**H-1B RTW Grants Performance Reporting**

**Tutorial #2: Preparing Data Files**

**Kevin Mauro:** Welcome to the H-1B Ready to Work Performance Reporting Technical Assistance Tutorial Series. This is the second tutorial, and today we will be talking about ***Preparing Data Files.*** Before we get started, let’s take a minute to review the tutorials in this series.

This performance reporting technical assistance tutorial series has been divided into three parts. We hope you’ve had a chance to view the first tutorial in order to get an overview of the performance reporting requirements of the H-1B Ready to Work grants. This tutorial will focus on preparing your data files. Grantee data files are the key component to H-1B RTW quarterly reporting, as preparing a data file tracks and reports participant level data.

Just as a recap, Grantees are required to submit the H-1B RTW QPR ETA Form No. 9166 and a Quarterly Narrative Report (or QNR) using the HUB System in order to successfully submit their quarterly progress reports to DOL. Both the QPR and a QNR will be submitted to ETA using the H-1B Performance Reporting System, HUB.

Now, Let’s go over today’s objectives.

By the end of this tutorial, you will be able to understand the basics of how to prepare your data files to track participant-level information, report intensive services and training activities, and program outcomes using the H-1B Ready to Work Data Elements and Edit Checks. You were introduced to these Data Elements and Edit Checks in the previous tutorial. For a refresher, please review this key resource.

We will go over a very basic system to prepare your participant data as it aligns with the H-1B RTW Data Elements, and how the code value responses will inform the data file that you upload into HUB.

In addition, sample data files are available in the Community of Practice, which include participant records for case management purposes, a data file, and a CSV file that can be used to upload into HUB. We will go over these samples during today’s tutorial.

First let’s talk about the requirements.

In preparation for H-1B Ready to Work Quarterly Performance Reporting, grantees should develop an internal record-keeping system or use existing resources to track each participant receiving H-1B grant-funded services in order to capture participant information and the other data required to report the quarterly progress of the grant program.

All participants that you serve should be entered into your organization’s internal participant tracking data system as it aligns with the Data Elements and Edit Checks document. This management information system could be as sophisticated as an Access database or as simple as an Excel spreadsheet.

While developing your system, it is important to ensure the collection method is sophisticated enough to securely store participant information including Personally Identifiable Information (PII). You must also ensure that each collecting agency such as sub-grantees; contractors; employer partners and other training providers are collecting the same required participant information and appropriate supporting documentation, in the event your program is audited.

Collecting participant data will vary depending on the service providers for your grant. Although trainers, employers, or other types of service providers won’t be accessing HUB directly, it is imperative that good communication is established between the grant program manager and those collecting data directly from the participant because this information needs to be stored and transmitted correctly. Lastly, the system must be able to save or export participant records as one single data file.

Let’s go over the H-1B RTW Data Elements and Edit Checks. The Data Elements and Edit Checks document is used to inform the process for collecting participant-level data used for quarterly progress reporting. Each individual that is considered a program participant (as defined in the Reporting Handbook) needs to be tracked for measureable outcomes, based on a set of data elements, and submitted to DOL ETA. Make sure your system includes everydata element as a data field entry for each participant record, as you are required to collect 67 data elements, which include participant demographics and social security numbers. HUB is date based; therefore, data element date fields such as date of program participation and date of program completion will inform the system of the quarter in which activities occurred and will populate your QPR form accordingly. You are also required to collect participant-level information on the types of intensive services that are provided, training activities and types of training, key dates for program start date and training program completion and employment outcomes for each participant served in your H-1B-Ready To Work funded grant program.

What you see here is a screenshot of the RTW Data Elements and Edit Checks document. We hope you have had a chance to familiarize yourself with these data elements, and how they impact your data collection process and reporting to DOL.

What is a data element? Data elements are all the participant-level data that you are required to collect for each of your participants. For each data element, we’ve provided the definition of these data elements, based on guidance provided in the RTW SGA and the RTW Performance Handbook. Each data element has a related code value response that you will use to indicate that the specific data element applies to your participant. Lastly, the edit check logic is a list of the specific rules that will validate your data in HUB. The Edit Check logic rules are key to making sure that you are reporting your participant-level data according to the requirements outlined in the RTW performance definitions.

