ResearchDataGov.org (RDG) User Guide

Updated March 2025

NOTICE TO SAP USERS: The National Center for Education Statistics NCES is currently not accepting new applications for access to data through the Standard Application Process. Review of applications for access to data from NCES is also paused until further notice.

About ResearchDataGov.org

ResearchDataGov.org (RDG) is the official portal for the Standard Application Process (SAP). RDG is a product of the federal statistical agencies and units, created in response to the *Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act* of 2018. The site includes a data catalog, which allows users to search for confidential federal data, and an application, which allows users to apply for access to data.

ResearchDataGov.org was built by and is hosted at Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan, under contract and guidance from the Project Management Office (PMO) at the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the National Science Foundation.

Table of Contents

Participating Agencies and Units

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recognizes 13 agencies and 3 units as having the production of statistics as their primary mission. For brevity, the term "agency" will be used to cover both agencies and the units within them. For agency-specific information about programs and data products, or questions about applying for data in the SAP, contact the agency directly using the contact page on ResearchDataGov.org.

- **Bureau of Economic Analysis** (BEA)
- **Bureau of Justice Statistics** (BJS)
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics** (BLS)
- **Bureau of Transportation Statistics** (BTS)
- **Census Bureau** (Census)
- **U.S. Energy Information Administration** (EIA)
- **Federal Reserve Board** (FRB): Microeconomics Survey Unit
- **Internal Revenue Service** (IRS): Statistics of Income (SOI) Division
- **National Center for Educational Statistics** (NCES)
- **National Center for Health Statistics** (NCHS)
- **National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics** (NCSES)
- **Social Security Administration** (SSA): **Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics** (ORES)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (SAMHSA): Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality
- **United States Department of Agriculture** (USDA): **Economic Research Service** (ERS)
- **United States Department of Agriculture** (USDA): **National Agricultural Statistics Service** (NASS)
- **United States Department of Agriculture** (USDA): **National Animal Health Monitoring System** (NAHMS)

Using ResearchDataGov

The SAP portal allows you to track your application from data discovery to final determination. This guide will focus on use of the site by applicants and potential applicants. Please note that there is a similar guide for data providing agency staff who review SAP applications.

These steps outline a typical application process:

- If you determine that restricted access data is necessary for your research, search for a restricted access data asset relevant to your statistical research or browse available data assets
- Evaluate whether a data asset meets your needs by reading the metadata for each asset
- Add relevant data to your basket
- Complete and submit application
    - Enter researcher information
    - Enter research description and the demonstrated need for restricted access data
    - Complete and upload required documents (for some applications)
    - Submit
- Track the status of your application by logging into ResearchDataGov after receiving email notification of a change in status of your application
- Use ResearchDataGov to view the agency's determination and comments from agency reviewers

Finding data

You can browse the entire data catalog by leaving the search box at researchdatagov.org empty and selecting the magnifying glass icon. However, you can also search for data by keyword, topic, agency, or a combination of these.

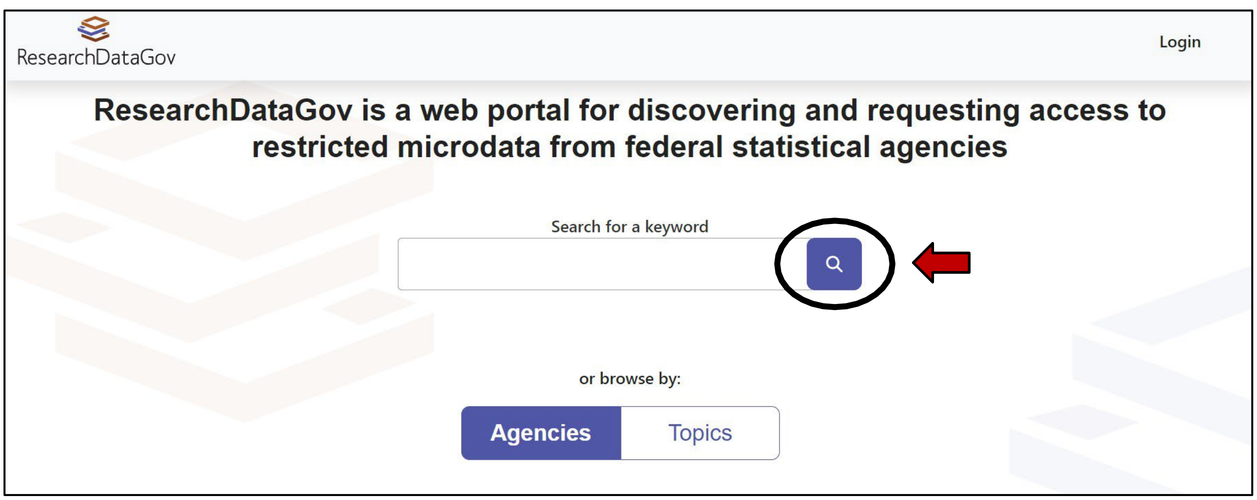


Figure 1 Magnifying glass icon and empty search box

Additionally, you can filter search results by other metadata fields, as shown in the image below. In Figure 2, we have searched for the keyword "families" in data from the Census Bureau.

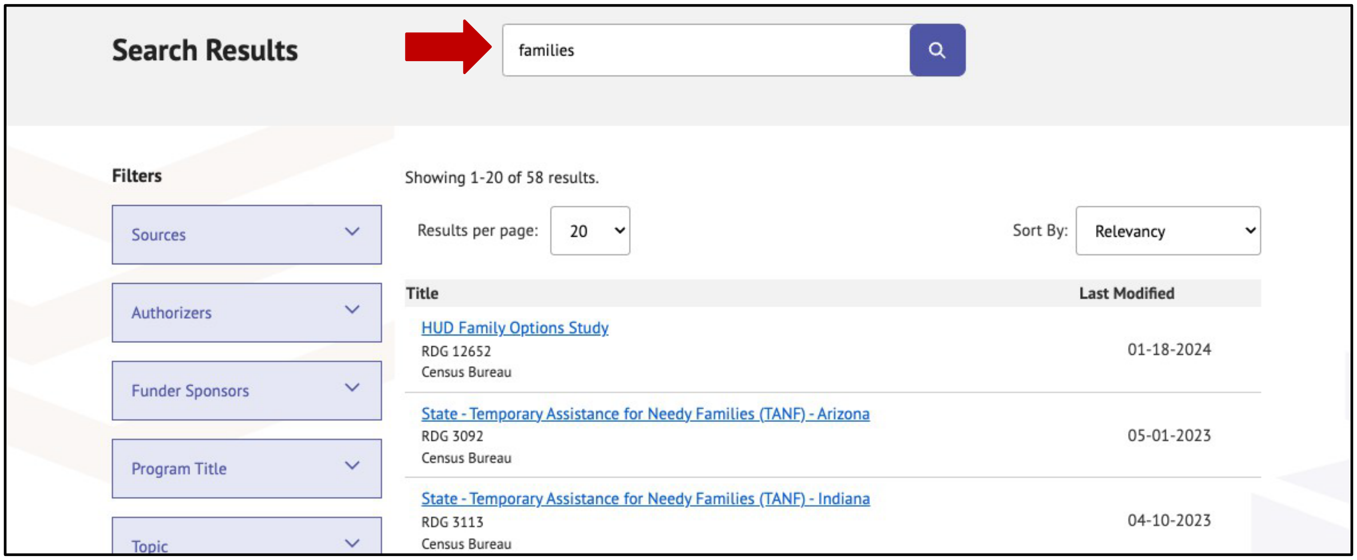


Figure 2. Search box containing the term "families" and Sort By menu dropdown.

Select the hyperlinked dataset title to view the metadata for a data asset as shown in the figure below.

