

PSC Solution: TIP0016

Date: 7/8/2010

Application: ESS

School Year: ALL

File Specifications: N/A

Solution Type: Technical Tip

Title: Reporting zero, missing, and null values in ESS file submissions

Issue Description:

This article provides general guidance on when to report a zero, missing, or null value in file submissions for ESS.

A zero (0) should be reported when a state collects the data, but has a count of zero to report for the data field and reporting period. For some files, records for counts of zero are required. Submitting the count of zero allows the data to be distinguished from missing or not collected data.

Missing (-1) should be reported when a state does not yet collect this data or the data has not been reported to the state, yet. The data will need to be reported as soon as possible, even if that is after the due date.

Null () should be reported when a state does not intend to collect or report this data because it is not applicable for the state.

Note also that when there is no table or metric data in a file, Missing and Not Collected are not permitted values. Further, when a field is Optional (O), as opposed to Mandatory (M), it may be left blank or omitted where it is not applicable or the data is not available.

Because this guidance can vary by file, be sure to read section 2.0 of the associated file specification to understand how to report zero, null, and missing counts.

*Example:* In the membership file at the school level, if a school with seventh-grade enrollment has no seventh-grade American Indian male students, the school file must still include a row for this category with a count of zero. However, if the school does not have a seventh grade, then all the rows of data associated with the seventh grade can be omitted.