

How LINC Works

Step 1: Project Development

LINC projects are born from real problems government partners face that demand analytics to inform smart decisions. Frequently these project ideas arise during agency leadership meetings, task force convenings or informal working group brainstorm sessions. Academic researchers can also initiate LINC projects if they have expertise to contribute to an area of high priority to government partners. The three-phase project development process begins with you answering a few quick questions to learn whether LINC offers a good fit for your project idea.

- **Determine Project Fit.**
[Answer 5 brief questions](#) to learn whether LINC is a good fit for your project idea. If so, you will be asked to describe your project in preparation for consultation with the LINC Director.
- **Project Design.**
A LINC representative supports you in designing an effective project and engaging [data partners](#).
- **Refine & Activate.**
A LINC review committee works with you to fine tune and complete the project approach and, upon approval, a [Data Use License](#) is completed.

Step 2: Data Partnering

State government agencies benefit from LINC's streamlined, secure process to research complex policy, process and service issues. Whether an agency initiates a research project or learns from research projects instigated by other agencies, there are big benefits to being a LINC partner:

- **Secure, Quality Data.** LINC delivers the highest available standards to ensure data privacy, and its expertise in top-tier identity resolution provides sophisticated data matching capabilities.
- **Big Data, Tailored Insights.** The large and growing collaborative of data partners offers unique cross-system insights on real-life challenges, along with tailored data collection approaches for each project.

- **Time & Cost Savings.** New agencies are compensated for their time to onboard with LINC and contribute data to an initial project, and partners have the ongoing benefit of a time-saving single data request pathway.

How Data Partners Decide to Participate in Specific Projects

- **LINC Director Sends Project to Relevant Data Partners**
 1. Is it a priority for at least one participating LINC data partner?
 2. Are there any ethical concerns about answering the posed questions (e.g., potential for unintended consequences)?
 3. Can data being requested fulfill goals of the project?
 4. Any opportunities missed to answer additional questions of value?
- **Virtual Review Committee Meeting**

The [virtual review committee meeting](#) is held with data providers, LINC Director, and requester. This meeting allows LINC data partners to provide feedback and required revisions and to make decision on the project (approve, approve conditional on revisions, decline).
- **Revised LINC Request**

LINC Director sends revised LINC request to the review committee who then respond with project approval if revisions are acceptable.
- **Data Use License**

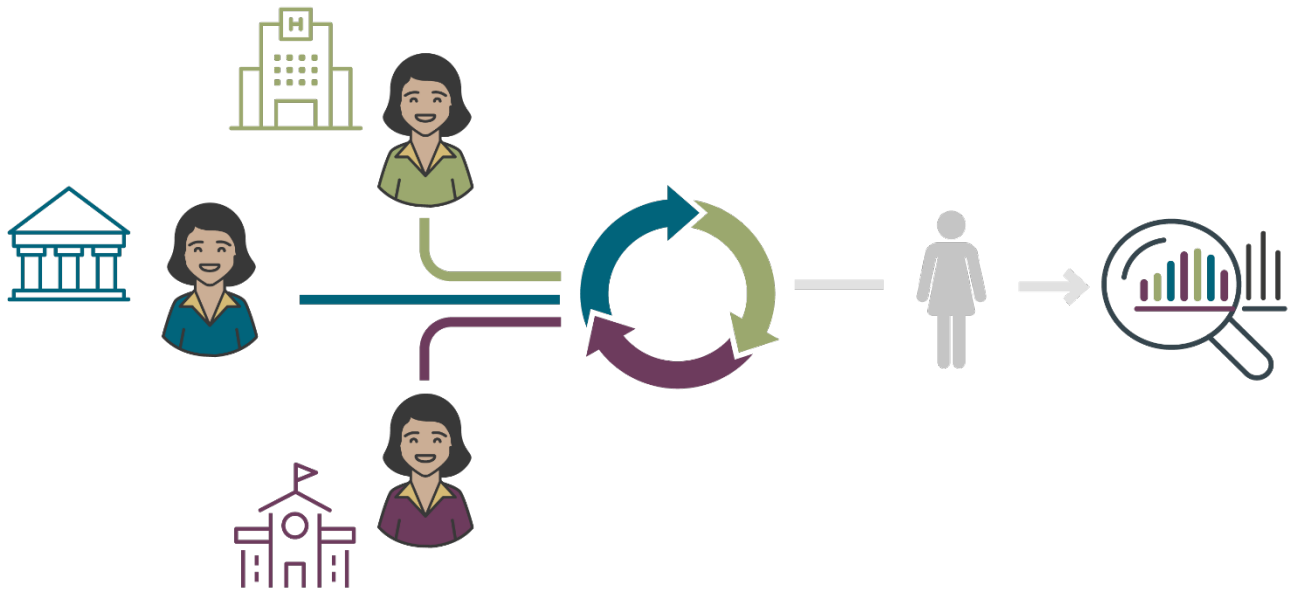
LINC Director completes standard [Data Use License \(DUL\)](#) with approved project details and sends to requester's organization for signature.

Step 3: Link & De-identify Data

LINC is not a data warehouse. It is a **federated data model** where data partners temporarily provide the minimum required data for an approved LINC project.

LINC follows all standards for data security and privacy required by state and federal laws and regulations. The [LINC Data Sharing Agreement \(DSA\)](#) allows each data partner to specify their exact expectations regarding the handling of their data. LINC therefore meets or exceeds the expectations of any one data partner. The LINC Data

Scientist secures the LINC project data on an encrypted computer within a physically secured office that is accessible only to the LINC Data Scientist.



- **Data Receipt**

The approved minimum required data for a LINC project are transferred by the LINC data partners to the LINC Data Scientist in OIT via MOVEit. [MOVEit](#) is a secure file transfer program (SFTP) that meets both health and criminal justice secure file transfer standards.

- **Data Linkage**

The LINC Data Scientist cleans, de-duplicates, and performs a series of identity resolution strategies appropriate to the LINC project data. [Senzing](#) is the preferred identity resolution software application and is always followed by detailed quality checks and adjustments to the matching process.

- **Data De-identification**

The LINC Data Scientist then de-identifies the linked project data to meet the standards of all LINC data partners as outlined in their signed LINC DSAs.

- **Data Transparency**

A data match report ([example report](#)) is provided to the LINC data partners and LINC requester for review and feedback. This data match report includes details of the matching process and results as well as a data dictionary of the de-identified LINC project data.

- **Data Provision**

After the data match report is accepted, the LINC Data Scientist uses the MOVEit application to securely transfer the de-identified LINC project data to the approved LINC requester for completion of the project goals.

Step 4: Ethical Data Use

- The LINC Director provides continued oversight of LINC projects once the de-identified LINC project data are in the hands of the approved requester. This ensures the LINC project data are only used for the approved purposes outlined in the LINC Data Use License (DUL) signed by the requester's organization
- The approved LINC requester must submit regular project progress updates that identify any changes to the project. If the changes are small and do not impact the project goals or potential results, they are reviewed and documented by the LINC Director. If the changes have meaningful implications for the project goals or results, they must be approved by the LINC review committee.
- A final project report must be submitted by the LINC requester and shared with the LINC review committee for review and comment. Before any results are shared publicly, the LINC requester must share the products (e.g., reports, slide deck) with the LINC review committee for the opportunity to review and share feedback.
- Once the project period is over, the LINC requester must destroy the de-identified LINC project data and submit a signed certificate of data destruction to the LINC Director.