

What's a Data Dream?

The Data Dream contest has become a regular feature at the annual Data Day sponsored by Data You Can Use. Residents and staff from neighborhood organizations, social service agencies and other local groups are invited to submit their “data dream.” In a short application, they describe how things would be different if they had a certain piece of data—how their planning, service provision, results, or funding might be improved with access to assistance in securing, analyzing, visualizing or presenting data.

Applications are screened and the top three win the chance to compete in the “shark tank” at Data Day. Following a five-minute pitch presentation to the full audience, celebrity judges debate the merits and award the winner. The judges are program officers at local foundations, so just appearing before them helps an agency make their case.

To support the dream, Data You Can Use raises funds from local foundations. Traditionally there has been one \$5,000 award, but last year there was a \$5,000 and a \$3,000 award, allowing two winners to reap the benefit of data services provided by Data You Can Use. The following year, the Data Dream winners return to Data Day to present their findings in an ignite presentation and their research is posted on our website.

Examples from previous winners are below.

Bread of Healing is a free clinic located in the Lindsay Heights neighborhood. They wanted to know where their patients were coming from. Client data was mapped, and some unexpected geographic clusters were discovered, and data were compared to the larger area and population level data.

CORE El Centro offers natural healing and wellness services and is in the Walker's Point neighborhood. Staff were curious why some of their patients participated in direct services (Reiki, massage, and yoga) but did not participate in movement classes (yoga, Zumba and conscious dance). Analysis of the data and focus groups with long-term clients allowed them to gain some insights about how programs were delivered and marketed.

Acts Housing is a homebuying counseling service that works with clients across neighborhoods to prepare and qualify for home ownership. They would to establish a process that would allow them to connect with homeowners who had used Acts' services. They found that despite successful home purchases, some families experienced additional problems with schools, safety and transportation. Acts is exploring how this might inform their future work.

Two of the completed projects found the work so helpful that they extended their contracts with Data You Can Use to continue to explore their data dreams!

