

## Useful Data Sources for Public Health Practitioners

The type of data being used can depend on several factors including the question or concern of interest, budget, skillset, resources, and efficiency. Depending on these and other factors, public health practitioners may use one or several data sources to answer health-related questions.

### Primary Data Sources

Primary data sources are those that are collected first-hand, usually for a specific purpose. An example of primary data sources may include responses to an interview following a foodborne illness outbreak. Collecting primary data can be resource intensive and time-consuming and is typically used when secondary data either is not available or is insufficient to answer the question. Some examples of primary data sources include:

- ESSENCE Emergency Department Data
- Case Report Data
- Community Health Assessment
  - o Community Listening Sessions
  - o Focus Groups
- Surveys

### Local Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources are those that are collected by another organization or entity, usually for a different purpose. Secondary data tend to be readily available and inexpensive to obtain. Examples of *local* secondary data often used in public health practice include:

- [Kansas Health Matters](#): The premier data resource for health-related data in Kansas.
- [All Things Kansas](#): A comprehensive source of all types of data for Kansas communities
- School Nurse Reports: May include nurse reports of notifiable disease and conditions, or even vaccination records
- Birth and Death Records
- Emergency Medical Services
- Sheriff's Office: While this can be a very specific data sources, some information can be gleaned with regards to drug misuse data
- Community Partners (i.e., food banks, shelters, etc.)
- [CEDBR Data Portal](#): A reliable source of local, state, and national demographic, and economic data that can be used to inform broader questions.
- [Kansas Information for Communities](#) is a health information portal used to query public health datasets, access County-level statistics, and access public health reports
- [Kansas Bureau of Investigation](#) (KBI) provides annual reports on crime, law enforcement, and drug report data. These data are useful to provide context. Be advised that these data are in a PDF report and there is no way to "download" the data. It is useful but needs to be manually added to other data.

### Large Secondary Data Sources

Like local secondary data sources, these sources are also collected by another organization or entity for a different purpose. Large secondary sources, in this case, can be used for comparison or to complement, enhance, or explain primary and local secondary data where appropriate. Examples of large secondary data sources include:

- [Census Bureau Data](#): A data tool that provides access to data about the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas. These data come from several different sources, such as the Census, the American Community Survey, the American Housing Survey, and the Economic Census.

- [U.S. Census](#): Information about the size and diversity of the U.S. population, collected by Constitutional mandate every 10 years. Data from the Census can help public health practitioners identify vulnerable areas or areas to invest resources and can provide a robust picture of population trends.
- [American Community Survey](#): An ongoing survey that provides annual information about the U.S. population and is used at the state and federal level to allocate resources. Unlike the regular Census, the American Community Survey is conducted annually on a random sample of addresses. These data can be used to inform practitioners about potential or emerging population trends or inform decisionmakers on areas likely to need more resources based on population size or social need.
- Disease Registries (i.e., [cancer registries](#))
- BRFSS: The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System is the Nation's surveillance system for monitoring trends regarding health-related risk behaviors, chronic health conditions, and the use of preventive services.
  - [Local and Regional Data Reports](#)
  - [National BRFSS](#)
- [Kansas Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System](#) (PRAMS): A survey of women who have given birth in the past 6 months. This national survey covers more than 80% of all live births in the United States.
- [Community Health Status Indicators](#): These indicators can be used to inform chronic disease and health promotion programs. They include indicators for obesity, heart disease, and cancer, and provide key indicators for local communities to encourage dialogue about actions to improve community health for related indicators
- [Kansas Health Institute](#) is a good resource to provide statewide context on current and emerging policy issues that impact health
  - They have numerous policy and research briefs on a variety of health topics (health reform, [access to care](#), [Medicaid/CHIP](#), etc.).
- [KIDS COUNT](#), a project funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a useful source for data regarding children and families. Comprehensive data reports are produced annually, which assess child well-being in the United States. KIDS COUNT data can be accessed at the state, county, and city levels, as well as by Congressional Districts.
- [Maternal and Child Health State Needs Assessment of Kansas](#): The Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant is critical in the provision of MCH resources in Kansas. As such, a statewide needs assessment is conducted every five years to identify priority maternal and child health issues.
- The Urban Institute Data Catalog: <https://datacatalog.urban.org/>
- [National Association for Community Health Centers](#) (NACHC): Useful for providing statewide context and information on the number of grantees, federal health center funding, and number of uninsured patients.
- [National Health Interview Survey](#) (NHIS): The principal source of information on the health of the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States and a major data collection program of the National Center for Health Statistics. Useful for providing National context regarding the amount, distribution, and effects of illness and disability in the United States.
- [National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey](#) (NHANES): Like the NHIS, NHANES is a program of the National Center for Health Statistics that has the responsibility for producing vital and health statistics for the Nation. NHANES is unique in that it is designed to assess the health and nutritional status of the civilian noninstitutionalized population of adults and children in the U.S. and includes both interviews and physical examinations. These data can be useful in providing context and geographic and other restricted-use data can be obtained by submitting a proposal to the National Center for Health Statistics.
- [Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates](#) (SAIPE): This is a program of the U.S. Census Bureau that produces single-year estimates of income and poverty for all U.S. states and counties in addition to providing estimates for the number of school-aged children in poverty for more than 13,000 school districts in the United States.