

Key Elements of Data Quality

This job aid presents five key elements of data quality and questions you may consider as you reflect on the strength of your data in accordance with each element.

1. **Validity** indicates whether the data collected and reported by grantees appears to measure the approved performance measure or program goal.
 - Is the data relevant?
 - Are your reported items consistent with the approved goals of the current grant and/or program?
 - Are you measuring what you intended to measure?
2. **Completeness** indicates whether there is enough information to draw a conclusion about the data and whether enough individuals responded to it to ensure representativeness.
 - Does the reported data contain enough information to represent performance measure activities?
 - Did the reported data come from all stations and/or a random sampling of volunteers/service recipients?
3. **Consistency** considers the extent to which data is collected using the same process and procedures by everyone doing the collecting and in all locations over time.
 - Do you clearly document your data collection methods?
 - Do you have policies and procedures which direct your data collection process?
 - Do you use the same data collection methods for all sites? Across the lifespan of the grant/award? Across all volunteers and service recipients?
 - Do you train data collectors?
 - Do you define “jargon” and other terminology used in data collection tools?
 - Have you taken steps to eliminate bias?
4. **Accuracy** indicates whether the data is free from significant errors and whether the numbers seem to make sense.
 - First, do you have a plan or procedure to collect and review data?
 - Second, do you have documentation showing that you followed your data collection and review plan?
 - Third, does the data vary significantly in unexpected ways?
5. **Verifiability** considers the extent to which grantees have ways to verify that data was collected and reported according to plans and procedures.
 - Did the grantee double check that the data collected follows the plans and procedures for data collection?
 - Did the grantee use controls throughout the data collection and management process?
 - Does the grantee regularly review and update its data quality control procedures?