

ECHO, June 16th

16 participants

All participants gave a quick introduction of their names, their organizations, and an update on their current evaluation practices and how the pandemic has affected evaluation where they are.

A few organizations reported that their evaluation practices have been on pause as they deal with the pandemic and having to pause a lot of their goals, they are still planning on moving forward with evaluation but do not have the capacity as they deal with the crisis.

Other organizations report that the pandemic has given them more time to work on things they hadn't gotten to, like evaluation.

Claudia gave a tutorial on how to use data.census.gov and the changes the website has made. The new interface is smoother but still needs work, the census staff is very open to feedback (in the bottom left corner there is a button to send feedback) and they are very open about what you can and cannot do on the site yet.

Some tips on using the site:

- After a couple searches, you need to close your browser and start new because the website tries to be helpful by remembering search terms, but it just gets stuck on those terms.
- Claudia recommend going straight to the Advanced Search, you can search by geographic areas/types of areas, years, topics, surveys, codes, etc.
- When viewing a table of data, you can remember the Table ID, and get back to it easily by typing that into the search bar.
- When in a table, in the top left of the screen you can click on "Filter" and look at specific aspects, like Education, Educational Attainment, etc.
- You can use the map feature to select areas, and then go directly to a table to see data from the area you have selected. (In the top left corner, you can select table or map)
- To go back and start a new search you can click on the Census Bureau logo in the very top left corner and it will take you back to the beginning to start a new search (but you may have to restart your browser).
- Customize table option lets you pick which columns you want to keep in your download. Claudia recommends that if this is new data for you, then you should keep all the columns and pick 5-year estimates for 1-year CSV file.

The downloads are 3 different files, one is just the title of the data, the other is meta-data file is a description of each variable, if it ends with E that is the estimate (headcounts), and an M is the margin of error. Then it gives you the names of the variables.

Data files are also not very friendly, it gives you the geographic ID, which is great if you are using Tableau, or similar software that uses geographic codes, then you can put the IDs into the software and it will put them into a map.

Some tips from Claudia on working with data files:

- Always start a new spreadsheet before you start narrowing down the data that is relevant to you
- Always save the original file
- Always save the original name of the variable

Here is why the census margin of error info is important, the census is super transparent and when you see a margin of error number that looks too high/weird you can take the original name of variable and go back to the original data, and it will tell you the margin of error, if it is very high do not use that number. It is telling you the sample was too tiny and they could get no data from it. In small areas, just make sure that the ratio of your estimate is about 1/5, 20% of the estimate. If your margin of error is too big it means they didn't have enough data/people.

Learning Center Announcements:

End of the year session for 2019-2020 year. No session in July but two-part training in place of Summer Institute, it is very basic but would be helpful if you have people in your organization who need some evaluation terminology and skills. July 28 and July 30, 10-12

First ECHO session of new year will be August 18 for the 2020-2021 year, Charla might not be there to host because she her baby is due in August.

Please fill out the survey and fill out the Learning Agreement for the ECHO sessions 2020-2021