



Focus Area 5: Other Items, Services, and Capacity Building

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Overview of Proposed Focus Area Scope

Scope of Topics

- The overarching purpose of this focus area is **ensuring NSDS users—be they federal, state, local, or other authorized entities—make the best possible use of the Service’s potential for secure and privacy-protecting evidence building, regardless of their existing analytic capacity.**
- Proposed primary remit is technical assistance across the evidence-building lifecycle, from *formulation of initial research question to dissemination of actionable evidence*. Includes support in curation, linkage, cleaning, analysis, disclosure avoidance, reporting, data archiving, and all things “open science.”
- Proposed secondary remit is communications about the Service, focused on the potential value propositions it offers for governmental and non-governmental actors.

Initial Low-Hanging Fruit

Potential Quick Wins

- As quickly as possible, we should develop a series of artifacts that serve as “worked examples” for how each stage of the eventual NSDS process is meant to unfold. This includes example project planning documents, agreements, technical plans, and anything else that others could replicate for us in their own projects.
 - These documents can serve as the foundation of virtual and in-person trainings on how to use the NSDS.
- Ideally, these “worked examples” would come from two or more NSDS pilot projects that varied on important characteristics (e.g., matching algorithm, analysis type) that could also be turned into clear and compelling use cases that would serve as examples of the Service’s potential value.
 - There might be value in developing use case examples of **existing** matches, like those the NSDS will be able to facilitate once widely available. To the extent that there is trepidation about secure, privacy-protecting matching, these use cases could begin to whet the community’s appetite and demonstrate the potential of an NSDS.

Committee Discussion

Discussion Questions

- Should the tenor of services provided to NSDS users be *project management* in focus, should they be more *technical in nature*, or both? (Do we want to stand up a PMO, a statistical consulting service, both, neither, or something else?)
- Do you believe it is appropriate, and if so feasible, for the NSDS to attempt to provide technical assistance services to federal, state, *and* local partners?
- How can we best communicate with state and local leaders and partners about the NSDS – regarding what it is intended to be and what it is NOT intended to be? What is the overarching communications strategy?
- Are potential services to NSDS users missing? (For example, we do not discuss *data collection*, though it is easy to imagine many low-capacity users might need technical assistance in that domain.) Similarly, are any services offered that should be taken off the table? (For example, do we want to be guiding users on *analytic methods* appropriate to their data?)
- When should the NSDS begin to offer technical assistance? Capacity-building *could* begin prior to NSDS being broadly available, focusing more generically on topics related to administrative data linkage and analysis (e.g., “Using the Federal Data Catalog to Locate Linkable Data”). Is this desirable?