

Education, Community, and Housing Open Data Dashboard

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About

The Education, Community, and Housing Open (ECHO) Data Dashboard includes a wide range of national data related to education, housing, and community demographics and welfare. These data, available in map, table, and chart formats, are intended to inform and shape the discussion and construction of social policy in states and communities, with no need for specialized analytical skills. All data are presented at four levels of geography—school district, state legislative district, county, and census tract—to allow users to make new connections between data that are usually reported in incompatible ways.

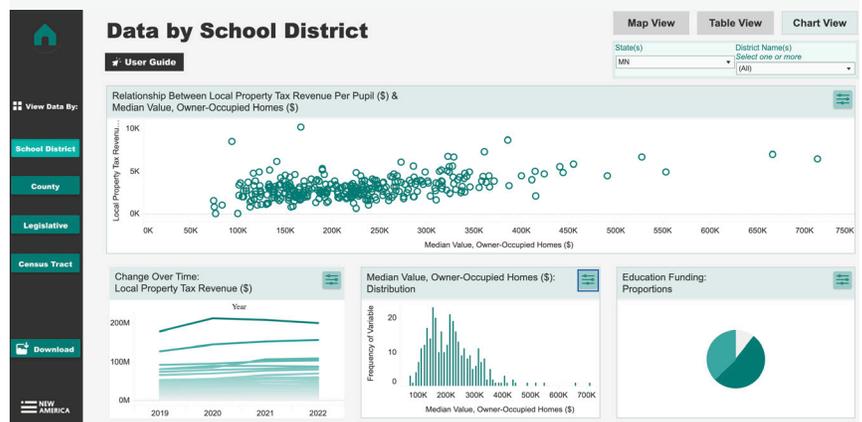
We hope this tool will help policymakers, advocates, journalists, and others to break down silos, build coalitions across issue areas, and tackle complex and vital problems in their states and communities. What follows is an example of how **education advocates** could use the dashboard to strengthen and advance their work.

The Sample User Story: Education Advocacy

A public education advocacy group is pushing for an increase in state education funding, arguing that current levels are too low to support classroom innovation or the staffing necessary to support high-need students. Some skeptical legislators have argued that districts just need better financial management, not more funds. The advocates use the ECHO Data Dashboard to **demonstrate to these legislators that public education is, in fact, getting more expensive to deliver**. For instance, they show that the state is seeing a multiyear increase in the number of students needing resource-intensive support (e.g., English learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing homelessness).

Broadening their search to include housing data, the advocates also use the ECHO Data Dashboard **to show a developing vicious cycle regarding property value, taxes, and enrollment**: When home vacancy rates have gone up and property values have gone down, school districts have not only had difficulty raising local property tax money for education, they have also seen enrollments drop, showing that families are leaving the area as schools struggle.

The education advocates share this information with economic development advocates, who are convinced that without an increase in state support for schools in areas like these, declining school quality will continue to drive residents away. The problem will likely worsen and economic development projects could fail, wasting hard-won state funding. With the help of these new partners, the advocates are able **to attract the support of additional legislators, especially those who have championed economic development programs and want to see a return on the state's investments**. With their votes, the education aid increase succeeds in the new budget.



The dashboard uses the chart view to plot the relationship between property values and local property tax revenue.