

# 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 **legislatures and their staff members** could use the dashboard to strengthen and advance their work.

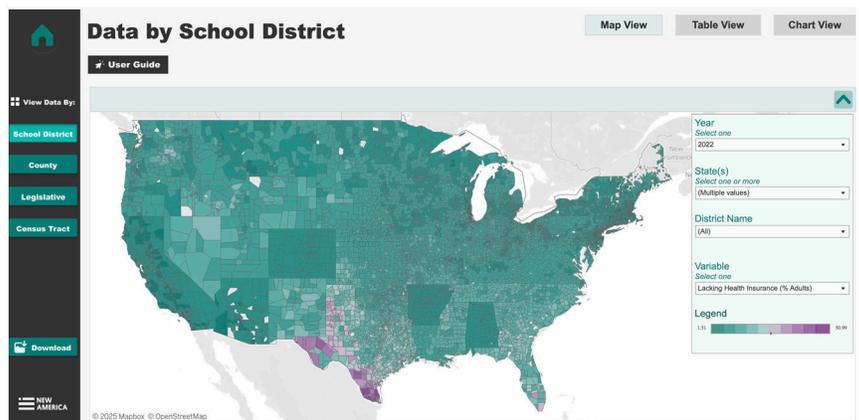
## The Sample User Story: Legislation

Senior members of the education committee have become concerned about high rates of student absenteeism in the state’s public schools. They have heard from both education advocates and officials from the state department of education that students who are chronically absent are at high risk of falling behind academically. Some legislators have suggested creating a new, outcomes-based funding program that rewards school districts for bringing up attendance rates. However, the chair is skeptical; he has heard from superintendents that absenteeism is caused by too many factors beyond their control—particularly prevalent health problems like asthma—and that funding incentives won’t do much to solve the problem.

The chair asks committee staff to look into the issue, and they **find that there is research supporting a connection between asthma and absenteeism**, and showing that better asthma control helps students succeed in school. They start to put together a framework for a bill including grant funding for school-based asthma clinics, additional school health personnel, and HVAC modernization to improve school air quality.

The state has data on student absenteeism by school district, but no information about this major risk factor. Using the ECHO Data Dashboard, a staff member **identifies the school districts that have the worst air quality scores and the highest rates of community asthma**. The staffer also finds out which districts have the lowest rates of health insurance coverage.

With this information, the staff members are able to **design a grant program that includes strong criteria for prioritizing funding for the districts with the greatest need**. They are also able to use the **dashboard to identify the school districts that would benefit most from such a program** and approach their legislators about co-sponsoring the bill, building broader support for the program and this root-cause approach to addressing chronic absenteeism.



*The dashboard uses the map view to display health insurance coverage by school district.*