

Request for Proposals

Competition to Conduct Analysis of HUD's Randomized Evaluation Data

Moving to Opportunity and Family Options Studies

HUD is now accepting proposals for its annual competition for access to HUD randomized experiment data. Successful applicants will gain access to data from two of the most significant randomized social experiments ever conducted, the Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing (MTO) demonstration and the Family Options Study (FOS). HUD has partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau to make the experimental data more readily available to qualified researchers and more readily able to be linked with other administrative data. By making these data more accessible to qualified researchers, HUD expects to continue the process of evidence building.

Successful applicants will be granted access to either FOS or MTO restricted data, with the expectation that they fully perform the tasks outlined in their proposal. MTO experimental data assess the impact of neighborhoods on the lives of low-income families with children. Likewise, FOS experimental data assess housing and services interventions for families with children experiencing homelessness.

This request for proposals marks the continuation of what we hope will be a long-term relationship with the U.S. Census Bureau to make data from HUD-sponsored randomized social experiments available to researchers for ongoing evidence-building efforts.

For each winner, HUD and Census will provide research support for the first year of the project at no cost to the researcher, *exclusive of the cost to access a Federal Research Data Center (RDC)*. Included in the award are the cost to obtain special sworn status for researchers; to draft, route, and review the project agreement; to ingest, process, and provision any outside data; to provide technical and administrative assistance during the analyses, and to assist with disclosure review for the final analyses. The estimated value of this support is \$30,000.

Access to a RDC is a separate expense not covered by the award that each research team will need to arrange with its nearest facility. Some researchers may already be affiliated with a RDC. For those that do not have an existing arrangement, Census will aid in establishing an initial contact.

Note: A list of other currently available data within the U.S. Census Bureau's Data Inventory are available here.

<https://www2.census.gov/about/linkage/data-file-inventory.pdf>

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ces.html>

<https://www.census.gov/ces/dataproducts/economicdata.html>

Overview (Background)

HUD and the US Census Bureau entered into an Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) to make selected randomized evaluation datasets from HUD-sponsored evaluations available to qualified researchers via the Census Bureau's [Economic Reimbursable Surveys Division](#). Approved projects can access the datasets at one of 28 [Federal Statistical Research Data Centers \(FSRDC's\)](#). Researchers working on approved projects must obtain Special Sworn Status (SSS) with the Census Bureau.

The first datasets being made available were collected as part of randomized evaluations – Moving to Opportunity and Housing and Services Options for Homeless Families (hereafter Family Options Study).

[Moving to Opportunity \(MTO\)](#) ran from 1994 to 1998 and involved 4,600 families from high-poverty public housing projects in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. These families were randomly assigned to one of three groups: those who received a housing voucher that they could use only in low-poverty neighborhoods, those who received a housing voucher without that limitation, or those who could continue to live in public housing. Participating families were then tracked through 2010, and researchers have conducted numerous matching exercises from later data. The power of the experimental design permits researchers to derive the impact of neighborhood on the lives of low-income families with children without bias from self-selection or other omitted variables.

[Family Options \(FOS\)](#) was a multi-site random assignment experiment designed to understand which housing and services interventions work best for families with children experiencing homelessness and learn whether certain types of families benefit more or less from different interventions. Between 2010 and 2012, a total of 2,282 families in 12 communities nationwide, including more than 5,000 children, were recruited for the study after staying at least 1 week in an emergency shelter. Families were randomly assigned to one of four possible interventions that differed in the duration of housing assistance provided or in the intensity of social services offered: (a) a long-term deep housing subsidy, usually in the form of a housing choice voucher, with no specialized services; (b) community based rapid re-housing, which is temporary rental assistance for up to 18 months with limited housing-related services; (c) project-based transitional housing, which is temporary housing for up to 24 months in an agency-controlled building coupled with intensive supportive services; and d) usual care, defined as any mix of housing and services that homeless families could obtain on their own outside of the demonstration.

