

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Demographics for Libraries Report

January 2021

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Executive Summary

There are many different ways that libraries might find value in utilizing demographic data to inform decision-making. These include:

- Setting the course for the library through strategic planning
- Making calculated decisions about resource allocation
- Ensuring diversity and inclusion

This report details resources for making the process as straight-forward and as informative as possible. This includes outlining a question to be answered, consideration of the different ways libraries can use demographics, where to find data, how to determine what information might be valuable, and a case study example to tie the process together.



The Project

Demographic data is a source of data that provides valuable insights about a community's past, current, and future needs and can help libraries make critical decisions related to resource allocation, service provision, and even library staffing. As part of a 2018 study regarding public libraries and community engagement done by Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction (DPI), one of the recommendations in the final report emphasized locating and leveraging demographic information about communities. As part of DPI's LSTA Five Year Plan for Wisconsin, Goal 4 focuses on stronger engagement of public libraries with their communities and utilization of data to actively adapt to community needs.

In addition to local and state-wide efforts around library data use, DPI is interested in putting efforts into a national framework. The Measures that Matter Action Plan (April 2018) called for a "sound base of public library data that measures and tracks impact" (p. 4). Measures that Matter research shows "a

need for the library field to understand that data is required for continuous improvement of programs, services, and structures" (p. 5).

The Action Plan proposes, among other things, adding new indicators focused on community impacts, and strengthening library education on data collection and use. This report -- written in partnership with WiLS -- speaks directly to those mandates.

The report outlines options identified by WiLS for DPI and includes recommendations for explicit ways to use demographics data in support of the work done by libraries in Wisconsin and beyond.

Why Demographics?

Community demographic information provides valuable information on the people that local institutions are serving and can inform a variety of organizational practices and considerations. For libraries, this can include everything from what resources to purchase to what types of programs to offer to encouraging community members to engage with the library in a variety of ways.

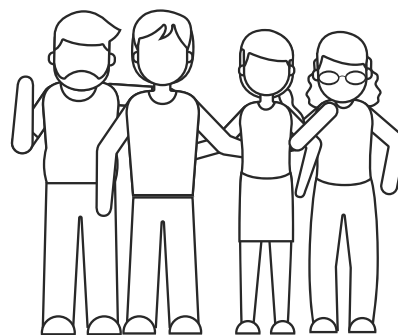
Demographic information includes data on items like: race/ethnicity, age, educational level, income level, use of food assistance or reduced meal programs, transportation, commute patterns, home ownership, employment status, and the like. Trends in demographic information can also be useful in understanding the ways a community might be changing and to adjust accordingly at the organizational level to stay dynamic in serving the entire community.

While libraries have access to their patrons to understand what they like about the library or wish was different, it's not always so easy to know much about how to help people that aren't

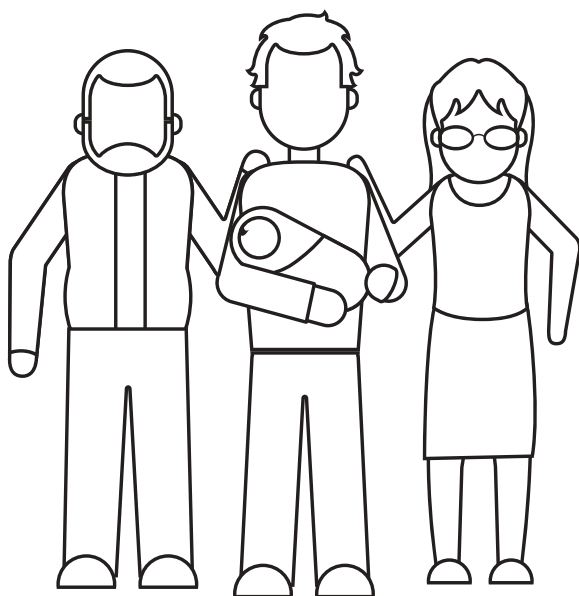
actively using the library. Using demographic information, coupled with information like ILS data, can point the library to groups that may not be directly represented by or reflected in the current operations of the library.



The *Measures that Matter Action Plan* calls for the development of Use Cases (p. 12) that illustrate how and why data can and should be used in a library setting. The following pages detail ideas for ways in which libraries might want to use demographic data to inform the work they are doing. Whether it's to learn more about the community itself, to develop strategically inclusive services, or to make decisions about how to allocate resources, demographics can provide a solid foundation for planning purposes.



