



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
AISP Equity in Practice Learning Community
 Issued: February 2, 2022

What	New cohort-based training initiative
Who	Integrated Data Systems (IDS) and other public sector data collaborations with a commitment to racial equity in practice
Why	Cross-sector data sharing can transform information about individuals into actionable intelligence that can be used to understand needs, improve services, and build stronger, healthier, and more just communities. Yet use of cross-sector data can also reinforce legacies of racist policies and produce inequitable resource allocation, access, and outcomes. To avoid this, we must embed questions and practices of racial equity throughout the data life cycle.
How	AISP's Equity in Practice Learning Community (EiPLC) will engage in discovery within and across sites to co-create guidance and new models for centering racial equity in IDS frameworks. Coaching and facilitation will focus on shifts to policy and practice across the data life cycle, including changes to cross-agency data governance, research agendas, legal agreements, staffing, and community participation practices and resources.
When	Applications due March 25, 2022 Optional applicant webinar: Feb 16 th at 2:00pm ET (register here) Four sites will be selected for participation by April 25 th The initiative will run from June 1, 2022–November 30, 2024 (30 months)
Funded Activities	Communities selected for participation will receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized training and coaching from experienced practitioners • Access to a rich community of peers and mentors working at the intersection of data + racial equity • Tuition, travel, lodging, and meals for two 2.5 day, in-person convenings for site teams of up to four people. • Direct grants of \$50K to support community engagement
Criteria for Eligibility	Applications must include a government agency (local or state) as lead or co-lead and will be assessed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to integrate and use cross-sector data on health equity and the social determinants of health to support social policy planning and analysis • Commitment to center racial equity in their work across the data life cycle
AISP Contact	Kristen Smith, krsm@upenn.edu

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Why Health Equity?

"Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care."

Braveman et. al., 2017, [What is Health Equity?](#), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Public health data and data systems take the pulse of our society; they measure and indicate how well we sustain the life and vitality of our population. Data are the building blocks for how we describe the health of people and the communities where we live—stories that emerge from data help the nation understand and contextualize what drives or impedes health and how structural factors like racism and other forms of discrimination influence one's ability to live a healthy life.

Yet in our current data system, data on health inequities are often decontextualized from history and the experiences of race, class, intersectionality, and place that impact health. Good health begins not in the doctor's office but in the places where we live, learn, and work. To understand and evaluate root causes and improve health equity, we must reimagine how data on key determinants of health (such as housing, employment, and education) are collected, shared, accessed, and used.

Why Shared Data Infrastructure + Racial Equity?

Data sharing and integration is increasingly commonplace at every level of government as a tool to support the interconnected needs of children, families, and communities more effectively and holistically. Integrating data across domains provides a comprehensive picture of risk and resilience and, therefore, also represents an opportunity for transformational data use that can drive program and policy changes towards health equity and racial justice. At the same time, many of the institutions engaged in the important work of data integration have not adequately examined and acknowledged structural bias in their history, or the ways in which that bias is often baked into data as a result of systemic inequities in the development and administration of policies and programs. Racism is a public health crisis in this country, yet anti-racism and racial equity are rarely centered in data integration efforts.

In addition, populations made vulnerable by government action are overrepresented in many of the administrative datasets being integrated but are rarely consulted in the development and use of data systems. This raises fundamental concerns, as administrative data increasingly provide the raw materials for evaluation, research, and risk modeling that inform policy, resource allocation, and programmatic decisions.

What is the AISP Equity in Practice Learning Community?

We are committed not only to addressing these concerns, but also to creating a new kind of data infrastructure that shares and builds power and knowledge with those who need systems change the most. To this end, we have created the AISP Equity in Practice Learning Community (EiPLC). In April 2022, AISP will select our first cohort of state and local government partners committed to working at the intersection of data infrastructure and racial equity to receive this first-of-its-kind

training and technical assistance. Together, AISP and the Learning Community will support in-depth discovery within and across sites to co-create guidance on centering racial equity in IDS frameworks. The work will require shifts to practices across the data life cycle, including changes to cross-agency data governance, research agendas, legal agreements, staffing, resource allocation, and community participation practices. Our goal will be to test and implement new models for incorporating community voice and agency in key decisions about how cross-sector data are used in service of health equity and racial justice.

