

# Community Data Program

Enabling communities to measure and track local well-being

The Flagship initiative of the Canadian  
Council on Social Development

Community Data Consortium Primer

<http://communitydata.ca/>



<http://www.ccsd.ca>

## *What is the Community Data Program?*

The CDP is a membership-based community development initiative open to any Canadian public, non-profit or community sector organization with a local service delivery or public policy mandate.

Created by CCSD, the CDP facilitates access to and use of the evidence needed to tell our stories and inform effective and responsive policy and program design and implementation. Through the CDP, the CCSD seeks to enable social development that tackles the pressing challenges of our time in communities across the country.

The CDP makes data accessible and useful for all members with training and capacity building resources. Through its vibrant network, the CDP facilitates and supports dialogue and the sharing of best practices in the use of community data. The CDP has emerged as a unique Canada-wide platform for generating information, convening and collaborating.

## *How does the Consortium Model Work?*

CCSD supports the establishment of Community Data Consortia, a grouping of organizations operating at a municipal level and “focused on the implementation of a public service goal”. The boundaries of the Consortium correspond to the Consortium member with the largest sub-provincial service catchment area, typically a municipality. Organizational membership in a Consortium includes some combination of municipal governments, Social Planning Councils, United Ways, Community Foundations, library, school and police boards, public health/regional health authorities, community health centres, non-profit housing corporations, economic development agencies, and a variety of other community sector agencies.

Each Community Data Consortium is led by an organization which assumes responsibility for entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with CCSD and maintaining communication with the Consortium membership. Consortium Leads are typically municipal governments, but can be voluntary sector organizations.

## *What do Member Organizations get for their Membership Fee?*

**Access to Data:** Half the challenge is *getting* the data you need- CDP takes care of the hard part. Members benefit from direct access to over \$1 million worth of relevant and credible community data products capturing trends and conditions related to hundreds of topics at the smallest geographies available across the country. The entire CDP data repository is available from a members-only [online catalogue](#). The program has built a unique compendium of hundreds of data products from over 20 public and private sector data providers offering data at municipal and neighbourhood geographies.

**Training & Capacity Building:** Data can be intimidating. That's why CDP's services are designed for members with a range of skills and knowledge, from power data users to data novices. Services include customized training, email and phone support, access to web-based data access and analysis tools, and webinars connecting members to a Canada-wide network of like-minded community data users. The CDP team is committed to building the capacity of members to access and use data to tell their stories and make evidence-backed decisions.

**Cross-Canada Networking:** The CDP connects a growing and dynamic network of over 1,600 individuals, working in over 350 municipal and community sector organizations across the country. An annual meeting, newsletters, community data stories, and live and recorded webinar events all contribute to raising awareness about evidence-based social development.

## *What unique Community Data products will be available through the Program?*

The Community Data Program works closely with over twenty public and private data providers in order to negotiate preferential pricing and licensing arrangements for customized data products involving special orders, cross-tabulations, and unique geographic boundaries, especially those corresponding to neighbourhoods.

Data products acquired by the CDP include Census tables, Taxfiler data and Credit Report Characteristics including consumer and mortgage debt. The CDP also works with Statistics Canada to make available custom geography data products, reflecting the unique boundaries of each Consortium. Data acquisition also includes products available at the scale of municipal boundaries (Census Division and Census subdivision), such as Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Population Projections, and inter-censal population estimates, and data tables on income, housing, immigration and labour force statistics.

# Community Data Consortium Primer

The CDP acquires national data sets at the smallest geographic levels available, including Dissemination Area and six-digit postal codes where possible.

The Program also acquires analytical tools with the capacity to generate neighbourhood profiles and convert postal code geographies into Census geographies.

Finally, the CDP offers a portal to facilitate access to free online data. Under the terms of the Government of Canada's Open Data initiative, increasing numbers of standard data products are being made available online at no cost by various Federal Government Departments. The CDP strongly supports this policy shift and facilitates members' access to and use of these free online data sets.

The scope and sequence of data acquisition is subject to the following conditions:

- Acquisition priorities established by CCSD and the Consortium Lead Organizations
- The Community Data Program budget
- Availability of data products from data providers

## *How is the Community Data Program used by Members?*

Data tables acquired through the CDP cover an incredibly wide array of issues and themes. The most popular uses of CDP data by Consortium members respond to local issues in the areas of poverty, children and families, aging populations, immigration and affordable housing. CDP data have also been used by community practitioners in the areas of planning and development, local economic development, social planning, public health, and education, to name but a few examples.

Members use the CDP data and tools to enhance their own data products in the form of neighbourhood profiles and fact sheets, printed and interactive online mapping, thematic reports, presentations, briefing notes & media releases. Some of the practical purposes for which Consortium data are regularly used by members include Strategic Planning, Research, Policy development, Service program design, Monitoring Evaluation, Advocacy, Community Education, and Performance Measurement and funding proposals.

