



# STRATEGIES FOR PUBLIC REPORTING FOR STATE TITLE IV-A PROGRAMS

## BRIEF

This brief provides guidance for State coordinators (SCs) on meeting Title IV, Part A (Title IV-A) key program-level public reporting requirements outlined under Subpart 1, Section 4104(a)(2) State Use of Funds. It presents strategies and approaches to identifying, collecting, and reporting data on programmatic outcomes from local education agencies (LEAs) who are Title IV-A grant subrecipients in their states.

## Introduction

Reporting publicly about the Title IV-A grant objectives and outcomes is a required and important part of a Title IV-A State coordinator's duties. Statute requires public reporting of both fiscal and programmatic outcomes. While OMB Uniform Guidance<sup>1</sup> details financial reporting requirements, a responsibility that may be shared with other members of a state's fiscal team, this brief focuses on how to report programmatic outcomes. [Title IV-A, Subpart 1, Section 4104 State Use of Funds, subsection \(a\)\(2\)](#), mentions public reporting as a component of administrative responsibilities. Specifically, state education agencies (SEAs) shall "reserve not more than 1 percent of the allotment for the administrative costs of carrying out its responsibilities under this subpart, including public reporting on how funds made available under this subpart are being expended by local education agencies, including the degree to which the local educational agencies have made progress toward meeting the objectives and outcomes described in section 4106(e)(1)(E)."

Program objectives are the goals a program hopes to achieve. Outcomes are the end results that are measured after implementing a program. Quality reporting of objectives and outcomes entails a process of collecting and sharing the results of program efforts using accurate, valid, and timely data. This involves collecting data and identifying the best way to present the information to stakeholders. Public reporting is similar to program evaluation, which systematically tests whether a given set of activities leads to desired outcomes (see page two of the [T4PA Center Evaluation Guide](#) for more information), though it may be completed at more regular intervals.

Through this brief, readers will be able to:

- Define key terms related to reporting program outcomes;
- Explain the benefits of reporting program outcomes (in addition to complying with the statute);
- Outline a process for determining high-quality programmatic indicators and identifying data sources;
- Describe how the process of determining quality indicators and collecting data aligns with other grants management activities.



To meet these objectives, this brief is divided into five sections:

1. Introduction
2. The Importance of Collecting and Reporting on Quality Outcomes
3. How Reporting Applies to State Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities
4. Steps for Reporting Program Outcomes
5. Conclusions

Tables and callout boxes throughout provide additional information such as notes from the Title IV-A statute, connections to resources, and examples from states.

## The Importance of Collecting and Reporting on Quality Outcomes

Outcome data are a valuable resource to demonstrate program progress. In fact, sharing data about a SEA's collective progress toward grant objectives and outcomes has benefits beyond meeting grant requirements. This section discusses specific ways that data can be used.

### *Guiding Priorities and Decision-Making*

Data can help State coordinators identify needs among LEAs, guide priority-setting, and inform decision-making around support and improvement efforts. For example, outcome data may highlight positive aspects of LEAs' work. This might include information from LEAs making significant progress toward their objectives, or patterns related to shifts in programming around the three Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) priority areas (well-rounded education [WRE], safe and healthy students [SHS], or effective use of technology [EUT]) or subtopics across the state. These types of data can show the value of the Title IV-A program and why efforts should be continued. Data can also reveal if LEAs are having a hard time meeting their objectives or if they are struggling in one priority area while doing well in another. Data provide information about specific challenges that interfere with meeting objectives and may also highlight gaps in services or details about the unique needs of LEAs' students, staff, and schools. Leveraging data to understand challenges is critical, and these data can be shared with external stakeholders to contextualize the situation and help them understand what can be done to address identified needs. This type of information can also be used in future Title IV-A (and other) applications to help inform planning of programs.



Related to needs-sensing and priority setting, data can also support State coordinators in guiding LEAs' efforts related to continuous quality improvement (CQI). CQI is an ongoing process of collecting data, identifying strengths and problems, creating and testing solutions, looking at the results after each cycle, and making decisions to amend or create new solutions that will gradually lead to the desired program outcomes. Georgia provides a useful state example of CQI at work. The Georgia Department of Education has developed a [shared CQI framework](#) to ensure that efforts are aligned across all agency divisions, departments, and programs. This framework “focuses on the systems and structures (the “what”) that must be in place for sustained improvement

in student outcomes. It also utilizes a problem-solving model (the “how”) to provide a clear process for identifying improvement needs, planning for improvement, and implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the improvement efforts.”

To support CQI efforts, data must be understandable to those with the ability to make changes and improvements in educational programming and services. This might include SEA-level decision makers, district and school personnel, community service provider partners, or others. Sharing data is the first step; however, to perform CQI effectively, it is important that those consuming the information have data-interpretation skills (see box below:

Building School Personnel Data Literacy), a good understanding of the programs or initiatives being implemented, and the power to make and enact

decisions quickly related to needed improvements. To be used for CQI, data need to be reviewed and interpreted at regular intervals during the school year or grant initiative. Additionally, data are needed on both processes (i.e., information about whether the program, training, or intervention is being implemented as intended) and outcomes (i.e., information about whether the program, training, or intervention accomplished what it was designed to do). This will help school personnel and other stakeholders make the connections between positive or negative aspects of implementation and short- or long-term outcomes.

