

State Data Plan Leadership Meeting Summary Report

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Policy and Management

Executive Summary

On September 18, 2024, state agency leaders convened to assist in the development of the 2025-2026 Connecticut State Data Plan (see *Appendix A for a list of attendees*). The meeting aimed to:

- Understand how agencies are currently using their data and identify challenges related to data access and usage.
- Gather feedback, recommendations, and priorities from state agency leaders to inform the new data plan.

Survey Results

Prior to the September 18th meeting, state agency leaders were asked to complete an online survey to share their agency's successes and challenges in using data to inform their work (n=22 responses). The survey also gathered insights on projected data-related training and resource needs for the next two years to guide the development of the plan. Please refer to the Appendix B for a complete list of survey results.

Survey Results Summary: Reported Successes

Successes building staff capacity to use data themes	Successes improving access to data	Successes using data to make decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring qualified staff into key roles • Developing skills of junior staff • Acquiring additional resources to grow area • Access to Fellows to increase support • Investing in trainings and technical assistance for staff • Investing in new tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving operations and efficiencies • Managing call wait times, real-time data to the public via maps, dashboards • Improving data sharing, transparency, and access for the public • Developing reporting tools to monitor programs • Enhancing access and internal data sharing to improve staff communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving operations and efficiencies • Reviewing call wait times to identify areas for improvement • Improving data sharing, transparency, and access for the public • Developing reporting tools to monitor programs • Enhancing access and internal data sharing to improve staff communication

Survey Results Summary: Challenges and Needs

Top 5 data-related challenges	Top 5 anticipated data-related impacts	Top 5 data-related training or capacity-building needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget, 89% • Data availability, 50% • Data Quality, 43% • Staff skillset, 42% • Recruiting qualified staff, 39% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial intelligence, 90% • IT optimization, 84% • Data security, 79% • Data privacy, 78% • Staff turnover, 74% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data storytelling, 100% • Data visualization, 95% • Data governance, 95% • Data privacy, 91% • Data management, 90%

Recommendations

Based on the discussion, the following are recommendations from agency leadership to include in the next State Data Plan:

1. Develop a centralized hub to provide access to existing online data-related resources, including tools, software, and training materials.
2. Conduct a needs assessment to identify additional data-related training and resource requirements.
3. Offer guidance and support to agencies in hiring qualified data analysts.
4. Establish clear and consistent statewide guidelines for data sharing across agencies.

Existing Resources

The following resource list is provided by the Office of Policy Management, Data and Policy Analytics division in response to requests from State Agency Leaders for specific data-related resources and training. Additional resources and opportunities will be detailed in the 2025-2026 State Data Plan.

- State data plan overview: <https://portal.ct.gov/datapolicy/state-data-plan>
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- Data capacity building resources and videos / screencasts: https://portal.ct.gov/datapolicy/knowledge-base/articles/evaluation-and-impact/our-long-term-goals?language=en_US and videos / screencasts: https://portal.ct.gov/datapolicy/agency-guidance?language=en_US
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Introduction

On September 18, 2024, State Agency Leaders convened to assist in the development of the 2025-2026 Connecticut State Data Plan (see *Appendix A for a list of attendees*). The meeting aimed to:

- Understand how agencies are currently using their data and identify challenges related to data access and usage.
- Gather feedback, recommendations, and priorities from state agency leaders to inform the new data plan.

