

# Community Data Program

Enabling communities to measure and track local well-being

## Community Data Consortium Primer

<https://communitydata.ca/>



**Canadian  
CED Network**

<http://www.ccednet.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. The program is run by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet).

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, CCEDNet 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?*

CCEDNet 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 CCEDNet 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 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 2,000 individuals, working in over 400 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 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 consortium members. Data acquisition also includes products available at the scale of municipal boundaries (Census Division and Census Subdivision), such as Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, intercensal population estimates, and data tables on income, housing, immigration and labour force statistics.

The CDP acquires national data sets at the smallest geographic levels available, including Dissemination Area and Census Tract where possible.

The Program also produces data access and visualization tools with the capacity to generate community profiles on a variety of subjects. The Program also acquires Canada Post's Postal Code Conversion File for its members, allowing postal code geographies to be converted 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 CCEDNet 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 Pop.		Annual Consortium Fee
3,000,000	+	\$ 24,487.00
1,500,000	2,999,999	\$ 22,238.50
1,000,000	1,499,999	\$ 19,990.00
950,000	999,999	\$ 19,240.50
900,000	949,999	\$ 18,491.00
850,000	899,999	\$ 17,741.50
800,000	849,999	\$ 16,992.00
750,000	799,999	\$ 16,242.50
700,000	749,999	\$ 15,493.00
650,000	699,999	\$ 14,743.50
600,000	649,999	\$ 13,994.00
550,000	599,999	\$ 13,244.50
500,000	549,999	\$ 12,495.00
450,000	499,999	\$ 11,745.50
400,000	449,999	\$ 10,996.00
350,000	399,999	\$ 10,246.50
300,000	349,999	\$ 9,497.00
250,000	299,999	\$ 8,747.50
200,000	249,999	\$ 7,998.00
150,000	199,999	\$ 7,248.50
100,000	149,999	\$ 6,499.00
50,000	99,999	\$ 5,749.50
25,000	49,999	\$ 5,000.00
20,000	24,999	\$ 3,747.50
15,000	19,999	\$ 2,998.00
10,000	14,999	\$ 2,248.50
5,000	9,999	\$ 1,499.00
<	4,999	\$ 749.50

Participation in the Community Data Program is based on a 5-year contractual commitment. The annual Consortium Fee, shown on the left, is calculated on the basis of the population of the Consortium catchment area. The Consortium Fee enables access to all custom cross-tabulation and custom geography data products, and associated Program services. **The cost of the Consortium fee can be shared among an unlimited number of Consortium member organizations.**

The \$150 annual Program Membership Fee is paid by each member organization of each Consortium.

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

The Program supports 30 Community Data Consortia established across Canada, from British Columbia to Newfoundland & Labrador. Consortia are based in smaller, rural communities as well as Canada's largest urban centres. These consortia represent over 400 member organizations and over 2,000 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.

## 2021 Member Testimonials

*The Community Data Program provides a wealth of data that is critical to informing decisions at the local level.*

– City of Calgary, Lead, Calgary Community Data Consortium

*CDP data is readily available and easy to access. When working with consultants, we can easily provide them with CDP data, which may save on consulting costs.*

– City of Regina, Lead, Regina Community Data Consortium

*The CDP program has made a real difference to the communities in Northern Ontario. Our consortium members can make evidence-based decisions in a timely way and at an affordable data cost. CDP has become an indispensable tool for policy makers here.*

– Northern Policy Institute, Lead, Northern Ontario Community Data Consortium

*Data from the Community Data Program has been used to push important issues on the public agenda and to developing important policy solutions.*

– Hamilton Community Data Consortium

*CDP is absolutely essential to our work. Through the CDP, we have affordable access to a wealth of data that we can use to support evidence-based research for social change. It also allows us to fulfil our role as a provider of data and research that supports the community sector. This work helps community organizations to make the case for funding to improve community services, meet local needs and enhance quality of life in our neighbourhoods. It also helps organizations to understand who is living in their catchment area and whether they are reaching marginalized groups.*

– Toronto Community Data Consortium

*Simcoe County has been a member of the CDP since 2005. Membership has been extremely valuable and worthwhile, and has been instrumental in building a strong network of data users and local consortia members in our community. At the national level, membership in the CDP provides ample opportunity to network with like-minded professionals from across the country, advocate for data, and be involved in large-scale initiatives. Access to data is just the tip of the iceberg – the value of the CDP is also in the networking, access to resources and training, and strategic planning around the acquisition and use of data. As a medium-sized municipality, with a mix of rural and urban levels of geography, being a CDP member supports our access to data at smaller levels of geography.*

– Simcoe Community Data Consortium

*We are frequent users of the data provided by the Consortium, we do not need to order them directly from the original sources when they are needed and it saves us time and money in general.*

– York Region, Lead York Community Data Consortium

*CDP data is used to better understand our community. Data is often used to supplement or inform our service plans.*

– City of Kawartha Lakes, Lead, Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton Community Data Consortium

## *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 CDP was transitioned from CCSD to the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) in September 2019. CCEDNet is a national association of organizations and people throughout Canada committed to strengthening communities by creating economic opportunities that enhance social and environmental conditions.

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