**H-1B Ready to Work Grants Technical Assistance**

**Tutorial #3: Resolving Common Errors**

**Kevin Mauro**: Hello everyone, welcome to the H-1B Ready to Work Performance Reporting Technical Assistance Series. This is the Third and Final installment of our Performance Reporting Technical Assistance Series, entitled: Resolving Common Errors.

We hope you have had a chance to view the first two tutorials. By this time, you should have a clear understanding of the performance reporting requirements of the H-1B Ready to Work grants, the features and functionalities of the HUB System, and how to prepare your data files to track and report participant data as it aligns with the Data Elements and Edit Checks. Tutorial #3 will review how to resolve some of the common data file errors and edit check errors that most grantees have experienced since HUB was introduced.

Let’s go over today’s objectives. By the end of this tutorial, you should be able to identify and resolve common data file errors in the HUB system. We hope that the tips provided in this tutorial will help you in preparing your data files for successful upload to the HUB system.

Let’s get started! In the last tutorial, you learned how to prepare a data file to track participant records as it aligns with the H-1B RTW Data Elements and Edit Checks. As a recap, when you upload your data file in HUB, HUB will go through two rounds of checks to validate your data. If errors have been identified, the HUB system will display a prompt that the file has been rejected. There are two steps of validation checks in HUB: The first is a format check to make sure your data is in the correct formatting. If HUB sees these errors, it will automatically reject your file and issue a format check error report for you to review and fix the errors. This includes incorrect data file formats, incorrect number of data element columns, incorrect field data, invalid zip codes, incorrect date field format, and duplicate data. The second step is an Edit Check. This will verify whether or not the code values that you’ve entered for each participant is in line with the edit check logic rules for each data element as it is outlined in the H-1B Data Elements and Edit Checks document. An Edit Check Error Report is generated when errors have been detected. This process can take up to two hours to complete. If format checks or edit check errors are found in your data file, you will have to correct the errors in your master database and re-upload a new data file. If you have a clean data file without errors, a QPR form will be generated based on the information provided in your data file.

Let’s take a look at three examples of a Format Check Error Report with data files that failed for the following reasons: The first example is that the participant records failed with a value of 101

The second example is that the participant records failed with a value of 63 fields. The third example is that the participant records failed with a value of blank – this means a code value was not entered in the data element field, but that a space is entered in this data element field. HUB will translate a space as a code value, which is an unacceptable code value. We will discuss the reason for these errors and how to resolve them in the next few slides. Remember, the format check error report will be generated in HUB if your data file has formatting errors. You will have to fix these errors in your master data file, save it as a CSV, TXT or DAT file and re-upload to HUB.

Let’s go over some common format check errors. Please correct the errors before attempting another upload. These are the common format check errors related to the Social Security Number data element field. The column on the left is the exact language that you would see in your format checking error report. The column to the right is the reason why the format check failed. The first participant record, Social Security Number failed with a value of ‘101.’ The reason for this is the data element headers were included in your data file. The next participant record the Social Security Number failed with a value of ‘97221253.’ You must provide a 9-digit Social Security Number. The reason for this is that the SSN code value may have started with a zero that was dropped when the file was converted to a data file. In participant record #3 the Social Security Number failed with a value of “blank.” You must provide a 9-digit Social Security Number. The reason for this error is that the SSN was not provided in this data element field. Instead a null value or a space or blank code value was entered.

Here is an example of a data file format error that was briefly discussed in Tutorial #2. The format check error report will indicate the error and the reason for error. This is a format error related to a data file with headers and additional rows. The sample data file provided here shows that row 1, which is participant record #1, has the data element numbers entered as code values for the 1st participant. Row 3, which is participant record #3, is missing required code values. The format checking error message indicates the Social Security Number failed with a value of blank. This indicates that a code value is missing from your data file for this participant. Remember, do not add headers, participant names and blank rows in between the participant records in your data file. Make sure all relevant code values are entered for each participant record.

