

Reviewing and Approving Data Requests

A *How NCLDS Works* Brief for NCLDS Contributors and Stakeholders

Enterprise Data Office

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The North Carolina Longitudinal Data Service

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The **How NCLDS Works** Series

This brief is part of a series that provides details for North Carolina Longitudinal Data Service (NCLDS) users, NCLDS Data Contributors, and other stakeholders about how various technical and procedural aspects of NCLDS and the systems that contribute data to NCLDS work. The briefs focus on aspects that are not easily explained in a paragraph or two.

Each brief has been written in a way that we hope will make it accessible even to audiences without data, analysis, or technical backgrounds, but please share feedback with us about how we can make the briefs more accessible. We are also open to suggestions for other topics you would like to see covered. We can be reached at NCLDShelp@nc.gov.

Currently Available Briefs

- [Linking Data: eScholar Student UID](#)
- [Linking Data: NC eLink Entity Resolution](#)
- [Linking Data: Workforce Data](#)
- [Linking Data: Prospects for *Ad Hoc* Matching](#)
- [Making Data Requests](#)
- Reviewing and Approving Data Requests (this brief)

Planned Briefs

- Common Elements across NCLDS Data Sources
- Data Availability and Use Guide
- Using the Public Version of the NCLDS Data Dictionary
- Reviewing Data Requests
- Fulfilling Data Requests
- Reviewing Products Created by External Partners with NCLDS Data
- Cross-Sector Governance of NCLDS
- Security and Privacy
- Creating Practitioner Portals
- Cross-Sector Learning Goals

1. Context: NCLDS and the Data Request Process

This brief describes the process that North Carolina Longitudinal Data Service ([NCLDS](#)) Administrators and Data Contributors follow when reviewing and approving requests for custom-built aggregated or record-level datasets.¹ This collaborative, multi-step process includes several checkpoints designed to ensure the preservation of data privacy and security, and Data Requesters should be aware that it can take several months to complete the process in order to honor NCLDS's commitment to these standards.

About NCLDS

NCLDS connects data from contributing state agencies and organizations across a variety of sectors, including early childhood, K12 education, postsecondary education, health and human services, and employment. The service supports practitioners and researchers by connecting them with the longitudinal data they need to address cross-sector [Learning Goals](#) under the guidance of a governance structure (developed in collaboration with every Data Contributor) that protects the privacy and security of personal information. Read other *How NCLDS Works* briefs (listed at the beginning of this document) and visit the [NCLDS website](#) to learn more about NCLDS and our data privacy, security, linking, and data-sharing processes.

It is important to remember that NCLDS is a data connector, not a data owner: It links, de-identifies, and packages data from two or more contributing data owners, but it does not have constant access to those data. After a request for data is approved by *all* the owners of the data included in the request, NCLDS prepares the data and then securely delivers the prepared data to the Data Requester. Requesters can come from a variety of backgrounds—they may be NCLDS data partners, other state entities, scholars, or practitioners—and their requests can be for many different purposes—including research, evaluation, decision-making, and reporting.

NCLDS Data Contributors

NCLDS facilitates the connection of data from several existing longitudinal data systems including the [North Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System \(ECIDS\)](#), NCSchoolWorks (NCSW), and the [Common Follow-Up System \(CFS\)](#). The agencies and organizations that contribute data to these systems or directly to NCLDS include:

- NC Department of Health and Human Services;
- NC Department of Public Instruction;
- NC Community College System;
- UNC System;
- NC Independent Colleges and Universities; and
- NC Department of Commerce.

¹ There is no request review process for already-approved and [publicly-posted aggregated datasets](#) published on the public NCLDS website.

The NCLDS Limited Implementation Phase and Prospects for Full Service

The current version of this brief has been developed specifically for Data Requesters and Request Reviewers participating in the Limited Implementation Phase of NCLDS. The Limited Implementation Phase requires significant support from the NCLDS staff, so NCLDS restricts the number of data requests reviewed each month. After the conclusion of this Phase, when NCLDS transitions to a fully online request tool (anticipated launch date: Q3 2026), NCLDS will remove the cap on the number of requests it accommodates each month.

