

**MODULE:  
THE SIX CORE  
COMPONENTS**

# 2 DATA COLLECTION

## The Process to Achieve Data Quality

**Required reference materials**

- Any materials used for data collection, such as intake forms, surveys and progress reports

**What topics and questions will this module explore?**

- Ensuring the organization has systems in place to collect high-quality data that can be used for further objectives, such as evaluation, program development and meeting funding requirements
- Thinking about the children and families you empower, are data collection materials focused on the specific goals, issues and outcomes that your organization works on?

**How does this relate to data governance?**

Data collection, integration and disaggregation represent important steps in data management that reflect directly on data governance practices. Outlining methods of data collection is important for obtaining meaningful information from program participants and other organizational metrics. Integrating your data systems and programmatic outcomes to “speak to one another” enhances organizational capacity, and allows an understanding of programs as a whole. For example, being able to understand a child’s learning outcomes as related to (or integrated within) their parent’s employment situation provides greater insight into your program’s performance, which reflects effective data governance. Finally, being able to analyze and communicate disaggregated data is a crucial component of contextualizing the unique circumstances of program participants using descriptive categories such as race, ethnicity, household income and gender. This reflects the race equity and inclusion values necessary for a responsible data governance protocol.

**COLLECTING HIGH-QUALITY DATA**

Collecting appropriate data about participants at intake, is crucial to ensuring that data quality is preserved down the line. This involves ensuring that those collecting data are well trained to do so, that data collection questions target the range of information and outcomes your organization needs to collect to successfully support families and that collection materials are regularly updated to reflect the organization’s and families’ needs.

**1. What are characteristics of good data?**

First, discuss with your team some reasons collecting high-quality data might be important to your organization’s success and ability to serve the families and children you work with. Note three to five of the most important reasons below.

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## 2. How does collecting good data help us?

Discuss with your team some reasons collecting high-quality data might be important to your organization's success and ability to serve the families and children you work with. Note three to five of the most important reasons below.

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## 3. How do you collect data at intake?

Describe how your organization collects data from participants upon first engagement. Consider the following prompts and use the space below to take notes on any other relevant details.

### a. How is intake conducted? Is it in person? Is this an interview, a survey?

### b. Who conducts intake data collection? Do participants fill out forms on their own, or is there a staff member collecting the information?

### c. How are staff members or volunteers taught the processes of data collection?

d. What are some main points of information your organization collects at intake?

e. Do these align with the three to five main objectives for high-quality data collection your team identified in “characteristics of good data” (see responses at the beginning of Module: The Six Core Components, 2. Data Collection)?

f. Are there some other pieces of information you need to collect at intake, but currently don't?

g. Are there any requirements from funders that you need to consider making a part of your intake questionnaire?

h. Are there certain questions and topics that participants would be more comfortable reporting on in a confidential survey, rather than to a staff member conducting intake, for example?

i. How does your organization utilize the information collected at intake? Is it entered into a database? Is it used in regular data reports, or analyzed for programmatic needs? Does it allow you to identify all services a family qualifies for?

Additional notes:

#### 4. How do you collect data on a regular basis?

Now, let's consider how data collection happens on a regular basis. Reflect on the ways in which your organization collects data during the course of the year; for example, to meet reporting needs, develop internal progress reports or stay abreast of your target population's strengths and needs. Consider the following prompts and use the space below to take notes on any other relevant details.

- a. For what purpose(s) does your organization collect data on an ongoing basis? If your organization does not regularly collect data, think of some reasons that you might consider doing so.

- b. At what points in time does your organization collect data on existing participants during the course of the year? Describe whether this is regular enough or if you think you require more collection points.

- c. Who is responsible for collecting data at regular points in time, and how are they trained to do so?

- d. What kinds of questions are posed during ongoing data collection? Do these differ across various programs and target populations?

e. Do these questions cover the breadth of information you would like to collect on a regular basis?

f. Do these questions align with your intake questionnaire in a way that you can track participants' progress? Or are questions framed around key outcomes your organization is aiming to measure?

g. How does your organization harness the data collected at regular points in time? How are the data stored? Are the data used in internal data reports or analyzed for programmatic needs?

Additional notes:

**DATA GOVERNANCE PROTOCOL TEMPLATE:  
DATA COLLECTION AND QUALITY**

 This is useful content to include as a part of your final data governance protocol.

**5. What are your data collection methodologies?**

Now, let's consider data collection methodologies, diving deeper into two main areas:

- a. **Is your organization collecting data in a way that supports participants giving you the information you need?**

A main concern when collecting data is whether those providing information are doing so in a way that is honest and accurate. Sometimes, individuals may not feel comfortable disclosing sensitive, yet crucial, information when being interviewed. There are also instances when participants may be able to confidentially fill in surveys, when they feel their information and identity is more protected, and when they may feel more comfortable disclosing a range of information. However, having a trained staff member or volunteer conducting data collection may also be helpful, so that participants feel supported and guided through the interview process.

Keeping such concerns in mind, consider your organization's collection methodology (e.g., self-report survey, interview, etc.) and reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of these strategies.

Method 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Advantages	Disadvantages

How can your organization improve this collection method?

Which data does this method work best with?

Method 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Advantages	Disadvantages

How can your organization improve this collection method?

Which data does this method work best with?

Method 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Advantages	Disadvantages

How can your organization improve this collection method?

Which data does this method work best with?

