A World of Dashboards

Thursday morning 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

NNIP Partners have reported that funders and clients have increasingly been asking them to develop data dashboards. This has led to lively discussions about what it takes in design, technology, and group process to create an effective dashboard that leads to positive change in our neighborhoods.

Dashboards mean different things in different contexts. A dashboard on a car provides the driver with real-time data about their driving. More importantly, those indicators are intended to influence the driver's behavior or prompt an action. For example, the driver might slow down if the speedometer is too high or pull into a service station when the fuel gauge is low.

In the corporate world dashboards are used to monitor sales and adjust advertising strategies to increase or maintain those sales. In the technology sector, dashboards provider developers with key data about what features of apps or programs that users actually use and which they don't, so that they can adjust for future versions of their software. The thing that all these examples have in common is that the dashboards:

1. Use real-time (or very recent) data
2. Influence behavior or prompt changes in strategy

The purpose of this session is to discuss the role of dashboards for community improvement initiatives. When does it make sense to create them? When does it make sense not to create them? And what are some best practices to make sure that they will ultimately be successful?

Peter Tatian from the Urban Institute will moderate this panel and lead the group discussion. He will introduce the topic and provide some framing for the two panelists, who will each speak for 15 minutes.

Bob Gradeck from Pittsburgh will offer a typology of dashboard tools available to NNIP partners. He will also present some questions that NNIP partners can ask when approached by a potential funder or client looking to build a dashboard. These questions can help to identify the primary purpose and use of the tool, develop personas of potential users, integrate the tool with community or performance management processes, and inform a product design approach.

Sharon Kandris from the Indianapolis will describe her experience developing dashboards, including IndyVitals and Community Report Card. Before building out

these dashboards, the Polis Center and their partners made deliberate efforts to engage with stakeholders in the communities to make sure that these tools included data and information that the community wants and that would drive local action.

After the formal presentations, Peter Tatian will lead a group discussion with the panelists and audience members for the last 20 minutes of the session. The hope is that NNIP partners who have experience with dashboards will chime in with their knowledge and experience. Questions for Bob and Sharon will be welcomed.

Discussion:

- When is a dashboard really a dashboard vs. a high-tech community profile?
- Knowing that neighborhood data often lags behind for months or years, how current does data need to be to be included in a community dashboard?
- How does a NNIP partner get started building a dashboard once the decision has been made to have one?

Additional Resources:

Data Fluency: Empowering Your Organization with Effective Data Communication by Zach Gemignani , Chris Gemignani , Richard Galentino, and Patrick Schuermann. http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118851013.html

What is The Purpose of a Dashboard? By Ashley McKown https://www.idashboards.com/blog/2016/09/26/what-is-the-purpose-of-a-dashboard-2/

Digital Dashboards: Strategic & Tactical: Best Practices, Tips, Examples. by Avinash Kaushik https://www.kaushik.net/avinash/digital-dashboards-strategic-tactical-best-practices-tips-examples/