

Virtual Data Enclave (VDE) User Guide

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Applying for Restricted-use Data and Accessing the VDE: Step-By-Step Guide

1. Creating your application

Navigate to the ICPSR website and log in or create your account. Then, locate the study page from which you would like to access restricted data. Select, “Access Restricted Data”, then, “Start Application”.



Guidelines for Applying for Restricted Data ✕

Users are reminded that these data are to be used solely for statistical analysis and reporting of aggregated information, and not for the investigation of specific individuals or organizations.

Access to these data is restricted. Users interested in obtaining these data must complete a Restricted Data Use Agreement. Data are provided via ICPSR's Virtual Data Enclave (VDE). Apply for access to these data through the ICPSR VDE portal. Information and instructions are available within the data portal. For further assistance please reference the [VDE Guide](#) to learn about the application process, about using the VDE, and how to request disclosure review of VDE output.

Close
Start Application

You will be redirected to the Virtual Data Enclave Management System. Select, “Start a new project”

ICPSR
Virtual Data Enclave Management System

Begin Request

Applying for NAHDAP Data in the VDE

Welcome to the National Addiction and HIV Data Archive Program (NAHDAP) VDE Data Management System. Below is an overview of the application and access process. [Applicants are encouraged to review our online VDE Guide.](#)

Step 1: User submits the information below along with the completed and signed Restricted Data Use Agreement (RDUA) to complete the application

- Contact information
- Project summary
- List of datasets requested and why needed (e.g., how they will be used)
- RDUA with lead Investigator (or Sponsor) and Institutional Representative signatures (one RDUA for each institution represented by those on the research team)
- Data Security Plan (included in RDUA)
- CV/resume/NIH biosketch for each user that will access the VDE
- IRB documentation (approval or exemption)

Step 2: ICPSR reviews and approves the application or determines the application needs work. Applicant receives email about approval or what modifications need to be made

Step 3: VDE licenses, access fees, and user accounts

- User provides information about research team members who will access the data in the VDE (i.e., user information)
- User submits payment for the VDE access fee to ICPSR (if payment screen displays)
- ICPSR staff configure University of Michigan accounts and sends email with instructions on how to download the required software and access the VDE

Start a new project

2. Filling out your application

a) **Title** - must match the title of the project on your IRB document from your institution

b) **Description** - describe your project and the PI's previous experience with restricted data (see FAQ #5 on page 7 of this guide)

- For Monitoring the Future (MTF) Data applicants, please also include a statement of intent to adhere to the [MTF Geographic Variable Guidelines](#)

c) **Investigator Information** - the PI on this project must have a terminal degree (i.e. PhD, MD, JD) and must be seen as PI eligible by their institution.

d) **Data Selection** - please check applicable boxes

Select "Create Project" when finished.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Project' form in the ICPSR Virtual Data Enclave Management System. The form is titled 'Create Project' and includes a 'Project Information' section with fields for 'Title' and 'Description'. Below the 'Description' field is a note: 'Please describe the topic of the proposed research and why each requested restricted-use dataset is needed (limit 2000 characters). Investigator must demonstrate experience with using Confidential Data by providing information that summarizes their recent/relevant research, including references. An investigator with no prior experience using Confidential Data should reference the research of their Sponsor on this project that has such experience. See Section III.C. of the [Example VDE Restricted Data Use Agreement](#) for more information. Please identify the name of the Sponsor for this project in the box above. Documentation for these data is publicly available on the [NAHDAP Data Use](#) and should be consulted before making this request.' Below this is the 'Investigator Information' section with fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email', 'Institution', 'Position', and 'Terminal Degree'. A note below these fields states: 'Any investigator that has no demonstrated experience using Confidential Data must have a Sponsor currently with the investigator's institution that has the required experience. The investigator or Sponsor must hold a terminal degree (e.g., PhD, MD, DrPh or JD). If without a terminal degree, investigators should enter 'No' in the Terminal Degree box and name the Sponsor in the Description box above and describe the Sponsor's required experience.' At the bottom is the 'Data Selection' section with three checkboxes: 'Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study [United States] Biomarker Restricted-Use Files', 'Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study [United States] Restricted-Use Files', and 'Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study [United States] Special Collection Restricted-Use Files'.

