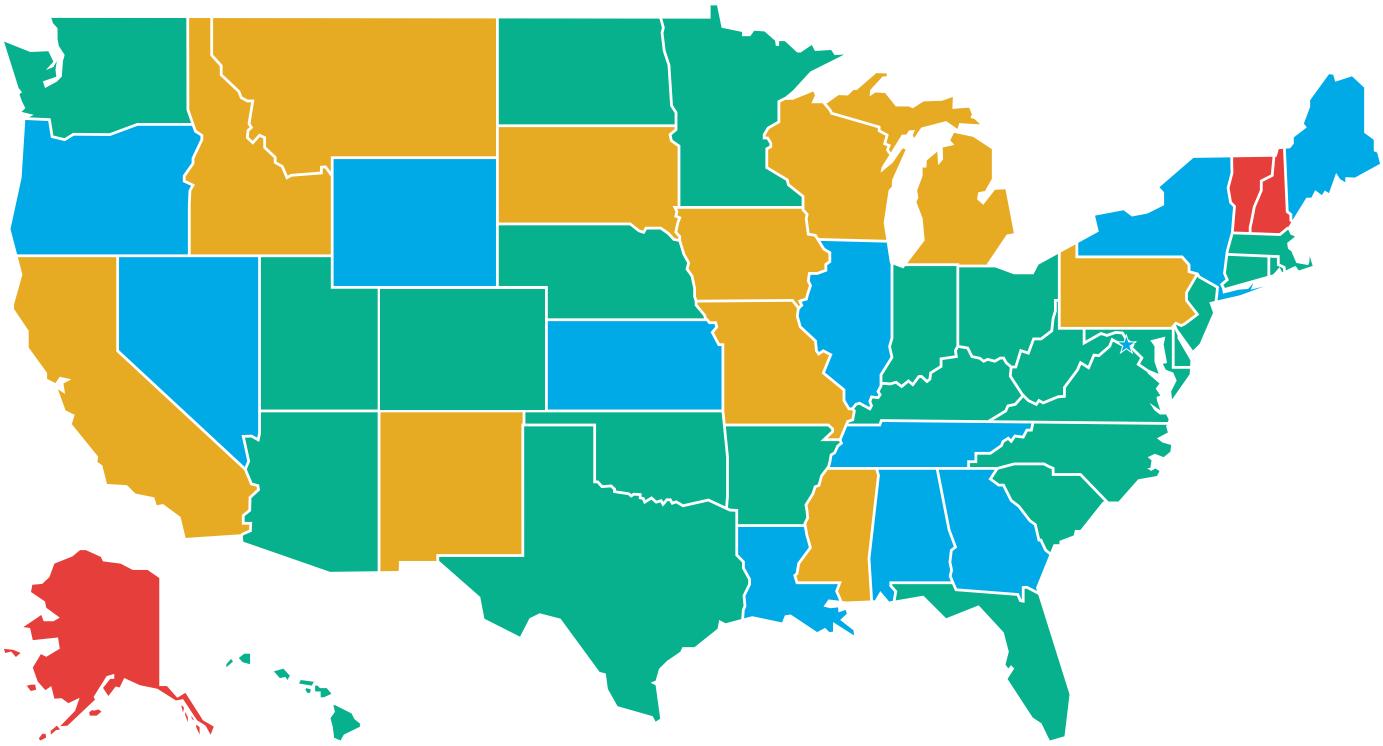
8. Affords researchers' access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets

Pre-matched, individual-level datasets save researchers time and effort by providing them with clean, ready-to-use data for analysis. As a result, researchers can generate more insights to improve postsecondary education and training systems.



Element 8 Criteria	Rating	Total States
The state has individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets for third party researcher access, and there is a clear description of a research request and approval process.	Leading	25
The state has individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets but is limited in at least one of the following: researcher access (e.g., internal researchers or state agency staff) or clarity on approval or request process.	Advanced	12
The state is in the process of developing individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets for researcher access or has published a research agenda.	Developing	11
The state allows for researcher access to aggregate data only, or the state has no individual level matched education-to-opportunity datasets identified through its response and Strada's research.	Foundational	3

