



Light-Touch Feasibility Study: Engagement Plans for Data Providers

Recommendation from the Office of California Cradle-to-Career Data System

This proposal seeks to establish engagement plans with data providers related to the California Cradle-to-Career Data System (C2C). The intended impact of the proposal is to support the dissemination and usage of C2C tools by data provider agencies and the communities which they serve. This request has a high cost and a moderate level of value in advancing community engagement for C2C.

The Office of California Cradle-to-Career Data System (Office) recommends that it continues to invest in working with data providers to disseminate information related to C2C through channels. This includes continuing to dedicate Office staff time to collaborate with data providers' communications offices, including continuing to coordinate public communication and offer resources and materials. In addition, the Governing Board (Board) could direct the Office to engage further with data providers to increase C2C engagement within agencies. If the Board is interested in investing further in this area, they could direct the Office to conduct a needs assessment to explore (1) data providers' internal use cases for C2C analytical tools; (2) the extent data provider agencies are effectively using C2C analytical tools to advance internal priorities; (3) additional supports that would enhance data providers' use of C2C.

Background

In 2025, Community Engagement Advisory Board (CEAB) member Marisa Johnson submitted a proposal for the Office and C2C data providers to co-create engagement plans to promote C2C Releases with internal and external audiences. The full text of the proposal can be found at [this link](#).

When conducting light-touch feasibility studies for CEAB Proposals, the Office considers four factors: **Alignment**, **Impact**, **Cost**, and **Compliance**.

Alignment with C2C Mission and Workplan

Alignment with Mission: *The extent that the proposal aligns with the mission of C2C*

The proposal aligns closely to the C2C Mission "To be California's source of actionable data and research on education, economic, and health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities; to expand access to tools and services to navigate the education to employment pipeline." The proposal intends to expand access to the C2C Data Tools by systematizing dissemination efforts by data provider agencies, both internally and externally.

Alignment with Workplan: *The extent that the proposal aligns with the Office's current and intended work*

The proposal aligns closely with the [C2C FY 2025-2026 workplan's](#) goal that "Different types of users will need different types of information when accessing the data system, and C2C will engage with communities to listen to and identify their information needs through our user-centered design work, community engagement activities, and trainings and outreach for the data system's practical tools, with a Governance structure that reflects and supports these priorities."

Currently, the Deputy Director of Communications partners with data providers to disseminate information regarding C2C. Activities include:

- The regular coordination of data providers' communication offices to co-create external engagement plans, collaborating to determine the dissemination activities that are most feasible and relevant for the data providers.
- Engagement with communications offices to collect quotes to champion data providers' contributions to the data system.

- The development of tailored resources and collateral materials, such as media toolkits, copy language, talking points, social media posts and related graphics, as well as other templates.
- Dedicated, in-depth coordination of cross-agency launches with data providers that are closely involved in the launch of specific C2C tools.

Impact

The potential benefits, risks, and/or drawbacks on advancing the goals of C2C.

Co-created engagement plans with data providers have the potential to exponentially increase the use of analytical tools by a variety of audiences across the state. Additional focus on data providers' engagement internally to encourage the use of C2C by their own staff has the potential to (1) ensure the state's investment in C2C advances the work of its own agencies; (2) increase data providers' investment in the data system and their role in submitting data by helping them to benefit from the system in their daily work, and (3) explore and expand use cases while strengthening feedback channels, fostering continuous improvement of both the system and community engagement efforts.

Creating new expectations for Office staff and CEAB members creates risks to the scope of future C2C workplans by committing the Office to specific responsibilities, thus providing less flexibility to adapt and react to emerging community engagement needs as the data system evolves. Additionally, if staffing changes, the Office staff may need to deprioritize other elements of the workplan to carry out the activities recommended by the CEAB.

The proposal includes similar risks to data providers by increasing expectations involved in participation in C2C. For data providers required to submit data, expanded expectations around communications and internal engagement could compete for staff's limited time. The Office currently aims to have coordinated engagement plans with data providers, but is limited by data providers' capacity as well as their own. Setting an expectation risks creating tension between data providers' many competing priorities. For those data

providers who submit data optionally, increased expectations could decrease the feasibility of overall participation in the system.

Cost

Startup Costs: *Costs to design and launch the proposal, including both direct costs and associated staff time for the Office.*

Startup costs for the proposal would be concentrated in Office staff time to:

- Further understand needs and opportunities for engagement;
- Develop processes, systems, and materials for the ongoing co-creation and engagement; and
- Determine necessary staffing to increase collaboration with data providers moving forward.

Startup costs would also include data providers' staff time to identify point-people beyond communications teams, participate in needs-sensing conversations with the Office, and develop internal processes for ongoing internal and external engagement related to C2C.

Ongoing Costs: *Costs necessary to maintain the proposed idea.*

This proposal involves significant ongoing costs in the form of staff time within both C2C and the data provider agencies.

Current collaboration with data providers requires a substantial amount of Office staff time. As one example, to implement a collaborative communications launch for the Student Pathways Data Story, the Deputy Director of Communications coordinated with communications offices of the six agencies that contributed data to the Student Pathways Data Story, including managing relationships, plans and timelines; creating content with time for agency review and input; maintaining consistent follow-up; and organizing public events with leadership participation. The Office's current ability to co-create engagement plans, coordinate messaging, develop materials, and implementation with data providers is constrained by staff capacity. Staff time and expertise in both communications and system use would be necessary for

additional meetings, co-development and revision of materials, customization of professional learning for interested data providers, and tracking of activities.

Data provider capacity is similarly constrained, and therefore it is likely that additional staff capacity within the data providers would be needed to support regular, required engagement.

Finally, Office staff time is likely required for oversight and accountability. Data providers' current capacity for C2C-related engagement is limited and competes with other priorities. Additional Office staff time is likely to be needed to provide the support necessary to ensure follow-through.

Compliance

Legal Requirements: *Compliance with privacy laws, intellectual property rights, and any other relevant regulations.*

There are no legal concerns regarding establishing engagement plans with data providers.

Neutrality of the Office: *Whether the proposal might jeopardize the Office's neutral stance.*

Low levels of risk to neutrality may arise if certain data providers are significantly more active in engagement plans than others. There could be a risk of perceived favoritism if the Office consistently reposts communications, as is best practice, from a limited number of data providers. Office staff capacity and accountability for data providers can mitigate this risk by ensuring all data providers participate.

There are no additional known risks to neutrality related to engagement plans with data providers. As large, statewide agencies, data providers are well equipped to disseminate information professionally and with sensitivity. Furthermore, any information delivered by data providers are not held to C2C's neutrality expectations and are free to present information from their perspective and voice.