



Using IRIS Data for Decision-Making and Advocacy

Contributors:

Lindsay Galindo

Loretta Severin

Katherine Cantu Anguiano

IRIS facilitates elements of standardized data collection for networks from the very beginning of network launch. Indicators such as organization capacity, average referral response time, referrals sent between organizations, and outcomes are readily available for community review. Each network also configures specific fields, both prior to launch and as new elements are needed. This allows the community to define the key pieces of information they need to facilitate change.

OPPORTUNITIES WITH IRIS DATA

Each IRIS community develops their coordinated referral network based on a shared vision or 'why' for the change they want to see for their community. This vision is often rooted in gaps identified by service providers who see firsthand the impacts of a disjointed referral system on families.

Utilizing a shared referral tool provides a unique opportunity for communities to leverage centralized data across partners to impact change. Information that would have been previously contained within each organization, if collected at all, is readily available in IRIS to support community identification of trends, highlight needs and gaps, and measure progress towards the shared vision.

We believe service providers and families are the experts in their own community. Therefore, each network dictates when, how, and through what context they leverage IRIS data. We have seen networks use their IRIS data to:

- Improve Processes Among Partners
 - Analyze referral response time data to improve timely access to services.
 - Use referral outcome data to understand why referrals are successful or not in order to make changes that increase successful connections to services.

- Measure and Improve Equitable Access to Services
 - Disaggregate data about referrals by race, ethnicity, language, location, reasons individuals decline services, enrollment rates, etc. to identify potential inequities.
 - Use this data to explore solutions, implement changes, and measure impact.

- Maximize the Impact of Available Resources
 - Understand which community services have untapped capacity.

- Set standards to encourage referrals across similar services to improve access for families.
- Advocate for Strategies to Meet Community Needs
 - Contribute to priority setting and action planning.
 - Identify where to invest resources; for example, to reduce waitlists.
 - Respond to funding opportunities with data representing need across the community.
 - Advocate for legislation and/or policy change.

IRIS offers communities an opportunity to develop, enhance, and leverage shared data, furthering local conversations and identifying action steps to improve the referral system for providers and better serve families.

NEXT STEPS FOR USING IRIS DATA FOR DECISION MAKING AND ADVOCACY:

- Current IRIS Partners: The IRIS Find Answers page offers information about utilizing your organization's referral data to improve processes. Your Local IRIS Leadership Team can also offer assistance.
- Local IRIS Leadership Teams: Guidance around leveraging community-wide data can be found throughout the IRIS Implementation Guide. We especially recommend beginning with the tool Moving to What Matters as you consider the path to your vision in collaboration with community partners. Your IRIS Implementation Coordinator can also act as a thought-partner as you explore opportunities to dig into existing data and plan for the future.
- Not yet using IRIS? [Connect with us](#) to learn how our IRIS implementation approach and platform can help your community leverage data for good.