For example, if State coordinators need to make a decision about continuing or supplementing professional development (PD) activities supported by Title IV-A funds, it would be helpful to have data related to both PD delivery (e.g., PD format, its duration and content, the number of teachers trained) and progress towards meeting the stated objectives of PD (e.g., improved fidelity to a new curriculum, reductions in student office referrals and suspensions, increased proficiency with using new instructional technology).

## Building School Personnel Data Literacy

Data literacy in the context of school improvement is defined as “the ability of a district or group of people to collect and understand data and then use the data to ultimately improve student learning.”<sup>2</sup> LEAs may benefit from technical assistance around data literacy.<sup>3</sup> While the concept of “data literacy” is becoming more well known, school staff tend to be overly focused on assessment literacy (i.e., the ability to use data from traditional or standardized assessments to plan future instruction or programming), overlooking other aspects such as statistical literacy (i.e., an understanding of statistical terminology and techniques for analyzing data) and data-driven decision-making (i.e., using metrics and data to guide choices about programming that will ultimately help you meet defined goals and objectives).<sup>4</sup> Two leading researchers in the field, Gummer and Mandinach, offer a more tailored definition: Data literacy, in this context, “combines an understanding of data with standards, disciplinary knowledge and practices, curricular knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and an understanding of how children learn.”<sup>5</sup> Based on recommendations from the Data Quality Campaign (a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that helps state policymakers and other key leaders effectively use data to improve student achievement),<sup>6</sup> State coordinators can support LEAs to become data literate by modeling data use in service of students, training LEA staff and teachers to become data literate, and carving out time for data use as part of meetings or other interactions.



### South Carolina Department of Education [Data](#)

[Literacy for Instructional Leaders](#) series. This series is focused on helping principals and instructional leaders both develop their own data literacy and coach teachers to improve their use of data when making instructional decisions.



### Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

[Data Literacy Module](#). This resource explains why data literacy is crucial when interpreting or using assessment data, monitoring or modifying educational practices, or working to improve student achievement.



### Oklahoma Office of School Support [Data](#)

[Literacy PowerPoint](#). This presentation serves as a useful example of how one SEA educated school personnel on how to explore their online assessment data dashboard, access school-level reports, and understand the results.

## ***Promoting Accountability***

Data help provide accountability around how Title IV-A efforts serve to improve students' academic achievement. Data sharing—including the results of needs assessment activities, CQI efforts, information around training and program or curricula implementation, and data on outcomes—promotes transparency around whether efforts are meeting the goals of SEA- or LEA-level strategic plans or directives. Data reporting also makes clear the extent to which efforts and programming improve equity and reduce disparities in student outcomes.



## ***Informing Decision-Makers and the Public***

Data can also be used to influence public perceptions about the SEA's Title IV-A efforts and the work of the LEAs. Communicating data well provides accountability to how funds and resources have been invested; it can also generate buy-in among stakeholders interested in the progress or effects of program activities. Potential audiences for Title IV-A outcomes reporting could include federal entities such as the

U.S. Department of Education, Congress, and others who may wish to sustain or expand Title IV-A efforts; state- and LEA-level decision makers, including superintendents, school board members, and state policymakers; and members of school communities, including staff, students, families, and school programming partners.

### **Evaluation vs. Reporting**

As noted earlier, Title IV-A statute (section 4106(e) (1)(E)) requires only reporting on how funds are being used and progress made toward meeting objectives and outcomes articulated in LEA applications. Some SEAs and LEAs work with evaluators, who ultimately generate a report of their findings that may be used to satisfy grant reporting requirements. That said, it may be useful to understand that all evaluations serve as some form of reporting; however, not all program reports are evaluations. Program summary reports and evaluation reports can both provide information that is useful for reflection and CQI. However, unlike evaluations, program reports may not use a scientific method for gathering and analyzing data. Evaluation reports' additional rigor can improve confidence in the validity of findings. For information on how to conduct a formal evaluation, see the [T4PA Center Evaluation Guide](#), which offers SEAs a high-level overview of the evaluation cycle to support them in evaluating whether a selected program is meeting identified needs and goals.

### ***Complementing Formal Evaluation Efforts***

Regular reporting of program data may also serve as a complement to formal evaluation efforts. Evaluation reports may count towards public reporting requirements if they describe progress made toward meeting program objectives and outcomes (see box: Evaluation vs. Reporting). That said, evaluations may not cover all an SEA or State coordinator's needs around priority setting, accountability, and grants management, indicating the need for additional reporting beyond evaluation activities. When planning evaluation and reporting strategies, both SEAs and LEAs will want to examine what resources are available (e.g., funds, existing infrastructure, time, and expertise) to do different forms of reporting.

## How Reporting Applies to State Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

Advance planning will help State coordinators collect, report, interpret, and learn from good quality program data. As part of overseeing the enormous, multi-faceted task of managing a state's federal Title IV-A allocation, data reports can be used to understand whether LEAs' needs assessment and programming are generating the desired results. Collecting and reporting good quality data on programmatic outcomes helps State coordinators know where to focus their efforts at different stages of the grant. Depending on the target audience and how the information is intended to be used, data can be shared publicly or privately. Reports can showcase statewide efforts through Title IV-A programming as a whole or on specific state priority subtopics (e.g., enhancing STEAM instructional opportunities, expanding broadband access, or increasing mental health support for students).

