At DataCenter’s Research Justice Academy, community members and organizers gather to sharpen their research skills in the context of creating change and building self-determination.

The Academy is tailored to the needs of grassroots community leaders depending on their ages, experiences, backgrounds, and organizational priorities. Participants leave the Academy seeing themselves as experts and researchers, and knowing how to develop community-led research that will help them achieve the social change they seek.

"[The Academy] was everything I wanted to learn at graduate school and never did. It teaches people how to link research to action with the goal of impacting people’s lives. It gives people ownership of their own knowledge production."
—RJA Participant

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DataCenter believes that ownership of community knowledge is a key element of community power in the struggle for social justice. Research helps ensure that communities can effectively access and produce knowledge, and leverage that knowledge to make their voices heard as experts on the issues they face.

The Research Justice Academy (RJA) uses a hands-on approach with popular education techniques to demystify the research process – everything from planning to methodology to analysis.

At the Academy, participants:

- Learn how to critically think about what information is being created, by whom, and how communities can reclaim the process
- Work collaboratively to identify ways research can increase organizing efficacy and elevate community expertise
- Understand the direct linkages between research and organizing
- Learn to use various tools to help them construct a strategic research plan with the appropriate methodology(ies)

"DataCenter works to dismantle the disconnect between community knowledge and "authoritative research" by helping communities learn and apply social science tools so they share "expert status" with policymakers and academic institutions."

— Zachary Norris, Co-Director, Justice for Families

- Understand the connection between the collective knowledge already in communities and the political power they’re trying to build – and how research can help make that connection
- Learn from organizers who have waged successful campaigns about their experience using research and the challenges they encountered

By the end of the Academy, participants walk away with a clearer sense of how community members can shape decisions that impact their lives. They develop concrete skills to build research capacity and create more successful grassroots organizing campaigns.

DataCenter tailors the Academy’s curriculum to fit your needs. Want to use research and develop better informed strategies for campaigns? Bring this training to your organization today!

Inquire at info@datacenter.org

Help take the Research Justice Academy on the road by supporting DataCenter at datacenter.org/donate.

Read about the most recent Academy at datacenter.org/rja.