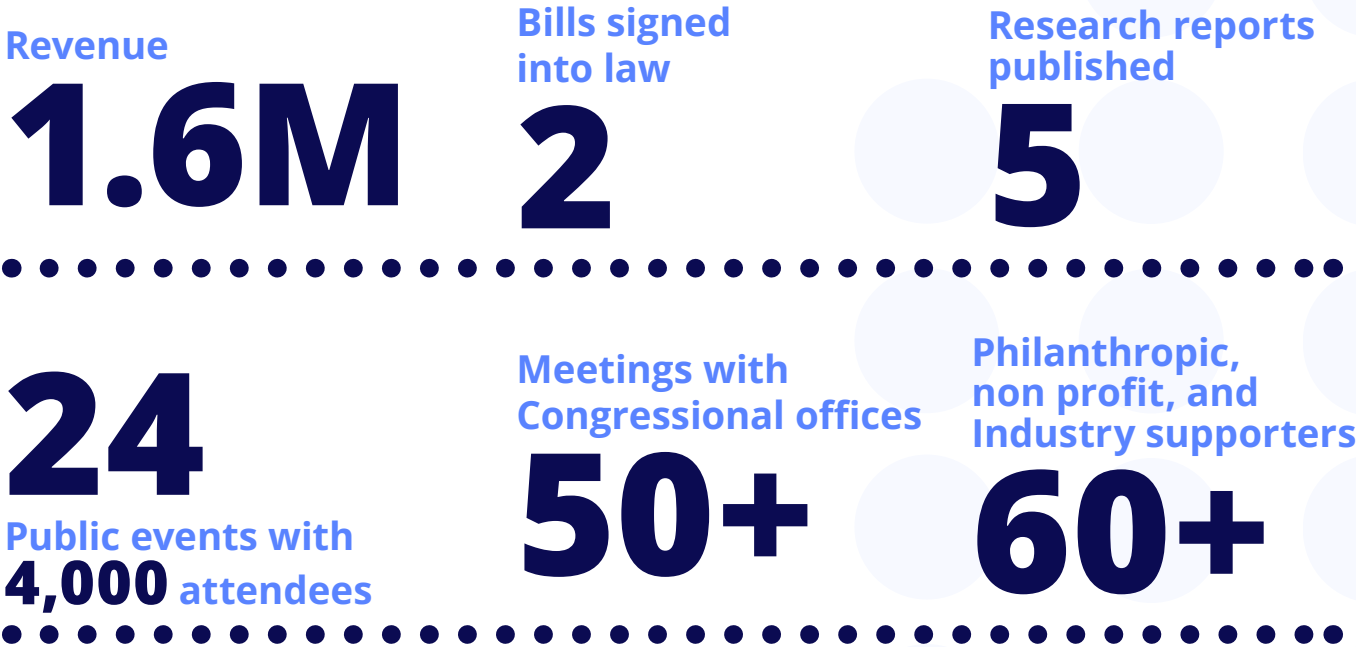# DATA FOUNDATION

2021
Annual Report

Improving government, business, and society through open data and evidence-informed public policy

In 2021, the Data Foundation strengthened its reputation as a leading, trustworthy think tank in Washington, D.C. Our research on data policy priorities was widely cited by the trade press and our materials served as the starting point for congressional and executive reforms related to financial data, open data, data sharing, and more. We also convened pivotal events – including GovDATAx, the RegTech Summit, and a Data Research Symposium – that gathered leading experts from industry, academia, and government to develop a shared understanding of challenges and solutions.
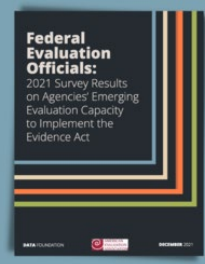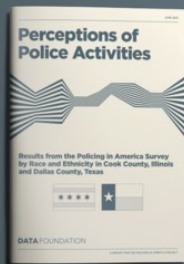
Our work brought attention to key issues and gaps in the data community and proposed practical solutions. Throughout the year, our efforts led to the enactment of milestone legislation, supported implementation of new transparency and data laws, and demonstrated new strategies for continuing to innovate with government data.