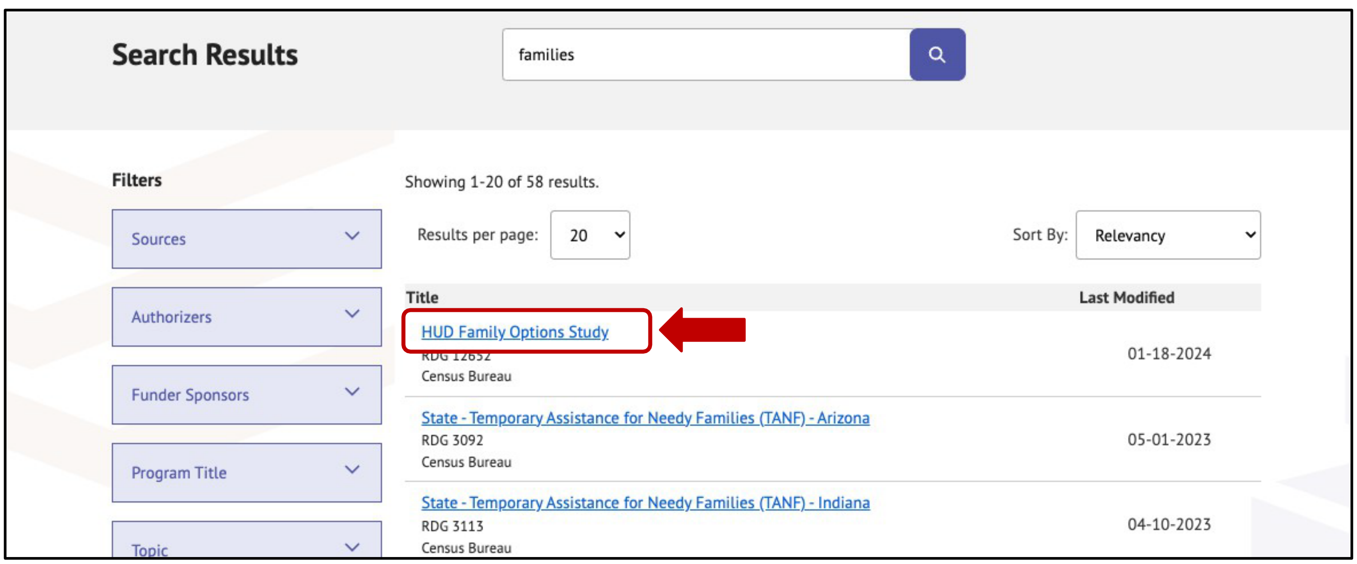


Figure 3. Hyperlinked dataset title

The **Metadata** menu on the left of the page outlines the information available for each data asset as shown in the figure below.

*Figure 4. The **Metadata** menu on the left of the dataset page*

Adding Data to your Basket

Select **Request Access** to add the data to your basket.

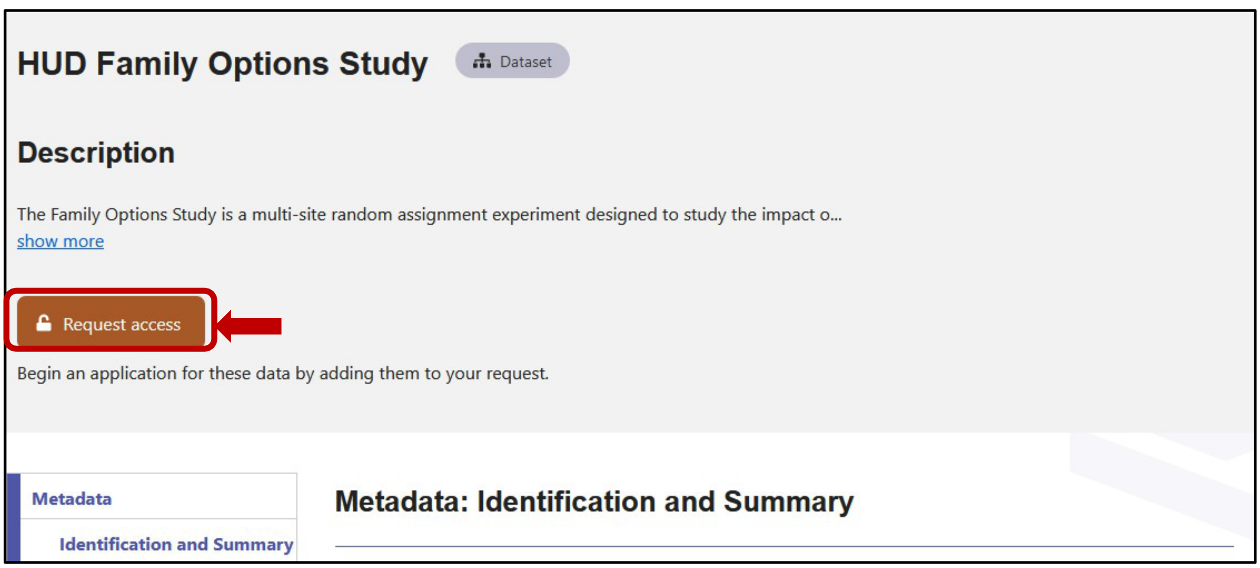


*Figure 5. **Request access** button at the top of the dataset homepage*

After requesting access, you will be prompted to login. If you do not have an account, you will be asked to create one. You will use this account to access your application dashboard and view your application progress.

You may add multiple datasets to your basket for inclusion in a single application. However, you should verify that the data can be accessed in the same location. The access modality in the "**Data Access**" tab of the dataset homepage lists where the data can be accessed.

If you are applying to access datasets from multiple agencies, it is best to contact the agency responsible for making the data available (listed as the source in the metadata identification summary) to make sure their data can be combined. You can find agency contact information in the Participating Agencies and Contact Information section.

Getting Help

While browsing the SAP Data Catalog, you might encounter questions not addressed by the metadata, including inquiries about data linkages, access procedures, or application expectations. For detailed questions about agency-specific data programs or products, please contact the relevant agency directly using the contact details provided on ResearchDataGov.org. If you require technical support for the website or application system, such as assistance with file uploads or application submissions, please email Help@ResearchDataGov.org.

Providing Feedback

Your feedback is essential to improving the SAP user experience. You can submit site feedback or report any bugs using the "Feedback" form, which is available via the FAQs, and the Contact page.

Starting an application

You can navigate to **Basket** at any time to view the datasets you have selected.

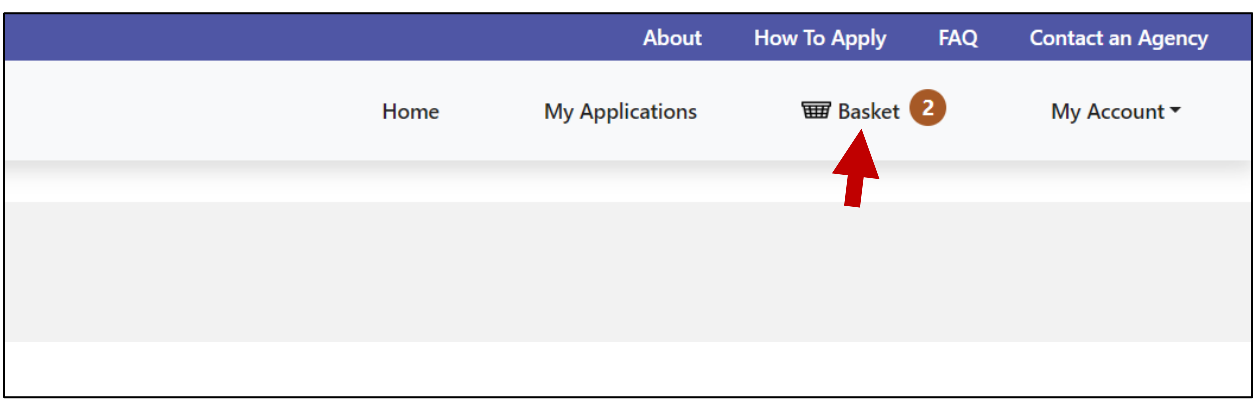


Figure 6. A basket with two datasets.

From this page, select **Continue Browsing** to return to the catalog and search for more data. Select **Start Application** if your basket includes all the datasets you would like to include in your application and **Add to Existing Application** to add data to an application you have started.

