

October 2021

# A Plan for Agency Input into Processes to Support the Data Governance and Organization to Support Equity and Racial Justice Act (20 ILCS 65)



*Submitted to the Legislature by the Office of Governor JB Pritzker on October 29th, 2021 as required by the Data Governance and Organization to Support Equity and Racial Justice Act (20 ILCS 65).*

## Introduction/Overview

The Data Governance and Organization to Support Equity and Racial Justice Act (the “Act”) requires eleven agencies<sup>1</sup> (collectively “the Agencies”) to report on participation in their major programs based on a standard set of designations for race, ethnicity, and indigeneity. The intent of the Act is to provide transparency into who is served by these programs and provide agencies and advocates the information necessary to develop strategies that help reduce inequities.

The Act calls on the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) to develop standard data management and governance processes to support agencies’ implementation of the law. The Act also requires the Governor’s Office to provide a plan for input into the processes that DoIT is required to support. This document details that plan—and provides recommendations and suggestions for how best to ensure that Agencies are engaged in the process of data governance, analytics, and reporting. This project will be a coordinated partnership across the Agencies implementing the Act, DoIT, and a variety of participants in the Governor’s office including the Office of Equity, the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) program, and all four of the Deputy Governors.

The Governor’s Office views the work of reporting on race, ethnicity, and indigeneity as critical to improving equity. In addition to agency input, the Governor’s Office believes community input is necessary for successful implementation.

## Plan for Input from Agencies into Data Governance Processes

This Agency Input Plan outlines three strategies for how the Agencies and communities will be engaged throughout the process of DoIT creating the processes and governing structures to implement this Act.

**STRATEGY 1:** Awareness building of existing DoIT processes and Agency data capacities

**STRATEGY 2:** Individual and collective agency meetings to inform processes

**STRATEGY 3:** Ongoing group convenings with Agency CIO and data owners and DoIT to coordinate implementation of the Act

<sup>1</sup> State Board of Education, Department on Aging, Department of Central Management Services, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, Illinois Department of Labor, Department of Health-care and Family Services, Department of Human Services, Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Transportation

Each agency implementing the Act will be able to modify the processes, within the parameters of the law to ensure they can best support the agency’s needs. The goal is to have standardized processes for data governance while allowing flexibility for the Agencies to support their own needs. Use of similar technology platforms to implement this law should also increase efficiency of the implementation and allow the tools to be used across a range of projects including this equity reporting effort and a variety of ILDS projects. The community engagement process begins with a transparent discussion of the processes to be implemented and will evolve into conversations regarding the data itself and processes to improve data quality which support better data use.

Best practices and lessons learned from the ILDS experience were used to build this Agency Input Plan. The ILDS supports the ability to connect data across eight state agencies<sup>2</sup>, allowing the state to analyze and report data from Early Childhood Education through the K-12 system and into post-secondary and the workforce. The ILDS has a governance and management structure that allows the state to solicit input on a variety of processes, including the data governance processes outlined in the Act. The ILDS is a pilot program using the data processes provided by DoIT and, as such, provides a resource for ongoing efforts (Appendix A provides more information on the work of the ILDS).

DoIT is developing a State Data Practice (the “SDP”), which will support processes for agencies to manage and catalog their data more easily. These processes will allow agencies to catalogue and evaluate its quality which enable improved reporting by race, ethnicity, and indigeneity. A goal of these processes is to reduce the burden on Agencies to collect more data — and reduce the burden on service providers to supply more data. Other goals are to have improved data standardization and to ensure common terminology across agency data systems. This will eventually make reporting more consistent and easier to use across Agencies.

For each Agency listed in the Act, the intent is to:

- Build awareness of Agencies on the DoIT processes and procedures
- Share DoIT training and guidance documents for implementation of DoIT processes
- Request and use each agency’s feedback to improve the DoIT processes
- Incorporate each agency’s feedback into the processes as appropriate
- Identify major programs for each agency and define high-level reporting requirements
- Work with Agencies to understand their plan for cataloging and reporting on their data
- Allow Agencies to leverage the DoIT processes to support their reporting

Following is the expected timeline to complete each major activity:

Activity	Date
Collate Documentation on DoIT processes	Q4 2021
Hold introduction meeting with all 15 agencies	Q4 2021
Build awareness of DoIT processes and procedures related to data management	Q1 2022
Meet individually with the 15 agencies	Q1 2022
Work with agencies to identify major programs and reporting requirements	Q1 2022
Develop plan for cataloging data	Q2 2022
Provide initial reports on major program participation by race, ethnicity, and indigeneity	Q2 2022

<sup>2</sup> State Board of Education, the Community College Board, the Board of Higher Education, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Employment Security, the Student Assistance Commission, and the Department of Economic Opportunity

Two additional assumptions to consider while developing this plan, derived from ongoing implementation of the ILDS, are:

1. Input into and execution of data governance processes is an ongoing endeavor, not a one-time event.
2. Collaboration on data governance processes by Agencies on programs with similar goals, lends itself to improved data use and accessibility.