3. Submitting required documentation

After submitting your VDE application, you will receive an email with instructions. Follow the instructions and reply with the following documentation or send to icpsr-help@umich.edu:

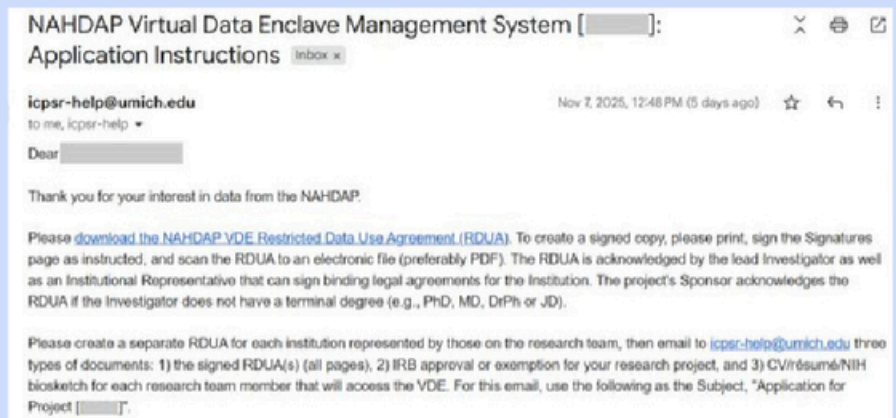
a) **Restricted Data Use Agreement (RDU)** - this must be signed by the PI and an institutional representative who is authorized to sign contracts on behalf of your institution (typically someone from an Office of Research and Sponsored Programs)

b) **IRB Approval or Exemption Letter** - the PI on the VDE application must be named on the IRB letter (does not need to be listed as PI, but must at least be research staff)

c) **CV, Resume, or NIH Biosketch** - required for the Investigator and any research staff that will access the data

d) **State Identifier Restricted-Use Files (SIRUF)** - ONLY required for applicants requesting access to State level PATH data

- Please indicate this request within your project description.
- You will receive a SIRUF form from NAHDAP staff once other required documents are submitted.





If you do not submit the previous documents, your application WILL NOT be processed.

ICPSR staff may send reminders to submit this documentation, however it is the applicant's responsibility to submit these documents promptly in order to ensure access to the data in a timely manner.

4. ICPSR VDE Training

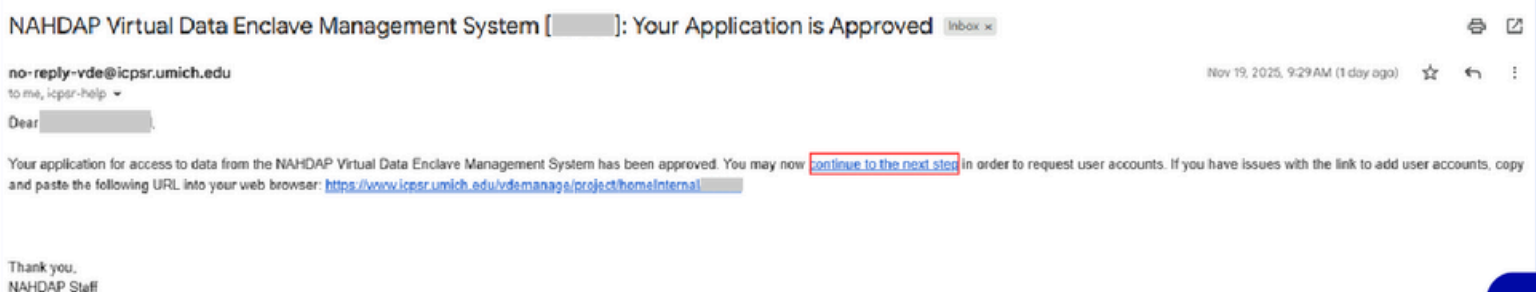
Your application is now in the process of being reviewed internally by ICPSR staff. During this time you may complete VDE Training. The PI and all research staff who will access the VDE are required to complete this training yearly.

Respond promptly to ICPSR emails. ICPSR staff will reach out if any action is needed on your application. This training may be done at any point after submitting your application, but please note that your VDE license will not be approved until this training is complete.

- a) Watch the [ICPSR VDE Training Video](#)
- b) Complete the [VDE Training Quiz](#)
- c) If you answered any of the quiz questions incorrectly, please [re-watch the video](#) and consult the [VDE Documentation](#)
- d) Once you have completed the quiz, respond to any existing tickets related to your application or email icpsr-help@umich.edu to notify ICPSR staff that you have completed this training. In your email, please include your name, VDE Project number (#####), and the email address you provided in the training quiz. **We recommend you use your institutional email.**

5. Requesting VDE Licenses

Once your project is approved, you will be notified and may now request user licenses. Select, "continue to the next step", to enter the VDE Management System.



