

# Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration

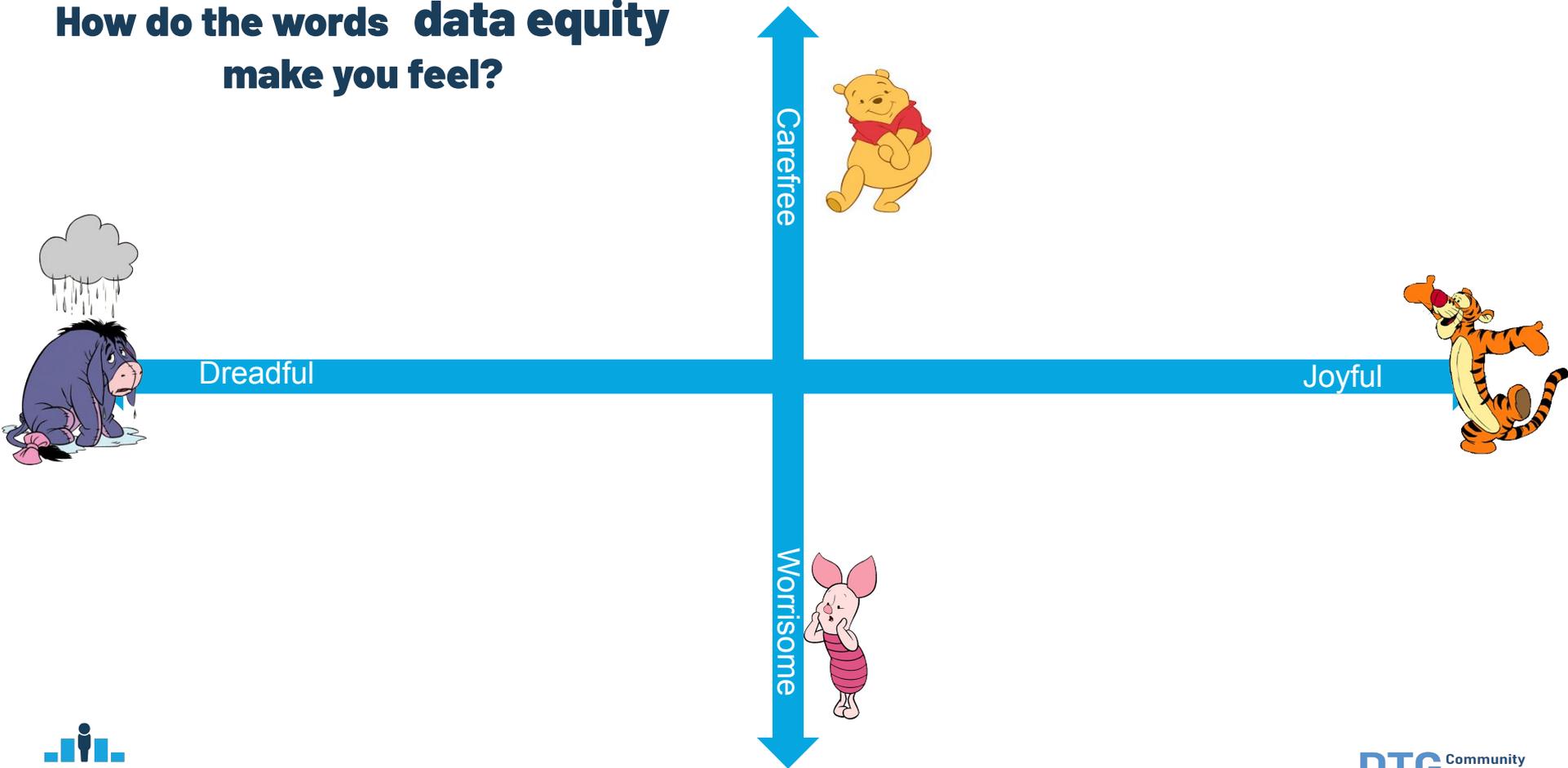
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Talking Data Equity  
February 6th, 2026

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attribution

# How do the words **data equity** make you feel?



# Which statement best describes you?

**Obsessed:** I think about data equity principles all day every day. My colleagues sometimes twitch when I start talking about data equity issues during team meetings, but they also know that my obsession betters our work.

**Invested:** I think about data equity principles a lot. I've read a lot of articles and books and I'm always striving to know better and do better.

**Learning:** I am new to considering how data equity principles can be incorporated into my work and I'm looking for ways to shift practice.

**Becoming Aware:** What are data equity principles?

# Agenda

Introduction to AISP and the *Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration*

Using the 4 questions to evaluate risk vs. benefit

Data governance as the foundation

Q & A

Wrap up

# **Introduction to AISP and the *Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration***

# AISP's Niche

We help state and local governments collaborate and responsibly use data to improve lives. We convene a peer network of 44 integrated data systems focused on strong data governance and routine use of cross-sector data for the public good.

# What We Do

Peer Network

Guidance & Standards

Training & Consultation

Advocacy & Communication

Actionable Research



**We are singularly focused on the ethical use of public sector data.**

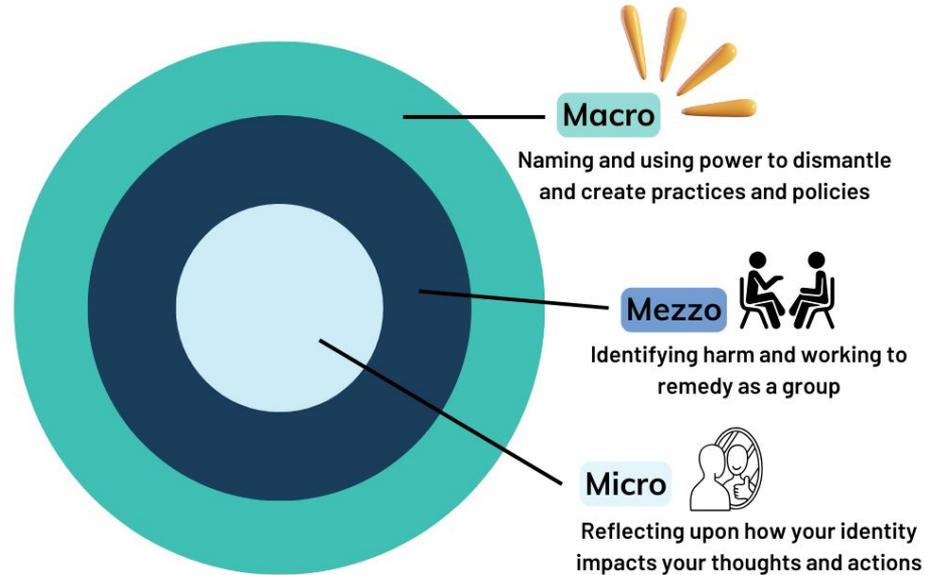
**And in the U.S. this means centering racial equity.**

# Racial Equity

Racial **is...** equity is a **process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone.** It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

[Race Forward](#)

# We must work to dismantle racism at the micro, mezzo, and



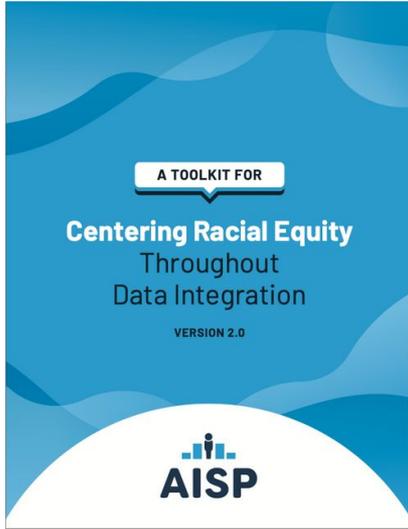


Those of us committed to racial justice, democracy, and mutual well-being know that safety does not come from hatred; it comes from solidarity with all who yearn for a world centered on mutual care and concern