2021 By the Numbers

Revenue
1.6M

Bills signed into law
2

Research reports published
5

24
Public events with 4,000 attendees

Meetings with Congressional offices
50+

Philanthropic, non profit, and Industry supporters
60+

Research: Practical and Applicable Resources for the Data Community

During 2021 the Data Foundation published practical research products for the data community. Our research sought to combine in-depth rigorous research, industry expertise, and collaborative thought leadership to guide the development and implementation of new legislation and policy focused on government data use. Our published research in 2021 included surveys of key data officials, including Chief Data Officers and Evaluation Officials, to provide the community with key insights and recommendations to strengthen data accessibility and use and to support data-informed decision-making in government.

Published Research

Structuring The Chief Data Office for Success. This white paper provided context for the new CDO roles in government, outlined core criteria for CDO success, and considered options for organizational placement and reporting.

Perceptions of Police Activities: Results from the Policing in America Survey by Race and Ethnicity in Cook County, Illinois and Dallas County, Texas. The Policing in America Project — launched by the Data Foundation, data.world, Microsoft, SpotCrime, Forward Cities, and NORC in 2020 – was created to gather information about perspectives on police activities in the United States and calibrate new insights with existing open data.

Evaluating Evidence-Building Plans: A Review of Five Federal Learning Agendas. This issue brief outlined a theory of change for developing and using a learning agenda, providing practitioners and government officials a useful framework for understanding the value proposition for agency evidence-building activities.

Federal CDO Survey Report. The Data Foundation, in partnership with Grant Thornton Public Sector, conducted its second survey of federal CDOs in 2021 to assess the progress of CDOs in fulfilling their responsibilities and supporting their agency missions.This was the second iteration of a survey of Federal CDOs.

Survey of Federal Evaluation Officials. This survey of federal evaluation officials was designed by the Data Foundation in partnership with the American Evaluation Association. It provided exploratory and suggestive insights about the growth of evaluation practice in federal agencies, while also identifying early Evidence Act successes and challenges experienced by evaluation leaders.

Advocacy: Achieving Pragmatic Policy Reforms

The Data Foundation had another highly successful year advocating and providing technical assistance for common sense data bills to improve government and society by using data to inform public policymaking. Throughout the year, the Data Foundation met with dozens of Congressional offices and executive branch agencies offering expertise and technical assistance. During the first session of the 117th Congress, legislative activities led by our advocacy arm, the Data Coalition, offered expert input on data bills that were ultimately signed into law.

Congressional Highlights

Bill Name	Introduced in Congress	Became Law
Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act	✓	
Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act		✓
Financial Transparency Act	✓	
Occupational Series for Data Science Act		✓
National Secure Data Service Act	✓	

Policy Highlights

Over 50 meetings with congressional offices

11 Federal Register comments submitted

2 letters to the executive branch

Joined 5 other organizations in supporting investments in federal data, open data reforms, and other relevant priorities through congressional sign-on letters

1 open letter to Congress

Provided analysis on appropriations and budget documents

Supported Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building Year-1 Report to include targeted recommendations aligned with organizational priorities and past research

Advocacy

Financial Transparency Act. In large part due to the technical assistance, education, and direct lobbying activities provided by the Data Coalition in recent years, an agreement was reached on language to pass the priority Financial Transparency Act legislation in the US House on the suspension calendar in late October. The bill establishes a process for creating data standards across seven of the eight federal financial regulatory agencies. Congressional Legislative Directors received a "Vote Yes" message from the Data Coalition, in addition to the Republican Study Committee, and the House Majority Leader.

Technical Assistance and Advisory

National Data Service. The Data Foundation continued to lead efforts to establish a National Secure Data Service, as recommended in 2017 by the Evidence Commission. In parallel, our work to align the recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building (ACDEB) further encouraged the establishment of a data service.

Budget Transparency. The Data Coalition has long advocated for greater transparency of federal budget information. The Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act, which provides better transparency about budget formulation processes, was signed into law in September 2021.

Federal Data Workforce. The Data Coalition endorsed a bill to establish a data science occupational series (category of jobs for federal employees), informally suggested by numerous CDOs, and provided technical assistance. That legislation passed the House last month and is now pending in the Senate.