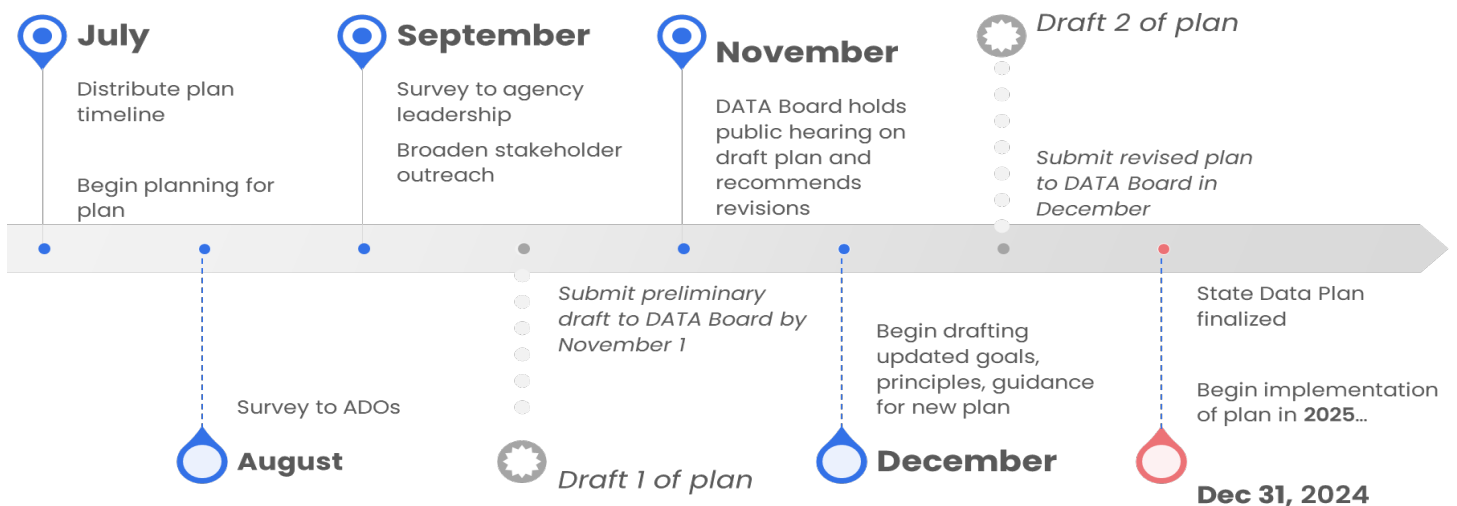
Connecticut State Data Plan

Per [Section 4-67p](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Data Plan is updated every two years to:

- establish management and data analysis standards across all executive branch agencies,
- include specific, achievable goals within the two years following adoption of such plan, as well as longer term goals,
- make recommendations to enhance standardization and integration of data systems and data management practices across all executive branch agencies,
- provide a timeline for a review of any state or federal legal concerns or other obstacles to the internal sharing of data among agencies, including security and privacy concerns, and
- set goals for improving the online repository [open data portal] established pursuant to subsection (i) of this section.

Revisions to the data plan are informed by engaging a variety of stakeholder groups including agency data officers, state leaders, and the Data Analysis and Technology Advisory (DATA) Board. This process began July 2024. A draft of the plan will be submitted to the DATA Board in November with a finalized plan slated for December 31, 2024.

2025-2026 State Plan Development Timeline



Results

Prior to the September 18th meeting, State Agency Leaders were asked to complete an online survey to share their agency's successes and challenges in using data to inform their work (n=22 responses). The survey also gathered insights on projected data-related training and resource needs for the next two years to guide the development of the plan. Please refer to the Appendix B for a complete list of survey results.

An external facilitator from Nimble Consulting was hired to facilitate the meeting. The group reviewed a summary of the survey results and shared examples of their experiences using data to provide context for the findings. OPM staff took notes during the meeting which were shared with the facilitator to create this report summary.

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Group Discussion

General Discussion

Themes from the meeting reflect a collective desire for improved data infrastructure, improved hiring resources, and enhanced collaboration across agencies to effectively use data for decision-making and program evaluation.

- **Data Tracking and Management:** There is a strong emphasis on the need for better data systems to track the success of programs, especially in educational contexts. This includes automated reporting and the ability to query data effectively.
- **Hiring Challenges:** A few leaders highlighted difficulties in hiring qualified data professionals, particularly data scientists. Issues include competition with the private sector, salary concerns, and the need for clearer job classifications.
- **Data Sharing and Collaboration:** The need for clear guidelines on data sharing across agencies was mentioned.
- **Technology and Tools:** There was a focus on the use of tools, like Power BI, for data visualization and reporting. Leaders discussed both successes and challenges related to outdated systems and data quality.
- **Customer Service Improvement:** Analyzing data to enhance customer service, such as measuring call wait times and understanding service preferences, was also a recurring theme.

