Stanford PACS
Center on **Philanthropy**
and **Civil Society**

Digital Civil Society Lab

HOW TO HIRE A DATA EXPERT

These questions can guide your conversations with paid or volunteer data experts at the beginning of a data project, to provide clarity about the types, uses, and challenges of digital data at your organization.

- **Discovery process:** What is the core problem to be addressed, as agreed upon by both parties? What data already exists that will be made available to the data expert? What new data needs to be obtained? What are the communication parameters (internal and external) and project deliverables? What organizational policies exist to guide the collection and management of data for this project?

- **Data lifecycle:** What is the data lifecycle for this project? Who is responsible for the data at each stage of this lifecycle? When and how will data be deleted or destroyed?

- **Metrics:** What are the agreed upon terms of success for each stage of the work? What do the different parties consider to be failure, what will they do if that happens, and what will happen to the data?

- **Beneficiaries:** Who are the intended beneficiaries of the work beyond the immediate project partners, and how will they be represented and invited to participate and provide feedback on the data project? What was the consent process for data subjects and how are these people involved in the data project itself?

- **Ownership:** Who owns – and who may use – the data, tools, algorithms, models and final products from this project? Who is responsible and who is legally liable for the data at each stage of the lifecycle?

- **Bias:** What are the known sources of data bias, algorithmic assumptions, and appropriate applications of the data model between the partners? What other stakeholders will have input and at what stage of the project?

- **Integration:** For what reason, and how, will the data and data models be added to existing organizational decision-making processes?

- **Sustainability:** How will the data collection and data models be maintained when the project is completed or the relationship with the data expert ends?

This guide was developed at a workshop hosted by the Digital Civil Society Lab at the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society. Please use, iterate, improve, and share feedback with us at **toolkit@digitalimpact.io.**