



Wisconsin Institute
for Healthy Aging

Collecting Data, Creating Impact

Demonstrate outcomes, improve access, and sustain programs statewide.

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Thank you for your partnership in delivering evidence-based health promotion programs in your community! All program providers and/or facilitators are **REQUIRED** to collect data from workshop participants. As a program provider and/or facilitator, your role in collecting participant data is incredibly important to the long-term success and sustainability of these programs.

While data collection may sometimes feel like an administrative task, it is actually one of the most powerful tools we have to demonstrate impact, improve access, and ensure these programs remain available across Wisconsin.

Why Data Collection Matters

The information collected through participant surveys help to:

1. Understand Who We Are Reaching

Participant data helps us identify who is participating in our programs — and where gaps may exist.

For example, the information collected may help us determine whether we are successfully reaching:

- Rural communities
- Men
- Individuals with disabilities
- Older adults from communities of color
- Individuals with chronic conditions
- People from varying economic backgrounds or age groups

Understanding who we are — and are not — reaching allows us to improve outreach strategies, develop new partnerships, and expand access to communities that may benefit most from these programs.

2. Improve Program Planning and Growth

Data allows us to evaluate:

- Which programs are growing
- Where programs are most needed

- Where additional trainings or workshops may be beneficial
- Opportunities for future expansion

This information supports strategic planning and helps to make informed decisions about future programming.

3. Support Funding and Sustainability

The information gathered through participant surveys is critical when communicating with:

- Foundations
- Government agencies
- Grantors
- Health systems
- Health plans
- Community partners

Data helps demonstrate the value and impact of these programs, including potential health care cost savings, reductions in hospitalizations or emergency department visits, and improvements in participant health and well-being.

Strong data helps us pursue additional funding opportunities that support continued program delivery and help us secure funding to reduce training costs, provide stipends, and/or expand program support.

4. Advance Health Care Coverage Opportunities

WIHA is also working with various partners to pursue broader coverage of evidence-based programs through Medicaid, Medicare, and other health care systems.

This is one reason some surveys request the last four digits of a participant's Social Security number. Providing this information is completely voluntary, but it helps verify participation among Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries and strengthens efforts to demonstrate program reach and value.

5. Demonstrate Program Effectiveness

The data can help to measure whether programs continue to achieve the positive outcomes shown in the original research. By comparing participant experiences before and after workshops, we can better understand improvements in health, confidence, self-management, falls prevention behaviors, health care utilization, and quality of life.

This helps ensure we are continuing to deliver programs with fidelity and achieving meaningful outcomes for participants.

Important Reminders for Program Providers and Facilitators

Program Providers and Facilitators are required to distribute and collect participant surveys as part of workshop implementation requirements. However:

- Participation in surveys is always voluntary for participants
- Participants may complete all, some, or none of the questions
- Participants may still fully participate in the workshop even if they choose not to complete surveys

WIHA asks all providers and facilitators to encourage participants to complete surveys as fully as they feel comfortable.

Customizing the Surveys

WIHA provides standardized pre- and post-surveys for each program under the Program Resources section of our website.

We encourage program providers and facilitators to customize surveys by adding questions or items that may support local evaluation efforts, grant reporting, organizational goals, or community needs. Additional questions can provide valuable insights for your organization and help strengthen local partnerships and funding opportunities.

However, we ask that you do not remove or alter WIHA-required questions from the surveys. Consistent data collection across all program sites allows WIHA to:

- Analyze statewide program impact
- Compare outcomes across communities

- Meet reporting requirements for funders and partners
- Strengthen future funding opportunities
- Support efforts related to health care coverage and sustainability

Depending on current grant funding and reporting obligations, WIHA surveys may occasionally become longer or shorter. Certain grants require WIHA to collect specific information to analyze outcomes and report back to grantors and partners.

Even when surveys change, we encourage organizations to continue adding locally relevant questions that may benefit your own evaluation and reporting efforts. Please refer to the **Optional Questions** document for examples and additional question ideas.

Tips for Successful Data Collection

The Workshop

Before the Workshop

- During reminder calls, encourage participants to arrive 15 minutes early to complete a brief survey
- Have surveys prepared and organized before participants arrive (for virtual programs, have the survey link)

During Session 1

- Provide surveys once participants are seated and settled
- Allow adequate quiet time for completion before beginning workshop content (for virtual programs, surveys may be completed live during the session 0)
- Offer assistance if participants have questions or need clarification

If New Participants Join Later

- Ask new participants attending Session 2 to complete the survey before the workshop begins

After the Workshop

- Hold onto completed pre-surveys until post-surveys are completed
- Return all surveys together along with attendance forms to:

WIHA Data Collection
1414 MacArthur Rd, Suite B
Madison, WI 53714

OR

Scanned & sent to: info@wihealthyaging.org

Suggested Talking Points for Participants

Providers and Facilitators may find the following language helpful when introducing surveys to participants:

Introducing the Surveys

"This workshop is made possible through the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging and [Your Organization Name]."

"These surveys help us understand who participates in workshops like this, whether the program is improving health and well-being, and how we can continue bringing these programs to communities."

"The information also helps us to demonstrate the value of these workshops to funders, health care organizations, and community partners so programs can continue to remain available and affordable."

Voluntary Participation

"All questions on these surveys are voluntary. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer."

"You may still fully participate in the workshop even if you choose not to complete the survey."

Privacy and Confidentiality

"We follow strict procedures to protect your information and maintain confidentiality."

"Paper forms are stored securely and destroyed after information is entered into a secure database by trained staff."

Offering Assistance

"If any questions are unclear or confusing, please let us know and we would be happy to help explain them."

Thank You

Thank you for helping us strengthen evidence-based health promotion programs and improve the health and well-being of older adults and caregivers across Wisconsin and beyond.

Your partnership, effort, and commitment to quality data collection truly make a difference.