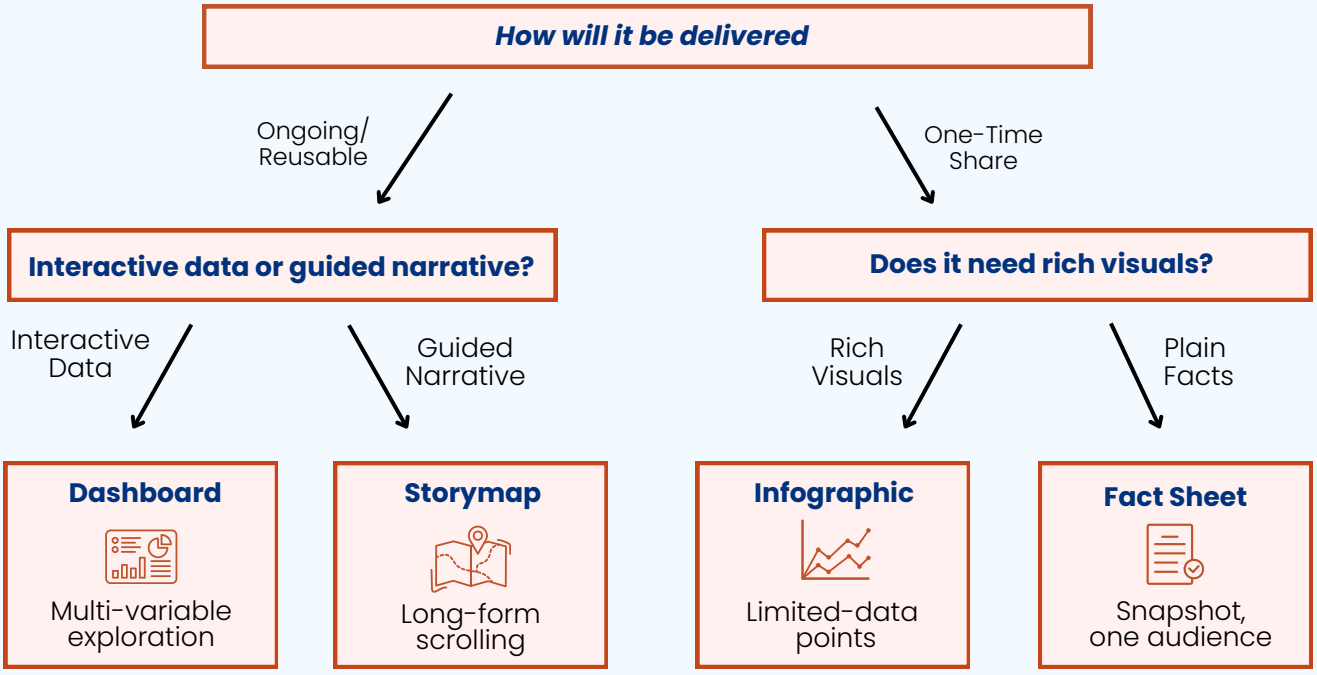
Data Dashboard Development

A Tip Sheet for LMI Data Producers

Creating an effective data dashboard is essential for turning data into actionable insights. This tip sheet provides guidance for developing dashboards that are not only visually appealing but also functional for all types of users.

1 What Type of Visualization is Best for My Data?



2 Define Purpose & Metrics

Know Your Audience
Who is using the dashboard - job seekers, workforce board staff, researchers? What questions are they asking, and what data/information do they need?

Choose Metrics that Work
Every metric should have a purpose and be transparent about data updates.

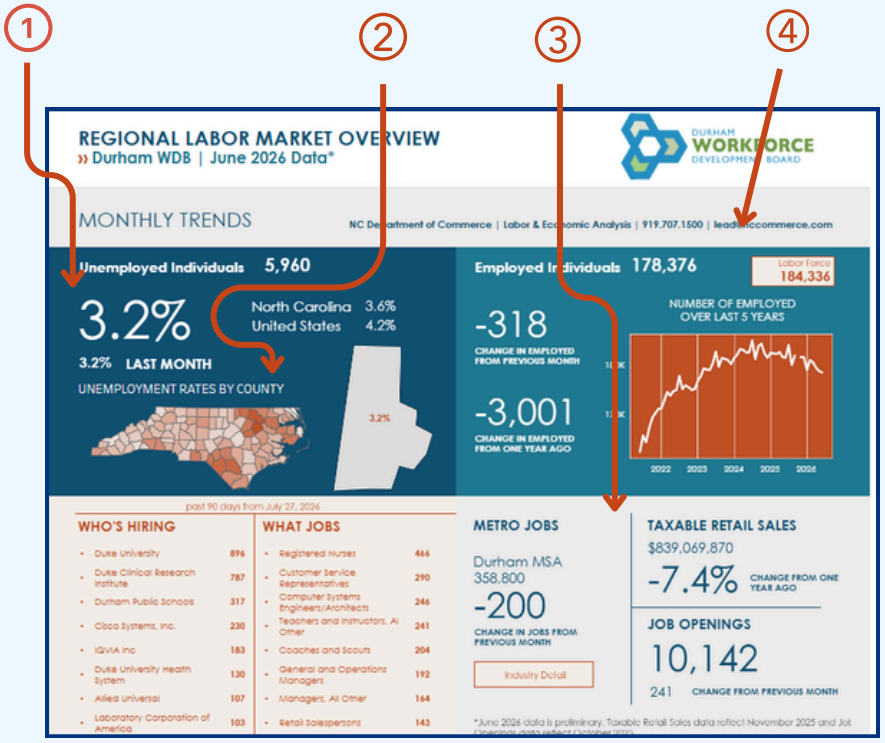
Less is More
More filters, charts, or text ≠ more useful. Decide what belongs on the page and engage stakeholders to validate.

This tip sheet was created for the Labor Market Information (LMI) Institute Data User Insights Academy, with funding provided by the Employment and Training Administration.

3 Design & Develop

1. **Lead with the insight**: Put the most important data points in the most prominent spot, using white space, size, and positioning strategically.
2. **Integrate text with graphics:** Labels, callouts, and short narrative embedded in the visual helps users understand why something matters.
3. **Design for comprehension**: Assume your user is not a data expert. Clear labels, readabale fonts, and additional context are critical.
4. **Prioritize accessibility**: Choose colors and contrast that work for all users. **Follow best practices** and Section 508 compliance guidelines in your state.

View this example at **nccommerce.org**



4 Communicate & Share

Place the dashboard in an intuitive location so users can easily find what they need.

Plan for data export and consider whether users will want to download as a spreadsheet or as a PDF for data sharing.

Test the dashboard with users before deployment to ensure it meets their needs.

Build a feedback loop to maintain communication with your users, such as through a feedback form, readily available contact information, or regular presentations and trainings to gather input and iterate over time.

SPOTLIGHT EXAMPLE

NC LEAD – NCcareers.org Occupational Employment Dashboard

Visit →

A strong model for multi-audience LMI delivery. Users can filter 800+ occupations by geography, wage, education level, and Star Jobs rating - a composite in-demand careers score. Projections data is paired with narrative context that works for job seekers, advisors, and workforce professionals.