Demographics in Action



How do library staff know if they're really meeting the needs of the entire community? In a nutshell: through demographics. Demographic data can highlight factors in the library's environment that may affect the provision of services. By comparing demographic data to library user information, you can learn who's not using the library in a first step to considering how to encourage new visitors to the library. It can also help prepare the library for external changes that may impact internal decisions.

This Demographics in Action section is meant to serve as inspiration for libraries as they think of ways demographic data could be beneficial to examine. The following pages will provide three different areas in which libraries can use demographics to support their organization. Each area includes example scenarios.



Demographics in Action: Inspiration 1

Inspiration 1: Setting the Course for your Library

By understanding the demographics of your community, you can understand its needs as well be prepared to make good strategic decisions for your library.

Example Scenario 1

A small, rural community with one large employer, has seen an increase in unemployment and a decrease in businesses in their area. The demographics show that median family income is lower than the surrounding areas and the rest of the state, that there has been a rise single parent homes, and that the population has decreased. This information can illuminate a number of considerations for the library.

This data indicates that the library should be prepared for potentially stagnant or shrinking budgets. For example, a library that understands these demographic changes might:

- Look for funding beyond tax dollars to ensure short and long-term fiscal sustainability through thoughtful

donor relationships, partnerships, and careful, transparent stewardship of funds.

- Create a development committee with members of the business and civic community.
- Examine demographics of other small communities to find out what others have tried, where success has already been discovered, or where the library might partner to learn together.

Example Scenario 2

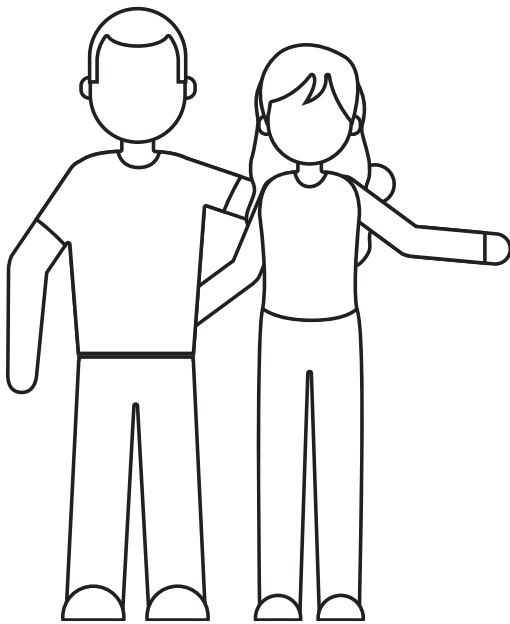
Community mapping is a method to envision the resources in a community and where the library exists in relation to these resources through a strengths-based approach. It begins by defining a specific geographic area and then can be as simple as brainstorming a list or a mind map to show how and where connections exist between the library and community partners or groups and what connections may need to be strengthened. Community mapping can be a very simple brainstorming activity, but it becomes more powerful when the library understands the demographics of its community. Knowing age, housing, and income information can

help the library do a more targeted and meaningful community map.

Let's continue with our example from above, a small community with lower than average household incomes and an increase in single parent homes. Knowing the needs of the community

allows the library to brainstorm local government agencies, schools, and community groups that might represent the needs of those groups. The library can then do targeted outreach, maximizing staff time and reaching the parts of the community that might need the library the most.





Example Scenario 3

A library is hoping to put out a survey to learn about their community members' needs and how they currently use or don't use the library. The library wants to engage with community members who have recently immigrated to their community and speak Spanish as their primary language. This group has been difficult for the library staff to effectively engage with. The demographics do show an increase in number of residents that speak another language in their home, but they also show that very few people are not proficient English speakers. In this case, the library might skip providing a survey in a second language. This type of surveying can be expensive and if most community members speak English proficiently, it might not be a good use of resources. Instead, the library might use community mapping to identify people and groups in the community who serve this population and can help make connections and ensure that more voices are represented in the library's planning efforts.



Demographics in Action: Inspiration 2

Inspiration 2: Decision-Making for Resource Allocation

Understanding community demographics, including family structure, age, and even transportation use could influence the types of services and collections a library offers to meet the community's changing needs and encourage library non-users to visit.

