

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.

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 when 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** (see [Helpful Resources](#) at the bottom of page 2) displays data availability for your program. These scores describe the completeness of your reported data: a score of 75-100% is considered "complete", a score of 50-74% is considered "partially complete", and a score below 50% is considered "incomplete". There are two ways to check your data availability.

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

Each page on the Data Dashboard shows two indicators. 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 for more details.

As shown at right, this page organizes data elements into categories and indicates the 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:** The Data Availability page shows many elements, but you do not need to aim for 100% on all of them. You should prioritize the **Required Data Elements**, which are determined based on your program's selected Area of Need. See the [How can I improve my program's data quality?](#) section below for more information. If you need a refresher on which data elements are required for your program, please refer to the ROSS Data Guide (see [Helpful Resources](#)).

The Data Dashboard provides a calculated score for **data availability**, but it can also help you make sense of your **data accuracy**. As you explore the data in your dashboard consider whether the numbers you see align with your knowledge 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 over- or under-represented? The Data Availability Scores cannot calculate your data's accuracy, but you can use it to identify potential issues in your program's reporting practices.

► **Note:** Almost all parts of the Data Dashboard, including Data Availability Scores, 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 completed an intake assessment.

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.

Data Availability Legend

Complete
Partially Complete
Incomplete

Data Availability
(Demographics)

91.6%

Data Availability
(Performance Metrics)

76.8%

General Resident Information	Employment	Financial Literacy and Income	Education
48.0%	38.9%	26.6%	35.0%
100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
85.6%	100.0%	5.7%	100.0%
78.1%	100.0%	7.0%	100.0%
66.7%	100.0%	2.0%	100.0%
25.8%	100.0%	3.0%	100.0%
13.0%	100.0%	3.0%	100.0%
10.6%	100.0%	3.0%	100.0%
0.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.1%
0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.1%
	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%

85.6% of Age data are available.
1,470 of 1,717 records have valid values.
This field is required for all grantees.

* 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?

- 1 While reporting your data, it helps to keep two resources open side by side, the Data Dashboard and the ROSS Data Guide (see [Helpful Resources](#)).
- 2 As described in the Data Guide, some data elements are **required** and others are optional. Required elements contribute to your program's overall data availability score, while optional elements do not. However, we encourage you to report on any optional elements that you are tracking, especially those that you feel are important for your program or population served.
- 3 Follow the best practices at right when recording data elements, especially for the required data elements that are currently "incomplete" or "partially complete".
- 4 Track your program's progress. Case management software can help record data throughout the year, and the Data Dashboard can track your program's progress and improvement in data quality. For more information, please visit the [HUD Exchange](#).¹

Example 1: Job Development Service

A Response Options	B Areas of Need Required to Respond	C Additional Information
<p>✗ (blank or invalid)</p> <p>✓ 1=Yes</p> <p>✓ 3=No</p> <p>✗ 77=Information not collected</p>	Required for Employment or Reentry. Optional for others.	Job development services may be counted if it was provided by the ROSS- SC, a partner, or service provider.

Example 2: Ethnicity

Response Options	D Areas of Need Required to Respond	E Additional Information
<p>✗ (blank or invalid)</p> <p>✓ 1=Hispanic/Latino</p> <p>✓ 2=Not Hispanic/Latino</p> <p>✗ 77=Information not collected</p> <p>✓ 88=Individual refused</p> <p>✓ 99=Individual does not know</p>	Required for all.	Grantees are encouraged to collect self-reported demographic data from residents. If needed, you may also refer to other resident files such as the 50058 (in the case of public housing residents) for this information.

- A Blank responses, invalid responses, and "Information Not Collected" will decrease data availability. Any other option will increase availability.
- B The Data Guide will tell you which elements are required for you to report on based on the Areas of Need you selected in your application.
- C If this service is provided by partners, follow up with them and record the outcome.
- D All grantees are required to report on this data element.
- E Your organization may already have this required information.



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, select "No" as your response. Similarly, use "Individual Refused" if you ask the participant a question and they do not answer, or "Individual does not know" if they cannot answer. These options increase data quality because they provide certainty about what happened.
- **Avoid blank or invalid responses.** Leaving a response blank, or entering a response that is not listed in the Response Options, will lower your Data Availability Score.
- **Only select "Information Not Collected" if the information is unavailable.** Similar to a blank or invalid response, "Information Not Collected" will lower your Data Availability Score.
- **Take advantage of data you and your partners already have.** Your organization may keep certain information on file, such as demographic information about your participants. To reduce burden on residents, you can ask them to simply confirm that the existing data is correct, instead of asking them to provide it again. You can also coordinate with program partners to share data about program activities.

Helpful Resources

- [HUD Standards for Success](#)¹
- [ROSS-SC Data Dashboard](#)²
- [ROSS Data Guide & Webinars](#)³
- [ROSS-SC Data Dashboard Webinars](#)⁴
- [ROSS-SC Data Dashboard Tables](#)⁵