Implementation of the Act will be an evolutionary process as Agencies identify major programs catalog the data from those programs and develop reports that provide insight into the equity of programs. To ensure reporting is aligned across Agencies requires ongoing discussions answering questions that include what is a major program; how is participation in each program defined; how should questions about race, ethnicity, and indigeneity be asked; how does reporting on these identifiers provide meaningful information about the equity of these programs; how can cross-agency or cross-program reporting provide a fuller picture of equity, etc.

## Overview of Data Governance and Organization to Support Equity and Racial Justice Act

The Act requires the Agencies to disaggregate their reporting of program participants in “major” programs by a standard set of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity classifications:

1. American Indian and Alaska Native alone.
2. Asian alone.
3. Black or African American alone.
4. Hispanic or Latino of any race.
5. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone.
6. White alone.
7. Some other race alone.
8. Two or more races.

The Agencies are allowed to further define classification by rule, including a classification of “no race specified” if needed. For programs with required Federal reporting, Agencies are allowed to adhere to existing reporting classifications to avoid duplication of reporting for the Federal government and state purposes. As national conversations around identity and data continue, for Illinois to remain at the forefront of equity and data collection, DoIT and the Office of Equity in the Office of the Governor will develop a process to add flexibility on data categorization to meet the needs now and in the future of race / ethnicity / indigeneity categorization.

The key to implementing this Act is the requirement that DoIT assist the Agencies “by establishing the following common technological processes and procedures.” DoIT is developing tools and processes to help support the processes listed below. These tools include Cloud Pak for Data, an IBM package that allows for cataloging, assessing data quality, and provides space for virtual analytics. Other tools being tested and developed include MuleSoft that allows for secure data transfer and Tableau that supports improved reporting and Master Data Management which supports data inter-operability and data stewardship including data conflict resolution (i.e. when data in one system is different than another system). Standardizing these tools allows the state to ensure improved data quality, not only within agencies, but across agencies. The Governor’s Office believes more rich and full data that can view a person more wholly, rather than a point of interest about a person, can better inform program design moving forward.

These data standards also allow for the creation of communities of practice around data domains. This is particularly important since many critical questions facing state government are cross-agency (i.e. how many children receive a continuum of early childhood services birth through five? What is the typical postsecondary experience of a high school graduate and what are the expected career outcomes based on different pathways?) rather than just within one agency. The ILDS Governance is an example of agencies collaborating around multi-agency data questions. Individual agencies are still responsible for meeting the

law's requirements – but by using DoIT supports and tools, the effort will be more efficient and effective and will provide for more cross-agency analysis.

DoIT is responsible for establishing common technological processes and procedures that will assist the Agencies in undertaking twelve separate activities in the Act:

1. Catalog data.
2. Identify similar fields in datasets.
3. Manage data requests.
4. Share data.
5. Collect data.
6. Improve and clean data.
7. Match data across the Board and Departments.
8. Develop research and analytic agendas.
9. Report on program participation disaggregated by race and ethnicity.
10. Evaluate equitable outcomes for underserved populations in Illinois.
11. Define common roles for data management.
12. Ensure that all major programs can report disaggregated data by race and ethnicity.

If the Agencies are unable to complete reporting for all major programs, the law requires them to provide a statement as to why they cannot follow through on the requirements. The processes delineated here include data collection processes, data quality processes, data inter-operability processes and data analytic and reporting processes. The Agencies, DoIT, the Governor's and the Office of Equity will need to work in concert to support their implementation.

### **Adaptations Based on PA102-0543**

PA102-0543 was signed by Governor Pritzker on August 20, 2021. This legislation adds additional fields beyond race, ethnicity, and indigeneity to the reporting requirements for agencies including age, sex, disability status, sexual preference, gender identity and primary or preferred language. In contrast to the fields for race, ethnicity, and indigeneity, the law did not provide standard definitions for these fields. Additionally, despite the added fields, the timeline for implementation has not been modified. PA102-0543 will require changes to data collections and work within and across agencies and, with the guidance of the Office of Equity within the Office of the Governor to help define, ongoing definition of the fields. This work will be necessary prior to being able to report on these attributes.