5. Requesting VDE Licenses (cont.)

This page is where you request and manage all VDE user licenses on your project. Select, “Assign new user”, to request a license.

Welcome! Your research project space in the VDE is fully set up and ready to use. In the section below, assign users on the research project that need access to the restricted-use data in the VDE. You can also view the status of each user's license.

Project ID: [REDACTED]
Primary Investigator: [REDACTED]
Project Status: APPROVED
RDUA Expiration Date: 2027-11-17

Virtual Enclave Users

Id	User	Status	License Expiration	Last Updated
	Assign new user	Open		
	Assign new user	Open		
	Assign new user	Open		
	Assign new user	Open		

Fill out the fields using user information for one member of your research team. Each user on your project must have their own VDE license, therefore this process must be done for each user. Check the box next to the statement at the bottom of the page and select, “Submit New User Request” when finished. Please also send a copy of each user's CV to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu.

Assign License to User

First Name *

Last Name *

Email Address *

Phone *

Home Address *

Please provide the user's full home mailing address including city, state/province/region, postal code, and country as necessary, which is required by the University of Michigan to set up your account. Your request will be delayed if a business address is provided as we will need to contact you to obtain your home address.

Date of Birth * 19 November 2025

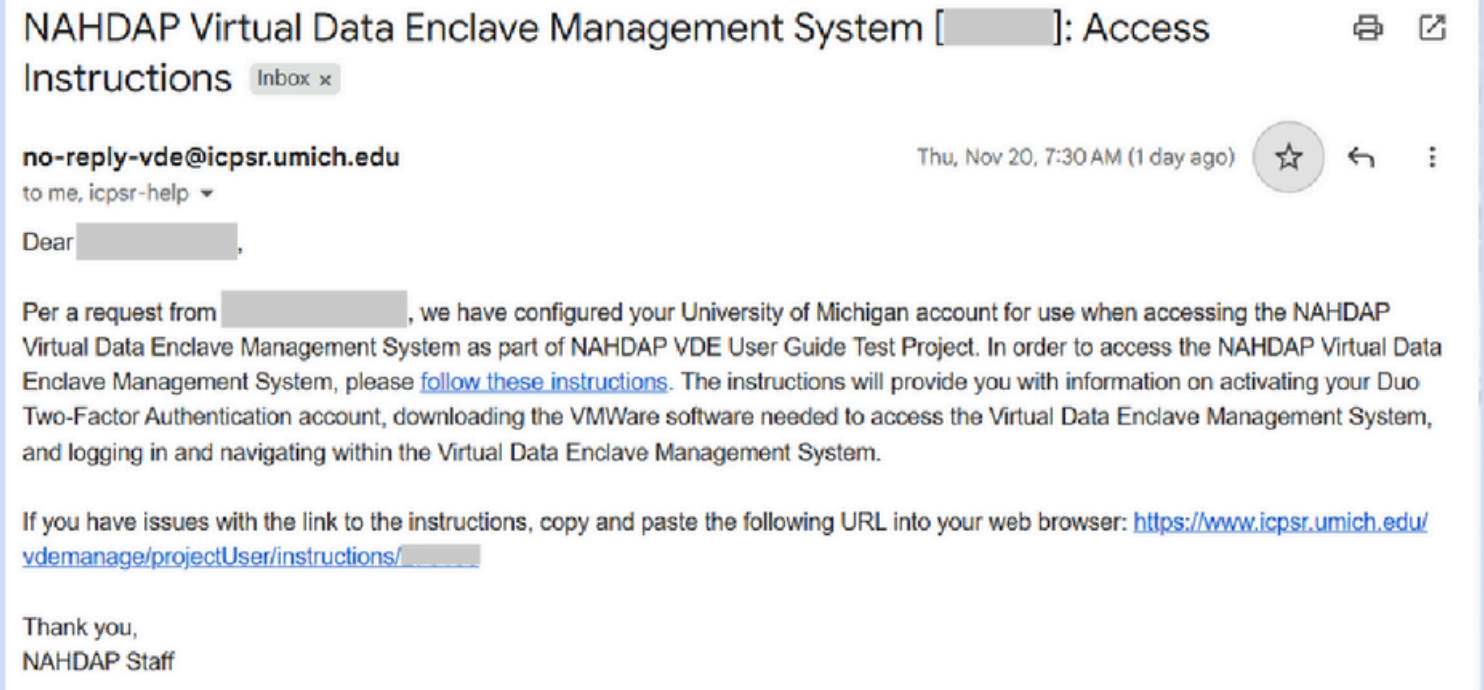
Uniqname
Optional, if you already have a University of Michigan username please enter it in the box above to expedite your request. Otherwise, leave the box blank.

