

# Using the States for the Future Data Platform

*Holly Heard, Texas 2036*

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April 11, 2024

[www.statesforthefuture.org](http://www.statesforthefuture.org)



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THE FUTURE**

# Key takeaways:

## Using the States for the Future Data Platform - *April 11, 2024*



- **The States for the Future data platform is a tool that can support data-driven policy organizations in multiple ways:**
  - Serve as a trusted source of up-to-date, vetted data that can be accessed via API and table downloads
  - Provide context and comparison across all 50 states and national averages
  - Connect like-minded organizations to learn more about one another and see what indicators others are interested in or projects they're working on
  - Act as a launchpad for Act as a launchpad for prototyping your own tool - select indicators you want to display and share with partners or funders via the organization profile URL OR use the API as a reliable data source as you develop and launch your own tool
- To develop the indicator framework that powers the platform, SFF used the following criteria to select indicators that were publicly available and cover all 50 states; comparability, availability, accessibility, measurement, disaggregation, and source reliability and reputation. SFF welcomes recommendations for new indicators that meet these criteria to be added to the platform! [\*\*View our Methodology\*\*](#)
- **Users can create an organizational profile via [data.statesforthefuture.org/form](https://data.statesforthefuture.org/form) to connect with their peers and select indicators to follow.** The SFF team reviews form submissions before posting, which is a practice other organizations that have a publicly accessible tool with a wide audience may consider.
- When creating a data product, find the right balance of in-house and external expertise. You know your stakeholders' needs and the local context best, but data collection and wrangling take a significant amount of time and expertise, as does ongoing maintenance of a tool and its underlying data. Partnering with local universities or consultancies that are familiar with creating indicator frameworks or building data products may help to ensure your tool is able to be sustained over time, even if your organization doesn't have internal expertise on building data tools. **[SFF's Network Resource, Building Quality Data Products](#) has more best practices and considerations.**
- Some funders may require that data products they fund be publicly accessible or that they are gated behind a log-in. Consider how your tool will be accessed and used early on in the design process when building your own data product and any access constraints by which you must abide.



# STATES FOR THE FUTURE

*A Data to Policy Network*

**States for the Future** is a **learning community** bringing state policy professionals together around **data**, **research**, and **action**.

Learn more & explore our data platform: [www.statesforthefuture.org](http://www.statesforthefuture.org)

# Today's speakers:



**Dr. Holly Heard**

Vice President, Data &  
Analytics

Texas 2036 is a nonprofit building long-term, data-driven strategies to secure Texas' continued prosperity for years to come.

Texas 2036 engages Texans and their leaders in an honest conversation and offer non-partisan ideas and modern solutions that are grounded in research and data.



