



Peer 2 Peer

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Data Collection Series #3: Exploring Data Collection Tools

Introduction

What is basic data processing?

Basic data processing includes tasks like sorting, organizing, and summarizing data, ensuring accuracy and reliability for further analysis and reporting. Sometimes data processing is known as information processing which reflects transforming raw data into meaningful and useful information.

What are the common types of data Councils collect?

In general, Councils use first-party data (information collected directly from participants), and second-party data (data shared by another entity such as a grantee or contractor) about people who participated in a project funded by your Council.

General terms related to data processing:

Data Processing is when you collect and transfer data into useful information (most commonly for reporting purposes).

Data integration is when you are combining data from different systems to create a unified set of data.

Data migration is a one-time process of moving data from one database to another.

Recommendations for data processing

Recommendation #1

Care should be taken to create clean and organized databases BEFORE data entry begins. Avoid waiting to develop the database until you need the database. Strongly consider providing step-

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by-step instructions and consider trial runs with Council staff and grantees or contractors who enter the data.

Best practices for recommendation #1

Organize data efficiently.

Standard formatting is key.

Prevent having data that is not properly arranged.

Recommendation #2

Council staff should stay on top of incoming data. This will help you identify missing or lost data and help alleviate overwhelming amounts of data at year end. If possible, assign data entry and data review responsibilities throughout the year. Strongly consider noting the person(s) who entered the data and when.

Best practices for recommendation #2

Keep a data entry log.

Note missing data, inaccurate data, unclear data, errors, and difficulties encountered during the data entry process.

Review data throughout the year. Detect errors early and communicate with staff, grantees, or contractors and adjust.

Tools

Data collection, data entry, and data management tools can streamline the process, improve data quality, and facilitate data analysis.

Final thoughts

Be committed to disciplined data processing.

When considering what to include in your database, think about what is necessary (i.e., type of participant, federal performance measure(s), collection timeframe).