**Tema Okun**

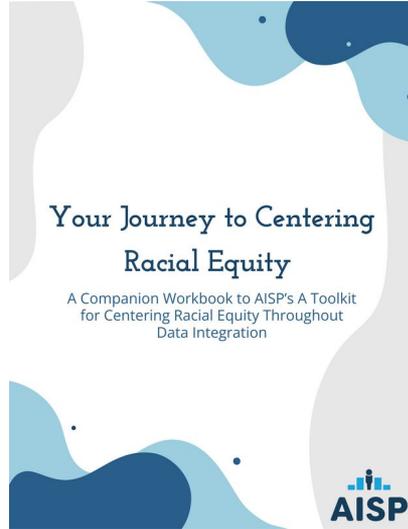
<https://aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity/>  
#CenterRacialEquity





Hawn Nelson, A., Zanti, S., Jenkins, D., Algrant, I., Rios Benitez, J., et al. (2025). A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration. Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania.

<https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity/>



Hawn Nelson, A., Algrant, I., Lewis, B., Jenkins, D., Paull, K., et al. (2025). Your Journey to Centering Racial Equity: A Companion Workbook to AISP's A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration. Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania.

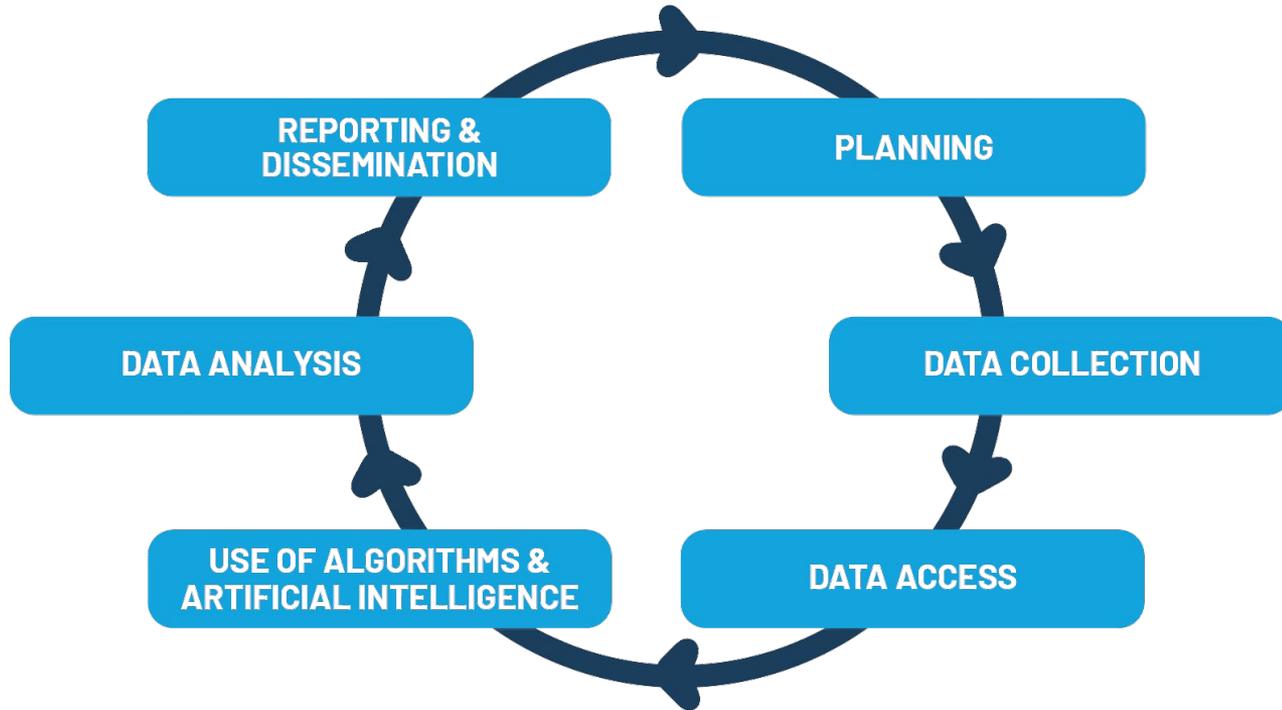
<https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity/>

**Where:** [aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity](https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity)

## What:

- Positive and Problematic Practices for using data at each stage of the data lifecycle
- Works in Action
- Activities to get you, your team, & your partners started in a companion workbook

# What stages of the data life cycle is your work focused on?



**As railroads and highways both developed and decimated communities, so too can data infrastructure.**

We can co-create data infrastructure to promote racial equity and the public good, or we can invest in data infrastructure that disregards the historical, social, and political context.

**Main Idea: This has been an ongoing collaborative process, with work co-created and presented by dozens of people**

# Process

- Secured funding for Toolkit
- In person workgroup meetings
- Writing, editing, & review
- Release & dissemination of V1 Toolkit

- Planning, curriculum, and resource creation
- Cohort 1 of EiPLC completed TA (Nov 2024)
- Convened Toolkit Workgroup V2
- Selection and start of EiPLC Cohort 2
- Data + Equity Summit #1(2024)

2017-  
2018

- Expressed need from AISP network sites
- Initial Funding from AECF
- Created Workgroup

2019-  
2020

- Secured funding for Toolkit
- In person workgroup meetings
- Writing, editing, & review
- Release & dissemination of V1 Toolkit

2021-  
2022

- Document shifts in site-based practices
- Learn and share and shift
- Secure funding
- Planning and beginning EiPLC

2022-  
2024

- Planning, curriculum, and resource creation
- Cohort 1 of EiPLC completed TA (Nov 2024)
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- Selection and start of EiPLC Cohort 2
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2025-  
2026

- Toolkit V2 and Workbook in the wild!
- All the presentations and discussions
- Cohort 2 of EiPLC completes TA (Nov 2025)
- Data + Equity Summit #2 (2026)

