



MLDS CENTER

Maryland Longitudinal Data System

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Privacy Notice

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1. Introduction

Protecting Your Information

The Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center protects your personal information including keeping it private and secure.

What this Document Covers

This privacy notice explains:

- How the MLDS Center collects personal information
- How personal information is used
- How personal information is protected
- How personal information is shared

2. What Personal Information Is Collected

The MLDS Center collects and uses personal information about students and workers that is gathered from other state agencies and private national certifiers (data sharing partners), including:

- The Maryland State Department of Education
- The Maryland Higher Education Commission
- The Maryland Department of Labor
- The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services
- The Maryland Department of Human Services
- Maryland Health Occupation Boards and Commission
- The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
- The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Services
- The Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation
- The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
- Private National Certifiers: Microsoft and CompTIA

The personal information provided by our data sharing partners includes:

- Full name including given and surnames;
- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number
- State Assigned Student ID Number or other unique IDs
- Addresses and Census Block and Tract

The MLDS Center follows all applicable Maryland and federal laws regarding the collection and use of personal information. The applicable laws and regulations include:

- MLDS Center Enabling Legislation - Md. Code Ann., Educ. §§ 24-701 – 24-706
- Maryland's Public Information Act as set forth in Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. § 4-101, *et seq.*
- Federal law and regulations - Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99
- Federal Regulations on the confidentiality and disclosure of state unemployment compensation information - 20 CFR § 603.2
- State Unemployment Law – Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. § 8-625(d)
- State Juvenile Justice Law – Md. Code Ann., Human Serv. §9-101 *et seq.*
- State Courts– court records are confidential and their contents may not be divulged – Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. § 3-8A-27(b)

3. Why the MLDS Center Collects and Processes Your Personal Information

a. Why the MLDS Center collects your information.

The MLDS is a statewide data system that contains individual-level student data and workforce data from all levels of education and the State's workforce. The MLDS Center organizes, manages, disaggregates, and analyzes the data to examine student progress and outcomes over time, including preparation for postsecondary education and the workforce (see Md. Code Ann., Educ. §24-702(b)).

The MLDS Center does not directly collect data from individuals. Instead, all of the data used by the MLDS Center are administrative data collected by our data sharing partners (see Section 2 above) and then provided to the MLDS Center.

b. How the MLDS Center Uses Your Information

The MLDS Center uses personally identifiable information for the purpose of matching individual records over time and across various educational and workforce sectors. Matching individual records is done on a highly secure and limited access server. Once data are matched, personal information is stripped from the record and the de-identified information is moved to a different server where authorized staff are able to use it for research and analysis.

The MLDS Center may only use de-identified aggregate data in the release of data in reports and in response to data requests. Further, aggregate data that may be identifiable based on the size or uniqueness of the population under consideration may not be reported by the MLDS Center. (see Md. Code Ann., Educ. §24-703(b))

c. What the MLDS Center Does with Your Information

The purpose of the system is to conduct research and analysis and provide timely and accurate information about student performance that can be used to improve the state's education system and guide decision makers at all levels.

d. How the MLDS Center protects Your Information

The MLDS Center only uses your personal information as needed to match data across sectors and over time. Data matching is done on a highly secure server that only four staff members are authorized to access. All other staff conduct research and analysis using de-identified data maintained on another server.

The MLDS Center is constantly working to ensure the highest level of system security including: (a) maintaining and following a detailed Data Security and Safeguarding Plan; (b) having the system audited;

(c) having penetration tests conducted to identify any vulnerabilities; (d) requiring criminal history background checks for all staff who access the system; (e) requiring all staff to sign a Rules of Security Behavior document; (f) enforcing least privilege access requirements; (g) constant monitoring of automated security scans; and (h) the application and maintenance of strict firewall rules.

e. Sharing and Consent

With two exception described below, the MLDS Center is prohibited from sharing personal information. State law only allows the MLDS Center to use aggregate de-identified data in reports, data requests, and research. The data sharing agreements that the MLDS Center has with each data sharing partner specifies that the MLDS Center may not re-disclose personal information.

Exception #1 - Md. Code, Educ. §24-703.2 allows the MLDS Center to share personally identifiable student data with the Maryland Comptroller for the purpose of matching student information to tax information. MLDS data are securely transferred to the Comptroller's office which does the data matching and reports back de-identified aggregate income information. The data exchange is pursuant to a detailed data sharing agreement that requires the Comptroller to: (1) only use the data for the purpose of providing tax information to the MLDS Center; and (2) delete the data within 15 days after reporting to the MLDS Center.

Exception #2 – Under Md. Code, Educ. §24-703.4, the [MLDS Center Governing Board](#) may authorize the MLDS Center to share data with one third party data center to enable multistate reporting. Before granting authorization, the Governing Board must determine that the third party data center meets a set of criteria that ensures the security, privacy, and use of data are consistent with the standards that the MLDS Center operates under. Currently the Governing Board has authorized the Center to share data with the Administrative Data Research Facility ([ADRF](#)), a third party data center managed by the [Coleridge Initiative](#). The MLDS Center will collaborate with Washington D.C. and Virginia to create a report on student outcomes in the Capitol Region.