### **Conclusion**

The Data Governance and Organization to Support Equity and Racial Justice Act is a significant step toward using data to support transparency and accountability regarding both equity and the strategies necessary to improve racial justice in the State of Illinois. Adding the demographic fields required under PA102-0543 further illustrates that the Act represents a keystone in the use of data to support all the people of Illinois. By leveraging centralized technology and data management processes, the implementation of this law should be more efficient and effective in providing agencies support. It also has the potential to assist in creating forums for discussing the law's implications and implementation. As illustrated throughout this document, implementation of the ILDS Data System and its governance processes already provide a baseline for the processes required by the Act.

## Appendix A: Illinois Longitudinal Data System, Governance, and Ongoing Work

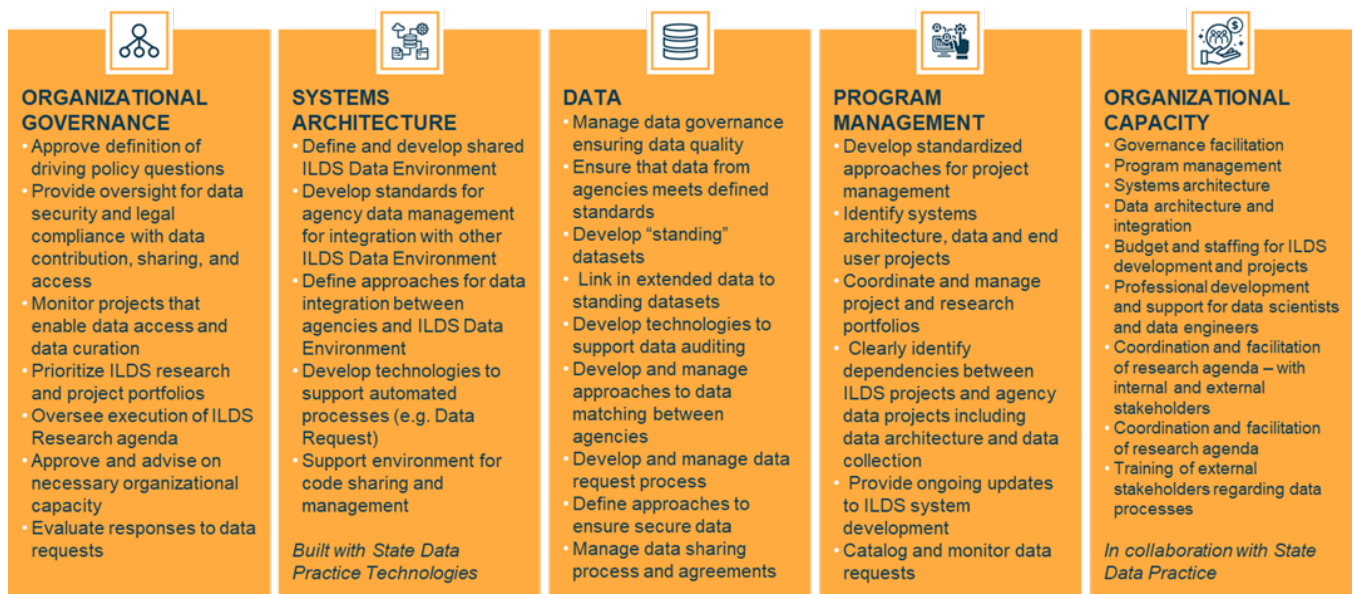
Enacted by the Illinois General Assembly and effective July 30, 2009, Public Act 096-0107—the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act—provides the statutory basis for the ILDS.

In 2013, the first inter-governmental agreement (IGA) was executed to establish the governance of the ILDS across seven state agency signatories and the Governor’s Office.

In 2021 a restated and amended IGA was executed, now including eleven signatories made up of eight state agencies<sup>1</sup>, the Governor’s Office, the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development, and the State of Illinois Health and Human Services Innovation Incubator (HHSi2). The ILDS agencies represent each stage of the P-20 education pipeline, and their collective data coverage enables longitudinal linkage of student information over time.