### Using Data on Program Outcomes

For example, State coordinators can use data on program outcomes to:

- Influence state priorities around instructional content; school climate, safety, and health; technology access or use; professional development; community partnerships; and more.
- Reveal both positive and negative patterns and trends and decide where to provide recognition of achievements or offer encouragement focused on improvement efforts.
- Develop and offer targeted technical assistance to LEAs reporting challenges or shortfalls in meeting desired outcomes.
- Inform decision-making around future sub-granting, including the amount and approved use of funds.
- Demonstrate progress to SEA leadership and federal entities interested in the return on investment of the Title IV-A grant.

Some data may best be shared with LEAs as part of technical assistance, empowering and incentivizing LEAs to use their own data for planning and improvements (see box: "[Building School Personnel Data Literacy](#)"). Reviewing data as part of training and technical assistance offers an opportunity for State coordinators and LEA leadership to reflect together on articulated goals and whether adjustments to programming are needed to better meet those goals. However it is shared, the information must be understandable and actionable for LEAs and their local stakeholders. State coordinators may want to offer resources or convenings that cover how the state manages data, how often reports are generated and what those reports cover, where the information can be found, how to interpret the information, and the process for feedback and communication about data and reports.



# Steps for Reporting Program Outcomes

Reporting program outcomes with quality requires engaging different stakeholders and organizing resources, such as arranging staff time and having the infrastructure to house data. The process described in this section will help organize reporting efforts to ensure that they are responsive to stakeholders so that they have a full understanding of the state’s Title IV-A efforts and coordination between the SEA and the LEAs to provide clear instructions and avoid duplication. For an at-a-glance review of these steps, see the *Title IV, Part A Reporting Process Action Guide*.

## Step 1: Identify reporting supports and stakeholders

The first step in a reporting process is to identify who can best support data reporting efforts and any specific stakeholders who will use the data to make decisions about Title IV-A. Although it is not required, you may wish to establish a reporting team to help guide the process. Critical team members include the Title IV-A State Coordinator, other key members of the SEA Title IV-A team, and an SEA data manager who manages records, consolidated reporting, and data collection from LEAs. If an SEA has engaged or plans to engage in a formal evaluation, the evaluators (e.g., consultants, university partner, research firm) may also be included on the team. In particular, the evaluators can help define the questions and structure the data so that it is possible to trace impacts associated with the Title IV-A program.

In addition to core team members, others who might need to be involved are those who are most likely to use the reports, dashboards, presentations, and other such products that share data to guide decision-making. For example, it may help to have representatives from LEAs who can suggest data that they want to see reported. They may also be able to better explain what data are feasible for LEAs to collect. Other stakeholders might include the state superintendent, members of the state board of education, state legislative funding committee members, local foundations, and parent or student groups. Each of these groups can use data to influence decisions about Title IV-A programs—either by directly making policies or allocating funding, as is the case for policymakers and foundations, or indirectly by their engagement and advocacy, as is the case for parent and student groups. Including representatives from these stakeholder groups can help ensure that the outcomes reported and the way that the information is presented match their needs.

## Figure 1: A Process for Reporting Outcomes





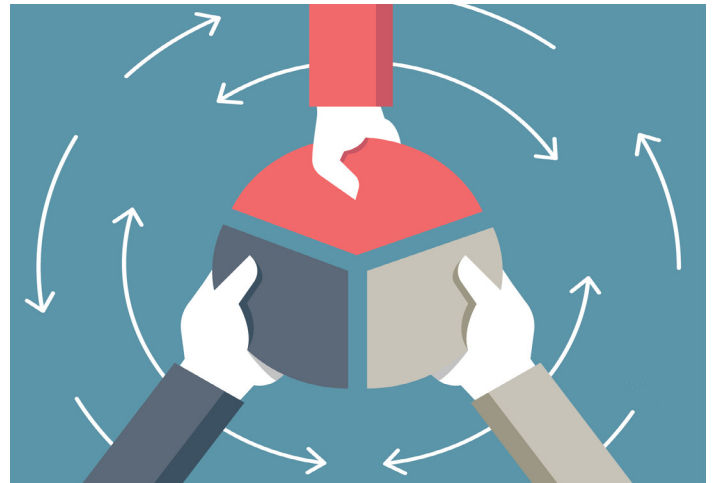
## Gathering the Right Perspectives

To identify additional stakeholders beyond the SEA's Title IV-A and data teams, consider these questions:

- Who within the state usually asks for information about public education programs?
- Whose buy-in can sustain or expand the programs that are established through Title IV-A funds?
- Whose perspectives need to be heard to provide equitable support to students?

Finance and IT personnel may also play a pivotal role in planning for and successfully reporting on grant progress and outcomes. For example, in Georgia, finance and IT teams were educated about the different federal programs, funding streams, and reporting requirements (e.g., for Title IV-A, the need to spend and report everything associated with one of the WRE, SHS, and EUT priority areas). They then worked with the Title IV-A staff to develop and tailor effective tools for collecting necessary information. In Maryland, SEA staff consulted with their finance team and encouraged LEAs to orient LEA-level finance personnel charged with filling out sections of required reports. Increasing finance staff's familiarity with the nuances of Title IV-A programming improved quality of reporting across the board.