Data-Related Challenges

Leaders shared the following challenges related to data management, sharing, and service delivery across agencies:

- **Data Availability and Accessibility:** There is confusion and concern over what "data availability" means, with discussions highlighting difficulties in accessing and sharing data across agencies.
- **Collaboration and Support Needs:** A need for a centralized resource or library of tools to aid in data management and sharing was expressed, along with calls for capacity building and training on existing tools.
- **Capacity and Resource Duplication:** The discussion included frustrations over duplicated efforts and the need for better alignment among agencies to optimize resources.
- **Client Experience and Service Delivery:** The burdensome data requests on clients, especially vulnerable populations, were highlighted. Simplifying processes could improve access to services.
- **Data Sharing Challenges:** Statutory and regulatory limitations are believed to hinder effective data sharing. Participants noted the need for agreements and collaboration but faced obstacles due to strict compliance requirements.
- **Legal and Compliance Considerations:** Participants discussed the complexities of adhering to both state and federal laws in data sharing, particularly regarding protected information.
- **Procurement and Data Management Issues:** There were concerns about inefficiencies in data management and the procurement process, with suggestions for better coordination and criteria for vendor selection.

Anticipated data-related impacts

Leaders anticipate a blend of opportunities and challenges associated with artificial intelligence (AI) integration, highlighting the need for ethical considerations, collaboration, and strategic planning.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications:** There is significant interest in using AI for operational improvements, such as call center routing and data analysis, with examples from other jurisdictions illustrating its potential benefits.
- **Data Integration Challenges:** Leaders highlighted difficulties in integrating and analyzing data, particularly narrative data, and discussed the possibility of using AI to facilitate this process.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Concerns about the ethical implications of AI use were raised, especially regarding its application in sensitive contexts like legal proceedings, emphasizing the need for ethical training and awareness.
- **Policy and Governance:** The existence of a policy on AI use and a dedicated advisory group to evaluate use cases indicates a structured approach to managing AI integration within agencies.
- **Collaboration on Use Cases:** The need for collaborative identification of multi-agency use cases for AI was discussed, highlighting the potential for shared benefits.
- **Training and Workforce Development:** Emphasis was placed on the importance of training staff on AI tools and their applications to enhance capabilities within agencies.
- **Needs Assessment:** A suggestion was made to conduct a needs assessment around AI to identify requirements and opportunities for its implementation across agencies.

Training and Capacity Building Needs

Leaders emphasized the need for training and capacity building that focuses on enhancing data communication, accessibility, and collaboration.

- **Data Storytelling:** Emphasizing the importance of effectively communicating data insights to various audiences, as this is a primary responsibility for agency leadership.
- **Dissemination and Accessibility:** Highlighting challenges in sharing and accessing data, including improved methods to disseminate information.
- **Internship and Recruitment Strategies:** The importance of leveraging internships and partnerships with educational institutions was discussed as a way to build a pipeline of qualified candidates. The benefits of collaborative initiatives, such as the Governor's Fellow program, were also highlighted.
- **Collaboration and Training:** Advocating for joint training efforts among agencies to enhance understanding and utilization of data, especially in community contexts.
- **Centralized Data Resources:** The need for a centralized landing page to facilitate easy access to relevant data across different sectors.
- **Communication and Engagement:** The need to improve transparency and public engagement through social media and improved communication strategies.
- **Unified Data-related Updates:** Proposing a centralized hub for data-related guidance and tools to streamline access and consistency.
- **Tailored Messaging:** The importance of adapting language and communication styles to suit different audiences.

- **Standardization:** Stressing the need for consistent terminology and clear metadata to avoid confusion among users.
- **Training for Consistency:** Training staff to ensure a shared understanding of key data elements and concepts.