Beginning in November of 2019, the ILDS agencies have been engaged in developing ILDS 2.0 — an ambitious effort to provide a central system for connecting agency data and linking it using a key developed and administered by Northern Illinois University’s (NIU) Centralized Demographic Data Administrator (the “CDDA Key”). In addition to developing an enhanced software system, ILDS 2.0 has included the redevelopment of the ILDS governance structure, creation of datasets that can be readily used to support research and reporting (including interactive data reports), and development of support processes that will help ensure consistency in data request and data analytic approaches. The elements of the ILDS are captured below:

DIAGRAM 1 | ELEMENTS OF ILDS 2.0



The ILDS agencies have been involved in discussions of four major processes and procedures:

- Unified Project Requests for Research and Analytic Partners
- Development of Standing Datasets (i.e., Early Childhood Participation Dataset and High School 2 College 2 Career Dataset)
- Coordination of Research and Analytics Portfolio
- Data as an Organizational “Function”

1 Ibid.

These four processes overlap with the processes discussed in the law. The following table illustrates the alignment of specific statutory processes from the Act with those processes required for each of above-listed ILDS processes:

ILDS Process	Statutory Processes in the Act
Unified Project Requests for Research and Analytic Partners	(1) Catalog data. (3) Manage data requests. (4) Share data. (7) Match data across the Board and Departments.
Development of Standing Datasets	(1) Catalog data. (2) Identify similar fields in datasets. (4) Share data. (5) Collect data. (6) Improve and clean data. (7) Match data across the Board and Departments.
Coordination of Research and Analytics Portfolio	(8) Develop research and analytic agendas. (9) Report on program participation disaggregated by race and ethnicity. (10) Evaluate equitable outcomes for underserved populations in Illinois. (12) Ensure that all major programs can report disaggregated data by race and ethnicity.
Data as an Organizational “Function”	(11) Define common roles for data management.

The ongoing development of the four processes defined by the ILDS 2.0 represent a pilot of the DoIT processes. The goal is that these four processes will support the improved use of data to inform policy making. Following is a short description of each process.

### *Unified Project Requests for Research and Analytic Partners*

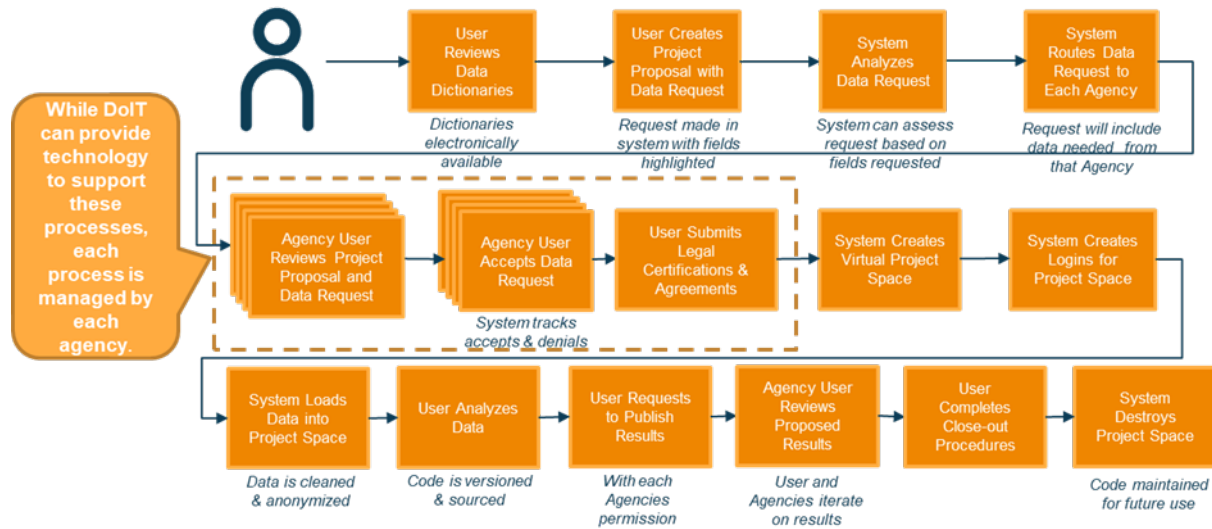
Currently, the process for obtaining data from multiple agencies is cumbersome. Requesting data for a project from a variety of agencies requires knowing the process at each agency and sometimes the right people at each agency to ask, knowing what data are available, and often knowing inside knowledge about how the data is used and comes together. This can make requesting, integrating, and analyzing the data an arduous path to navigate.