As NCLDS grows, it also will provide services in addition to custom datasets, including:

- **Research-Ready Datasets:** Pre-prepared, record-level, de-identified, linkable datasets from NCLDS Data Contributors that comprise their most frequently requested data elements;
- **Data Portals for Practitioners:** Special cross-sector, longitudinal data products tailor-made for educators and other practitioners, accessible only via a secure portal to protect data privacy and security; and
- **Aggregated Data:** Cross-sector data tables and visualizations at levels of aggregation that mask individual data and therefore allow for unrestricted, public sharing.

A Note on Single-Source Data Requests

Data Requesters seeking data from a single source (*i.e.*, data from only one of the state agencies or organizations contributing to NCLDS) should contact that specific Data Contributor to make a data request. NCLDS currently facilitates only the linking of data from two or more contributing agencies or organizations and does not yet provide single-source data request services, with one exception: NCLDS does support single-source requests for data from the NC Community College System.

The Two-Stage Data Request Review Process

Each NCLDS data request begins when a Data Requester completes an online data request form, which NCLDS Administrators shepherd through a **two-stage request review process**. Data Requesters receive updates from NCLDS via e-mail about the progress of their request as it passes through each review stage.

NCLDS Administrators and Data Contributors collaborate throughout the data request review process, and both stages of the process include several decision points for all parties reviewing a request. This brief is designed to orient you to how a data request moves through the review process, as well as the criteria used by NCLDS Administrators and Data Contributors to vet and (if the criteria are met) approve that request.

Depending on the complexity of your request, the number of Data Contributors involved, and the permissions needed to access the specific data elements you are requesting, **be prepared for this process to take a significant amount of time**. Certain Requesters—including state

leaders, policymakers, and designated employees of NCLDS Data Contributors—may be eligible for an **expedited review process**, explained in more detail in the **Appendix**.

During **Stage A** of the data request review process, Data Requesters provide high-level information about their project and anticipated data needs.² The goals of this stage are to orient Data Requesters to the expectations and requirements of NCLDS and its Data Contributors and to vet each request to ensure that Requesters are eligible to receive the data they seek. A comprehensive list of information collected from Data Requesters during Stage A is provided in the [How NCLDS Works: Making Data Requests](#) brief.

A Note on Submitting Data Requests

Once fully operational, NCLDS will host a formal online interface for processing all data requests and for submitting related documentation. Currently, Data Requesters must complete and submit Stages A and B of the request process via Microsoft Forms and must submit related materials (e.g., formal documentation of faculty and/or Data Contributor sponsorships, IRB status, etc.) as prompted via e-mail instructions sent by NCLDS Administrators.

Data Requesters whose projects are approved in Stage A (or who qualify for expedited review) are invited to complete **Stage B**. The goal of this stage is to gather in-depth information about your proposed project, including details about project personnel, your proposed research questions and methodology, and the specific data elements you are requesting. Formal documentation of any specific sponsorships and/or approvals you may have secured in preparation for your request also must be provided at this stage. The [Making Data Requests](#) brief also includes an overview of the in-depth information gathered from Data Requesters during Stage B.

Monitoring the Status of Data Requests

While it is important for NCLDS to ensure that everyone involved in the data request review process has the time needed to complete each step of the process thoughtfully and securely, it is equally important to NCLDS and its Data Contributors to improve our efficiency. To that end, NCLDS tracks the time it takes to complete each step of the review process for each data request, and we use this information to help us better understand where we have opportunities for improvement.

Our [Data Request Tracking Dashboard](#) is updated regularly to keep our team, Data Contributors, Data Requesters, and the general public informed about requests submitted to NCLDS and the time it takes to complete each step in the request process. This public tracking of requests supports NCLDS's commitment to being transparent about the data requests it is processing.

² Requesters who meet the requirements for expedited review bypass Stage A.

Prioritizing Data Requests

Because NCLDS's first responsibility is to provide timely data to help address the needs of the state, NCLDS reserves the right to prioritize the order in which data requests are fulfilled, should the number of active requests exceed NCLDS's capacity to process those requests. At such times, the [NCLDS Board](#) has approved a policy that prioritizes requests for data from elected officials and state agencies that contribute data to NCLDS. When the demand requires that NCLDS invoke the prioritization policy, all other requests will be addressed in the order in which they are received after fulfillment of the priority requests.