**Dr. David  
McClendon**

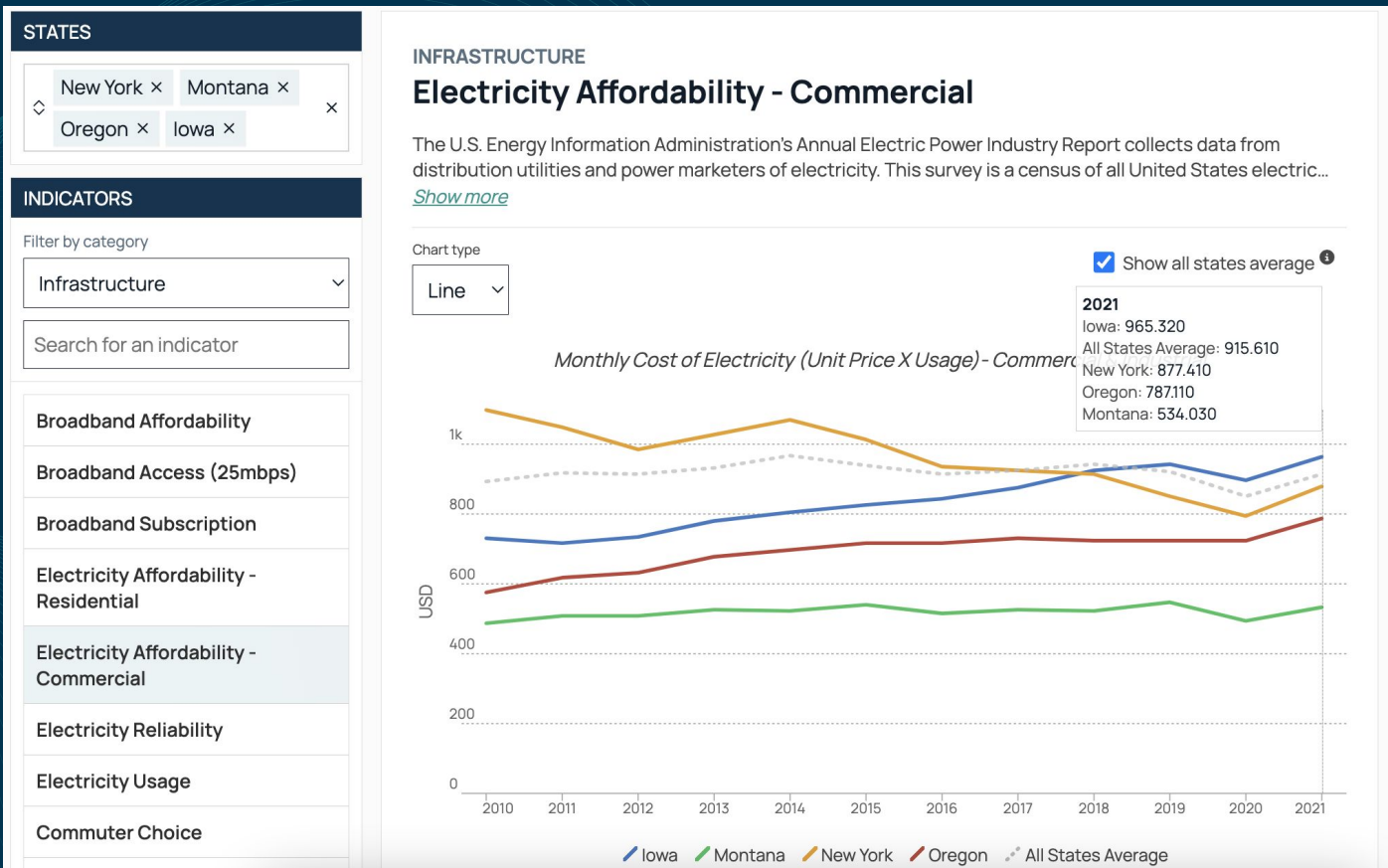
Principal

January Advisors is a data science consulting firm that works with public and nonprofit sector clients.

January Advisors specializes in strategy and planning, data for advocacy, data visualization, custom studies, capacity building, and digital campaigns.



# Data Platform



# How can the platform advance your work?



Trusted data  
source



Context &  
comparison



Connecting with  
peers



Tool prototyping

# How to create an org profile

1

Go to  
[data.statesforthefuture.org/form](https://data.statesforthefuture.org/form)

2

Complete & submit the form &  
receive confirmation email

3

SFF team will review & add your  
profile to the data platform



# SFF Data Platform - New Policy Areas & Indicators (1/2)

## Justice & Safety

Violent Crime  
Property Crime  
Firearm Deaths  
Clearance Rate - Criminal  
Clearance Rate - Civil  
Lawsuit Climate  
Access to Justice  
Incarceration  
Traumatic Events

Child Maltreatment  
Time in Foster Care  
Fostered by Family  
Liquid Asset Poverty  
Housing Vulnerability  
Evictions  
Delinquent Borrowers  
Food Insecurity