Leading Advanced Developing Foundational

State	Rating	Description and Resource Links
Alabama	Advanced	Alabama has individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets but access is limited to higher education institutions.
Alaska	Foundational	Alaska provides researchers access to aggregate education-to-opportunity datasets. The request and review process is not publicly documented.
Arizona	Leading	Arizona provides researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets. The state clearly documents the request and review processes.
Arkansas	Leading	Arkansas has established the Arkansas Research Environment in the Administrative Data Research Facility. Through this environment, researchers can access individual-level matched education-to-employment datasets. The system has an online application form and a unified interagency approval process. Additionally, state agencies can access individual-level data for operational purposes through the Arkansas Data Hub.
California	Developing	California is developing a process for researchers to request deidentified, individual-level data that is linked to postsecondary education and workforce data summaries.
Colorado	Leading	The Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC) provides de-identified education-to-employment data to researchers upon request and agency approval. LINC publishes a clear description of the research request and review process as well as summarizes of approved projects.
Connecticut	Leading	Connecticut's SLDS, DataLinkCT, provides individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets. Researchers, policymakers, analysts, and evaluators can submit proposals that outline the benefit of the research project to the state, including how the request aligns with a participating agency's priorities or DataLinkCT's learning agenda. All participating agencies identify data elements that can be considered for a data request. Data requesters can access a data dictionary prior to submitting their applications to be reviewed and approved by a Participating Agency's Data Governing Board member.
Delaware	Leading	The Delaware Education Research Alliance (DERA), a collaboration between the Delaware Department of Education, Delaware State University, and the University of Delaware's College of Education and Human Development provides researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-employment datasets. Most research projects are submitted in response to DERA's request for proposals, ensuring that research addresses state priorities.
Florida	Leading	The Florida Department of Education provides third-party researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-employment datasets. The state clearly describes the request and review process, including that requests are evaluated for alignment with state priorities.
Georgia	Advanced	External researchers can partner with researchers affiliated with Georgia higher education institutions and then submit requests to access individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets.
Hawaii	Leading	The state provides external researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-employment datasets through a clearly documented request and review process. The state has published a research and policy agenda, so that external requests can align with state priorities.
Idaho	Developing	The Educational Analytics System of Idaho provides aggregate postsecondary data to researchers upon request. The state does not currently provide access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets.
Illinois	Advanced	The state provides individual-level matched postsecondary education-to-employment datasets to state agency staff and the Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative at the University of Illinois for projects such as the Illinois High School to Career Series. The state has not clearly documented a process for other researchers to access these datasets.
Indiana	Leading	The Indiana Management Performance Hub has individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets for third party researcher access and has a clear description of the request and approval processes. Researchers may also request access to individual-level higher education data through the Commission for Higher Education.
Iowa	Developing	Iowa provides individual-level data on high school to postsecondary outcomes as needed for specific, approved projects after requestors follow standard request processes. Iowa does not provide individual-level high school-to-employment or postsecondary education-to-employment datasets.

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State	Rating	Description and Resource Links
Kansas		Kansas affords researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets through the Kansas Board of Regents' data governance committee. The state has established formal data governance policies and data request processes, but these policies and processes are not clearly and publicly documented. Kansas publishes summaries of completed research projects.
Kentucky		The Kentucky Center for Statistics provides researchers with individual-level, de-identified K12, postsecondary, and employment data under a data sharing agreement. The state has a clearly documented request process, and the state has published a research agenda.
Louisiana		Louisiana has individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets for research use but access is limited to Louisiana's Foundational Integrated Research System for Transformation.
Maine		Maine's Department of Labor provides authorized external researchers with linked postsecondary and employment data upon request. The data request procedure is not clearly documented on the department's website.
Maryland		The Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center provides researcher access to a mix of prematched and pre-built datasets upon request. Some researchers may be granted access to deidentified individual-level data. The Center has a published research agenda and clear project management and approval procedures.
Massachusetts		Massachusetts provides researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets upon execution of a memorandum of understanding. Each agency of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education as well as the Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub have identified and published their research priorities. Massachusetts encourages research proposals to align with agency research agendas.
Michigan		The Michigan Center for Data and Analytics (MDCA) is developing a process for researchers to request individual-level matched education-to-employment datasets. Researchers will be approved by individual agencies that own the data housed in the MCDA research system.
Minnesota		The Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) provides researchers individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets. The de-identified data are available by application, and the SLEDS Research and Data Committee reviews applications for their alignment with state and SLEDS research priorities. Research leveraging SLEDS data is published on the system's website.
Mississippi		Mississippi State University's National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPARC) is contracted with Mississippi's SLDS Governing Board to provide research and analysis services to fulfill approved requests. NSPARC provides only aggregate data, and the request and review process is not clearly documented online. The state is developing a research agenda.
Missouri		The P20W Research and Data Center, housed within the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, is collaborating with partner agencies on a draft data governance framework that will formalize a process for requesting deidentified linked data. Data have been provided in the past on an ad hoc basis.
Montana		In 2023, Montana established the Education and Workforce Data Governing Board. The Board is responsible for drafting policies and processes related to education-to-employment data sharing, including regarding research requests. The Board has published a research agenda, so future requests can be evaluated for their alignment with state priorities.
Nebraska		The Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System has individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets for third-party researcher access, and there are clear processes for request, review, and sharing of results. Additionally, the state has published a research agenda.
Nevada		Nevada, through the Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research Data System (NPWR) Research Portal, affords researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets, though the request and review process is not clearly documented. Most research projects are submitted in response to NPWR's request for proposals, ensuring that research addresses state priorities. The state publishes reports from completed projects.
New Hampshire		No evidence was identified through the state's response or in Strada's research of the state demonstrating this element.

