



The [21st Century \(21C\) Learning Community](#) participates in many in-depth conversations and peer learning to promote public health system transformation. Key learnings from those activities highlight processes, activities, and opportunities related to: Foundational Public Health Services, assessment and costing, workforce, data modernization, public health accreditation, and more.

## Data Modernization

To serve communities equitably, public health systems need access to modern, real-time, hyperlocal data and tools, and to center community and people in driving decisions. These are critical in understanding the needs of the people, making data-driven decisions that address community priorities, and transforming public health infrastructure. 21C states express that to facilitate data modernization, states should:

1. **Have expertise and resources in data interpretation and sharing.** For example, some states are using consultants or have Chief Data Officers on board to streamline data across different systems and manage the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of data.
2. **Communicate effectively about data modernization strategies and current activities.**
3. **Create shared language and understanding.** States need standard definitions of data and data sharing to collaborate better and easily determine gaps and opportunities.

### CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES TO FACILITATE DATA MODERNIZATION

States recognize that there are many data systems that are separate from one another and have various access levels across the system. There are opportunities to understand what the influences on decision making power can be to better connect systems. States also need techniques and language to communicate better between IT and public health personnel, as well as the policymakers and the public. Lastly, privacy is a big concern since public health collects a lot of data and it is not always easy to deidentify it or translate it into a useable form. It is important to build or rebuild relationships with health systems to share data. Building and upholding secure data systems create trust within communities.

### AWESOME ADVICE

Put legal and data sharing agreements into place as early as possible to help alleviate any issues down the line.

Think about how to harness joint purchasing power across the system.

Create an overarching message that outlines:

- Public health needs and the role of data systems
- Leadership needs
- Strategies, decision makers and processes
- Roles and plan for internal and external communications

Determine how to make data processes more transparent throughout the system and to the public.

Look at successful data modernization projects in other communities around the world.