Mission Statement
and
Data Governance Policy
of the
Rhode Island
Longitudinal Data System

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Mission Statement

The Rhode Island Longitudinal Data System ("RILDS") (f.k.a the Rhode Island DataHUB) connects data across sectors and over time to inform policymaking and research that improves the wellbeing of all Rhode Islanders.

Background

The RILDS is a resource for the State of Rhode Island ("State"), and it is maintained and operated by DataSpark, a program unit of the University of Rhode Island, for the Contributing Agencies/Entities with whom it maintains data sharing and confidentiality agreements. The RILDS is a robust, modern system that securely integrates and links education, health and human services, and workforce data from the Contributing Agencies/Entities.

The RILDS:

- Informs cross-sector policymaking and fosters longitudinal research
- Drives accountability and investment decisions
- Supports federal, state, and local reporting
- Improves organizational capacity and efficiency
- Enhances the accessibility and improves the quality of the data from Contributing Agencies/Entities

- Ensures the privacy and security of the data from Contributing Agencies/Entities and the data's use in accordance with federal and state law and regulations

Governance Policy Statement

The Rhode Island Longitudinal Data System (RILDS) Governance Policy is intended by the Contributing Agencies/Entities to establish a format for its internal governance. A coordinated statewide data governance program is critical to fulfilling the demand for high-quality education, health and human services, and workforce data. Governance establishes the structure, policies, and procedures of how data are collected, stored, transferred, and used. It ensures the availability, usability, quality, privacy, and security of the data.

Scope

This policy governs all data that are regularly integrated into the RILDS as well as data that are integrated on a temporary basis for project-specific use. This policy supplements those existing data sharing and confidentiality agreements[1] that have been executed by and between the Contributing Agencies/Entities and the University of Rhode Island on behalf of DataSpark, and should be read in conjunction with all other policies and process governing the RILDS, including the RILDS Security & Access Policies as well as the RILDS Request & Release Policies, and applicable federal and state law and regulation. However, should there be a conflict between the terms and conditions set out in this governance policy and the terms and conditions set out in any of those data sharing and confidentiality agreements executed by and between the Contributing Agencies/Entities and University of Rhode Island on behalf of DataSpark, the terms and conditions set out in those data sharing and confidentiality agreements shall control. These terms and conditions include, but are not limited to, questions of liability, data access, storage, transfer, use, confidentiality, privacy and security. The specific operations of the RILDS governance, namely the implementation of the policy, will be detailed in a separate manual.

In short, RILDS data shall only be for the legitimate business of DataSpark and as required in the performance of job functions. Contributing Agencies/Entities retain ownership of their data. DataSpark functions as the custodian of these data. RILDS data cannot be released or disclosed

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[1] See the RI Data Sharing Agreement & Memorandum of Understanding executed by and between the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, and the University of Rhode Island on behalf of its program unit DataSpark, dated February 2, 2022.

except as expressly authorized under applicable federal and state law and with the consent of the applicable Contributing Agency/Entity. Where a Contributing Agency/Entity objects to the use, release, or disclosure of their Agency/Entity Information, DataSpark shall not proceed with such use, release, or disclosure.

The founding RILDS Contributing Agencies/Entities ("Contributing Agencies/Entities") include:
- The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE),
- The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (RIOPC),
- The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT).

Agencies/entities providing their Agency/Entity Information on a recurring basis to the RILDS shall be subject to this and other policies governing the RILDS.

Governance Roles and Responsibilities

The RILDS governance involves three representative governing bodies—an Executive Committee, a Governance Committee, and a Stewards Working Group. Each group is comprised of staff from Contributing Agencies/Entities and is coordinated by DataSpark.

Executive Committee

As in any statewide initiative, the participation and support of executive-level agency leadership is critical to ensure that the governance and long-term sustainability of the RILDS is a State priority.

The Executive Committee includes one executive-level representative from each RILDS Contributing Agency/Entity and DataSpark, specifically:
- the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, or designee;
- the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education, or designee;
- the Director of the Department of Labor and Training, or designee; and
- the Director of DataSpark.

The chief executive or their designee of any other agency or entity providing their Agency/Entity Information on a recurring basis to the RILDS shall also serve on the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee meets at minimum twice each year. The Committee members elect a chair from amongst themselves. The Chair serves a two-year term.