**b. Is your organization asking questions that directly inform the outcomes you are trying to measure?**

Questions and prompts to collect data should be carefully designed to elicit information most relevant to the outcomes you seek. For example, if your organization is interested in learning about a child’s health status, you may pose a series of questions, such as: How often the child has been taken to medical services in the past 12 months? How often, on average, has the child been sick? Is the child up to date on necessary medication, supplements and/or vaccinations?

This requires you to consider your organization’s purpose in benefiting families and children, specific reporting needs required by funders and the outcomes you are trying to measure to show change and improvement in participants’ lives.

What are main objectives (or points of improvement) for participants that your organization should collect data on? Organize these into two areas: what you already collect and what you should collect but currently don’t.

Outcomes or objectives already measured in data collection	Outcomes or objectives that ideally need to be measured in data collection

Do you have a thorough understanding of what data need to be collected based on funder requirements? Describe some of the main points of data collection for funders below:

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Based on your responses to the above questions, work with your team to draft a series of questions around three to five key outcomes for data collection. These could be a revision of questions you already pose to be more accurate and targeted, or new topics and objectives you seek to explore.

### #1 Key Outcome for Data Collection:

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#### Targeted data collection questions:

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### #2 Key Outcome for Data Collection:

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#### Targeted data collection questions:

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**#3 Key Outcome for Data Collection:**

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Targeted data collection questions:

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**#4 Key Outcome for Data Collection:**

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Targeted data collection questions:

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## #5 Key Outcome for Data Collection:

## Targeted data collection questions:

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## 6. What are points of change and improvement in data collection quality?

Finally, based on your responses and reflections from this Module: The Six Core Components, 2. Data Collection, identify three to five areas for assuring data collection quality that your organization can improve. For example, these could include providing better training for staff to collect data, changing collection methodologies, reframing collection questions to better reflect the outcomes you need to report on or collecting data at more regular points in time.

a.

Consider how your organization can go about implementing this change. **What** needs to be done in order for this change to take place? **Who** will be responsible for making sure this happens? **When** would be a feasible time to make this change? **Why** is making this change important for your organization and the families and children you serve?

b.

Consider how your organization can go about implementing this change. **What** needs to be done in order for this change to take place? **Who** will be responsible for making sure this happens? **When** would be a feasible time to make this change? **Why** is making this change important for your organization and the families and children you serve?

c.

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Consider how your organization go about implementing this change. **What** needs to be done in order for this change to take place? **Who** will be responsible for making sure this happens? **When** would be a feasible time to make this change? **Why** is making this change important for your organization and the families and children you serve?

d.

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Consider how your organization can go about implementing this change. **What** needs to be done in order for this change to take place? **Who** will be responsible for making sure this happens? **When** would be a feasible time to make this change? **Why** is making this change important for your organization and the families and children you serve?

e.

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Consider how your organization can go about implementing this change. **What** needs to be done in order for this change to take place? **Who** will be responsible for making sure this happens? **When** would be a feasible time to make this change? **Why** is making this change important for your organization and the families and children you serve?

### DATA GOVERNANCE PLANNING TOOL KIT – DISCUSSION NOTES

Please use this space to take notes on important points you and your team discussed. You may also want to include a list of any references or additional resources you used to complete this module or that you think are relevant to developing a data governance protocol based on this module.

**Notes:**

**Resources and references:**

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Notes:

Resources and references:

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## DATA COLLECTION: DATA DISAGGREGATION

Disaggregation refers to the breaking down of data into smaller groupings, often based on characteristics such as sex, income or racial and ethnic group. Generally speaking, data are disaggregated for the purpose of revealing underlying trends, patterns or insights that would not be observable in aggregated data sets, such as disparities in income or child health outcomes across different racial and ethnic groups.

Having access to only disaggregated numbers isn't enough though, it's the combination of both the aggregated and the disaggregated that gives a more complete story. Disaggregated data improve an organization's ability to respond to the unique needs and issues that might exist for varying subgroups.

### Disaggregated data can assist in...

- evaluating how specific groups of participants are doing in programs;
- considering participants' perspectives and program delivery methods that address the differences among gender, racial and ethnic subgroups, etc.;
- revealing patterns that can be concealed by aggregate data;
- identifying needs so that human and financial resources are allocated more accurately and equitably;
- acknowledging the racial and ethnic heritage of children and families; and
- monitoring equity in programmatic resources and outcomes.

## DEVELOPING A DISAGGREGATED DATA STRATEGY: GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What current issues might be addressed by disaggregating data?

2. What data collections and systems currently obtain racial and ethnic data?

3. What subgroups are growing in your area? What subgroups are projected to grow in the future?

4. Will there be additional costs to your organization to disaggregate data?

Yes  No

If yes, what will it cost? Will the cost yield a return on investment?

5. What, if any, technical changes are needed?

6. What changes do you propose to make to data systems, data structures, data processes and related technical support and services?

7. What additional training will be provided to personnel who will be tasked with collecting, managing or using the disaggregated data.

8. What needs design, development and testing?

**Important considerations:**

- Privacy and confidentiality should always be considered when collecting personal information, disaggregated data may, in some cases, indirectly reveal the identities of specific individuals even when the data seemingly contain no personally identifiable information — i.e., information that might, directly or indirectly, reveal the identity or personal information of specific individuals.
- For this reason, organizations may not publicly report or share certain data when subgroups are small enough to potentially connect otherwise anonymous data to specific individuals.
  - Data suppression is used whenever there is chance that the information contained in a publicly available report could be used to reveal or infer the identities of specific individuals.