# A TOOLKIT FOR CENTERING RACIAL EQUITY 2025



## 110 CONTRIBUTORS:

25 workgroup members

**73 work in action authors**

12 AISP team members

1 external reviewer

2 graduate students

## 54 WORKS IN ACTION

7 long-form case studies on participatory governance

23 different states represented

7 national initiatives & 1 international organization



## 86 HOURS AND 15 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

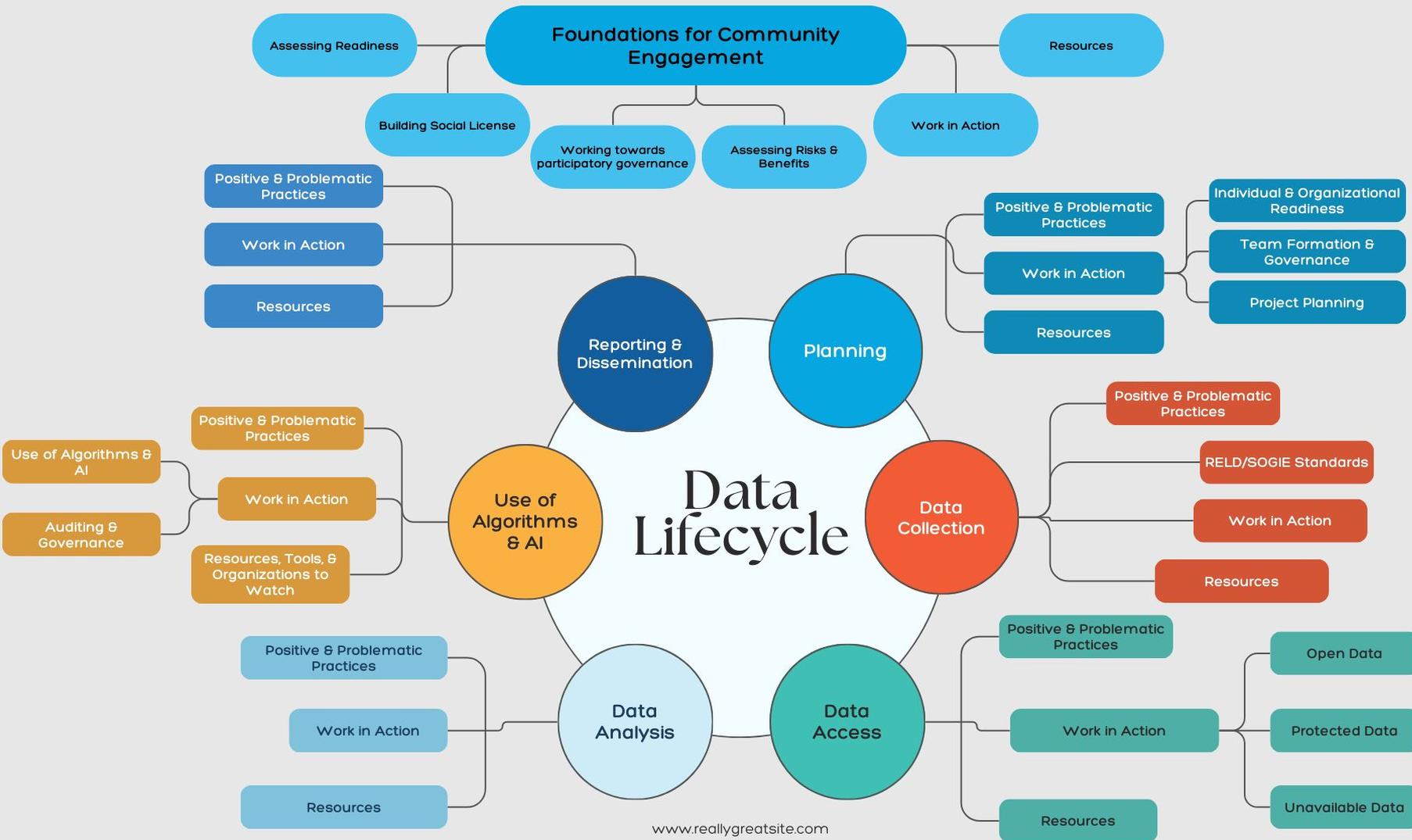
This is about 3.6 full days of meetings, including our workgroup and subcommittees, and 14 hours and 45 minutes of work in action meetings.

This is a gross undercount based on calendars, not counting phone calls, the number of people in each meeting, and independent writing time.

## 743 WORK IN ACTION EMAILS

This is DEFINITELY a gross undercount, but it gives you the idea.





# A Vision for Building SHARED POWER



Equity in Practice Learning Community Convening  
 OCTOBER 5, 2023

# Updates

**There is an Interactive website!**

## **Companion Workbook**

The Workbook is filled with activities which are a great way to start centering equity in your data work!

## **Tribal Data Sovereignty**

What considerations need to be made when working with Indigenous, American Indian, Alaska Native, and/or Native American Communities

## **Foundations for Community Engagement**

Prepare organizations to bring community in... It's not always the right choice

## **Artificial Intelligence**

Given the MASSIVE changes since 2020, we have updated Algorithms and Statistical Tools section to AI and Algorithms

<https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity/>

# Using the four questions to evaluate risk versus benefit

# The Four Questions

Spoiler alert:  
this is data  
governance



Is it legal?



Is it ethical?



Is it a good idea?



How do we know?  
Who decides?

See: Finding a Way Forward: How to create a strong legal framework for data integration, <https://aisp.upenn.edu/resource-article/finding-a-way-forward-how-to-create-a-strong-legal-framework-for-data-integration/> and Four Questions to Guide Decision-Making for Data Sharing and Integration, 2023, <https://ijpds.org/article/view/2159>

# 1. Is this legal?

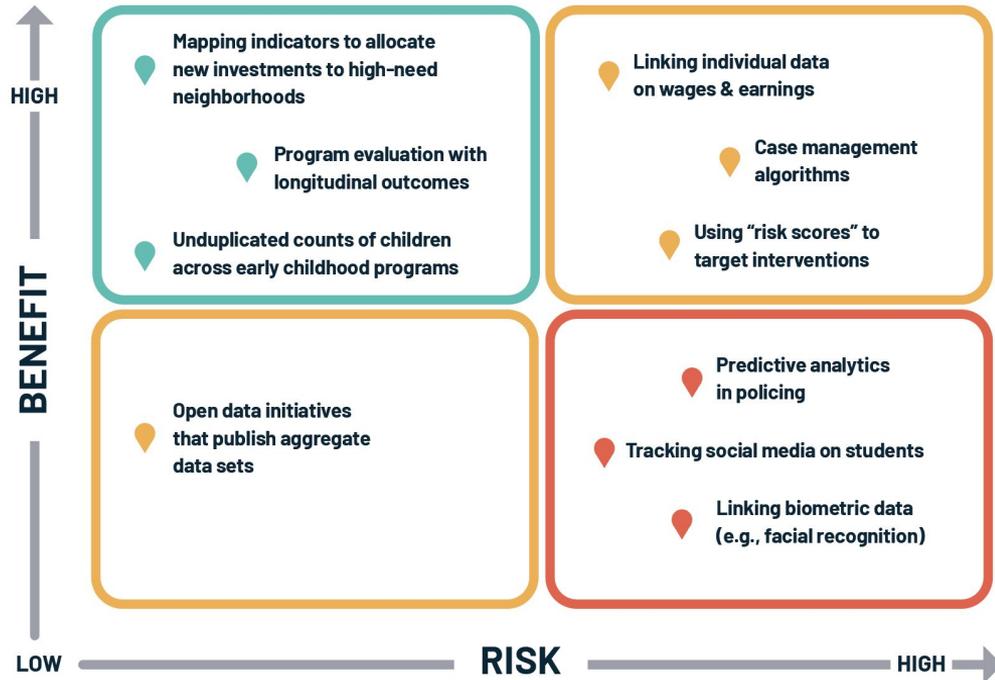
## AUTHORITY AND ACCESS



Open Data	Protected Data	Unavailable Data
Data that can be shared openly, either at the aggregate or individual level, based on state and federal law. These data often exist in open data portals.	Data that can be shared, but only under specific circumstances with appropriate safeguards in place.	Data that cannot or should not be shared, either because of state or federal law, lack of digital format (paper copies only), or data quality or other concerns.

## 2. Is this ethical?

### SOCIAL LICENSE, RISK v. BENEFIT



# 3. Is this a good idea?

## DATA AVAILABILITY, RESOURCES, ACTION

Is there available data to answer this question?