## Prosperity & Well-being

GDP Growth  
New Economy Index  
Prosperity Index- Domain of Open  
Economies  
Empowered People  
Individual Well-Being  
Cost of Living  
Housing Affordability - Homeowners  
Housing Affordability - Renters  
Income Inequality



# SFF Data Platform - New Policy Areas & Indicators (2/2)

## Natural Resources

- Air Quality
- Days Of Good Air Quality
- Air Quality Compliance
- Drought Vulnerability Index
- Public Water System Violations
- Public Water System Compliance
- Protected Acreage
- Agricultural Production
- Agricultural Water Efficiency
- Total Energy Production
- Traditional Energy Sources
- Renewable Energy Sources
- Carbon Intensity Of Energy Production

## Infrastructure

- Total Freight Movement
- Transportation Safety
- Cost Of Crashes
- Distance/Exposure
- Commute Choice
- Road Conditions
- Broadband Subscriptions
- Broadband Access (25 Mbps)
- Broadband Affordability
- Affordability- Residential
- Affordability- Commercial+Industrial
- Reliability
- Usage



Platform demo

# Let's discuss!

- What questions do you have about building a platform like this? What challenges are you facing in building your own tools? (e.g., underlying indicator framework, design/development of the platform, etc.)
- Are there other features you'd like to see on the platform?
- What else would you want to know about other organizations when exploring their organization profile page?
- When thinking about creating your own profile, does privacy concern you? Should we consider gating some information just for SFF members?

# Announcing a new SFF community resource!

“Building Quality Data Products”  
is a guide for organizations  
looking to build and launch a  
new data product.

Now live on  
[statesforthefuture.org/blog](https://statesforthefuture.org/blog)

## INTRODUCTION

As data-driven policy organizations, one of the most effective ways to impact policy conversations happening in our states is by making data accessible to community members.

Good data products can support policy analysis and shared facts.

## PURPOSE

Define the problem you are trying to solve and for whom

## ACTION

Make your data actionable through adoption & stakeholder engagement

### Data Product

In this States for the Future brief, we share considerations across four key priorities:

- 1 Purpose
- 2

**Dos and Don'ts**

Beginning with the seed of an idea, product development begins with many decisions. Product development pitfalls that organizations focus on:

The insights in this brief intend to provide experiences of States for the Future examples of data products built to date.

Additional resources and examples included at the end of the brief.

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### Maybe Don't Build It

If your organization is considering whether a data product is worth the effort, consider the following:

While technology can make data products that make sense, it's not always the best solution.

**Before investing resources, people are already doing this data product.**

What isn't working about how you're currently addressing the problem?

Will a new data product characterize the underlying problem?

Is the data already available, or innovation?

Are people communicating the data effectively?

If you've been sufficiently skeptical, absolutely build a data product, pragmatic about how your tool is doing so.

**Problem-oriented Key Performance Indicators**

**Remember:** Why are you trying to build this data product?

Usage is the only KPI (Key Performance Indicator) during the building process. To stay focused on the activity, use the KPI.

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### Product adoption is no accident

Launching a product is a communication and engagement project but communications teams are rarely involved in the product development process.

**Long before the build is complete, think through:**

- How will you get the product into the hands of users?
- How will branding and communications materials be coordinated?
- What happens if communication schedules and development schedules become misaligned?
- Will there be demonstrations or events? How will you provide guidance to users?
- Who will have the knowledge and skills necessary to "sell" your product?

Adoption is also an ongoing maintenance process. In addition to reviewing your data product's analytics at a regular cadence, you should have avenues for continuously collecting feedback from users (e.g., "suggest" or "report" features, advisory groups, internal testing, etc.).

**Make a plan for how you will collect, organize, review, and prioritize this feedback to inform subsequent iterations and updates to your product.**

**Data products are starting points for action**

Your data product should serve as an opening for the more nuanced work of relationship building and problem solving amongst the different stakeholders in your state. Data has a way of bringing down the temperature around contentious policy issues by providing a shared set of facts to start from.

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