

Executive Summary

ACCESS Data SAIL - Request for Proposals

Issue Date	August 11, 2025
Proposal Webinar	August 21, 2025
Updated FAQ Published	August 22, 2025
Letter of Intent Due	August 29, 2025
Proposal Deadline	11:59 pm local time, Friday, September 19, 2025
Important Dates	October 2025: Teams Notified of Awards October – December 2025: State Site Visits January 2026: In-Person ACCESS Kick-Off January – December 2026: Proposed Project Period

Scope / Executive Summary	The Data SAIL state teams will focus on addressing data, technology, and user experience barriers that hinder the state’s ability to provide cohesive services across health, human services, and workforce programs. The three selected state teams will have access to technical assistance, innovation funds (\$200k/state), and peer cohort community learning and support.
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Eligibility	Only U.S. state agencies in health, human services, and workforce can apply.
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Budget	Not to exceed \$200,000 per state for a 12-month project period (January – December 2026)
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Submission Criteria	Successful proposals include the following: ☐ Completed Proposal Application ☐ Preliminary Budget ☐ 2 Letters of Commitment from state agency leadership in health, human services, or workforce
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Aligned Customer-Centered Ecosystem of Services & Supports (ACCESS) Data & Impact State Action and Innovation Lab - Request for Proposals

Overview

The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is inviting state health, human services, and workforce agencies to join the Data & Impact State Action & Innovation Lab (“Data SAIL”).

The Data SAIL state participants will be focused on addressing data, technology, and user experience barriers that hinder the state’s ability to provide cohesive services across health, human services, and workforce programs, as well as negatively impact both program efficiency and customer experience. The opportunity will include peer learning, team-based technical assistance, and access to innovation funds (up to \$200,000 per state). Three states will be selected to receive hands-on assistance in building toward their alignment goals through data-enabled solutions, addressing barriers such as, but not limited to, a lack of interoperable data sharing systems, inconsistent data formats, data silos within and across departments, privacy and security concerns, lack of user experience research, and outdated or incomplete data. State teams will also work directly with customers to co-design solutions that support individuals, families, children, and agency staff.

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Deadlines: Letter of Intent – **August 29, 2025**
Full Request for Proposal Submission – **September 19, 2025**

RFP Contents

Overview	2
Background	4
Project Design	4
Project Teams	4
Project Activities	6
Products & Deliverables	6
Budget.....	7
Allowable Use of Grant Funds.....	7
How Funds Will Be Disbursed	7
Project Timeline	7
Grantee Benefits & Obligations	8
Technical Assistance	8
Cohort Learning	8
In-Person Events	8
Proposal Content.....	9
Proposal Requirements & Scoring Categories	10
RFP Timeline	11
Proposal & Submission Instructions	12
About the Data SAIL Partners	13

Background

The purpose of the ACCESS initiative is to align capacity-building efforts across state agencies and cross-sector partners focused on developing modern, integrated, and customer-centered access to benefits and supportive services that promote economic mobility. During the first two years of ACCESS, APHSA and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) worked with a state advisory council and a community advisory council to surface the key barriers and enablers of cross-program coordination. These barriers include but are not limited to lack of interoperable data sharing systems, inconsistent data formats across programs, privacy and security concerns limiting data sharing, data silos within and across departments, and incomplete or outdated data. To learn more about ACCESS, see [the project microsite here](#).

The next phase of ACCESS includes the launch of the Data & Impact State Action & Innovation Lab (“Data SAIL”) to create cross-departmental and/or cross-agency data solutions to support agencies’ ability to provide cohesive services across health, human services, and workforce programs, as well as positively impact both program efficiency and customer experience. In coordination with Process Innovation and Impact experts at APHSA, the leaders of NASWA’s Multi-State Data Collaborative (MSDC) initiative, NASWA’s Workforce Information Technology Support Center (WITSC), the U.S. Digital Response (USDR), and the Coleridge Initiative’s Administrative Data Research Facility (ADRF) will form the core of the data technical assistance support network. In addition, the three selected states in the Data SAIL will have support from the community impact council to co-design data solutions that are aligned with customer experience and needs.

