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CONQUERING YOUR PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES

FALL INSTITUTE WORKSHOP

AEL
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Conquering Your Performance Challenges Workbook

This workbook, *Conquering Your Performance Challenges: Training Workbook*, is a resource designed to help local adult education providers identify and address challenges at the local, and classroom levels through the use of data. This workbook provides examples and space for local teams to identify performance challenges and to develop strategies for addressing those challenges. First, program teams will receive a refresher on why data matters and how to use the data. Then, program teams will walk through solutions around performance challenges together. Afterward, teams will identify strategies to address those challenges.

Examining and reflecting on your local data using the guidance and activities in this workbook will help you do the following:

- Identify significant challenges local programs face that affect performance and data collection.
- Understand the reasons for the challenges using data.
- Identify strategies to address the challenges.
- Develop action steps to be implemented at the local program level.

As local providers, we constantly strive for positive results for our adult education participants. Taking the time to reflect on data and its challenges can help us create and inform these results. In doing so, the action steps you develop will be better tailored to address the performance challenges specific to your local programs.

Write your Challenge Statements here:

1.

2.

3.

Notes:

Why Data Matter and How We Use Data

Data have a variety of uses and can be found almost anywhere. Data are used for advertising, for health instruments from blood pressure cuffs to heart monitors, and for calculating wind speeds to help delayed flights make up for lost time. Data can be used for many products and as a source or function, such as an exercise monitor, restaurant review platforms, and travel websites. With so many different sources and types of data, it is important to ask whether the data are trustworthy.

Questions to Consider
- What is the source and validity of the data?
- What is the quality and integrity of the data?

Data, Data Everywhere
At your table, brainstorm and list the different ways data appear and are used on a day-to-day basis. For each item, discuss the impact the data have and whether you trust the source of information.

Source of Data	Impact or Use	Do you trust the source? Yes or No (Include why)
1.		
2.		
3.		

Question to Consider
- How do we use data on state, local program, and classroom levels?

Example Uses of Data

The following examples reflect some of the ways states, classrooms, and local programs can effectively use data.

States
- Suggest needs for improvement in instruction.
- Measure program success and effectiveness.

Local programs
- Identify enrollment: trends and types of students.
- Track student progress: test scores and Measurable Skills Gain (MSG).

Classrooms
- Track student progress: testing, test scores, and MSG.
- Determine whether your instruction is effective.

Exercise: Other Uses of Data

Brainstorm and list other uses of data for states, classrooms, and local programs.

States
-
-

Local programs
-
-

Classrooms
-
-

Notes:

Developing Guiding (Who, What and Why) and Data-focused (How) Questions

A core part of this training is to help local program teams determine what their performance challenges are and how to address those challenges. However, teams will first need to know what kinds of questions to ask in order to analyze their performance. To do this, teams will need a set of guiding questions (the Who, What and Why questions), a set of data-focused questions (the How), and an understanding of potential data sources. Let's take a closer look at what all of those look like.

Developing Guiding (Who, What and Why) Questions

Guiding questions suggest ways to understand the challenge and what to do next. These questions focus on the who, what and why.

Examples

- **Why** is [the challenge] happening?
    - Is it widespread or limited to some programs or participants?
- **Why** is the [data point] so [low/high]?
- **What** performance indicators are most affected?
    - What data collection procedures go into these indicators?
- **Who** are the participants affected by or causing the challenge?
- **What** data sources or other information do we need to review to understand the challenge?

Notes:

Developing Data-Focused Questions (How)

Data-focused questions identify what you need to review and **how you will use data** to help analyze the challenge. Review, disaggregate, and analyze the data to help understand the challenge.

State the information you need to review and how you will use data to help analyze the challenge further.

- Review and disaggregate the data.
    - Is [X] lower or higher for groups of participants or programs? Why?
    - What data sources and analyses will you consult?
- Examine program and data collection procedures.
    - What are programs doing that affects the data and challenge?
    - What data will we examine to understand procedures?

