

IASSIST Regional Report for Canada 2026

Membership:

As of May 20, 2026, there were 61 active Canadian IASSIST members with the longest serving members having joined in 1998 and the most recent in 2026. This represents about a 10% decrease over the last year. Canada is well represented at the IASSIST Executive and Administrative Committee whose members include Dylanne Dearborne (University of Toronto) Vice-President; Carla Graebner (Simon Fraser University) Canadian Regional Secretary; Alisa Rod (McGill University) Member at Large; Amber Leahey (University of Toronto) Member at Large and Regional Treasurer – Canada.

Overview:

Canadian IASSIST members are well integrated into the data landscape participating in a variety of regional, national and international events and initiatives such as Love Data Week, the Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) days of training and various workshops or panel discussions sponsored by the Digital Research Alliance of Canada (DRAC), Canadian Research Data Centre Network of Canada (CRDCN) among others.

With the launch of the [Explora](#) platform by DRAC, access to online workshops, webinars, bootcamps, and other training events across Canada has become significantly easier allowing researchers, data scientists, data librarians and students to develop skills in advanced research computing, research data management, and research software.

This year has been one of celebration and of sorrow. I would like to once again congratulate Eugene Barsky (University of British Columbia) for being awarded the Canadian Research Knowledge Network's 2025 Ron McDonald Outstanding Service Award recognizing his work toward advancing research data infrastructure and persistent identifiers (PIDs).

The Canadian data community lost one of our best colleagues this year. Walter Giesbrecht was known to many of you through his work as Data Librarian at York University and his participation and support for IASSIST throughout his career.

Anything I could say about Walter would fall short so I'm reproducing this note, with permission, sent to the IASSIST list by his wife Roberta.

“Got the 2026 census questionnaire today. Once I got online, it was the long form. I think, as a former data librarian, Walter Giesbrecht would have lived if he had known we would get the long form for the 2026 Census. The last time we got the long form of the census it was in paper, this is online. He slowly looked through the form in a manner that was not the least disturbing at all. He took us through every question and told us the background of each question: when it first appeared, any changes and when and how these changes occurred, how the definitions had changed over the years. It was practically a religious experience. I opened the census webpage and started entering the information, Once I realized it was the long form, I started to cry. He would have loved this. Our daughter, Sarah, also got the long form. What are the chances? That’s rhetorical, no one needs to do the math.”

National:

Digital Research Alliance of Canada:

The Alliance is advancing its vision for an interconnected Canadian research data ecosystem that supports researchers and strengthens national research data sovereignty. Initiatives like the [Canadian Research Data Platform](#) (CRDP) aim to align infrastructure, standards, governance, and services across the full data lifecycle to reduce fragmentation, lower costs, and enable trusted, interoperable, and reusable research data at national scale. The [National Data Spaces Pilot](#), a cornerstone of the CRDP, will play a key role in advancing support for research data, including sensitive data in the social sciences.

[Canadian Research Data Centre Network \(CRDCN\):](#)

The CRDCN has now rolled out remote access to microdata to over half its userbase. The community response has been very positive and we continue to roll out to the remaining sites. CRDCN has also been funded by the Digital Research Alliance of Canada to create a national data space around sensitive social science data (Social Science Canada Data Space - SSCAN data space). This 2-year project involves engaging with the research community around sensitive data and exploring how to set up an effective support, access, and discovery infrastructure.

Data Liberation Initiative (DLI):

The most recent DLI National Training was held virtually on May 5-7, 2025. Topics included Statistics Canada's Rich Data Services (RDS), a Labour Force Survey supplement overview, GeoSearch, statistical literacy, IPUMS, and more. Between 40 and 50 people attended each session.

This year we are returning to the pattern of hosting the virtual training sessions in the fall and the next DLI National Training will be held virtually from November 30, 2026 to December 2, 2026. We have only recently announced those dates and have not yet started preparing the program.

And, the DLI's Professional Development Committee updated the [DLI survival guide](#) and the new version should be published to the Statistics Canada DLI website later this spring.

Canadian Public Data Rescue Initiative:

The Canadian Public Data Rescue initiative grew out of previous data rescue efforts in Canada while being inspired by the threats to public data in the U.S. and the incredible work being done by our U.S. colleagues. Our initial work has included a major project to scrape over 800 environmental datasets from the Canadian Open Government Portal as well as rescuing select other datasets submitted through our nomination form or suggested by members. Current efforts are focused on developing workflow and training, including a recent workshop to train library science students to assess and curate rescued environmental data.

<https://sites.google.com/view/cpdri/home>

Regional:

Atlantic:

The Atlantic Data Contacts group met three times in the 2025/26 academic year. They discussed various topics of regional interest and teamed up to offer region-wide online webinars for ICPSR's "Love Data Week".

Central:

McMaster University

McMaster University has released its [Community Research Data Toolkit](#), a CC-BY-SA resource which aims to reframe data management for community research work. It has

templates for conversational data management plans, establishing roles and responsibilities, and ways for communities to be involved in controlling access to data once the project is complete. They also are great plain-language resources and descriptions of RDM practices - what RDM is, data security, budgeting, DMPs, and data deposit.

Guidance and tools were authored by five superb teams of colleagues:

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Subhanya Sivajothy (lead), Melissa Cuthill, Neha Gupta, Keshav Mukunda
 - Community protocols for research and data governance for before, during, and after research.
- **Data Management Planning:** Anneliese Eber and Isaac Pratt (co-leads), Cathy Paton, Kaelan Caspary
 - Template for building a Data Management Plan through conversation
 - Data management in action - examples and guidance
- **Data Deposit:** Amber Gallant and Niloofar Hooman (co-leads), Lucia Constanzo, Mikala Narlock, Tracy Sallaway - templates and example language for:
 - Data Access Committees
 - Data Access Terms, and Data Use Agreements
 - Reviewing and taking care of community research data
- **Framing Texts:** Danica Evering (lead), Shahad Al-Saqqar, Oishee Ghosh, Laurence Horton, Billie Hu - plain-language briefs on:
 - Managing community research data
 - Balancing budgets and data needs, assessing risk and avoiding breaches, naming and organizing files
 - Data Management Plans as conversations that build trust
 - Data Deposit as community care and control over data and Creative Commons and data licensing
- **Glossary:** Oishee Ghosh, Nancy He (RDM Assistants – 2024-25) Rebeca Gaston Jothyraj (RDM Assistant – 2024), Shrey Acharya (RDM Assistant – 2023) translated RDM terms into a Plain Language Glossary

Compute Ontario:

1. In partnership with 4 Ontario HPC (High Performance Computing) Consortia, Compute Ontario is co-developing and delivering the Compute Ontario Summer

School, a 3-week, multi-disciplinary slate of over 40 DRI (Digital Research Infrastructure) courses, including 11 directly related to RDM.

2. Compute Ontario proactively contributes to the coordination and advancement of DRI and RDM initiatives at the regional and national level through membership on provincial and national committees and by flowing government funding to Ontario HPC consortia.
3. Compute Ontario committees and working groups actively engage experts in DRI and RDM to guide current and future initiatives (e.g. DRI training, microcredentials, curation, and more).

Western:

The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the University of Northern British Columbia and the University of Victoria continue their partnership in making open and licensed datasets available through the Abacus data repository. Recently, through a pilot initiated by the British Columbia Electronic Library Network, SFU, UVic and UNBC have been able to join UBC in providing access to BC Assessment data.