Example Scenario 1

Remember our first community example, a community with increasing unemployment, a lower than average median family income that has seen a rise in single parent homes? Knowing these demographic points could help the library to make programming and purchasing decisions.

This library might:

- Look for workforce development grants to encourage community members to learn new skills.
- Perform targeted research to better understand what the community needs/wants, in partnership with organizations and businesses who serve the community, so that

resources and programming can be executed in a collaborative effort with intention and based on evidence.

- Explore partnerships with organizations and businesses to support community members, such as childcare providers or volunteer organizations to provide childcare while parents take classes in the library.

Example Scenario 2

A suburban library began to see some changes in their community. Several assisted living facilities had been built, school enrollments had decreased, and the library patrons seemed to be getting a little older. With this anecdotal evidence in mind, the library looked at the demographics in their community and how they have changed in the past 10 years.

They learned that demographics clearly showed that the community population was aging and at a rate higher than the rest of the county and state. The median age of residents in the year 2000 was 39, in 2015, it was 44.5. Those that are 55+ made up nearly 26%

of the population in 2000, and in 2015 accounted for 34% of the population. The significant increase had clear implications for the library, so much so that they wrote the development of services, including programming and outreach services, into their five-year strategic plan that included the following actions:

- Engage in outreach and assessment to understand the needs and interests of the older adult population, from active retirees to those with limited mobility.
- Ensure the collection reflects needs and interests of the population.
- Develop programs tailored to the growing older adult population.
- Implement Library Memory Project programs with partner libraries.
- Explore the use of the Library's integrated library system (ILS) outreach module to enhance and create efficiencies in home delivery service.
- Seek and strengthen partnerships with other agencies, organizations, and businesses that support the older adult population.
- Advocate for services for this population in the library in and in the community, using the demographics numbers to make the case.

- Develop opportunities for home delivery so patrons can participate in library reading programs.

Example Scenario 3

A small community, between Madison and Milwaukee, has seen a shrinking population, with one exception. Their workforce is increasingly made up of seasonal workers, the bedrock of the local nursery and agricultural industries. Many members of this community group speak limited English, though are motivated to learn. They do have families with them and often their children speak English and act as translators.

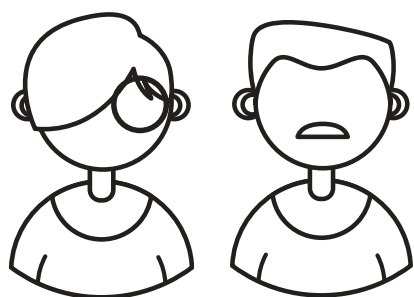
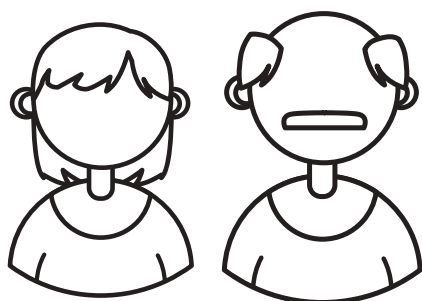
With a clear look at the community's demographics, the library might do the following:

- Purchase Spanish language newspapers, particularly ones from the new immigrants' home countries.
- Prioritize hiring Spanish-speaking staff.
- Connect with leads from the Latinx community to build relationships and understanding.

- Develop a clear understanding of community needs and develop programming around those needs.
- Increase Spanish language books, movies, and other materials.
- Find ways to bring the library to where the community is.
- Learn from and collaborate with library peers and other organizations who have had similar challenges.
- Connect to businesses and agricultural communities that may have similar needs.
- Create signage in Spanish.
- Develop marketing specifically for this community group.



Demographics in Action: Inspiration 3



Inspiration 3: Ensuring Representation at All Levels

When considering ways to make a library an inclusive environment to serve the local community, demographic data can provide a foundation for considering the ways library leadership and staff are similar or different from the surrounding community. This is valuable in ensuring diverse voices are involved in decision-making for the library.

Example Scenario 1

Policy changes, resource allocation, and more have a pathway through the library board. Perhaps a library director wants to make a change, such as not requiring photo identification for a library card. Having a thorough understanding of the community's demographics can help the board understand the need for the change.

