Making Excel Work for Your Tribal Community

Displaying Data with Excel Charts

Capacity Building
CENTER FOR TRIBES

MAKING EXCEL WORK FOR YOUR TRIBAL COMMUNITY
Displaying Data with Excel Charts

For federal and state reporting, you probably provide mostly plain, unadorned numbers. However, you may also want to share important information with other people, like your staff, your Tribal leadership, community members and partners, or grant funders. Rather than making them read a lot of numbers or a long written explanation, you could show them the information you want them to know in a quick and easy-to-understand graphic.
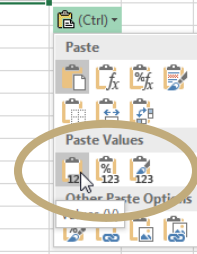
One of the simplest ways to create this kind of graphic is through Excel Charts. In Excel, you can select any part of your data and create nearly any kind of chart or graph with a few clicks.
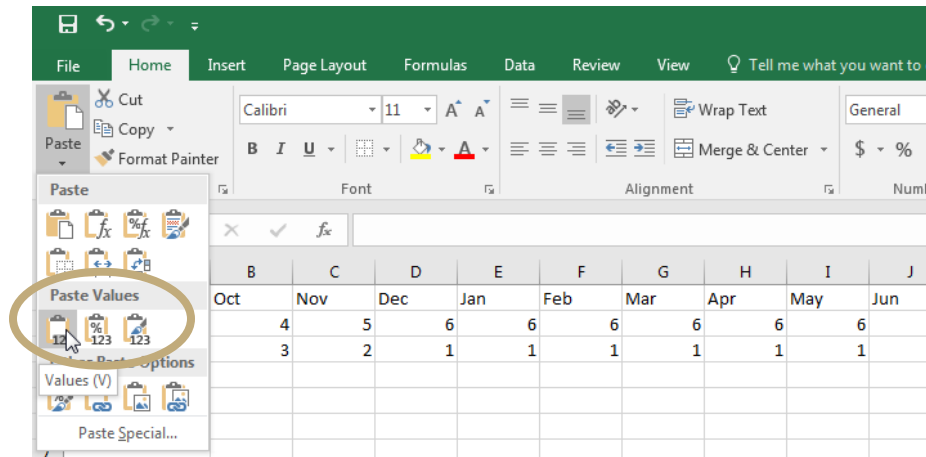
Setting Up Your Data

1. Create a new blank tab in your spreadsheet or open a new blank workbook. You can insert a chart in any worksheet, but creating a new sheet for each chart makes it easier to work with.
2. Copy your data into the blank worksheet. **Remember to include the column and row labels!**

   Note: If you're copying from a spreadsheet with formulas, you may end up with some odd-looking errors instead of your data. To fix this, choose "Paste Values" in one of the two ways shown on the following page.

|	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Substantiated	4	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!
Unsubstantiated	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!

OR

Creating a Chart

1. Click on the "Insert" tab of the menu. Around the middle of the ribbon is the Charts section, which may look different depending on which version of Excel you are using. In Excel 2016, you'll see options for different types of charts (line graphs, pie charts, bar charts, etc.) as well as a "Recommended Charts" button.
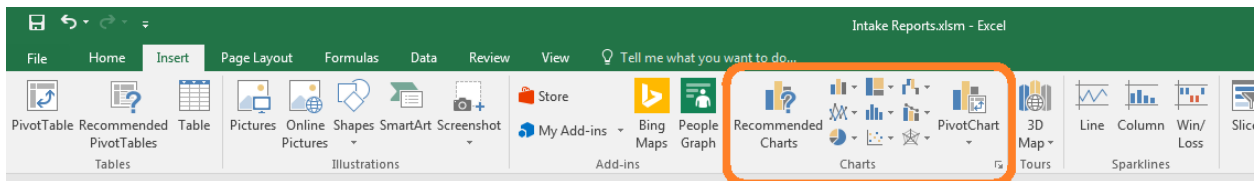
2. When you click on the different chart options, Excel will show you a preview of what your data would look like in each format.
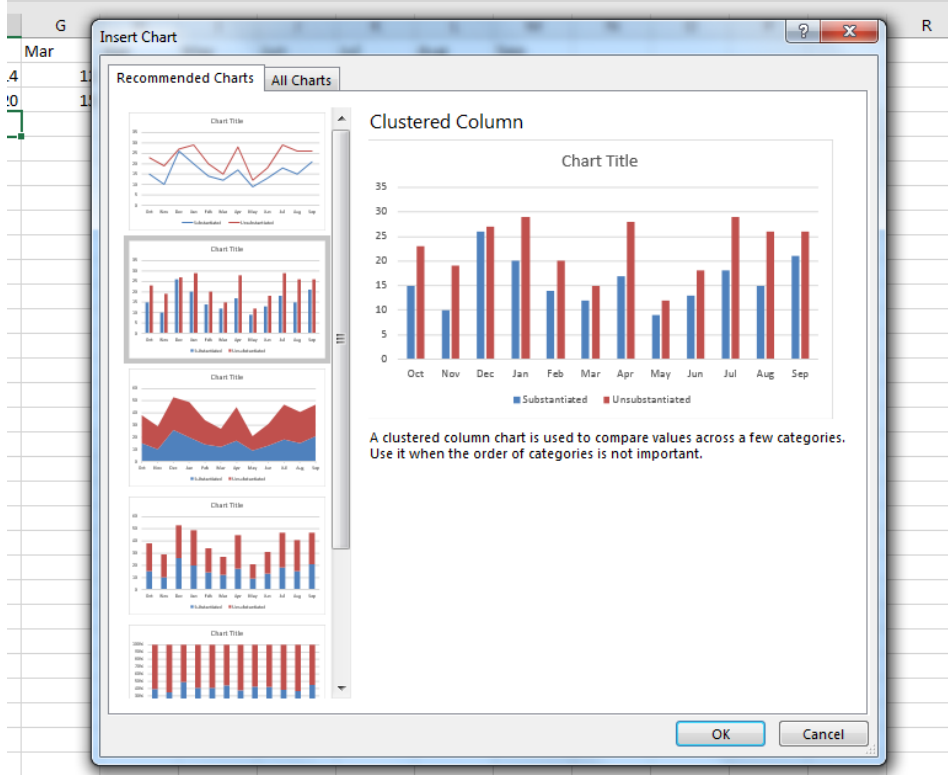
3. Choose the chart format that best communicates the story your data is telling. Ideally, when someone looks at your chart, they should understand what it means in just a few seconds.