Upload Curriculum Vitae No file chosen

I attest that this user is affiliated with an institution with a signed RDUA for this project. The lead institution for Project 59081 is University of Michigan ICPSR.

6. Accessing the VDE

After your license has been approved, you will receive an email with instructions on activating your Duo Two-Factor Authentication account, downloading the software needed to access the VDE, and logging in and navigating within the VDE Management System.



You should now have access to the VDE! Please read through our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) if you run into issues. Then, contact icpsr-help@umich.edu or nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu if your problem persists.

Obtaining VDE Output:

Step-By-Step Guide

1. Fill out the Disclosure Review Memo in your VDE folder and ensure all output for review is in the “DisclosureReview” folder (see details in “FAQs: Obtaining VDE Output” on page 12)

2. Submit a request for output review by sending an email to icpsr-help@umich.edu or nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu.

3. NAHDAP or ICPSR staff will now review your output. Once review is complete, they may either send output that has cleared disclosure review or request modifications.

4. Complete all requested modifications and resubmit your request.

5. NAHDAP or ICPSR staff will perform a second review and send you approved output.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Making a Request

1. Why are NAHDAP data in the ICPSR VDE?

The National Addiction and Health Data Archive Program (NAHDAP), funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), is hosted at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). NAHDAP data in the ICPSR Virtual Data Enclave (VDE) are restricted from general dissemination to protect the confidentiality of the individuals and/or organizations represented in the data. To access data in the VDE, a Restricted Data Use Agreement (RDUA) must be established between the University of Michigan and the researcher's institution.

2. What statistical packages are available for use within the VDE?

Please visit the [ICPSR VDE Resources Page](#) for a list of available software in the VDE.

3. Who is eligible to access the data?

According to the RDUA, the Investigator is the researcher primarily responsible for analysis and other use of the files in the VDE; assumes the responsibility of completing the online access request and providing required documents, reports, and amendments; and agrees to responsibly manage and use the data in the VDE (including the work of all research team members) and implement all security procedures per the Data Security Plan (Attachment A. of RDUA). The Investigator must demonstrate experience with using restricted-use data (defined as Confidential Data in the RDUA) by providing information that summarizes their recent/relevant research, including references. This information is entered in the Project Description box in the online request system.

4. Does the Investigator need to complete the request themselves?

The Investigator can designate someone to enter the information into the online system and provide the needed documents. The automated emails from ICPSR regarding the request will be sent to the person named as Project Administrator on the Create Project screen.

5. What needs to be provided in the Project Description?

The description is limited to 3800 characters. Most important is describing the project as research with a short reference to theory or historical context, how the project extends what is presently known, and why the restricted-use data are needed (rather than other data) to do the project. Each of the study's datasets (or reasonable group of datasets) needed should be listed along with information on why and how the dataset will be used.

- For all MTF Data applicants, please also include a statement of intent to adhere to the [MTF Geographic Variable Guidelines](#).

6. I clicked “Create Project” in the online request system but need to add more information. What should I do?

Requests are submitted when the “Create Project” button is used. Please send an email to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu to have your project returned to you for you to edit your information. Please do not start another project.

7. What is the cost of data access?

There are no fees to access Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study or Monitoring the Future (MTF) data in the VDE. Some other NAHDAP restricted-use data available in the VDE have a per-user VDE license fee. When this applies, you will be made aware of the fee during the application process.

8. How long does the request process take?

The length of the review process is variable, and depends on whether all required documentation has been submitted and whether it is necessary to return the request to the investigator for modification or more information. Requested modifications to the RDUA must be approved by the University of Michigan and will extend the review timeframe (see FAQ #13). If there are no requested modifications to the RDUA, researchers can expect the application process to take 2-4 weeks from submission to approval.

