



Birth

The [National Vital Statistics System](#) has records of all births and deaths in the United States. Data can be used to see trends in birth rates over time, understand birth rates by mothers' demographic characteristics, and understand risk factors and birth outcomes for both mothers and infants.

Questions these data can help answer:

- How are birth rates changing over time?
- How are birth rates different across age, race, and other demographic groups?
- What types of risk factors did moms experience during their pregnancy?
- What type of prenatal care did moms receive during their pregnancy?
- How many infants were born early or with a low birth weight?

Obtaining the data:

Download public use data using the [Vital Statistics Online Data Portal](#). However, note that these data can't be used to explain birth trends and risks at the state, county, or Tribal level. To address this, consider connecting with your state health department's vital records office, which keep databases of births and deaths that occur in the state.

Cancer

The [U.S. Cancer Statistics](#) database includes records of newly diagnosed cancers that happen in the U.S. and information on demographic characteristics (like age, sex, and race) and tumor characteristics (such as year of diagnosis, stage, and site).

Questions these data can help answer:

- What stage is my population at when they are diagnosed?
- Do AI/AN people have a higher likelihood of malignant cancers in my state?
- Are lung cancer rates increasing?

Obtaining the data:

Instructions for accessing public use data are [here](#). Note that these data do not include data down to the county level. Further, race and ethnicity for American Indian and Alaska Native people cannot be displayed in [some states](#), and data below a certain number are hidden.

Keep in mind

Cancer registry programs have databases of cancers. These programs may release more specific data. [This site](#) and [this site](#) provide contact information for cancer registries.

Death

The [National Vital Statistics System](#) has records of all births and deaths in the United States. Data can be used to describe the top causes of death in a community, understand whether death rates are changing over time, and understand the life expectancy for particular groups.

Questions these data can help answer:

- What are the leading causes of death in my community?
- How are opioid overdose death rates changing over time?
- What is the life expectancy for AI/AN people in my state compared to the total state population?

Obtaining the data:

Download public use data using the [Vital Statistics Online Data Portal](#). However, note that these public use data can't be used to explain death trends and risks at the state, county, or Tribal level. To address this, consider connecting with your state health department's vital records office, which keep databases of births and deaths that occur in the state.

Death data can also be accessed through online systems, like [CDC WONDER](#).

Violent Death

Violent deaths include deaths from homicide, suicide, and police violence. The [National Violent Death Reporting System](#) was developed to collect data on the circumstances of violent deaths.

Questions these data can help answer:

- Did people who died from suicide in my state experience mental health or substance use problems?
- What kind of weapons are involved in homicides in my community?

Obtaining the data:

The [Web-based Inquiry Statistics Query and Reporting System](#), or WISQARS, allows you to obtain data on violent deaths. There are [videos](#) to help guide users. You can also request the National Violent Death Reporting System Restricted Access Database for free by submitting a [proposal package](#).

Keep in mind

[State Violent Death Reporting System](#) programs keep databases of violent deaths. These programs may be able to share more specific data under a data agreement.

Census

The Census Bureau provides data on the people and the economy of the United States. Census data can provide important information on a community's demographic makeup, educational attainment, economic well-being, and access to services and resources.

Questions these data can help answer:

- How has the Elder population in my community changed over the past 10 years?
- What is the child poverty rate in my community?
- How many households in my community have multiple generations living together?

Obtaining the data:

Visit data.census.gov which allows you to search for specific topics and explore tables and geographic profiles. You can also use [Census Microdata](#) to develop custom tables. The [My Tribal Area](#) tool provides basic demographic information for specific Tribal areas. You can use these tools and data without a data agreement.

Notifiable Conditions Surveillance System

Notifiable diseases and conditions by law must be reported. Notifiable conditions include diseases, such as COVID-19, and exposures, such as lead poisoning. Data collected at the local and state level are reported through the [National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System](#). Notifiable conditions may change year-to-year and vary by state.

Questions these data can help answer:

- Is an outbreak occurring in my community?
- Are rates for sexually transmitted infections increasing in my community?
- Is COVID-19 affecting some groups more than others in my state?

Obtaining the data:

There is no online portal to get notifiable conditions data. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) releases [tables summarizing notifiable conditions](#) on a weekly and yearly basis.

State health departments have systems to collect, investigate, and report cases of notifiable conditions. These departments may be able to provide access to or release notifiable conditions data under a data agreement.

Syndromic Surveillance Systems

Syndromic surveillance systems provide near real-time data on health events that occur in a community. These systems can be used as early warning systems to identify health threats. Most syndromic surveillance data is reported from emergency departments and other health care settings to the [National Syndromic Surveillance Program](#).

Questions these data can help answer:

- Is there an increase in emergency department visits for patients with symptoms of COVID-19?
- How are emergency department visits for opioid overdoses changing over time?

Obtaining the data:

Access to syndromic surveillance data is controlled by local and state syndromic surveillance programs. These programs may be able to give access to their syndromic data using a data agreement.

Hospitalization Reporting Systems

Hospitalization reporting systems collect data on inpatient hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and outpatient care received at hospitals. These data allow you to identify hospitalization trends, evaluate healthcare outcomes, and measure healthcare access across a particular state.

Questions these data can help answer:

- What are trends in hospitalizations for specific conditions?
- How often are people in my community hospitalized for preventable conditions?
- What is the cost of hospitalizations in my state?

Obtaining the data:

The [Healthcare Cost and Utilization Program \(HCUP\)](#) provides access to several datasets on care received at hospitals and emergency departments. [HCUPnet](#) is a free online system that can be used to access hospitalization data at the national and state levels. HCUP also makes [national and state databases](#) available through data agreements and for a fee.

Individual states may also release hospitalization data under a data agreement.

Other Data Sources

Tribes and Native-serving organizations may need types of data not listed in this handout. Some of these data may be collected by Tribal Epidemiology Centers, as well as by county, state, and federal agencies. Keep in mind that non-health agencies may have data that is relevant to health.

Collecting Your Own Data

Tribes and Native-serving organizations may find that the data collected by outside agencies do not meet their needs. When this is the case, they may consider collecting their own data. Tribal Epidemiology Centers and other [data supports](#) can provide help if needed.

Need Help?

There are several [data supports](#) who provide free advice and data services to Tribes and Native-serving organizations.



Got questions? Contact us at ideanw@npaihb.org or visit NativeDATA.npaihb.org.

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