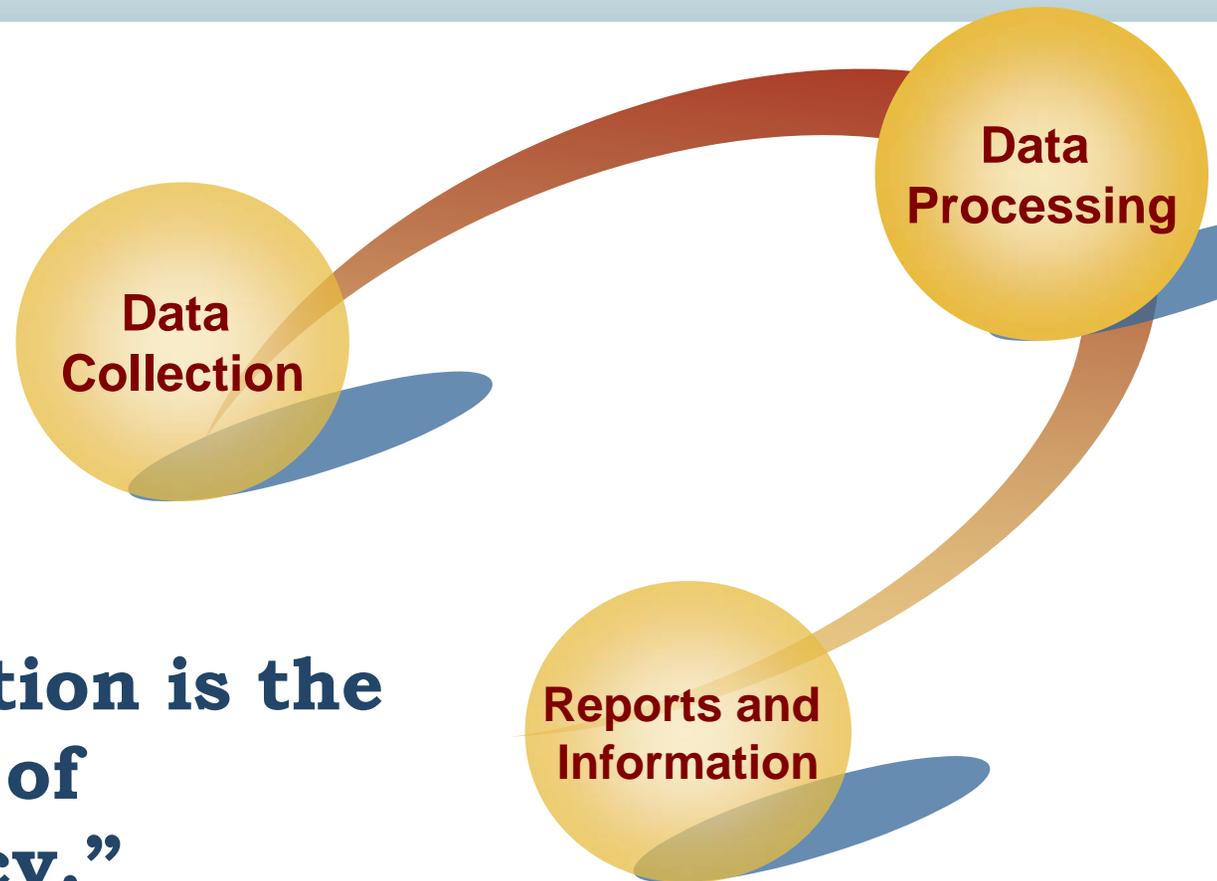
Fiscal Stewardship, Participant Outcomes, Labor Market Impact

Performance Accountability



- Ability to describe the core purposes of the workforce system.
 - How many people found jobs?
 - Did they stay employed?
 - What did they earn?
- Ability to analyze program outcomes and develop effective program strategies.
- Ability to compare results of similar programs.

