

Community Partners and Organizations Data Chat

Event Description

On April 15th, 2026, 17 community organization leaders attended a data chat hosted by Clean Wisconsin and the Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) at the Milwaukee Public Library's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. branch. This data chat was developed with support from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Taking Action with Data grant. The purpose of this chat was to have community partners review and provide feedback on the environmental health risk data/profiles from Clean Wisconsin & MHD, while simultaneously giving community partners and their organizations the opportunity to voice their concerns, opinions, advice, and stories about the environmental health risks in their neighborhood and Milwaukee overall.

Data chats are conversations with the purpose of understanding local community member's opinions, perspectives, and interpretations of data. This locally tested model was developed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin by Data You Can Use and centers the knowledge and lived experience of people who live in a neighborhood, adding context to quantitative data.ⁱ

Topics Covered

Throughout the data chat, Clean Wisconsin, MHD, and the 17 community leaders explored the data contained within the data profiles about the environmental conditions of various neighborhoods within the city of Milwaukee. Draft data profiles from an assortment of neighborhoods serviced by the organizations were available to the participants, but for time purposes we only reviewed the Sherman Park draft neighborhood environmental data. Throughout the review, participants used the guiding questions to provide feedback on the data and the profiles to ensure that their community members could make the best use of the profiles. The chat also dedicated time to a world cafe style discussion for reflection about any environmental issues that are not reflected in the data, which current programs are improving the environmental health of their neighborhood, and what programs the organizations wish existed to improve the environmental health of their neighborhoods.

● Guiding Questions

1. Do you see value in this tool for the community or neighborhood you serve? How might it be useful in your work?
2. Are there any data indicators or topics you feel are missing that would be useful to include?
3. Do you have any reflections about how we are communicating the data?
4. Are there better visuals we could use?
 - a. Is the city-level comparison helpful? Are there other comparisons that would be better?

Figure 1. Participants were sent these questions before the data chat. They were asked to keep these questions in mind throughout the data chat.



Figure 2. Picture of the small group discussions in the world cafe style where participants shared their thoughts about the environmental conditions, programs, and what is missing from their neighborhoods.

Themes

Some themes that emerged include:

1. **Emphasis on the power of language-** Participants expressed concerns that the language used in the profile could mislead readers as to the cause, duration, and what influenced the harmful environmental health conditions inflicted on the community in question.
2. **Increased focus on transportation & food access-** Participants thought community members would benefit from the profiles having an increased focus on the transportation and fresh food options available.
3. **Interactive elements and formatting-** Participants liked the maps and how the data was portrayed. They also thought that the maps and data could be further optimized by making the maps interactive and allowing for the data to be comparable across neighborhoods, cities, counties, and nationwide.
4. **Flooding and housing conditions-** Participants shared that their communities were worried about flooding and housing conditions and consequently would like to learn more about the health risks and related data associated with those environmental factors, especially related to renters vs. homeowners.
5. **Data comparison consistency and clarity-** Participants mentioned that community members could misinterpret the data based on the different measurement scales used and suggested trying to standardize as many of the measures as possible.

Evaluation Results

Participants ranked their agreement with each of the following statements after the data chat on a 1-4 scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree). 11 participants completed the evaluation.

	I understand the purpose of a data chat.	The data presented felt relevant to the populations I serve.	The portrait tool will be useful in supporting my organization's work.	I identified projects, policies, or initiatives that can improve the environmental health of the population I serve.
Average score	3.73/4	3.64/4	3.55/4	3.7/4

Resources and Next Steps

Following up on the 4/15 data chat, Clean Wisconsin and MHD will be evaluating the feedback provided by the participants and Clean Wisconsin will be editing their profiles where applicable to enhance the accessibility of the data profiles in the future. Clean Wisconsin and MHD will continue hosting data chats citywide and exploring ways to improve the distribution and outreach of the neighborhood-level data gathered, including Clean Wisconsin's environmental health neighborhood profiles. They will also continue to work collectively to engage with local neighborhood organizations and residents to incorporate their lived experiences with pollution and environmental health risks into data.

¹ Cohen, M., Rohan, A., Pritchard, K., & Pettit, K. (2022). Guide to data chats: convening community conversations about data. Urban Institute. [Guide to Data Chats: Convening Community Conversations about Data](#)