**Slide 1**

Good morning everyone and welcome to today's webinar entitled, *Understanding the National Reporting System’s Federal Measures and Reporting Requirements.*My name is Russell Fenton, and I’m a Program Specialist at ACLS as well as the SMARTT Liaison to the field.  I am joined by a few of my colleagues; some of whom have agreed to assist me, and that includes Barbara Pope, Olympia Stroud, Dana Varzan-Parker and Jen Cabral.  I need to go over a few logistical items with you and then we’ll get started.

First, if at any point during this webinar you are having technical difficulties, please indicate that in the chat box and we’ll try to assist you as best we can.

Second, feel free at any time to adjust your screen to full-screen mode, but  just be aware that if you choose to do so,  you won’t be able to see the chat box.  Also, to give you heads up, there will be a few slides in this presentation which will require the full-screen mode from our end in order for you to see the text better.

**Slide 2**

I anticipate that you will have many questions, so please type them in the chat box at any time.  However, if you quickly scan the agenda on this slide, you will notice that I have allotted time for three separate mini Q&A sessions, so while I encourage you to type in a question at any time, in the interest of time, I will try to resist the temptation to answer questions until the designated Q&A.  The one exception to that rule is if I see a clarification type of question that is simply screaming for an immediate response.

At the end of today’s presentation, you’ll be able to download the PowerPoint to review at your leisure.  We are also recording this webinar where you’ll be able to access it from the SABES website for your multiple viewing pleasure.  Also, all the questions from the chat box will be collected, and I will send those questions, along with as many answers as I have, to whatever email address you used to register for this webinar.  I can’t tell you exactly when I will do this; certainly not until after the second showing of this webinar on April 5th, but definitely before the Director’s Meeting on May 23rd.  Speaking of which, I will be giving a face to face version of this webinar at the Director’s Meeting, so after this morning, if you feel like you need a second pass at the material, I invite you to attend my session at the DM.

Alright, enough of the ancillary stuff--let’s get started.  Our strategy for this morning, as you can see from the agenda is to address what I’m calling the six key elements of the NRS Federal Measures and Reporting Requirements.  These Measures are sometimes referred to simply as the WIOA Measures, and we are going to cover them two at a time; at the end of each block or session, we will pause for some Q&A.  So, if that’s the strategy, what’s the goal?

**Slide 3**

The goal of this webinar is for participants to come away with a shared understanding of the NRS Federal Reporting Measures and Requirements--what they are, why they matter, and how they differ slightly from the Massachusetts ABE Performance Standards, which hopefully, most of you are already familiar with.

**Slide 4**

What exactly are the NRS Federal Measures, or WIOA Measures?  We will look at them in greater detail in a moment, but here are the six measures at a glance:  Measurable Skill Gain, or MSG; Second Quarter Employment; Fourth Quarter Employment; Median Earnings; Credential Attainment; and Employer Satisfaction.

Let me say right now, that we will not be addressing the Employer Satisfaction measure today, primarily because there isn’t a lot of guidance yet on what precisely is meant by employer satisfaction, let alone how it will be measured.  In any event, states are not required to report on Employer Satisfaction at present, but eventually they will be, so it’s good to be aware of that measure, even though our focus today will be on the other five.

Now that we know what we are talking about, let’s answer the question, “Why do they matter?”

The easy answer is that they matter simply because these are the measures by which all the states are judged at the Federal level through the National Reporting System.  If you need a deeper, more philosophically satisfying answer than that, perhaps we better go out for a drink.

For our more pragmatic purposes, the WIOA Measures matter because they represent what success looks like at a Federal level for all the adults that are served not only by ABE programs, but by our Core Partners as well.

If this is how the states are measured, it follows that the programs within the states will be measured in a similar fashion.  Now, I mentioned in the goal statement that there is a slight difference between the NRS Federal Measures and the Massachusetts ABE Performance Standards, but that difference has more to do with how we count or credit the outcomes rather than on the outcomes themselves.  In other words, our accountability system incentivizes and reports the outcomes to programs in a way that is aligned with, but different from the way the state reports outcomes to OCTAE, which stands for the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

I have a slide at the end of the presentation which goes over these differences in more detail, but for now, please remember that this webinar is focused primarily on how the NRS Measures pertain to states and only secondarily on how they pertain to programs.

**Slide 5**

With that, let’s delve into the measures themselves as well as the challenges and implications that arise from them.  We start with *Key Element #1, Participants vs. Reportable Individuals.*

Let’s begin with definitions:  You are considered a participant only upon attaining 12 contact hours after program entry.  Furthermore, participants are reported on NRS and statewide Performance Report Tables.

