

## DATA FOR ACTION

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### How do you find the data you need?

#### *Using data in your campaign*

- Focus your data on your issue with an emphasis on supporting your case
- Put your data in context—what has happened in the past and what may happen in the future
- Think about the data that the opposition may use
- Use data from credible, up-to-date sources, preferably outside of your organization
- Consider whether to lead with numbers or stories

#### *Sources of online summary data*

Summary data includes sites like the *County Health Rankings*, where you can find county-level data on 29 measures. This data is pulled together in one place for you and you can download it, but you can't enter specific parameters by which you want to look at data.

- **County Health Rankings** at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) provides county-level data.
- **KIDS COUNT** at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/> provides county-level data; and some at congressional district, school district, and city-level
- **Community health assessments/plans** may be available through various local agencies' websites (e.g. local health departments, not-for-profit hospitals, United Ways)
- **Diversity Data** at <http://diversitydata.sph.harvard.edu/> provides metro area-level data.
- **Kaiser State Health Facts** at [www.statehealthfacts.org/](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/) provides state-level data.
- **America's Health Rankings** at [www.americashealthrankings.org](http://www.americashealthrankings.org) provides state-level data.

#### *Sources for online query data*

Sites offering query data allow you to define your search terms.

- **CDC Wonder** at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/> provides state- and county-level data.
- **Food Environment Atlas** at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/FoodAtlas/> provides state, county, and region-level data.
- **American FactFinder** at <http://factfinder2.census.gov> provides data by state, county, city/town, congressional district, and county subdivisions

#### *Tips for using online data*

- Review the documentation
- Test additional queries to make sure the system works in the way you assume it does
- Always record and cite the date you accessed the information
- Check what sources are used by others to confirm the reputation of online data sources and to identify new potential sources

## How do you convey data in a powerful and persuasive way?

### *Social Math*

- A simple way to make data easier to grasp by relating it to things that we already understand.
- A way of presenting numbers in a real-life, familiar context that helps people see the story behind them.

### **Social Math Example:**

“Community residents near a gasoline refinery noted that the plant emits 6 tons of pollutants per day - or 25 balloons full of toxic pollution for each school child in the town.”

— News for a Change: An Advocate's Guide to Working with the Media

### **Why this works:**

- Six tons is an unimaginable number; 25 balloons per child is comprehensible and visual.
- It's all about **framing**. Analogy provides the framing cues missing in the raw numbers.



### *Learn more about social math*

- Frameworks Institute [www.frameworksinstitute.org](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org) (search “social math”)
- Berkeley Media Studies Group [www.bmsg.org](http://www.bmsg.org) (search “social math”) – learn different ways to turn numbers into meaningful analogies that get your point across in a powerful and persuasive way.