

# Data Coordinator Quarterly Call Notes

Thursday, May 14, 2026



## Detailed Notes –

### Meeting Overview

The meeting focused on:

- Preparing centers for the upcoming NIRS reporting season.
- Reviewing reporting timelines and deadlines.
- Demonstrating data cleaning tools and export functions in NIRS.
- Explaining reporting workflows for UCEDDs, LEND, DBP, and PPC Programs.
- Discussing the importance of accurate and complete data reporting.
- Framing data coordinators as “storytellers” whose work demonstrates national impact.

### Reporting Season Overview

The meeting is described as:

- The last Data Coordinators meeting of the fiscal year.
- The beginning of “report season”.
- A period when centers focus heavily on reporting progress and outcomes.

### Major Reporting Systems and Processes - Three Main Reporting Pathways and Due Dates

#### 1. Autism CARES Module for LEND and DBP Programs

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- Completed directly via the Admin Section > “CARES Evaluations” within NIRS.
- Administrative access is required to access the tool.
- No data transfer needed; the report has reports accessible in the report to assist with answering questions. The reports pull from data users provide in Datasets / forms across NIRS.
- The CARES Module will open in NIRS on June 17, 2026 and must be submitted by July 29, 2026.

## 2. DGIS Reporting for LEND, LEAH, PPC, DBP Programs

- Completed in MCHB’s DGIS, which is a separate system.
- Data must be exported from NIRS and imported into DGIS using MCHB’s import templates.
- NIRS and DGIS do not directly communicate.
- Data formatting and alignment are critical.
- Users should review the [DGIS User Guide](#) because the system was updated last year.

## 3. UCEDD PPR Reporting for UCEDDs

- Completed entirely via the Admin section > “Program Performance Report (PPR)” within NIRS.

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- There is a separate report, completed by UCEDDs in the fifth year of the grant cycle, accessed via the Admin section > “Five-Year Closeout Report” within NIRS.
- Administrative access is required to access the reports.
- The reports pull in responses from records entered in the Trainees, Projects, Activities, and Products Dataset.
- The PPR is due July 30, 2026.
- The Five-year Closeout Report is due October 28, 2026, for recompeting Centers.

## Advantages:

- Approximately 75% of report fields are pre-filled automatically based on data entry in other Datasets in NIRS.
- Reports can be saved as PDFs.
- PDFs are uploaded into GrantSolutions.

## NIRS Workflow - Methods for Entering Data

Two approaches:

1. Manual data entry.
2. Importing data using CSV templates.

## Important Note About Imports

- While challenging, importing records in bulk in NIRS can decrease the overall time needed for managing data in NIRS.

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- Importing is possible but complicated.
- AUCD support is available by messaging [NIRS@aucd.org](mailto:NIRS@aucd.org).

## Data Sets Used for Reporting - LEND and DBP Programs

- LEND and DBP Programs must provide Trainees and Products data.
- These two Datasets can be exported via the NIRS “DGIS Review 2025+” tool in the Admin section.
- Projects and Activities are still used for reporting, though must be manually entered in MCHB’s DGIS.
- NIRS contains Standard Reports in Projects and Activities that may be used to guide responses based on MCHB reporting requirements.

## LEAH and PPC Programs

- LEAH and PPC Programs must provide Trainee data only.
- The Trainees Dataset can be exported via the NIRS “DGIS Review 2025+” tool in the Admin section.
- Products are optionally available for export.

## Data Cleaning Emphasis

### Why Data Cleaning Matters

Clean data is:

- Accurate.

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- Complete.
- Consistent.
- Free of errors.

From AUCD.org/urc, under the “NIRS” tab > “Training Courses, Demos, Tip Sheets”, the [Data Cleaning in NIRS](#) will guide users through available resources and common errors to correct in each NIRS Dataset.

## Importance for DGIS

- Since DGIS and NIRS do not synchronize automatically, data formatting must align perfectly as errors can create import problems.

## Reporting Process Changes - Shift in Responsibilities

- Historically, AUCD handled transfer of data into MCHB’s DGIS. However, individual Programs complete DGIS reporting themselves.
- To support Programs, AUCD built NIRS export tools.

## Technical Assistance and Support

Weekly office hours beginning June 1, Mondays at 1:00 PM EST.

Purpose:

- Help with exports.
- Troubleshoot imports.
- Answer NIRS questions.

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- Support report preparation.

Details to be sent through the data coordinator listserv.

## NIRS Data Cleaning Demonstration

Three major tasks:

1. Complete all data entry.
2. Clean all datasets.
3. Review exports and reports.

## Standard Reports in NIRS - Trainees and Products Datasets

- Located in the Trainees Dataset > Standard Reports, “ALL” column.
- Located in the Products Dataset > Standard Reports, “ALL” column.

## Data Entry Errors – Assists with identifying missing or incomplete fields

Instructions:

- Run report for all years.
- Click the trainee names (Trainees Datasets) or product title (Products Dataset) to edit records.
- Resolve errors listed under the “Missing” column until names disappear from the report.
- Rerun the standard report. If successful, the record will no longer be listed.

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**Duplicates** - Assists with identifying duplicate trainee records with more than one long/medium term trainee record, or more than one short term trainee record.

