Educational Methods Sheet
University of Idaho Extension Community Data Tools
http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/community-data-tools

The decisions Idaho's leaders and citizens make today affect generations to come. Many Idaho communities face changes that influence all aspects of the community. To make informed decisions, it is important that Idaho leaders and citizens understand data and can retrieve it quickly and efficiently. University of Idaho Extension is uniquely situated to be the leader in providing credible, accessible data to stakeholders.

In response to this need, the Community Development Data Tools team has created a unique teaching tool – the Data Tools Website. The website offers up-to-date county demographics and indicators in a variety of areas updated as new data become available. To enhance the tool kit, the web site includes *County at a Glance* brochures for every Idaho county and a PowerPoint presentation template that can be customized for any county.

The Data Tools Website is available to help clientele make informed decisions. While the information the website provides is a valuable resource, the Data Tools team understands that not everyone is comfortable with statistical data. In addition, each person may have a different reason for seeking the information provided by the website. The *County at a Glance* brochures and PowerPoint presentation included on the website offer methods to convey the information to audiences with differing skill levels and dissimilar interests. Using these additional tools gives educators the opportunity to provide background and explain the nuances of the data. Providing different avenues for presenting data allows the Educator to convey information in a style that best fits the audience. Educators can adapt the information for use in a one-on-one training session or adapt the PowerPoint presentation to convey the data to hundreds of county residents in one setting.

County at a Glance brochures offer a unique accompaniment to written documents such as strategic plans, grants, annual county reports, employee training packets, school district grants and accreditation reports, and Chamber of Commerce or economic development packages. Educators report that brochures have been used by a variety of community groups in relocation and business recruitment packages, at visitor centers, and at fairs and expositions. The brochures also serve as a unique marketing tool for Extension by providing reliable information to audiences that may not be familiar with the services University of Idaho Extension Community Development can offer. The tri-fold brochure is a concise tool that provides decision makers and citizens with easy access to data. The brochure's

portability is a strong point: clients report that they refer to the information often because of its convenience and accessibility.

Another effective tool to disseminate information from the Data Tools website is through posters and displays. The brochure can be converted to an attractive poster for display at county courthouses, community kiosks, fairs and expositions, career days, and other events.

Educators can adapt the PowerPoint presentation for a variety of events such as strategic planning workshops. Because not everyone is comfortable with data and its interpretation, presenting the information through a public forum provides an opportunity for the presenter to answer questions, assist the audience in interpreting and assessing trends, and providing a more in-depth understanding of the story the data tells about a community. The PowerPoint presentation has been used at "State of the County" meetings, new employee trainings, and at other events where citizens require information about their county. Providing *County at a Glance* brochures and other written documents to attendees expands the impact of the PowerPoint presentation and provides reminders of the data after the workshop ends.