Education, Community, and Housing Open Data Dashboard

January 2025

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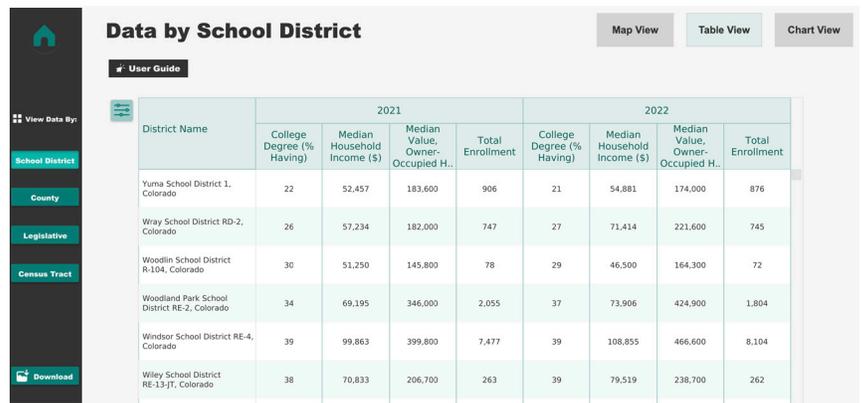
We hope this tool will help policymakers, advocates, journalists, and others to break down silos, build coalitions across issue areas, and tackle complex and vital problems in their states and communities. What follows is an example of how **housing advocates** could use the dashboard to strengthen and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

The Sample User Story: Housing Advocacy

An advocacy group is pushing for a new state program that would subsidize the construction of affordable housing near public transit stops. Thus far, the campaign has focused on direct benefits to low-income commuters, transit systems, and local economies. Legislative support has been limited to members who are already aligned with the group's priorities on housing and transportation issues. The advocates would like to find ways to reach new potential partners and legislative champions.

Using the ECHO Data Dashboard, they match the locations of their 10 highest-priority proposed developments to the school districts in which they would be located. Insights from the dashboard allow advocates to **make the case that those school districts would provide excellent opportunities to students from low-income families:** They are funded at levels well above the state average, drawing on healthy property tax bases, and their high-school dropout rates are very low. Adults in the area tend to have college degrees, and family incomes are above the state median, suggesting that new students in these districts would benefit from role models with high rates of education and social capital. In turn, the school districts would see increased socioeconomic diversity—a broad win for education equity. Based on this information, the housing advocacy group **puts together talking points about the educational benefits of the proposed affordable housing program.**

With this new line of argument, the advocacy group is able to **form an alliance with a state education equity coalition**, which organizes its members to sign on in support of the proposal and sends out email blasts to its lists asking parents and community members to contact their legislators about the program. Legislators whose primary focus is education and youth become engaged in championing the program, and a pilot is authorized in the new session budget.

The dashboard uses the table view to display data about the communities served by school districts.