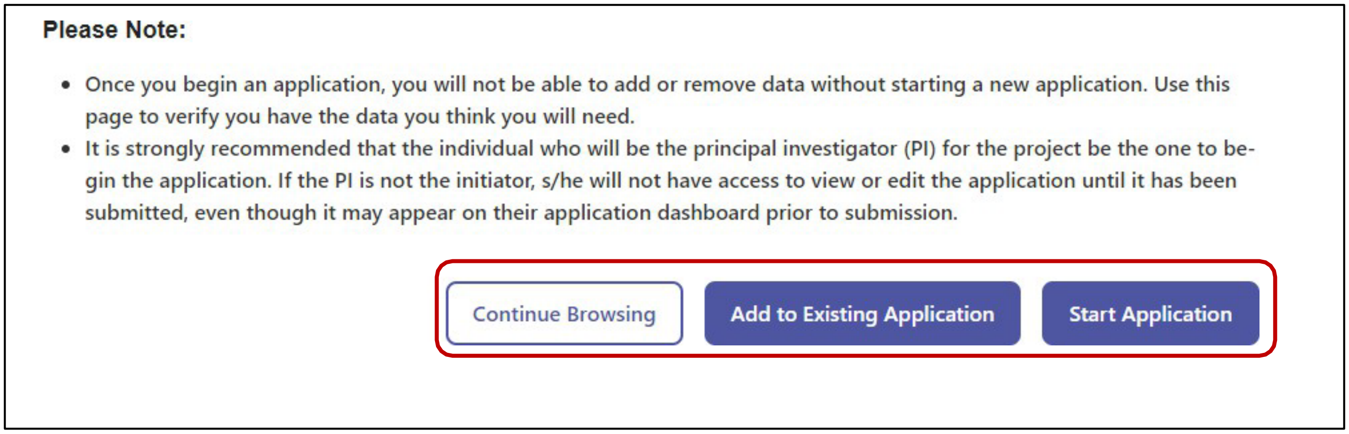


*Figure 7. **Continue Browsing, Add to Existing Application** and **Start Application** buttons on the basket page.*

PLEASE NOTE: We strongly recommend that the principal investigator (PI) or co-principal investigator (co-PI) create the application. Only the PI or co-PI can make edits to the application. Researchers can view the application but cannot make edits.

Completing an application

The application requests information about the research team and the project. You may preview the application questions in the appendix. Most fields are text boxes, but some fields instead require a text document (PDF or .docx) upload. The fields requiring an upload are those that may need formatting, such as tables and formulas.

Welcome

The **Welcome** tab provides further details about the application and the review process.

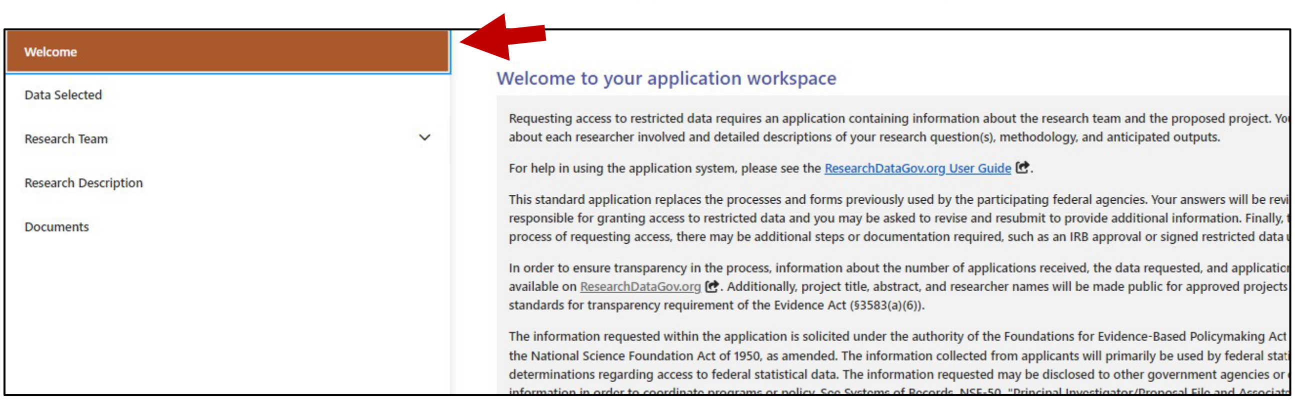
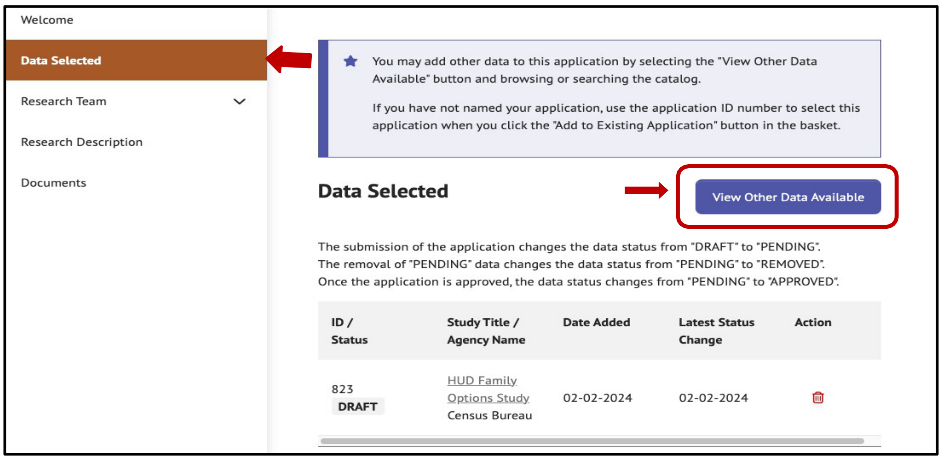


*Figure 8. The **Welcome** tab on the application homepage.*

You do not need to finish the application in one session as your answers will be automatically saved. You are also able to save your work using the **Save and Continue** button at the bottom of the screen. Note that it can only be saved after you have completed all the required fields in the section you are working in.

Data Selected

If you find or wish to select additional data after you have begun the application, you may add it by navigating to the "**Data Selected**" section on the left side of the application and selecting the "**View Other Data Available**" button (shown in the figure below). This button will return you to the ResearchDataGov.org homepage where you can search or browse for additional data.



Researcher Information

Please review the Eligibility Requirements section in this User Guide before completing your application. Eligibility requirements are unique to the data-owning agency and may include items like a specific institutional affiliation or U.S. citizenship.

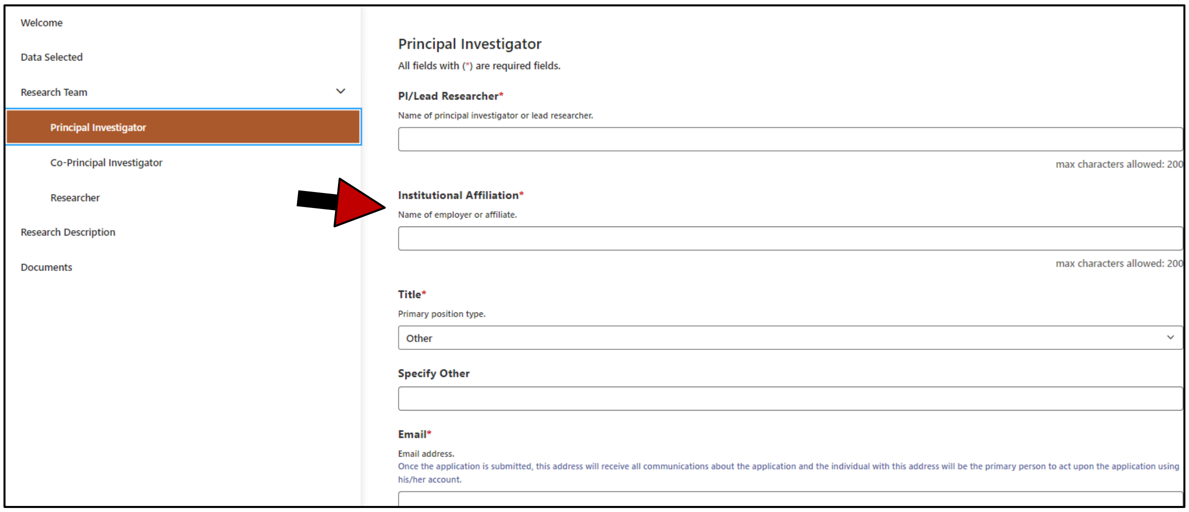


*Figure 10. Fields of the **"Principal Investigator"** sub-section of the **"Research Team"** section, such as a specific institutional affiliation.*

Research Description

Responses to some application fields in the Research Description section may be subject to agency or access modality-specific requirements, such as the **Project Duration** as shown in figure 10 below. This information may be found within the application or in the Agency-Specific Information section at the end of this guide.