Tips on How to Prepare for Reporting

Participant Intake: Make sure your system includes EVERY data element as a data field entry for each participant record and that all data element code values are collected for each participant

Participant Tracking: Grantees are encouraged to use their own internal Management Information System to track participant-level data, this could be as complex as an Access database, or as simple as an Excel spreadsheet. However, we ask you to make sure that you align your MIS system to capture all the data elements that are required for RTW reporting.

Tips on for creating your data file

All case management systems MUST have the capability to export your data into a csv, txt or dat file. These are either tab-deliminated files, comma-separated files, or text files that will allow HUB to read your participant data. Remember, HUB is NOT a case management file. You are simply uploading participant-level data using the code values indicated for each data element.

A simple way to manage your data file is to establish file-naming systems to track all the data files that is successfully submitted in HUB.

And remember, a data file is a comprehensive data file of ALL participants served to-date (meaning it does not include only participant data for the specific reporting quarter, but is updated every quarter to include all participant data to date, as of the specific reporting quarter).

A participant record should have a corresponding code value for each data element. The Data Elements and Edit Checks document, as well as the Performance Reporting Handbook, include the types of code values that you will enter. In some cases, leaving the data field blank or with the digit “3” signifies that information is not yet available, and is a valid option if the data element does not apply to the participant, or the activity occurs in a future reporting quarter and the information is not available. The edit check logic associated with each data element will inform the code value responses that must be entered for the data element. Each data element is associated with an error type, which can either be a reject or a warning. An error message in your error message report will indicate a reason for the error. We will go over how to resolve these types of errors in the next tutorial.

So what is a case management file?

A case management file is what you will use using your own internal MIS system to track participant level-data using the RTW data elements. The sample provided here is an Excel spreadsheet that has the data element numbers and data element names as headers.

Remember, this is NOT a data file. This sample is for your internal grantee tracking purposes only. Each row in this spreadsheet represents a participant; and each column represents each data element code value provided for each data element. Obviously the sample here is not represented of all the data elements; but as a hot tip, remember that you may leave a data element blank if it is an acceptable code value when the information is not yet available for your participant; or if the data element does not apply to the individual.

And what is a sample data file?

Here is a replica of what a data file will look like as a TXT, DAT or CSV file that you upload in HUB.

To reiterate some of the key tips we provided in previous slides,

1. Data files are comprised of the code values entered for each participant in your case management file.
2. Data files should be a comprehensive list of all participants served to date.
3. Updates to a participant record are made across the data element columns.
4. New participants are added as a new row.

Remember: there are 67 data elements that you are required to collect for your participants. If you are using an excel spreadsheet, the last data element, DE 622: Date Attained Recognized Credential #3, will end in column BO of your spreadsheet.

As a recap, database systems may vary with each grantee. This tutorial will go over a simple format to track participant records using Excel spreadsheets. We will go over how to export participant information as a data file that can be uploaded to HUB. This is an example of a case management file for one participant. Each participant that is served in your H-1B RTW grant-funded program should have an Electronic Case File that includes all the required data elements for performance reporting. Because each of your grant programs will have different database systems and case management filing systems, we are providing this example to illustrate how each participant’s information will be informed by the data elements and code values associated with each data element. For each participant’s case management file, a simple Excel spreadsheet can include data elements represented in each row and the following columns to record the participant’s code value of each data.

In this example, a participant’s case management file is represented as a tab in an excel workbook. The data element number, the data element name, the information collected by the grantee at the time of enrollment is provided here using columns A through C. It is important to note that this is not a data file. The information that is reported to DOL using the data element code values is recorded in Column D. Each participant record will have all 67 data element fields with the corresponding information as it relates to each of your unique participants. The appropriate code value response for each data element again be noted in column D. Column D is the most important. The code values listed here correspond to the information that you collect during the intake process. You will have to closely review the H-1B Ready to Work Data Elements and Edit Check document to ensure that the code values for each data element is correct as it aligns with the information you collect in your intake form.