Demographic information can help in other tangible ways as well. Board members who have diverse backgrounds and match community demographics will bring a deeper

understanding of community needs and issues. Consideration of community demographics may help make the case for change to the board and/or those who appoint members to the board.

Example Scenario 1

The board president of a large suburban library located on the border of Milwaukee wants the board to be more representative of the larger community. The community is predominantly white - roughly 80% - and the median income is higher than the rest of the county. However, that wealth is concentrated in certain census tracts. The board right now is fairly balanced between men and women, though the president and vice president are both men, but all members are white and over the age of 50. They also largely come from a middle to upper middle class background.

Understanding this, the president might:

- Ask to speak about the library board and trustee roles at community meetings that are attended by a variety of community members.
- Reach out strategically to community leaders who represent different segments of the population.

For example, 5% of the community is African American; the library might wish to connect with leaders from that population.

- Write about the library and the library board for other community publications that reach segments of the community that library communications might miss.
- Utilize the DPI Inclusiveness Toolkit in conjunction with the library director.
- When a board seat opens, prioritize or advocate filling it with a community member from an underrepresented group.

Example Scenario 2

In the same way that a board might use demographics to ensure representation, so too can a library director. This can range from making hiring decisions to building strategic partnerships in the community.

For example, a library in a suburb that borders a large city has seen an increase in patrons using computer terminals and library spaces, but circulation has remained flat. Staff report that many need help with their job search and many are English language learners. An

examination of the demographics shows that while their city has higher than average state and county income levels and a lower unemployment rate, there has been an increase in the Latinx population over the past ten years. The larger city has seen this trend as well, in addition to increases in the number of African American families moving into the neighborhood that borders the suburb.

Knowing this, the library director might take some of the following steps to help ensure the library and its services are reflective of the community's needs and its make-up:

- Develop an equity and inclusion committee that includes members of the community.
- Identify and cultivate partnerships with groups and local leaders in the Latinx and African American communities.
- Review policies and procedures, such as food in the library policies, who can use the meeting room, and computer time limits to be more reflective of community needs.
- Prioritize hiring a more diverse staff that represents the cultures and diversity of the community.
- Identify local, state, and national

initiatives related to equity and inclusion that align with the library's changing role in the community.

- Increase continuing education opportunities for staff.
- Share experiences with the board to enhance their understanding of the work the library does in this area.
- Develop an outreach plan to provide key services where the community is.
- Utilize the DPI Inclusiveness Toolkit.

Example Scenario 3

All of the examples laid out in this guide take work. Finding, compiling, understanding, and responding to community demographics and needs takes time and effort from the library board, director, and staff.

Libraries should make sure that the changes that are made, including changes to services, programming, and policies, are communicated effectively and one way to help do this is through demographics.

For example, a library has decided to do a concerted effort to promote their digital books and magazines, along with other digital tools such as Gale Courses and

Mango Languages. They know that many of their dedicated library users tend to either have young children or are retired, but the community has a median age of 35. There are quite a few people in the community that are 20-35 years of age, unmarried, and renters.

Knowing this, the library might:

- Determine the messages that will best connect with the different audiences.
- Create messaging for younger segments that focuses on free, easy access to resources to grow skills and satisfy interests.
- Create messaging for retirees that focuses on the ease of connecting to digital resources
- Use communication channels that will reach the different segments of the population.
- Tailor messaging based on known trends, such as the fact that social media works well at reaching 20-35-year-olds, while in library messaging and the library newsletter is optimal in targeting frequent library users that are retired.

How does this work with the Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide?

The Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide was designed by Wisconsin public library and public library system staff for public library directors, staff, and boards with the intent to foster inclusive library environments where everyone is safe, welcomed, and respected. This resource was developed to support libraries in implementing the Inclusive Services Statement. In addition, this resource intentionally complements the 2018 Wisconsin Public Library Standards.

There are several areas of analysis that a library can fully answer only if they have a clear sense of their community's make-up. For example, "Does the library board reflect the demographics of the community?" or "Does the evaluation instrument ask how the library director is interacting with members and organizations reflecting the demographics of the community?" can only be accurately answered after community demographic research has been completed.

