Cancer
PROGRAMS

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

NATIONAL CANCER DATABASE

NCDB Participant User Files: How to Apply

1. **Eligibility:** Confirm that you are at a Commission on Cancer (CoC)-accredited program.

2. **Overview:** Before you start planning your proposal, review the information available at https://www.facs.org/quality-programs/cancer/ncdb/puf This webpage contains an introduction and overview to the NCDB PUFs, detailed documentation of the data items included in the distributed file, the Data Use Agreement, Terms of Agreement, and Getting Started Document.

3. **Letter of Support**: Secure support from your CoC-accredited cancer program. As part of the application process Principal Investigators (PIs) will be asked to upload a letter of support for the proposal, written on hospital or cancer program letter head, from the Cancer Committee Chair on record with the CoC. If you are the Chair, please provide a letter of support from your Cancer Program Administrator.

4. **Username and Password:** At the program level, the CoC Quality Portal (QPort) *Primary Contact* (the only individual allowed to add, remove or update user contact information) should add your information to CoC QPort *Site Contacts* as a *NCDB PUF Applicant*. Each program is responsible for maintaining *Site Contacts*. Once information is added to *Site Contacts*, please allow 3-5 business days for processing of new users and automatic processing of edits to existing users. For password or login issues, please contact CoC@facs.org.

   Note: If it is unknown who the *Primary Contact* is at your facility, please reach out to your program's hospital cancer registrar; if it is unknown who the hospital cancer registrar is then contact the medical staff office, Cancer Committee Chair, or Cancer Liaison Physician to inquire who the *Primary Contact* is for CoC QPort.

5. **Online Application**: Begin the NCDB PUF on-line application process. Once you have your CoC Datalinks credentials, log into the *NCDB PUF Application Manager* and start the on-line application. PIs can return at any time to complete, revise, or update an application until the application deadline. No facsimile or mailed copy of the application will be accepted.

6. **Application Review Process**: Investigators can request an optional technical review of their proposal. The review is performed by NCDB staff, who will check for the completeness of each proposal and assess the feasibility of the proposed project, given the data available in the PUFs. At the conclusion of the review process, proposals will be designated as approved, or approved contingent on specified revision(s). If no technical review is requested, the application is automatically approved. However, if no technical review is requested, and the PI requests an incorrect PUF file for example, the PI will need to submit a new application in order to receive the correct file.

7. **Downloading Files:** PIs with accepted proposals will be notified when PUFs are ready to be downloaded. Files will be available through the *NCDB PUF Application Manager* only after the PI electronically signs the Data Use Agreement (DUA). NCDB PUFs are delivered as compressed and encrypted text files, and a file-specific password is provided. *7-zip*, available for free at http://www.7-zip.org/download.html, is necessary to open these compressed files. PUFs are accompanied by a SAS and SPSS script, as well as informational documents describing PUF elements, changes from previous application cycles, and appropriate use of data. PUFs are available to PIs to download for one month following notification of their availability. If not downloaded within the month's deadline, the Investigator will need to submit a new application in order to obtain PUF data.

Required Application Elements

The NCDB PUF application requires completion of each of the elements listed below. PUF Applications should be completed on-line, using the PUF application manager at https://ncdbapp.facs.org/puf/. Investigators may return at any time to complete, revise, or update an application until the application deadline. No facsimile or mailed copy of the application will be accepted.

A **Terms of Agreement** will need to be completed online when you first log into the application. You will only need to do this the first time you log in to each application. The Principal Investigator is required to complete the Terms of Agreement.

1 - Research Project Title

2 - Principal Investigator:
Name; E-mail; CoC-Accredited Program; Biosketch (2 pages or less).
Letter of Support from the Cancer Committee Chair of your cancer program (on facility letterhead). If you are the Chair, please submit a letter or support from the Cancer Program Administrator.

3- **Data Analyst:**
A data analyst is required and must be located at the facility of the Principal Investigator.
Name; E-mail; CoC-Accredited Program
Biosketch (2 pages or less)

3 - Co-Investigator(s) [members of the research team]
Name; E-mail; Institutional Affiliation; and Planned Role in the Proposed Research Project
Biosketch (2 pages or less for each)

4 – Disease Site and Patient Age Cohort of Interest

5 – Research Questions/Objectives (min. 50 characters, max. 1000 characters)

6 - Background (min. 50 characters, max. 1500 characters)

7 - Describe your analysis plan: NCDB needs to determine that your proposal is feasible given the data items available in the PUF file. Therefore, describe your analysis plan, naming the variables that are key to your analysis (see PUF Data Dictionary https://www.facs.org/quality-programs/cancer/ncdb/puf Please note that the PUF data do not include cancer specific mortality or recurrence data. (min. 50 characters, max. 2000 characters)

8 - Describe prior experience in using and analyzing large data sets (min. 50 characters, max. 1000 characters)

9 - Citations (5 or less from Background Research, min. 100 characters, max. 2000 characters)

10 – If you are a previous PUF participant, list, using complete citations, all publications using NCDB PUF data that you have authored.

11 - With which of the following commonly available data sets have you had experience?
> NCDB Participant user File; SEER Medicare File; NAACCR CINA Deluxe; NSQIP; SEER Public
> Use File; Other

12 - What statistical software packages are you planning to use?
> SAS; SPSS; Stata; SPLUS; Other

13 - How are you planning to fund or support your proposed PUF study?
> Funded by Grant; Department Monies; Other

14 - How long do you anticipate the proposed study will take to complete?
> 3 Months; 6 Months; 9 Months; 1 Year, More than 1 Year