

Data Foundation Launches the 'People's Data 100'

Data Coalition Initiative will recognize national datasets delivering greatest value to Americans

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, November 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/

-- The Data Foundation today announced the launch of the People's Data 100, an initiative to identify and honor the national datasets that deliver the greatest value to the American people. Announced at the seventh annual Datum Awards ceremony, the initiative will recognize the invisible data infrastructure that powers the economy, protects public health, enables scientific discovery, and ensures government accountability.



"National data is an invisible infrastructure that Americans rely on every day, often without realizing it," said Nick Hart, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Data Foundation. "From the weather forecast on your phone to Social Security checks, from GPS navigation to mortgage rates, national datasets power decisions affecting hundreds of millions of people and trillions of dollars in economic activity. The People's Data 100 will show decision-makers—in both government and the private sector—where investment in data infrastructure creates the greatest return."

The Return on Data: Maximizing Value from Information Already Collected

A key principle behind the People's Data 100 is that much of the most valuable national data comes from information businesses and individuals are already required to provide—through tax returns, regulatory filings, permit applications, and administrative processes.

"When businesses file with the SEC or individuals file tax returns, that creates data that the government has already paid to collect—or rather, that businesses and citizens have borne the

cost of providing," Hart explained. "Making that data publicly available in standardized, accessible formats creates enormous economic value at virtually no additional cost."

Examples include weather data that enables private forecasting services and helps farmers plan crops; GPS that powers driving apps and location services; medical research data that accelerates treatments and saves lives; Census data that helps businesses decide where to open new stores and communities decide where to build new schools; emissions reports that help communities plan for how to protect vulnerable populations; and public business reports that help investors make informed decisions.

A Rigorous, Transparent Process

Beginning today, the Data Foundation's Data Coalition community is launching an [open nomination process](#) where anyone can propose data assets for consideration. Data Coalition members—representing business, civil society, academia, and the civic tech community—will review nominations and vote on datasets within their expertise. A panel of expert judges will apply objective criteria including data quality and infrastructure, how many other datasets depend on it, and scope of coverage. Expert assessment will capture what numbers alone can't measure—societal impact, economic value created, whether the private sector could provide this data, and the dataset's role in enabling democratic accountability and market efficiency.

"We're asking fundamental questions: What would happen if this data disappeared? How many lives and livelihoods depend on it? Could anyone else feasibly collect this information?" Hart explained. "Through this combination of broad input and expert refinement, we're creating a systematic process that's transparent, defensible, and reflects which data matter most to Americans."

More Than Recognition: Defining Advocacy Priorities

The People's Data 100 represents more than an honored list—it defines the Data Coalition's advocacy priorities. These are the data assets the Data Coalition will protect and strengthen by ensuring that the information individuals and businesses already provide to the federal government is generating substantial value to the American public.

"When resources are constrained, the People's Data 100 provides clear evidence of where investment creates the greatest public return," Hart said.

Spanning Sectors Critical to American Life

The People's Data 100 will honor datasets across domains essential to daily life and economic prosperity: economic data, public health data, environmental and geospatial data, demographic and social data, safety and justice data, and administrative and transparency data.

Part of a Broader Movement

The People's Data 100 joins the Data Foundation's initiatives demonstrating data's public value:

- [Datum Awards](#): Recognizes the federal leaders transforming how we use data to serve the public
 - #MyDataStory: Shows how national data touches individual lives
 - The People's Data 100: Identifies the datasets delivering the greatest value to Americans
- Call to Participation

While anyone can nominate data to be included, Data Coalition members have the opportunity to also participate in the evaluation process and shape advocacy priorities. "Join us in building the first People's Data 100 and advancing open data policy for the public good," Hart said.

About the Data Coalition

The Data Coalition brings together a diverse community of industry leaders, government allies, and data experts dedicated to improving government, business, and society through open data and evidence-informed public policy. As an initiative of the Data Foundation and a trusted knowledge broker between industry and government, Data Coalition members have been instrumental in the successful enactment of numerous data-related laws over the past decade.

About the Data Foundation

The Data Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. that champions the use of open data and evidence-informed public policy to make society better for everyone. As a nonpartisan think tank, we conduct research, collaborative thought leadership, and advocacy programs that advance practical policies for the creation and use of accessible, trustworthy data. For over a decade our Data Coalition community has supported the implementation of good data practices through advocacy, thought leadership, collaboration, and strategic networking opportunities that promote evidence-informed decision-making. The Data Foundation is recognized by Candid Guidestar with the Platinum Seal of Transparency and received 4-Stars from Charity Navigator. To learn more, visit www.datafoundation.org.

Resources:

- Nominate datasets: <https://bit.ly/49DPSr9>
- Join the Data Coalition: <https://bit.ly/3LgOcKe>
- Donate to support the Data Foundation: <https://bit.ly/43VkJbw>

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