Project Design

This section describes the design of projects that will be considered for funding through ACCESS Data SAIL:

Project Teams

APHSA and its partners seek to support cross-departmental or cross-agency teams that demonstrate a collaborative and innovative approach to their selected issue area. Based on past experience, cohort learning projects thrive when core project teams are established to represent and drive complex projects forward across agencies. To support continued success for agencies and partners executing process innovation work, APHSA and its partners request that proposed projects are managed by a collaborative core team that includes named representatives that cover the following areas:

- Data & Technology Lead,
- Workforce Program Lead,
- Health & Human Services Program Lead, &

- Customer Experience Lead

APHSA requests that one team member be designated as the “*project manager*” to support overall team coordination and alignment across project phases. In proposal submissions, applicants will be asked to identify the core team members and specify individuals who will fulfill the responsibilities specified below. In submitted proposals, please be prepared to demonstrate experience and readiness to collaborate with key partners.

Role	Description
Data & Technology Lead(s)	• <u>Responsibility</u>: Serving as the point of contact for the various data and technology contributors on the state’s project. Updating the core technical assistance partners on progress and obstacles for the duration of the project. • Ideally, but not required, there is a data and technology lead for each program involved (e.g. WIOA, SNAP, TANF, etc.) • If there is limited capacity to recruit internally, please elaborate in the proposal submission.
Workforce Program Lead(s)	• <u>Responsibility</u>: Serving as the liaison to workforce services partners (e.g. Department of Labor, Department of Education, etc.) involved in the state’s project. Updating the core technical assistance partners on policy and program opportunities, obstacles, and initiative progress for the duration of the project.
Health & Human Services Program Lead(s)	• <u>Responsibility</u>: Serving as the liaison to health and human services partners (e.g. Medicaid, SNAP, Child Support, TANF, etc.) involved in the state’s project. Updating the core technical assistance partners on policy and program opportunities, obstacles, and initiative progress for the duration of the project.
Customer Experience Lead	• <u>Responsibility</u>: Keeping the team’s focus on improving the customer’s experience across health, human services, and workforce services. • <u>Fit</u>: This role should be filled by a person with lived experience in accessing and/or navigating health and human services and/or workforce services in your state. This person <i>cannot</i> be a current employee of the applying state agencies. • Customer experience leads will be invited to join Community Impact Council meetings to support their role on state teams. • Budget to compensate the customer experience lead should come from the awarded innovation funds.

Additional Partners

The above roles are the *minimum* required team members for a proposal to be considered. APHSA and its partners **strongly encourage** state teams to provide information on additional partners that the state team expects to work with during the proposed project. While named individuals are not required, please identify the departments, teams, and/or positions of the expected partners. For a list of potential partners to include in the state team's project, [please see the FAQs here](#).

Project Activities

APHSA and its partners encourage state project teams to leverage funding to support activities that operationalize innovative process changes. Proposals should describe the major activities of the proposed project.

Examples of major project activities in the Data SAIL can include, but are not limited to:

- Enhance Staff Awareness of Partner Program Eligibility/Offerings
- Host Customer Experience Design Sessions with Customers, Staff, and Leadership
- Complete User Research Sessions and Integrate Findings into Project
- Connect Vendor Products to Existing Case Management (CMS) Systems
- Adapt Systems to Empower Clients to Contribute to and/or Approve Plans or Actions
- Build Consensus on Identification of Other State Databases as “Authority” Verifications

Products & Deliverables

In the submitted project proposal, please include an overview of anticipated products or deliverables from the project. Anticipated products and deliverables will vary greatly from project to project depending on team composition and expertise level, the state-level regulatory environment, and the state's priorities and needs.

Strong proposals will outline the anticipated products and deliverables, how APHSA and its partners can contribute to their development, and how it aligns with the project team's overall goals.

Examples of products and deliverables can include, but are not limited to:

- Improved or Streamlined Common Intake or Referral Products/Processes
- Cross-Sector Training Modules Covering Partner Program Offerings
- Data Mapping Documentation and Implementation Guides with User Guidance
- Governance Framework with Proposed or Approved Implementation Roadmap

Budget

Proposals with budgets of up to \$200,000 for 12-month projects will be considered for this funding opportunity. Proposal budget narratives should summarize and provide justification for total project costs, including direct and indirect costs. Selected state teams will have the opportunity to modify budgets if needed during the planning phase. If helpful, a budget template document can [be downloaded here](#) but this specific budget template is *not* required to be submitted.