Here is another example of a common format checking errors related to Social Security Numbers. This slide describes in detail how to resolve the common format checking error of SSNs that fail with a value of 8-digits. The reason for this error is that some participants have social security numbers that begin with a zero. These zeroes are then dropped in Excel when it is converted into a data file. A way to resolve this issue is to insert an apostrophe before you enter the first digit 0. Another related issue that grantees have told us about is that their SSN columns are being entered with hyphens, even if hyphens were not manually entered. This is because the Excel spreadsheet is automatically formatting the data as an SSN in that data element field. A simple way to resolve this issue is to use the formatting function of your excel spreadsheet. Select the “Custom” option and enter 9 zeroes in the type field.

Here is another tip – open your data using Notepad to view your data file and ensure that the zeroes are included as part of your data set. For participants that do not disclose their SSNs, the code value 999-99-9999 is an acceptable code value. However, in order for HUB to read this individual record as a unique participant, a Date of Birth must be provided in DE 103 and a Date of Program Participation/Date of First Service must be provided in DE 301.

Here is another common format checking error about the incorrect number of fields in your data file. The Format Checking Error Report below indicates a data file with only 63 fields for the first participant record. This issue happens with grantees that use excel to convert their data files into TXT, DAT or CSV. Excel is reading that your last data element ends in column BK since that is the last set of data in your file. In Excel the 67th data element field should end in column BO because the last data element require information that may not yet be available this data element field will be left blank in most accounts. To resolve this common data file error, please enter a single quotation mark (‘) or apostrophe in Column BO of your first participant record so that Excel will read this column as a blank entry when it is converted into a data file.

Let’s take a look at a master data file in Excel with these types of errors and save them as a CSV file. The following errors in this file include an SSN with two leading zeroes that are dropped from this data file. The next error is an SSN with hyphens, you will also see that the date field value here is in an incorrect format. Lastly this data element ends in column BK not BO, this signifies that the data file will end in this column. Uploading this data file in HUB will result in a reject and will produce a format checking error report.

To view the data file errors, you can use Notepad to view your data file as a series of raw data separated by commas. This is the raw data that HUB will use to generate your QPR form. Select the data file in your file folder by right-clicking on your mouse to select open with Notepad. You will see that each row in this data file represents a participant record. Each data element code value is separated by a comma. You might remember that the participant record in the master data file had an SSN with two leading zeroes. You will see here that this data file has an SSN with seven digits. Next, the other participant record had an SSN with hyphens, here’s the error in your data file. In addition, the date format in your master data file was incorrect. Your data file should have 67 commas. The last code value that we entered was in column BK, this indicates that this data file has only 63 records.

Let’s go back to the master data file in excel to resolve these errors. There are numerous, simple ways to resolve these common format check errors. The first issue with an SSN that starts with two zeroes can be resolved by entering an apostrophe and the extra digits, this will ensure that your data field will have 9-digit code values. The next issue is to simply remove the hyphens in your data file format. Next, you will see here that the date format has been changed to year, month and day. In addition, to resolve the issue of your data file ending in column BK enter an apostrophe in column BO. This will inform HUB that your data file ends in column BO. We can save these changes to the data file and double check them again in Notepad.

Here is a sample Edit Check Error Report. An edit check will occur when the code values entered for your participant record data elements is not in alignment with the business rules associated for each data element. Remember, the edit check error report will be generated in HUB if your data file is free of format check errors. It will take two hours for HUB to check if your data file has additional edit check errors. Please log off and log back in to HUB after two hours. If your data file has edit check errors, you will have to fix these errors in your master data file, re-save it as a CSV, TXT or DAT file and re-upload to HUB. If your data file does not have any edit check errors a QPR form will be generated in HUB.

As a general rule, data elements with multiple edit check logic rules will most likely result in edit check errors if you do not take into consideration all the rules associated with that data element. For example, DE 304 has four edit check logic rules as it relates to various data elements. The first edit check rule is that the code value must be a valid date of year, month and date. Next the date entered for program completion must be greater than DE 301, Date of Participation/Date of First Service (DE 301). In this case an error will occur if the date of training completion is January 15, 2015 but the date when they started the program is January 30, 2015.