In contrast, you are considered a reportable individual if you provide identifying information, take action that demonstrates an intent to use program services, and have less than 12 contact hours.

**Slide 6**

For you more visual types, this slide represents what was just stated in a more pleasing format.  different format.  This wine glass looking thing that is supposed to be a funnel shows how reportable individuals get “funneled” if you will into participants.  The yellow circle reminds us that to be reportable, an individual must provide identifying information.  The blue circle reminds us that there must also be a demonstrated intent to use services, and the orange circle reminds us that a reportable individual must have less than 12 contact hours.  Once an individual has more than 12 hours, they mystically transform from a reportable individual into a participant.

You may be wondering why I’m  even mentioning reportable individuals if it's only participants that are counted in terms of outcomes.  The reason is because, as the name suggests, reportable individuals are those who we will be asked to report on, just not at the moment, and not on any of the WIOA Measures.

**Slide 7**

Moving on to *Key Element #2: Program Entry, Exit, and Periods of Participation.*First, some definitions:  Program entry is the date on which a reportable individual enrolls in an adult education and family literacy program.  Program exit occurs when the participant has not received services for the past 90 days and has no additional services scheduled.  The date of exit is the last date on which the participant receives services.  However, the service exit date cannot be determined until at least 90 days have elapsed since the participant last received services.

**Slide 8**

We now come to my least favorite part of the presentation, *Periods of Participation,* or POP.  What do we need to know about POP’s?  First,  every program entry is counted as a period of participation even if it occurs during the same program year.  I should add here, that program entry must be followed by at least 12 contact hours to become a participant.  Second,  participants with more than one program entry will have multiple periods of participation in a program year.  Third, every period of participation is a new service period and treated as if the participant is a new participant in regard to things like follow-up or measurable skill game.  Finally, a new intake process is required for each period of participation.

**Slide 9**

Hopefully this chart will help clarify things a little bit.  If you look at POP 1--I know it's a little small on your screen, so you may have to expand your view--you will see that the gray circle represents the date of entry and the pink circle the date of program exit.  If a student, let's just call her Anisha, enters your program on September 12th for example and her last date of service was September 29th, then assuming she had attained 12 contact hours during that time, her exit day would be September 29th. But, she will not actually be exited until 90 days after September 12th which will be sometime in December.  If she were to return any time in October or November, she would continue to be in POP 1, but if she returned any time in January or beyond, she would have to be re-entered, and that date of reentry would officially begin POP 2.

Let's assume Anisha re-entered the program on January 5th, thus beginning POP 2 and then she leaves--I didn’t say exit, I said leaves--on February 5th.  The program, or most likely SMARTT, will wait until 90 days before exiting her, and if she doesn’t return within that time, her exit date would then be February 5th.  Thus ends Period of Participation number 2.

Now, if Anisha re-enters the program yet again during the same program year, and let’s say she does re-enter on June 1st, then June 1st would be the beginning of POP 3.  At this point, you might be wondering, “Does POP3 roll over into the next fiscal year?” The answer is, “sort of.”  Yes, in the sense that the current period of participation has not ended, so in that sense POP3 would become POP 1 of the following year.  However, Measurable Skill Gain, such as EFL completion must be reported in the program year ending June 30 for all three POPs because MSG can only be reported on for the completed program year.  This starts to get a bit complicated, and we can address it further during Q&A, but we're not quite finished yet with Periods of Participation.

**Slide 10**

Let's continue with our example.  Not only is Anisha considered a new participant for each POP in regard to MSG, she is also considered a new participant in regard to the exit based measures like Employment and Credential Attainment.  As we already saw, one of  the employment indicators under WIOA is Second Quarter Employment.  This means that NRS wants to know whether Anisha was employed during the second quarter after her exit...but which exit...her POP 1 exit or her POP 2 exit?  The answer is both!  That is why Periods of Participation is my least favorite element,  because under WIOA, programs need to report on exit based measures such as Second Quarter Employment for each participant for each period of participation.

**Slide 11**

To make this a little more concrete let's take a look now at a screen shot of the Cohort Follow Up Details page for our fictitious student Anisha.  You may need to expand your screen here so you can see the red arrow which is pointing to the Period of Participation box.  Underneath that, and I know it’s next to impossible to read, is the Intake Date, which is October 1, 2016 and then follows the Exit Date which is January 31, 2017.

These dates are a little different from the ones we used for Anisha in the previous example, so treat this as a completely different example.  Since Anisha has only one Intake Date and one Exit Date, we can conclude that she only had one Period of Participation.  So, when you see the Second Quarter Employment and Fourth Quarter Employment boxes below, you know that you are following up on the first Period of Participation.  However, if Anisha had more than one Intake and Exit Date, when you clicked the little plus/minus, or expand/contract button to the right, it would expand to show you all her Periods of Participation; in this example, the Period of Participation box has been opened up fully and that’s how we know that Anisha has only one POP.

