

The purpose of this assignment is to apply the skills you gain from this class to a policy issue. For this project, we'll use data from the 2004 Washington State Population Survey. You will pick a subject, pick a client (real or hypothetical), manipulate the data and write up the results for the client.

In the proposal for your report (due Feb. 17), describe the hypothesis (or set of related hypotheses) that you will test by using the data. In other words, what statement will you test? Explain what variables and comparisons you will use to examine your ideas. Write this proposal as a memo to the client you have chosen for your project.

The final report should be 8-10 single-spaced pages in length (including graphics and tables) and demonstrate your understanding of the issues and concepts covered in the class. The report must contain empirical analysis in the form of tables, graphs, and hypothesis tests. The objective is to "translate" statistical and economic information for a policy-maker. Write your report for the client (a nonstatistician), but include enough information for a statistician to evaluate what you've done (some will be in footnotes and appendices). The memo will be graded on content, analytic reasoning, analytic techniques, writing (appropriate for your client), and graphical presentation. You're encouraged to make full use of Excel or statistical software, word processing, and graphics packages to put your results in an attractive, readable form. Refer to *Dos and Don'ts for Writing about Statistics* appended to the end of your first homework assignment for additional guidance. We will discuss your results in class on March 10, when the report is also due.

Required elements of Policy Report

- Executive summary (at front of paper and 1 page or less) What are your results (assuming the client never read the rest of the report)?
- Construct a research question: what question will you answer for your client?
- Describe your data source: what is the source of your evidence?
- Present your evidence: how can you translate statistics into meaning?
- Tell client how good this information is (give caveats about data or methods) and how to get better information: do these data answer the questions?
- Give your conclusions and policy implications: what should your client do with this information?

Hypotheses

A research hypothesis is a specific statement a relationship between groups that you can test. Here are some examples:

- People in higher income households are less likely to use public transportation
- Households with children are more likely to be earning less than 200% of poverty income than are households without children
- Senior citizens are more apt to live in substandard housing than are other people
- People of color (both men and women) are more likely to have served in the military than are white people
- Housing quality differs significantly by geographic region within the state
- Workers with at least a college education earn significantly more than do other workers
- Women in traditionally male occupations earn more than do other women
- Workers with a limited ability to speak English or a mobility limitation earn less than do other workers