**GitHub** FAQs

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# What is GitHub for?

[GitHub](https://gbc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/github.com/) is a collaborative platform for creating, storing, managing, and sharing code. In addition to [Git](https://git-scm.com/)-based version control, GitHub offers features for managing bug tracking, product roadmaps, task management, documentation, and continuous integration for software development.

# How do I use ACF’s GitHub licenses?

ACF has purchased licenses in [HHS’s enterprise GitHub account](https://github.com/HHS/acf_analyses/blob/main/ana/disbursement_model/1_prep_historicals.R) so that ACF staff and contractors can leverage GitHub for shared, version-controlled code repositories. Refer to the [ACF Connect Agency-Wide Software page](https://connect.acf.hhs.gov/agency-wide-software) for how to be added as a user on HHS’s GitHub account. GitHub is listed under the “Managing code” data tools section.

# Can my contractors use ACF’s GitHub licenses?

Yes, ACF contractors, including those without acf.hhs.gov email addresses, can be added as users to HHS’s GitHub account. Contractors without ACF email addresses must provide the information for a Federal employee they are working with.

# Can I use my existing GitHub username?

If you have an existing GitHub account (e.g. a personal one), you can use that same username if you would like. If you do so, we recommend you [add your ACF email address to your GitHub account](https://docs.github.com/en/account-and-profile/setting-up-and-managing-your-personal-account-on-github/managing-email-preferences/adding-an-email-address-to-your-github-account) so that any commits made on ACF work are signed by your ACF email address.

You can also choose to create a new GitHub username specifically for your ACF work.

# Are there any guidelines for how to use GitHub?

**Naming repositories**

Because the HHS GitHub account is shared across OpDivs, we suggest naming code repositories (“repos”) using the following nomenclature to make it easy to discover and identify ACF repos:

acf-[office\_acronym]-[project\_shortname]

For example:

* acf-ohs-pir-pipeline
* acf-ohsepr-dart-frontend

For more suggested guidelines, refer to the [ACF Tech Data Surge Support Team GitHub standards](https://github.com/HHS/acf-datasurge-standards/blob/main/github.md).

**Sharing access to repos by Teams**

If a group of people are collaborating on multiple projects together, you can create a [Team](https://docs.github.com/en/organizations/organizing-members-into-teams/about-teams) in GitHub with those people and share permissions on repos to the Team instead of individuals each time. To help us keep track of Teams that belong to ACF, please make your team a child team to the ACF team. All team members must be members of the HHS GitHub account.

# What do I need to know about GitHub and security?

HHS uses and manages the FedRAMPed GitHub account that ACF uses. Repos in GitHub can be set to private (where only certain people you add can view/contribute) or public (where anyone in the Internet can see). When users create a repo, they designate if the repo is private or public; that visibility can be changed as needed in a repo’s settings.

When pushing code into GitHub, make sure you are not storing secrets (passwords, etc.) in your code. If using R, consider using the keyring package (reference: [Managing secrets in R](https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/httr/vignettes/secrets.html)). If using Python, consider using [python-dotenv](https://pypi.org/project/python-dotenv/).

It is best practice to not store datasets in GitHub.

HHS’s enterprise GitHub subscription includes SAML setup. If your team wants to implement a SSO portal for the SAML configuration, we can facilitate an introduction to the relevant team at HHS.

# How else can I learn more about using GitHub?

* Refer to [GitHub documentation](https://docs.github.com/en/enterprise-cloud@latest/get-started)
* Ask questions in the [ACF Data Community of Practice #programming channel](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/channel/19%3a0d6b6bba8df844b28dc11df75007da98%40thread.tacv2/Programming?groupId=84c64187-0f56-44c5-9cfa-a83535450866&tenantId=d58addea-5053-4a80-8499-ba4d944910df)
* View examples of how ACF teams use GitHub:
  + [/ACF-pir-data](https://github.com/HHS/ACF-pir-data): Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) processing pipeline
  + [/TANF-app](https://github.com/HHS/TANF-app): Office of Financial Assistance Data Portal application
  + [/acf-datasurge-standards](https://github.com/HHS/acf-datasurge-standards/blob/main/github.md): Code standards for ACF Tech’s data surge support team