Incidentally, if you expanded the Second and Fourth Quarter Employment boxes, you would see a series of questions that whoever is doing follow up for your program could use when talking to a student.

Ok, that ends our first session, so now I will take some questions.

**Slide 12**

I'm going to mute myself for a minute or two to read the questions that have already come in, and I will return shortly, so don't go away.

**Slide 13**

We’re moving on now to our second session starting with *Key Element #3: Employment Performance Indicators.*The first employment indicator is Second Quarter after Exit which we've already talked a little bit about.  This indicator is defined as the percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit.

The next indicator is Fourth Quarter after Exit, and it is defined as the percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit.

**Slide 14**

The third employment indicator under WIOA is Median Earnings which in this context refers to the median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.  The immediate challenge with this indicator is figuring out how to collect that information.

**Slide 15**

This screenshot shows you how we hope to collect this information.  If you can find the red arrow, you will see that it is pointing to the fourth data field under the Second Quarter Employment box, which is the Wage Collection Period field.  If Anisha answers yes to question number 1:  “Were you employed between July 1, 2017 and September 30, 2017?”  Then the Wage Collection field would allow you to select the period for Wage Collection and then a new series of questions would appear to help you collect the information.

Before moving on, let me give you a pop quiz, no pun intended.  Why does question 1 ask about employment between July 1, 2017 and September 30, 2017?  Don’t type the answer, just think about it for a moment.  If you don’t know, take a look at the Exit Date.  It’s hard to read, but Anisha’s exit date is January 31, 2017 which is the third quarter of our fiscal year.  That quarter comes to an end on March 31, so the first quarter after exit would be from April through the end of June.  The second quarter after exit would begin July 1 and continue through September 30th.  That’s what is meant by the term, “reporting period” and that’s why question 1 is worded that way.

Ok, now we can move on.

**Slide 16**

*Key Element: 4*  is Measurable Skill gain or MSG, and it will probably be familiar to most of you.  As you can see,  there are five ways to demonstrate progress toward an academic, technical or occupational credential or employment, and on the chart they comprise the second row directly below the measurable skill gains box.  Of those five only two apply to adult education, and they are the boxes with the blue background.  The first MSG is Secondary Diploma or its equivalent and the second MSG that applies to us is Educational Functioning level gain.

Under EFL gain there are three boxes indicating the acceptable means for documenting or attaining an EFL gain.  The first is by comparing a participant pre and post-test using an NRS approved standardized test.  The second is by the awarding of Carnegie units in an adult high school program.  This option doesn't apply to anyone in our system, so you can safely ignore it.  The third way to attain an EFL gain is by entering into a post-secondary education program after exit.  It’s not on this slide, but it should be added that entering into a job training program post-exit would also count, but both job training and postsecondary entry need to happen before the end of the program year.  Which leads me to my next point.

**Slide 17**

Before leaving MSG behind, I want to remind you of what I said at the beginning of the presentation when we were reading the goal statement for this webinar; that there is a slight difference between how the NRS counts outcomes and how ACLS counts outcomes, and I will highlight those differences as they appear on this slide.

Let’s look then at the first requirement for counting MSG.  All participants are included for MSG for each period of participation.  So far, so good; let’s go to number two.  Only one type of gain can be counted for each participant per period of participation; the last one achieved.  Now this is a clear example of how the ACLS Performance Standards deviate just a bit from the NRS.  ACLS made the decision to allow partial credit for any MSG gains beyond the first.  So, for example, if a student achieved an EFL gain and also entered into postsecondary education by the end of the program year, ACLS would give full credit so to speak for one of those outcomes and partial credit for the second, while the NRS would only accept as an outcome the last one achieved, which in this example would be entry into postsecondary education.

We come now to requirement number three:  Entry into post-secondary education is measured only after the participant exits.  This is true for our Performance Standards as well, but what is different is what is stated in number four: Receipt of secondary credential and entry into post-secondary education must occur by the end of the program year; June 30th.  In contrast, ACLS gives programs until December 31st following the end of the fiscal year for these outcomes to be attained.

Requirement five doesn’t apply to us, so that means we’ve reached the end of session number two.  Ok, let's take some questions.

**Slide 18**

Just like last time, I'm going to mute myself for a couple of minutes to read your questions, and I will return shortly.

**Slide 19**

We begin our final block of material with *Key Element #5: Credential Attainment Indicator.*The two components of the credential attainment indicator are secondary credential and postsecondary credential attainment.