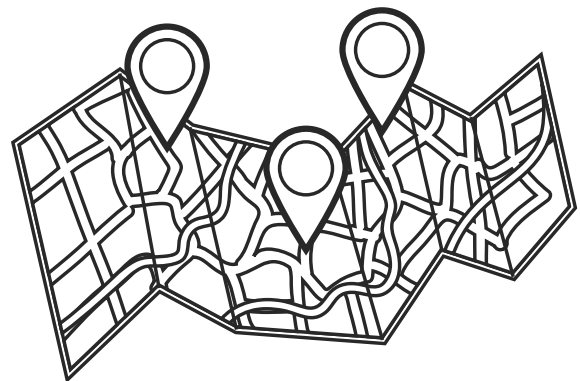
Demographics Resources

As noted in the Measures that Matter Action Plan, it is imperative to "identify tools and resources that would help library directors, staff, and trustees to better use/understand library data" (p. 12). The next step is to identify where to get the data. There are many options. The US government collects some of the most comprehensive demographic data through the work of the US Census Bureau. A number of tools now exist to help people get this large amount of data into more user-friendly formats. These options range from basic and free to sophisticated and expensive.

Below are a number of options focused on: 1) budget-friendliness, 2) ease of use, and 3) demographic variables included. The following pages detail five options:

- GetFacts Wisconsin
- US Census Data Explorer
- Data USA
- PolicyMap
- DPI's ACS-ED Maps

None of these options require any background knowledge of data analysis or visualization to use. A good place to begin the process is to explore each website and determine which interface feels the most comfortable and intuitive to you while providing you with the data you are looking for. You might want and/or need to draw from multiple sources to get a full picture of your community's demographics.





Option A: Get Facts: Wisconsin's Data and Visualization Portal (getfacts.wisc.edu)

Cost: Free

Overview: This option allows users to obtain demographic data down to the County Subdivision level. It is easy-to-use; you get started simply by clicking the Data Viewer tab on the Home page and entering in the County or County Subdivision you want to examine. Data is pulled from the US Census and displays it over time in simple graphics for a basic demographic overview. Charts can be saved or downloaded to be shared in other locations.

Data: Data points are limited to population, age, language, race, ethnicity, families and households, and employment. Data is complemented by state-level data and the site provides easy access to longitudinal data for certain categories.



Option B: Census Data Explorer (data.census.gov)

Cost: Free

Overview: This option draws directly from US Census Bureau data which includes surveys like the American Community Survey. The website provides data dashboards down to the City level through profiles. Type the County or City name into the "I'm looking for..." search box on the home page to access extensive demographic information in a dynamic format that automatically updates when new surveys are released by the Bureau.

Data: Data points include extensive, comprehensive variables gathered by the US Census Bureau, but dashboards are only for the current year limiting the ability to easily visualize longitudinal data over time.



Option C: Data USA (datausa.io)

Cost: Free

Overview: Data USA is a third-party platform that allows you to explore, map, compare, and download all data from a large variety of federal endeavors, including US Census data as well as public data from places like IPEDS. Data is available down to the city level and includes downloadable charts in sleek, modern visualizations in comparison to the ones available through Get Facts and the Census Data Explorer.

Data: Data points include extensive variables gathered by the US Census Bureau and other federal entities. Creating longitudinal and trend data would require additional skill utilizing their website's Viz Builder functionality.



Option D: Policy Map (policymap.com)

Cost (annually): Policy Map *Public Edition* is a free option available to map certain demographic points. Paid subscriptions are available for other functions but are not required to access data maps.

Overview: PolicyMap uses comprehensive geographic data in a curated format to create visualizations in a map format. The free version allows users to access limited census data down to Block Group. Subscriptions allow for additional, extensive data access as well as the ability to pull reports, customize and embed maps, and upload unique data. Premium subscriptions include access to a data team for support.

Data: Data points in Public Edition include incomes and spending, housing, lending, quality of life, economy, education, health, federal guidelines, and other analytics..



Option **E:** ACS-ED Maps
(<https://dpi.wi.gov/wise/gis-maps/web-app-maps>)

Cost: Free

Overview: The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has developed a tool that identifies conditions of school-age children in school districts based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Educational Tabulation (ACS-ED). ACS-ED Maps allow users to explore community indicator data aggregated by public school district. Users can browse the data by total population or, more narrowly, by school-age children.

Data: Data includes economic, social, demographic, and housing indicators.