One specific external stakeholder group that may be particularly helpful to engage is the State coordinators of other U.S. Department of Education Title programs (e.g., Title I, Title II, Title IX, etc.). These other Title programs support specific populations of students or oversee other aspects of education within each state. Coordinating with them can help streamline data collection in the state overall, thereby reducing burden on LEAs, and ensuring efforts complement rather than compete with or duplicate each other. This may be particularly helpful in states using a consolidated funding approach. For example, Maryland consulted with their Title II-A and Title IV-B teams when developing their [Title IV-A Application Review Checklist](#) (login required). Georgia also consulted with all other Title program staff when developing their [LEA Consolidated Application](#). See "[Step 4: Identify available data and plan for collecting additional data](#)" for more information on both of these examples.



If you choose to establish a team, it is also important to clearly define the roles, which helps to explain who should be engaged at each stage of the process to ensure team members are best utilized for their respective knowledge and skills as well as prevent tasks from getting bogged down by too much user input. It is best to assign roles based on individuals' expertise and abilities. For example, SEA data managers may be responsible for building or amending the data system as well as analyzing the data. Similarly, if LEA representatives are available, they may help shape data collection in conjunction with SEA data managers. The Title IV-A State coordinator and their team may provide overall guidance on reporting needs or requirements. Some external stakeholders, such as policymakers or community representatives, may be consulted on specific questions related to their interests and kept informed for accountability purposes but may be less able to provide guidance and feedback on how to collect data. Other roles may include building out and approving the concept at the team level, then overseeing it going to scale.

## Using Management Tools to Stay Organized

It may be helpful to fill out a responsibility matrix like a RACI or MOCHA. Responsibility matrices are charts that provide pre-defined roles that are then assigned to members within a team. The roles reflect the extent to which people have a say and who will carry out the work. [RACI](#)<sup>7</sup> stands for responsible, accountable, consult, and inform. [MOCHA](#)<sup>8</sup> refers to manager, owner, consultant, helper, and approver.

## Step 2: Identify questions

The next step is to identify the questions that the reporting process will answer. This step helps set the goals of reporting. As noted in “[The Importance of Collecting and Reporting on Quality Outcomes](#)” section, data can serve many purposes. Title IV-A statute does not prescribe what or how State coordinators report outcomes – only that the reporting must happen. As overseers of the program, Title IV-A State coordinators will lead the selection of the questions that need to be answered through reporting outcomes but will want to solicit input from previously identified stakeholders. The following discussion prompts can help guide reporting discussions:

- **What information is needed to reflect the range of Title IV-A programs and activities at the SEA and LEA levels?** This question sets the baseline for the amount of information that would be useful so decision makers and stakeholders can know how to respond to the data. Incomplete data can result in inefficiencies or even poor decisions that ultimately cause more harm than good.
- **How many questions and priorities can the data reporting product(s) address?** While the previous question sets the baseline, this question can help set the upper limit. The answer will be based on the staff, resources, and time available.
- **What S.M.A.R.T.I.E. objectives have been outlined within the state’s strategic plan and LEAs’ applications, logic models, or district plans?** S.M.A.R.T.I.E., a way of framing objectives, stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**imely (or Time-bound), **I**nclusive, and **E**quitable. Logic models are how an organization conceptualizes the way its program works and are often presented as a chart. The documents alluded to in this question helps State coordinators identify which strategic priorities LEAs are beholden to, either at the SEA or LEA level. Strategic plans at the LEA level as well as the Title IV-A applications and logic models<sup>9</sup> submitted by LEAs can indicate what is most salient to stakeholders and what activities are already in place.
- **What kinds of data are stakeholders interested in?** Similar to strategic plans and applications, this question reveals potential priorities. SEAs can consider past requests for data to help guide how they structure the reporting products for Title IV-A.
- **What kinds of hypotheses does the SEA want to explore?** In particular, Title IV-A State coordinators may wish to use what they know about Title IV-A program priorities and how those programs operate to figure out where data will be useful in verifying successes or identifying needs.
- **What is within the SEA’s or LEAs’ power to adjust or control?** This question is particularly helpful if reporting will be used to guide quality improvement efforts. It can be frustrating to report on a problem if the solution is outside the control of data consumers.

## Why Setting Priorities is Important for Managing Resources

Reporting for Title IV-A State coordinators needs to be completed using less than 1 percent of the budget dedicated toward overall administrative activities, as noted in section 4106(e)(1)(E). Limited resources mean that priorities need to be set to make the most use of funds.



### Step 3: Determine the types of data needed

The next step is to determine the data needed to answer the questions that the SEA hopes to address.

First and foremost, Title IV-A coordinators and/or their reporting teams will want to set their indicators (i.e., the measures that show progress toward their goals and can answer the questions they have selected). Well-designed indicators are specific, quantifiable, and can signal whether progress toward an intended outcome is being made. All indicators will ultimately require some sort of comparison. Table 1 includes some common comparisons and examples of each type.

#### Indicators

The measures that show progress toward your goals and can answer the questions you have selected.

