Data Foundation Announces 2026 Datum Award Recipients

Data champions were recognized for contributions to evidence-informed decision-making and data policy at the federal level

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Data Foundation today announced six federal leaders in the data community as recipients of the 2026 Datum Awards. The Datum Awards recognize civil servants for significant data and evidence initiatives that help government data deliver meaningful results for the public good.

> The Datum Awards celebrate federal leaders' ongoing commitment to use data and evidence to make government work better for all Americans"
>
> *Data Foundation President and CEO Nick Hart*

Datum Award Categories and Recipients:
- Data Innovation Award: Sharon Boivin, Research Director; and Heather Madray, Program Director; National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, National Science Foundation
- Data Innovation Award: Ross Williford, Grants Data Standards Lead, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Chief Data Officer Award: Tony LaVoi, Chief Data Officer, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Chief Evaluation Officer Award: Tiffany Boiman, Chief Evaluation Officer, U.S. Department of Labor
- Statistical Official Award: Chou-Lin Chen, Retired Associate Administrator, National Center for Statistics and Analysis, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

Boivin and Madray were recognized for advancing the National Secure Data Service demonstration projects to a level of operational maturity that can support full-scale national infrastructure, including a functional framework for secure data linkage; AI-enabled concierge and retrieval services; and the deployment of privacy-preserving technologies. Their work has maintained bipartisan momentum for federal data integration across two administrations. Williford was recognized for leading the government-wide effort to turn the GREAT Act's vision into practical, reusable data infrastructure, culminating in the June 2026 release of Grants Standard Data Elements v3.0 for the Notice of Funding Opportunity stage of the federal grants lifecycle, which moved the effort from policy aspiration to operational data standard.

LaVoi was recognized, alongside his NOAA data team, for expanding the accessibility, transparency, and utility of federal environmental data through the continued development of the NOAA Open Data Dissemination (NODD) program and updates to NOAA's public access and open government data plans.
Boiman was recognized for leading the U.S. Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office and serving as the Department's named Evidence Official, responsible for ensuring the department's evaluation research upholds the principles of rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics while turning that evidence into program decisions.

Chen was recognized for executing the second generation of the Crash Investigation Sampling System (CISS), which for the first time collected data on vehicle crashes involving vulnerable road users and significantly increased the estimate precisions of the system. The resulting data release gave policymakers the first-ever access to much more comprehensive and granular crash information to strengthen public safety decisions.

"The Datum Awards celebrate federal leaders' ongoing commitment to use data and evidence to make government work better for all Americans," said Nick Hart, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Data Foundation. "The ground-breaking work of this year's recipients represents key elements in the future of our public data infrastructure. Their work exemplifies the power of good data policy that allows us to ask better questions."

The Data Foundation Board of Directors selected the award recipients from a cohort of candidates nominated by the public, including members of the Data Coalition, the advocacy and member community of the Data Foundation. Since launching in 2019, the Datum Awards have recognized 41 individuals for their leadership. See the full list here: https://datafoundation.org/pages/datum-awards-hp

This year's award ceremony and reception to honor the award recipients took place on September 15, 2026, in Washington, D.C.

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