

# Standard Application Process (SAP) Questions



Interagency Council on  
Statistical Policy  
Leaders of the United States Federal Statistical System



Standard  
Application  
Process



The questions from the application are provided here so you know what 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 (\*) indicates required items. The question format is noted for each.

**Blue 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.

## Researcher Information

Field Label	Field Wording	Format
PI/Lead Researcher*	Name of principal investigator or lead researcher.	text box
Institutional Affiliation*	Name of employer or affiliate.	text box
Title*	Primary position type.	drop down
Email*	Email address. Once the application is submitted, this address will receive all communications about the application and the individual with this address will be the primary person to act upon the application using his/her account.	text box
Phone Number*	Phone number.	text box
Curriculum Vitae (CV)/Resume	Please upload a CV or resume, including employment history, research experience, publications and/or presentations. PDF and .docx files are accepted.	upload
	Note: This question only appears for applications for BEA, BJS, BTS, FRB, and NCHS.	
Letter of Support (student advisor agreement) *	Please upload a letter of support from a faculty advisor demonstrating your qualifications to conduct the proposed research.	upload
	Note: This question only appears for applications to NCHS and BEA data when the PI or Co-PI selects "Graduate Student" as their title.	
Citizenship*	Is this person a U.S. citizen?	Yes/No
Special Sworn Status*	Does this person have active special sworn status (SSS) with the U.S. Census Bureau?	Yes/No/Not sure

Field Label	Field Wording	Format
Data Access*	<p>Will this person access the data listed under “Data Requested” in the sidebar of this application? Note: Some options may require follow-up with the data provider.</p> <p>Select Yes if this person needs a security clearance to obtain an enclave seat or access point to do statistical work or needs a security clearance to participate in discussions involving unvetted output in a secure location (this option is only available for some data providers).</p> <p>Select No if this person does not need a security clearance and is only supporting the research project in ways that involve access to information that has been cleared for disclosure.</p>	Yes/No
Graduation Date*	Expected graduation (MM/YYYY).	text box
	Note: This is only asked when a researcher selects “Graduate Student” as their title.	
Researcher role on the project*	Role on project.	drop down
	Note: This is only asked of researchers. It is not asked of PIs or Co-PIs.	

## Research Description

Field Label	Field Wording	Format
Project Title*	Title of project.	text box
Project Duration*	<p>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.</p> <p>Note: A pop-up window provides a table of maximum duration for each agency. This information is also provided in the User Guide.</p>	text box
	Funding*	

Field Label	Field Wording	Format
Timeline*	<p>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.</p> <p>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 <a href="#">list of FSRDC contacts</a>. If you are unsure which FSRDC to contact or have a general question, please reach out to the Census Bureau at <a href="mailto:ced.fsrc.info@census.gov">ced.fsrc.info@census.gov</a>.</p> <p>Note: A Project Timeline Template is provided and can be downloaded.</p>	upload
Research Question*	What is the proposed research question?	text box
Demonstrated Need*	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).	text box
Study Population*	Briefly describe the study population or universe and how it relates to the research question.	text box
Project Abstract*	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.	text box
Variables Requested	<p>If you are requesting data from the Census of Agriculture from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), please upload a data dictionary indicating which variables you will need to access following the instruction on their pages: <a href="#">NASS</a>, <a href="#">NCHS</a>, and <a href="#">SAMHSA</a>. If you are requesting the Census of Agriculture, please email <a href="mailto:SM.NASS.Data.Lab@usda.gov">SM.NASS.Data.Lab@usda.gov</a> for instructions on creating a variable list.</p> <p>Note: This question only appears for applications to NCHS, NASS, and ERS data.</p>	upload
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.	text box

Field Label	Field Wording	Format	
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.	check box	
Data Linkages	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.	upload	
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.	Select "Add user-provided data"	
	Note: If the applicant adds user-provided data, the following questions will appear:		
	Name and Description of Data	Provide the name of the dataset, a brief description of its contents, and the approximate size of the file.	text box
	Ownership	Please indicate whether these data are publicly available or proprietary and provide the source (including URL) from whom you obtained the data.	text box
	Anonymized	Will personal identifiers be removed – that is, will the data be anonymized?	Yes/No/Don't Know
	Linkage	Will you be linking these to other data at the record (e.g., person, household, business) level?	
	Protected Identification Keys (PIKs)	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.	Don't Know/Yes/No
Software Requirements	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.	text box	

Field Label	Field Wording	Format
Methodology*	<p>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: 5-10 pages.</p> <p>Your methodology may include, but is not limited to the following information, as appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How each requested data set will be used</li> <li>▶ Model equations to be estimated</li> <li>▶ Estimation methods</li> <li>▶ How previous research supports the feasibility of the methodology of the project</li> <li>▶ How model variables will be constructed</li> <li>▶ Strategies for addressing data quality issues</li> <li>▶ Expected sample size and subsamples</li> <li>▶ Unit of analysis including level of geography</li> <li>▶ Ability to link datasets</li> <li>▶ Availability of the study population in the data</li> <li>▶ Use of sample weights, design variables, and adjustments for use of complex survey design</li> <li>▶ Expected outcomes</li> </ul> <p>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 <a href="#">list of FSRDC contacts</a>. If you are unsure which FSRDC to contact or have a general question, please reach out to the Census Bureau at <a href="mailto:ced.fsrdc.info@census.gov">ced.fsrdc.info@census.gov</a>.</p>	upload
List of References*	<p>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.</p>	upload
Project Products*	<p>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.</p>	text box

Field Label	Field Wording	Format
Requested Output*	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ For modeling output include descriptions of the samples you anticipate using and variables you plan on reporting results on, including descriptions of categorical variables.</li> <li>▶ 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.).</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>	upload
Census Benefits*	<p>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.</p> <p>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 <a href="#">list of FSRDC contacts</a>. If you are unsure which FSRDC to contact or have a general question, please reach out to the Census Bureau at <a href="mailto:ced.fsrc.info@census.gov">ced.fsrc.info@census.gov</a>. (List of the criteria with details about each is provided within the application.)</p> <p>Note: This question only appears for applications requesting Census data.</p>	text box

Field Label	Field Wording	Format
Agency Benefits*	<p>This question is required by the agencies listed below. Failure to answer this question could delay the determination of your application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The Bureau of Economic Analysis</li> <li>▶ The Nation Center for Health Statistics</li> <li>▶ The Bureau of Labor Statistics</li> <li>▶ The Statistics of Income Division of the Internal Revenue Service</li> </ul> <p>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.</p> <p>(Guidance for completing this question is linked within the application.)</p>	text box

## Documents

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.