



## GROUP ACTIVITY – WHO LIVES IN OUR AREA?

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Effective health promotion training requires knowledge of who lives in the area – specifically focusing on neighborhoods, local communities, cities, counties or regions. The following activities, strategies and resources are provided to assist the audience to learn about the demographic make-up, health and other important trends in the geographic locale. .

**Demographic patterns and trends.** Identify key demographic information about populations related to the health promotion training objectives. This may include, but is not limited to, population by race and ethnicity, non-ethnic cultural groups, countries of origin and number of immigrants, refugee populations, languages spoken, age distribution of the population groups, education and literacy levels, socioeconomic status, health indicators, health and mental health disparities. Sources for these data include:

◆ **Census Data.**

The website for the Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/>) is a wonderful source of data. On the home page there is a feature called State and County Quick Facts that will lead to an array of data. Special topics are also listed on the home page. Census data includes socioeconomic status, education, urban/rural designations, as well as information about race and ethnicity of the population, family constellation, etc.

◆ **Language Use, English Ability & Linguistic Isolation.**

For information about languages spoken in your area, the Census Bureau's Quick Facts shows percentages of languages other than English spoken at home, by state or county, see <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/02000.html>

For detailed tables of languages spoken at home in states, see [http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/lang\\_use.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/lang_use.html)

◆ **Immigration Data.**

The Migration Information Source

(<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/statemap.cfm>) provides state level data on the size, composition and socioeconomic characteristics of foreign-born populations.

The Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS), Office of Management, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) publishes the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (<http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/aboutus/statistics/ybpage.htm>) each year (formerly entitled *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*). This publication provides detailed information about who is coming to the United States (by state) and information about their immigration status.



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◆ **Health and Mental Health Data.**

The National Center for Health Statistics <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/Default.htm> website has a Fast Stats feature that can connect to state level data and other topical data. Data tables about key health indicators and prevalence/incidence data by race and ethnicity are available as well as documents about health disparities. Data about mental health is included. There is also data about risk factors.

◆ The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation also has state level data on disparities in mental health. It can be accessed at: [http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=compare&category=Minority+Health&link\\_category=Health+Status&link\\_subcategory=Mental+Health&link\\_topic=Poor+Mental+Health+by+Race%2fEthnicity](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=compare&category=Minority+Health&link_category=Health+Status&link_subcategory=Mental+Health&link_topic=Poor+Mental+Health+by+Race%2fEthnicity)

◆ **Socioeconomic & Related Data.**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/home.htm> is a source of data about employment, income levels, occupations etc. in states and other areas.

### Activities, Exercises & Strategies

Develop a group activity to engage audiences in exploring new and emerging demographic trends and patterns. Consider using game formats, such as asking audience members to guess the top five or ten countries of origin for immigrants during a specific time frame for a specific state. This can be used as a small or large group activity. When providing training to small groups, and if there is internet access at the training site, audience members can be assigned to find specific information on the Web using the suggested sources. This approach can also be used for multi-day training events as assignments can be given to audience members to research and share demographic trends and patterns.



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**Factors that Make Our Area Diverse.** In the Executive Summary of the 2001 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report entitled “Health and Behavior: The Interplay of Biological, Behavioral, and Societal Influences”, the authors state the importance of the community, rather than an outside organizer, in defining needs and priorities; the need for an initial and continuing community diagnosis and assessment to identify and build on community strengths and resources; and the importance of using participatory and empowering approaches to evaluate community- level change interventions (p. 13-14). Consistent with this, culturally and linguistically competent health promotion training should be developed with an understanding of broader perspectives on how those living in communities or geographic locales view themselves. In addition to demographic information about the area in which the health promotion activity takes place, it is important to learn from the community about the multi-dimensional, cultural factors and characteristics that describe who lives there. The following list suggests key factors, but not all factors, to consider in understanding the diversity of the community or geographic locale:

**Internal factors that influence diversity among individuals and groups in the community or geographic locale:**

Age	Language
Gender and sexuality	Family constellation
Cultural, racial and ethnic identify	Social history
Tribal affiliation/clan	Sexual orientation and identity
Nationality	Religion and spiritual views
Socioeconomic status/class	Political orientation and affiliation
Education	Acculturation/assimilation

**External factors that influence diversity in the community or geographic locale:**

Experiences with racism and discrimination	Inter-group relations
Experiences of bias with organizations and agencies related to health/mental health	Natural networks of support
Community economics	Group and community resiliency
Community history	Political climate
	Migratory patterns