

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
Proposal Abstract

Proposal:1937033

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Proposal Title: Convergence Accelerator Phase I (RAISE): Building the Federalism Data and Advanced Statistics Hub (FDASH)
Institution: University of North Carolina at Charlotte
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The NSF Convergence Accelerator supports team-based, multidisciplinary efforts that address challenges of national importance and show potential for deliverables in the near future.

The broader impact and potential societal benefit of this Convergence Accelerator Phase I project is the development of a single, comprehensive source of data and analysis on governing institutions and public policies across the states of the United States of America. This resource, which the project calls the Federalism Data and Advanced Statistics Hub (F-DASH), has the potential to provide significant benefits to researchers, educators, and the public by integrating an unprecedented amount policy, social, and economic data, as well as developing analytic tools that will allow users to easily explore, visualize, and analyze these data. The project is a convergence research effort encompassing applied statistics, computer science, geography, philosophy, political science, public policy, and sociology. It also draws on technical expertise and channels for connecting the work to users through collaborations with several partner organizations, such as Open States, the Society for Public Health Educators, and the State Politics and Policy Section of the American Political Science Association. These collaborations and the overall F-DASH effort should facilitate breakthroughs by researchers, innovations by practitioners, new classroom materials for teachers, and new opportunities for engagement by citizens. Public policy at the state level has a direct impact on citizens' daily lives, including their health, education, and employment, and this phase I F-DASH project will provide immediate and accessible information on these and other topics.

The study of public policy is the study of how representative government in a federal system translates citizen preferences into laws that impact society. The American states represent an ideal venue for understanding the effects of policy choices because states routinely experiment with different solutions to important challenges. However, the decentralized nature of the American federal system impedes efforts to compare economic, social, or other outcomes across the states. Indeed, researchers must often engage in 50 separate data collection processes due to the unique challenges of data acquisition in each state. Consequently, researchers or government agencies commonly collect only the minimum of what they need to address a particular question. Moreover, they often do not share these data, and those who do make data publicly available have no obvious way to connect their data to data collected by others. The F-DASH will provide a centralized location for data collection and analysis related to institutions, policies, and their implications in the American states. These data will include policy documents produced by government, such as legislative bills, as well as commonly-used derivative measures. In addition, the F-DASH will promote innovation in complex database design and provide an extensive test-bed for researchers interested in text mining, large-scale relational databases, static and dynamic network analysis,

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and many other topics.

This award reflects NSF's statutory mission and has been deemed worthy of support through evaluation using the Foundation's intellectual merit and broader impacts review criteria.