

National Center for
Homeless Education

<https://nche.ed.gov>



A Closer Look at File Specifications: FS 150 and 151

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) developed a series of briefs focused on ensuring data submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) meet quality standards and conform to program requirements. As the fourth in the series, this brief provides information about the data collection and submission process for File Specification 150: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and File Specification (FS) 151: Cohorts for Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate.

Data Collected by FS 150 and FS 151

FS 150 includes data groups 695, 697, 755, 850, 852, 854, and 856. It provides information on how to report the percentage of students in a cohort who graduate within four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, or ten years with a regular or approved alternate diploma. FS 151 includes data groups 696, 698, 756, 851, 853, 855, and 857. It includes information on the number of students in the four-, five-, six-, seven-, eight-, nine- and ten-year adjusted cohorts. In addition to including information on students experiencing homelessness, data are reported for students by major racial/ethnic subgroups, disability status, English learner status, economically disadvantaged status, and foster care status.

Important Dates

FS 150 and FS 151 are due by February 9, 2022 for School Year 2020-21. Once the data have been submitted to ED, the information will undergo a data quality review. States will then have the opportunity to submit data again as needed; the due date for data resubmission is typically in May.

Data Quality Checks

During the data quality review, information submitted by states will be compared to the Business Rules Single Inventory (BRSI). The full BRSI, which contains rules for all data submitted through *EDFacts*, is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/business-rules-guide.html>.

The questions below are based on rules pertaining to FS 150 and FS 151 contained in the BRSI. State coordinators, *EDFacts* coordinators, and others reviewing data included in FS 150 and FS 151 can use them to validate their data. If any question results in a response of no, state coordinators should investigate the reason and work with liaisons or the data staff submitting information to make corrections prior to submitting information to ED. If upon further investigation, the data are determined to be correct, state coordinators should work with *EDFacts* coordinators to submit explanatory comments with the data.

Completeness

- Does FS 150 include a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for every high school and LEA with high schools that enrolled homeless students in high school?
- Does FS 150 include a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the state educational agency (SEA)?
- If the state uses an extended year graduation rate, is data submitted in FS 150 for the extended year rates for each high school and LEA with enrolled homeless students, as well as the SEA?
- Does FS 151 include the number of students experiencing homelessness in the four-year cohort for every high school and LEA with high schools that enrolled homeless students?
- Does FS 151 include the number of homeless students who graduated within four years of starting high school for every high school and LEA with high schools?
- Does FS 151 include the number of students experiencing homelessness in the four-year cohort for every high school and LEA with high schools that enrolled homeless students?
- Does FS 151 include the number of homeless students who graduated within four years of starting high school for the SEA?
- If the state uses an extended year graduation rate, is data submitted in FS 151 for the extended year cohorts for each high school and LEA with enrolled homeless students, as well as the SEA?
- Do the rates submitted in FS 150 correspond to the counts submitted in FS 151?

Current Year Accuracy

- Using SEA data, is the four-year cohort submitted in FS 151 equal to or larger than the number of homeless students enrolled in Grade 12?
- Using LEA data, is the four-year cohort submitted in FS 151 equal to or larger than the number of homeless students enrolled in Grade 12?
- Using school data, is the four-year cohort submitted in in FS 151 equal to or larger than the number of homeless students enrolled in Grade 12?

General Data Quality Notes

Only students who graduate with a diploma or approved alternative diploma will be considered graduates. While federal law does not specify how states create the subgroup of homeless students when reporting ACGRs, NCHE recommends that students who were homeless at any point during their high school career be included in the calculation.

In an adjusted cohort graduation rate, students are added or removed from a cohort based on their enrollment status in the school or LEA. The only reasons a student may be removed from a cohort are when:

- the school has evidence that the student has enrolled in another diploma granting school,
- the student leaves the country,
- the student is transferred to a prison or juvenile detention facility, or
- the student dies.