This is a sample master database before it is exported as a csv, dat or txt file and uploaded to HUB. This Excel document lists the Data Element Number in Row 1, the Data Element Name in Row 2. Although not included here, some grantees have reported that adding the Edit Check Rule in their master database helps them to determine how to enter a code value within each data element fields.

Each participant record is entered as one row, with each of the code values entered across the data element columns across the spreadsheet. There should be 67 data element fields across your spreadsheet.

This is a example of five participant records . The code values were extracted from the case management file. Here is a simple way to gather this information.

Step one, in column Dof the participant record, select and copy all the code values for each of the data elements, starting from Data Element 101 to Data Element 622 **-** Date of Recognized Credential. You will right click this column and copy all the data elements.

Step two is where you will extract the data. In your data file, you will paste the code values that you copied by right-clicking and selecting Paste Special . When the Paste Special window comes up, you will select Transpose, to transpose the data across the data element columns in your spreadsheet.

Let’s take a look at your data file. When viewing your data file in your file folder, it is important to note the file name extension. You will want to open the document with a CSV, TXT, or DAT file extension.

This is a sample data file that opened in an Excel spreadsheet. As you will see here, each participant record has all the code values noted across the spreadsheet. Because there are 67 data elements to collect, your data elements should end in Column BO.

Let’s go over some common data file format errors. Make sure that your data file does not include the following: Participant names, data element headers, additional rows, blank entries when code values are required, or a null value instead of a blank or a space. Spaces are counted as a code value. Let’s show an example with incorrect format. You’ll see in this example, that this data file has a data element heading, additional rows, and a participant name.

Now, here’s an example of the correct format. This sample is a correct data file format that shows your raw data.

Let’s talk about your data file format. Here are three tips to remember when developing your data file. The first tip is to establish a consistent file naming convention. When you export your data from your database and upload to HUB, your data file may not initially pass the format check and edit checks. In most cases, you may need to upload several versions of your data file until it passes in HUB and generates a QPR form No. 9166. It is important to have a consistent naming convention so you can identify the different versions of data files, and the final version of your data file that was correct and generated a QPR form No. 9166. For example, you can name your data file by your grant number, the reporting quarter end date, and the data file version number to track each version of your data file that you upload to HUB. The next tip is to always make changes to your master database, not the CSV, TXT, or DAT data file that you upload to HUB. Please note: a CSV data file will open automatically in Excel. Any changes that you make to the CSV data file in Excel will not be saved. Last, view your data file using Notepad to view the raw data format, or the comma separated values, that you entered for each data element. This will help you identify common data file errors, which we will go over in tutorial number three, Resolving Data File Errors.

As a recap from the previous tutorial, these are the components of the H-1B Ready to Work Performance Reports. You will develop a data file from your own internal database tracking system using the required H-1B Data Elements. You will upload a data file in HUB, which will go through a series of validation checks to verify that your data is in alignment with the Edit Check rules for each data element. HUB will generate a QPR form No. 9166 once your data file is validated. Next, grantees will enter the Quarterly Narrative Reports in HUB, as well as upload up to 2 additional documents. The Authorized Representative will submit and certify your quarterly reports using the PIN.

We have developed several resources to help you get started with H-1B Performance Reporting.

The first step is that your program staff should absolutely review these key reporting materials: Your Performance Reporting Handbook and Data Elements and Edit Checks. The links to these key resources are provided for your reference here.

<https://etagrantees.workforce3one.org/view/2001512060233073668/info>

https://etagrantees.workforce3one.org/view/2001512060367110003/info

All of the documents referenced on this Tutorial today are available online at the ETA Grantee Community Resource Page. Here’s a snapshot of what the H-1B ready To Work folder looks like and where you can find all of the mentioned documents and more!

If you have any additional questions or comments including requesting additional technical assistance, please send an email to your H-1B Ready to Work grant mailboxes. The email address is RTW at DOL dot GOV. Please remember to include your grant name and grant number, with a courtesy copy to your Federal Project Officer, or FPO. In addition, the ETA Help Desk will provide information on any issues you might have with the HUB system. You can access the ETA Help Desk by sending an email to EBSS dot Help at DOL dot GOV. Thank you for taking the time to view this tutorial. We hope you found it helpful, and we look forward to seeing you again in our final tutorial.