Engagement in the AISP EiPLC will provide participating sites with the opportunity to work with a team of partners locally and with a cohort of peers and experienced practitioners from across the US. Cohort sites will also be paired with AISP Equity in Practice Fellows, who are themselves leading community-engaged data integration efforts, and mentor sites, and will learn by doing, together. While most training and engagement will take place virtually, participants will also meet with their peers, mentors, and the AISP team in person for two 2.5-day meetings at the University of Pennsylvania during the course of the 30-month TA period. AISP will cover the costs of travel, meals, and lodging for four participants from each site for these meetings. AISP will also award direct grants of up to \$25,000 a year for two years (up to \$50,000 total) to each participating site to support community participation and racial equity in data practices. AISP will work with sites to ensure that successes, challenges, and lessons learned are well documented both internally, to support sustainability of practice, and externally, to support broader field-building efforts.

Our focus for this cohort is on health equity and social determinants of health for families and children. AISP has received generous support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to engage cohort one over a 30-month period from June 2022 to November 2024. The AISP EiPLC builds upon previous data capacity-building funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's [Recommendations from the National Commission to Transform Public Health Data Systems](#).

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to improving health and health equity in the United States. In partnership with others, they are working to develop a Culture of Health rooted in equity that provides every individual with a fair and just opportunity to thrive, no matter who they are, where they live, or how much money they have. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children and youth by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. Learn more at aectf.org.

We anticipate an additional cohort of Learning Community sites to follow.

What is AISP?

About Us

Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP) is an initiative based at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice. For the last thirteen years, we have helped state and local government agencies and partners collaborate and responsibly use data to improve lives. We currently represent a Network of 36 cities, counties, and states across the US who routinely integrate data at the person level to support social policy planning and analysis. These jurisdictions, comprising over 50% of the US population, have been collaborating for over a decade to develop national standards, share best practices, and use data ethically and equitably. Whether they call themselves integrated data systems (IDS), data hubs, data collaboratives, or data intermediaries, these efforts are working towards the same goal: routine and responsible use of cross-sector data for good.

What We Do

- **Convene** and advocate on behalf of communities that are sharing and using cross-sector data for good
- **Connect** to innovations, best practices, and research and funding opportunities that support ethical data sharing
- **Consult** with data sharing collaborations to build the human and technical capacity to share data and improve lives

Why We Do It

When communities bring together cross-sector data safely and responsibly, policymakers and practitioners are better equipped to:

- Understand the complex needs of individuals and families
- Allocate resources where they're needed most to improve services
- Measure long-term and multi-generational impacts of policies and programs
- Engage in transparent, shared decision-making about how data should (and should not) be used

To learn more about our approach, explore [AISP's Introduction to Data Sharing & Integration \(2020\)](#) and [AISP's Quality Framework for Integrated Data Systems \(2021\)](#).

Our Commitment to Racial Equity

From its founding, AISP has focused on the ethical (re)use of administrative data and promoted strong, collaborative governance as the foundation of all data sharing and integration. More recently, we have formally acknowledged that ethical (re)use of administrative data requires us to center racial equity in our initiatives, and we are committed to help the growing field of integrated data systems do the same. Since 2019 we have led a diverse workgroup of civic data stakeholders to co-create strategies and identify best practices to center racial equity in data integration efforts. AISP released [A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration](#) in May 2020. The Toolkit was developed collaboratively and puts forward a shared vision for a new kind of data infrastructure—one that seeks to share power and knowledge with those who need systems change the most. This Learning Community is our next step towards putting the promising practices lifted up in the Toolkit into action and will support data integration efforts and cross-sector partnerships as they work to share and build power with community through data access and use. As a majority White and White-led team, we act carefully and learn constantly. We are

committed to staffing that supports a broad range of experiences and identities, including the hiring of colleagues who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and compensating and learning from a diverse team of Equity in Practice Fellows throughout this initiative and beyond.

What can an Equity in Practice Site expect to gain?

There are a host of benefits that sites will gain as a member of the AISP Equity in Practice Learning Community. Some of these benefits include:

- Increased training, awareness and understanding of structural bias, and concrete strategies to center racial equity and community voice in cross-sector data work
- Advice and facilitation from experienced practitioners to support implementation of a racial equity framework
- Data governance practices that authentically incorporate community voice and agency throughout the data life cycle to support health equity
- Flexible funding to support community participation activities
- Increased capacity to shift policy and practice and demonstrate impact on health equity with a customized roadmap for sustainability of the effort
- Practice techniques to right-size data holdings that support a more holistic view of individuals, families, and communities, including data from community-based organizations
- Improved and more efficient shared data structures across foundational pillars of governance, legal, technical, capacity, and impact
- Opportunities to share and accelerate learnings and community-led research agendas with other sites and potential funders
- Access to mentor sites and a peer community where cross-agency teams committed to health equity can share and learn from each other

How do sites access the grants?

