Getting Started With Research on Secondary Data

1) Before you begin the data acquisition process
   a) Develop realistic expectations
   b) Review the data provider's overall process for data acquisition for any dataset you may need
   c) Identify the earliest date that you would need to have the data,
   d) Identify how to cover any associated costs or fees
   e) Identify what supportive documentation or other approvals are required
   f) Consult with information technology staff to determine how to meet data security requirements
2) Common components of data acquisition
   a) Research statement or data use proposal
      i) Provide description of the proposed research including scope and rationale for needing the dataset
      ii) Review codebook to determine whether a dataset has the constructs/variables you need
   b) Institutional Review Board (IRB)
      i) Similar across universities
      ii) People are in place to help navigate the process (e.g., analysts, coordinators)
   c) Data protection plan or data security plan- typically involves physical, administrative, and technical/electronic security
      i) Physical: Using locked filing cabinets, placing computers containing data in locked rooms
      ii) Administrative: Developing and enforcing organizational rules, who has access to personal information
      iii) Technical: The use of computer passwords, firewalls, antivirus software, encryption, other measures that protect data from unauthorized access, loss, or modification; access control
   d) Research staff forms
3) Tips
   a) Learn about the relevant research policies for your institution. Identify and contact the relevant office (e.g., Research Compliance and Ethics, Office of Research Protection), and attend an informational training if one is offered at your university.
   b) When in doubt, always ask: someone usually knows the answer and can help you find it.
   c) Look for red flags: if you see terms or conditions or have to "click to agree" etc., it's possible that you should not proceed.