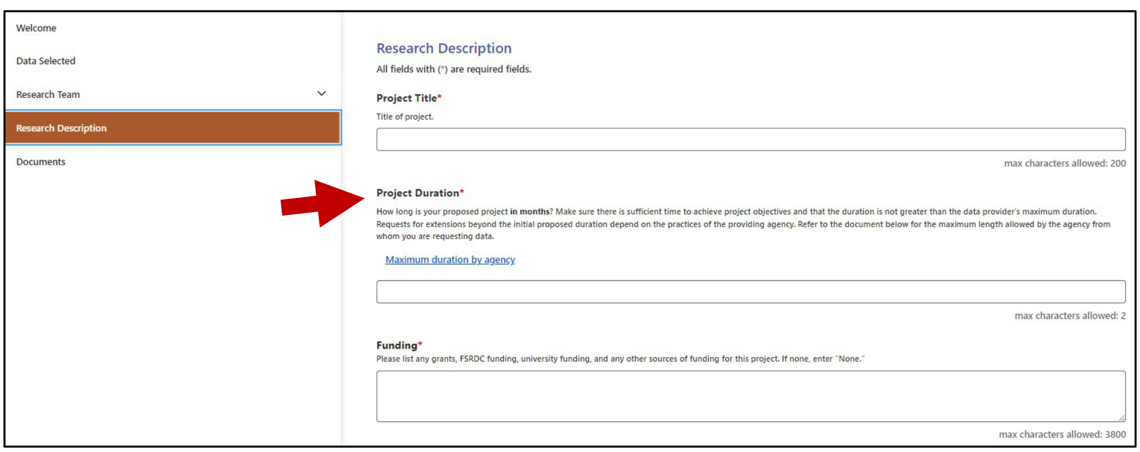


*Figure 11. Fields of the **"Research Description"** section, such as "**Project Duration**".*

Additionally, you may need to refer to the metadata listed in the SAP Data Catalog to respond to some application fields. For example, look at the "Application-related" tab of the metadata menu for each dataset you are requesting to see if there are "Provisioned by…" fields, and if so provide the years, states, or other units you are requesting when answering the **Time, Geographic, and Other Units Requested** part of the application.

Time, Geographic, and Other Units Requested

Some datasets are made available only for the specific years or states that you need for your project. For each dataset you're requesting, look at the "Application-related" tab on the main dataset page. If there are "Provisioned by..." fields, please list the years, states, or other units you are requesting for each dataset, indicating why these specific data are necessary for your research. If you have multiple datasets provisioned this way, list the dataset name and other information for each. If the "Application-related" tab shows no "Provisioned by" fields, you may skip this question.

max characters allowed: 10000

*Figure 12. **Time, Geographic, and Other Units Requested** require applicants to refer to the metadata "Provisioned by" fields.*

Another important example is **Work Location**. To complete this field, refer to the access modality listed in the **Data Access** metadata tab and make one selection (although you can select multiple locations within a top-level access modality that allows for multiple locations such as the Federal Statistical Research Data Centers (FSRDC) network). This is the only place where that data can be accessed.

Work Location*

Where will the data be accessed? If you and, if applicable, other members of the research team plan on using data in multiple places, please mark all that apply. Note that there are often fees for accessing data in a Federal Statistical Research Data Center (FSRDC), please contact the FSRDC location you intend to use for more information. Other data may have fees for access as noted in the "Fees" field in the "Data Access" section of the information about the asset.

- [ ] BEA Network
- [x] BLS Onsite
- [ ] BLS Virtual Data Enclave
- [ ] BTS Onsite
- [ ] FSRDC

Northeast Region

- [ ] Boston
- [ ] New York - Baruch
- [ ] New York - Cornell
- [ ] Penn State
- [ ] Philadelphia
- [ ] Yale

Midwest Region

- [ ] Central Plains
- [ ] Chicago

*Figure 13. The **Work Location** field allows researchers to select more than one location within a top-level access modality.*

If you are applying for multiple data assets from more than one agency, you should make sure that they can be accessed in the same location by contacting the agency or agencies.

Documents

Some agencies or data assets require additional documents to be completed and uploaded. If additional documents are required for your application, they will appear in the Documents section of the application. If no additional documents are required, you may skip this section.

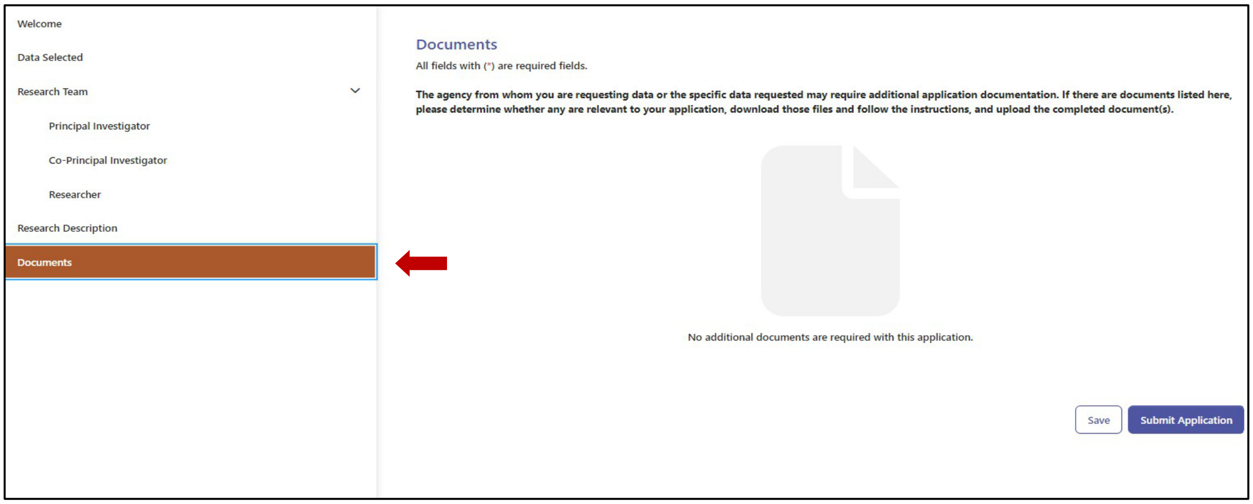


Figure 14. Required documents will appear in the ***Documents*** *section of the application.*

Submit Application

Once all required sections have been completed, select "Submit Application".

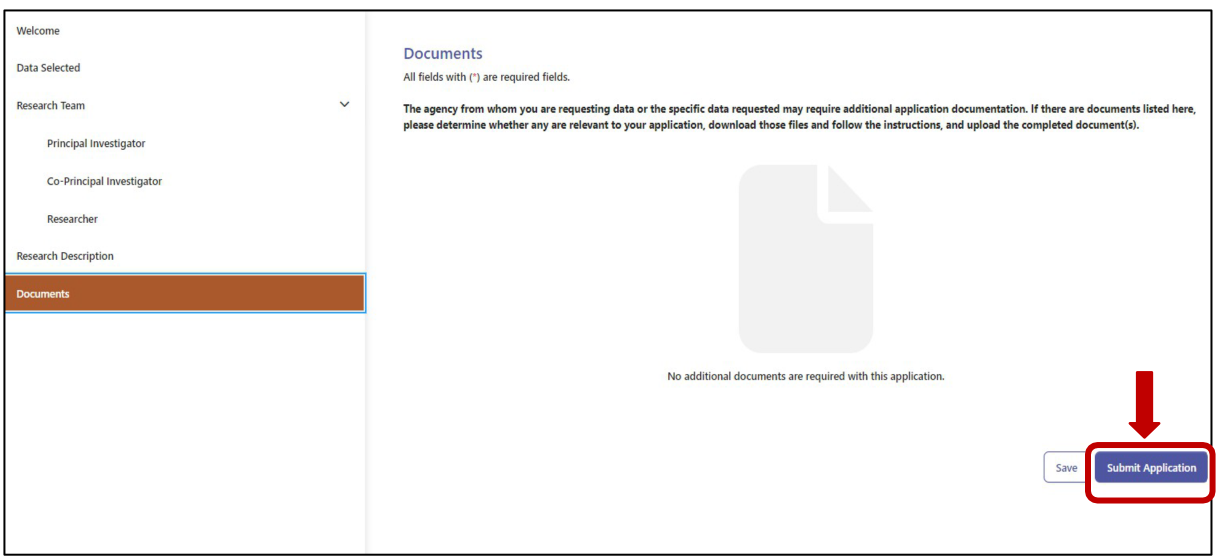


Figure 15. ***Submit Application*** *button*

Once your application has been submitted, you will see a **Congratulations** screen. You will also receive an email with a link back to the application. You will not be able to edit the application further unless asked to do so by one of the reviewing agencies.

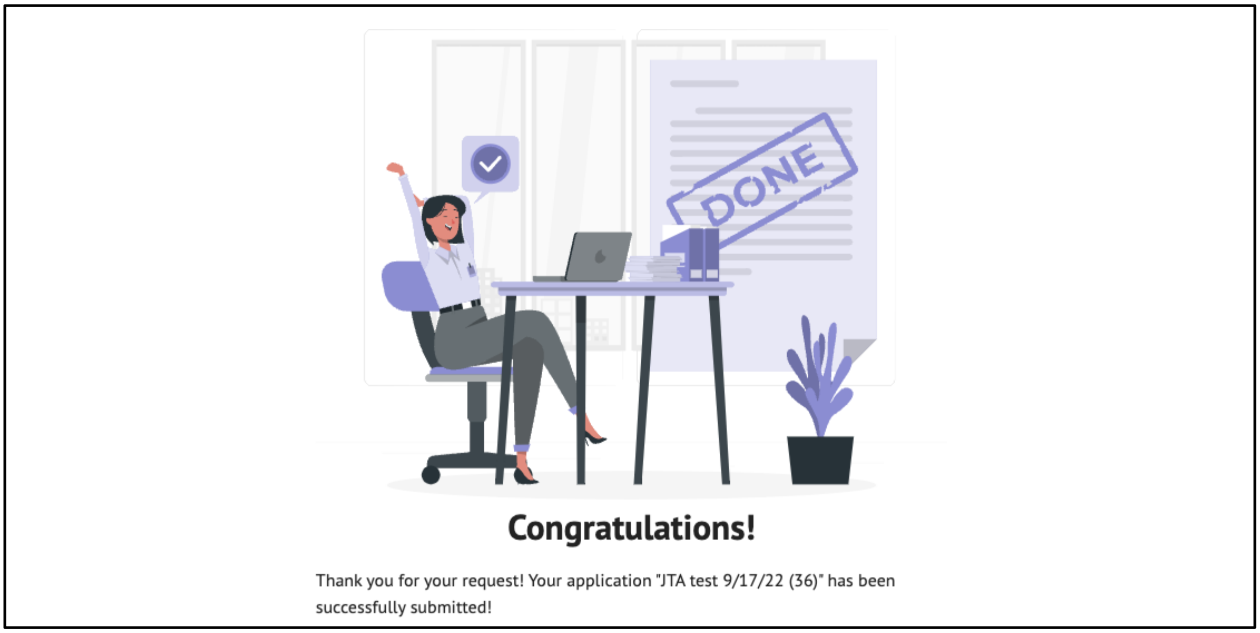


Figure 16. The "Congratulations" screen after successful submission of an application

Review Process

Applications are reviewed by agency staff responsible for granting access to restricted data. Agencies evaluate applications according to a standard set of review criteria, outlined in the SAP Policy M-23- 04 (section 4.1). Agency reviewers will make one of three determinations upon completing their review: Approved, Not Approved, or Changes Needed. For Changes Needed, you will be able to edit the application fields to address their requested changes.

SAP agencies also follow set timelines in reviewing applications for data that they fully control:

- If you request data from one agency or unit, the agency typically has 12 weeks to review your application and provide a final determination of Approved or Not Approved.
- If you request data from multiple agencies or units, the agencies typically have 24 weeks to review and collaborate to provide a final determination of Approved or Not Approved.

However, if the data you have applied for requires approval from an organization or entity outside of the SAP (such as a state or local government), the SAP and non-SAP agencies do not have a time limit on providing a final determination of Approved or Not Approved.

In most cases, application review takes less time than the time limit. However, in some cases, application review may take longer.

- Agencies can request review extensions if needed.
- The review timeframes are paused while you are responding to agencies' comments on an application that is in a "Changes Needed" state (see below).

Changes Needed

An agency may ask you to make changes to your application. Agencies will request changes when they determine that an application does not yet meet the standard review criteria but could do so with minor adjustments.

You will receive an email notification if an agency requests changes. You can then log in to your application dashboard to view the agency's comments and to revise your application. If you have questions or are unclear about the agency's comments, please contact the agency ResearchDataGov.org. Public Reporting

The Standard Application Process is required to provide the public with information surrounding applications to access confidential data. This includes both approved and unapproved applications.

For applications with a final determination of Not Approved, the following information is reported to the public:

- Requested data assets

- Statistical agencies and units involved
- The date the application was received
- Proposed project duration
- Status of application
- Unmet review criteria

For approved projects, the following information is reported to the public:

- Requested data assets
- Statistical agencies and units involved
- The date the application was received
- Project title
- Project abstract
- Approval date
- Project duration
- Names of the principal investigator/lead researcher and other persons requesting access

SAP Standard Review Criteria

The SAP policy (M-23-04), section 4.1, establishes the standard review criteria. These are summarized below. To view the full criteria, please refer to M-23-04. When reviewing applications, agencies **must use** the standard review criteria as outlined in M-23-04. Agencies may take into account other considerations only where required by law or regulation.

Statistical Purpose:

- Your project must use the data for statistical purposes. This means you'll use the data to describe or understand groups of people or things, without identifying individual people or businesses.
- Examples of things that are not statistical purposes include using the data for law enforcement, legal cases, or regulatory actions.

Allowed Use:

- How you plan to use the data must match any rules or restrictions that apply to it. These rules might come from promises made to those who provided the data, or from laws.

Statistical Disclosure Limitation:

- You must be able to use techniques that protect the privacy of individuals, organizations, or businesses. These techniques reduce the risk of someone being identified from the data.

Demonstrated Need:

- You must show that you need to use confidential data to achieve your project goals. You must also show that public data isn't enough to do what you need to do.
- This helps explain why it's worth taking the risk of sharing confidential data.

Feasibility:

- You must show that you can achieve your project goals with the confidential data you're requesting.
- Agencies will look at these things:

- Project Design: This includes your methods, technical details, computer needs, whether you have space to work, logistics, and how long the project will take. You must provide enough information about your methods.
- Agency or Unit Support: This means checking if the agency can support your project, including things like space, technical help, logistics, and if the data can be prepared in time.
- Applicant Ability: This means checking if you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the project. You must provide enough information about your qualifications.

Maintaining Public Trust:

- Agencies will check if your project helps them keep the public's trust and confidence.
- If a project could harm the agency's ability to do its job or collect data, it may be rejected.

To ensure that review criteria remain standardized across statistical agencies and units, additional review criteria are only permissible when necessary to meet agency or data asset legal or regulatory requirements. These may include:

- **Programmatic benefit**: Project proposals must define contributions to the program under which the confidential data asset was collected. (For example, access to confidential Census Bureau Data may only be granted if the proposal provides a benefit to the Census Bureau's Title 13 programs.)
- **Additional criteria**: This applies only when the additional criteria are deemed necessary based on a statutory authority or regulatory requirements applicable to the data collection or the statistical agency or unit. This may vary by agency according to statutory or legal requirements.

Criteria for Applicant Review

Note: Some of the criteria below are verified following application approval.

Identification:

- Verifying your identity, job title, organization, and skill level.
- Ensuring you meet the legal requirements for accessing the data (e.g., citizenship requirements for some agencies).
- Checking if you meet the feasibility criteria for the application review.

Training:

- Completing training on data use, data management, confidentiality, and cybersecurity.
- Required by some agencies and completed after application approval.

Agreements:

- Signing agreements, such as non-disclosure agreements or data use agreements.
- Potentially creating a security plan outlining how you will protect the data.

Investigation:

- Undergoing a background check, such as a National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI) or a moderate background investigation (MBI).
- Required by some agencies and for access to certain data sets.

Accessing Confidential Data (Post approval)

Submitting an application is one step in the process of gaining access to confidential data. If your application is approved, there will be additional steps and documentation required. These may include background investigations, data security training, and licensing. After your application is approved, the data-owning agency or agencies will contact you to initiate their data security protocols.

Agency-specific Information

Eligibility requirements

Applicants for data from some agencies must meet specific requirements as shown below. Most agencies do not allow access from overseas. If you have questions about accessing data from outside the US, please work directly with that agency.

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA):

- U.S. Citizenship required.

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS):

- Affiliation with an educational institution, research arm of a government agency, or non-profit entity.
- Evidence of fulfillment of human subjects requirements.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS):

- Affiliation with a U.S. educational institution or non-profit entity.

Census Bureau:

- Residency in the U.S. for three out of the last five years.
- Affiliation with a U.S. educational institution, research arm of a U.S. government agency, or U.S. non-profit entity.

Energy Information Administration (EIA):

- U.S. Citizenship required.
- Affiliation with a U.S. educational institution or non-profit entity.
- Residency in the U.S. for three out of the last five years.

Federal Reserve Board (FRB):

- U.S. Citizenship required.

IRS Statistics of Income (IRS SOI):

- U.S. Citizenship required.
- Affiliation with a U.S. educational institution or U.S. non-profit entity.

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS):

- Research must be conducted in the U.S.
- Graduate students are not eligible to be principal investigators.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES):

The National Center for Education Statistics NCES is currently not accepting new applications for access to data through the Standard Application Process. Review of applications for access to data from NCES is also paused until further notice.

- Affiliation with a U.S. educational institution or non-profit entity.

- Residency in the U.S. for three out of the last five years.

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES):

- Affiliation with a U.S. educational institution or non-profit entity.
- Residency in the U.S. for three out of the last five years.

Access Modalities and Available Software

The "access modality" is the place where the requested data can be accessed and used. Some are physical locations and others are virtual. This table provides a list of the access modalities, including the agencies who use them and software available within each.

- **BEA Network**:
  - Agency: BEA
  - Access provided at the user's domicile.
  - Security clearance is required.
  - Software Available: MS Office, Python, R and RStudio, SAS, Stata, and Stat/Transfer.
- **BLS Onsite**:
  - Agency: BLS
  - Access in a researcher room at the BLS national office (Washington, D.C.).
  - Researchers reserve time during business hours.
  - Use BLS workstations connected to an internal server.
  - More information: www.bls.gov/rda/onsite-at-bls.htm.
  - Software Available: Anaconda, Python, R and RStudio, SAS, and Stata.
- **BLS Virtual Data Enclave**:
  - Agency: BLS
  - Offsite, limited remote access to restricted data.
  - Available for NLSY Geocode and CFOI-Masked data.
  - More information: www.bls.gov/rda/offsite.htm.
  - Software Available: Python, R and RStudio, SAS, SPSS, Stata, and Stat/Transfer.
- **BTS Virtual Data Enclave**:
  - Agency: BTS
  - Remote access through a virtual data enclave.
  - Software Available: Varies.
- **EIA Onsite**
  - Agency: EIA
  - Access at EIA's Forrestal Building located in Washington, DC
  - Software Available: MS Office, R, Python, and SAS
- **FRB Onsite**:
  - Agency: FRB
  - Access via a physical data enclave at the Federal Reserve Bank headquarters (Washington, D.C.).
  - Software Available: Python, R and RStudio, SAS, Stata, and Stat/Transfer.
- **Federal Statistical Research Data Centers** (FSRDCs):
  - Agencies: BEA, BJS, BLS, Census, NCSES, NCHS, SAMHSA
  - Census Bureau facilities at partner institutions.

- Meets physical and information security requirements.
- Remote access via secure Virtual Desktop Interface (VDI) may be available.
- Researchers must obtain Census Bureau Special Sworn Status (SSS) and pass a background investigation.
- Software Available: Anaconda, Gurobi, Intel Composer, Knittro, MADD, Mathematica, Matlab, OpenGeoda, R and Rstudio, SAS, Stat/Transfer, Stata, Stata-MP, SUDAAN, and Tomlab.

- **ICPSR Physical Data Enclave**:
  - Agency: BJS
  - Located in the Perry Building on the campus of the University of Michigan.
  - Software Available: R for Windows and RStudio, SAS, SPSS (including AMOS), Stat/Transfer, and Stata/MP.
- **ICPSR Virtual Data Enclave**:
  - Agency: BJS
  - Users access restricted data via their own computers using a virtual desktop.
  - Software Available: ArcGIS Desktop, Matlab, Mplus, Python, R and RStudio, SAS, SPSS (including AMOS), Stat/Transfer, Stata, and SUDAAN
- **IRS-issued Laptop**:
  - Agency: IRS
  - Remote access to the IRS network via secure VPN.
  - Government laptop issued and configured by IRS IT.
  - Software Available: Python, R, SAS, and Stata.
- **IRS Onsite**:
  - Agency: IRS
  - Access at IRS Headquarters, Submission Processing Center, or other satellite (field) offices.
  - Software Available: Python, R, SAS, and Stata.
- **NAHMS Onsite:**
  - Agencies: NAHMS
  - NOTE: If a request includes both NASS and NAHMS data, the NAHMS Onsite option cannot be used, the USDA Virtual Data Enclave must be used
  - Researchers access restricted-use the NAHMS physical data lab in Fort Collins, CO.
  - Software Available: MS Office, R, RStudio, SAS, SUDAAN
- **NCHS RDC**:
  - Agencies: NCHS, SAMSHA
  - Researchers access restricted-use NCHS data at Research Data Centers (RDCs) in Hyattsville, MD, Atlanta, GA, and Rockville, MD.
  - RDCs are open by appointment only.
  - Computers are not connected to the Internet.
  - RDC Analyst reviews all materials and output.
  - Electronic devices are not permitted.
  - NCHS projects can also access NCHS data at Federal Statistical RDCs (FSRDCs).
  - Non-US citizens are generally encouraged to use FSRDCs.
  - Software Available: R, SAS, Stata, and SUDAAN.
- **NCSES Secure Data Access Facility** (SDAF):

- Agency: NCSES
- Provides secure remote access to NCSES restricted-use data.
- Researchers must apply, be approved, and complete training.
- Access via approved computer and private internet connection.
- Personal file space and software suite provided.
- More information: https://ncses.nsf.gov/about/licensing.
- Software Available: Jupyter Notebook/Github, Microsoft Suite (e.g., Word, Excel, Access), R and RStudio, SAS, Stata, and Stat/Transfer.

