

Data Guide Overview

Working with your data requires more than a spreadsheet. All data are entangled with people, places, technologies, and organizations that fundamentally shape their significance and use. Without proper context, users of civic data are ill-equipped to identify quality constraints, uncertainties, limitations, biases, and potential privacy and ethical issues that can cloud their analysis. Use the steps below to develop a data guide that helps community stakeholders understand your data, how they came to be, and how they might be used effectively and responsibly.

Data Collection: Why are you collecting or using these data? Where and when did these data come from? What problem are you trying to solve that currently cannot be done without these data?

Data Use: How are you using these data? What would someone else—an outside partner or community organization or journalist—need to know to understand these data?

Data Sharing: Do you have standards to follow? How are you addressing ethical concerns with your data? What third parties might be interested in your data? Are there avenues to monetize your data?