Performance Management



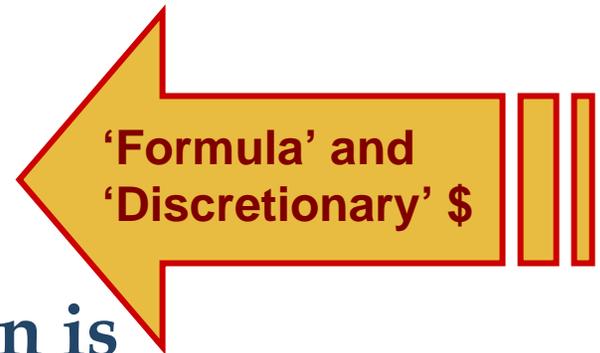
**“Information is the
currency of
democracy.”**

-Thomas Jefferson

The Scope of Required Reporting

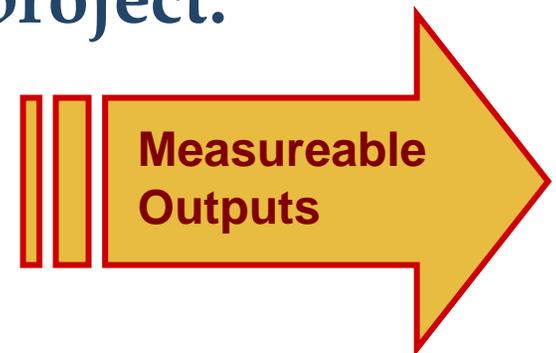
All grantees are responsible for two main types of reporting:

- Program (service-related), and
- Fiscal (financial).



The focus of our presentation is on programmatic reporting, which tells the story about your program or project:

- Who you serve,
- What they get, and
- With what results.



Why Track Outcomes?

Collected information – including performance-related metrics – supports performance accountability for:

- Common measures,
- Grant-specific participant training outcomes, and
- Other information to tell the story of your program's or grant's accomplishments.



These may not paint the whole picture. In addition to what's required, you want to collect additional data that's important to you or that paints a more complete picture of your grant/project.

Federal Reporting Requirements

Data Collection & Reporting Requirements

Grant Agreement

**29 CFR
Parts
95 & 97**

**Public
Law
107-288**

**29 CFR
Part 37**

**Approved
Reporting
Instructions**

Federal mandates ensure accountability.

Federal Reporting Mandates

Reporting requirements are based on Uniform Administrative Requirements in 29 CFR Parts 95.51 and 97.40, and include:

- Comparison of actual accomplishments with **goals and objectives** for the project;
- Reasons why established goals were not met and **corrective action** being taken; and
- Other **pertinent information**, including technical assistance needs, best practices or any promising approaches.

Additional Reporting Mandates

Non-discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) reporting requirements are spelled out in **29 CFR Part 37:**

- Ethnicity and Race;
- Sex;
- Age; and
- Disability, where known.



Back to Basics

What data collection principles are important?



Data Collection – Introduction



Data collection is the process used to gather information for the management of a grant, program or project.

Data integrity depends upon data quality, and valid data entry. Ensure **duplication of effort** does not occur in the collection of data to avoid:

- Costly errors (invalid data or duplicate counts), or
- Lack of consistency.

Data Element Definitions

All data elements are *specifically defined*.

Multiple definitions (as in Webster's dictionary) do **not** always apply, so do not assume what a data element represents.



This is particularly true for performance and outcome measurements, which are defined by both their **operational and coding parameters**.

The Purpose of Collecting Data



Collecting Information to Optimize Performance

Involve internal staff and external partners in the process of assigning data collection responsibilities. They know what format it comes in and when the information is collected.

Remember: *You are collecting data (e.g., counts, characteristics) on who you're serving, what they're getting and with what results.*



What Information To Collect

Reporting requirements to know about are:

- What data elements to collect
- When, how, and where to collect data

Start with the grant proposal and grant award documents.

- Review goals, objectives, & expected outcomes for your grant
- Review the work plan, service flow chart, performance measures, project deliverables, etc.



Data Collection & Service Flow



Participant Characteristics Data

Types of individual (or characteristic) information to be collected about participants includes:

- participant contact and emergency contact information (e.g., name, address, telephone);
- information to assess a person's eligibility for the program (tailored to each grantee based on definition/information from the proposal);
- demographic and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) information (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity, race, disability status, veterans' characteristics and status);
- Veteran's characteristics and priority status;



Participant Characteristics Data

-continued from previous slide

- date of birth;
- Social Security Number (SSN);
- education information (e.g., highest school grade completed);
- employment status at enrollment and past/current employment information; and
- information about supportive service needs and additional reportable characteristics (e.g., offender, runaway, low income, single parent, pregnant, etc.).



Participant Services Data

Collecting information about the services provided to individuals is critical!