Important for identifying trainees with:

- Multiple Long-term/Medium-term trainee records, and
- Multiple short-term records within the same year of data collection.

Instructions:

- Click on the trainee names highlighted in blue to go to the record.
- Determine the trainee status for each duplicate record (long/medium term annual record, or multiple short-term record).

**Product Duplicates** - assists with identifying Product records with duplicate titles.

- Every product title **must** be unique.
- Suggested solutions (add details to the title of the product):
  - Add dates.
  - Number recurring series.
  - Differentiate versions.

## Questions and Clarifications

- Do Error Reports Include Short-Term Trainees?
  - Yes, all trainee types are included.

Clarification:

- Long/intermediate trainees have both main and annual records

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- Short-term trainees only have one record.
- How should we handle recurring trainings delivered multiple times annually?
  - If using the same materials repeatedly, it may count as one product entry with combined participant totals.
  - However, duplicate titles within the same year must still be addressed appropriately.
- Should duplicate records be deleted?
  - Administrators can delete records within the same reporting year.
  - Message [NIRS@aucd.org](mailto:NIRS@aucd.org) if you need assistance.

## Standard Reports in NIRS – Projects and Activities Datasets

Both Datasets include the “Data Entry Errors” reports which will assist with identifying records with incomplete in the Projects and Activities Datasets within the current year of data collection.

- Located in the Projects Dataset > Standard Reports, “ALL” column.
- Located in the Activities Dataset > Standard Reports, “ALL” column.

### Workflow:

- Run the report for the current year. Click on the title highlighted in blue to go to the record.

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- Resolve errors listed under the “Missing” column until names disappear from the report.
- Rerun the standard report. If successful, the record will no longer be listed.

## Export Process - Export Tools for DGIS Reporting

For LEND/DBP Programs:

- In the Admin section of NIRS “DGIS Export 2025+” tool.

Exports include:

1. Trainees (former trainee surveys and current trainees).
2. Publications/conferences/web products.
3. Products and submission data.

These files:

- Download as Excel files.
- Can be used with MCHB’s DGIS import templates to upload data.

Instructions:

- Review export files early and continuously for common errors.
- Treat exports as preview tools.

Important reminder:

- Editing Excel files does NOT update NIRS.

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- Corrections must be made on the online form in NIRS.

## UCEDD PPR Walkthrough - Accessing the PPR

- The UCEDD annual PPR is completed in the Admin section by clicking “Program Performance Report (PPR)”. You will see the report for the current year of data collection, “FY 2026 Report”.
- Administrative access is required to access the report.
- There are three main screens to the report:
  - VIEW – this screen allows you to review the preview of the report as it will appear in the final export. Once all sections of the PPR have been completed, there are also instructions at the top of the page to submit the report at the top of the page.
  - Cover Letter – this screen allows users to update the principal investigator, who will receive a copy of the report when it has been submitted, and change your primary area of emphasis.

If you have changed your primary area of emphasis, please message [NIRS@aucd.org](mailto:NIRS@aucd.org) to inform AUCD. You should also inform your UCEDD Project Officer at ACL.

- Report – This is the main portion of the report. The report is organized into five (5) parts and an optional appendix. You will also see a summary of completion with an overview of information needed for each section.

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Red X = incomplete

Green check = complete.

- To edit each section, click on the blue “Review” button under the manage column. Some sections require narrative responses, e.g., sampling procedures and response rate explanations. You will also see various fields that are automatically.
- Users must go through each section and verify responses.
- The [PPR Guidebook](#) explains how fields populate and which NIRS data funnels into each section.

Message [NIRS@aucd.org](mailto:NIRS@aucd.org) for assistance with creating custom reports.

## Breakout sessions - Data as Storytelling

Data coordinators help their Center with:

- Storytelling.
- Advocacy.
- Visibility.
- Accountability.

Data coordinators are central to the network’s national impact narrative.

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Optional fields often generate the strongest national insights and provide the richest storytelling opportunities.

## Examples of impact

Trainee outcome (from former trainee surveys:

- Nearly 9.8 million individuals served (2021–2025).
- 12.9 million individuals served (2016–2025).
  - Data is likely underreported due to incomplete survey responses.

DD Act Partner Collaborations (from activities 2021 - 2025):

- Hundreds of collaborative activities nationally.
- Partnerships between UCEDDs, DD Councils, and Protection & Advocacy agencies.
- Collaboration demonstrates systems-level impact.

Direct Services Data (from activities, 2021 – 2025)

- Demonstration Services: More than 313,000 people with disabilities served.
- Direct Clinical Services: More than 1.3 million people with disabilities served.
- Other Direct Services: More than 2.4 million people with disabilities served.

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- The “unduplicated participants” and Types and “Numbers of Participants” fields in the Activities Dataset are likely under reported as the questions became required within the past few years. It was optional previously.

## Key takeaways:

- There are real interactions with people and families.
- Accurate local reporting enables national advocacy.
- Centers/Programs should consider how they are handling optional fields in NIRS.

## Breakout Discussion Questions

Participants were asked to discuss:

1. How their Centers/Programs use NIRS data beyond federal reporting.
2. How additional uses of NIRS data could benefit their Center/Programs.

Participants were encouraged to discuss:

- The broader story their data tells.
- How data supports advocacy and visibility nationally.

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