Do we have the resources to respond to the answer?

Can these data be acted upon?

## 4. How do we know? Who decides?

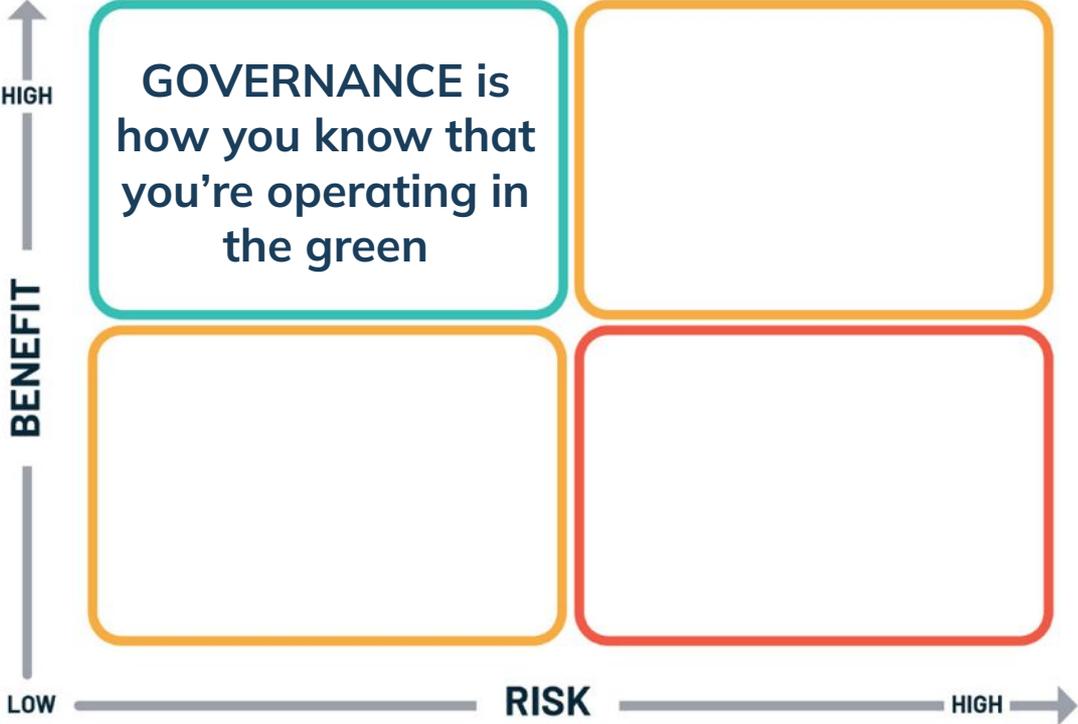
### DATA GOVERNANCE

The people, policies, and procedures that support how data are managed, used, and protected.

Strong and inclusive data governance for cross-sector data sharing and integration should be:

- Purpose-, value-, and principle-driven
- Strategically located
- Collaborative
- Iterative
- Transparent

# Benefit/Risk Matrix



# Benefits and Risks to Consider

## Benefits

- **Whole-person, longitudinal view:** Using multiple sources allows a holistic view of individual experiences and outcomes across programs and, potentially, across time.
- **Whole-family view:** Administrative data linkages can enable us to better understand experiences and outcomes across a family or household unit.
- **Scale:** Administrative data can allow for a population view, rather than a sample, and is therefore less vulnerable to certain forms of bias, such as nonresponse.
- **Time & cost:** Data reuse is less time- and resource-intensive than collecting new data.

## Risks

- **Privacy disclosure:** Any transfer of data includes the risk of data being accessed improperly.
- **Misuse of data for research and evaluation:** Without sufficient data documentation, analysts may misuse or misinterpret data.
- **Harming individuals:** Certain uses of administrative data carry particularly high risks of causing personal harm, including uses that provide case workers, service providers, teachers, law enforcement, etc., with personal information that could lead to biased treatments, punitive action, or lengthened system involvement.
- **Harming communities:** Use of administrative data, especially when mapped, can create or deepen community stigma. When analysts fail to understand and acknowledge the discriminatory practices and structural causes of disparate outcomes by race or geography, they risk using administrative data in ways that perpetuate deficit-based narratives.

# Legal risks

## Risk of Unauthorized Disclosure

- Breaches
- Security incidents
- Re-identification

## Enforcement Actions

- State & federal investigations
- Loss of funding
- Cost of corrective actions (notices, credit monitoring, etc.)
- Private causes of action (negligence, invasion of privacy, attorneys' fees)

## Misuse

- Data used for different purposes other than allowed under law and/or contemplated under agreements

# What are the ethical risks?

# Evaluating Risk vs. Benefit

1: High benefit, low risk

2: High risk, high benefit

3: Low risk, low benefit

4: High risk, low benefit

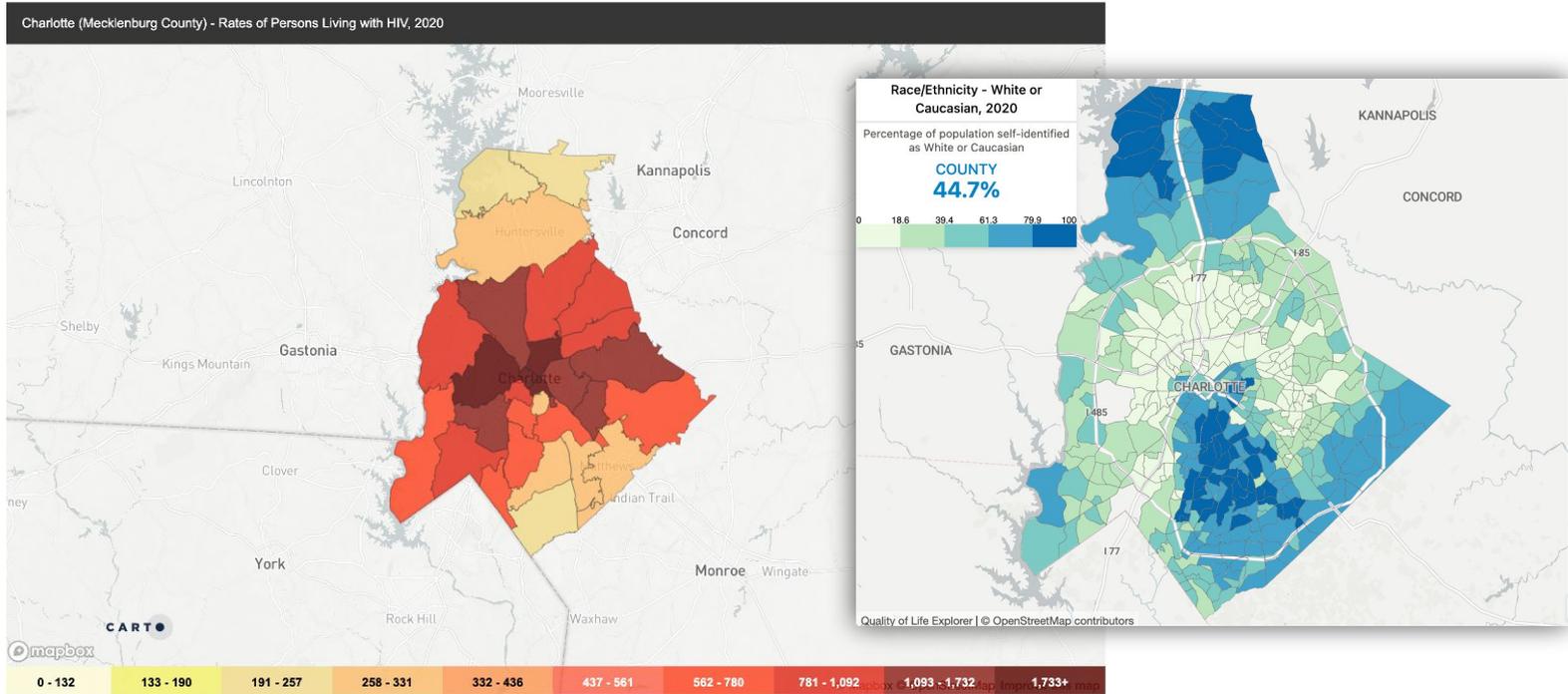


Round 1: These examples focus on open data

# Example 1: HIV status by zip

In 2020, there were 6,668 people living with HIV in Charlotte (Mecklenburg County).  
 In 2020, 209 people were newly diagnosed with HIV.