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State	Rating	Description and Resource Links
New Jersey		The New Jersey Statewide Data System provides external researchers with de-identified, individual-level data from across state agencies. The data available include K-12, higher education, and workforce and training information. An executive leadership committee reviews requests to access these data, and all requests must align with the state's research agenda. Researchers can also review data dictionaries that provide details of the potential datasets available prior to applying for data access.
New Mexico		The New Mexico Higher Education Department provides individual-level education datasets upon request. Research Informing Success in Education is developing individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets and solutions for researcher access.
New York		New York provides researchers at the Community College Research Center and New York City Public Schools access to integrated education-to-employment data, but there is not a clearly documented process for other external researchers to request access to individual-level matched education-to-employment datasets.
North Carolina		The North Carolina Longitudinal Data Service provides individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets for third party researcher access. The state clearly documents the request and review process and has published research and policy learning goals.
North Dakota		North Dakota's SLDS provides authorized external researchers individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets upon request. The state clearly documents the request and review process and publishes its research priorities as well as reports from completed projects.
Ohio		The Ohio Longitudinal Data Archive (OLDA) combines data from several state agencies such as the Ohio Department of Higher Education, Ohio Department of Education, and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. The state provides internal and external researchers with individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets through this platform. Ohio publishes a clearly documented request and review process as well as results of studies conducted using OLDA records.
Oklahoma		Oklahoma has individual-level postsecondary and workforce data that researchers can access via a data request form, or they can also make a data request that is covered under an existing Memorandum of Understanding between the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, and the Oklahoma Tax Commission.
Oregon		Oregon provides de-identified, pre-matched, aggregate postsecondary and workforce data to external researchers upon request. The request and review process is not clearly documented online, but requests are initiated via an email request submission with additional steps determined based on the nature of the request. Additionally, the state has published a research agenda.
Pennsylvania		Researchers may request individual-level education records from the Department of Education. The Department's Institutional Review Board reviews these requests. Researchers may then match these education records to employment datasets. The Department of Education has published a research agenda.
Rhode Island		Rhode Island provides individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets to external researchers upon request. The state publishes a clear description of the request and review process as well as reports from completed projects.
South Carolina		The South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) manages the SLDS and works with state agencies and external researchers. The RFA clearly describes the research request and review process and coordinates this process with all agencies whose data are requested. Additionally, the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce provides staff at public colleges and universities with access to the state's enhanced wage records and publishes an online form to facilitate researcher requests.
South Dakota		South Dakota provides customized postsecondary employment and wage outcomes data upon request. The request and review process is not clearly documented.
Tennessee		Tennessee has individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets for third-party researcher access. For K-12, higher education, and labor research requests, Tennessee has a single application (with addenda for K-12 education) and access is provisioned through a secure portal. The request and approval process is not clearly documented.

Leading Advanced Developing Foundational

State	Rating	Description and Resource Links
Texas	Leading	The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) provides secure access to longitudinal student and workforce data through its three Education Research Centers (ERCs). Researchers can apply to use de-identified data from K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems, and the ERCs clearly document the request and approval process. In 2025, THECB began pursuing a virtual data enclave with Coleridge to expand access and support national data linkages.
Utah	Leading	Upon request, the Utah Data Research Center affords researchers access to individual-level, de-identified, linked education-to-employment data. The system has published a research agenda to guide internal and external research products data.
Vermont	Foundational	No evidence was identified through the state's response or in Strada's research of the state demonstrating this element.
Virginia	Leading	The Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) provides external researchers with individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets via its online platform. VLDS has published the research agendas of its participating agencies and the system overall.
Washington	Leading	Washington provides researchers with de-identified, record-level matched education-to-employment data. The state clearly documents the request and review process and has published a research agenda.
Washington, D.C.	Advanced	The Office of Education Through Employment Pathways currently has individual-level matched education-to-employment datasets for agency partner access and is developing a process for external researchers to request access. In fall 2026, external researchers can request access for projects aligned with the office's research agenda.
West Virginia	Leading	West Virginia provides external researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets. The state publishes a clear description of the request and review process.
Wisconsin	Developing	Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction provides researchers with access to de-identified student-level data within postsecondary education. It is unclear if employment data that are pre-matched and linked are available.
Wyoming	Advanced	Wyoming has individual-level education-to-opportunity matched datasets across systems, but access is limited to internal state agency staff and legislatively mandated participating entities.

About Strada Education Foundation

We collaborate with learners, educators, employers, and policymakers across the U.S. to bring to life a postsecondary education and training ecosystem that provides equitable pathways to opportunity.

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