

California Health Interview Survey

Making California's Voices Heard on Health

Data Access Center

The **Data Access Center (DAC)**, based at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, provides services via a DAC project to analyze California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) data in a secure, controlled environment that protects the confidentiality of respondents. Upon DAC project application approval, researchers can analyze confidential data remotely using services provided in the DAC.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review

The UCLA South General IRB has approved the DAC to conduct analyses of confidential CHIS data (IRB-11-2227). Researchers who are affiliated with UCLA should not apply to the UCLA Human Subjects Protection Committee. Researchers who are not affiliated with UCLA should consult with their local IRB to determine the appropriate review of their proposed research but are not required to submit proof of IRB approval to the DAC. DAC staff are required to obtain UCLA IRB approval and submit a copy of the approval with their DAC project application.

Data Disclosure Review Committee (DDRC)

The DAC operates by following policies and procedures approved by the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP) and the State of California's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). The DDRC is responsible for implementing the confidentiality policies adopted by the CHIS Principal Investigator (PI) and approved by OHRPP and CPHS. The DDRC's main tasks include:

- Review of data files, data products, and data requests to ensure that CHIS respondents' privacy and confidentiality are not violated;
- Review of CHIS variables and recommended confidentiality and sensitivity levels;
- Make recommendations on disclosure limitation techniques for the Public Use Files (PUFs); and
- Review of applications to use confidential data through the DAC.

DAC Project Application Review Process

Researchers interested in using confidential CHIS data must submit a [DAC project application](#) (select "Access DAC Online").

The DAC Coordinator will review each application and communicate feedback directly to the researcher if needed (i.e., for questions/clarifications, if revised documents needed). The completed application will then be reviewed by the DDRC, which will make a formal recommendation to the CHIS PI to approve, request further information, or reject the application. Criteria for project approval include feasibility, minimal risk of disclosure of confidential information, and consistency with the purpose of CHIS. Researchers are encouraged to develop their proposal in consultation with the DAC Coordinator. Researchers will generally receive a response up to two weeks after application submission.

Approved DAC projects are assigned to two DAC staff members who will create a custom data file and run data requests in the DAC environment.

Confidentiality Assurances

Researchers with approved DAC projects must sign a Data User Agreement prior to submitting data requests. All electronic materials provided to researchers from the DAC are carefully screened to minimize the risk of disclosure of confidential information.

Student Researchers

Students interested in using confidential CHIS data for a thesis or dissertation (or other class project for academic credit) are required to provide evidence of faculty sponsorship in the DAC project application. A brief letter must be provided by a faculty member stating that they will serve the faculty sponsor for the project, have reviewed and approved the student's research proposal, and will oversee work completed under the student's DAC project. Students may also submit a [DAC Student Scholarship Application](#) (under "Students"), which would subsidize the costs of accessing confidential CHIS data. The number of scholarships available is limited and based on financial need. Submitting an application does not guarantee that the scholarship will be awarded.



Data File Set-Up

The DAC staff will create a custom data file for the DAC project based on the variables and age groups selected in the Master Variable List. In addition, researchers may supply an external data file to be merged with CHIS data. Supplied data may consist of proprietary data collected and owned by the researcher or a publicly available data file. Researchers must specify in their DAC project application if they intend to merge an external data file with CHIS data. The DAC will not provide access to the external data file to anyone without prior written consent from the researcher who supplied the file. Merged data files containing CHIS data may not be removed from the DAC.

Options for Analyzing Confidential CHIS Data

1. Statistical Services

DAC staff will run all requests in the DAC environment and return output to the researcher. Researchers do not receive any confidential data files.

- a. Researchers will write and submit their own code (this option is required for student researchers)
- b. DAC staff will write the code for the researcher

2. De-bugging

For researchers writing their own code

- a. DAC staff will de-bug researcher's code
- b. DAC staff will send an error log file so the researcher can correct and resubmit their code

3. Statistical Consulting

Assistance with statistical conceptual questions

- a. Available to non-student researchers only

Approved Software in the DAC

- SAS
- SPSS
- Stata*
- R*
- ArcGIS

* Please consult the [list of approved and available packages](#). If any packages not on this list are needed, please note them in the DAC project application. Extra charges may apply for packages not already on the approved list.

Costs

Cost estimates for DAC projects vary and depend on the type of services needed, complexity of the analysis, and number of requests.

Researchers writing their own codes should utilize [sample code](#) and [dummy data](#) (under "Dummy Data Files") to test code and generate a cost estimate for each planned data run. For example, if code that is tested using dummy data takes 30 minutes to run, then the estimated cost for this run is \$62.20 (\$125/2).

Fees for DAC services can be viewed [here](#) (under "Cost"). Please note that there is a minimum project cost of \$1,000 (or \$500 for DAC Student Scholarship recipients).

Renewal, Expansion, and Request for Additional Variables

All DAC projects expire two years after the date of application approval. Researchers who wish to continue working on DAC projects that are about to expire must submit a **Renewal application**, which will extend the DAC project for another two years.

Researchers who have previously been approved to access confidential CHIS data and wish to expand their original DAC project application by adding new CHIS years and/or age groups must submit an **Expansion application**. The Master Variable List must contain the same approved variables from the originally approved application.

Researchers who wish to add more variables to their project must complete an **Additional Variable request**.

For More Information

For additional information regarding the DAC project application process or the use of confidential CHIS data, please contact the DAC Coordinator at dacchpr@ucla.edu. Additional information about the CHIS and its methodology is available on our [website](#).

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<https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu>