

Costs

- Estimated for each approved research project
- Vary according to project complexity
- A user fee of \$150 for approved projects covers technical assistance, simple file construction, and up to 2 hours of programming support. *This fee will be waived for full-time graduate students working on dissertations or other degree requirements and for Federal Government agencies.*
- Additional programming support through the AHRQ data processing contractor costs \$80 per hour
- Actual costs may exceed estimated costs. Users are responsible for costs that exceed the estimate.

Operations

- Researchers must sign a confidentiality agreement
- The AHRQ data processing contractor constructs necessary data files, including merged user data
- Output is subject to disclosure review
- Disclosure review guidelines are available under “Frequently Asked Questions” at <http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/datacenter>
- Analysis passing disclosure review can be taken off site

- Three user workstations connected to a secure LAN
 - Pentium III computers with Windows 2000
 - Computers in the Data Center have no external drives
- Statistical software includes SAS, Stata, SUDAAN, SPSS, GAUSS, STAT Transfer, LIMDEP, and EQS
- A secure printer is used
- Laptop computers and similar devices are not allowed in the Data Center
- The CCFS Data Center is open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday by appointment

CCFS Data Center Staff

- Limited staff support by people who know:
 - The data
 - The confidentiality issues
 - The software

For more information contact:

CCFS Data Center
Center for Cost and Financing Studies
2101 East Jefferson Street, Suite 500
Rockville, Maryland 20852
Phone: (301) 594-1406
Fax: (301) 594-2166
E-mail: ccfsdc@ahrq.gov
Internet: www.meps.ahrq.gov/datacenter

CCFS Data Center

A Resource for Researchers



AHRQ Pub. No. 02-0019
March 2002



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Service
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality



Introduction

The Center for Cost and Financing Studies (CCFS) of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has developed the CCFS Data Center, which allows researchers and data users to access AHRQ data that have not been publicly released for reasons of confidentiality. Data currently available through the CCFS Data Center include the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) Household Component, Nursing Home Component, Medical Provider Component, and linked MEPS Household Component and Insurance Component data. Researchers may also use the Data Center to access MEPS files merged with contextual data from the Census Bureau, the Area Resource File, or other data collected or provided by the researcher (State Medicaid generosity, air pollution data, medical facilities, etc.) to perform contextual analyses while maintaining respondent confidentiality.

Submitting a Proposal

Prospective researchers must submit an application, including a research proposal, that will be reviewed by a committee. The criteria for approval include risk of disclosure, consistency with AHRQ's mission, availability of CCFS Data Center resources, and feasibility of the project. It is expected

that users will develop their research proposals in conjunction with CCFS Data Center staff.

Accessing the Data Center

Researchers must execute all computer runs using the facilities located within the CCFS Data Center in Rockville, Maryland. Remote access is not available at this time.

Instead of traveling to Rockville, Maryland, researchers may choose to have their files developed and programming executed by entering into a financial agreement with the AHRQ data processing contractor. Printouts will be shipped to the researcher after a confidentiality review by AHRQ staff. Cost estimates for this option will be given after project approval.



Data

CCFS Data

- Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Household Component, Nursing Home Component, and Medical Provider Component
- MEPS linked Household Component and Insurance Component data

User-Supplied Data

- Can be data collected or obtained by the user
- Can be other publicly available information such as Census Bureau data
- Analytic files constructed are added to master file repository for use by other researchers

Application

- Required
- Must contain a detailed summary of proposed research
- Acceptability based on risk of disclosure, availability of CCFS Data Center resources, consistency with the AHRQ mission, and feasibility of the project
- Applications reviewed monthly

For more information about the application process, see “Data Center User Guide/Application Information” on the MEPS Web site at <http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/datacenter>

Programming Services

- Available through the AHRQ data processing contractor
- Researcher provides the specifications with input from AHRQ staff