Recommendations

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- Responsible AI framework for agencies: <https://portal.ct.gov/opm/fin-general/policies/-/media/d13d6f704fa3408998f20e67ebda8aab.ashx>

Appendix A: State Leadership Attendance

- Thea Montanez, Office of The Governor
- Scott Gaul, Chief Data Officer, Office of Policy and Management
- Ellen Solek – Connecticut Technical Education and Career Services Executive Director
- Mark Boughton – Department of Revenue Services Commissioner
- Bryan Cafferelli – Department of Consumer Protection Commissioner
- Shantelle Barnes – Department of Social Services Dept Commissioner
- Amy Porter – Aging and Disability Services Commissioner
- Andrew Hoskins – Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Chief of Staff
- Kelli-Marie Vallieres – Chief Workforce Officer, Office of Workforce Strategy
- Charlene Russell-Tucker – State Department of Education Commissioner
- Angel Quiros – Department Of Correction Commissioner
- Paul Potamianos – Office of Policy and Management Deputy Secretary
- Nancy Navarretta – Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Commissioner
- Deidre Gifford – Office of Health Strategy Commissioner
- Tim Larson – Office of Higher Education Commissioner
- Joyce Lee Taylor Department of Children and Families Deputy Commissioner
- Manisha Juthani – Department of Public Health Commissioner

Appendix B: Leadership Survey Results

Which agency do you represent?

- ADS
- CETCS
- DAS
- DCF
- DCP
- DECD
- DEEP
- DMHAS
- DOC
- DOH
- DOL
- DOT
- DPH
- DRS
- DSS
- OEC
- OHE
- OHS
- OPM
- OWS
- SDE
- Other (not defined)

What is your role within your agency?

- Agency Data Officer, 1
- Agency Leadership, 21

Challenges: To what extent does your agency face any of the following challenges using data?¹

Budget, data availability, data quality, staff skillset, and recruiting qualified staff are reported as the top 5 challenges agencies face using data.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Lack of budget	89%	5%	5%
Data availability	50%	22%	28%
Data quality	43%	32%	25%
Staff lack the appropriate data and analytical skill sets	42%	21%	37%
Inability to recruit qualified staff that know how to interpret and use data effectively	39%	16%	37%
Inability to retain qualified staff that know how to interpret and use data effectively	37%	16%	42%
Lack of executive support	12%	17%	61%
Rate of technological change is too high	16%	42%	43%

¹ Strongly Agree and Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree are combined. Not applicable is not reported in this table and therefore, totals may not equal 100%.

My agency effectively utilizes data to achieve our agency goals.

- Strongly agree, 4
- Agree, 18
- Neither agree or disagree, 0
- Disagree, 0
- Strongly disagree, 0

Impacts: How likely are the following to have significant impact on your work in the next two years?²

Artificial intelligence, IT optimization, data security, data privacy, and staff turnover were the top 5 predicted impacts reported.

	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely
Artificial intelligence	90%	--	10%
IT optimization	84%	11%	10%
Concerns about data security	79%	11%	11%
Concerns about data privacy	78%	11%	11%
Staff turnover / retirements	74%	21%	5%
Federal changes in race / ethnicity standards	68%	21%	11%
Other changes in state or federal law	58%	32%	11%

Which of the following would you prioritize for training or capacity-building for your agency?³

	Important	Neutral	Unimportant
Data storytelling	100%	--	--
Data visualization	95%	5%	--
Data governance	95%	5%	--
Data privacy	91%	10%	--
Data management	90%	10%	--
Artificial intelligence	81%	10%	10%
Demographic data collection	80%	15%	5%
Accessibility	79%	11%	11%
Performance management	76%	24%	--
Evaluation	76%	24%	--
Geospatial information systems (GIS)	75%	25%	--
Statistical techniques	75%	25%	--
Equity in data use	68%	32%	--
Specific tools (e.g. R, Python, SQL)	65%	30%	5%
Ethics/human subjects training	47%	48%	5%

² Very and Somewhat Likely and Somewhat and Very Unlikely are combined. Not applicable is not reported in this table and therefore, totals may not equal 100%.

³ Very and Somewhat Important and Somewhat and Very Unimportant are combined. Not applicable is not reported in this table and therefore, totals may not equal 100%.

Rankings of the most important data-related activities to achieve agency goals over the next two years⁴

1. Development of training and capacity building (68%)
2. Providing access and tools and technology for data use (50%)
3. Supporting analysis research and evaluation using state data (32%)
4. Developing guidelines and standards for data use (32%)
5. Communicating the use of data by state agencies (18%)

⁴ First and second choice rankings are combined.