

Volume II:

Request for Clearance for Focus Groups on the
Need for Data on Adult Education and Training

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Focus Groups on Adult Education Data Needs

Background:

The National Center for Education Statistics is in the process of reviewing its portfolio of data collections on adult education and training. This effort is intended to assess policy, program, and research needs for data on adult education and to determine the implications of these needs for future NCES data collections. The review encompasses participation in adult education programs (from adult basic education through workforce training), skill and competencies of the US adult population, and outcomes of adult education. Of particular interest is the need for assessments of adult literacy, skills, and competencies—currently collected nationally through the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) and internationally through the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

To help us understand who needs statistical data on adult and career education, and for what purposes, we are holding focus groups with key constituencies who need solid statistics to support policy, program, and research priorities.

We will be finishing the focus groups in early January 2011 and will synthesize the results and make recommendations about implications for NCES data collections by the end of January. We hope to be able to share a summary of all of the focus groups with those who have given of their time to provide us with input.

Questions:

The questions below are illustrative of the kinds of issues we will discuss in the focus group:

1. What are your main policy, program, or research questions related to adult education and training?
2. What kinds of statistical data are useful in addressing (or providing context for) these questions?
3. In particular, what are the implications of your questions for data on:
 - a. Participation in workforce education and training?
 - b. Adult literacy, skills, and competencies?
 - c. Outcomes of workforce education and training?
 - d. The relationships among the above?
4. In addressing needs for data on adult skills and competencies, what are the relative benefits of a more disaggregated national assessment versus a less disaggregated but internationally comparable assessment?