- Specific**
- Quantifiable**
- Measure Progress**

**Table 1. Types of Comparisons for Indicators**

Comparison Type	Sample Indicators for Each Type
<b>Change over time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students enrolled in STEM electives compared to the previous year</li> <li>• Change in number of suspensions from semester to semester</li> <li>• Counts of mental health referrals or services provided over time</li> </ul>
<b>Differences between student groups (particularly helpful for gauging equity)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences in discipline outcomes by racial and ethnic categories</li> <li>• Reading scores of English language learners compared to non-English language learner students</li> <li>• Participation in arts classes of students with a disability compared to students without</li> </ul>
<b>Differences across LEAs by student outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average standardized test scores across LEAs</li> <li>• Comparing suspension rates across LEAs</li> <li>• Rates of staff participation in PD events across LEAs</li> </ul>
<b>Differences across LEAs by program type</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of schools using restorative practices across LEAs</li> <li>• Number of community partnerships related to the arts across LEAs</li> <li>• Percentage of teachers trained in blended learning strategies across LEAs</li> </ul>

## Accounting for Different LEA Priorities

One of the challenges SEAs have encountered with reporting outcomes is the potential for LEAs to be focused on different activities or goals. This is likely to be the case as LEA-approved activities and funding allocations are based upon their needs assessment, and needs will vary from one LEA to another. State coordinators can group data from LEAs with aligned needs and activities into subsets, and target questions based on those activities.

For example, some LEAs within a state may have received funding outside of Title IV-A to implement trauma-informed programs to students. These LEAs may then elect to leverage Title IV-A to expand or deepen those efforts. If that same state also had a different subset of LEAs focused on use of technology, then the State coordinator would need to collect and report different information from these two sets of LEAs. The State coordinator may opt to focus on outcomes such as access to mental health services or school climate surveys for the LEAs with trauma-informed programs, while requesting information such as internet bandwidth or blended learning for the LEAs focused on technology. To clearly differentiate between the groups of LEAs being reported on, the State coordinator could choose to create separate fact sheets, subdivide a longer report, or make tailored presentations to interested stakeholders; the important thing is that products clearly delineate which sets of LEAs are being referred to and the outcomes of interest.

Title IV-A State coordinators and data managers can work together to make sure that data for indicators are collected consistently across the comparison groups. For example, if the state is using a school climate survey to track changes in SHS outcomes across time, the survey questions should remain the same from year to year. In contrast, if the state is more focused on comparing LEAs to each other and less concerned about comparing across time, questions may vary from year to year, but in any given timeframe (e.g., one school year), all LEAs should receive the same questions.

In addition to the main indicators that showcase Title IV-A program outcomes, State coordinators and/or their reporting teams will want to consider if other information is needed to further contextualize the data they observe. For example, it may be helpful to know if there was a policy change that required a certain number of STEM or art classes for graduation that played a role in increasing STEM or art classes, apart from Title IV-A programming. Another type of contextual data is information about how LEAs are implementing their Title IV-A activities, including strategies they have found successful, the barriers faced and surmounted, and innovative practices that LEAs have developed or launched. Similarly, the SEA may also wish to gather information on environmental factors (e.g., policies, emergency/major events) that might influence either the implementation or the results of the state's Title IV-A efforts. Such contextual information can be provided as either quantitative (mostly counts) or qualitative (mostly words) data.



## Step 4: Identify available data and plan for collecting additional data (if needed)

Once SEAs have determined the types of data needed, they can begin planning how to gather that data. It is important to remember that not every indicator requires new data collection. In fact, it is best to begin by thinking through what is already available, adjust as needed, and structure new data collections to complement existing data. These questions can help SEAs think through what they have and what they need:

- 1. What information is already collected from LEAs specifically for Title IV-A?** To receive funds, all LEAs are required to submit applications to their state. Additionally, LEAs receiving more than \$30,000 of Title IV-A funds must complete a needs assessment. See "[Leveraging LEA Applications for Data Collection](#)" below to read more about how these can support data collection efforts.
- 2. What other information is collected by the state that can supplement information provided by the LEAs?** If a state uses a consolidated title application or staff managing title programs work closely together, data used for other title programs can be used to answer Title IV-A questions. Additionally, federal data collections such as the [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) (a biannual survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) or the [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) can provide insight into student outcomes. Other sources of data include state assessments and administrative records managed at the state level. Additionally, there may be some data that are not a perfect match but can be adjusted to better reflect Title IV-A informational needs (e.g., if there is another grant program that some LEAs are participating in, it may be that metrics used for that program may be good for the Title IV-A program but would need to be expanded to include other LEAs).
- 3. What information is *not* already collected?** After reflecting on what is available, Title IV-A State coordinators and/or their reporting teams can review what indicators are not covered by existing sources and discuss whether there is sufficient time, interest, and resources to access that additional information.

### *Leveraging LEA Applications for Data Collection*

According to the Title IV-A statute, LEA applications must contain a set of descriptions and assurances that identify the partnerships, activities, objectives, and intended outcomes for the program. State coordinators provide instructions and guidance to LEAs on how to fill out the applications. Providing detailed instructions or templates can help standardize information received from LEAs. For example, rather than saying "Tell us about your activities" and letting LEAs provide an open narrative (e.g., some may opt to use a bulleted list, others may write it in a series of paragraphs), an SEA may instead choose to include a table where states fill in the programs in the first column, indicate which priority area the program covers in the second column, and provide the number of schools using the program in the third column. Below is an example of what such a table could look like:

**LEA:** Merryweather Unified School District

**Total # of schools in LEA:** 45

Program Name	Priority Area	Number of Schools Served
State Seal of Arts Proficiency	Well-rounded education (WRE)	19
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)	Safe and healthy students (SHS)	40

Another option to help ensure the consistency of information presented in LEA applications is using application checklists, as done in Maryland. After consulting with Title II-A and Title IV-B teams on the content and layout of checklists those title programs were using, the Maryland Title IV-A team developed their own checklist to help LEA staff know they are meeting all the requirements. Beyond supporting data collection that could be used when reporting outcomes, the Maryland team also felt the checklists would be a helpful tool for technical assistance to newer grant staff as LEAs experience turnover, and for all LEA teams coordinating efforts across different offices and divisions. LEA teams are encouraged but not required to use the checklist.