4. Knowledge and Consent

The MLDS Center gets all of its data from its data sharing partners. Each data sharing partner is responsible for managing consent related to the use of personal information.

5. Limiting Collection

The MLDS Center collects data (including personal information) from data sharing partners pursuant to detailed data sharing agreements. The data collected is limited to data needed to answer important questions about student outcomes and performance. All data added to the MLDS [data inventory](#) must be reviewed and approved by the MLDS Center Governing Board. The MLDS Center is required to submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly that includes a list of all data elements added to and removed from the MLDS.

6. Use, Disclosure, and Retention of Personal Information

a. Use of Your Personal Information

The MLDS Center only uses personal information for data matching. Because of the nature of the work that the MLDS Center does, which is to understand student outcomes over time, data may be kept for 20 years.

b. Sharing Your Personal Information

The MLDS Center does not share your personal information (except for the Comptroller and the ADRF as described in Section 3e above). State law requires the MLDS Center to only release aggregate data in reports and in response to data requests.

The MLDS Center **never** sells your personal information to anyone.

c. Anonymizing Your Personal Information

Personal information is de-identified and assigned a random system identification number. De-identified data are used for research and analysis.

d. Public Access to Records

Government records may be open to the public if required by the Maryland Public Information Act. However, Maryland law has safety exceptions to keep your private details from being released to the public.

7. Accuracy

The accuracy of the personal information provided to the MLDS Center is managed by the data sharing partners. The MLDS Center receives and uses the personal information as provided.

The MLDS Center will never ask you about your personal information.

If you feel that it is possible that the personal information that the MLDS Center received about you is incorrect, please contact the data sharing partner that gathered the information about you.

8. Safeguarding Personal Information

a. Protecting Your Personal Information

State and federal laws require the MLDS Center to keep your personal information safe. For example, education records are protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and workforce information is protected by the confidentiality and disclosure requirements under unemployment compensation program laws. Under Maryland law, the MLDS Center is required to maintain your personal information pursuant to a detailed *Data Security and Safeguarding Plan* that is reviewed and approved by the MLDS Center Governing Board. The plan requires encryption of personal information, strict access controls, and highly secure servers maintained in a secure data center.

b. What Happens in the Case of Unauthorized Accesses Your Personal Information

If someone accesses personal information in the MLDS without proper authority, the MLDS Center will inform the data sharing partners as required under our data sharing agreements and incident management plan.

9. Privacy Notice Changes

The MLDS Center reviews and updates this notice at least once a year to keep up with new laws, technology, and best practices. The MLDS Center will let you know about any big changes by posting the new rules with a new “Last Update” date.

10. Access to Personal Information

a. Requesting Your Information

None of the personal information that the MLDS Center receives is collected directly from you. Requests to review your records must be made with the data sharing partner that originally collected your information.

b. What We Can't Show You

By law, the MLDS Center is only permitted to release aggregate data in response to a data request. Therefore, a request for an individual record will be denied.

11. Artificial Intelligence

AI Technology is becoming more common. Currently, the MLDS Center does not use AI in providing services to the public or processing data. The MLDS Center is committed to being clear and open about its use of AI and will follow [Maryland's Responsible AI Policy](#) to protect your data.

12. How to Contact the MLDS Center

You can ask questions about this notice or report a privacy issue by contacting the MLDS Center's Data Privacy Officer: Molly Abend – mollyb.abend@maryland.gov or 410-767-0039.

13. Email

If you email the MLDS Center, we will use your message to answer your questions. Your emails are like official letters and become public records that may be shared if someone asks for them under the Maryland Public Information Act.

14. Website Privacy

This section explains privacy practices related to the MLDS Center website.

a. Cookies

A cookie is a small file saved on your computer when you visit a website. The MLDS Center uses cookies to help our site work well, count visitors, and make your experience better. Most web browsers accept cookies by default. You can change your settings to block cookies, but doing so might stop some features from working.

b. Information Collected and Stored Automatically

When you visit the MLDS Center website or download files, our system automatically collects some basic information. This information does not identify you personally. Here is what we collect:

- Your internet domain and your device's IP address. An IP address is a special number given to your device by our internet service provider. This helps your device talk to other on the internet.
- The type of web browser (e.g. Chrome, Safari) and operating system you are using
- The date and time of you visit
- The specific pages you viewed
- Where you click on the site (not including text you type in forms)

We use this data to improve our website, to learn about the number of visitors on our site, and to understand what technology people are using. We do not track personal information about visits.

c. Other Website

The MLDS Center’s website links to other websites. Our privacy rules do not apply once you leave our site. We cannot control how these other websites use your data. Always check their privacy statement to understand how they handle your information.

d. Site Security

To protect our website and make sure it is accessible to everyone, the MLDS Center uses special security tools. These tools watch the traffic on our network. The security tools help us find and stop any attempts to change data or harm our pages.

The MLDS Center does not try to find out who individual users are unless it is part of a policy investigation. Uploading unauthorized information or damaging government computer systems is against the law. This can lead to punishment under both State and federal laws. In the event of a data breach, we will notify the data sharing partner agencies in accordance with our data sharing agreements.