



## Tips & Tricks for Writing a Statement of Need

### Questions to help you determine the data/ evidence that might be useful to find via research:

- Who is affected? From a demographic perspective, how would this group of people or community be described?
- Is the problem systemic in nature? Does it have a long history? Are there studies or reports that look into the nature of the problem or its history?
- Is the problem newly emerging? Is it getting worse? What evidence can you find to support this?
- How does the problem affect the well-being of individuals? How does it affect their quality of life? In other words, why should we care that this is a problem? What is the evidence for the problem's impact on people's daily lives?
- Does the problem have harms that are both individual and community-wide? What are those and what are the distinctions between the two?

Keep asking *why* as you go along. When you get the answer to one of your questions, ask yourself *why* that is the answer... and then keep researching!

### Common places to search for data for needs statements (this list is NOT exhaustive):

- [U.S. Census Bureau](#)
  - [American Community Survey](#)
- [Data USA](#) - a compilation of public data that can be drilled down to county/ municipal levels
- [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- [Prosperity Now](#) - for income and wealth-related data
- Local government (e.g., state or county level) websites with data and reports on particular communities
- School system data (e.g., the % of kids who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch is often an indicator of poverty levels in a community)

### Remember the following:

- Cite your sources as appropriate!
- Keep in mind the hierarchy of evidence/ sources
- Primary sources generally provide better support than secondary sources