Eligibility

Researchers in government, academic, non-profit, and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply. Persons affiliated with a policy or research organization and have experience in conducting rigorous policy research and evaluation using social and behavioral science data are strongly encouraged to apply. Lastly, any person on an

approved project that requires entrance to the Census Bureau's secure environment to view or work with restricted data must first obtain special sworn status (SSS) with the Census Bureau. Subsequently, proposals must list at least one member of their research team who is eligible to apply for SSS.

The Census Bureau grants SSS to enable researchers to conduct work that specifically benefits a Census Bureau program. By obtaining SSS, all individuals are held to the same standards, legal obligations, and penalties as Census Bureau employees are, in accordance with protecting the confidentiality of Census data. Users must also adhere to relevant ethics, confidentiality, and privacy protection procedures.

SSS is authorized by Title 13 U.S.C. 23 (c) and permits the Bureau of the Census to utilize researchers to help the Census Bureau perform the work authorized by this title. Under this title, SSS researchers must adhere to all Census Bureau security and data stewardship standards and may only use Census data for Census Bureau statistical purposes. Consequently, individuals with SSS may not use Census data to make decisions regarding a specific individual, housing authority, housing provider, or business.

NOTE: The discretionary authority to swear in researchers with SSS rests with the Census Bureau.

Deliverable

While not exceeding 10 pages, proposals should clearly describe the applicant(s) experience performing the proposed scope of work; the analysis plan and methodology for performing the proposed scope of work; and the proposed research outputs. Proposals should also describe all data sources required to conduct the analysis and assess the feasibility of accessing these data sources.

Each proposal will be assessed by HUD program and/or research staff and depending on the scope of the proposed project, may involve staff from other federal agencies with research interests aligned to the topic(s) proposed.

At a minimum, each proposal should include:

- The HUD FOS or MTO dataset for which access is requested (one HUD study dataset per submission)
- Analysis Plan
 - The applicant must include an analysis plan for the project that is reasonable to undertake the proposed work. The narrative should present a clear, practical, and forward-looking plan to fully perform the tasks outlined in the proposal.
- Research and Development Design
 - The applicant must include a preliminary research and development design that specifically addresses this project.

- The applicant must include a brief description of the research literature and the contribution of the proposed project.
- The applicant must include the research question(s) being considered.
- The applicant must include the types of analysis being considered, any additional datasets that will be linked/used in the analysis and a discussion of the feasibility of accessing any such data sources during the timeframe proposed. (See appendix for administrative data listings and other restricted data held at the Census Bureau. Contact ERD.data-linkage@census.gov for more information about the content of datasets.)
- It is highly encouraged for researchers to bring outside data into the Census Bureau for linking with HUD's MTO or FOS evaluation data.
- Organizational Capacity and Experience and Key Personnel.
 - Applicants must identify the Federal Statistical Research Data Center (FSRDC) where the researcher(s) plans to access the MTO or FOS evaluation data.
 - Recent Experience and Performance - The applicant must include a summary of relevant, recent experience and performance. HUD will evaluate all applicants and their respective organizations on any relevant work based on their recent (within the past 5 years) research or data projects comparable in scope and complexity to the proposed work. (Note: Supporting documents should be included in an appendix.)
 - Key Personnel - The applicant must include a summary of key personnel. For the purposes of responding to this sub-factor, 'key personnel' is defined as the applicant's proposed research team. Applicants should include in their proposed research and development team people with expertise in applied research, project management, data management, statistics (including econometrics), and writing and editing. (Note: Resumes/CVs should be included in an appendix.)
- Performance Evaluation.
 - The applicant must describe the general methods and measures it will use to regularly monitor progress in performance of proposed analyses.

Proposal Submittal

Proposals will be reviewed and accepted on a rolling basis. However, 10-20 submissions are expected for this award, and because of limited capacity to provide individualized services to research teams, researchers are encouraged to submit proposals early. Special attention will be given to applicants that take advantage of the experimental design of the studies and that propose to bring in outside data to be linked with Census and/or HUD data. Please submit your proposal to ERD.Data-Linkage@Census.gov.

HUD Contact: Christopher.J.Narducci@hud.gov