Allowable Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds must be used to support the design and implementation of cross-agency data integration and interoperability efforts, including but not limited to:

- Developing interoperable data systems that enable secure, privacy-compliant data sharing across departments and programs.
- Addressing technical challenges such as inconsistent data formats, data silos, and outdated or incomplete data.
- Enhancing infrastructure to support real-time or near-real-time data exchange that facilitates coordinated service delivery.
- Compensating participants involved in user research activities
- Use of the Administrative Data Research Facility ([learn more here](#))

How Funds Will Be Disbursed

APHSA and its partners anticipate awarding three state teams 12-month grants of up to \$200,000 per state team. APHSA will be the awarding organization and has significant flexibility with the dispersal of funds. Commonly, however, states may receive the funds as a subaward, and APHSA will work with the state team to lay out the scope of work and other requirements according to the submitted proposal.

Project Timeline

APHSA and its partners are seeking project proposals with a 12-month timeline: January 2026 – December 2026. Extensions beyond December 2026 will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Key Dates:

- October 2025: Award Notification
- October – December 2025: State Site Visits
- January 2026: In-Person Data SAIL Kick-Off Event
- January 2026: Lab Launch, Start of Grant Period
- September 2026: ISM Conference Session with State Participants
- October 2026: State Case Studies

- November 2026: Progress Reports
- December 2026: End of Grant Period
- January 2027: Live Webinar and Demo Day with Lab Participants

Project proposals should include an expected timeline with clear project phases. All timelines are assumed to be tentative and are subject to change as the project progresses. If there are clear milestones associated with your team's goals, please note that on your project timeline. For example, if a data sharing agreement needs to be signed, please indicate on the timeline a projected agreement signing date.

Grantee Benefits & Obligations

Technical Assistance

Over the course of the grant period, APHSA, NASWA's MSDC and WITSC, the Coleridge Initiative, U.S. Digital Response, and other as-needed technical experts will be available to provide strategy support and ongoing data technical assistance for the state team's projects. In your submission, please identify areas in need of support.

State teams will be expected to check-in virtually with APHSA and its partners on *at least* a bi-weekly basis, or as requested by the state team, to move the team's project forward. The content and frequency of check-ins will be determined by the state team's identified barriers and project needs.

Cohort Learning

The selected state teams will participate in cohort learning throughout the grant period. APHSA will facilitate monthly opportunities for cohort members to convene and learn from one another's process and gain insights from states and data & technology experts who have undertaken related initiatives. The cohort model provides state teams an opportunity to further uncover broader opportunities for cross-sector process innovation and policy and practice alignment at the systems level.

In-Person Events

State Site Visits: APHSA and its Community Impact Council (CIC) representatives will work with the selected teams to organize and hold a 1-day Economic Mobility Summit in the Award Recipient's home state. The in-person event will be attended by community members with recent lived experience in health, human services, including child support, and workforce programs. The full-day event will be developed in collaboration with the state team and the CIC to further gather and integrate the insights of individuals and families participating in the health, human services, and workforce ecosystem. Summit participant insights, ideas, and priorities will ultimately be woven into the state's project.

Selected teams will have up to \$10,000 worth of community engagement time covered, which includes compensating participants to the Economic Mobility Summit. The Summit will be coordinated with state team members in between accepting their award and the December in-person kick-off event.

January Kick-Off: APHSA and its partners request that at least two team representatives attend an in-person Data SAIL kick-off convening in January 2026. Dates and location are TBD. Please indicate in the RFP submission that team members anticipate attending this in-person event. APHSA will financially support travel and lodging.

ISM Conference 2026: APHSA and its partners request that at least two team representatives attend and present at APHSA's ISM Conference in 2026 (dates TBD). Team members will present on project progress and opportunities for alignment and innovation that teams identified through technical assistance and cohort learning. APHSA will financially support conference registration, travel, and lodging.

Proposal Content

Interested state and local government teams should submit the following to be considered for the opportunity:

Proposal Cover Sheet

The proposal cover sheet will provide a high-level overview of the proposed project and provide the contact information of the identified "project manager."

