

Data Foundation Releases Second Federal Evidence Capacity Pulse Report

Report Provides Monitoring for Ongoing Changes to Federal Data Infrastructure in the United States

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, April 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ --

The Data Foundation today released its second "[Evidence Capacity Pulse Report](#)" documenting substantial changes affecting America's data and evaluation infrastructure. The report,

compiled in part through the Data Foundation's [SAFE-Track \(Secure Anonymous Federal Evidence, Data and Analysis Tracking\)](#) portal, identified several critical developments since our [March report](#) affecting government and industry capacity for data collection, analysis, and evaluation activities.



"Our April report reveals increasingly systemic and substantial changes to America's data infrastructure, with vacancies in at least 17 key Evidence Act positions creating governance gaps that will directly impact data quality and availability," said Nick Hart, President and CEO of the Data Foundation. "While we're seeing disruptions across federal agencies, we also note promising developments like the National Science Foundation's continued progress on the National Secure Data Service, demonstrating that targeted infrastructure improvements can proceed even during periods of significant reorganization."

The April 2025 report identifies several new and continued trends:

--Widespread Personnel Vacancies in Critical Roles: At least 17 key Evidence Act positions are now vacant, including Evaluation Officers, Chief Data Officers, and Statistical Officials across multiple agencies, with more expected after April 30th Deferred Resignation Program announcements.

--Strategic Termination of Research Programs: Federal scientific agencies, including the National Science Foundation, terminated over 400 research grants, with further cuts anticipated across other agencies.

--Structural Reorganization of Data Units: Several federal health data collection programs have

been eliminated or restructured, affecting continuity of statistical information.

--Ongoing Private Sector Disruption: Contract cancellations for data analysis and evaluation services expanded to include major consulting firms, triggering additional workforce reductions at companies supporting government data infrastructure.

--Diminished Federal Statistical System Capacity: Key federal statistical agencies, including the Census Bureau, are experiencing staff departures that challenge historical knowledge and understanding of existing data assets used to produce reliable economic and demographic information.

--International Data Collaboration Challenges: Restructuring within the State Department and significant changes at key international development agencies like the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) limit global data sharing and research capacity for international development.

--Continued Progress on Coordinated, Responsible Data Sharing: The National Science Foundation continues to advance the National Secure Data Service authorized in the CHIPS and Science Act, providing a promising model for secure data sharing across agencies while maintaining privacy protections and creating a foundation for better evidence-building capabilities that supplements existing statistical infrastructure.

"Despite widespread personnel vacancies and restructuring, we're seeing agencies work to preserve critical data functions while adapting to new organizational realities," said Sara Stefanik, Director of the Data Foundation's Center for Evidence Capacity. "The next month will likely reveal whether these changes represent a temporary adjustment or a more fundamental shift in how the federal government builds and uses evidence."

With the publication of new agency reorganization plans and the forthcoming FY 2026 President's Budget, the Data Foundation anticipates greater insights about developments on the administration's approach. The Data Foundation will consider these plans in future analysis, while continuing to document operational changes occurring across federal departments and agencies. The Data Foundation will continue to work with stakeholders across the political spectrum to advance open data and evidence-informed decision-making as part of our commitment to radical collaboration. We invite organizations and individuals to contribute to this ongoing analysis through our SAFE-Track platform, which provides secure and anonymous reporting of evidence ecosystem impacts.

The full report is available <https://datafoundation.org/news/reports/605/605-Evidence-Capacity-Pulse-Report-April-30->

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About the Data Foundation

The Data Foundation is a Washington, DC-based, non-profit, non-partisan organization. It is a trusted authority on the use of open, accessible data to fuel a more efficient, effective, and

accountable government; spark innovation; and provide insights to the country's most pressing challenges. It conducts research, facilitates collaborative thought leadership, and promotes advocacy programs that advance practical policies for the creation and use of accessible, trustworthy data and evidence. The Data Foundation's Center for Evidence Capacity works to strengthen evidence-building functions across government through research, education, and technical assistance to support effective implementation of laws like the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act. The Data Foundation is recognized by Candid Guidestar with the Platinum Seal of Transparency and by Charity Navigator as a 4-Star non-profit. To learn more, visit www.datafoundation.org. (LEI: 254900I43CTC59RFW495)

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