

What to Consider for Surveys



Surveys can be a powerful tool for gathering information. This document is a guide to help determine if, and when, a survey is the best method to collecting information.



Does the information exist elsewhere?

Review other sources of publicly available data, including national data from the US Census or academic studies. Research other organizations that might be doing a similar survey, like the school district, and see if you can collaborate.



How will you use results?

Only ask questions when you have a plan for the data. If results are not actionable, then reconsider if that question is necessary or determine how results can be used.



How will participants be informed?

Participants need to be informed how the data will be used and included in action planning and results sharing. What is your plan to engage with survey respondents to keep them informed?



How much time will the survey require?

Because surveys are considered "easy" to put together and use, survey fatigue is real. Consider how often your participants might be surveyed for other things and how many questions you are asking them to answer.



Is a survey the best method?

A survey is best used when confirming an idea or concept. It is also a good method to gather a large number of responses. But other methods, like interviews or focus groups, might be more appropriate. Also consider the survey format (online versus paper) and whether that will exclude a subset of people from being able to respond.

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The following is a list of potential data sources to consider before conducting a survey. The list is not exhaustive and is meant as a starting point during the initial planning process.

General Data

- Building Our Future: <https://www.buildingourfuturekc.org/county-overview.html>
 - Data dashboards for Kenosha county
- Pew Research Center: <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/>
 - Nonpartisan research center
- Stats America: <http://www.statsamerica.org/>
 - Profiles, maps, and data for the U.S
- U.S. Census Bureau: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>
- 211 counts: <https://211counts.org/home/index>
 - Info on 211 service calls for basic needs

Early Childhood Data

- Child Trends Data Bank: <https://www.childtrends.org/indicators?a-z>
 - Population-level info on children and families
- Kids Count Data Center: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#WI/5/0/char/0>
 - Data on children and families in the U.S.
- Heckman Equation: <https://heckmanequation.org/>
 - National research related to early childhood care and education
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/reports>
 - Reports and data on Wisconsin children and families

K-12 Education Data

- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: <https://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard>
 - Data dashboard for Wisconsin public schools

Employment Data

- WI Department of Workforce Development: <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy/>
 - Data for employment and the labor market in Wisconsin

Health Data

- Wisconsin Department of Health Services: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/stats/index.htm>
 - Data and statistics for health in Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/index.htm>
 - Wisconsin health indicators