Project Narrative

The project narrative will include a high-level overview of the team's identified areas for improvement, the anticipated approach the team will explore, and anticipated outcomes.

Improvement Areas: This section should discuss why the identified areas for improvement in coordination and collaboration are needed and what the current state of coordination among programs is.

Anticipated Approach: This section should include project activities, the anticipated products and deliverables, the anticipated timeline, and the partners you expect to engage for the duration of the project. Please identify any known gaps in expertise or participation.

Anticipated Outcomes: This section should discuss what takeaways the team expects to learn or gain from this T/TA initiative, inclusive of downstream impacts on families and children.

Budget Narrative

Proposal budget narratives should summarize and provide justification for total project costs, including direct and indirect costs. Selected state teams will have the opportunity to modify budgets if needed during the planning phase. If helpful, a budget template document can be [downloaded here](#) but this specific budget template is not required to be submitted. Budgets should be scoped for a 12-month period – January to December 2026 – for up to \$200,000 total.

Letters of Commitment

Teams must provide a brief letter of commitment from leadership in at least two of the following agencies: health, human services, or workforce. The letter should clearly affirm the agencies' commitment to supporting the project. If applicable, brief letters of commitment from other partner organizations that will be involved in or may be significantly impacted through the proposed project are encouraged but not required.

Proposal Requirements & Scoring Categories

Minimum Proposal Requirements	
	At least two collaborating agencies listed in project proposal plans. Represented agencies must include at least 2 of the following agencies: health, human services, or workforce.
	4-person minimum required team representation: (1) Data & Technology Lead; (2) Workforce Program Lead; (3) Health & Human Services Program Lead; and (4) *Customer Experience Lead, which is a person with lived experience living in the state of the applicant team. This person <i>cannot</i> be a current employee of the applying state agencies.
	Except for the Customer Experience Lead, all core state team members must currently be a part of a state agency or state agencies overseeing health and human services programs and/or workforce programs
	Commitment of at least 2 team members to participate in the January 2026 in-person kick-off event.
	Commitment of at least 2 team members to participate in ISM Conference 2026
	Commitment of team members to participate in technical assistance working sessions with T/TA providers, to the state site visit, and participate in monthly cohort learning calls with the other participating state teams

	Projects scoped for 12-months (January – December 2026) at a budget of \$200,000 or less
	At least 2 letters of commitment from the leadership of the following agencies: health, human services, or workforce

*APHSA can support the logistical recruitment of individual(s) with lived experience to participate in the state team.

Scoring Categories	
	Impact of proposal to ultimately support the shared health, human services, and workforce participant population of the identified state-level programs
	Strength of project team structure and collaboration strategy
	Demonstrated capacity of team to engage with people with lived experience, learn from program participants and clients, and act upon feedback provided through collaborative community engagement processes
	Detailed plans for engaging and sharing with colleagues in other human services or workforce program agencies focused on developing data solutions to create a cohesive health, human services, and workforce ecosystem

RFP Timeline

Timeline Component	Target Date
RFP Release	August 11, 2025
Proposal Webinar	August 21, 2025
Deadline for Questions	August 21, 2025
Letter of Intent Deadline	August 29, 2025
Proposal Submission Deadline	September 19, 2025
Anticipated Award Notifications	October 2025
Anticipated State Site Visits	October – December 2025
In-Person Grant Kick-Off Event	January 2026 (Date & Location TBD)
Anticipated Project Duration	January 2026 – December 2026
Anticipated End of Grant	December 31, 2026

Proposal & Submission Instructions

To register for the Data SAIL Request for Proposals Webinar, [please register here](#). The webinar will be held on August 21, 2025, at 4:00 pm ET. The recording will be posted on the [ACCESS Project Microsite](#) after August 21st.

To submit questions or asks for clarification, [please submit here](#). APHSA will post an updated FAQ document on August 22, 2025, to the ACCESS Project Microsite.

To submit the letter of intent, [please access the form here](#). APHSA and its partners encourage early submissions. The deadline is **August 29, 2025**.

To submit a full proposal, please complete the [accompanying RFP template](#) provided and email Khristian Monterroso kmonterroso@aphsa.org. Please include the letters of commitment and preliminary budget. The completed application is due **September 19, 2025**.

Please email kmonterroso@aphsa.org and Jessica Maneely jmaneely@aphsa.org with any application questions.