2. Request Reviewers and Their Roles

Two groups of stakeholders are responsible for reviewing your data request: **NCLDS Administrators** and **Data Contributors** associated with your request. Both groups are involved in both stages (Stage A and Stage B) of the data request review process.

NCLDS Administrators ensure that Data Requesters have provided all necessary information to complete the Stage A and Stage B forms and to confirm their legal eligibility to receive any data included in their requests. NCLDS Administrators complete an initial review of each submission and may contact you with questions or to seek additional information. Once NCLDS Administrators determine that your request form is complete and confirm you are eligible to receive the data included in your request, they pass your request along to each Data Contributor that will be involved in approving your request.

Representatives from each Data Contributor associated with your request conduct a thorough review of your proposed project and provide feedback during both Stage A and Stage B. Data Contributor reviewers include subject matter experts (people with knowledge of the questions and issues of importance to each Contributor), people with knowledge of the data being requested (including knowledge of Contributor- and data-specific data-sharing and/or data-matching restrictions), legal consultants, research and evaluation methodology specialists, and data privacy and security experts.

Once NCLDS Administrators and all associated Data Contributors approve your Stage A or Stage B form, you will receive additional information and instructions by e-mail from an NCLDS Administrator about the next steps in the data request process. If at any step in the review process your request is not approved by NCLDS and/or any of the Data Contributors associated with your request, you will receive feedback from an NCLDS Administrator about why your request was not approved. You may revise and re-submit a declined Stage A or Stage B request.

Anticipating Delays in Response to Data Requests

At any given moment in the calendar year, NCLDS Administrators and Data Contributors juggle a variety of demands on their time. Request Reviewers may have especially limited availability to review data requests during specific "high-stress" months or seasons, which can impact the

request review process and lead to delays in turnaround time. Table 2.1 provides more information about typical “high-stress” periods for each Request Reviewer for you to keep in mind as you consider the timing of your data request.

Table 2.1 *Contributor Typical Annual High-Stress Periods*

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
ECIDS												
NCDPI												
NCCCS												
UNCSO												
NCICU												
Commerce												
NCLDS												

= High-Stress Period

3. Stage A Request Review

Each Stage A request is reviewed by NCLDS Administrators and associated Data Contributors to determine whether the Data Requester is eligible to make the request (based on state and federal rules that govern the access to and use of each Contributor’s data), and whether the request is a good fit for the NCLDS process (based on the types of requests NCLDS currently is authorized by Data Contributors to facilitate, as well as on the data available via NCLDS). As noted above, in some cases, Data Requesters may be able to bypass Stage A and start with Stage B. More information about this expedited review process is provided in the **Appendix**. NCLDS Administrators may contact you at any time during the review of your Stage A request with questions or to seek additional information.

Stage A NCLDS Administrator Review

After submitting the Stage A form, each Data Requester will receive an e-mail from an NCLDS Administrator within five business days acknowledging NCLDS’s receipt of your submission. NCLDS Administrators focus their review on several key components of your Stage A request, which are summarized in Table 3.1 (following page).

After NCLDS Administrators determine that your Stage A request is complete and that you are eligible to request the data you have identified, your Stage A request will be shared with each associated Data Contributor.

Table 3.1 Stage A Data Request Review: NCLDS Administrators

Key Component	Review Criteria
Basic information about the organization or institution making the request, including your organization/institution's name and type (e.g., an Institution of Higher Education [IHE], a research group not affiliated with an IHE, a state or local government agency, a non-agency branch of state government, etc.)	NCLDS Administrators will review your organization's or institution's name and affiliation to determine whether you might meet the criteria for our expedited review process (Appendix). Requesters meeting the criteria for expedited review will be invited to complete the Stage B form. Requesters <i>not</i> meeting the criteria for expedited review will proceed through the full Stage A request review process.
Your status as a student/post-doctoral researcher, and contact information for your Faculty Sponsor (if applicable), including your sponsor's name, title, phone number, and e-mail address	If you are a student or a post-doctoral researcher, NCLDS Administrators will confirm that you have identified a Faculty Sponsor and have provided contact information.
Whether your data request has a formal sponsor affiliated with one or more of our Contributing Agencies and, if so, contact information for the representative(s) formally sponsoring your request, including name(s), title(s), and e-mail address(es) for any formal sponsors	Formal sponsorship is not required by most Data Contributors ³ , but it is required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) for any request that includes NCDPI data . NCLDS Administrators will review whether your request requires formal sponsorship and, if so, confirm that you have secured the appropriate sponsorship.
Whether you have applied for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct your research (if your organization or institution has an IRB process) and, if so, the status of your IRB application	NCLDS Administrators will review your current IRB approval status. Please consult the <i>Making Data Requests</i> brief for more information about the IRB approval process and related requirements.