- **NCES Remote Access** (Administrative Data Research Facility - ADRF):
  The National Center for Education Statistics NCES is currently not accepting new applications for access to data through the Standard Application Process. Review of applications for access to data from NCES is also paused until further notice.
  - Agency: NCES
  - A secure cloud-based computing platform.
  - Promotes collaboration, facilitates documentation, and provides data use information.
  - Provides secure access to over 100 confidential government datasets from 50+ agencies.
  - More information: https://coleridgeinitiative.org/adrf/
  - Software Available: ArcGIS, Matlab, Mplus, Python, R and RStudio, SPSS, Stata, and Stat/Transfer.
- **Requester Secure Site**:
  - Agencies: BJS, NCES, SSA
  - Researchers use data at their institutions.
  - Method and requirements set by the data-owning agency.
  - May include non-networked computers, secure offices, or other security provisions.
  - Software Available: Varies by agency
- **SSA Onsite**:
  - Agency: SSA
  - Access via a physical data enclave at the Social Security Administration in Washington, D.C.
  - Software Available: COBOL, Excel software (to access and store data), and SAS.4
- **USDA Virtual Data Enclave**:
  - Agencies: ERS, NASS, NAHMS, USDA
  - Offsite remote access via secure internet connection.
  - Researchers use their own computer and web browser.
  - Personal file space and software suite provided.
  - Software Available: DBeaver, Jupyter Lab with Python and R kernels, LaTeX, LibreOffice, MS Office, Python, PyCharm, R, RStudio, SAS, SQL Server Management Studio, Stata, and SVN.

Required agency-specific documents

Some agencies require documents beyond the application itself, as listed below.

BEA

- Required Document:
  - Curriculum Vita (CV) for each applicant

BJS

- Required Documents:
  - CV for each applicant
  - Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Census

- Required Document:
  - Permission to use proprietary data

EIA

- Required Document:
  - CV for each applicant

NASS

- Required Documents:
  - Signed MOU
  - List of requested variables (Census of Agriculture requests only)

NCHS

- Required Documents:
  - CV for each applicant
  - If student project, student advisor agreement form
  - Permission to use proprietary data
  - Requested output must include Table Shells
  - Variables requested must be provided in a data dictionary format that lists all variables (i.e., restricted-use, public-use and external) needed for the research project

SAMHSA

- Required Documents:
  - List of requested variables

Project duration

Participating agencies differ in the length of time for which they allow access to restricted-use data. The chart below provides the maximum duration allowed for each.

- BEA: 60 months
- BJS: 48 months
- BLS: 48 months
- Census: 60 months
- EIA: 60 months
- ERS: 60 months
- FRB: 60 months
- IRS: 60 months
- NAHMS: 36 months
- NASS: 36 months
- NCES: 60 months (The National Center for Education Statistics NCES is currently not accepting new applications for access to data through the Standard Application Process. Review of applications for access to data from NCES is also paused until further notice.)
- NCHS: 36 months

- NCSES: 60 months
- SAMHSA: 36 months
- SSA: 60 months

Variables Requested

The following agencies require lists of specific variables requested. Please refer to the dataset's data dictionary to review the variables available. The agency will determine whether the proposed use of variables is appropriate and evaluate project feasibility based on the variables requested.

- NASS: For Census of Agriculture projects, complete the spreadsheet for all variables needed from NASS and email to SM.NASS.Data.Lab@usda.gov. Refer to the data dictionary for the dataset to see the available variables.
- NCHS: List all variables needed for research project (i.e., restricted-use, public-use and any external variable). Refer to the agency dataset data dictionaries for available variables.
- SAMHSA: List all variables needed from SAMHSA. Refer to the data dictionary for the dataset to see the available variables.
- NAHMS: List all variables needed from NAHMS. Refer to the data dictionary for the dataset to see the available variables.

Agency Benefits

The following agencies require that applicants demonstrate how their projects will benefit the agency or agencies providing the data:

- BEA (Bureau of Economic Analysis)
- Census Bureau
- BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- IRS-SOI (Internal Revenue Service – Statistics of Income Division)
- NCHS (National Center for Health Statistics)

Agency-specific criteria for evaluating the applicant's answers are provided within the application. If you have questions while completing this section, you are advised to contact the agency responsible for making the data available. Contact information can be found in the Participating Agencies and Contact Information section at the beginning of this guide.

Appendix

Standard Application Questions

The questions from the application are provided here so that you know what information you will need before you begin the application process. All questions, along with any help text or links, are included here, even though some are agency-specific and might not appear on the application you complete. An asterisk (*) designates required items and the question format, whether it is answered within the application (in app) or via file upload (upload), is noted for each. **Bold font** indicates that a question only appears when data from specific agencies are requested. These agencies have unique legal or contractual requirements for certain information to be provided.

Additional documents may be required depending on the data selected – these are typically presented for download, completion, and upload. Documents such as Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or security plans may be requested by the data owners upon approval of the application.

Research Description

Project Title* [text box, max characters allowed: 200]

- Title of project.

Project Duration* [text box, max characters allowed: 2]

- How long is your proposed project in months? Make sure there is sufficient time to achieve project objectives and that the duration is not greater than the data provider's maximum duration.
- Requests for extensions beyond the initial proposed duration depend on the practices of the providing agency. Refer to the document below for the maximum length allowed by the agency from whom you are requesting data.

Note: A pop-up window provides a table of maximum duration for each agency. This information is also provided in the User Guide.

Funding* [text box, max characters allowed: 3800]

- Please list any grants, FSRDC consortium funding, university funding, and any other sources of funding for this project. If none, enter "None."

Timeline* [upload]

- What is the timeline for completing project tasks? The document linked below should be used as an example of the level of specificity and format preferred.
- Projects that use data from the U.S. Census Bureau are required under Title 13, U.S.C. to contribute to the Census Bureau's mission.
- These contributions are called "benefits." The development of the timeline requires linking Census benefits to each of the project activities. Assistance from an FSRDC administrator will greatly reduce the need for future revisions to the timeline after submission. To find an FSRDC administrator near you, please check the list of FSRDC contacts. If you are unsure which FSRDC

to contact or have a general question, please reach out to the Census Bureau at ced.fsrdc.info@census.gov.

Note: A Project Timeline Template is provided and can be downloaded.

Research Question* **[text box, max characters allowed: 3800]**

- What is the proposed research question?

Demonstrated Need* **[text box, max characters allowed: 10000]**

- Explain why the research questions can only be addressed using the requested restricted- use microdata. Be as specific as possible, including listing key variables or methodological advantages of the restricted file compared to a public-use file (where available).

Study Population* **[text box, max characters allowed: 10000]**

- Briefly describe the study population or universe and how it relates to the research question.

Project Abstract* **[text box, 3800]**

- Provide a project abstract of approximately the length that would be published for a journal article. The abstract should broadly describe the purpose of the research, the type of data to be used, and the hypotheses to be tested.

Variables Requested **[upload]**

- If you are requesting data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the Census of Agriculture from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), please upload a data dictionary indicating which variables you will need to access following the instruction on their pages: NASS, NCHS, and SAMHSA. If you are requesting the Census of Agriculture, please email the completed spreadsheet to SM.NASS.data.lab@usda.gov with your SAP application number.

Note: This question only appears for applications to NCHS, NASS, SAMHSA and ERS data.

Time, Geographic, and Other Units Requested **[text box, max characters allowed: 10000]**

- Some datasets are made available only for the specific years or states that you need for your project. For each dataset you're requesting, look at the "Application-related" tab on the main dataset page. If there are "Provisioned by…" fields, please list the years, states, or other units you are requesting for each dataset, indicating why these specific data are necessary for your research. If you have multiple datasets provisioned this way, list the dataset name and other information for each. If the "Application-related" tab shows no "Provisioned by" fields, you may skip this question.

Work Location* **[check box]**

- Where will the data be accessed? If you and, if applicable, other members of the research team plan on using data in multiple places, please mark all that apply. Note that there are often fees for accessing data in a Federal Statistical Research Data Center (FSRDC). Please contact the FSRDC location you intend to use for more information. Other data may have fees for access as noted in the "Fees" field in the "Data Access" section of the information about the asset.

Data Linkages **[upload]**

- Discuss data linkages planned for the research, if any. Please specify datasets to be linked, whether linkages are at the record level (e.g., person, household, business), the purpose of the linkage (e.g., geographic/industry context), and provide basic information on how the linkages are to be performed. Expected length, for projects including linkages only: 2-5 pages.

