



LONG-TERM CARE DATA COOPERATIVE

RESEARCHER APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS

MISSION

The mission of the Long-Term Care (LTC) Data Cooperative is to improve the quality of care within skilled nursing facilities by compiling the most comprehensive data on nursing home residents nationwide – and to translate these data into accessible and actionable information designed to help clinicians, managers and policy makers improve care.

GOVERNANCE

This initiative is governed by the American Health Care Association (AHCA). Together with Brown University, a pioneer of research studies using integrated data on residents that have helped the long-term care community, and Exponent, Inc., an interdisciplinary and scientific consulting company, the AHCA-led effort will assemble the largest and most comprehensive health records database from geographically and structurally diverse nursing homes and residents.



I. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this guide is to provide researchers with an in-depth understanding of the LTC Data Cooperative’s application and review process. Also found in this document are detailed instructions on the plain-language abstract that is submitted as part of the application and information on the LTC Data Cooperative Research Review Committee.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

Please note: A [PDF of the application in its entirety can be found here](#) for reference.

- 1. Step One: Upload a 1-page Specific Aims page [here](#).**
 - a. A representative from the LTC Data Cooperative team will review the Specific Aims page and conduct a brief review to ensure that the proposed study aligns with approved research categories. Feedback will be given to researchers within two weeks.
- 2. Step Two: Submit Application.** If the Specific Aims page is approved, researchers will be directed to submit an application [here](#).
 - a. Once received, applications will be reviewed administratively to ensure that all required materials have been submitted and that all necessary components were provided.
- 3. Step Three: Initial Review.** If the project is not yet funded, the LTC Data Cooperative Research Review Committee will perform an initial review and provide a preliminary approval decision.
 - a. If requested, a letter of support is provided after the preliminary approval decision.
 - b. Once funded, researchers must submit proof of funding and any additional required documents (IRB or privacy board approval, consent documents if applicable) to LTCDataCooperative@AHCA.org.
 - c. If the project has already received funding (or once proof of funding is sent to the LTC Data Cooperative), the application will move onto the application review process.
- 4. Step Four: Provider Comment Period**
 - a. The plain language abstract is sent out to providers enrolled in the LTC Data Cooperative during an open public comment period to solicit their feedback about the value of the proposal and assure it is consistent with the mission of the LTC Data Cooperative (further information and instructions on this abstract are found in Section III of this document).
- 5. Step Five: Application Review**
 - a. The LTC Data Cooperative Research Review Committee will review the application and comments from providers and make a recommendation. The Research Review Committee is comprised of ten members (for more information on the Research Review Committee members, please see section IV below labeled “Research Review Committee”).



- 6. Step Six: Decision & Notification.** Final decision will be shared with the Principal Investigator (PI) within 4-6 weeks from date of application submission.
- a. *If application is recommended:* The LTC Data Cooperative Research Review Committee will notify PI of recommendation, listing any outstanding materials and onboarding information, within 4-6 weeks from date of application submission.
 - i. PIs will be directed to complete and sign a Data Use Agreement (DUA).
 - ii. Once a DUA is executed, PIs will be provided with an onboarding packet and instructions for accessing the data workspace.
 - b. *If application is NOT recommended or more information is required:* The LTC Data Cooperative Research Review Committee will notify PI of recommendation and provide a feedback report and rationale within 4-6 weeks from date of submission.
 - c. *If applicant is requesting access to CMS-EHR linked data:* If application has been approved, the PI will receive an approval letter and information on how to apply to NIA Data LINKAGE to use the CMS-EHR linked data.

III. PLAIN-LANGUAGE ABSTRACT

All applications must include a plain-language structured abstract (750 words max). The audience for this abstract is nursing home providers who have expertise in the long-term care policy and practice environment, and are not formally trained in research. They will review the abstract and provide feedback to the LTC Data Cooperative Research Review Committee during the public comment period of the application review process. If either the nursing home providers or the Research Review Committee do not believe an application aligns with the mission or approved data uses of the LTC Data Cooperative, it may be rejected.

The abstract should clearly and succinctly describe, in **plain language**:

1. **Objective(s) and importance.** What are you trying to demonstrate and how will it help providers improve resident care?
2. **Study design,** stated briefly in plain language
3. **Study population.** If you only need data on a subset of nursing homes and/or residents, state that here.
4. **Intervention, if applicable**
5. **Key measures and outcomes**
 - a. Example: “We will compare the rates of antibiotic prescriptions and urinalyses between nursing homes that did vs. did not receive antibiotic stewardship training.”
6. **Data requested and why**
 - a. Example: “We will use medication administration records (MAR), vital signs, and diagnoses that are linked to MDS data and Medicare claims to look at antibiotic prescribing and hospitalizations for residents with dementia.”
7. **Provider engagement.** If and how you have engaged, or will engage, nursing home providers in your study. For intervention studies, specify whether you have already recruited nursing homes for participation.



8. **Implications for providers**, such as: Potential impact on practice and/or policy; Alignment with nursing home provider priorities; Acceptability, i.e. how likely are providers to adopt the intervention and/or findings?; Feasibility, i.e. how practical is the intervention and/or findings under current conditions? and; Any costs, burden, or risks for providers, residents, or other key stakeholders.

Abstracts with overly-technical academic language or failing to include the above elements will be returned for revisions.

IV: RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. The purpose of the LTC Data Cooperative’s Research Review Committee is to assess each research application for consistency with the mission of the LTC Data Cooperative. It is comprised of providers, representatives from the research community, and members of the LTC Data Cooperative team.
2. The membership of the committee includes:
 - a. Long-Term Care Data Cooperative Leadership Committee:
 - A representative from AHCA Solutions Staff with background in health services research;
 - A representative from Exponent with knowledge of the technical aspects of the dataset; and
 - A representative from Brown University and/or NIA;
 - b. One Long-Term Care Data Cooperative Advisory Committee Member, usually a provider representative;
 - c. Six Long-Term Care Data Cooperative Participants to ensure provider representation:
 - Advisory Committee & Participant representatives will serve a maximum of a two- year term up to three terms.
 - Each member should have a named alternate in the event the Committee member is unavailable.
3. The Research Review Committee & Leadership Committee will assess whether the research proposed in an application:
 - Fits within the mission of the LTC Data Cooperative
 - Merits scientific priority within the LTC Data Cooperative
 - Utilizes data elements that are sufficient in quality and completeness to address the research objectives
 - Is sufficiently detailed to determine the feasibility of the data to address the research objectives, and
 - Does not place an unusually heavy burden on data processing staff to generate the necessary requested files
 - Project personnel/investigative team are well-qualified to execute the



study as proposed

- Meets the requirements of allowed data use and IRB/Privacy Board approvals
4. The Research Review Committee must confer recommendations via Virtual Conference, or if a conference is not available, all recommendations and rationales must be sent via SurveyMonkey. Timelines for recommendations, and receipt of rationales will be provided on an ad hoc basis.

