



Community Issues Management (CIM)

Mission

To improve community decision making using facilitation technologies that engage people in ways that promote understanding, strategic collaborations and the wise use of resources.

The Need for CIM

Many agencies make data accessible and downloadable through web-based warehouses. Paradoxically, these conventionally compiled and accessed data management systems constrain most organizations' capacity to make decisions and analyze policy. Whereas organizations increasingly rely on data and geographic information technologies to examine the place-based impacts of public policies, they lack the time, expertise or technological infrastructure to make the best use of these often poorly designed resources for decision-making.

Community Issues Management (CIM) transcends these constraints by providing tools for the framing of issues, community facilitation and decision support, and data integration. CIM is flexible and responsive to user needs and questions, including the incorporation of "their" data into the system. It deepens understanding of the issues and opens new ways of viewing the questions groups are seeking to address. CIM allows decision makers to deliberate how best to align resources with organizations, people and place.

What is CIM?

Community Issues Management (CIM) is a web-based system designed for local and regional organizations, community partnerships or coalitions to frame, manage and take action on complex issues. CIM can be employed as a tool for use within organizations and as a tool for community engagement to foster participation in transparent, data-informed and collaborative decision making. The foundation of this system is a process for framing issues, a wealth of GIS data, and mapping and reporting tools specially focused for organizations that aim to better understand how issues impact people and place. The CIM system allows users to access the CIM Library, which includes issue notebooks, interactive maps, dynamic reports, multimedia, and other content to learn how organizations in their region and across the U.S. are confronting issues. Unique to CIM is a streamlined process to integrate and overlay local mapping data with state and national mapping data that resides in CIM's Data Warehouse. Data can then be organized around specific issues that CIM organizations or other user groups have identified for their communities or regions.

At its core, CIM makes public data publically accessible in a meaningful context for decision support. Informed community decision-making is realized through the efforts of CIM Partner Organizations to go beyond the data and tell better stories with CIM's unique tools and facilitation support. CIM can help organizations and other user groups tell sophisticated stories about key issues such as gaps and overlap in service provision for vulnerable populations, health inequities, workforce retention, and emergency preparedness. Using CIM ensures that the stories they tell -- about people, place and the impact of organizations -- are more complete and more accurate. **Stories derived using CIM's tools enable policy makers to better align resources with needs.**



Who uses CIM?

CIM provides access to two types of user groups: Partner Organizations and Public Access Users.

- **Partner Organizations** serve as lead community conveners around issues impacting their region, engage local partners, and provide technical assistance and consultation for the community to maximize CIM's utility. Partner Organizations can make maps and reports, create and manage issue notebooks, add content to the CIM Library, administer local use of the system, and learn how other communities are addressing issues.
- **Public Access Users** can make maps, reports and search issue-specific content in the CIM library and explore how communities across the U.S. are using CIM to address pressing concerns.

CIM Features



The CIM library is a space to pull all the information together by a user or group, including interactive maps, reports, documents, videos, images, and other files. Users can search the CIM library by theme or organization and view resulting content items organized by content area.



Issue notebooks help organizations frame and manage the issues they have identified and plan to address over time. The notebook can be edited and updated on an ongoing basis, allowing organizations to track development and progress.



Interactive maps enable users to visualize and overlay over 500 national and state-level GIS layers. Users can also access additional local data provided by CIM Organizations.



Dynamic reports present underlying social, economic, demographic and health characteristics which can be compiled for pre-defined geographic areas such as counties, cities and zip codes. CIM Organizations can generate reports that integrate local GIS data and user-defined geographic areas.



Community webpage serves as a portal to each CIM Organization. Users can use the interactive map to click on locations of CIM Organizations and view their CIM community homepages.



Administrative tools allow Partner Organizations to manage local profiles, communications, and security settings.

The Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems (CARES) at the University of Missouri and the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) are collaborating with CIM Partner Organizations to facilitate discourse, shared learning and collaborative action across and between organizations and the public. In order to sustain this system and its associated public benefits, we continue to seek foundation, public and non-profit sector support to raise the tide of accessibility to all communities. If you are interested in supporting this initiative or joining the collaborative as a Partner Organization or Associate Organization please contact us at info@cim-network.org.