## Spotlight on Georgia Data Collection



Georgia uses a consolidated application process. To determine the right questions to ask within the application and develop the platform to collect the information, Georgia consulted with other Title program staff, and each program educated one another about their program requirements. Of note, [Georgia's LEA Consolidated Application](#) includes the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan, or “CLIP” (see the Streamlined CLIP (S-CLIP) Questions Template on the application page). The CLIP helps LEAs develop a plan to support their students when accepting federal funds under Title IV-A. This plan is then collected by the Georgia Department of Education. CLIP components are collected in two distinct parts. Part I, located within the online Student Longitudinal Data System, includes tools, templates, and resources for capturing LEAs’ annual plans for providing supports and services for students using federal funds under the ESEA/ESSA law. Part II collects required annual documentation to accompany LEAs’ plans, including overall general assurances; prayer certification; program budgets; program specific worksheets; and a General Education Provision Act 427 statement. The Georgia Title IV-A team then reviews the submissions with three criteria in mind (logic [i.e., does it make sense], allowability, and allocability) and works with LEAs on revisions until the CLIP is satisfactory. LEAs are encouraged to treat the CLIP as a ‘living document,’ making updates as needs change. Full information about their approach can be found in Georgia’s [Federal Programs Handbook: Information Applicable to all Federal Programs \(Updated June 7, 2021\)](#).

If SCs or their reporting teams decide to pursue new data, they can then begin developing a plan for data collection. Data collection may be influenced by the answers to the following questions:

- **Who or what are the best (i.e., most reliable, accurate) sources of this information?** Sources can be people (e.g., teachers, students, administrators) or they can be administrative records (e.g., attendance, class rosters, etc.). Depending on the source, special permissions or considerations may be needed for the data collection (e.g., parental consent for student surveys, a special data system for data that falls within both [HIPAA](#) and [FERPA](#) guidelines).

- **How are existing data currently organized and stored?** This question helps data collection planning by ensuring that new data fit into the structures already available so that comparisons can easily be made. For example, a state may need to ensure that student-specific data uses the state’s student ID number system.
- **How might the SEA need to coordinate data collection across schedules?** The SC or reporting team will want to ensure data collection does not interfere with other LEA or school activities and staff responsibilities and workloads (including the time needed to check the quality of the data). Still, these schedules will need to be balanced against when the information will be most useful.

## Spotlight on Maryland

### Data Collection



In collaboration with their finance department, Maryland updated their general grant reporting documents to reflect the nuances of Title IV-A. These forms now ask about progress toward objectives and outcomes, as well as spending in each of the Title IV-A specific priority area categories (WRE, SHS, and EUT). Before rolling out the forms, Maryland piloted the forms with a few sub-recipients and then offered office hours and technical assistance to walk LEAs through the changes and explain expectations for completing the form. LEAs are required to submit these reports every 6 months and reporting periods are coordinated with Title II and Title III. This information both helps satisfy federal consolidated state performance reporting requirements and keeps good tabs on waivers LEAs are utilizing as well as spending and balances of funds. Maryland also found that orienting both LEA grant staff and finance teams on reporting requirements ensured that both budgetary and program objectives and outcomes were more thoroughly reported.

### Step 5: Develop a workplan for all components of data collection, analysis, and reporting

At this point, Title IV-A State coordinators and/ or their reporting teams should have a good sense of what they hope to achieve with reporting and the necessary data collection activities. This step focuses on articulating the final tasks that will move a state from simply collecting data to reporting it.

To begin, SCs will want to determine the format of their reporting products. This would be an ideal point to consult with external stakeholders. Table 2 provides broad categories of reporting products, strengths of this product type, and limitations.



**Table 2: Different Types of Reporting Products**

Types of Reporting	Examples	Strengths	Limitations
<p><b>Long written products</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual reports</li> <li>• Evaluation reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a traditional and more formal format that may appeal to audiences such as researchers or policymakers</li> <li>• Allows for greater discussion of contextual factors because of length</li> <li>• Can address multiple topics at once</li> <li>• Can be produced during one period of concentrated effort, which simplifies planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be more expensive to produce than shorter products</li> <li>• May not be fully read by audiences</li> <li>• May only be referred to sparingly or upon release</li> </ul>
<p><b>Short written products</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy memos</li> <li>• Spotlights on particular LEAs</li> <li>• Tip sheets collating best practices</li> <li>• One-page summaries with key indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides flexibility in format to meet different audience needs (e.g., can choose to respond in real-time to requests; can write one product for a policymaker and one for parents)</li> <li>• Increases likelihood that audiences will read the full product</li> <li>• May be more easily adaptable to sharing information with the press or on social media</li> <li>• Typically written in plain language, making it easier for stakeholders to understand</li> <li>• Can offer a more focused view of specific aspects of the Title IV-A grant program</li> <li>• Can be a good format when there is a wide variation among LEAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases the number of products needed to offer a comprehensive view of the Title IV-A program</li> <li>• May require more coordination and discussion to define parameters of reporting and dissemination</li> </ul>
<p><b>Live presentations to stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations to parent-teacher organization</li> <li>• Briefings to other Title coordinators or state education agency staff</li> <li>• Briefings in response to a request from a state legislator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be more engaging because of auditory and visual nature of presentations</li> <li>• Can spark dialogue with stakeholders</li> <li>• Can vary length and detail of information provided</li> <li>• Can respond in real-time to requests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can have a more limited reach (i.e., only people who access the presentation(s) will get the information)</li> <li>• Can be more difficult for audiences to use as a static reference</li> <li>• May require additional steps for dissemination (e.g., determining presenters, scheduling presentations instead of simply posting resource)</li> </ul>