Collectively, the Executive Committee is responsible for:
- demonstrating that governance and the long-term sustainability of the RILDS is a State priority;
- working to ensure that the RILDS has adequate resources to fulfill its mission and objectives;
- approving the strategic plan and research agenda drafted by the Governance Committee;
- for matters not covered in any applicable data sharing and confidentiality agreement executed by and between the Contributing Agencies/Entities and the University of Rhode Island on behalf of DataSpark,
    - approving policies and processes drafted by the Governance Committee; and
    - resolving issues escalated by the Governance Committee.

Individually, the members of the Executive Committee are responsible for:
- appointing representatives from their agency/entity to the Governance Committee and Stewards Working Group and including governance responsibilities in the performance expectations of these staff;
- communicating with the representatives from their agency/entity to the Governance Committee in order to prepare for Executive Committee meetings;
- holding their staff responsible for adhering to the policies and processes established through RILDS governance.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee includes one representative from each Contributing Agency/Entity with decision-making authority over the Agency/Entity Information shared through the RILDS. The Director of DataSpark, and as funding allows, the Governance Coordinator, participates in the Governance Committee and facilitates the meetings.

The Governance Committee meets at minimum once every other month.

Collectively, the Governance Committee is responsible for:
- drafting the strategic plan, performance measures, and research agenda of the RILDS in consultation with DataSpark;
- identifying possible data quality issues and redirecting them to the Stewards Working Group or escalating them to the Executive Committee for resolution;

- for matters that are not covered in any applicable data sharing and confidentiality agreement executed by and between the Contributing Agencies/Entities and the University of Rhode Island on behalf of DataSpark,
    - drafting the policies and processes of the RILDS in consultation with DataSpark;
    - approving Contributing Agency/Entity and third-party requests for RILDS data;
    - enforcing security policies and investigating cases of data misuse; and
    - providing oversight and management of the RILDS in consultation with DataSpark.

Individually, the members of the Governance Committee are responsible for:
- modeling and advocating data governance principles;
- understanding their Agency/Entity Information shared through the RILDS and communicating any issues, laws, policies, or regulations that could affect their Agency/Entity Information;
- participating in Governance Committee meetings and communicating with the representatives from their agency/entity to the Executive Committee and Stewards Working Group; and
- coordinating between data governance program of their agency/entity and the RILDS data governance program for matters are not covered in any applicable data sharing and confidentiality agreements by and between the Contributing Agencies/Entity and the University of Rhode Island on behalf of DataSpark.

Stewards Working Group

The Stewards Working Group includes representatives from the Contributing Agencies/Entities who are responsible for understanding and ensuring the quality of the data within their realm of responsibility. The Director of DataSpark, and as funding allows, the Governance Coordinator, participates in the Stewards Working Group in a non-voting capacity and facilitates the meetings.

The Stewards Working Group convenes as necessary.

Collectively, the Stewards Working Group is responsible for:
- ensuring that Agency/Entity Information shared through the RILDS are understood and used correctly, including providing the necessary metadata and data dictionaries; and
- ensuring data quality and resolving possible issues.

Individually, the Stewards are responsible for:
- informing RILDS business rules, aggregate calculations, and other metrics to achieve alignment between Contributing Agencies/Entities and nationally; and
- for matters are not covered in any applicable data sharing and confidentiality agreement executed by and between the Contributing Agencies/Entities and the University of Rhode Island on behalf of DataSpark,
    - documenting and maintaining metadata on their agency's/entity's systems and their Agency/Entity Information shared through the RILDS;
    - preparing and submitting data to the RILDS and documenting the associated agency/entity processes; and
    - identifying and resolving data quality issues.

DataSpark

As the custodian of the RILDS, DataSpark's leadership and management of and participation in the RILDS governance program is critical to its success.

DataSpark is responsible for:
- convening and communicating with the governing bodies;
- documenting and monitoring the implementation of all policies and processes approved the Executive Committee; and
- annually reviewing additions to federal and state laws and regulations to ensure compliance;
- ensuring the privacy and security of the RILDS and the Agency/Entity Information shared through the RILDS and that they are used in accordance with federal and state law and regulations; and
- advising the Governance Committee about the feasibility, scope, and cost of requests for matters are not covered in any applicable data sharing and confidentiality agreement executed by and between the Contributing Agencies/Entity and the University of Rhode Island on behalf of DataSpark.