Gathering Demographic Data

Once you've selected the platform(s) to use to gather data, you want to determine what actual data you need. In other words, you want to figure out the who, what, where, and when of the demographic information you are looking to obtain for your organization. Working through the following information and considerations before you begin can help you narrow your search down:

The Who?

Based on the goal(s) your organization has in gathering demographic information, consider who you're most interested in getting information about. It can be good to create a "data snapshot" of your entire community by looking at many different variables, but when using data to facilitate strategic decision-making, it can be overwhelming to look at too much information at once. Thinking with intention about each of your goals can help focus your search.

For example, if you feel like your library's patrons are not totally representative of

your community's population, demographic data can help confirm if this is the reality or not. To do this, you would begin by looking specifically at your community's age breakdown, racial and ethnic data, educational attainment, and other similar characteristics to tell you more about your entire community.

The What?

In addition to items like age and race that many people immediately associate with demographic data, there are other pieces of information that can tell you a story about your community.

For example:

- Community poverty rates can be compared to county, state, or national rates to tell you if your community is dealing with a higher or lower level of poverty by comparison. Higher poverty rates could signal unique needs patrons might have from their library ranging from internet access to ability to attend programming.
- Home ownership rates can tell us a

number of things about the community - high levels of home ownership generally signal a "stable" community, meaning that community members usually stay within the community longer-term. High home ownership rates are also associated with a number of other community indicators like lower community crime rates and lower teen pregnancy rates.

The Where?

Once you know what specific data you want to gather, you want to consider where you want to focus your search. On the most obvious level, this is your local township or city, though some of the provided websites let you drill down to specific census tracts. However, as noted above, sometimes geographic comparison data can be beneficial so you can get a clearer picture of what your community's numbers mean and what about those numbers might make your community unique by comparison.

Options for geographic comparisons could

include:

- Gathering county and/or state data to see how your local community is similar or different from the broader area. This can be beneficial for understanding your own community's demographic data, while also providing helpful insights for advocating for your organization if your community is significantly different from the broader area.
- Identifying a specific city or town you want to compare your own to. Perhaps you know a specific library that has a much higher number of registered cardholders and you want to see how similar or different your community is from theirs.

The When?

You want to begin with the most recent data available. The US Census is done once every ten years, however a number of other federal and state endeavors collect information to create yearly estimates that can be very useful and informative.

Each of the four websites curated for this report automatically displays the most recent data available on their platform. You will be able to identify what year the data is from by looking at the provided link to each chart which lets you know where the data is being pulled from. This is important to note because 1) it's important to document what year of information you're looking at since demographic data can change from year to year (sometimes dramatically), and 2) if you are moving between multiple websites, you might be looking at demographic data from different years which should be noted before using it to inform decisions. Whenever possible, you only want to compare data from the same year. For example, if you selected an age breakdown chart on GetFacts that pulled from 2018 data but then selected a racial composition chart from Census Data Explorer that pulled from 2017 data, you would ideally want to see if you could obtain racial composition data for 2018 as well. If not, you would want to consider obtaining the age composition chart

utilizing 2017 data instead, if available. There may be times data isn't available for a specific year which should always be noted in any documentation you are producing so you can make sure your organization is using demographic information that is as up-to-date as possible and can be assumed to be as accurately representative of the entire community as possible.

"The When" is also important to consider when looking at trend data - in other words, how something has changed over time. Is your community getting older or younger? Do you have a growing population of people for whom English is not their first language? Are people's incomes going up or down? These broader trends can tell you important things about shifts and changes in your community.



Case Study

To tie this all together, the following section walks through each step outlined in this report using the fictitious town, Anywhere, WI.

The Scenario

A library director from Anywhere Public Library has been working over the last year to build community partnerships between the library and other local organizations as part of their library's strategic plan. The director has reached out to numerous organizations to facilitate this process, but determined that complementing this process with demographic data might help the library prioritize efforts. Anywhere Library is the only public library in a town that has a population of approximately 15,000 people. The library has a modest budget so the director is prioritizing utilizing free, open access data to gather demographic information about the community.

Choosing a Demographic Resource

Drawing on resources from the DPI report on utilizing demographics in library

planning, the director sits down to explore the three free options: US Census Data Explorer, Data USA, and Get Facts. They begin by simply searching the town name in each website to see what data is available and how it is displayed. The director prefers GetFacts' clear, easy to obtain and read trend data. The library also likes how Data USA includes more than census data in their city profile for Anywhere. Based on these preferences, the director chooses to focus on using these two sites to gather demographic information.