Applicants that are selected are eligible for direct grants to support community engagement and racial equity in data practices. Participating sites will work with AISP Equity in Practice Fellows and AISP staff to develop an initial plan for community participation and will receive grants of \$25K each in Fall 2022 to support that work. Sites will be asked to reflect upon how funds have been used, with the opportunity to request a second grant of \$25K in 2023.

FUNDING DETAILS

- Type of Award: Awards funded under this opportunity will be structured as subgrants.
- Amount of Award: \$25,000 a year for two years, or up to \$50,000 total
- Use of Funds: Award funds should cover community participation activities and must be comply with the policies in Appendix C.

Who should apply for the Learning Community?

We expect this to be a diverse pool of applicants and are interested in supporting IDS and other public sector data collaborations with a commitment to racial equity at both the local (city, county, tribal) and state level. Applicants must involve a government agency as either the lead or co-lead, but may also include partners from universities, non-profits, foundations, and advocacy groups. Applicants may be located anywhere in the United States, and must meet the following requirements:

A. **Demonstrated ability to integrate and use cross-sector data on social determinants of health (at the individual, person level) to support social policy planning and analysis.**

Data partners may include a wide range of human services, including vital records (birth, death records); health (APCD, Medicaid, public health, EMS, etc.); child & family welfare (juvenile justice placement, adult protection, etc.); early childhood; education (K-12, post-secondary); legal system and law enforcement (courts, corrections, probation); economic security (TANF, UI, etc.); and homelessness/housing (HMIS, PHA, etc.).

Documentation of data capacity may include legal agreements, a technical approach to facilitate integration at the person level, governance structures, and demonstrated use cases. This demonstrated capacity is important as successful participation in the TA requires participants to have the capacity to undertake analysis and generate data-driven solutions to questions formed and prioritized by community members, without delays due to a lack of data flow. Participation in the EiPLC will involve refining and routinizing processes across the data lifecycle but is not designed to build a new data sharing collaboration from the beginning.

B. **Demonstrated commitment to center racial equity in data integration and across the data life cycle.** We are looking for participants with a growth mindset who are committed to reflecting, learning, and changing practices, both personally and professionally. We believe this training will be most effective for agencies with a leadership commitment to health equity and racial justice. We do not expect applicants to have figured out how to operationalize this commitment (this is one goal of the Learning Community), but we are looking for evidence that your team has begun the process of awareness-building and is ready for race-explicit conversations and culture change.

Members of the AISP Network are welcome to apply and will be evaluated by the same standards as all applicants.

How will AISP training services be awarded?

All eligible applications will be reviewed by a multi-member panel at AISP, including staff and Equity in Practice Fellows, for responsiveness to the questions listed in Part B of the application (see page 12). Each eligible application will be scored on the elements listed below.*

40%	Demonstrated ability to integrate and use cross-sector data to support social policy and planning analysis: Successful applicants will describe their current use of administrative data and existing data capacity with concrete use cases as examples. This also may include staffing plans, including dedicated staff tasked with data management and analysis; data sharing agreements in place and in negotiation among agencies; current data governance structures and data access and use processes; and/or a description of current technical approach for integrating data. Both narrative responses to Part B and the Part C self-assessment will be used to evaluate this element.
30%	Demonstrated commitment to center racial equity in their work across the data life cycle: AISP is seeking applicants with a growth mindset that have conducted internal capacity building around issues of race, structural and institutional racism, and implicit bias. Understanding that historically marginalized communities, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, are overrepresented in many of the administrative datasets being integrated but are rarely consulted in the development and use of data systems, is a foundational awareness required for this work. We also have an interest in supporting organizations with diversity among staff leadership positions and trusted relationships with communities of color. Narrative responses will be used to evaluate this element and finalists may be asked to participate in interviews.
20%	Progress and goals towards community participation: AISP is seeking applicants that are embedded, with demonstrated relationships and connections to the community in which the project activities will take place. Successful applicants will describe their progress and outline future plans for centering community participation in data governance and research activities.
10%	Current Data Holdings: AISP is seeking applicants that have established data sharing relationships with state and/or local human service agencies that can inform social policy planning and analysis on key social determinants of health. Data access may be ad hoc, although routine access is preferred.

*Not all criteria must be met for an applicant to be selected. AISP may follow up with applicants to obtain more information to inform the selection process.

What are the expectations of selected sites?

