

What do we mean by data quality?

Data quality measures how well your annual ROSS reports reflect the services your program provides, the people your program serves, and the outcomes they experience. It has two main parts:

Availability describes how complete your program's reports are. High availability means that very little information is missing or blank. For example, if you record and report the education level of 49 out of 50 participants, that data element has high availability.

Accuracy describes how well your program's data captures what really happened. High accuracy means that numbers are not higher or lower than you observe in real life. For example, if you know that at least 25 participants received a particular service, but the data only shows 10, that data element is not very accurate.

► **Tip:** If data **availability** is low, it can be difficult to understand data **accuracy**, because you cannot always tell whether information is inaccurate or simply skewed because so much is missing. It's usually a good idea to focus on **availability** first.

How can I check my program's data quality?

The ROSS Data Dashboard can help (see [Helpful Resources](#)). There are two ways to check your program's data availability:

1 Refer to the two indicators at the bottom of pages in the Data Dashboard.

The Data Availability (Demographics) indicator shows the availability of the data elements that describe participant characteristics, like age and disability status. The Data Availability (Performance Metrics) indicator shows the availability of data elements that describe service activities and outcomes.

2 Explore the Dashboard's Data Availability page.

As shown at right, this page organizes data elements into categories and indicates your program's data availability for each one. The indicator at the top of each column shows overall availability for that category, and the indicators underneath it reflect individual data elements. Hover over each indicator to learn more about what it represents.*

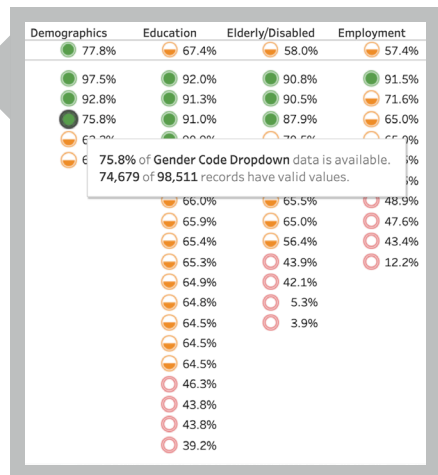
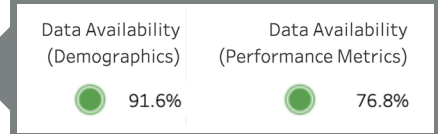
► **Tip:** Focus on the categories and data elements that are priorities for your program. Checking your program's data quality can be overwhelming because there are quite a few data elements, but you do not need to aim for 100% on all of them. See the [How can I improve my program's data quality?](#) section below for more on how to choose which data elements to prioritize.

The Data Dashboard can also help you check your program's data **accuracy**. As you explore, consider whether the numbers you see make sense based on what you know about your program. For example, on the Overview page, is the correct number of participants listed in each population type? On pages focusing on services or outcomes, do any program activities seem under-represented? The Data Dashboard cannot calculate accuracy, but you can use it to identify potential problems in your program's reporting practices.

► **Note:** Almost all parts of the Data Dashboard, including data availability indicators, only include ROSS participants. The Overview page indicates how many individuals are marked as participants versus non-participants. Remember, ROSS participants are those residents who have had a needs assessment completed.

Why does data quality matter?

The higher your program's data quality, the more valuable its data is as a tool to help you and HUD. When you reach a high level of quality, all the work you do to collect data can start to really pay off. With high-quality data, you can see your program's reach, show HUD the work you do, set informed goals, plan program improvements, and track your program's progress.



* If you use a screen reader, we encourage you to visit the Data Dashboard Tables page (see [Helpful Resources](#)).

How can I improve my program's data quality?

The best practices at right apply to almost all ROSS data elements. But, since there are quite a few elements, we recommend focusing on the ones that are most important to your program. During this process, it helps to keep two resources open side by side, the Data Dashboard and the ROSS Data Guide (see [Helpful Resources](#)).

- 1 The Data Guide will indicate which elements your program is required to report on based on the areas of need you indicated your program would focus on. We also suggest reporting on optional elements that capture other work that is especially important to you.
- 2 Use the Data Dashboard to check the data quality of each prioritized element (see the [How can I check my program's data quality?](#) section above).
- 3 Follow the best practices at right when recording prioritized data elements, especially for the data elements that are currently lower-quality.
- 4 Track your program's progress. Case management software can help record data throughout the year, and the Dashboard can track your program's progress and improvement in data quality. For more information, please visit the [HUD Exchange](#).¹

Below, excerpts from the ROSS Data Guide are organized under letters "A" through "E" to show where best practices apply. Each letter is then discussed in more detail:

Job Development Service

A.		
✗ (blank)		
✓ 1=Yes		
✓ 3=N/A		
✗ 77=Information not collected		
	Required for FY18 and FY19 grantees that selected Employment and/or Reentry as an area of need/focus.	May be counted if it was provided by the ROSS-SC, a partner, or service provider.

Gender

	C.	E.
✗ (blank)		
✓ 1=Male		
✓ 2=Female		
✓ 3=Transgendered Male to Female		
✓ 4=Transgendered Female to Male		
✓ 5=Other		
✗ 77=Information Not Collected		
✓ 88=Individual refused		
✓ 99=Individual does not know		
	Required for All Grantees	You may also refer to other resident files such as the 50058 (in the case of public housing residents) for this information. Non-Profit organizations should consult with the tribes/TDHE's or PHA's staff to organize data sharing for this information.

A. Blank responses and "Information Not Collected" will *decrease* data **availability**. Any other option will *increase* **availability**.

► **Note:** "Individual Refused" and "Individual Does Not Know" are considered **available**, so you should use those responses if participants are not comfortable providing the information or they do not know the information requested.

- B. The Data Guide will tell you which metrics are required for you to report on based on the areas of need you selected in your application.
- C. All grantees are required to report on Gender.
- D. If this service is provided by partners, follow up with them and record the outcome.
- E. Although this data element is required, your organization may have it already.



Following some simple best practices can make a big improvement in data quality:

- **Tell us what you know, even when nothing happened.** If you know that a service was not provided, or an outcome was not achieved, recording that specifically using either "N/A" or "No" increases data quality because it provides certainty about what happened.
- **For the same reason, don't leave elements blank.** This will always lower your data availability.
- **Only select the "Information Not Collected" option when you are unsure about a data element.** This is similar to leaving it blank.
- **Follow up with service providers and other partners.** By communicating frequently, you can better understand when services are and are not provided, which will allow you to select an option other than "Information Not Collected," increasing your data quality and demonstrating your program's effectiveness.
- **Take advantage of data you already have.** Your organization may keep certain information on file, such as demographic information about your participants. When appropriate, gathering and reporting on this data can increase your data quality.

Helpful Resources

[ROSS-SC Data Dashboard](#)²

[ROSS Data Guide & Webinars](#)³

[ROSS-SC Data Dashboard Webinars](#)⁴

[ROSS-SC Data Dashboard Tables](#)⁵

¹<https://hudexchange.info/programs/standards-for-success/>

²<https://public.tableau.com/views/ROSS-SCDataDashboardbyGrantee/Home>

³<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6071/ross-data-guide/>

⁴<https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/ross-sc-data-dashboard-webinars/>

⁵<https://public.tableau.com/views/ROSS-SCDataDashboardTables/Home>