Rutgers University

Author and English professor Lauren Grodstein used PolicyMap to access data for a grant application for a new writing project.

Challenge

Novelist and English professor Lauren Grodstein had an idea for a project, but needed data for an effective grant proposal. She wanted to travel to some of the least ethnically diverse parts of the country and explore how different communities felt about the current state of the country.

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Solution

By using PolicyMap through Rutgers University's university-wide license, she was able to download rankings of counties by level of diversity, and identify which areas she wanted to focus on. She was able to get additional indicators, like income levels and election results, which further bolstered her application. All this took just a few clicks on PolicyMap, giving her more time to focus her efforts on describing the project.

To make the case that this was a worthwhile grant proposal, she identified five specific counties she wanted to visit, and cited data on why they were notable. Wheeler County, Nebraska, was one of the least diverse counties in the country, with 99.6% of the population white. Elk County, Pennsylvania, also had a homogenous population, with 97.5% of the population non-minority. The same was true in Glacier County, Montana, Lincoln County, Maine, and Highland County, Virginia.

Including these figures in her grant application helped get the grant approved, and she was able to travel to these areas and begin her project.