User-provided Data **Select "Add user- provided data"**

- If you are planning to provide other data for use in this project, please describe those data below. Enter information about one dataset at a time, using the "Add User-provided Data" button to include additional sources.

Note: If the applicant adds user-provided data, the following questions will appear:

- Name and Description of Data [text box, max characters allowed: 200]
  - Provide the name of the dataset, a brief description of its contents, and the approximate size of the file.
- Ownership [text box, max characters allowed: 200]
  - Please indicate whether these data are publicly available or proprietary and provide the source (including URL, if applicable) from whom you obtained the data.
- Anonymized [yes/no/ don't Know]
  - Will personal identifiers be removed – that is, will the data be anonymized?
- Linkage [yes/no/ don't Know]
  - Will you be linking these to other data at the record (e.g., person, household, business) level?
- Protected Identification Keys (PIKs) [yes/no/ don't Know]
  - Will you require Census protected identification keys (PIKs) to be applied to these data in order to link to other Census Bureau data?
  - *Note: This question only appears for Census data.*

Software Requirements **[text box, max characters allowed: 200]**

- If your project requires statistical software other than that which is currently available in the location in which you will access the data, please indicate that here.

Note: A pop-up window with a table of software by location is provided. This information is also listed in the User Guide.

Methodology* **[upload]**

- Explain the methodology that will be used for the project. The methodology should be clearly stated and appropriate for the research questions. The metadata catalog, agency publications and statistical products, agency web pages describing the restricted access data, and agency contacts are valuable resources for background information for drafting a strong methodology. Expected length: 3-10 pages.
- Your methodology may include, but is not limited to the following information, as appropriate
  - How each requested data set will be used
  - Model equations to be estimated
  - Estimation methods
  - How previous research supports the feasibility of the methodology of the project
  - How model variables will be constructed
  - Strategies for addressing data quality issues
  - Expected sample size and subsamples
  - Unit of analysis including level of geography

    - Ability to link datasets
    - Availability of the study population in the data
    - Use of sample weights, design variables, and adjustments for use of complex survey design
    - Expected outcomes
- Projects that use data from the U.S. Census Bureau are required under Title 13, U.S.C. to contribute to the Census Bureau's mission.
    - These contributions are called "benefits." Your proposed methodology must demonstrate that the use of the data can achieve the required Census benefits. Assistance from an FSRDC administrator will greatly reduce the need for future revisions to your methodology after submission. To find an FSRDC administrator near you, please check the list of FSRDC contacts
    - If you are unsure which FSRDC to contact or have a general question, please reach out to the Census Bureau at ced.fsrdc.info@census.gov.

List of References* **[upload]**

- List any publications referenced in this application as well as any other works that are of importance to this project.
    - Expected length: 2-5 pages.

Project Products* **[text box, max characters allowed: 3800]**

- What are the anticipated journal articles, books, working papers, conference presentations, technical memoranda, dissertations, government reports, or other products for this project? Please include the names of journals.

Requested Output* **[upload]**

- Describe the anticipated output for this project, including regression/modeling output, summary statistics, and any other output you intend to submit for disclosure review as well as anticipated methods to meet disclosure requirements (e.g., noise infusion). Please check with the agency contact if you are unsure of the agency's output and disclosure requirements.
    - For modeling output include descriptions of the samples you anticipate using and variables you plan on reporting results on, including descriptions of categorical variables.
    - For tabular output, describe the output needed for the project products in detail, including examples when applicable (i.e., state groupings, levels of output and how you will display restricted-use data, analytic methods to reduce disclosure, etc.).
- Each agency will assess this section based on its disclosure requirements. Some agencies' disclosure requirements only allow for projects that emphasize regression/modeling output and a limited number of summary statistics that support this output, while others require table shells of requested output be included in the application. (Expected length: 2- 15 pages).

Census Benefits*

- Projects that use data from the U.S. Census Bureau are required under Title 13, U.S.C. to contribute to the Census Bureau's mission. These contributions are called "benefits." List each proposed criteria, explaining how the benefit will be achieved. The development of Census benefits that will be accepted during the application review process can be challenging for many researchers. Assistance from an FSRDC administrator will greatly reduce the need for future revisions to your benefit statements after submission.

- Assistance from an FSRDC administrator will greatly reduce the need for future revisions to your benefit statements after submission. To find an FSRDC administrator near you, please check the list of FSRDC contacts. If you are unsure which FSRDC to contact or have a general question, please reach out to the Census Bureau at ced.fsrdc.info@census.gov. (List of the criteria with details about each is provided within the application.)
- Select a Criterion [drop down]
    - Criterion 1: Evaluating Concepts/Practices
    - Criterion 2: Increase relevancy of trends
    - Criterion 3: Developing utilities
    - Criterion 4: Enhancing administrative functions
    - Criterion 5: Improving quality of data
    - Criterion 6: Improving methods for data collection
    - Criterion 7: Enhancing data usage lifecycle
    - Criterion 8: Improving underlying classification schemes
    - Criterion 9: Identifying further data needs
    - Criterion 10: Improving sampling frames
    - Criterion 11: Describing population
    - Criterion 12: Improving survey estimates
    - Criterion 13: Developing statistical weights
- Criterion Description *[text box, max characters allowed: 10000]*

Agency Benefits* **[text box, max characters allowed: 10000]**

- This question is required by the agencies listed below. Failure to answer this question could delay the determination of your application.
    - The Bureau of Economic Analysis
    - The Nation Center for Health Statistics
    - The Bureau of Labor Statistics
    - The Statistics of Income Division of the Internal Revenue Service
- List the benefits to the agency from whom the data are being requested, explaining how the proposed work will achieve those benefits. Please click the link below to view specific guidance provided by the above agencies.
- Guidance for completing this question is linked within the application.

Documents *[upload]*

- Additional documents may be required depending on the data selected. These are typically presented for download, completion, and [upload]. If additional documents are required, these will appear in your application in the “Documents” section.

- Some documents, such as IRB approval or security plans, may be requested by the data owners upon approval of the application.

BJS:

- Pre-approval documentation: Pre-approval documents include IRB determination documentation and a fully executed BJS Privacy Certificate. These documents are required to ensure that users of BJS restricted data will comply with applicable federal requirements concerning the protection of human subjects and the confidentiality of information identifiable to a private person, consistent with the regulations at 28 CFR Part 46 and 28 CFR Part 22. These documents must be submitted before an approval can be issued in the SAP.
- Post-approval documentation: Post-approval documents include a fully executed NACJD Restricted Data Use Agreement, ICPSR Data Security Plan, ICPSR Confidentiality Pledge, and Certification of Training (when applicable). These documents are required to establish an agreement between NACJD (National Archive of Criminal Justice Data)/ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research) and the user(s) who is approved to access BJS restricted data in accordance with the terms and conditions stated in the agreement, as well as to establish the technical, physical, and administrative controls that must be followed by the user(s) to protect data from unauthorized disclosure and misuse. These documents must be submitted before NACJD/ICPSR can provide access to BJS restricted data.

Census:

- LA County SNAP Employee Acknowledgment and Confidentiality Agreement: Required by data provider.
- CJARS Data Use Request Template: Required by data provider.
- CMS DUA Signature Addendum: Required by data provider.
- CPS Request Template: Required to determine if sponsoring agency review is needed.
- DOD DMDC form: Required by data provider.
- FSRDC Access Confirmation Form: Agency requirement - Used to ensure that the FSRDC location is aware of the potential project and to ensure that the FSRDC administrator has the opportunity to provide information on any fees and to give guidance on proposal and SSS requirements.
- IPUMS Research project application and researcher agreement: Required by data provider.
- Survey of Construction Template: Sponsoring agency requirement.
- VA Data Use Request Template: Required by data provider.
- SSA Data Use Request Form: Required by data provider.

NASS:

- MOU NASS: The MOU form must be signed at the time of application submission to ensure the project is supported and the institution has agreed to accept and enforce the responsibilities associated with using restricted microdata.
- MOU NASS-ERS: The MOU form must be signed at the time of application submission to ensure the project is supported and the institution has agreed to accept and enforce the responsibilities associated with using restricted microdata.