



### Checklist for Planning a Report

Data analysis is the process by which data are transformed into information that answers key questions and provides the foundation for decision-making. Most data collection and analysis efforts culminate in one or more reports on data or the findings associated with them. Reporting can take many different forms, including formal written reports, data dashboards, or datasets that may be accessed and used for purposes of federal, state, or local reporting.

The plan for producing a report should include the following steps:

- ✓ Ensure that adequate resources are available for preparing and disseminating the report in the format(s) required.
- ✓ Ensure that realistic timeframes are set for producing the report.
- ✓ Identify intended audiences.
- ✓ Determine the audiences' information needs.
- ✓ Assess the audiences' level of technical knowledge.
- ✓ Identify the appropriate media for presenting findings to the intended audiences, such as online or printed copies.
- ✓ Follow appropriate protocols for dissemination to special groups (for example, board members or legislators).
- ✓ Consider if presentations are necessary to enhance dissemination efforts to particular audiences, such as boards, legislative education committees, or educational organizations.

For more best practices and additional checklists on data collection and reporting, see the *Forum Guide to Strategies for Education Data Collection and Reporting (SEDCAR)* ([https://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub\\_2021013.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2021013.asp)).