

Advocating with Public Data: Examining Health in Hartford's Neighborhoods

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Goals:

- Develop confidence and curiosity with data
 - Understand public data:
 - Who collects public data?
 - What are some uses of public data?
 - Case Study: Using public data for action
 - React, reflect and share:
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Levelset & Understanding Public Data (20 minutes)

- About the Connecticut Data Collaborative
- Introduce around the room
 - *What we love about data*
- Review goals:
 - Level set our vocabulary
 - Understanding of public data and use of secondary data
 - How to engage line staff/grassroots advocates.
 - Develop confidence and curiosity with data
 - Understand public data:
 - Who collects public data?
 - What are some uses of public data?
 - Explore a case study
 - Data Walk exercise - react, reflect, and share
- (slide 4) Where do data come from: Who makes the collection strategy
 - Federal and state sources of data: Census, each federal and state agency
- (slide 5) Data are not neutral
 - Discuss human intervention in data production: people intervene by deciding what to collect, how to collect, what to do when you have your data.
 - All data is the result of decisions we make in trying to understand a question, a social problem, the natural world. A human has to make decisions about what and how to collect information. Other humans have to make decisions about how to store and display that information. And still more humans have to communicate that

information. As we discuss data, let us keep in mind the kind of decisions in that chain of information creation.

- (slide 6) Data alone will not solve problems
 - Data provides → Insight that can lead to → Action
 - Data on its own does not tell us much--researchers collect data to turn data into information and insights. Then researchers, advocates, citizens use that information to take action.
- (slide 7) Open/Public data sharing
 - Define open data
 - Data are accessible to everyone
 - Data are available in open non-proprietary formats
 - You have the right to redistribute
 - You have the right to modify and make derivative data and works
 - Define public data
 - Information collected through provision of publicly-supported services
 - Made available to the public in various forms or subject to FOIA
 - Edsight.ct.gov
 - Vital Statistics reports
 - Benefits of accessing open and/or public data
- (slide 8) Common Sources of Data
 - Why you might choose external data?
 - Many organizations find that they collect some data internally but placing the data in context requires collecting data external to their organization.
 - There are many external data sources but some gold standard sources that users can trust and repeatedly rely upon.
 - Many states have a state data center--this is the approved entity that has a formal relationship with the US Census organization..
- (slide 9) All good data-informed work is QUESTION DRIVEN
 - *What questions drove the creation of the best places to live indices?*
- (slide 10) *Remember the context*
 - All good data-informed work is grounded in CONTEXT
 - CONTEXT matters
 - Public data can provide CONTEXT for your work

Case study (10 minutes; slides 11-14)

Health in Hartford's Neighborhoods

- Inspired by what we know about health equity and what we know about housing, we wondered about the relationship housing and health conditions in Hartford

- What we do know: comparison of Hartford neighboring towns, to other large cities
- The data we started with: CDC 500 Cities Data
- The data we had to track down: Data detectives tracked down Hartford Open Data sources
- What can be done with the data: We knew we could understand something about health in the city. We narrowed the focus to three questions.
 - In general—are housing conditions—including measures of housing affordability, stability, and physical characteristics—related to health outcomes?
 - Where in the city are housing conditions likely to be a factor contributing to health disparities?
 - More specifically, which neighborhoods could benefit from targeted intervention?
- Top line takeaways
 - There is a robust connection between both housing quality and housing stability measures and health outcomes.
 - The most stable tracts had better health measures than the least stable tracts on almost every health measure under study, a surprisingly robust pattern given the diversity of health measures that we included here.
 - Two drivers are the leading causes of poor health outcomes.
 - Foreclosures
 - Calls for essential (emergency) service
 - More granular data are needed to understand the impact of rodents; currently the data are not collected with enough specificity.

Data Walk (30 minutes; slide 15; slides 18-20 maps displayed for the walk)

We can TELL you about the findings or we can let you get up close and personal with the data visualizations. Around the room you will find three screens. On each screen you'll find a dataviz from the Health in Hartford's Neighborhoods project. At each station you will find some general guiding questions as well as metadata for the visualization. Start by taking time to understand the visualization. What do the colors represent, what do the data represent, are there any markers or text that draw your attention to something specific in the visualization. Once you come to a consensus as a group about the dataviz and its meaning, use your group's post it notes to log questions, ideas, and thoughts about this dataviz or how it might inspire you to use your own data to make something like it.

- Explore the images displayed in the room. With each image, we provide metadata and discussion questions on big white paper (what else would you want to know).

- You will have 5-7 minutes at each dataviz to discuss. We also provide each group with a stack of post-it notes.
- Write down observations, thoughts, and questions on these post it notes and stick them to the wall before you move on to the next dataviz.

Debrief/Next steps (15 minutes; slide 16)

We want to create and grow an ecosystem of data users and producers in the health and housing sector. We know that this is the first step in bringing together community organizations.

- Regroup and discuss Data Walk experience.
 - Review the post it notes and summarize findings and questions.
 - It's easy to look at the final product and think "I could never make that" or "how did they make that" but every data-driven project starts with a question. Something that pushes you to consider information, look for information.
- Using data to support advocacy?
 - To use data for advocacy, you have to know what you want to show. Does the data exist?
 - THEN you have to modify your question if the data don't exist
 - If you can't achieve your goal with the data you have (and it doesn't exist), you have a new hurdle to clear.
 - If you can achieve your goal with the data you have, then you have to find a message and hone it for your audience.
- Health in Hartford's neighborhoods is meant to inspire curiosity, to push for answers (especially when they don't exist).
 - What questions do you want to answer?
 - Not a new discovery that health and housing related; Measurement issues, shared definition issues
- What data do you own?
 - Can you share? What work is underway?
 - Do you need help sharing?

Wrap up (10 minutes; slide 17)

- Who do we connect to, add to the room?
- How do we build on our findings and connect to other efforts?
- Are there others who could benefit from understanding our methodology/conversation?
- Review of public data sources
- Ways to continue to build data literacy skill set
- Ways to get your data into the hands of people who will use it