



Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) Evaluation

PREP Performance Measures Frequently Asked Questions

Questions About Participant Entry and Exit Surveys

When does participant entry and exit survey data collection begin? When will the aggregated measures first be reported to ACF?

For the purposes of performance measures, participant entry and exit surveys will be administered beginning August 1, 2013. If grantees elect to administer the surveys before August 1, 2013 (for their own purposes) they will not include any responses collected prior to August 1, 2013 in their reporting to ACF. The aggregated measures will first be reported to ACF in fall 2014. If a cohort of youth begins the PREP program before August 1, 2013, they will not provide any entry data; this cohort will provide exit survey data if the cohort ends after August 1, 2013. If cohorts begin and end the program before August 1, 2013, these cohorts will not provide any entry or exit survey data.

Does ACF expect grantees to obtain IRB approval to administer the participant entry and exit surveys?

Because the national evaluator (Mathematica) is not collecting or acquiring individual-level data for the performance measures, its IRB cannot oversee the administration of the participant entry and exit surveys. Grantees are expected to determine whether local IRB approvals are necessary. Grantees must determine which IRB has jurisdiction over a data collection effort for performance management purposes and whether the IRB requires the grantee to initiate an approval process. If IRB approval is necessary, grantees are expected to follow all IRB review requirements. In working with an IRB to determine whether approval may be necessary, grantees may find the following resource on “Distinguishing Public Health Research and Public Health Nonresearch” helpful: <http://www.cdc.gov/od/science/integrity/docs/cdc-policy-distinguishing-public-health-research-nonresearch.pdf>.

When should the IRB process begin? What survey instruments should be used?

Given prior ACF guidance, grantees should have already investigated whether IRB review and approval will be necessary. If grantees have not, that process should start immediately so that grantees, their sub-awardees, and their program sites are approved to begin survey administration on August 1, 2013. Grantees should use the April 2013 version of the participant entry and exit surveys for the IRB approval process. No substantive changes were made to those instruments, as compared to the June 2012 version previously distributed to grantees; some minor changes were made to the directions.

What if my IRB requires active or passive parental consent to administer the participant entry and exit surveys and I do not get that consent for all youth?

We understand that, if grantees must use a parental consent process, some parents may not allow their child to answer the survey questions; even if parents do provide consent, youth always have the right to not assent to the survey. Those youth can still receive PREP programming, but they cannot complete the entry and exit surveys. The PREP performance measures requirements cannot take the place of or oppose local IRB requirements.



Will the entry surveys be administered to all youth?

No. ACF will not collect entry survey data from middle school youth in school-based programs. A school-based setting is defined as a program operating in a school, either during school hours or after school. If grantees elect to administer the entry survey to middle school youth in school-based programs, they will not report them as part of their aggregated measures to ACF.

Will youth under 14 in non-school settings complete the entry surveys?

Yes. Youth under 14 in non-school settings must complete the entry survey, but these youth are exempt from the sensitive questions on the surveys. If grantees elect to collect responses to the sensitive questions from these youth, they will not report them as part of their aggregated measures to ACF.

Which questions on the entry survey are “sensitive questions”?

Sensitive questions are those that ask youth about their sexual orientation and sexual behaviors. On the entry survey, these are questions 6, and 9–15. Grantees can remove these questions from the surveys before administering them to youth under 14 in non-school settings.

My program serves older youth (grades 9 and above in a school setting, ages 14 and above in a non-school setting), yet the state, sub-awardee, and/or the program site will not allow the administration of the sensitive questions on the entrance survey to these older youth and/or objects to questions on the exit survey. What should we do?

Please contact your federal project officer immediately to discuss the problems you may be facing administering survey questions because of local sensitivities.

Why is sexual intercourse defined as “the act that makes babies”?

This item is being used to understand the extent to which PREP program participants have initiated vaginal sexual intercourse before program start. The item wording is currently being used in federal evaluations of similar program models and has been used in previous federal evaluations. These past efforts have shown that this definition is acceptable in various contexts and for a range of ages (including younger youth), both of which are an important consideration for constructing PREP performance measures. During the development of the PREP performance measures, this definition was cognitively tested with youth ages 13 to 18, and no participants reported any problems with the definition.

Although the final, OMB-approved item must be used exactly as constructed for performance measurement purposes, this does not preclude grantees from asking additional questions (for example, about oral or anal sex) if those items provide useful information for the grantee and they are acceptable to program implementation sites. However, any added items will not be reported to ACF as part of the performance measures.

My program addresses three adulthood preparation subjects, not all six. Must I ask youth all the items about the perceived effectiveness of adulthood preparation subjects?

