

Standards for the collection of data on geography

Reference guide

Note: This document aligns with Utah Code 26B-7-114, Office of Health Equity duties.

This document serves as a reference guide for the standards for the collection of data on geography. Additional information on the collection of data on geography is outlined in the [Utah DHHS Guidelines for the collection of data on geography](#).

Geography data collection standard

The DHHS standard for data collection on geography—which typically means where someone lives—is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: DHHS geography data collection standard*¹

County

In what county do you currently live?

ZIP code

What is the ZIP code where you currently live?

To collect this information, instructions ask a respondent “In what county do you currently live?” and “What is the ZIP code where you currently live?”¹ You may wish to give respondents a space to write in responses, or you may want to provide a drop down menu. When a space is given for write in responses, it may be helpful to include examples of counties and ZIP codes in the instructions, such as “In what county do you currently live? (for example, Carbon County, Weber County, Salt Lake County, etc.)” and “What is the ZIP code where you currently live? (This is usually a five-digit number such as 84116.)”

Data collection standards for additional details

Additional questions besides county and ZIP code may be asked for greater detail on geography. If you have determined it necessary to collect more detailed geographic data for data collection purposes, you may want to ask for the full address, as outlined in Figure 2.

*This question was adapted from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).¹

Figure 2: Current address

What is your current home address?

Address
Address line 2
City/town
State/region/province
ZIP/post code

Note: Collecting information on where someone lives may be personally identifiable information (PII). PII is any data that can be used to identify, contact, or locate a specific person. Agencies and organizations must use the appropriate safeguards under applicable laws and regulations to protect and secure this information during data collection and storage.

References

1. Office of Public Health Assessment. (2021, November 12). 2022 Utah Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Questionnaire. Utah Department of Health and Human Services. <https://healthassessment.utah.gov/access-brfss-data/>