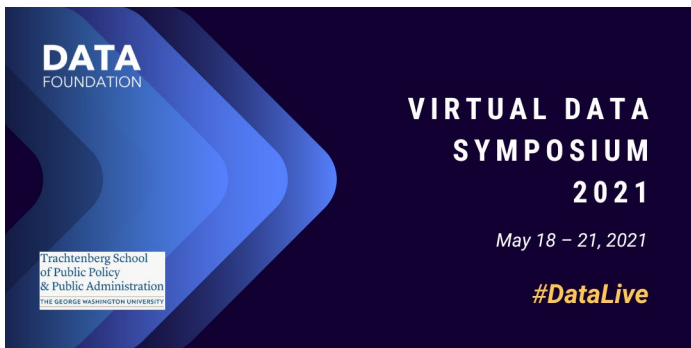*Credit: House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress*

Data Foundation President Testifies Before House Committee in October 2021

In October 2021, <u>**Nick Hart testified**</u> before the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Modernization as part of a hearing on evidence-based policymaking issues in the Legislative Branch. His testimony emphasized the need for effective Evidence Act implementation and highlighted areas where congressional oversight was needed. It also discussed opportunities for congressional capacity to use data and led to bipartisan Committee recommendations, including the creation of a new legislative Evidence Commission.

Collaboration: Convening and Supporting the Data Community

The Data Foundation has a strong history of bringing stakeholders together to accelerate effective implementation of government data policy and champion evidence-based policymaking. In 2021, we convened 25 public webinars, conferences, community forums, and policy roundtables, including our annual Research Symposium, RegTech Data Summit, GovDATAx 2021, public forum for the Chief Data Officer community, Datum Awards, and more. Our public events featuring a wide diversity of speakers attracted 4,000 attendees from across the country.

Event Spotlights

2021 Virtual Research Symposium

In May, we hosted a four-day **2021 Virtual Research Symposium** focused on social equity and civil rights, public health, economic mobility, and data innovation in partnership with George Washington University. The symposium featured 36 presentations and reached over 370 attendees.

GovDATAx 2021

In September, we aired our annual **GovDATAx event**, in partnership with ABC's Government Matters, Cerner, and Ernst & Young. The program featured 15 speakers and was an opportunity to highlight the Data Coalition's range of issue interests and important themes facing the data community in the years ahead. Multiple speakers discussed the National Secure Data Service, data sharing challenges, issues facing the evaluation community, and emerging priorities for CDOs and data officials in government. The segment with **former House Speaker Paul Ryan** continues to be re-aired by Government Matters and WJLA-DC.

Co-sponsorshiped STEPPS 2021

In November, the Data Coalition co-hosted an AI Summit in the Netherlands, "**Better Algorithms for Better Policies**," during which Nick Hart provided a keynote address. In December, the Data Coalition co-hosted a conference in the Hague, Netherlands, "Evidence for Policymakers," featuring Data Foundation Board member Kathy Newcomer (who chairs the STEPPS advisory board).

Featured Event Partners

GOVERNMENT MATTERS

GovMatters.tv

GAO
U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

NORC

OPEN TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE

Arnold Ventures

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

Sustaining Financial Support for Mission Attainment

With continued support from philanthropic foundations – such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Schmidt Futures – the Data Foundation demonstrated strong fiscal growth in 2021 and announced a new major, multi-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Additionally, the organization led a notable change in its structure during 2021 to further diversify our funding and partnership opportunities by integrating the Data Coalition into the Data Foundation. The realigned organizational structure reflects the organizations' common mission to advance and promote effective use of government data in the years ahead.

The Data Foundation, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2021

Assets	
Current Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	$1,094,179
Accounts receivable	103,542
Promises to give	318,310
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	94,134
Total Current Assets	1,610,165
Deposits	8,511
Total Assets	1,618,676
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable	29,334
Total Current Liabilities	29,334
Net Assets	
With Donor Restrictions	773,587
Without Donor Restrictions	815,755
Total Net Assets	1,589,342
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	$1,618,676

Where We are Going

The activities that are now underway in the Data Foundation are rooted in a strong history of research, collaboration, and advocacy that form the bedrock of the organization's activities today that span multiple program areas and initiatives. The Data Foundation's ongoing and future work seeks to educate and encourage business, society, and government to organize, analyze, and use information in support of evidence-informed decision-making.

Research   **Collaboration**   **Advocacy**

Insights   Involvement   Impact