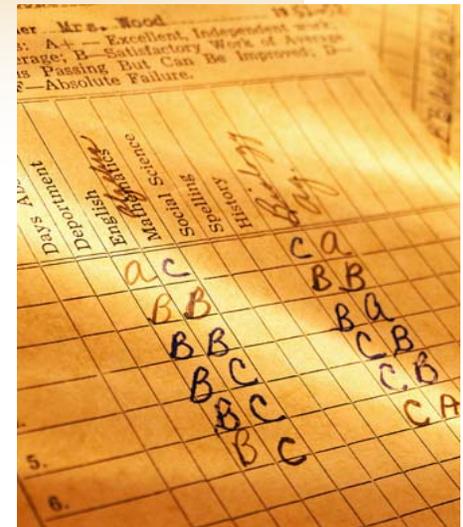
It is especially important to capture:

- participation or service enrollment dates;
- types of services and training;
- service completion dates; and
- training provider information.

Where to Get the Information

Source Documentation

- Social Security Card
- Driver's License/ID Card
- Hospital Records
- Intake/Eligibility Forms
- Attendance Sheets
- Sign-In Sheets
- School Records
- Activity Forms
- Assessment Results
- Pay stubs
- Progress Reports
- Surveys
- Self-attestation forms
- Copy of Diploma
- Training Certificates
- Interviews
- Public Agency Records
- Student ID



Data Integrity

How can we avoid GIGO ("garbage in, garbage out")?

- Make reporting a clear priority from the bottom up and from the top down ... from directors to customer greeters; and
- Set a **systemic data management strategy**, which is easier before you start (i.e., before you have enrollees).



Data Management Strategy

**“All data should come with a label –
WARNING: These data were compiled by
busy people with other priorities.”**

- ESP Solutions Group



Grantees should design and implement a comprehensive data management strategy.

Collect **decision-informing data** to help case managers, job developers, planners, managers, etc. make programmatic decisions.

Management Information Plan

To develop a **data collection and tracking mechanism**, there are four fundamental questions:

1. What information needs to be collected and in what format?
2. When does information need to be collected?
3. Where does the grantee obtain the information?
4. How does the grantee know the information is accurate or valid?



Data Collection: Last Point

You need processes to gather, manage and utilize the data you collect – processes are absolutely critical!



“Every process is perfectly designed to produce the results it gets.”

- W.E. Deming

Back to Basics

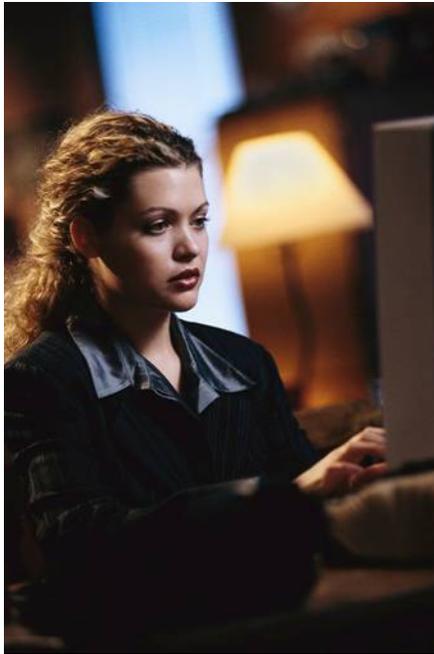
What data management processes are needed?



Data Processing - Introduction

Data processing is the work method used to:

- input data and information into a management information system (MIS),
- find and correct errors in the data, and
- compile and aggregate the information into a user-friendly format.



Responsibility for Data Processing

You are responsible for ensuring that a system is in place to track participant characteristics, services and outcomes.

- It is highly recommended that you **maintain access to data processing and reporting** at all times – you need to know what is going on with your grant!
- You may contract out for services, but you should **provide input** on how the data is maintained and gathered.

Key Principles for an MIS

Key principles of an effective MIS are:

- enter data only once;
- enter information in a timely manner;
- make information available on demand;
- enter information at the most cost-effective level of the organization (e.g., line staff versus technical staff); and
- allow access available to all levels in the organization, as needed.



Other Data Processing Duties

All staff, including subrecipient staff, need to clearly understand their role in creating, collecting, maintaining, and reporting program data, to include:

- Understanding **interrelationships** of staff member duties;
- Understanding **consequences** of missing deadlines, not sharing information, etc.; and
- Valuing **reduced errors** through training staff and meeting specified qualifications.

Data Processing Design

You must address these fundamental questions.

- Who has responsibility for data entry, compilation and processing?
- How should they validate the data and ensure its integrity?
- What management information system will be used to maintain the data?



