

Why is Data Collection Important?

Why is data collection so important? What do we gain from it? Lots! Here are a few reasons we require and appreciate your cooperation in data collection efforts. The data you collect helps us:

1. **Measure whether the programs continue to be as effective** as the original research shows. For some of the programs, we can evaluate participants' health, and health care utilization before and after the workshop, to determine whether we are still getting the same good outcomes. This helps us know we're continuing to do things right.
2. **Identify whom we're serving and where – and whom we're not serving.** It helps us determine whether we are missing certain pockets of the population – e.g., men, individuals of certain age ranges, certain economic status, caregivers, people with disabilities, individuals with certain chronic conditions, rural residents, people from communities of color. This helps us determine the need for Facilitator Trainings, different participant outreach strategies and partnerships to make sure we're offering and delivering the programs to the people who need it most.
3. **Identify current and pursue new partners.** By looking at the sites, sponsoring organizations, volunteer or employment status of the Leaders, and other data points, we can identify which of our various partnerships are growing and where there's more potential to grow.
4. **Engage in better program planning.** We use the data to analyze what programs are growing and where, which ones need more attention and what are future potential growth areas.
5. **Be responsive to funders.** It helps us show potential funders what we have all accomplished together and where future needs are.
6. **Pursue other funding opportunities for all of us.** Having the data and comparing it to public health numbers helps us identify how the program delivery has resulted in great cost-savings, avoided health care (hospitalizations, emergency department visits, etc.), and improved health care and quality of life. This helps us identify future opportunities for us all too.
7. In addition to funding we are also **working with various partners to pursue coverage of our Evidence-Based programs covered through Medicaid and Medicare.** This is why we ask for the last 4 digits of Social Security number. Like all questions, this is voluntary, but it is another way to verify the number of Medicaid and Medicare participants' that we are reaching.

These are just a few of the reasons why we send you these questionnaires and ask you to administer and return them. We are so appreciative of all you and your local partners' efforts – and to your participants too. Thanks for helping make Wisconsin a healthier place for all generations.