

# Tip Sheet: Using CICP Data

## Charity Insights Canada Project (CICP)

Community Education Centre (CEC): <https://carleton.ca/cicp-pcpob/cec/>

### Survey Reliability

- Bigger samples = more reliable results: when you ask more people, the results are more likely to reflect what the whole group actually thinks, rather than just a few opinions.
- Margin of error ( $\pm 4\%$ ): the real answer is likely very close to your result, usually within 4 percentage points above or below it.
- 95% confidence level: if you repeated the same survey many times, you would get similar results within that range in about 95 out of 100 cases.

### Key Statistics

- Mean: the sum of all values divided by the number of values, representing the overall average.
- Median: the middle value in an ordered dataset, which splits the data into two equal halves.
- Standard deviation: a measure of how much individual data points typically differ from the mean, indicating the spread/variability of the data.

Tip: Use the median instead of the mean when your data is uneven or has extreme values (like very high or very low numbers), because it better represents the “typical” value; also, report the standard deviation (spread) so people understand how much the responses differ.

### Types of Data

- Quantitative data (numbers, percentages): information that can be measured and expressed numerically, such as counts, ratings, or percentages.
- Qualitative data (comments, experiences, visuals): information that describes meanings or experiences, which can include words, images, videos, or other non-numerical forms of data.

Tip: Pair statistics with quotes or narratives to strengthen your story.

### Using CICP Dashboards

Pay attention to sample size when using filters. The Margin of Error increases as the sample size decreases.

### Critically Assess Survey Data

Before using data, ask:

- Who conducted the survey?
- Who was included or excluded?
- How were questions worded?
- What answer options were available or missing?

Tip: Always use multiple sources when possible.

