

AEFLA Program Process

ORIENT STUDENTS AND HELP THEM SET GOALS FOR INSTRUCTION

Your program should have a procedure in place for orienting students to the program and helping them set goals for instruction. The best time for this process to occur is when the learner first enters the program. During the intake process, students typically complete paperwork, providing basic information about themselves, and may take mandated assessments. Either as part of the intake process, or at a separate time shortly thereafter, your program should have another process whereby students meet with teachers or an intake counselor at least once to help them establish goals for instruction.

PAIR Correlation

INTAKE, ORIENTATION, AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Orientation content is planned, recorded, and consists of a sequence of activities to positively introduce learners to the program.
- Intake process includes counseling of learners on appropriate goal setting.

AEFLA Program Process

IDENTIFY ATTAINABLE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS

During the goal setting process, learners, with assistance from program staff, should identify their goals and reasons for attending the program. As part of this process, staff should help learners set both a realistic time line for attaining each goal and a means for determining whether the goal has been achieved. Setting the time line and evidence of achievement will help the learner realize whether the goal is short- or long-term and whether the goal is achievable. For example, when they enter a program many learners state very broad goals, such as attaining a GED or getting a job. Breaking the goal down into discrete steps—with short and long-term milestones along the way—will establish a series of goals which will help learners and teachers to design instruction, as well as identify the appropriate goals for NRS purposes. Since learners often change their goals as they begin instruction, you might consider extending goal setting over additional sessions during the first few weeks.

PAIR Correlation

INTAKE, ORIENTATION, AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Intake process includes counseling of learners on appropriate goal setting
- Intake process includes processes for identifying other learner needs and goals.
- Evidence indicates that individual learner needs and goals are addressed and revisited throughout the program year.

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IDENTIFY NRS FOLLOW-UP GOALS

The goal setting process will determine whether you should set one or more of the NRS follow-up goals—obtain employment, retain employment, enter postsecondary education or obtain a GED—for a learner. Since your program will be held accountable for whether the learner achieves this goal, you should consider, through your goal-setting process, whether there is a realistic chance that the student can achieve the goal during the reporting period.

Goal Setting Guidelines for AEFLA Programs – Program Accountability and Improvement Review (PAIR) Correlation

For example, it is unlikely that lower level students will enter postsecondary education or pass the GED tests during this short period of time. For such students, you should consider setting such goals for the long-term. Employment goals may be more difficult to evaluate. During the goal setting process, explore with the learner the skills he or she needs to get a job and the time that might be needed to attain these skills. These skills may be broad, such as learning to speak English better, or more specific, such as to read manuals to operate machinery. On the other hand, it may be tempting to be too conservative in setting long-term goals, as they are rarely met by learners. You should avoid this inclination, since this does a disservice to the learner, and set goals *appropriately*. Good instruction requires you to assist the learner in achieving goals, not play a numbers game. In addition, if you ignore long-term goals, you deny your program the opportunity to demonstrate that it can help learners achieve such goals.

PAIR Correlation

CORE INDICATOR 2: POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING, OR EMPLOYMENT

- Directors and instructors are aware of the current fiscal year's post-secondary education, training, and employment goals. Current targets are available for reference.
- Instructors can identify resources within the program and externally for assisting learners who have identified post-secondary education or training as a goal.
- Instructors can identify resources within the program and externally for assisting learners who have identified entering or retaining employment as a goal.

PAIR Correlation

CORE INDICATOR 3: HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION (EARN A GED OR ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA)

- Directors and instructors are aware of the current fiscal year's high school completion/GED goal. The current target is available for reference.
- Directors, instructors, and support staff can identify the local GED testing center(s). Test schedules are available for reference.
- Students whose pre-test score places them in the High Adult Secondary level have the goal of GED/adult high school attainment.

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SUPPORT STUDENT FOLLOW-UP TO DETERMINE GOAL ATTAINMENT.

Once a student has selected an NRS follow-up goal, your program or state is responsible for determining whether the goal is attained for NRS reporting. This procedure involves following up on the student at some time, depending on the goal, after the student has left the program. Your state or program may collect goal attainment through a data matching methodology or by a survey. If your state uses data matching, you may need to collect the student's Social Security number and obtain consent to use the number for matching purposes. If your program uses a follow-up survey, it is vitally important that you obtain the information you need from the student to allow you to locate and contact the student in the future. If you are unable to locate the student after he or she has left to obtain information on goal attainment, the validity of your data may suffer. Consequently, your intake process should include an explanation of the survey and its purpose, contact information and the names and numbers of people who might be able to locate the student several months later. If you have knowledge of when the student will leave or complete instruction, it is also advisable that you remind the student about the survey and recheck contact information, shortly before the student exits.

PAIR Correlation

CORE INDICATOR 2: POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING, OR EMPLOYMENT

- Program has a survey process and timetable for collecting follow-up information for reporting on attainment of post-secondary education and training goals.
- Program has a process to ensure that students whose goal is to obtain or retain employment provide valid SSNs and sign the SSN waiver form.
- Students with employment goals who do not have a SSN or waiver are surveyed.

Goal Setting Tips

DISCUSS WITH STAFF.

Talk to intake staff members about how they assist students in setting their goals. You might have staff members discuss or complete the goal setting evaluation form to facilitate discussion. If your discussion uncovers issues or problems, work with staff to identify a plan for improving areas of weakness.

OBSERVE GOAL SETTING.

Observe staff during an intake and goal setting session, using this form during your observations. Identify areas of strength and weakness and discuss with staff.

TALK WITH STUDENTS.

Talk to students individually or in a small group about their experience in goal setting, why they set the goals they did and get their evaluations of the goal setting process. This discussion may give you insights in the process from the students' perspectives.

REVIEW PROGRAM DATA.

Review your program's student demographic and goal data to evaluate whether they provide a clear and accurate picture of your students' goals, consistent with your program's approach and students' needs. For example, you could examine:

- o The number and percentage of students with specific goals
- o Goals by type of student groups
- o Goals by educational functioning level
- o Unemployed Students with Employment Goals Report
- o High ASE Goal Report

REVIEW DATA MATCHING Q&A.

If your program's "Unemployed Students with Employment Goals Report" shows that a disproportionately small percentage of unemployed students have employment goals, review Data Matching Q & A, Colorado Table 5a, and NRS Table 5 with staff. Talk to staff about the importance of each program's contribution to the statewide data collection and data matching processes.