All applicants will be expected to do the following:

- Ensure that at least four representatives will participate in each of the two 2.5-day, hybrid (preference for in-person participation, with virtual option) training convenings;
- Dedicate a *minimum* of 15 hours of staff time per month to the EiPLC;
- Maintain regular correspondence with AISP, Equity in Practice Fellows, and other sites;
- Actively participate in online EiPLC activities;
- Participate in formative and summative evaluation of the EiPLC;
- Sign an MOU with AISP to govern partnership over the 30-month engagement (see Appendix B)
- Use grant funds in a manner that is consistent with the policies outlined in Appendix C, Policies Regarding Permissible Use of Funds

About the Application Process

Application Components

All application components are listed in the form (on pages 11-12) included with this Request for Applications (RFA) for the EiPLC. AISP will host an information webinar on this RFA on February 16, 2:00pm Eastern. [Register here](#). This will include opportunities for participant questions on the elements of this application, our evaluation process, and/or the services offered. Applicants may also submit questions about the RFA to AISP Sr. Research Coordinator, Kristen Smith (krs@upenn.edu).

Application components:

- Application Part A (see page 11, contact information and key organizations, required)
- Application Part B (see page 12, proposal narrative and self-assessment, required)
- Letters of Support from community members, governor or mayor's office, legislative body, and/or key data partners (optional but encouraged, see template in Appendix A)
- Finalist interviews (to be scheduled by AISP in early April)

RFA Schedule

February 2, 2022: AISP publishes RFA.

February 16, 2022: AISP hosts an informational RFA webinar with opportunities for participant questions at 2pm Eastern. A recording will be posted within one week of the webinar date. Attendance is optional. [Register here](#).

March 18, 2022: Last day to submit questions to AISP (Kristen Smith, krs@upenn.edu).

March 25, 2022: Applications are due to AISP by 5pm Eastern.

March to April 2022: AISP reviews submitted RFA applications and makes follow-up calls/contact with applicants to gain additional information as needed.

April 7, 2022-April 9, 2022: Finalist notified via email for interviews.

April 11, 2022-April 15, 2022: Virtual interviews conducted for finalists.

April 25, 2022-April 26, 2022: Selected finalists are notified via e-mail.

May 2022: MOU between AISP and each selected site is developed and finalized.

June 2022: Learning Community activities begin.

October 2022: First cohort convening anticipated.

How should I prepare and submit my application?

Please email one copy of your narrative application in PDF format to AISP Sr. Coordinator, Kristen Smith (krs@upenn.edu). All applications should be no longer than 15 pages (not including additional materials, such as letters of support). All application pages should be numbered, font should be 12-point Times New Roman, text should have one-inch margins all around, and all relevant questions should be answered. Please combine all application materials in a single PDF. The online self-assessment can be accessed online [here](#) and will be submitted automatically upon completion.

Who is the AISP point of contact?

Questions about this RFA and completed applications should be sent to AISP Sr. Coordinator, Kristen Smith (krs@upenn.edu).

Part B: Application Narrative

Please respond to the prompts below to provide information describing your agency, the data integration effort, your partners and relevant activities to date, and the challenges you would expect this Learning Community to address. Limit your response to these questions to no more than 15 pages (not including letters of support or supplemental materials).

1. Goals and Objectives: Briefly describe your preliminary goals and objectives for participating in the EiPLC. (Thought of another way, what are 2-3 key issues or problems that you hope to address?)
2. Racial Equity Knowledge, Skills, & Relationships:
 - Describe any relevant diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities of your data integration effort and/or key partners. This could include staffing, leadership, initiatives, resolutions, etc.
 - What are your definitions of “racial equity” and “health equity”? How did you arrive at these definitions?
3. Data Integration Effort and Partners: Briefly describe the purpose of your data integration effort more broadly. As relevant, include the history of development, mission, policy priorities, funding, and partners involved. Include a short description of each partner agency and their main role in the effort. (Note: Applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate engagement from partner agencies through letters of support. See Appendix A for template.)
4. Demonstrated Cross-Sector Data Capacity:
 - Complete self-assessment tool [here](#).
 - Please note that this tool was not designed for this RFA, but rather as a formative assessment for sites interested in building data integration capacity.
 - Be sure to include the name of individual submitting this RFA under “Your Information.”
 - From your past or current work, briefly describe a successful data integration project that includes social determinants of health data.
 - Briefly describe an unsuccessful data integration project and a lesson you learned.
5. Community Participation: Describe the ways that your data integration effort and key partners seek and respond to community feedback, particularly around data access and use.
6. Staffing: List the primary point of contact and three additional staff from lead and partner agencies who will participate in the EiPLC. Explain the rationale for the individuals selected and how their experience and training will support this work.

