



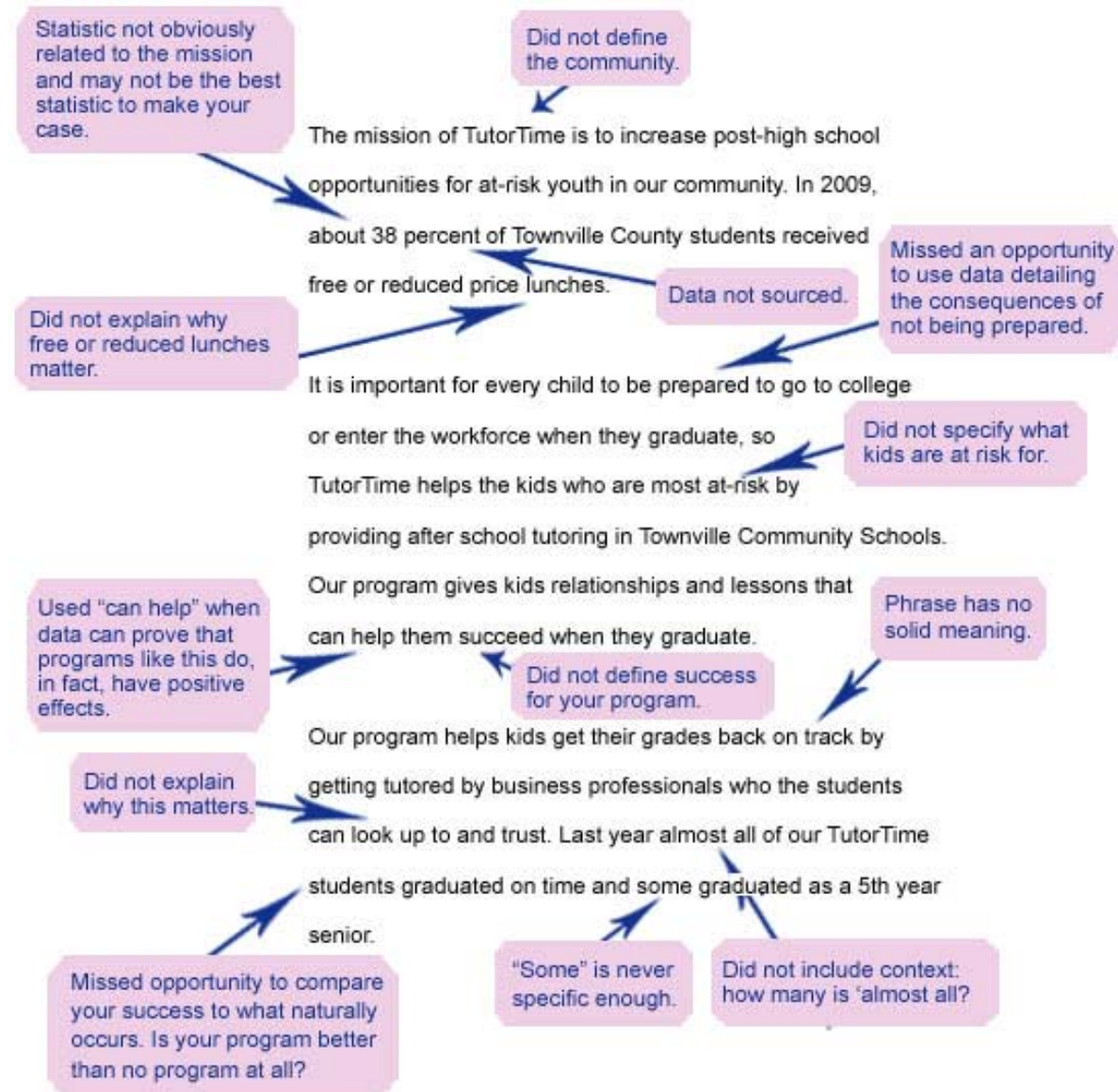
Turning Data into Dollars!