4. Click "OK" and your chart will appear in the worksheet!
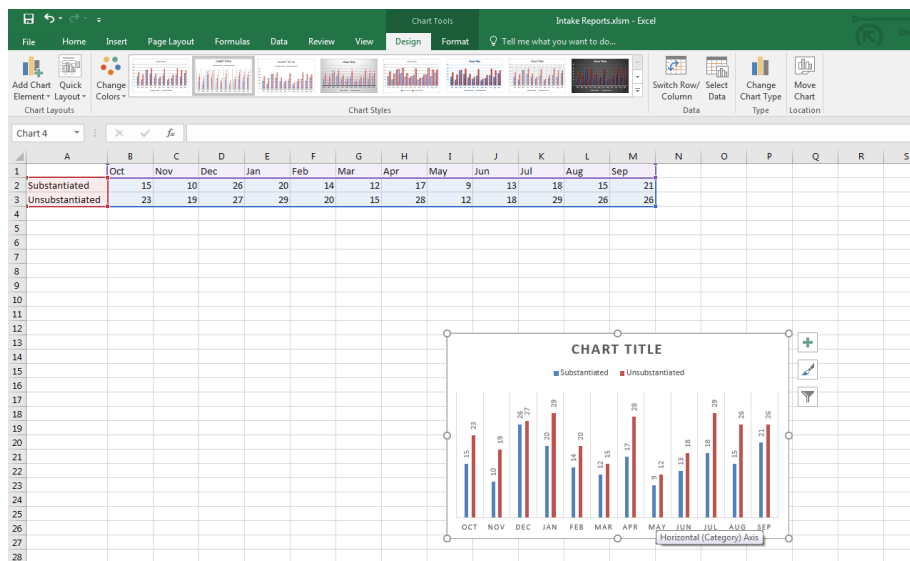
Making It Your Own

Once you have your basic chart created, you can style it however you like.

- Change the chart title by clicking on "CHART TITLE" and typing over it.
- Adjust the chart layout or colors through the "Chart Tools" menus that will appear when you click on the chart.
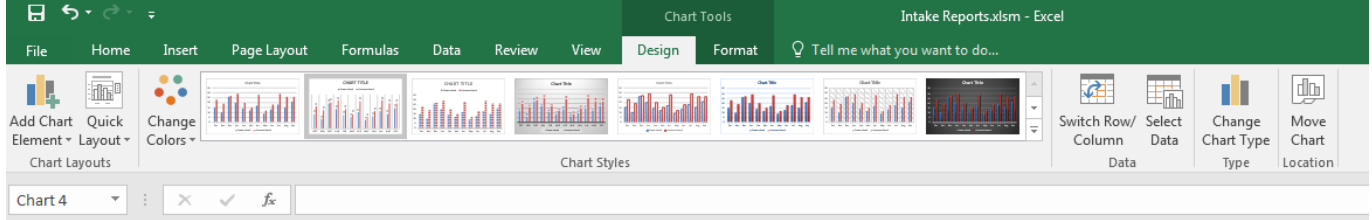
Experiment with these tools to learn all the ways you can make your chart attractive and meaningful. You can find tips on data visualization in many places online.

VIEW THE COMPANION VIDEO