Please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for any quick questions.

About the Data SAIL Partners

About the Data SAIL Lead:

American Public Human Services Association (APHSA)

Direction and technical assistance coordination for this program are being provided by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA). APHSA is a bipartisan, nonprofit membership organization representing state and local health and human service agencies through their top-level leadership. APHSA seeks to *influence* modern policies and practices that support the health and well-being of all children and families, *connect* its members to national policymakers and human-serving organizations, and *build* more capacity for their teams. APHSA will use its expertise in facilitating peer-to-peer learning with state agencies and to provide the direction and coordination of technical assistance for Data SAIL. [Learn More about ACCESS Here.](#)

About the Data SAIL Workforce Lead:

National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)

The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) is the national organization representing all 50 state workforce agencies, D.C. and U.S. territories. These agencies deliver training, employment, career, business and wage and hour services, in addition to administering unemployment insurance, veteran reemployment and labor market information programs. NASWA provides policy expertise, shares promising state practices, and promotes state innovation and leadership in workforce development. [Learn More about NASWA Here.](#)

Multi-State Data Collaborative (MSDC)

The MSDC brings state agency program, policy, and data experts together to focus on using agency administrative data to address critical program and policy questions. The MSDC provides agency staff with a supportive network to share ideas, access technical assistance, and share their practices and products across functional, sectoral, and state lines. The MSDC supports project development focused on topics of national, regional, state, and local interest.

Workforce Information Technology Support Center (WITSC)

Led by a steering committee comprised of federal and state Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program representatives, the WITSC initiative encourages technology approaches that are modern, innovative, program-driven, and user-centric. The initiative also embraces partnerships and leveraging existing resources as guiding principles. WITSC helps states enhance their capacity to realize the vision of WIOA, address digital transformation, implement cost-effective

solutions, improve access to services, and achieve better outcomes for customers and communities across the country.

About the Data SAIL Data & Technology Subject Matter Experts:

The Coleridge Initiative

State and federal leaders are partnering with the Coleridge Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public policy through data-driven insights. Coleridge helps government agencies unlock the value of their existing data to better understand complex issues, improve outcomes, and uphold the highest standards of data security.

Coleridge's collaborative model is built on a three-pronged strategy:

1. **Data access** – enabling secure sharing of data across agencies and states,
2. **Analysis and education** – building capacity through training and collaborative research, and
3. **Secure data linkage** – integrating datasets to broaden understanding and enhance decision-making.

The Coleridge Initiative supports public agencies by providing both tools and expertise to use data more effectively. This includes secure researcher access via research enclaves, hands-on data literacy training for agency staff, and participation in data challenges and collaborative projects that address real-world policy issues.

At the core of this effort is the **Administrative Data Research Facility (ADRF)** - a secure, FedRAMP-authorized, cloud-based platform designed to support data sharing and analysis. The ADRF allows government agencies to securely link longitudinal data across states and agencies, enabling comprehensive insights without compromising confidentiality.

Originally developed under the guidance of the U.S. Census Bureau and with funding from the Office of Management and Budget, the ADRF was created to inform the work of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking. In recognition of its innovation and impact, the ADRF received a 2018 Government Innovation Award.

[Learn More about the Coleridge Initiative here.](#)

The United States Digital Response (USDR)

U.S. Digital Response (USDR) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works alongside governments at all levels to ensure they have the capacity to meet the public's needs. USDR leverages a network of pro bono technical expertise to address common, systemic challenges facing public servants. As of January 2025, USDR has partnered with over 500 government and nonprofit partners on nearly 600 projects, across 50+ states and

territories. USDR has built a dedicated community of over 10,000 pro bono specialists driven to serve in a time of need. [Learn More about USDR Here.](#)

About the Customer Experience Experts

About the Community Impact Council (CIC):

The Community Impact Council is composed of individuals with lived experience accessing health, human services, and workforce programs. Members of the CIC leveraged their expertise to ground the ACCESS project's first phase in customer experience and human-centered design. The CIC also led customer engagement efforts through community conversations and shaped customer-centered outputs. Members of the CIC will continue to use their expertise to advise on project activities and outcomes, including assisting states with their customer experience needs to ensure state projects reflect the needs of the people accessing programs.