Building the Case for Public Statistics

A Workshop for Public Data Users and Stakeholders: March 8, 2018

Academy Health, Washington, DC

Federal statistics inform decisions made at the highest levels of business and public policy, along with important research and program evaluation. However, with limited resources, statistical agencies have had to make tough choices about critical data programs that may ultimately affect the quality of available data about the American people and the businesses that drive our economy. How can you better understand:

- the messages that resonate best with policymakers about the value of Federal data?
- the most effective way to engage with policymakers to make the case for statistical data?
- the needs of a broader community of federal data users and supporters?

8:30 - 8:45 Introduction and Overview of Today's Agenda

SECTION 1:
8:45 – 9:15 How to Describe the Importance of Federal Statistics as a Resource for Evidence-based Policy
Theory/discussion
This session is designed to provide a brief overview of the history, uses, and threats to the Census, BLS, NCHS, NCES, and other key federal statistical programs that rely on it to help users understand the potential losses that could result from funding threats to the availability, quality, and timeliness of federal data. This session will also examine key concerns among stakeholders and how to talk about them to decision makers (including political leaders).

9:15 – 9:45 Using Commercial Data with Public Statistics
Theory/discussion
"So, why we need NOAA when we have the Weather Channel's latest forecast?".…or "Why we need the Current Population Survey when ADP can provide its own jobs report?" You've heard these common questions. How do you talk about the relationship between public and private data in a compelling way? How do we describe the reliance of commercial data on the Census or other public data in a simple but effective way? How do we talk about the role of private data in helping to make public statistics stronger?

9:45 - 10:00 Break

SECTION 2:
10:00 – 11:00 How Policy Decisions Impact the Statistical System
Theory/discussion
Data advocates have limited time and so do policymakers. How do Census and other public data users educate policymakers as efficiently as possible and present their messages when these interactions are most likely to have an impact? This session provides a primer on the federal budget appropriations process. It also describes how congressional offices operate and process information, providing an important insight into the timing of stakeholder communications with policy leaders.

11:00 – 12:00 Building an Effective Communications Strategy About the Role of Public Data
Theory/discussion
Even the Census, the largest of the statistical agencies, rarely get attention outside of a small circle. That's because statistical programs are relatively small agencies when compared with domestic program agencies. To build support for these agencies, it is vital to gain allies. This session focuses on engaging with a coalition of statistical supporters. How do data advocates build a <u>meaningful</u> grass roots network, build support that will be there when it is needed, and nurture policy champions in the legislative and executive branches?

12:00 - 1:30 Lunch

SECTION 3:
1:30 – 2:30 Tools for Building the Case for Key Statistical Agencies
Discussion/working group exercises targeted to preparing for discussions about statistical agencies
This session participants with hands-on experience in developing messages for policymakers. With the help from expert facilitators, participants will work with peers to create messages about problems that data helps to solve or questions it helps to answer in a safe environment that allows for critiques about what makes the message compelling.

2:30 – 2:45 Break

2:45 – 4:30 Crafting and Delivering Your Message to Policy Leaders
Group Exercises focused on the needs of statistical agencies
Participants will test their ideas in small groups and practice delivering key messages and creating communications tools, including social media, grassroots emails, joint letters, and in-person visits.