

## Checklist for Submission of Research Proposals Using NCHS Data

Researchers must submit proposals that are detailed enough in their data specifications to permit RDC staff to easily determine what data elements are required. Portions of doctoral proposals or grant applications with appropriate modifications may suffice for the research proposal.

The research proposal must contain the following information:

- Cover letter
- Project Title
- Abstract: approximately 100-300 words summarizing the project.
- 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.
- 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.
- Source of funding for the proposed project.
- Background of study:
  1. Key study questions or hypotheses.
  2. Public health benefits.
- A summary of the data requirements for the proposed research along with an explanation of why the data are needed for the proposed study, including:
  1. Identification of cases to be included in the analytic file.
  2. Identification of variables to be included in the analytic file with source of data (i.e. survey name and years needed) clearly stated.
  3. Data, if any, to be supplied by the researcher and merged with NCHS or other data (source of this data needs to be clearly identified).
  4. A description of why publicly available data are insufficient.
- Methods for the study:
  1. Analytic strategy and statistical methods to be used.
  2. Software requirements. A list of software currently available in the RDC can be found at the RDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/r&d/rdc.htm>).
- A description of the output that the researcher intends to have reviewed for nondisclosure. 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.

## Appendices

### For all applicants:

- A current resume or Curriculum Vitae for each person who will participate in the research activity. Resumes or CVs must specify nationality.
- A data dictionary: a complete listing of the specific data requested with the sources of the analytic data (i.e. specific files and years), cases, variables, matching or linking variables, etc clearly stated.

### For applicants with researcher-supplied data files:

- A data dictionary for the researcher –supplied portion of the data that will 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).

### For remote-access applicants:

- 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.

### For student applicants:

- A letter from student applicant's department chair or academic advisor stating that student is working under the direction of the department.

Upon receipt, the Research Proposal will be evaluated by a review committee convened for that purpose. The following criteria apply to proposal review for projects requesting use of NCHS data:

- A. Scientific and technical feasibility of the project;
- B. Availability of resources at the RDC;
- C. Risk of disclosure of restricted information; and
- D. For projects using NCHS data, whether the proposed project is in accordance with the mission of the NCHS to provide statistical information that will guide actions and policies to improve the health of the American people.

### **Special Note to all applicants: NCHS does not try to determine if proposals are duplicative.**

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

Research Data Center  
National Center for Health Statistics  
3311 Toledo Road, Suite 4113  
Hyattsville, MD 20782  
[RDCA@cdc.gov](mailto:RDCA@cdc.gov)