Types of Reporting	Examples	Strengths	Limitations
<b>Recorded presentations or slide decks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recorded webinar or Zoom meeting with parent-teacher organization</li> <li>PowerPoint file with audio narration included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be more engaging because of auditory and visual nature of presentations</li> <li>Can be accessed at any time</li> <li>Can reach more people since time is not a constraint</li> <li>Provides autonomy to viewers to speed through and/or skip sections that feel less relevant to them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces capacity for dialogue and to respond in real-time to stakeholders' information needs</li> <li>May be challenging for audiences to cite information (e.g., if they want a specific statistic, they will have to scan through the video to relocate the information)</li> <li>May require additional steps for dissemination (e.g., determining speakers and coordinating a time to record)</li> </ul>
<b>Online dashboard available to LEAs or the public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tableau dashboard</li> <li>SEA-created dashboard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be more engaging because of visual nature of dashboards</li> <li>Can provide information on many topics at once</li> <li>Allows for independent exploration by audiences (i.e., can look up what they want when they want it)</li> <li>Requires fewer writing resources</li> <li>May be more easily adaptable to sharing information with press or on social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides less room for contextualizing information</li> <li>Requires more technical expertise to create (i.e., programming, trouble shooting, etc.)</li> <li>May require more frequent updating of data to be useful</li> <li>May require user access management (e.g., for LEAs to access only their information)</li> </ul>

There is no single correct way to report data – it is best to pick the form that best fits the data and the needs of stakeholders (e.g., if LEAs would like to use data for CQI but the SEA opts to release a long report once every 3 years). Revisiting the questions outlined in Step 2, particularly the kinds of requests for data that have been made in the past, can help SEAs select the best format. State coordinators that are interested in using their reporting structures to generate buy-in for Title IV-A activities may wish to engage their state communications offices. Staff within communications offices can provide helpful feedback on reporting products and support the development of messaging.

Once SEAs have selected the format(s) they will use for products and the frequency with which the products will be produced, they can begin to ‘backwards plan’ their development based on required review processes within their state as well as the review processes agreed upon by the SC and/or the reporting team. See the “How Often Are Reports Required” box on the next page for a summary of Title IV-A Reporting Requirements. SCs can refer to and build off the roles outlined in Step 1 – matching tasks according to the roles that team members were expected to play. It is important to be clear about who is responsible for different reporting activities (including plans for dissemination) and expectations around timelines.

## How Often Are Reports Required?

LEAs are required to report to SEAs annually their use of Title IV-A funds in the three priority content areas. However, the statute does not specify how often SEAs need to publicly report data on the use of these funds by LEAs or the degree to which LEAs have made progress toward meeting their objectives and outcomes. It is something that states can decide for themselves (see Table 3 below). Questions about who the audience is and their desire for data asked in Step 2 can inform that decision (e.g., if a particular audience is invested in Title IV-A and regularly requests data, the State coordinator can choose to align their reporting to that audience’s needs). Other considerations may include:



- **Current priorities of the grant program:** An LEA may be using Title IV-A funds to expand pre-existing efforts (e.g., if they had a program that they had implemented through another grant where the funding was ending) or launching new efforts. LEAs that are launching a new program may want feedback to refine their work and may want data more frequently from their SEA compared to if there is a time-specific, limited data request to generate buy-in for a program.
- **Frequency of existing data collections:** If data used for Title IV-A reporting are only provided annually, that sets the maximum frequency of reports (i.e., states cannot report any more frequently because there is no new information to share). When planning new data collections, states should try to match the periodicity of other data collections and avoid overburdening LEAs.
- **Effort needed as data accumulates:** While less frequent reporting may mean a reprieve in some time periods, it can also compress the level of effort during reporting years. Additionally, it may be more difficult for states to retrieve data on past years if it is not actively collected and stored in an easily accessible place. The accumulation of data over time also will typically mean more information to report and different expectations for data (e.g., if reporting occurs once every 3 years, audiences may expect a more longitudinal view of the progress, and reporting on older data may seem less relevant to stakeholders).

**Table 3: Title IV-A Reporting Requirements**

SEA Public Reporting Content	SEA Public Reporting Timing	LEA Reporting to SEA Content	LEA Reporting to SEA Timing
Use of funds by LEAs in the three content areas	At the discretion of the SEA, and a report may include multiple years of use of funds data	Use of funds by LEA in the three content areas	Yearly
Degree to which the LEAs have made progress toward meeting objectives and outcomes	At the discretion of the SEA	Degree to which the LEA has made progress toward meeting objectives and outcomes	At the discretion of the LEA

## Step 6: Create and disseminate reporting products

The final stage in the reporting process is to implement the work plan to create and disseminate reporting products such as reports, dashboards, infographics, and presentations. As noted in the previous step, the creation process should include time for relevant stakeholders and entities to provide feedback. The creation process should include developing templates and other options for standardizing reports on outcomes across different LEAs who have different activities and reports. In particular, it will be important to discuss how to present a coherent picture of the LEA's work. For a series of short written products, that may mean linking back to other products in the series, while something like a report may require splitting the information into chapters or sections. It also can include having a set of shared data elements or sections that are included in the materials (e.g., number of students or schools served and high-level accomplishments).