³ While not required for a request that does not include NCDPI data, securing sponsorship from representatives of other organizations and agencies that hold data relevant to your request may strengthen your overall application. We recommend identifying a potential sponsor at each Data Contributor that oversees data included in your request.

Stage A Data Contributor Review

Data Contributors focus their review on two key components of your Stage A request, which are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Stage A Data Request Review: Data Contributors

Key Component	Review Criteria
<p>A short summary of your proposed project, including information about how you plan to use the data that you request</p>	<p>Data Contributors will review your summary of your proposed project with an eye toward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actionability (e.g., the extent to which the projected results of your project might be immediately actionable); • Level of Impact (e.g., the potential impact of your project on policy development, program management, or the production of NC-relevant research); • Breadth (e.g., whether your request involves cross-sector data⁴); • Level of Coverage (e.g., the potential geographic scope of your project, be it at the state, regional, or county/community-level); and • Alignment with <u>NCLDS Learning Goals</u>.
<p>High-level information about the data you plan to request, including the level(s) of data you seek</p>	<p>Data Contributors will assess the degree to which your proposed project's scope and goal(s) match the level or amount of data you have requested.</p>

If all associated Data Contributors approve your Stage A request, you will receive additional information and instructions by e-mail from NCLDS Administrators about how to complete Stage B. If at any step in the review process your request is not approved by NCLDS and/or any of the Data Contributors associated with your request, you will receive feedback from our team about why your request was not approved. You may revise and re-submit a declined Stage A request.

⁴ Please note that **cross-sector data requests that do not require linking services** (i.e., requests for data from multiple NCLDS Contributors that do not need to be linked across sectors) will receive the lowest priority. NCLDS accepts requests for cross-sector but unlinked data, but whether those requests will be fulfilled via NCLDS or via separate requests made to each Contributor will be determined by each impacted Contributor during the initial request (Stage A), and also by whether NCLDS staff can accommodate the request in addition to the current number of other active requests. For situations in which NCLDS does not have the capacity to handle such requests, NCLDS will work with impacted Contributors and the Requester to transition to separate Contributor-level requests.

4. Stage B Request Review

As in Stage A, both NCLDS Administrators and associated Data Contributors complete a comprehensive review of each Stage B request—including the in-depth project details provided by the Data Requester during this stage of the request process—and make a determination about whether to fulfill the request. Requests must be approved by NCLDS Administrators and all associated Data Contributors before they can be fulfilled. NCLDS Administrators may contact you at any time during the review of your Stage B request with questions or to seek additional information.

Stage B NCLDS Administrator Review

After submitting the Stage B form, each Data Requester will receive an e-mail from NCLDS Administrators within five business days acknowledging our receipt of your form. NCLDS Administrators focus their review on several key components of your Stage B request, which are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Stage B Data Request Review: NCLDS Administrators

Key Component	Review Criteria
Project personnel and their contact information, including their names, titles, roles within your project, and e-mail addresses	NCLDS Administrators will confirm that you have identified the personnel associated with your proposed project and have provided all required contact information.
Documentation of faculty sponsorship, if applicable	If you are a student or a post-doctoral researcher, NCLDS Administrators will confirm that you have secured a formal Faculty Sponsor for your project and provided appropriate formal documentation of that sponsorship (e.g., a letter or e-mail from your Faculty Sponsor).
Documentation of sponsorship(s) by one or more of our Contributing Agencies, if applicable	If your project involves formal sponsorship from one or more of the NCLDS Contributing Agencies, NCLDS Administrators will confirm that you have provided appropriate formal documentation of sponsorship (e.g., a letter or e-mail from a representative of the Contributing Agency indicating formal sponsorship). As noted above, formal sponsorship from an NCDPI representative is required for any request that includes NCDPI data.

Key Component	Review Criteria
Documentation of your project's IRB status, if applicable	If you indicate that you have secured or applied for IRB approval for your project, NCLDS Administrators will confirm that you have provided appropriate formal documentation of the status of your IRB application (e.g., a letter or e-mail verifying your project's current IRB status).