code



Left image: Sullivan PS, Woodyatt C, Koski C, Pembleton E, McGuinness P, Taussig J, Ricca A, Luisi N, Mokotoff E, Benbow N, Castel AD. [A data visualization and dissemination resource to support HIV prevention and care at the local level: analysis and uses of the AIDSvu Public Data Resource.](#) Journal of medical Internet research. 2020;22(10):e23173. Right image: <https://ui.charlotte.edu/our-work/quality-life-explorer/>

# Example 2: Language spoken at home (other than English)

Language Map of the United States

Language

Language spoken at home (other than English)

Spanish

Data source

YEAR RANGE

Year

2019

Most spoken languages in visible area:

1. Spanish
2. Arabic
3. French
4. Vietnamese
5. Chinese
6. German
7. Hindi
8. Telugu
9. Russian
10. Gujarati

<https://languagemap.us>

**Charlotte City (Northeast) PUMA**

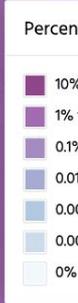
Language: Spanish

Speakers: 27,216

Percentage: 20.9%

Most spoken languages:

1. Spanish
2. Vietnamese
3. Tamil
4. Arabic
5. Hmong



# Evaluating Risk vs. Benefit

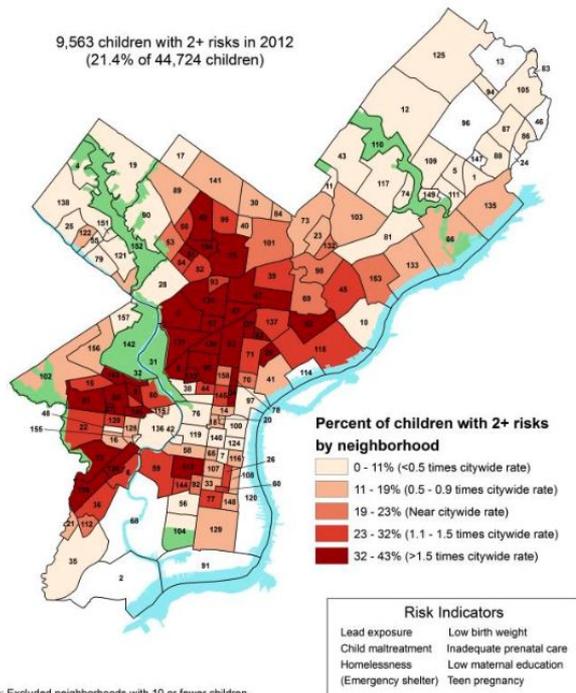
- 1: High benefit, low risk
- 2: High risk, high benefit
- 3: Low risk, low benefit
- 4: High risk, low benefit



Round 2: These examples focus on use of restricted data

# Example 3: Early Childhood Risks

Multiple Early Childhood Risks in Philadelphia:  
Three- and four-year-olds with two or more risks

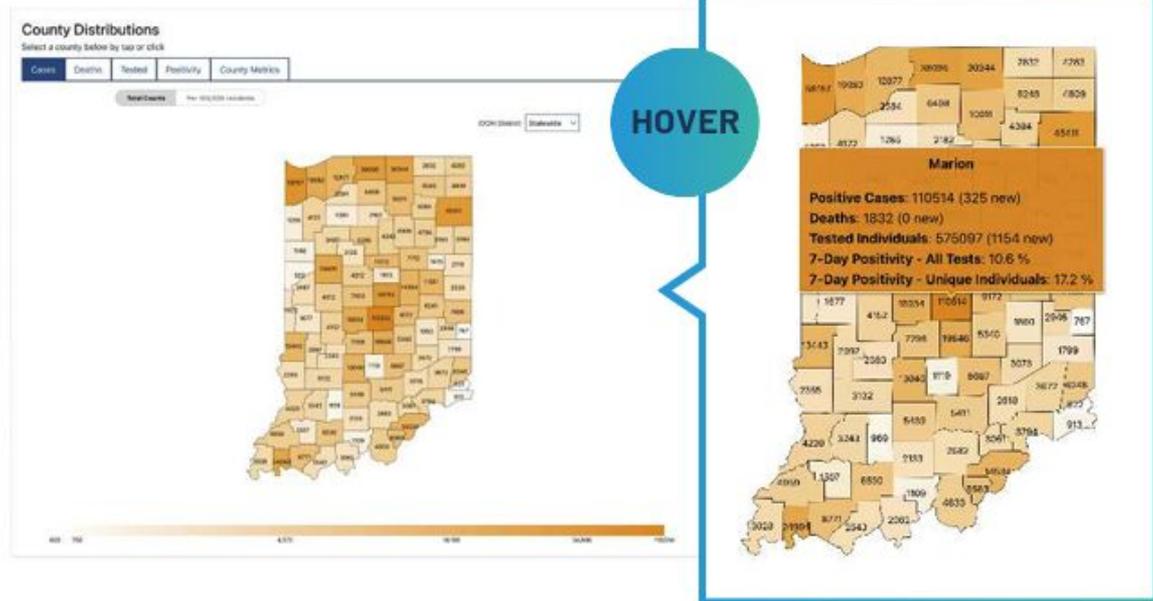


LeBoeuf, Whitney; Barghaus, Katherine; Henderson, Cassandra; Coe, Kristen; Fantuzzo, John; and Moore, James, "The Use of Integrated Data to Inform Quality Pre-K Expansion in Philadelphia" (2017). Research Briefs. 1. [http://repository.upenn.edu/pennchild\\_briefs/1](http://repository.upenn.edu/pennchild_briefs/1)

# Example 4: Tracking COVID-19

P

Total Confirmed COVID-19 Counts <sup>0</sup>



# **So how do we increase benefit? How do we mitigate risk?**

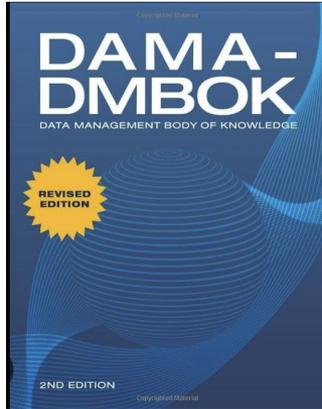
**(In all honesty, there's no magic answer here. But we do know you do this with discernment and in collaboration with other people)**



# **Data governance is the foundation.**

The people, policies, and procedures that support how data are managed, used, and protected.

