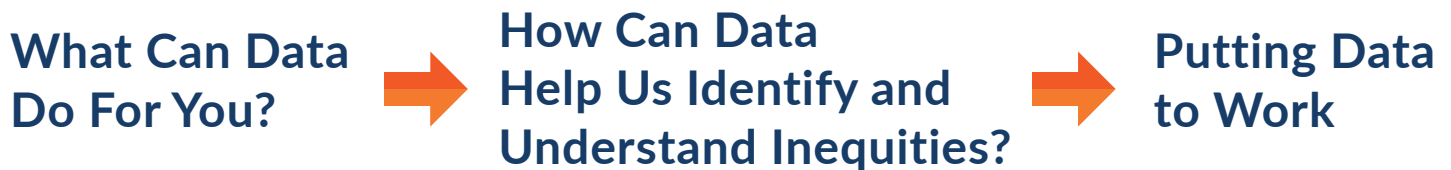


## WORKSHEET

# Why Use Data?

This worksheet is a companion to the *Why Use Data? Action Learning Guide*. Consider the worksheet a place to track your progress through the guide and to reflect on your own community's experience with the topic.

The worksheet will take you through the sections of the Action Learning Guide:



## What Can Data Do For You?

Data can help you answer questions about the experiences and health outcomes of people in your community.



**There are many questions data can answer:**

- Why?
- Who?
- What?
- When?
- How?
- Where?





## Generate Questions:

Begin with a question: What do you want to know about your community?

Your questions can be broad or specific. Stating your question will help you figure out what data you need to answer that question.

Brainstorm with partners and community members to generate questions to explore. Examples of questions you might ask include:

- How many people are experiencing hunger (food insecurity) in my city?
- What is the most pressing health topic concerning people in our state?
- Is vaping more common among teens or adults?
- Why are there differences in birth outcomes by race/ethnicity in my county?
- When was the child uninsured rate highest in the US?
- Where are the schools with the highest test scores?
- How do I best address childhood poverty in my neighborhood?



## Reflection and Discussion

As you develop your questions, consider:

<p><b>Are community members interested in exploring the question?</b></p>	<p><b>Who might be key partners to help you answer the question(s)? Who might already have data available to shed light on the topic?</b></p>	<p><b>What resources (e.g., people, time, skill) would you need to answer the question(s)?</b></p>



## Explore Your Strengths and Needs

### Find Your County Health Rankings Snapshot:

1. Go to Explore Health Rankings at [countyhealthrankings.org](http://countyhealthrankings.org) (a new browser window will open).
2. Enter your state or county name under Find County Rankings.
3. Select your county. This brings you to the County Health Rankings snapshot for the current year.

### See What Stands Out: Identify Areas of Strength and Areas to Explore:

You can use the County Health Rankings snapshot to identify measures to explore further.

1. Turn on Areas to Explore to highlight potential challenges your community may want to examine more closely. These measures will be highlighted in orange.
2. Turn on Areas of Strength to highlight health factors that may be assets in your community. These measures will be highlighted in purple.

(Hint: Find Areas to Explore and Areas of Strength in the upper right corner of your snapshot)

**Do the measures that are highlighted relate to your own experience in the community?**



## Measure Change Over Time

When you try to measure progress, consider the following questions:

- How has your data has changed over time?
- What community histories help give context to the data you see today?
- What do you hope happens to the data overtime? Is there a goal value you'd like your community to achieve in a certain time frame?
- What trends do you see in other geographies? (e.g., how does your community's trend compare to state or national values?)
- What factors might be influencing trends?

### How Has Your County Changed Over Time?

The County Health Rankings provides trend data on multiple measures of health. In this activity, we will explore what your trend graphs tell you about children in poverty in your county.

1. Scroll down to Children in Poverty under Social & Economic Factors and locate the trend graph icon.
2. Notice the color of the line in the icon. It lets you know how your county is doing:
  - Red means your county is getting worse for this measure.
  - Yellow means your county is staying the same for this measure
  - Green means your county is getting better for this measure
3. Click on the graph icons to see your county's values over time. You can see data as far back as 10 years and compare your county to your state and to the US.



## Reflection and Discussion

<b>Is your county improving, staying the same, or worsening?</b>	
<b>How does your county trend compare to the national trend?</b> <i>In 2007, 18% of children lived in poverty nationally. In 2018, the rate of children living in poverty nationally was the same. But if we look at data for each year along a trend line, we see that from 2008 to 2012 the rate of children living in poverty was on the rise.</i>	
<b>How does your county trend compare to the state trend?</b>	
<b>Is the line for your county increasing or decreasing faster or slower than the state line? (Note the text at the bottom of the trend graph might start to give you a clue)</b>	
<b>Do you see anything in the data that stands out? (e.g., a sharp increase or decrease)</b>	
<b>Consider the context. What was happening in your community, your state, or the nation that might cause these data trends?</b>	
<b>Recall that nationally, the US faced a recession that caused the rate of children living in poverty to climb between 2008 and 2012. Between 2012 and 2018, the national data show improvement. Was your county's rate of children living in poverty impacted during the recession? Has your county's rate begun to return to pre-recession levels?</b>	

<b>What are some areas of strength and need in your community?</b>	<b>What are some trends you want to keep an eye on in your community?</b>	<b>How might additional context help you better understand why these trends are happening?</b>
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# How Can Data Help Us Identify and Understand Inequities?

Differences in health exist by age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, and sexual orientation. Differences can also exist from one neighborhood to the next. Data are a helpful tool in defining and understanding the size of these differences.



## Dig Deeper Into Your Data:

1. Scroll to **Median Household Income** under Social & Economic Factors and expand the Additional Social & Economic Factors portion of the snapshot.
2. Click on the value for your county.

<b>What is the overall value for your county?</b>	
<b>What is the household income value for each racial and ethnic group in your county?</b>	
<b>How does the household income for each racial and ethnic group compare to the overall value for your county?</b> ■ Which are higher? ■ Which are lower?	
<b>How could this data inform an intervention related to household income in your community?</b>	

## Putting Data to Work

Data can help you tell a story or answer a question.

Let's consider how data can work in different ways to guide community health improvement. The stories highlighted in the following sections represent different ways that communities have used data to inform their work.



## Reflection and Discussion

<b>When has data mobilized your community?</b>	<b>For what purpose do you plan to use data in your community?</b>
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