Potential Data Sources

- Adult education state and program data
    - State data system (TEAMS), NRS and state tables
    - Participant surveys
- Partner databases
    - Workforce agency, employment databases, supplemental wage and employment records
    - Community college databases: local and state, National Student Clearinghouse
    - Referring agency databases

- State and program-developed data collection instruments
    - Surveys, observation, focus groups, document review guides
- Extant databases
    - US Census and American Community Survey
    - Labor market data
    - Adult education research and surveys

Table Activity

Challenge: Second-quarter employment of exited participants is lower than expected and we want to improve it.

At your table, create guiding and data-focused questions for the challenge provided.

Guiding Questions (Who, What and Why):

1.

2.

3.

Data-Focused (How) Questions:

1.

2.

3.

Report outs: Each table will elect a spokesperson to conduct the report out.

Revise Example Challenge Statement:

Breakouts (note: check the back of your name tag for your breakout room assignment)

Local Program Team/Group Activity

Write your first Challenge Statement in the box below.

Challenge:

Review the worksheet and then proceed with the following activities.

Develop three to five guiding (Who, What and Why) questions for your challenge.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Develop three to five data-focused (How) questions for your challenge.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

What data and data sources could you use to answer your questions?

Data versus Data: Leveraging Data to Address the Challenge

Now it's time to start answering your questions. Let's first practice with our earlier example Challenge Statement.

Data Challenge Example 1:
Guiding (Who, What and Why) Questions and Answers

Challenge: Second-quarter employment of exited participants is lower than expected.

Guiding (Who, What and Why) Questions	Sample Answers
1. What might be the data and programmatic reasons the rate is too low?	
2. What data and procedures go into calculating the rate?	
3. What data would you need to understand this challenge?	

Data Challenge Example 1: Data-Focused (How) Questions and Answers

Challenge: Second-quarter employment of exited participants is lower than expected.

Data-Focused (How) Questions	Sample Answers
1. Are the data that make up the indicator accurate (i.e., number of exited PoPs, number obtained employment)?	
2. How many SSNs are missing? Does this differ by participant or provider?	
3. Is the employment rate low everywhere or limited to some programs and levels?	

Activity: And the Answer Is...

In your assigned teams, continue the data analysis of your selected challenge by providing data-sourced and data-based responses to your guiding and data-focused questions:

- Choose **at least three of your guiding (Who, What and Why) questions** to answer the following prompts.
  - Use two or three sources of data to support your responses.
  - Write your responses on a flip chart.
- Choose **at least three of your data-focused (How) questions** to answer the following questions.
  - What will be your process for getting to this answer? Outline your process on a flip chart.
  - Use at least two sources of data.
  - Write your responses on a flip chart.

Responses for guiding (Who, What and Why) questions

1.

2.

3.

Responses for data-focused (How) questions

1.

2.

3.

What data and data sources would you use to answer your questions?

Questions to Consider

• Do your responses enhance your understanding or analyses of the issue?
• What other answers or issues might be suggested as a result of the above responses?

▶ Planning to Conquer

To conquer performance challenges, teams will need to identify effective strategies. In this section, take 5 minutes to reflect on the following prompts. Be prepared to share one Aha! Moment.

Reflection

Prompts	Reflections
Who is impacted by the challenge itself and by addressing the challenge?	
What types of changes or actions are needed to address the challenge (i.e., instruction, services, revised data procedures and/or a combination)?	
Identify current and needed resources and assets to assist in addressing the challenge.	

Staff Who Can Make Change Happen

The left-hand column provides examples of just a few of the staff members needed to address challenges and effect change. In the right-hand column, brainstorm and list other staff members who are needed to effect change.

Needed Staff Members	Other Needed Staff Members
• State leadership • Program staff • Local and state data staff • Teachers • Partner agency staff	• • • • •

Identify Strategies to Address the Challenge

Each team will work to identify strategies to address their selected challenge. Use the following questions as a guide.

What do you want to see happen?