Information Gathering

Before jumping into the process, the director takes time to map out what information would be valuable to have based on the goal of understanding the community to better to make strategic partnership decisions - the who, what, where, and when of Anywhere. Besides understanding broad demographic information like age, gender, and race and ethnicity, the director determines that it would also be valuable to understand the local economy by examining employment

rates, poverty rates, and major employers in the area. In addition, they decide to look for information on educational attainment and household information to see if there might be ways the library could partner with organizations serving families in valuable ways that align with or build off the mission and services of Anywhere Library.

Since the director has never researched or used demographic data before, they decide it would be valuable to compare Anywhere's demographics to Wisconsin as a whole to better understand and contextualize the data. In addition, the director is curious to know how things might have changed over the last five years and wants to look at some demographic trends to understand ways the community might be changing.

The director heads to both Get Facts and Data USA to dig into the data. Through this they discover a number of notable things about their local community:

- Anywhere's median age of 31 is significantly younger than Wisconsin's median age of 40.

- Anywhere's poverty rate is much higher than the state's rate by almost double - 23% compared to 12%.
- The employment in Anywhere is growing faster than in Wisconsin on the whole, however the most common type of jobs in the community are restaurants/food service and personal care industries.
- The percent of Anywhere's population without health insurance is double that of Wisconsin on the whole - 10% versus 5%.
- There's been an increase in the number of families headed by a single parent over the last decade.

Taking Action

Using these pieces of demographic information, the director is able to begin to construct a picture of the local area and what are unique strengths and challenges of the community at large. With demographics in mind, the director takes time to consider what type of community partnerships should take precedence in meeting some of the needs of the

community. For example, based upon the demographics, the director decides one of the first priorities is to find local partners who work with lower-income families to better understand what resources are out there and if there are ways the library and its services could complement their work.

The director reaches out to the library's board with this information and asks for suggestions on local organizations. One of the board members suggests a local nonprofit agency they are familiar with that provides a variety of social support services and programs for the community, ranging from a food pantry to educational training programs. The director is able to make an easy connection there thanks to the board member's relationship with the nonprofit. Through this connection the library learns a number of ways they might be able to collaborate:

- The nonprofit has a limited budget and old computers for their training programs while the library has a new computer lab space.
- The nonprofit is interested in trying to obtain a literacy grant which one of the employees at the library has

experience doing. The grant prioritizes proposals that involve community partnerships so they decide to write one together leveraging their joint resources.

Facing the Unexpected:

A year after building this partnership, the library faced a very unexpected turn of events: a health pandemic that forced them to close for an extended period of time. While the library was not specifically prepared for this to occur, the demographics work and subsequent actions had helped the library be positioned with valuable knowledge to help in efforts to serve dynamic and changing needs in the community. As soon as businesses began to close, the library reached out to their partners for an emergency meeting to see if there were ways they could pivot their services together to help people within their community. Having done the demographic research, the library director knew that much of the population of Anywhere was at risk of being impacted by the closures since the biggest employers were

restaurants and the personal care industry which were forced to close for health reasons almost immediately.

Through the course of the meeting, local organizations who already had partnerships were able to brainstorm ways to help the community in a variety of ways by working together. They decided to establish a community task force and were able to obtain an emergency grant from another local organization to begin to fill needs of people in Anywhere being impacted in a variety of ways by the pandemic.



Conclusion

Today's libraries strive to build organizational foundations for making a variety of decisions; demographic data can be a powerful tool in building that foundation. As institutions that serve the community, public libraries are incredibly valuable and important organizations that provide a wealth of resources to their patrons. Demographics provides the opportunity to create a cohesive picture of the community that a library is serving to facilitate the ability to make strategic decisions and allocate resources in as efficient a manner as possible, while also ensuring inclusivity of the entire community.

As detailed in this report, using demographic data as a library director, staff, or board does not have to be overly time-consuming or expensive. There are a number of free resources that can be used to curate data on a community's demographic information. With this information in hand, libraries can be positioned to make a number of important decisions for their organizations both for immediate and long-term planning and goals.

