



NativeDATA

A Data Sharing Resource for
Native Peoples and Organizations

Is Sharing Your Data a Good Choice?

There are several questions Tribes and Native-serving organizations can ask to decide if sharing their data is a good choice.

How Will Sharing Data Benefit My Tribe, Organization, and the People We Serve?

Consider the possible impacts of sharing data. What are the benefits for your Tribe, organization, and the people you serve? What are the benefits to the wider community (locally, nationally, and even globally)? What are the downsides? What useful services or opportunities can the potential partner offer?

Keep in mind

Having a protocol for deciding whether or not to share your data is useful. This protocol should describe who has the power to make this decision for your Tribe or organization, and how this decision is made. Protocols may change depending on whether the individual requesting your data is from your Tribe or organization or from an outside entity.

[This protocol](#) shows how the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment set up a research review process to protect their community.

Consider using [this advice](#) about data governance to create your own decision-making protocol if you don't already have one in place.

Who Wants Our Data?

Know exactly who is requesting your data. If an outside entity wants to use your data, make sure that they clearly describe everyone who will have access to your data. If the exact individuals are not clearly described, that is a red flag.

As with any new professional relationship, do some background research. Does your potential partner have a history of working respectfully with Tribes and/or Native-serving organizations? Do they have a good understanding of [Tribal data sovereignty](#)?

What Data Are They Requesting and How Much Effort Will It Take To Share It?

It is important to understand what information your potential partner is requesting. What exact data is being asked for? Do you have the data? If so, how much time and effort will it take for you and your Tribe or organization to collect and share the data?

How Do They Plan On Using the Data?

Learn how your potential partner, and their partners, plan on using your data. Then, decide whether their proposal lines up with what your Tribe or organization has said is okay.

Sometimes, a requestor may have good intentions, but their proposal may not directly benefit the people you serve. Keep in mind that if sharing data is not in the interest of your Tribe, organization, and the people you serve, you do not have to share your data. This is a power all Tribes and Native-serving organizations have.

Where Will the Data Be Stored and How Will It Be Protected?

It is important that your potential partner has a strong plan for keeping your data safe. Admittedly, asking someone how they will store and protect your data can result in a highly technical response. If you are not an expert, reach out to others. These [data sharing supports](#) can help. Also, learn more about [data stewardship](#) (protecting data).

When Will Data Sharing Take Place?

What is your potential partner's timeline? Will it give you enough time to get approvals? Each partner may have different expectations about the timeline. During the planning phase, talk with your potential partner about how long it may take before data is shared.

Do You Have a Plan for Getting Approvals From the Right People?

You may need to [get approval](#) to share data with an outside entity.

These might include:

- Approval through a resolution from your Tribal council or governing board
- Approval from Tribal research review committees or boards
- Approval from specific departments within your Tribe or organization

Describing the approval process to your potential partner will make sure that they are aware of your timeline. Be aware that your partner will have their own process for obtaining approvals, which will also require time and effort.

What Don't I Know?

Once data are shared, it can be near impossible to recall the information. For this reason, it can be challenging to feel comfortable with all aspects of data sharing. This includes creating and signing [data agreements](#). Have a trusted partner organization or legal consultant review documents and respond to your questions.

Need Help?

Reach out to these [data supports](#).



NPAIHB
NativeDATA

Got questions? Contact us at ideanw@npaihb.org or visit NativeDATA.npaihb.org.

Funding for this resource was generously provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under a contract from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (CDC cooperative agreement number 6NU38OT000306-02-01).