# What do we mean when we use the term data governance?



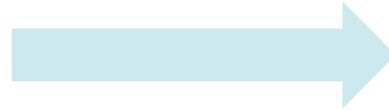


AISP Quality Framework for IDS:

<https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/quality-framework-for-integrated-data-systems/>

# The goal

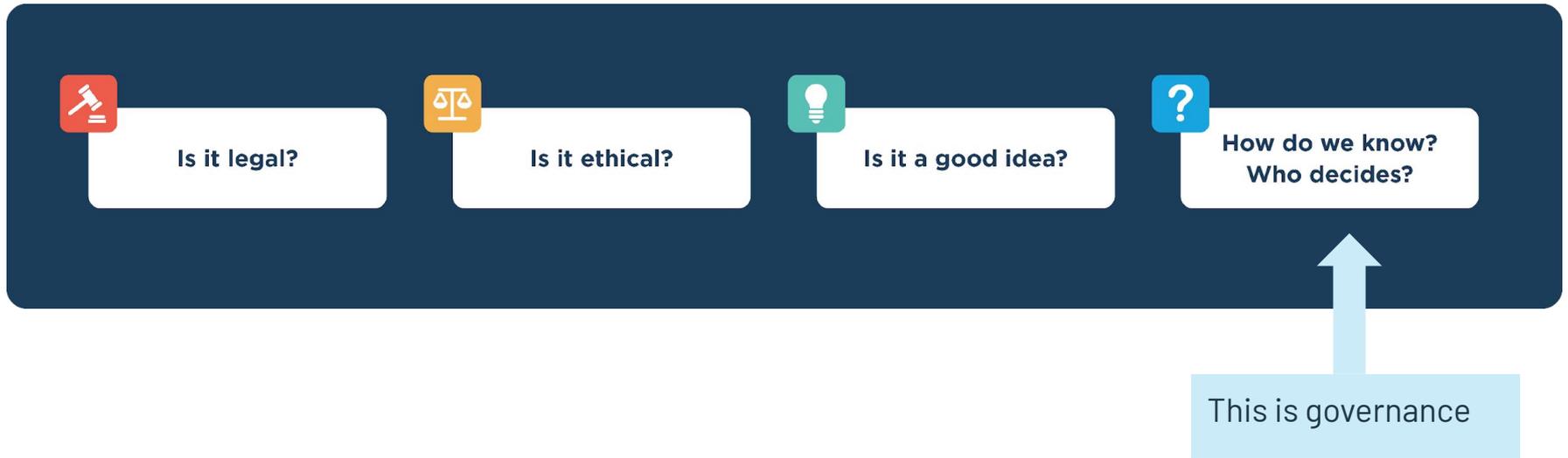
Collaborative data governance with decision making processes that support equity



Want some inspiration? Try this resource.  
<https://aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity/>



# The Four Questions



See: Finding a Way Forward: How to create a strong legal framework for data integration, <https://aisp.upenn.edu/resource-article/finding-a-way-forward-how-to-create-a-strong-legal-framework-for-data-integration/> and Four Questions to Guide Decision-Making for Data Sharing and Integration, 2023, <https://ijpds.org/article/view/2159>

# Data governance should

**be:** Purpose, mission, + vision driven

- Practical and strategic
- Collaborative
- Transparent
- Iterative

## ***Some guiding questions:***

How were governance policies and procedures developed?

Who is currently involved in the governance process?

Do people understand that process?

What governance documents and protocols are publicly available?

# Governance

## Clarity in Mission and Vision

Clearly expressed shared values

## Clarity in Goals

Purpose

What it is and what it isn't

## Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

### Governance Board and Committees

Data sharing

Data security

Data use priorities

Data request processes and approvals

## Transparent

Written charter and bylaws

Clear process documentation

Regular meetings with published meeting minutes

## Grow and evolve over time

Start basic, mature over time

## Participatory - in a real way

Input

Decision-making

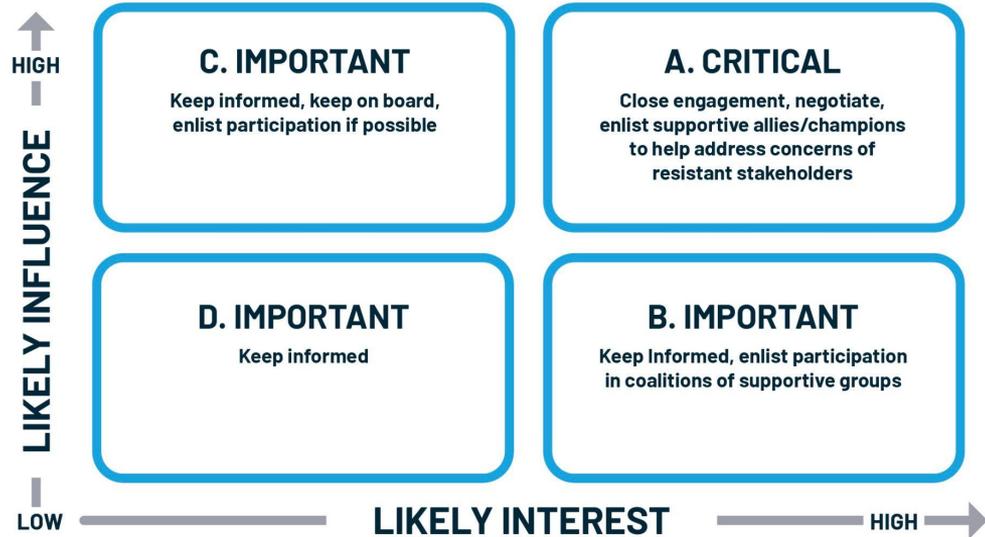
## Suggestion #1:

Figure out what data governance processes already exist that are working, use them, and build upon them. (Don't recreate the wheel unless you have to)



## Suggestion #2:

Carefully identify interest holders and set your table.

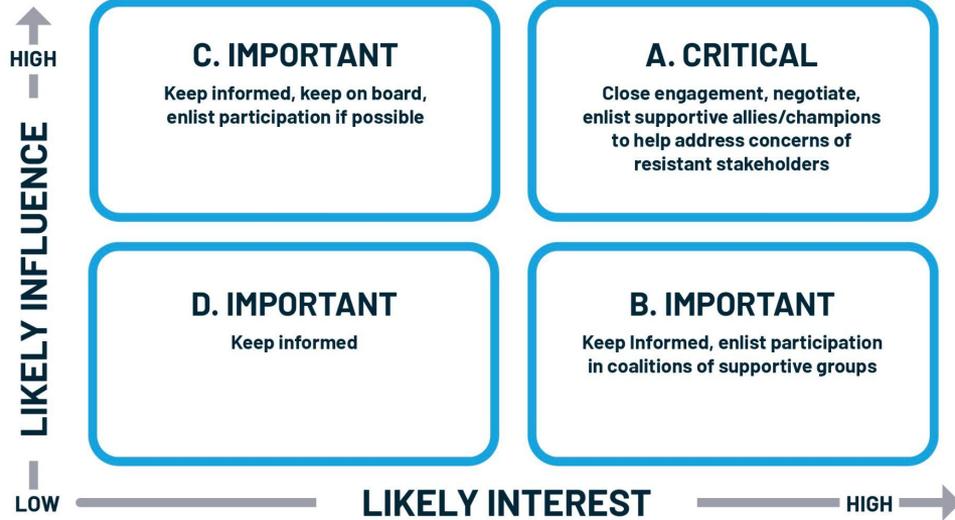


(adapted from Bryson, J. 2004)

