

ATTACHMENT I – PROJECT TOPIC

Providing Customer Service for a National Secure Data Service through a Data Concierge

Key Objective

The key objective of this effort is to establish a centralized resource providing a broad set of services that support the discovery, acquisition, access, and appropriate use of federal and state statistical data to enable effective decision-making. Currently, connecting data users with federal and state statistical data requires navigating a complex data ecosystem with key parts having limited user support infrastructure. This project seeks solutions to provide a data concierge service as part of the National Secure Data Service (NSDS) that would facilitate access to and appropriate use of federal and state data, with appropriate privacy protections when needed, for evidence building and research purposes.

Background

The concept of an NSDS has a long lineage, including the [report](#) of the Commission on Evidence-based Policymaking, recommendations in the [Year 2](#) report prepared by the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence-Building (ACDEB), and subsequent legislation ([PL 117-167](#) §10375) that established a demonstration project to explore the feasibility of an NSDS. An NSDS will connect people and communities to federal and state data, furthering the goal of making federal data access and use seamless for the American people.

The data concierge service will ultimately serve as the central customer service component of an NSDS where anyone can obtain support to find the data they need, whether public or confidential, to support statistical data uses including evaluating public policies and programs to promote efficient use of government resources. The recommendations from the ACDEB Year 2 report included a data concierge service that would assist data users in discovering confidential data; in developing a proposal to request access to confidential data; and in directing them to any specialized resources or services needed to successfully navigate a data request. The National Secure Data Service Demonstration (NSDS-D) project was established at the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) to inform a potential, future NSDS. This RFS builds on previous work conducted as part of the NSDS Demonstration (NSDS-D) project under the [vision for a future NSDS](#) that includes a data concierge integrated with and complementing other components such as the NSDS website, a Secure Compute Environment, the Standard Application Process (SAP), the Federal Statistical Research Data Centers (FSRDCs), and other data services. Within the NSDS-D, work on [conceptualizing a data concierge service](#) explored user needs and found that navigational support in accessing data and publicly available estimates is needed as well as expert guidance in data sources, data access, and linkage.

Current state

The U.S. Federal statistical system is a decentralized, interconnected network of 16 Recognized Statistical Agencies and Units, 24 Statistical Officials (across 24 major cabinet agencies), approximately 100 additional Federal statistical programs engaged in statistical activities, and several cross-system interagency and advisory bodies. A steep knowledge curve is typically required for potential users of data to locate, access, and utilize data from the federal statistical system. Not only are data spread out among various websites, customer service resources needed for data users to experience streamlined data discovery and access also vary. This results in unmet needs and missed opportunities for data-driven evidence-building. Additionally, state data require knowledge and expertise about access and utility.

Future state

A system-wide data concierge service can increase customer service efficiencies for federal and state agencies by providing a central service or hub that can serve as an initial point of entry for questions about federal and state data and other components of the data ecosystem that data users need for evidence building. The service shall adjudicate most questions with only a subset of questions needing input directly from federal staff, creating efficiencies across the federal government and improving effectiveness.

This project seeks solutions to establish a centralized NSDS data concierge providing a broad set of services and tools that support the discovery, acquisition, access, and appropriate use of federal and state statistical data. The solution should describe an NSDS data concierge designed at scale to handle the full set of intended users and uses. The data concierge should be developed in alignment with the [vision for a future NSDS](#) and should be integrated with and complement other NSDS components such as the NSDS website, a Secure Compute Environment, the Standard Application Process (SAP), the Federal Statistical Research Data Centers (FSRDCs), and other data services.

Objectives

At a minimum the data concierge should achieve the following:

- Provide general user support
- Help NSDS users with NSDS and federal and state websites and services navigation
- Incorporate artificial intelligence supported interfaces, such as ChatBots
- Facilitate public data access and acquisition (subject to applicable privacy and IT security regulations)
- Assist with developing requests for access to restricted data (subject to applicable privacy and IT security regulations)
- Serve as a liaison between users and data owners
- Direct users to training opportunities
- Engage stakeholders on the data concierge service and its capabilities
- Provide surge management capabilities to address potential cases of a rapid increase in the number of customer requests
- Plan for expansion capabilities to respond to evolving user needs or NSDS changes
- Gather data about what proportion of questions needs input from agency experts to assess performance over time

- On an ongoing basis, assess and recommend improvements to the concierge support and services

Information Gaps

This project will identify:

- How high-quality customer service can streamline data access and appropriate use, connecting data users with federal and state data.
- How a data concierge can adapt over time to meet evolving customer service needs.
- What innovative mechanism can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the concierge service to continually enhance and improve customer service and power a data concierge service based on user and government feedback.

Key Evidence Building Considerations

- Key focus questions (address one or more) to assess innovation in the following areas - user engagement and customer service:
 - What support do data users need to discover, access, and appropriately use federal, state, and local data?
 - How can a data concierge service be structured to meet the needs of data users and communities?

Deliverables

At a minimum, offerors will provide the following if selected for an award. Additional deliverables may be required.

- Monthly status reports on progress towards project objectives.
- Quarterly lessons learned that will inform a future NSDS and highlight what has been learned thus far, challenges with potential solutions, and any best practices.
- Within four months of project award, an NSDS data concierge framework and a roadmap to implement the data concierge at full scale including, but not limited to, identification of concierge services and tools, a mechanism to capture user needs and requests, overall schedule, key milestones, resources required including software or IT support, estimated cost, and plans for continued assessment and evolution. The roadmap should describe all phases and associated timing to implement a data concierge service at scale, including phases and activities that extend beyond the project end date.
- Within six months of project award, in alignment with the roadmap to implement the data concierge at scale, implement a base NSDS data concierge.
- Ongoing enhancements to the data concierge service, in alignment with the roadmap to implement the data concierge at scale, as well as user needs and feedback.
- Technical documentation and code as appropriate, to support maintenance and replicability of data concierge services and tools.
- An evaluation plan that includes methods for evaluating the data concierge service, including metrics. Collection and delivery of quarterly metrics, as the baseline data concierge service is developed.

- A communications and outreach plan, with accompanying implementation plan, for communicating with stakeholder groups about the data concierge service, messaging, and metrics to highlight the value proposition for a data concierge service.