July 29, 2009

Da•ta \ dā-tə a collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
 One possible conclusion: ***your organization deserves some money!***

The best appeals for funding, whether to an individual or a foundation, are based in fact. Most importantly, funders must know that the community your program serves is in need. It is that community need that sets a tone of empathy and urgency to support the programs you provide. However, data to support these statements of need are often missing or not well-articulated when speaking with or writing to funders.

Sample Needs Statement Without Data



The Same Needs Statement *Including Appropriate Data*

With a mission to increase post-high school opportunities for at-risk students in Townville, TutorTime is addressing Indiana's low graduation rate head-on. Last year nearly one in four Indiana students did not graduate with their class. Townville Community Schools fall below this average with only 70 percent graduating on time. (1)

The TutorTime program pairs every at-risk student with a local business professional. Using this model, students increase their college readiness by receiving personalized tutoring in difficult subject areas as well as preparing them for the workplace by connecting with local businesses.

Over the last two years, 82 of the 94 TutorTime students have graduated with their class, and another 4 graduated just one year later. When compared with the general population, students in our program are 16 percent more likely than their peers to graduate on time.

(1) *Kids Count in Indiana Database*. www.iyi.org/data

Make your case for funding!

Here are the five questions you should answer with data every time:

1. What is the need?
2. Why does this need occur?
3. Who is in need?
4. Where are they?
5. How does your organization fulfill that need?

Top Six Tips for Using Data More Effectively

1. **Back up statements clearly with facts.** Don't just talk about a general teen pregnancy problem in your community; look up the numbers to support your statements. Remember to use the appropriate facts. Be selective and use only the data that tells your organization's story with the most impact. Not every data point you can find will help to illustrate your story.
2. **Tell why the data is important.** Make sure your statements are clear and logical. Don't make leaps in logic between the data you use and the point you are trying to make. For instance, don't use dropout rate data to justify a preschool program unless you explicitly explain how the two are connected.
3. **Make comparisons.** If you are arguing that the teen birth rate has gone up, make sure you cite more than just one year's data. Trends from the past three to five years can show an increased urgency for your program. Another way to make comparisons is to show why youth in your area have greater or different needs than the rest of the community.
4. **Give the reader hope.** Show not only the need in your community, but also the hope that your program brings as a resource to combat the problem. Prove that your program can be successful and, if it has been successful, share data and stories about its successes to bolster your case for support.

5. **Properly source your data.** Make sure to be clear about where your data comes from. Using reputable, nonbiased data sources will reflect well on your ability to fulfill your mission. Furthermore, policy changes often make indicators rise or fall abruptly. If the changes in your indicator over time don't make sense, be sure to look into the history and measurement of the statistic so your readers can't discount the need in your community.
6. **Consider talking to a data expert about how to say it best.** Use rates instead of raw numbers, tell how often something happens, or make a "one in ___" statement when the statistics you find are difficult to understand at first glance. There are many rules and considerations when you start rewording data, but a data expert can help you find a solid statement that is meaningful to readers.

www.iyi.org/data

Check out **IYI's online database** to see what type of information is available in your area and to find the latest numbers by Indiana county. Then take a look at our Data Book for some background on the statistics in your area and to see what numbers are available at the state level.

www.iyi.org/datarequest

If you can't find the numbers you are looking for in the database or Data Book, you can submit a free **custom data request** and an IYI staff member will find the data you need.

www.iyi.org/library

For more information about your program area, take a look at **IYI's free lending library**. When you find a book or resource you are interested in, we will mail it to you for free and include a postage paid return envelope.

www.iyi.org/help-line

When you're not sure what you need and want to bounce questions off of someone, **try IYI's Youth Service Help Line**: Call 1-877- IYI-TIPS and an IYI staff member will help determine which IYI services are best for you. From proposal review to evaluation and consulting, IYI can help.

If you would like to sign up to receive IYI Data Products via e-mail, visit www.iyi.org/weekly-update/signup.aspx.

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