Want some activities to get started? Try this resource

[Your Journey to Centering Racial Equity: A Companion Workbook \(2025\)](#)



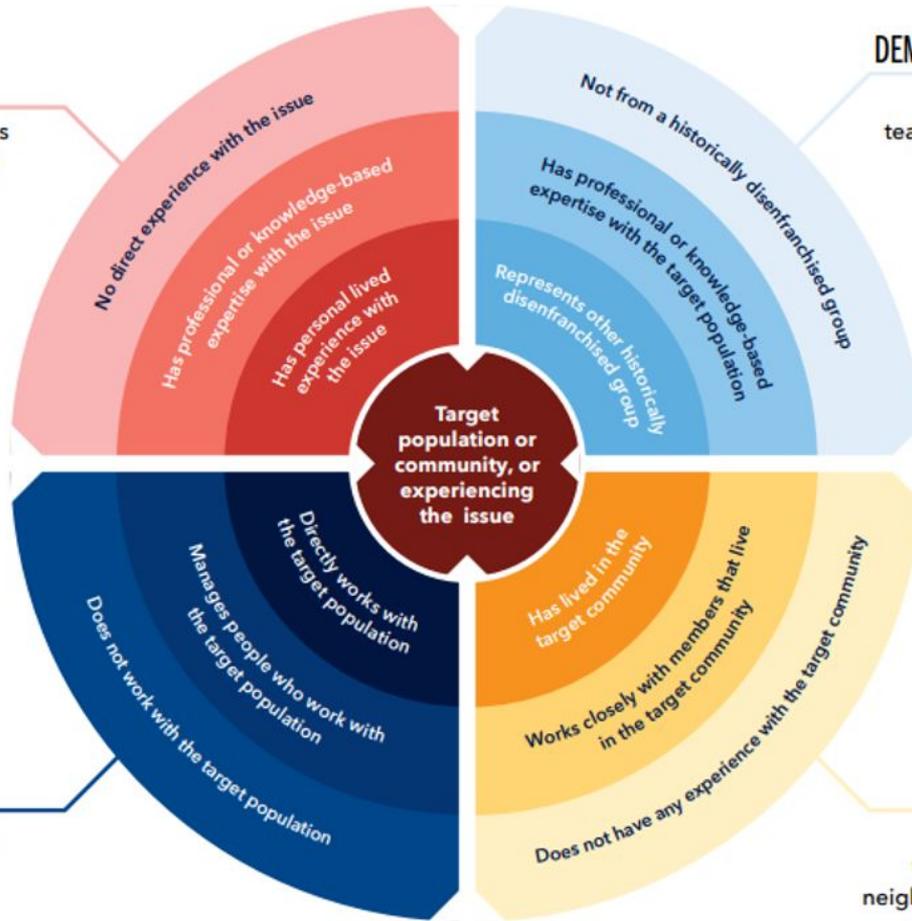


(adapted from Bryson, J. 2004)

Priority	Encourage Participation	Keep Informed
Critical:		
Important:		

## EXPERIENCE WITH THE ISSUE

How many people on this team have been directly impacted by this issue?



## DEMOGRAPHIC RELATIONSHIP

How many people on this team demographically reflect the target population?

## DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

How many people work directly with the target population?

## GEOGRAPHIC RELATIONSHIP

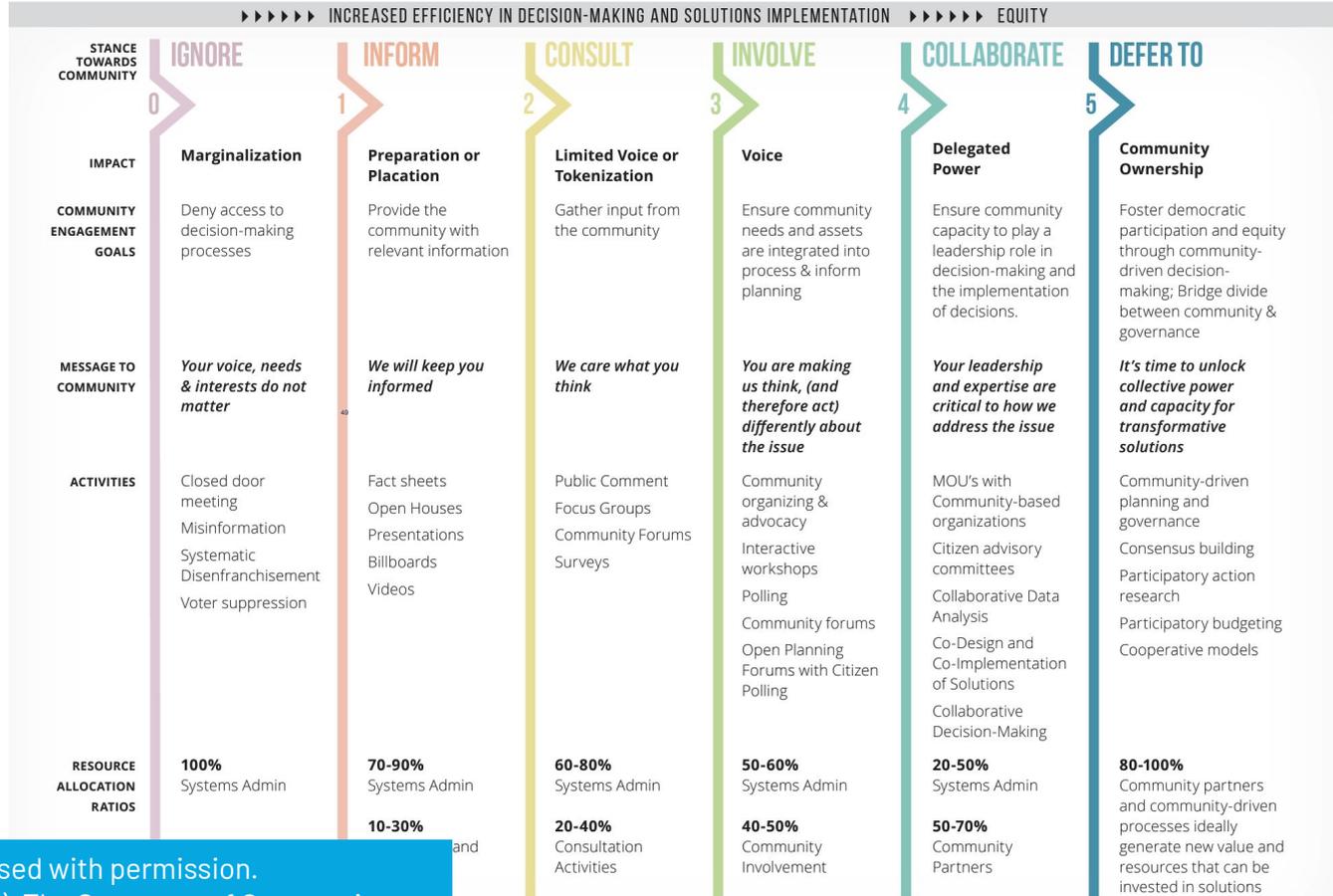
How many people on this team grew up or live in the neighborhood you are serving?

† This tool is a modified version of the Kent County ENTF toolkit, which was developed by Inclusive Performance Strategies to equip a Kent County action team with tools that foster inclusive and collaborative environments designed to achieve equitable outcomes throughout.<sup>11</sup>

# Identifying Interest-holders

Name	Experience with the issue	Demographic relationship to the issue	Direct engagement with the issue	Geographic relationship to the issue

Note: make as many copies of this slide as you need, this is a helpful exercise to complete with specific staff members in mind, not just roles.