Name, Title, and Role of Staff	Agency

Note: Staff listed above should:

- have accommodations that will allow travel or virtual attendance for two 2.5-day sessions over a 30-month period, and
- be able to dedicate a minimum of 15 hours per month to this training effort.

Appendix A: Template for Partner Letters of Support

AISP Equity in Practice Learning Community

Name of applicant:

Name of partnering agency supporting the application:

Partner representative (name, title, and email):

Please describe the nature of your partnership:

We understand the nature of this work and are excited to support our partner in their application for the AISP Equity in Practice Learning Community.

Signature: _____

Appendix B: AISP Learning Community Equity in Practice Site MOU

Please note that this MOU is included as an example of a partnership agreement that will guide participation. You do not need to fill this out as part of your RFA response.

Memorandum of Understanding

between

Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP)

and

(Participating State or Local Government, or their Designated Representative)

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (“AISP”) and the (state or local government) which is participating in the AISP Learning Community: Equity in Practice Site, collectively (the “Parties”).

Organization name: Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy
Partner representative: Dennis Culhane, PI
Position: The Dana and Andrew Stone Professor of Social Policy
Address: 3701 Locust Walk, C19, Philadelphia PA 19104
Telephone: (215) 746-3245
Fax: 215.573.2099
E-mail: culhane@upenn.edu

Primary Agency/ Organization:
Primary point of contact:
Position:
Address:
Telephone:
Fax:
E-mail:

Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to establish an agreement among the above-mentioned parties concerning their respective roles and responsibilities for implementation of the AISP Learning Community: Equity in Practice Site.

It is important that all partners to the MOU agree upon their respective roles and have a common understanding as to the scope and purpose of the program.

Duties of Parties

In this section, the responsibilities and agreements of each party is described separately.

For Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, the responsibilities and activities include:

- Provide coaching, training, and curriculum materials;
- Conduct two, two 2.5-day, in-person training convenings at the University of Pennsylvania over the course of a 30-month period;

- Cover the costs of travel, meals, and lodging for four participants from each site in these convenings;
- Award direct grants of \$25,000 a year for two years, or up to \$50,000 total to Site, which will be memorialized by the parties in a separate Grant Agreement;
- Provide training materials and host online file sharing that will house all Learning Community resources;
- Write up lessons learned and recommendations specific to the Site and to the cohort overall, and provide the Site a chance to review evaluation findings and public communications (case studies, etc.) before they are shared.

For the participating state or local government, the following apply:

- Ensure that at least four representatives will participate in each of the two 2.5 day, hybrid (preference for in-person participation, with virtual option), training convenings;
- Dedicate a *minimum* of 15 hours of staff time per month to the training program;
- Complete pre-work assignments for the program;
- Maintain regular correspondence with the AISP TTA team, including Equity in Practice Fellows, and other sites;
- Actively participate in AISP Learning Community activities;
- Participate in formative and summative evaluation of the AISP Learning Community and TTA;
- Use grant funds in a manner that is consistent with the policies outlined in Appendix C, Policies Regarding Permissible Use of Funds

Duration

The agreement is for a period of thirty months covering the duration of the AISP Learning Community, from June 2022 to November 2024.

Procedures for Modification and Termination

- The MOU may be modified, revised, extended, or renewed by mutual written consent of both parties, by the issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by both parties.
- Either party of the MOU may terminate their participation in this MOU by giving ten (10) days, written notice of intent to terminate to the other partner.
- Upon notice of termination, within ten (10) business days, Site shall return to AISP any unexpended funds up to the date of termination.

Signatures

All partners in this agreement sign to confirm their acceptance of its terms by their signature.

 (Dennis Culhane, AISP)
 Dennis Culhane
 The Dana and Andrew Stone Professor
 of Social Policy
 University of Pennsylvania

 (Partner signature)
 Partner Printed Name
 Position
 Organization

Date:

Date:

Appendix C: Policies Regarding Permissible Use of Grant Funds

<p>Permissible Uses:</p>	<p>Funds from this award must be used for proposed project activities. Allowable uses of this funding include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct cash payments or gift cards for community members involved in focus groups, workshops, advisory councils, or other governance and research activities • Food and meeting space • Childcare, translation, and other costs of supporting inclusive gatherings • Support for consultants or partners to staff aspects of the work where your core team does not have expertise
<p>Restrictions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds may not be used for employee salaries. • In keeping with RWJF policy, funds also may not be used to support clinical trials of unapproved drugs or devices, to construct or renovate facilities, and for lobbying or political activities.