Management Information Matrix

How the data will be collected

Collect information verbally, with paper documents or electronically

Who is responsible for the data collection

Assign responsibility for data collection to specific staff to ensure that expectations are clearly understood

In what format the data will be collected

Use MS Excel spreadsheet, MS Access, proprietary system

When to collect the data

Incorporate deadlines and establish timeframes for all collection tasks

What Protocols are in Place?

It is highly recommended that you have policies and procedures in place to support data collection and data processing.

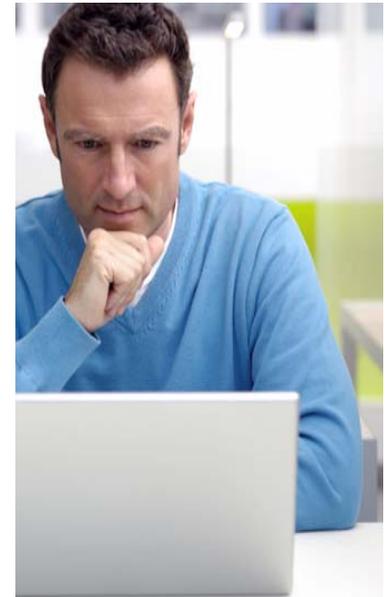
- Policy can be supported by written procedures (e.g., an “MIS Handbook” or “Data Entry/Processing Procedures for Staff”)
- Ongoing staff training and capacity building is critical.
- All staff, including sub-recipient staff, need to *clearly* understand their role in reporting.

Is the Data Reliable?

Data needs to be reliable...accurate, complete and consistent.

Factors affecting data reliability are:

- lack of data collection and data processing policies and procedures,
- inaccurate and incomplete data,
- insufficient staff training,
- differences in definitions, and
- insufficient system controls.



Assuring Data Quality

- Assign ranges of possible values to each data element.
For example, a person's age could range from 16-100, anything outside the range would be flagged by the system
- Check for consistency across data elements.
For instance, the same identification number, but a different race or sex was entered.
- Look for missing data.
- Conduct periodic reviews of information keyed into the MIS compared with original sources (i.e., a sample of case files and MIS cases).

Data Reliability

Data errors can occur at any point in record keeping.

Remember **data must be auditable** – one must be able to track it back to original source documents!



Back to Basics

What about program performance reporting?



What are the requirements?

Data Reporting – Introduction

Reporting is the means by which data are organized and compiled in a useful manner for management purposes.



There are two types of reports:

1. Internal reports for grant management

Management must be able to easily interpret internal reports for use in decision-making.

2. External reports to ETA and other stakeholders

These include required quarterly reports.

The Value of Reporting

Reporting depends upon the ability of the grantee to use data processing and processing techniques to develop reports.

You need an **information system** that can give you reports that tell a story about your grant.

- What other data help you to tell your story?
- What about customer satisfaction data?
- Don't collect data simply to 'feed the Federal data machine,' but to inform **program design, planning, resource allocation and management decisions.**

Reporting Requirements

What must the grantee's MIS be able to do?

At a minimum, they should:

- capture all required **data elements**,
- perform any necessary **calculations**, and
- **report information** to the grantee and its partners.



In some cases, ETA may provide the required data collection instruments, the required report format for your use with established due dates, and a system for collecting and reporting the information.

What System Should We Use?

Question: How sophisticated or elaborate does the grantee's MIS need to be?

Answer: It varies, but high-performing organizations have an MIS that produces information/reports to assist staff in addressing issues and improving performance.

- Examples include MS Access, MS Excel, or a proprietary system such as Client Tracking System.
- Contract with local workforce investment areas to process and aggregate data.

Who has Reporting Responsibility?

Grantees are responsible for ensuring a system is in place to track participant characteristics, services and outcomes.

They may contract out for services, but the grantee should (at a minimum) provide input on how the data should be maintained and processed.

- It is highly recommended that grantees **maintain access to data processing and reporting** at all times.
- You need to know what is going on with your grant... **you're accountable!**

Is the Information Reliable?

Ensure the **data elements** are well defined and understood by program/project staff – this includes contractors.



- Train all staff on definitions, specifications and processing requirements.
- Communicate that original sources of information are more reliable than secondary information.

Are the Data Accurate?

Remember that data needs to be accurate, complete and consistent.

Employ mechanisms to ensure reports generated, and outcomes reported, are calculated correctly.

