




Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™



Public Health Surveillance and Data

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CDC and USDS: Innovation Through Partnership

As part of CDC's Data Modernization Initiative, we work in partnership with the [U.S. Digital Service](#)  (USDS), a technology organization within the Executive Office of the President at the White House.

USDS's mission focuses on implementing best practices in technology and design to address the federal government's most pressing technical challenges. They work across government to support the delivery of digital services. Since 2020, CDC and USDS have been engaged in projects to:

- Reimagine how data flows between CDC, state and local jurisdictions, and healthcare providers
- Create pandemic-ready tools and systems
- Modernize the hiring process at CDC
- Use "discovery sprints" to learn quickly about some of the biggest challenges facing public health data and surveillance

As this partnership has grown since 2020, so has our focus. We have learned a lot since our first project called Pandemic-Ready Interoperability Modernization Effort (PRIME), which began during COVID and has since developed into a robust partnership.

Reimagining the data flow

North Star Architecture: CDC and USDS are working with the Office of the National Coordinator and with jurisdictions to develop a [North Star Architecture](#) for public health data. This will increase the timeliness and interoperability of data in the public health ecosystem. It will also provide different levels of support to public health departments as they modernize.

Find out more about how we're [advancing public health interoperability](#).

ReportStream: ReportStream provides modern, cloud-based lab data routing and cleaning for health departments to receive, process, and share data across jurisdictions.

- Accepts data from senders, including apps like SimpleReport, devices, labs, and hospitals in an open-source approach to facilitate fast and high-quality data reporting
- Open-source approach facilitates fast and high-quality data reporting
- Allows public health departments to receive multiple types of structured data from many different facilities via a streamlined single connection and formatted for usability

Visit the [ReportStream](#) website.

Creating pandemic-ready tools

Launched in 2020, SimpleReport improves reporting of tests from both traditional and non-traditional testing sites using point of care rapid tests for COVID-19 and COVID19+Flu.

SimpleReport is expanding beyond COVID-19 to other respiratory illnesses and is currently piloting the reporting of STD testing.

- A free, easy to use web app that remembers required patient information, guides the testing workflow, records results of a point-of-care test, and routes data to public health jurisdictions
- Allows any testing provider, such as a school, jail, assisted living facility, or employer to send high quality, structured data to their public health jurisdiction

Learn more about the [SimpleReport app](#) [🔗](#).

DMI in action: SimpleReport app helps Alaska count cases

The free SimpleReport app that CDC developed with USDS filled critical gaps in COVID case reporting in remote rural areas, in schools, and in the fishing and tourism industries their economy relies on. Alaska went live with SimpleReport in September 2021, rolling out initially for non-traditional testing locations who were struggling to report cases. Anne Zink, MD, chief medical officer for the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, says SimpleReport was a “huge game changer,” allowing Alaska to go from calls and faxes and spreadsheets to an automated tool.

Modernizing the hiring process

Subject Matter Expert-Quality Assessments: Across the entire government, about half of all open and competitive job announcements close with no job selection.

To address the problem, CDC worked with USDS to pilot Subject Matter Expert-Quality Assessments (SME-QA), an innovative strategy used by federal agencies to recruit world class and diverse talent as efficiently as possible.

In the first test of the new hiring process at CDC, 600 applications were received in record time, and qualified candidates were shared with hiring managers across the agency.


Learn more about this hiring process on the [SME-QA website](#) .

Discovery sprints

Discovery sprints are a useful method to quickly build a common understanding of the status of a complex organization, system, or service. They create paths toward solutions by identifying specific, actionable next steps for the people at the organization who will carry that work forward. Since 2020, CDC and USDS have worked together on discovery sprints like:

- **Pandemic-ready systems for health departments:** In May 2020, a USDS team began a discovery sprint at the request of the White House Coronavirus Task Force to investigate and create recommendations for improving the flow and quality of data related to the COVID-19 pandemic and response, from the local level to the federal level and all levels in between. The result of these insights is a new multi-year collaboration between CDC and USDS to strengthen data quality and information technology systems in state and local health departments.
- **Streamlining case surveillance:** In May 2022, CDC and USDS launched a new discovery sprint to inform a more modern vision for case reporting and notification. This work will help deepen understanding of the current technologies, processes, and policies around case reporting and notification and build upon the successes of previous efforts. The findings from the sprint will be used to determine how to better support state, local, tribal, and territorial (STLT) jurisdictions and CDC programs in data collection and reporting, with an emphasis on minimizing the reporting burden on states.

Learn more about

- Discovery Sprints led by USDS on their [Discovery Sprint Guide website](#) .
- Case surveillance modernization related to the [streamlining case surveillance discovery sprint](#).

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