

## ATTACHMENT I – PROJECT TOPIC

# Engaging Policy Stakeholders through a Future National Secure Data Service

### Key Objective

The objective of this project is to explore the development of a National Secure Data Service (NSDS) framework to enable federal policy stakeholders to use data efficiently and effectively for informed, evidence-based decisions. The outcomes of this project will inform a future NSDS by highlighting the potential role of navigation and concierge services for policy stakeholders, and the development of resources, to support the needs of these groups who seek data and evidence for their work.

The Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act) requires federal agencies to both develop evidence to support policymaking and to make those data accessible to support the needs of users. In the [Year 2](#) report prepared by the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence-Building (ACDEB), recommendations 3.4 and 3.5 describe the need for an NSDS to use data concierges and technical assistance to help users, more generally, refine their research questions and to identify and acquire relevant data. ACDEB recommendation 3.2. also specifically calls for the development of services to address the basic user needs that align with specific *personas*. This project seeks to target the *policy stakeholder persona* at the federal level to illuminate data needs and challenges and to provide a suggested framework of services within an NSDS.

Federal policy stakeholders often encounter challenges to achieve their goals given the unique demands, skillsets, and time constraints that could limit their ability to access and use data in a timely way for critical decision making. More information is needed 1) to consider the unique needs of policy influencers and advisors, policymakers, and policy evaluators at the federal level, and 2) to explore the development of NSDS resources, strategies, persona pathways, and tools that could be helpful to them for effective decision making.

This project will utilize a case study to explore how best to meet the evidence building needs of the policy stakeholder at the federal level, and will illuminate the specific needs, both met and unmet, that are essential within the lifecycle of public policy activities. These needs include but are not limited to clarifying research goals, data acquisition and evidence gathering, evidence application, and data-driven decision-making through each stakeholder's specific case study (topics to be determined). Of note, this project will not support or provide policy recommendations, or policy framing related to the case study or other aspects of the project.

## Background

Since the passage of the Evidence Act, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has issued guidance to inform federal agency implementation of the requirements set forth in the Evidence Act (see OMB Memos M-19-23 and M-21-27). This guidance promotes activities and infrastructure that supports the goals for evidence use and critical decision making. Despite these efforts, challenges remain in federal sharing and access of data for these purposes. Policy stakeholders (including but not limited to policy influencers, policy advisors, policymakers, and policy evaluators) have unique responsibilities for promoting and implementing critical decisions that have the potential to impact society at all levels. These responsibilities include but are not limited to enacting laws and regulations, establishing new programs and initiatives, allocating program funds and resources, measuring program impact on a specific population, and establishing other priorities for public investment. Objective, timely and accessible data are critical for these efforts.

The NSB is an executively appointed Board of Members appointed by the President of the United States and is the governing body to the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). Its role is to support the goals and function of NSF and the pursuit of national policies for the promotion of research and education in science and engineering. The second role of the Board is to serve as an independent body of advisors to both the President and the Congress on policy matters related to science and engineering and education in science and engineering. In addition to major reports, the NSB also publishes occasional policy papers or statements on issues of importance to U.S. science and engineering.

Given the NSB's policy advisor role for the Executive Branch, this project utilizes the NSB as a case study (topics to be determined) to illustrate the needs, gaps, successes, and challenges that are faced for developing policy recommendations of national significance. As required, this project will also implement a user journey framework by providing real-time solutions and pathways and to note any encountered barriers for data-related needs specific within the case studies. Lessons learned from the user journey framework may be used to inform future concierge services for an NSDS. This project will not provide support or provide policy recommendations, or policy framing related to the case studies or other aspects of the project.

The project will also explore other federal policy stakeholders and their needs through a landscape analysis and literature review that may contribute to this understanding. Findings will be used to develop a potential NSDS technical assistance service framework and other resources to support future evidence-based decision-making across the Nation.

The goals of this project are:

1. To conduct a detailed case study, as described above, to illuminate the processes, capacity needs and other barriers that highlight unique requirements for data-driven policy activity. The case study of interest will be defined in consultation with the NSB. Technical and other forms of data assistance will be provided through a user journey framework, as needed, to support the case study.

2. To conduct a literature review, environmental scan and separate needs analysis with a diverse set of policy stakeholders at the federal level, including but not limited to policy influencers, policymakers, and policy evaluators.
3. To conduct a gap analysis to determine what needs are not currently being met and what barriers currently exist with policy stakeholders' capacity for evidence-building.
4. To build on the findings of current NSDS Demonstration efforts and current community models and toolkits, to provide recommendations for a potential framework of services and tools in support of policy stakeholders who engage within a National Secure Data Service.

## Information Gaps

This project will:

- Build understanding of the federal policy stakeholder persona and user journeys that can be adapted and used for the NSDS and related outreach.
- Document the needs of federal policy stakeholders to plan, identify, acquire, access, and use statistical data and information to inform their work.
- Provide a framework, models, approaches, and tools that could be used to provide services and other interventions to support the data needs of federal policy stakeholders within a National Secure Data Service.
- Identify the services and support that could potentially be integrated into a larger data concierge service function for a National Secure Data Service.

## Key Evidence Building Considerations

- Key focus questions (address one or more) to assess *innovation* in the following areas - user engagement and customer service:
  - What unique approaches and support do policy stakeholders need for data-driven decision making?
  - How can a data concierge service support the needs of policy stakeholders?

## 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 based on what has been learned.
- Stakeholder engagement strategy plan for each of the stakeholder groups that includes the unique outreach methods to be used for each group, including the case study participants.
- Four reports:
  - One report detailing the needs and gap analyses based on a literature search, community research, existing research, and stakeholder outreach
  - One report with findings from the project's case study detailing lessons learned, successes, challenges and barriers during the evidence building lifecycle.
  - One report documenting the federal policy stakeholder user journey experience with accompanying technical support, noting the specific data needs, barriers, and challenges and reasons for why the use case data needs could or could not be supported.

- One report with recommendations for the development of specific frameworks, resources, or other tools to inform a concierge service model within an NSDS
- A draft prototype service framework or policy toolkit that could be adapted or scaled for an NSDS concierge service.
- Proposed Strategic Communication Plan for the policy framework/toolkit
- OMB package materials in support of the Paperwork Reduction Act, to be coordinated with NCSES.