Frequently Asked Questions
Data User Insights Academy

Team Formation

Question: Who qualifies as a "data user" group? Who can participate as a state team representative?

Examples of data user groups that might participate in the Academy process could include state or local workforce agencies; economic development agencies and organizations; community colleges or vocational training providers; direct service providers/workforce intermediaries; businesses or professional associations; researchers or universities; or elected officials and other government agencies. However, you should not

Anyone from an organization that is part of the data user group identified in your application is eligible to be a representative on a state team, either as a core team member, or as a home team member. However, representatives (particularly on the core team) should be individuals with significant experience in their field and the state, ideally in a leadership position, who can meaningfully influence policy and programs focused on data access and usage.

Question: What if the data user constituency we have in mind is not represented on the list included on the letter of interest form?

Teams shouldn't feel confined to engaging strictly in one of the groups as defined/listed on the letter of interest form. We do want to provide some latitude in terms of how a data user constituency or group is being defined. Identify participants that make the most sense based on the shared needs and challenges present within your state's context.

If the data user group/organizations you'd like to participate in the Academy process are not represented on the interest form list, please email us and we can provide additional guidance or feedback.

Question: Our LMI agency is interested in participating in participating in the Academy and have a data user group in mind that we'd like to partner with, but don't have existing relationships with any of these organizations—what should we do?

Answer: If you are interested in participating but do not have any existing relationships with data user organizations in your state, please email us and we may be able to connect you with organizations from within our networks, or who have either expressed interest in Academy participation.

This is also the perfect time/opportunity to start forging new relationships with data users! If we do not know of any interested groups from your state, consider reaching out to groups directly to see if they would want to participate.

Question: Our organization uses state LMI data and is interested in participating—what should we do?

We are glad you are interested in participating! The first thing you should do is reach out to your state's LMI agency about this opportunity and see if you can work with them to apply (or if they can include you as part of a team that is already being arranged). Please email us if you are looking for contact information of your state's LMI agency. We may also be able to connect you with them directly.

Activities

Question: What will state teams be doing as part of the project?

Exactly what each state team will be working on as part of the Academy process depends on the unique context and needs of each state's LMI ecosystem and the data user groups that are involved in the project. While each team is asked to identify a specific challenge or opportunity related to data use they'd like to address, one aim of the first in-person convening will be to begin clarifying what will be needed to address that challenge or opportunity through additional strategic planning and goal setting. The rest of the process will involve implementing and putting these plans into action with the assistance of the team's facilitators, technical assistance resources, and subject matter experts.

We want to avoid being too prescriptive as to what exactly these solutions will look like. However, one example could be the development or improvement of a data resource, such as a one-pager or data dashboard, that addresses the unique needs of the data user group participating on your state team. LMI Institute/PMP facilitators could then assist in arranging, guiding, and interpreting user testing of the resource, while subject-matter experts in data visualization would further inform the team of best practices in design and user experience. Another example could include facilitating greater access to restricted microdata for a user group, with the input of SMEs in data governance and privacy.

Question: How much time should we anticipate spending on this project?

Aside from the in-person convening at the start of the project, the virtual convening at the end, and the in-state facilitator visit, core team members should expect to spend a few hours a month, at a minimum, on the project. This time will include participation monthly virtual meetings with other teams in the cohort (one hour apiece), regular or ad-hoc check-ins with your team's external facilitators, and any additional time dedicated to receiving technical assistance or SME consultation.

Of course, any additional time commitments are up to you to determine and will likely vary depending on your team's focus/project.

Question: What resources from the LMI Institute/PMP are available to the state teams?

Travel, lodging, and meal costs, both for state core teams to travel to the in-person convening, and for facilitators to conduct in-state site visits, will be entirely paid for.[1] The LMI Institute/PMP will also cover all costs associated with the outreach, time, and technical assistance provided by facilitators assigned to each team, as well as any costs associated with bringing in outside subject matter experts to provide consultation.

Question: Should projects focus on data dissemination, data visualization, or data creation?

Any of the above! The purpose of the Academy process is to make LMI data more accessible and usable for a wider audience of data users. As long as your efforts are focused on addressing that goal, we'd love to see teams take any variety of approaches. Most importantly, your project should be meeting a real need, challenge, or opportunity for data users that hasn't already been addressed.

Applications and Selection

Question: How will applications be reviewed? Is there a panel?

Answer: Yes, applicants will be reviewed by a panel made up of staff and partners of the LMI Institute and PMP based on the criteria we have laid out in the application instructions.

Question: Can we set several tentative goals for our team?

Absolutely. Outline them in the narrative portion of the application, and your team can refine/solidify them as part of the Academy process itself.

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[1] State teams must book their own travel and pay out-of-pocket for any food and lodging but will be reimbursed for these costs. Additional information and instructions for booking/reimbursement will be provided following team selection.

Question: What is the maximum number of applicants that can be selected from the same state or organization? Will the selection process take place at the state or organization level?

State teams must be made up of representatives from both the state LMI agency and selected data user group. Multiple organizations from within the same data user group can (should) be part of the same state team.

Because any state team must secure participation from the state LMI agency to be eligible, however, this necessarily limits the number of teams that may apply to participate from any one state. While states may submit applications for multiple separate teams (focused, of course, on different data user groups and goals) representatives from the state LMI agency must be committed to supporting and participating in any of those proposed teams/projects. That said, we will likely be selecting a single team per state to participate in this cohort.