After NCLDS Administrators determine that your Stage B request is complete and that you are eligible to request the data you have identified, your request will be shared with each impacted Data Contributor.

Stage B Data Contributor Review

Data Contributors focus their review on several key components of your Stage B request, which are summarized in Table 4.2. They also review the project personnel details and other key documentation summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.2 Stage B Data Request Review: Data Contributors

Key Component	Review Criteria
Details about your proposed project's alignment with existing <u>NCLDS Learning Goals</u> and other benefits of your project to the state	Data Contributors will review which component(s) of the NCLDS Learning Goals, if any, are directly addressed by your proposed project. While alignment with an NCLDS Learning Goal is not required, demonstrating this alignment may improve your likelihood for approval. Data Contributors also will assess the degree to which your project may benefit the state of North Carolina (e.g., how the project will improve the education, health, and/or well-being of North Carolina students or citizens).
The specific research questions your project is designed to address, your proposed research methodology, and your project's timeline	Data Contributors will assess the feasibility of addressing the full scope of your proposed request given your anticipated timeline, proposed methodology, and indicated team size/staffing/expertise. Data Contributors also will assess the alignment between your proposed research questions and research methodology and the degree to which these elements of your proposal align with your team's expertise.

Key Component	Review Criteria
The level and type of requested data, including the specific data elements you have requested	Data Contributors will assess the degree to which your requested data elements are relevant to your proposed research questions and methodology. Data Contributors also will consider whether and to what extent privacy regulations such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ⁵ (FERPA), the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act ⁶ (HIPAA), or the Federal-State Unemployment Compensation Program ⁷ (20 CFR 603) may limit your ability to access the requested data elements for this specific project. ⁸

If all associated Data Contributors approve your Stage B request, you will receive instructions by e-mail from NCLDS Administrators about additional steps preceding the data transmission process. If at any step in the review process your request is not approved by NCLDS and/or our Data Contributors, you will receive feedback from our team about why your request was not approved. You may revise and re-submit a declined Stage B request.

5. Next Steps Preceding Data Transmission

After the approval of a request but before data are made available, Data Requesters can expect to work closely with their organizations/institutions, NCLDS Administrators, and Data Contributors to complete the final steps in the data request process. Before an approved dataset can be transmitted to a Data Requester:

- NCLDS and the Requester must complete a Privacy Threshold Analysis and Security Attestation to ensure that appropriate data privacy and security regulations are in place on the Requester's end;
- All parties must complete and sign a Data Use Agreement and any additional agreements and forms required by individual Data Contributors (based on each Contributor's own data governance structure and statutory obligations);
- Any members of your organization/institution's team who will have access to the data you are requesting must sign a Project Personnel Agreement; and

⁵ <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/ferpa>

⁶ <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html>

⁷ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-603>

⁸ The full set of NCLDS privacy and security policies are posted at: <https://nclds.nc.gov/data-standards/data-privacy-and-security>

- The requested data package must be prepared by NCLDS Administrators and reviewed by all Data Contributors who provided data for the request.

Privacy Threshold Analysis and Security Attestation

Prior to the transmission of any data, Data Requesters are required to provide additional information about their organization's or institution's data privacy and security standards and policies and also disclose their plans for ensuring secure storage and manipulation of requested data. Data Requesters must prove that these standards and policies *meet or exceed* the standards outlined in the North Carolina Department of Information Technology's [Statewide Information Security Manual](#). Additional information about statewide information security policies and related topics can be found [here](#) (in particular, in the [Security Audit & Assessment document, SCIO-SEC-304: Security Assessment and Authorization Policy](#)).

As part of the privacy and security review process, NCLDS Administrators will ensure that your data request meets privacy safeguarding requirements before any datasets containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and/or Protected Health Information (PHI) can be transferred. Your proposed data usage must be legal and must align with the [Fair Information Practice Principles](#).

