DATA SHARING PLAN

BACKGROUND
Scientific research depends on the free flow of information and ideas. To ensure that future research can build on previous efforts and discoveries, the NIH has a data sharing policy for grant applicants seeking NIH funding of $500,000 or more in direct costs in any one year. The policy expects that grantees and contractors make final research data, especially unique data, from NIH-supported research efforts available to other investigators. It includes data from:

- Basic research
- Clinical studies
- Surveys
- Other types of research

Data sharing applies to human subjects and laboratory research. In some instances, it may include data that was used in an NIH-supported activity but not produced with NIH funding.

DATA SHARING PLAN REQUIREMENTS
Investigators submitting grant applications seeking NIH funding of $500,000 or more in direct costs in any one year will be required to include a data sharing plan. Offerors submitting contract proposals must provide a data sharing plan as requested in the RFP or BAA, regardless of the proposal's direct costs. If the data cannot be shared, the applicant/offeror must state why data sharing is restricted or not possible. The precise content of the data sharing plan will vary, depending on the data being collected. The sharing plan may include the:

- Schedule for data sharing
- Format of the final dataset
- Documentation to be provided
- Analytical tools to be provided, if any
- Need for a data sharing agreement
- Mode of data sharing

Timeframe for Data Sharing
Data sharing should be timely and occur no later than the acceptance for publication of the main findings from the final dataset. Data from large studies can be released in waves as data become available or as they are published.

Data Sharing Plan Evaluation for Grants
The reviewer will address whether the application’s data sharing plan is “Acceptable” or “Unacceptable”, if applicable. The reviewer should not include an assessment of the plan in the determination of the application's Overall Impact/Priority score. If the plan is deemed “Unacceptable,” a brief explanation of why it was unacceptable should be provided.

However, some special initiatives may contain additional requirements related to data sharing; in these cases, the adequacy of the data sharing plan may be an additional review criterion, and the reviewers
would then factor their evaluation of the plan into the overall evaluation of scientific merit, i.e. the Overall Impact/Priority score.

**Data Sharing Plan Evaluation for Contracts**

If applicable, the reviewer will address whether the proposal's data sharing plan is “Acceptable” or “Unacceptable.” The reviewers should not include an assessment of the plan in the determination of whether the overall proposal is “Acceptable” or “Unacceptable.” If the plan is deemed “Unacceptable,” a brief explanation of why it was unacceptable should be provided.

However, some Requests for Proposals or Broad Agency Announcements may contain special requirements related to data sharing; in these cases, the adequacy of the data sharing plan may be factored into the score of the respective Technical Evaluation Criteria and into whether the proposal is “Acceptable” or “Unacceptable.”

**For more information, see the following NIH website:**

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data_sharing/