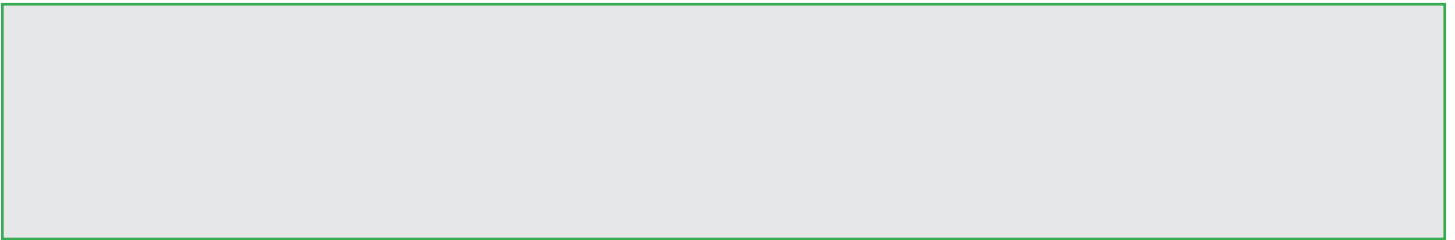What potential strategies and activities can get you there based on what you now know?

Who needs to be involved and how?

What resources and support are needed?

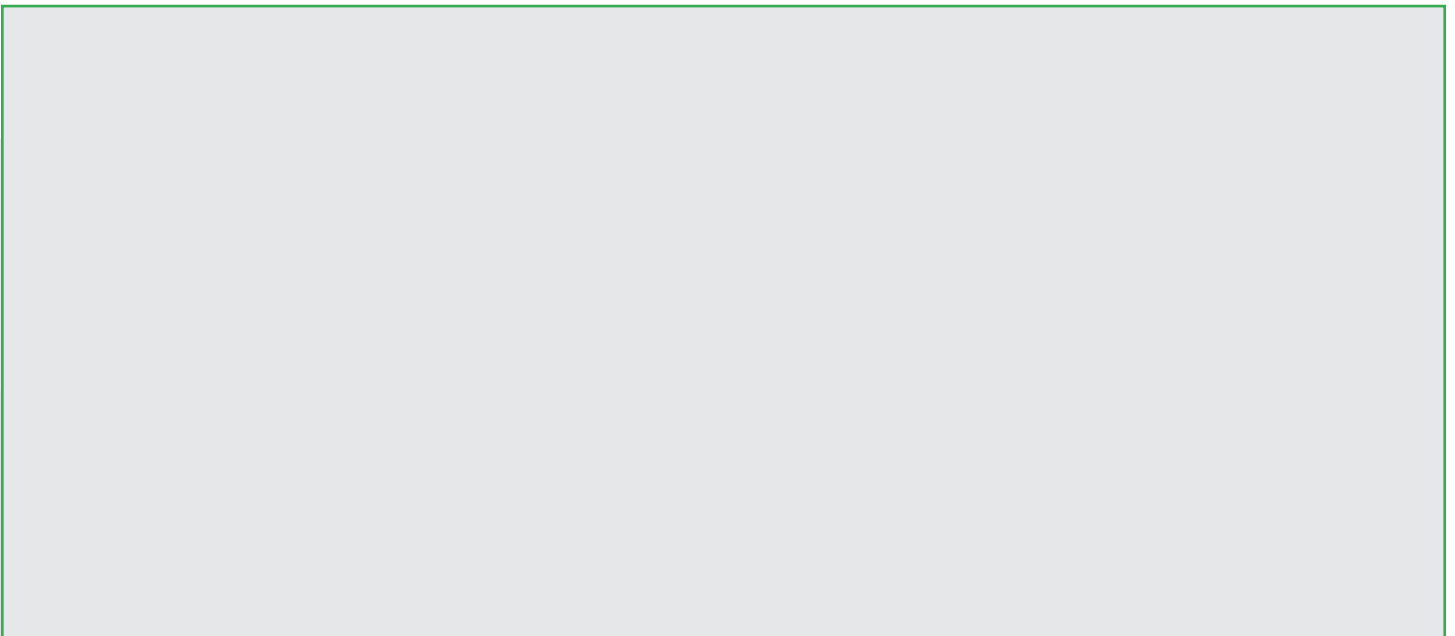What are the potential barriers to implementing your strategies and how might they be addressed?

What data will you use to determine whether your strategies have been successful?

Use the PPT template to create a presentation to use with your staff and stakeholders.
Write down and share what your challenge was, the strategies you identified and what are your next steps.

▶ Key Takeaways Regarding Data

Please respond to the following prompts.

A key takeaway or positive reflection on using data to address state or program challenges.

An action step you will take around data use to address your challenge.

Closing and Evaluation