A goal of ILDS 2.0 is to support a unified approach to data and project requests across ILDS agencies. The intent is to create a system where analysts can make one request in a central location. The ILDS 2.0 will then route the request to the right people at each agency for approval. Once a data request is approved by each agency the data will be provisioned in a standard way, using a standard tool, with well-defined access and user controls. This will improve security and ensure the state maintains control over the data. Agencies will also be able to review the results of research and analysis to ensure the methodologies being used are correct and findings align with the purpose of the research. The following diagram captures this process:

**DIAGRAM 2 | UNIFIED DATA PROJECT REQUEST**

**Unified Data/Project Request**

*Governance will define this process. Technology will enable it. And datasets will make it useful.*



*Development of Standing Datasets*

Aligned with the process above is the creation of “standing” datasets, which will increase ease of use for analysis and research. The current process for conducting research and analysis often involves giving researchers data sets directly from multiple operational data systems that support specific programs (such as child care or unemployment). To date, researchers have largely had to do their own pre-processing. Pre-processing allows for the development of business rules that are used to shape the data in the standing dataset. This helps standardize reporting and ensure the same rules are used each time data is analyzed. As with the standard approach to data requests, appropriate standing datasets could support improved reporting by race, ethnicity, and indigeneity across agencies.

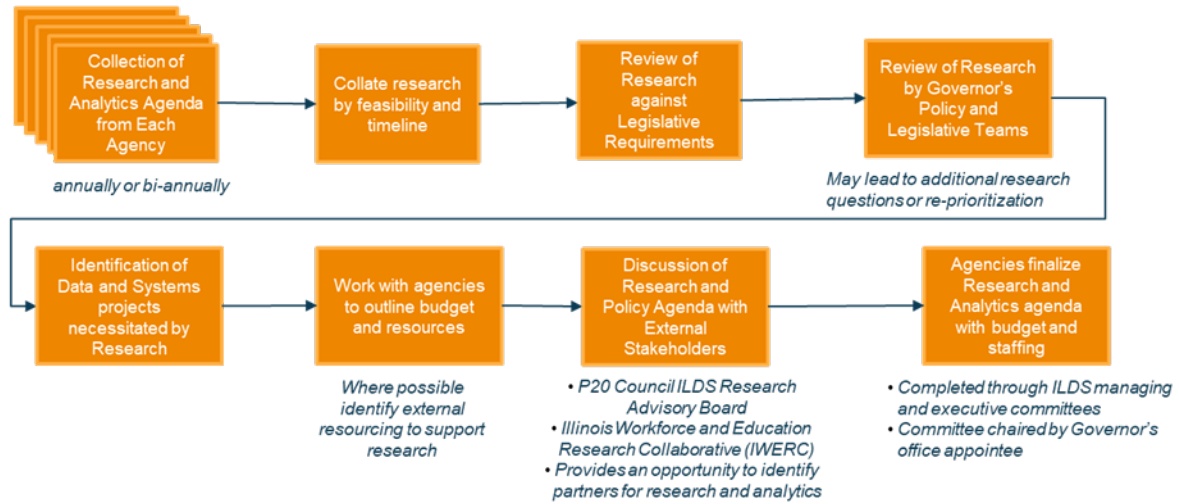
*Coordination of Research and Analytics Portfolio*

There are many questions for which data could provide the direction or answers -- but it takes time and resources to bring the data together, ensure the data is of meaningful quality, align the business rules, and agree on how best to use the data. This means research and analytics need to be prioritized. The ILDS agencies are discussing how best to prioritize cross-agency equity-oriented and people centered research and analytics to better plan future work. Priority questions already defined by the ILDS Governance include a better understanding of the continuum of services that students Birth to Five receive and questions regarding the pathway from high school to postsecondary and into careers.

**DIAGRAM 3 | COORDINATION OF RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS PORTFOLIO**

**Coordination of Research and Analytics Portfolio**

*Identification and management of key research projects to inform development of data capacity*



**Data as an Organizational “Function”**

The Act calls on DoIT to “define common roles for data management”. The ILDS agencies have discussed the concept of data as an organizational “function.” This function, like other functions such as Legal and Finance, will vary across agencies, but DoIT can help guide the development of a common structure while allowing for needed variations across agencies. The ILDS agencies are discussing how best to adopt the concept of data as a “function.” Each agency will need roles to support the following processes:

Process	Description
Data Stewardship	Catalog data and ensure it aligns with the needs of business users. Manage who has access to data and when. Manage how best to link it to other data. Rationalize fields across data.
Data Governance	Ensure that data is well managed. Fields do not change names over time, and individuals are aware when data is changing. This includes councils that can discuss when data is being changed and help define how best to use data.
Data Request Management	Make sure that data requests make it to the right people. Ensure that the legal processes are being followed to allow access to the data. Work with the data steward to determine when individuals or organizations can have access to the data. Ensure that the data being asked for exist and can be used for the purposes for which is being requested.
Data Analytics	Develop and prioritize the questions of stakeholders. Develop analytics that answer those questions. Explain why the data can or cannot be used for the analytics being run. Make sure results are provided in an accessible manner that can be understood by stakeholders and correctly answer the questions that are being asked of the data.