



DATA ACCESS PRINCIPLES

(Adopted 10/21/2016 by the NLPES Executive Committee)

Background

The National Legislative Program Evaluation Society (NLPES) has adopted the following data access principles in support of its member organizations that conduct program evaluations, performance audits, reviews, studies, or other similar forms of oversight on behalf of state legislatures.

Principle #1

Having access to all data and information from government agencies, including data and information that is confidential or sensitive in nature and not publicly available, is critical to our ability to provide the thorough, independent, objective, and fact-based assessments and analyses on which legislators rely for decision making. Restrictions on our access to data and information ultimately limits the legislature's ability to engage in effective oversight and ensure accountability for the use of public resources and the results being produced.

Principle #2

Organizations that conduct program evaluations, performance audits, reviews, studies, or other similar forms of oversight on behalf of state legislatures often have access to data and information that is confidential or sensitive in nature and not publicly available. Therefore, we have a responsibility to ensure the proper handling of data and information we obtain from agencies, including safeguards to prevent the unauthorized release of or access to confidential or sensitive information. This responsibility is a critical element in ensuring the public's confidence and trust in our organizations and the legislative oversight function.