Students who drop out of school are still considered a part of the cohort. Students must also be included in the school or LEA cohort even if they are not on track to graduate on time when they enroll in school. The number of times a student has transferred and the time of year in which the student enrolls also does not impact the student's status in a cohort; the student must be added to the cohort when enrolling in school.

This file should be submitted for the school, LEA, and SEA levels. Only include the student in the data count one time for the SEA level data file. If a student attended more than one high school for at least half a school year, the student must either be assigned to the school the student attended for the most school days during Grades 9 through 12 or the school in which the student was most recently enrolled.

While states may exclude students from cohorts when considering a school's or LEA's status under the state accountability plan based on the number of days a student attended a particular school, there are no exemptions from reporting ACGR data to ED. All students who experienced homelessness must be included in file specs FS 150 and FS 151. All states must report a four-year cohort in file spec FS 151 and a four-year ACGR in file spec FS 150. Additionally, all states using a five- and six-year ACGR for accountability purposes must report the rates and respective cohort counts.

Prior to submitting this data, confirm that the number of students included in FS 151 results in the calculated rate submitted in FS150.

Providing Notes About Quality

SEAs are required to respond to the feedback sent to them by ED during the data quality review. Additionally, SEAs are allowed to submit comments with their data to explain why the data may be outside expected ranges. The comments should be concise, explain a problem or large change contained with the data, explain why data have not been submitted, or explain steps the SEA is taking to correct the data. The three most common mistakes SEAs make with regard to including comments with their data are:

1. using the same comment that was used for the previous collection window, even though it is out of date and no longer relevant;
2. including comments for a data point that do not apply to that data; and
3. including comments that are unclear or confusing.

The following is an example of comments that help clarify data included under FS 150 and FS 151, and therefore are likely to reduce the number of corrections the SEA will be asked to make:

- Our state calculates the homeless student cohort by including any student who was homeless during high school in the cohorts.

The following is an example of comments that are vague, do not indicate what steps were taken to address the concern noted by ED during the data review, or indicate that the SEA violated a rule included in the file specs, and are therefore likely to result in a data flag:

- In response to an error message: Data are correct.
- In response to an error message: This is the same methodology we used last year.

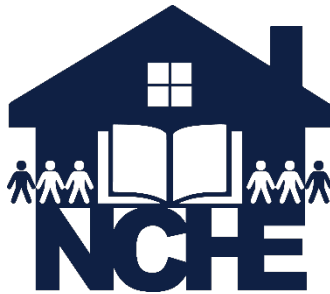
Public Availability of Data

While data are aggregated and do not include personally identifiable information, they are made available to the public in order to increase transparency, identify technical assistance and programmatic needs, and provide information to policymakers. The following list is not all inclusive as LEAs, SEAs, and other non-governmental organizations may also release information on the education of students experiencing homelessness, but it provides several examples of how data submitted to ED are released to the public.

- **ED Data Express** is a website hosted by ED to improve public access to data at the district and state levels. ACGR data and related notes on data quality can be accessed by visiting <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/> and selecting the green download button. After clicking the green reset filters button, the public can select the state, level (LEA or SEA), school year, file specification, and homeless subgroup to create a downloadable file.
- **Government Performance and Results Act reports** provide information on long-term goals and performance measures for federal government agencies. ED adopted a goal on high school completion for homeless students using 4-year ACGRs as a GPRA measure starting with SY 2018-19 data. This information populates the President's Budget Request for the U.S. Department of Education, Justification of Appropriations Estimates to the Congress,

which are available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/tables.html?src=rt>.

- **Federal Data Summaries** published by NCHE have included state-level four- and five-year ACGRs starting with SY 2017-18 data. These reports are available at <https://nche.ed.gov/data-and-stats/> and <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/education-for-homeless-children-and-youths-grants-for-state-and-local-activities/performance/>.
- **The Digest of Educational Statistics** published by ED's Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Statistics is available at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2020menu_tables.asp. State-level ACGR information is provided in a section of Chapter 2 on high school completers and dropouts.



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