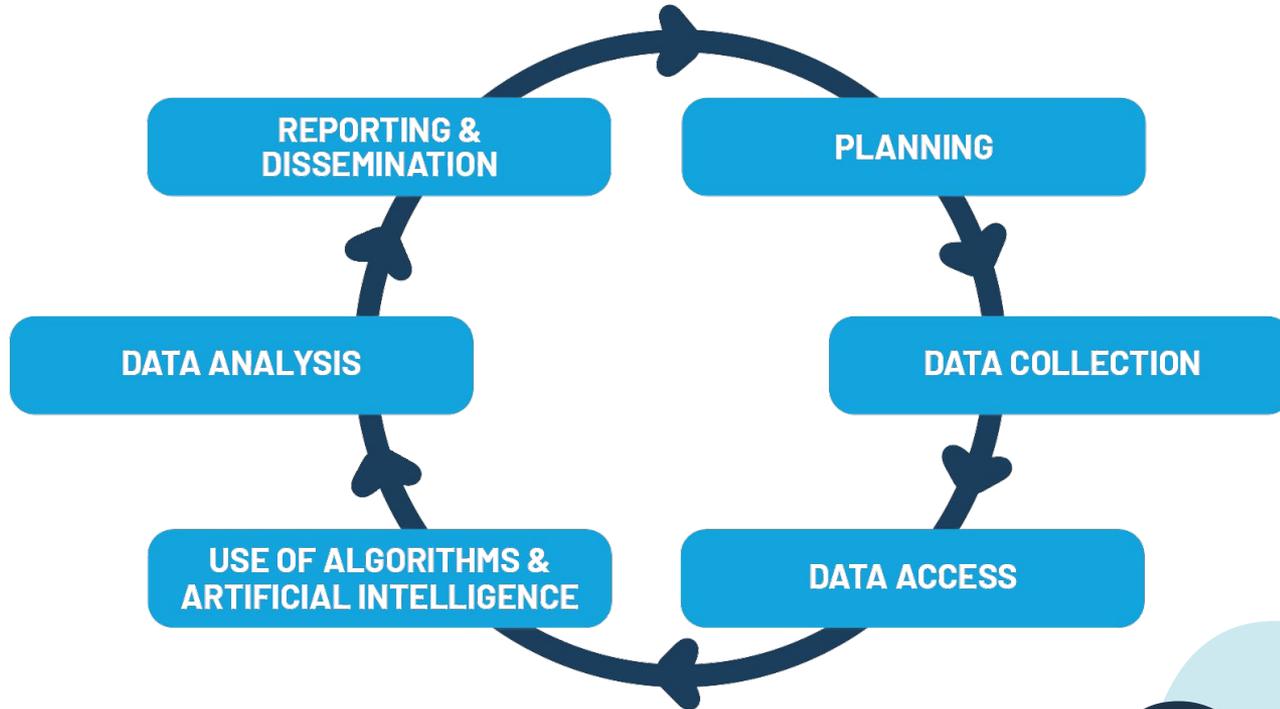


### Suggestion # 3:

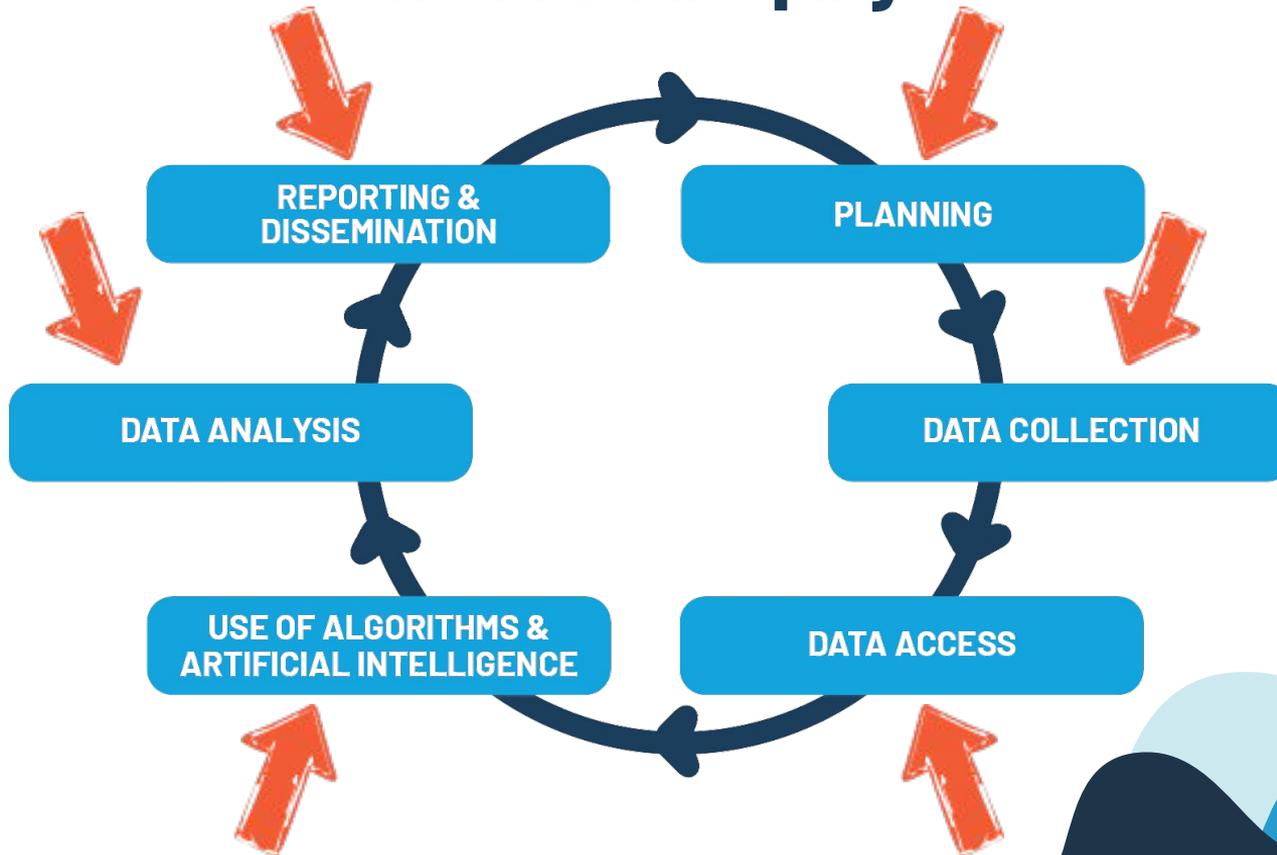
Get on the spectrum and work to move right.

Image used with permission.  
Gonzalez, R. (2020). The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership. Facilitating Power.

# Where do we need to center racial equity?



# Where do we need to center racial equity?



# Resources

- [A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration 2.0](#) (2025)
- [Your Journey to Centering Racial Equity: A Companion Workbook](#) (2025)
- [Internal Network Memo on Federal Data Response](#) (2025)
- [Finding a Way Forward: How to Create a Strong Legal Framework for Data Integration](#) (2025)
- [Introduction to Data Sharing & Integration](#) (2025)
- [Yes, No, Maybe? Legal & Ethical Considerations for Informed Consent in Data Sharing and Integration](#) (2023)



# Questions?

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