

Disappearing Data Tip sheet 2026- Miranda S. Spivack

Worried about disappearing federal data, which seems to be evaporating almost daily?
Looking for information in your community on rising hunger or disaster prep? Curious about vaccination rates in your state?

Now more than ever, go local!

Getting information of many types from the federal government – which has never been easy – is now a nearly impossible task.

And even if the government does answer a request for its public records, how reliable will the information be? The disappearance from government websites of decades of data on health, diseases, education, criminal justice, civil rights are among the many datasets that the Trump administration has dumped.

If FOIA offices were somehow miraculously reinvigorated, they will have less and less information to give out. And that is information that tax dollars already paid for, and by all rights, belongs to the public.

The bottom line is that nation is being kept in the dark and journalism and policy making are being hobbled by the disappearance of government data..

But there are many ways to try to examine and protect government data. Your best bet right now is to go to local and state governments, who are still providing information, data and documents to the federal government and are still receiving information, data and documents from the federal government. The key is to ask for it!

Here are some resources:

-Ask your local and state governments for a list of health data, schools data, tax data, environmental data, airport safety data, weather data, information about infrastructure – that they often send to the feds. Then ask them how you can access it and whether it is online somewhere or if you need to file a public records request.

-Ask local and state governments for a list of data that they may still be **receiving** from the federal government but aren't being publicly posted by the feds – nutrition, vaccination info, and infrastructure and weather are some examples Ask the local and state governments where they are keeping that data from the federal government and how you can get access to it.

-Several non-government organizations are trying to rescue government data.

Check out the [Data Rescue Project](#), the [Data.gov archive](#), [Internet Archive](#), [Safeguarding Research](#) and this group on Reddit.

Want to participate in data saving or know someone who does? Check out this [site](#):

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As we mark Sunshine Week – an annual celebration of government transparency - open government advocates should be hunting down data and documents, and writing stories that tell the public why it matters that they have access to this information at the local, state and federal levels.

Anyone interested in preserving First Amendment rights to assemble, petition the government, speak freely, practice religion, and protect a free press needs to explain to their neighbors why they should care about disappearing data. Start at the local level, where your community's health department is being affected as are your public schools – and keep pushing at the state capital and in Washington, D.C.

The method that is likely to lead to success in retrieving important information that the federal government has collected is to ask state and local governments to provide it. Though it might be a time-consuming effort, it is one key way that frustrated members of the public can get federal data and documents that, by all rights, they already own.

And what you do close to home can ripple across the country, and make a big difference in what kind of nation we will become – and whether information from governments, including state and local governments that rely on federal information, can be trusted to be truthful.

A longer version of this piece is available on the Sunshine Week content for publication website: Look for “Removal of federal data affects our hometowns.”

<https://sunshineweek.org/2026-content-for-publication/>

Miranda S. Spivack is the author of **Backroom Deals in Our Backyards: How Government Secrecy Harms Our Communities and the Local Heroes Fighting Back** (The New Press 2025). She is a journalist and vice president of the D.C Open Government Coalition. You can reach her at mirandaspivack@yahoo.com and at <https://www.mirandaspivack.com/>

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