The numerator is the percentage of participants who obtained a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent or a recognized postsecondary credential, while they were enrolled, or within one year of exit.

But, a participant who has attained a secondary school diploma for the credential attainment indicator is counted only if the participant is employed or enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program within one year of exit.  This is what is known as the Special Rule.

**Slide 20**

Let's take a little closer look now at the secondary credential.  The secondary credential component of the credential attainment indicator is limited to participants who did not previously possess a high school equivalency and entered at or above the ninth grade level; or who advanced to the 9th grade level or higher during a period of participation; and exited from the secondary education program.

**Slide 21**

Now let’s take a closer look at the postsecondary credential.  The postsecondary education component of the credential attainment indicator is limited to participants who were enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program including an integrated Education and Training (IET) program; and exited from the postsecondary education and training program.

**Slide 22**

In the Smartt Cohort follow-Up Details screen, you can see how the follow-up for postsecondary education and training works.  We are still using Anisha as our example, even though I forgot to include her name on this slide.  If you remember from the Employment follow up screen, Anisha’s exit date was January 31, 2017.  The reporting period for that credential is one full year after exit so it makes sense that question 1 asks: “Was the student enrolled in postsecondary education or occupational training at any time between February 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018?” because that is the reporting period; one year after exit.  To be even more precise, the reporting period is actually one year after the end of the first quarter of exit, which is why you see March 31, 2018 and not January 31, 2018.

However, ACLS doesn’t report that data until October 15, 2018, and although I haven’t checked the math, I believe that’s why you see “924 days to follow up.”

Now take a look at the second red arrow under “Obtain a secondary credential (Data Matched).”  Because this outcome is 100% data matched, this field will be “read only.”  However, if you know of a student who received their HiSET or GED for example, and you don't see them appearing in this field, that would be a signal for you to call Tom Meacham in our office to figure out what happened.

**Slide 23**

Alright, we've come now to the last key element, number 6:   Participant Exclusions from Indicators.  The logic of this is pretty straightforward.  It’s premise is that some students should not be included in the denominator for the state's performance indicators due to certain extenuating circumstances that are considered legitimate reasons for exiting a program.

Under WIOA, there are four reasons for excluding participants from all performance indicators and they are as follows:  1) If exit is due to the participant becoming incarcerated or being entered into a 24-hour support facility such as a hospital or treatment center.  2) If exit is due to medical treatment that lasts for more than 90 days.  3) If exit is due to death, and 4) If exit is due to being called into active duty in the National Guard or other armed services for at least 90 days.

**Slide 24**

We continue with exclusions on this slide.  To avoid any confusion, I should mention Corrections Exclusions refers here to adult Learners who were already incarcerated before entering a program, whereas the previous slide was referring to adult Learners who became incarcerated after program entry.

So,what are the Corrections Exclusions?  Participants in a correctional institution under section 225 of WIOA who remain incarcerated after exit are included in the MSG indicator, but excluded from: the second quarter employment indicator, the median earnings indicator, the fourth quarter employment indicator, and the credential indicator; in other words, the exit-based measures.

**Slide 25**

We're now entering the home stretch of this presentation.  We just finished our review of five of the six WIOA Measures as well as some other key elements that are related to them.  Before our final Q&A session however, I want to take one more pass at explaining the difference between the NRS measures and reporting requirements and the ABE Performance Standards.

Using this chart as a guide, take a look at the Credential Attainment column, because this is where the difference lies.  The blue circles are meant to alert your attention to a few key facts:

The first is that ACLS does not have a Credential Attainment Standard, only an MSG Standard.  Thus, unlike the NRS, outcomes such as HSE or Enrolled in Postsecondary, or Enrolled in Training are only counted as MSG under the ACLS standards.  Under the NRS, an HSE for example, might count as a measurable skill gain in one fiscal year, but also count as a credential attainment in the next fiscal year, if the Special Rule was met.

A second fact to be noted is that ACLS gives until December 31st following the end of the fiscal year for the MSG outcomes to be attained.  This does not apply to EFL gain, which is the only MSG in which ACLS and NRS are perfectly aligned.

Ok, that wraps up my presentation; I strongly encourage you to stick around for our final Q&A session.

**Slide 26**

Okay by now you know the drill; I'm going to mute myself in order to scan your questions and shall return shortly.

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Alright everyone; that’s all the time we have left.  I want to thank you for participating in this webinar and being willing to engage on what I think is a very confusing topic.  I hope it was worth your time.  I will send these questions out to all of you, along with as many answers as I have, as soon as I am able.  Thank you.  It’s been a pleasure. Have a good rest of the day.