The next edit check is related to Date of Exit. The date of exit cannot be greater than date of program completion. An error will occur if the individual is exited before they complete the program. Last, the date of program completion must be greater than DE 405, 415 and 425, the dates entered when training activities #1, #2 and #3 is completed. This will ensure that training activities are recorded as complete before the individual can be recorded as completing the program, and is no longer participating in training.

Here is a common edit check error related to Data Element 303, Reasons for Exit.

Record #1 was rejected because data element 303, Reason for Exit has an invalid entry of a blank code value. Grantees must enter a code value if a Date of Exit is provided for a participant that has exited the program. Among the acceptable code values are 0 = Other, which can be used to indicate that the individual has successfully completed the program and exited, or has withdrawn from the program and exited. Entering 0 or Other will ensure that participants that complete or withdrew from the program will be counted in Common Measures. Individuals with a code value to indicate various reasons for exit as outlined in the H-1B Data Elements and Edit Checks will be excluded from ETA Common Measures.

This is common edit check error is related to training activities # 2 and 3 using Data Elements 410 and 420. This edit check error report indicates that Record 2, or participant #2 in your data file, was rejected because of an edit check error related to Data Element 410, date entered or began receiving education or job training activities #2. The edit check rule for this data element indicates that the year, month, date MUST be greater than data element 400, date entered training activity #1. On a similar note, record #25, or participant 25 in your data file, was rejected because of an edit check error related to data element 420, date entered training activity #3. The edit check rule for this data element indicates that the year, month, date MUST be greater than data element 400, date entered training activity #2. To Troubleshoot, Training Activity #1 must be completed before Training Activity #2 can be recorded. Training Activities #1 and #2 and #3 cannot start on the same day. Grantees may select primary, secondary or tertiary types of training if other types of training is provided as part of training activities #1, #2 or #3.

Please review the SGA and the RTW Performance Reporting Handbook for more information on training strategies and what constitutes training completion versus program completion and exit.

Here is an edit check error related to Data Element 601, 611 and 621, Type of Recognized Credential for training activities #1, #2 and #3. These participant records were rejected because the code value to indicate the type of credentials was entered as a null value, or blank. Code values for credential outcomes must be completed if training activities #1, #2 and #3 are completed. (Not all code values are provided here.) A credential type must be entered if a participant completes training activities. Selecting 0 = No Recognized Credential is a suitable code value response if a credential or certificate was not earned as a result of this training activity.

You may have noticed that when you upload your data files or additional supporting documents, your data files (txt, csv, and dat), and PDF and Microsoft Word Files are renamed to the following naming structure. This represents your Grant number, the quarter reporting date and the specific document. This is one of the reasons why it’s important for you to be consistent in the file naming structure for your internal database/data files.

This is an example of a HUB System Technical Error. In most cases, you will receive a notice that the data file is processing an error report. However, after logging in after two hours, the HUB system seems “frozen” and has not process an error report? How to resolve this error? This error indicates that your data file has tripped up the system! In the error description, the date underlined in RED indicates that there is an invalid date of 04/31/2014 in your data file. The HUB system does not recognize this date because there are only 30 days in April. Please review your data file to view invalid dates such as this one to ensure that your data file goes through the format and edit checking process. In general, if nothing seems to be happening with your data file after the estimated 2 hours that it takes to generate your data file, there may be a technical systems issue. Please contact the ETA Help Desk for any other errors that may seem to be a technical system error, with a cc to the Ready to work grant mailbox.

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.

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

Congratulations! You have now completed the three part Technical Assistance tutorial series on H-1B Ready to Work Performance Reporting. We encourage you to share these tutorials with your staff. Thank you for taking the time to learn about the performance reporting requirements of the H-1B grants program.

Another GREAT way to access up-to-date resources is to visit the H-1B Community of Practice, or CoP, our H-1B online resource page. The Community of Practice is an online repository of resources designed to support H-1B grantees with all of their reporting needs. There are several folders designed to help grantees navigate the various resources including templates and forms for each grantee type, policies and guidance for reporting, as well as great tip sheets, samples and tutorials to share with your program staff.

To access visit: etagrantees.workforce3one.org

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@dol.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.Help@dol.gov. Thank you again for taking the time to view this tutorial.

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