Yes. All grantees must ask all the questions about perceived effectiveness on the exit surveys and must report responses for all items. PREP programs are required to address at least three of the six allowable adulthood preparation subjects. The items on the participant exit survey measuring the perceived effectiveness of the programs on outcomes related to adulthood preparation align with one or more of these subjects (see Table 1). However, the items that will be analyzed for a program depend on the adulthood preparation subjects that the program intends to address. For example, if a program covers adolescent development, financial literacy, and educational and career success, only those items pertaining to those subjects will be analyzed for that program. Grantees will be asked to report which adulthood preparation subjects each PREP-funded program is covering; currently, ACF does not have any performance benchmarks established for participants' perceived effectiveness of the covered adulthood preparation subjects.

Must the final survey items, approved by OMB, be used as constructed?

Yes. The questions, responses, and skip logic¹ must be used as approved by OMB. Grantees cannot change item wording or responses, or modify the skip logic.

Can grantees integrate the final items on the participant entry and exit surveys with their existing survey instruments?

Grantees can append their own survey items *following* the OMB approved entry and exit survey items. The OMB-approved items must be identified by the OMB approval number.

Can data collected for program developers' reporting requirements be used in place of the PREP participant measures? Can data collected for the purposes of PREP performance measures be used to meet program developers' data reporting requirements?

Data collected to meet developers' requirements can only be used to address PREP performance measures if the data elements are defined in exactly the same way and the data will be collected and aggregated using exactly the same approach. Otherwise, developers' data cannot substitute for the PREP performance measures. ACF cannot require that PREP performance measures data substitute for developers' own data reporting requirements. If grantees have such questions, they should ask them of the developers.

Has ACF established benchmarks for items that ask about participants' perceived effectiveness of the programs or participants' responses to the programs?

No. For the first year these data will be analyzed (fall 2014), they will be analyzed descriptively. For example, ACF will compile data from all programs that are addressing educational and career success and will examine the perceived effectiveness of these programs on the items pertaining to educational and career success. In the future, ACF may use such descriptive findings to establish benchmarks.

What is a "PREP Program Participation Year," and how does that correspond to the administration and reporting of the participant entry and exit surveys?

Reporting data from the participant entry and exit surveys will be organized by "PREP Program Participation Year." The PREP Program Participation Year has been designed to maximize the number of cohorts from which both entry and exit survey data will be available in each reporting year, especially for programs that operate in schools. Each PREP Program Participation Year begins on August 1 of one year and ends on July 31 of the following year, and therefore does not align with a federal grant year (October 1 through September 30). Each fall, beginning in fall 2014, grantees will report, in the aggregate, data from all participant entry and exit surveys completed within the prior August 1 through July 31 PREP Program Participation Year.

How should participant-level data be reported for cohorts whose programs span two PREP Program Participation Years?

A single cohort may have data collected over two PREP Program Participation Years. For example, for one cohort, the entry survey may be administered in July of one PREP Program Participation Year, and the exit survey may be administered in September of the next PREP Program Participation Year. In this case, the entry and exit surveys for this cohort will be reported as part of separate PREP Program Participation Years. Cohorts operating across reporting periods do not cause reporting or analysis problems, as entry and exit surveys will not be linked and participant-level data will be aggregated across cohorts and sites.

¹ Also referred to as "conditional branching," skip logic allows you to route respondents through a survey based on their answers to certain questions. Skip logic is used when you have a question or a series of questions that only apply to some of your respondents and you want the other respondents to "skip" out of these questions.

When should participant entry surveys be administered with respect to program start?

When data collection begins, it is important that entry surveys be administered *before* program activities begin for a group of youth. In most cases, this will be on the first day of a program, although there *can* be a small time lapse between survey administration and program start. For youth who start the program late, the survey should be administered before they receive any program services.

When should participant exit surveys be administered with respect to program end?

The exit survey should be administered on the last day the program content is delivered.

Table 1. Alignment Between Perceived Effect on Adult Preparation Measures and Subjects^a

Question	Adult Preparation Subjects					
	Healthy Relationships	Adolescent Development	Financial Literacy	Parent-Child Communication	Educational and Career Success	Healthy Life Skills
Please think about how this program has affected you.						
Even if your program didn't cover a topic, would you say that being in the program has made you more likely, about the same, or less likely to ...						
Resist or say no to peer pressure?	X	X				X
Know how to manage stress?		X				X
Manage conflict without causing more conflict?	X					X
Form friendships that keep you out of trouble?	X	X				X
Be respectful towards others?	X	X				
Make plans to reach your goals?					X	X
Care about doing well in school?		X			X	X
Get a steady job after you finish school?			X		X	
Share ideas or talk about things that really matter with a parent/guardian?		X		X		
Make healthy decisions about drugs and alcohol?		X				X
Get more education after high school?					X	
Manage money carefully, such as making a budget, saving, or investing?			X			
Be the best that you can be?		X			X	X

^aThe alignment between items measuring perceived effectiveness and the adulthood preparation subjects may change. For example, ACF may decide to analyze more or fewer items relating to Healthy Relationships.



The PREP Evaluation is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractors—Child Trends, Twin Peaks Partners, Decision Information Resources, Public Strategies, and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago—under contract with ACF, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Mathematica and Child Trends will oversee the PREP-PM component.