### Spotlight on Arizona Reporting



The state of Arizona developed a single [evaluation report](#) to illustrate the ways the state has leveraged Title IV-A funds to support students. Throughout their reporting outcomes process, Arizona kept the following questions in mind: “how do we use what we’re already doing to minimize burden and create buy-in” and “what are the efforts that Title IV-A is uniquely and best positioned to support?” In particular, they recognized that LEAs and other stakeholders needed examples of creative ways to use Title IV-A funds and see the benefits of those efforts to feel motivated to retain their Title IV-A funds instead of shifting them to another title program.

With these needs in mind, Arizona adapted an existing report to cover their state’s Title IV-A efforts. The report is divided into three sections, representing their three main priorities: increasing arts access within schools, providing training and support to teachers for digital learning, and improving school climates and student and family engagement. In addition to representing the main foci of the Title IV-A grant, these categories were responsive to questions and interests indicated by LEAs in their needs assessments and via technical assistance sessions provided by the state. The state used a backwards planning process to create the report. They planned and organized their record keeping of state activities so that it aligned with one of the categories. Sections of the report were assigned to priority area leads so that they could be responsible for the records keeping and writing of their specific section. An editor then reviewed the report to ensure a unified voice across the different elements.

Arizona has gone through two iterations of this report and is looking ahead to how they can improve on their outcomes reporting. Over time, they hope to incorporate more LEA stories into the report. The state is trying out a spotlight model. To collect this data, they are asking “what is one thing that you are proud of” in their LEAs monitoring reports. Additionally, Arizona has grown its digital presence over the last couple of years, and the state is considering new formats for the report such as shorter segments delivered via a digital newsletter. Finally, Arizona has had an arts dashboard that was housing data related to arts endeavors in the state. The utility of the dashboard has led to requests for a similar tool for other areas. Currently, the state is working on replicating the dashboard to share data about physical education.

#### Public Reporting In Action

The report has been used by stakeholders at both the state and local levels. At the state level, other programs are using the report as an exemplar for their own efforts in reporting outcomes. It also is helping break down siloes by encouraging other program managers to see where their work overlaps with Title IV-A work. At the local level, LEAs have found the activities of the state helpful in thinking through their own efforts and ways to carry down practices into their districts.

After completing the product(s), the final component is to share it with stakeholders. Title IV-A State coordinators will want to consider the format of the product (see [Table 2 in Step 5](#)), the stakeholders they have prioritized, and how much the stakeholders will need to refer to the information. For example, slide decks are most useful when they are presented to a group. The SC may opt to post the slides after the presentation is given so that others can have access or they may opt to only provide the presentation, which would make the information more transient. With reports that get posted to a website, Title IV-A State coordinators may want to maintain reports from previous years, or they may wish to only present the newest information. This decision is another one where input from external stakeholders and their needs can provide useful insights. Additionally, pieces of products, such as a particularly positive piece of data or the story of a particular LEA's work, may be used in social media, newsletters, or press releases to encourage people to view the full products.

## Conclusion

Title IV-A statute requires that SEAs publicly report on how funds allocated to LEAs are expended, including a summary of LEA progress toward meeting desired objectives and outcomes. Reporting on program outcomes is important not only to meet grant requirements, but to demonstrate progress, provide accountability, inform decision-making, influence public perceptions, and (as applicable) complement evaluation efforts. As demonstrated by several state examples shared above, reporting efforts can be organized to ensure that they are well-planned, responsive to the needs of SEA and LEA data consumers, and avoid duplication of other efforts. State coordinators can work with others in their state to define the “who” (Step 1), “how” (Steps 1 & 6), “when” (Step 4), and “what” (Steps 2, 3, 4, & 6) related to reporting useful data on Title IV-A programmatic processes and outcomes. The key to reporting success is having a plan and a functional reporting system that meets the needs of both LEAs asked to provide the data and key audiences reviewing the reports. Reporting of successes is also key to obtaining local, state, and national buy-in for the Title IV-A program broadly, and potentially can contribute to sustained funding and political will for future related efforts.



## Endnotes

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3. Mandinach, E. & Gummer, E. (2016). Every teacher should succeed with data literacy. Phi Delta Kappan. Retrieved from <https://kappanonline.org/mandinach-gummer-data-literacy-essa/#:~:text=Data%20literacy%20for%20teaching%20is,to%20help%20determine%20instructional%20steps>.
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6. Data Quality Campaign. (2019). Data Literacy 101. Retrieved from <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/resource/data-literacy-101/>.
7. Alvaro, B. (2020). "RACI matrix of responsibilities." *The Business Value-Oriented Principles Journal*. Retrieved from <https://bvop.org/journal/raci-matrix/>.
8. The Management Center. (n.d.). "Assigning Responsibilities with MOCHA." Retrieved from <https://www.managementcenter.org/resources/assigning-responsibilities>.
9. Logic models are a visual tool that conveys how a program's resources and activities work together to achieve outcomes and meet objectives, often represented as a chart or graphic. For more information on logic models, please consult pages 4 and 5 of the [Title IV-A Evaluation Guide](#).



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