In addition, the Enterprise Security Risk Management Office ([ESRMO](#)) at the North Carolina Department of Information Technology will verify the security of the system on which you plan to receive, store, and work with the data you have requested. To facilitate this verification, you will be asked to identify a person within your organization or institution who is responsible for overseeing the security of your computing tools, provide that person's contact information, and indicate the level of security that is in place for those tools. Security level designations include:

- [ISO 27001](#) attestation;
- [HITRUST](#) certification;
- [FedRAMP](#) attestation;
- [SOC II Type 2](#) certification;
- Approved [North Carolina Vendor Readiness Assessment Report](#);
- [NIST 800-53](#) compliance;
- [NIST 800-171](#) compliance; or
- Favorable [HECVAT On-Prem](#) report.

If your organization or institution does not have a designated security oversight person, you will be considered the security point of contact. Until a formal attestation of the security of your receiving system has been provided to and verified by ESRMO, NCLDS will not be able to fulfill your data request. If a Data Requester is not able to demonstrate full compliance with the standards linked above, approval still may still be granted pending a review by ESRMO and the [Office of Privacy & Data Protection](#).

Data Use Agreement

Before data can be released, a Data Use Agreement (DUA) must be signed by the Data Requester, NCLDS Administrators, and all Data Contributors whose data are included in the request. You can preview the standard NCLDS DUA [here](#); keep in mind, however, that each DUA will be customized to reflect the specific nature of your request, so, while the template is a good guide, it is not the final version of the DUA you will be asked to sign.

The DUA is a legal document, so you may need to ensure that a member of your organization's legal team is able to review the document before you sign. If you do not have a legal team, you may want to consider engaging legal counsel for this purpose. For more information about the Data Use Agreement, including specific sections of the document to which Data Requesters might want to pay close attention, please review the *Making Data Requests* brief referenced earlier in this document.

Project Personnel Agreement

Any members of your organization/institution's team who will have access to the data you are requesting are considered project personnel and must sign a Project Personnel Agreement (PPA) before data can be released. The PPA asks signers to certify that they have reviewed the DUA associated with the project and agree to follow all terms outlined in the DUA, including those governing the use, privacy, and destruction of data. Each member of the project team will sign a separate PPA, and each PPA also will be signed by the Data Requester.

Preparing and Reviewing Data

The amount of time necessary for NCLDS to prepare the data associated with approved data requests will depend on the breadth of the approved request and the complexity of the linking required to fulfill the request. Once NCLDS has prepared the data package, all Data Contributors who provided data for the request will review the package to ensure that all privacy and security requirements have been met.

After Data Contributors have reviewed the data package and all required legal documents and forms have been completed by all parties, NCLDS will follow a [privacy- and security-forward process](#) for making the requested data package available to the Data Requester. Once a Data Requester receives and inspects the data package, the Data Requester can request EITHER:

- a) Corrections to any errors not identified during the review process; OR
- b) Additional data element(s) if, upon receipt, the Data Requester discovers that a requested element is only usable with inclusion of another element.⁹

⁹ A Data Contributor also can recommend the inclusion of additional data elements based on the Data Requester's proposal during the data request and/or data package review process.

Please note that any such requests made after transmission of the data package will require verification of destruction of the original data package and may also require repetition of some or all of the steps outlined above, based on the nature of the correction request.

Appendix: Expedited Requests

Bypassing Stage A

There are **three** situations in which NCLDS Administrators and Data Contributors may be able to work with a Data Requester to expedite the data request process.

1. **Members of certain state governing bodies** already meet requirements reviewed during Stage A and can request direct access to the Stage B request form by contacting NCLDShelp@nc.gov. These include:
 - **North Carolina General Assembly members and designees** working directly on their behalf;
 - **The Governor's Office, the Education Cabinet, and designees** working directly on their behalf; and
 - **Council of State members and designees** working directly on their behalf.
2. **Individuals designated by NCLDS Data Contributors as having direct affiliation with NCLDS work** already meet requirements reviewed during Stage A and can request direct access to the Stage B request form by contacting NCLDShelp@nc.gov. These include:
 - Designated employees of Data Contributors with NCLDS-related data responsibilities; and
 - Third parties that have secured formal sponsorship for their proposed request from all impacted Data Contributors.
3. **Individuals making a request in response to a pressing, formally-identified state need that requires expedited processing.** If a Data Requester believes a request meets this criterion, the Requester sends a written rationale (including summary information about the data needed) to NCLDShelp@nc.gov and an NCLDS representative will work with the Requester and the relevant Data Contributors to determine the steps needed to review the request.