



# Nutrition and Aging Resource Center

## Data Collection & Analysis 101

### What is data collection?

Data collection is gathering and measuring information systematically to answer research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. More plainly, this means collecting and measuring information about specific things we are interested in, in a structured and organized way so that we can answer questions, test our predictions, and assess the results.

### What is data analysis?

Data analysis is the process of examining data to draw conclusions or insights. This can involve using math and statistics to analyze numerical data (quantitative) or interpreting non-numerical data, such as text (qualitative). No matter the method, data analysis aims to make sense of the data and draw valuable and meaningful conclusions.

### Types of data

| <i>Quantitative data examples</i>                                       | <i>Qualitative data examples</i>                                      |
|---|---|
| Demographics (e.g., age)<br>Website visitors<br>Simple survey responses | Focus group discussions<br>Interview transcripts<br>Observation notes |

### Why is it important?

Data collection is critical for senior nutrition programs to demonstrate impact and improve the quality of services. By collecting and analyzing data on program operations, participant outcomes, nutrition education, and more, programs can make informed decisions about service delivery and demonstrate their value to stakeholders and the public.

## Benefits of data collection

- **Program evaluation:** Data collection allows programs to evaluate effectiveness in meeting their goals and objectives. By collecting data on program participation, satisfaction, and health outcomes, programs can identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions about program design and delivery.
- **Sustainability:** Data collection is important for educating others about the impact and necessity of senior nutrition programs at the local, state, and national levels. By collecting data on program outcomes, programs can demonstrate their value to stakeholders, policymakers, and decision-makers.
- **Quality improvement:** Data collection allows programs to monitor and improve the quality of their services. By collecting data on nutrition standards, client needs, and other critical quality areas, programs can identify areas for improvement and implement evidence-based best practices.
- **Accountability:** Data collection helps programs to be accountable to their communities, funders, and the public. By collecting data on participation, effectiveness, and outcomes, programs can demonstrate their commitment to meeting the needs of older adults and achieving their program goals.



### Explore More

To learn more about this topic, visit the [Data and Reports](#) and [Evaluation](#) sections of the Nutrition and Aging Resource Center.