Factors affecting data quality are:

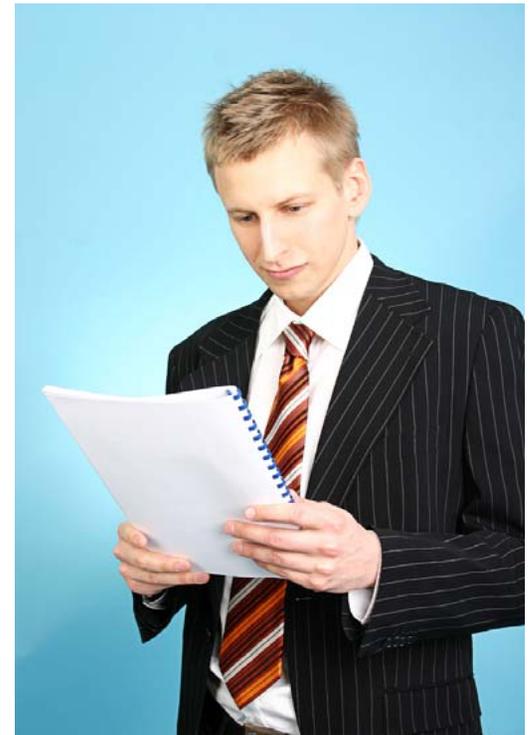
- Lack of data collection and data processing policies and procedures,
- Inaccurate and incomplete data,
- Insufficient staff training,
- Differences in definitions, and
- Insufficient system controls.



Ensuring Data Reliability

It is useful to have a **data entry/MIS handbook** as a reference tool for system users that details:

- data collection protocols,
- definitions of terms,
- coding assignments,
- acceptable data sources,
- operational rules for data entry,
- available edit checks and
- report operations.



External Reports

Grantee program performance reports to ETA are based on Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved reporting instructions.



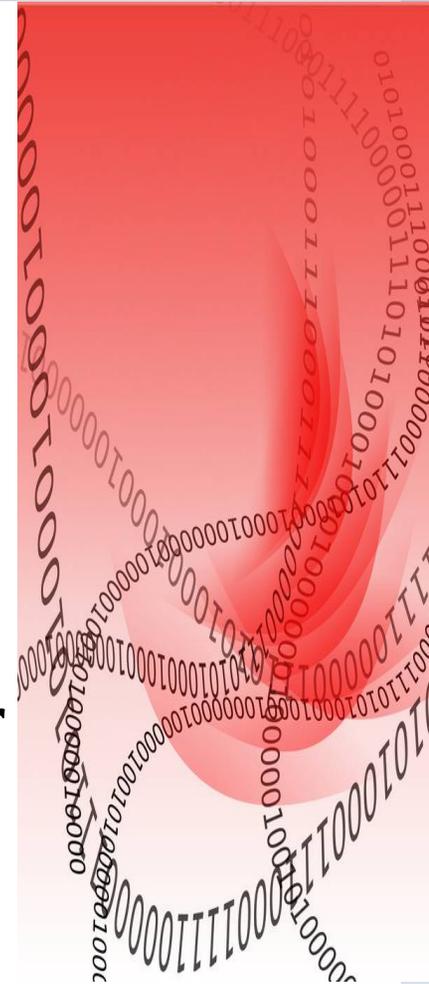
Before submitting your **reports**:

- Verify that counts and outcomes are computed and reported correctly; and
Example: Summing number of males and females and arriving at a total that does not equal the number of participants.
- Research any extreme numbers (outliers).
Example: Calculating an outcome that exceeds 100%.

A Final Word on External Reports

At the heart of complete and accurate reporting is a **sound data collection strategy** and an **effective information management system** that produces useful, credible reports.

Errors made in collecting data will later translate into **erroneous results** being reported.



Conclusion

Measuring performance can be a powerful mechanism for managing performance!

Data Collection

- Intake/Eligibility forms
- Attendance sheets
- Activity forms
- Progress reports
- Records of completion
- Exit & follow-up forms
- Satisfaction surveys

Data Processing

- Data Entry
- Organizing data
- Compiling data
- Aggregating data
- MIS
- Excel spreadsheets
- Access databases
- Analyzing data

Information & Reports

- Internal management
- Quarterly ETA reports
- Stakeholder reports
- Customer satisfaction
- Evaluation reports
- Contractor reports

Key Reporting Factoids

If it's not
reported,
it's not real.

And remember,
**accountability
begins with
you!**





Thank you

San Francisco Performance
Accountability Forum
December 9-10, 2009