ISC, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides oversight for the ISC Community Database, which is the only integrated data system in North Carolina. The ISC’s mission is to advance university research and increase the community’s capacity for data-based planning and evaluation.

What is an Integrated Data System?
An integrated data system holds administrative data from numerous organizations and can match information across these organizations at the individual level. For example, the information about students in a certain school can be matched to data from the Department of Social Services so that a school can better understand its population. Or, a nonprofit organization can match its program list to both these agencies to learn how to better serve its target population. Therefore, an integrated data system (IDS) is a unique resource and powerful tool for local program evaluation and policy formulation.

What is Administrative Data?
Administrative data is the information that organizations and agencies collect in the process of their daily work. This information includes demographics such as race and age as well as program use and data like student attendance and community arrest records.

What is the Purpose of Using Administrative Data in Research?
Administrative data is not collected for research purposes. However, it is useful data for researchers because it does not rely on self-report and it tells us who uses what services and how much. If a study wanted to look at the impact of absenteeism on test scores, a researcher could survey individual students for information on their attendance and test scores. This information already exists as administrative data, which means that researchers can study a population instead of a sample. Without using administrative data that has already been collected, this research is very difficult, time-consuming, and expensive. Using administrative data is not only faster and easier, it can provide more statistically powerful results.

What Procedures Are in Place to Protect this Data?
The data in the ISC Community Database is individual level, identifiable data so that data can be linked across agencies. Therefore, the ISC has numerous procedures in place to protect the data. Most importantly, each data depositor enters into a rigorous legal data sharing agreement with ISC, Inc. This agreement explicitly states the expectations of confidentiality and security. ISC also has strict protocols around data security.

To request data in the ISC Community Database for research purposes, the researcher is required to obtain IRB approval. Data requests may require IRB approval if requested by the ISC Data and Research Oversight Committee (DAROC). The researcher must also submit a Data License Request to DAROC, which provides oversight of the ISC Community Database and reviews all research requests. DAROC includes University researchers and members of the community, including a representative from each data depositor. The agency that owns the data being requested must approve the use of their data during the approval process. If approved, the researcher signs a limited license agreement to only use the data as stipulated in the data license request.
No researcher will ever see identifiable data. The ISC’s Data Scientist links and matches data on a secure terminal that is not connected to a network, then the data is deidentified and sent to DAROC for review.

**What Administrative Data Does the ISC Hold?**
We are always in the process of negotiating data sharing agreements with local government and non-profit agencies. To learn more about our depositors, please visit the ISC Codebook at [http://charlotteresearch.info](http://charlotteresearch.info).

**What Kind of Projects Use the ISC Community Database?**
ISC collaborates with both researchers and community members. Therefore, data from the ISC Community Database is used for research projects such as investigating the educational trajectories of disengaged youth age 18-24 involved in Mecklenburg County’s criminal justice system.

The ISC Community Database is also being used for numerous program evaluations for community organizations that are being conducted by UNC Charlotte Urban Institute staff. These evaluations are mixed-methods evaluations, so they use data from the ISC Community Database as an important quantitative component, but complement this data with additional quantitative and qualitative data collection.

**What Does ISC have to Do with UNC Charlotte Urban Institute?**
The ISC integrated with the Urban Institute in 2012. The UNC Charlotte Urban Institute ([http://ui.uncc.edu/](http://ui.uncc.edu/)) is a nonpartisan, applied research and community outreach center. Founded in 1969, it provides services including technical assistance and training in operations and data management; public opinion surveys; and research and analysis around economic, environmental, and social issues affecting the Charlotte region.

The ISC is now a critical resource used in the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute’s work. All ISC team members are Urban Institute staff, working on research and community projects that do and do not utilize the ISC Community Database.

**How Can I Use the ISC Community Database for My Research?**

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<th>Aggregate Requests</th>
<th>Research Requests</th>
<th>Program Evaluation</th>
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<td>If you believe the data outlined in the codebook could be a good fit for your research and you would like request <strong>aggregate</strong> data to further explore the potential for your study, apply for grants or funding, or use in a data story, contact Associate Director, Ashley Williams Clark (<a href="mailto:Ashley.Clark@uncc.edu">Ashley.Clark@uncc.edu</a>)</td>
<td>If you believe the data outlined in the codebook is a good fit for your research and you would like to request <strong>individual level</strong> data from the ISC Community Database, contact Associate Director, Ashley Williams Clark (<a href="mailto:Ashley.Clark@uncc.edu">Ashley.Clark@uncc.edu</a>)</td>
<td>If you are a community organization who is interested in evaluating a program or programs using the ISC Community Database, contact Director of Research Services, Diane Gavarkavich (<a href="mailto:D.Gavarkavich@uncc.edu">D.Gavarkavich@uncc.edu</a>)</td>
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