Date: March 14, 2008
From: NCHS Research Data Center (RDC)
To: Applicants
Subject: Instructions for Developing Proposals

The format detailed below pertains specifically to the use of NCHS data. Some data files have project specific requirements which can be found in <u>Appendix III</u>. For example, the appendix contains information on submitting a research proposal requesting use of data from the Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD) project. If no project specific requirements are provided for non-NCHS data, the format below is to be used. The research proposal must contain the following information:

A. Cover letter.
B. Project Title.
C. Abstract: approximately 100-300 words summarizing the project.
D. Full personal identification, institutional affiliation, mailing addresses (including overnight express mail address), phone, and e-mail address. Applicants who are students must append a letter from the department chair or advisor stating that the applicant is a student working under the direction of the department.
E. Dates of proposed tenure at the RDC (or use of the remote access system). Proposals requesting remote access should include an appendix describing the computer and e-mail account that will receive output as well as the security provisions established for them.
F. Source of funding for the proposed project.
G. Background of study.
  1. Key study questions or hypotheses.
  2. Public health benefits.
H. A summary of the data requirements for the proposed research along with an explanation of why the data are needed for the proposed study.
  1. Identification of cases to be included in the analytic file.
  2. Identification of variables to be included in the analytic file.
  3. Data to be supplied by the researcher and merged with NCHS or other data.
  4. A description of why publicly available data are insufficient.
I. Methods for the study (summary)**.**
  1. Analytic strategy and statistical methods to be used.
  2. Software requirements (currently, SAS, Stata, SUDAAN, LIMDEP, HLM, SPSS, and Watcom Fortran 77 are available in the RDC; other languages can be made available with sufficient lead time).
J. A description of the output that the researcher intends to have reviewed for non-disclosure. This should include table shells, model equations, or test statistics of any output that the researcher plans to remove from the RDC. This will help the reviewers to determine the risk of disclosure and plan for the disclosure review.
K. Appendices.
  1. A current resume or Curriculum Vitae for each person who will participate in the research activity. Resumes or CVs must specify nationality.

2. A letter from student applicant's department chair or academic advisor stating that student is working under the direction of the department.
3. A data dictionary: a complete listing of the specific data requested--data system, files, years, cases, variables, matching or linking variables, etc
4. A data dictionary for researcher-supplied data, if any, to be merged with the confidential data. This includes identifying the source of the data, variable names, variable codes or ranges, file layout, number of records, and restrictions on NCHS use of the data (currently the RDC policy prohibits release of merged data to anyone other than the prospective researcher).
5. A description of the computer and e-mail system to be used to receive output from the remote access system as well as the security provisions established for them.
6. Portions of doctoral proposals or grant applications with appropriate modifications may suffice for the research proposal.

Proposals to use the Research Data Center should be sent to:

Peter Meyer, Director
Research Data Center
National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road, Suite 4113
Hyattsville, MD 20782

pmeyer1@cdc.gov