## *How much does Membership cost?*

The annual cost of Membership is based on two components: a flat Consortium Fee shared among members of each Consortium, and a Program Membership Fee paid by every Member organization.

Consortium Catchment Area Population	Annual Consortium Fee
1,000,000 +	\$ 19,990
950,000 999,999	\$ 19,241
900,000 949,999	\$ 18,491
850,000 899,999	\$ 17,742
800,000 849,999	\$ 16,992
750,000 799,999	\$ 16,243
700,000 749,999	\$ 15,493
650,000 699,999	\$ 14,744
600,000 649,999	\$ 13,994
550,000 599,999	\$ 13,245
500,000 549,999	\$ 12,495
450,000 499,999	\$ 11,746
400,000 449,999	\$ 10,996
350,000 399,999	\$ 10,247
300,000 349,999	\$ 9,497
250,000 299,999	\$ 8,748
200,000 249,999	\$ 7,998
150,000 199,999	\$ 7,249
100,000 149,999	\$ 6,499
50,000 99,999	\$ 5,750
- 49,999	\$ 5,000

The annual Consortium Fee, shown on the left, is calculated on the basis of the population of the Consortium catchment area. The price range reflects the relative complexity, cost and availability of data tables for larger communities. The Consortium Fee enables access to all custom cross-tabulation and custom geography data products, and associated Program services. Participation in the Community Data Program is based on a 5-year contractual commitment. Fees are paid annually to CCSD by the Consortium Lead on behalf of Members. **The cost of the Consortium fee can be shared among an unlimited number of Consortium member organizations.** Fees are exclusive of sales taxes and no fee increases will occur without the consent of all Consortium Leads.

The annual Program Membership Fee is paid by each member organization of each Consortium. This \$125 annual fee – plus locally applicable sales taxes - includes a complementary membership in CCSD.

## *Where are the existing Community Data Consortia located?*

The Program supports over 30 Community Data Consortia established across Canada, from British Columbia to Newfoundland & Labrador. Consortia are based in smaller communities like Parry Sound-Nipissing, Ontario as well as Canada's largest urban centres. These consortia represent over 350 member organizations and over 1,600 registered data users.

*I'm interested in creating a Consortium. What are the benefits of membership that I can present?*

**Cost Savings:** Access to this breadth of data has a very high price point if bought individually by any one organization or municipality. A large number of custom tabulations are also prepared exclusively for the Program and negotiated with each cycle. By pooling their resources, Consortia gain access to hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of community data at a fraction of the cost. Since there are no limits on the number of organizations that can join a Community Data Consortium, the CDP creates opportunities for further cost-savings.

**Access to relevant data and analytical tools:** The Community Data Program researches and negotiates partnerships with data providers from across Canada, ensuring members have access to current, reliable and relevant data sets and analytical tools. Cross-Canada networking by Consortium Leads and members ensures the data is relevant for current planning priorities and policy initiatives relevant to municipalities and their neighbourhoods.

**Building Community Partnerships:** Many municipalities and voluntary sector organizations are already involved in any number of collaborative initiatives; the Community Data Program complements and reinforces this function. Creating a Community Data Consortium strengthens local networks of data users and connects members to a Canada-wide network of hundreds of like-minded organizations.

**Increased Capacity for better decision making:** The Community Data Program is committed to building the capacity of members to make use of complex data tables. This is achieved through formalized training, email and telephone support, analytical tools, connecting members to a Canada-wide network of like-minded community data users, and providing all members and users with information updates on the state of community data in Canada.

## *History of the Community Data Program*

In the mid-1990s, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) launched a network of community data consortia in municipalities across Canada. The Community Data Consortium model was created to assist municipalities and community-based organizations to identify and better understand the social and economic trends within their community and to allow them to share both the costs and the benefits.

There are three core purposes to the Community Data Consortium:

- Purchase and facilitate access to social data at the smallest geographies possible
- Train organizations to analyze community data and use it for better decision making
- Communicate and disseminate the results as widely as possible

The Community Data Consortium model strengthens the Program's capacity to negotiate effectively with public and private sector data providers for the preparation and lower-cost purchase of a wide variety of data that are geographically relevant for planning local programs and services.

The Community Data Program is led by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD). CCSD is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization, which was founded in 1920. CCSD's mission is to develop and promote progressive social policies inspired by social justice, equality and the empowerment of individuals and communities. CCSD does this through research, consultation, public education and advocacy. Its main product is information. Its sources of funding include research contracts, the sale of publications and memberships, and donations.

Contact:

[information@communitydata.ca](mailto:information@communitydata.ca)

<http://communitydata.ca/>



<http://www.ccsd.ca>