9. How long is my period of data access?

The access period is two years. Researchers needing more time to complete their project can request an extension for another two-year period. If doing so, they also need to make sure all information submitted previously is still current. If a member of the research team changes institutions, a new RDUA must be established with his or her new institution before the individual can continue to access the data in the VDE. A change in institution by the Investigator terminates the RDUA for all VDE users. If remaining VDE users want to continue access, a new Investigator needs to be designated and a new RDUA submitted signed by the new Investigator and Institution.

10. The RDUA must be signed by the Investigator and an Institutional Representative (IR). Who is my IR?

Your Institutional Representative is an individual who has the authority to enter your institution into legally binding agreements. The Restricted Data Use Agreement is approved by the University of Michigan Office of Research and Sponsored Projects. Although an institution-to-institution agreement, the RDUA is unilateral and only signed by the Investigator and a legal representative of his or her Institution.

11. Can individuals at different institutions collaborate on one research project?

Yes. The ability for researchers at different institutions to collaborate is one of the main advantages of using the VDE. Please note, however, that RDUAs are between the University of Michigan and the Investigator's institution. Therefore, if two researchers are on the project and are affiliated with different institutions, two RDUAs must be executed – one for each institution.

12. My institution does not have an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Do I still need to provide an IRB document?

Yes. Institutions without an IRB should have the project reviewed by an accredited organization listed with the [Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Program, Inc. \(AAHRPP\)](#). Investigators should submit to NAHDAP the approval or exemption document received from the accredited organization. Please send questions or problems with this process to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu.

13. My institution would like to request modification to the Restricted Data Use Agreement (RDUAs), is this possible?

The terms and conditions of the RDUAs are written to apply uniformly to all data users and without modification. An Institution can request modifications to the RDUAs by preparing a version of the RDUAs in which the requested changes are tracked or otherwise clearly identified. NAHDAP staff will send RDUAs with requested modifications to the University of Michigan Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (UM ORSP) for approval, negotiation, or disapproval. This process can extend the time to obtain approval to access the VDE by several months. The UM ORSP is under no obligation to approve or negotiate requested changes to the RDUAs and retains the right to disapprove any such changes. You must submit a new modification request for each project, even if similar modifications have been approved on a separate project's RDUAs with your institution.

14. RDUAs modifications have already been approved for a different project at my Institution. Do I still have to request modifications?

Yes. Each project must go through the RDUAs modification process individually, even if the same modifications are being requested for two different projects (see FAQ #13 for instructions on submitting a modification request).

15. Can I input files into the VDE?

Researchers interested in having their own files (e.g., existing syntax) for use in the VDE with the requested restricted-use data can email the files to nahdap-vde-support@icpsr.umich.edu. NAHDAP staff will vet the files for any unallowable content before researcher-supplied files are imported into the VDE.

16.

Can I request that additional software be added?

The VDE offers a wide range of software for researchers to use. Please visit the [ICPSR VDE Resources Page](#) for a list of available software. Requests for additional software should be emailed to nahdap-vde-support@icpsr.umich.edu. Please note that requested software packages with little demand are unlikely to be added.

17.

Can I access the VDE from my home office?

Working on a laptop or working from home is possible, as long as work is completed in an office that meets the requirements of a Secure Project Office, which are listed below:

- The computer or monitor screen is not visible from open doors or through windows
- The office door must be closed when you are logged into the VDE
- Only approved research team members can be in the office when you are logged into the VDE
- While logged into the VDE, if you and any other research team members are out of the office, the door must be locked

18.

What is the Duo Two-Factor Account and on what devices can it be used?

Logging into the VDE requires a University of Michigan unickname (login) and password and a second-factor device from Duo Security. ICPSR will send instructions for setting up Duo authentication once a user's VDE account is ready. Duo works on a wide range of devices, including smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, and landline phones. Hardware tokens are available for those who are unable to use Duo via other methods.

19.

Why do I use an ICPSR MyData account to request the data but use a UM account to access the VDE?

At this time, the ICPSR VDE Management System requires use of an ICPSR MyData account. The VDE uses the University of Michigan Active Directory because the VDE resides on the University of Michigan system. ICPSR cannot use Active Directory for the VDE Management System because potential VDE users do not have a University of Michigan account at the time of application. ICPSR MyData cannot be used for the VDE because it does not have access to the University of Michigan computing system.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Using the VDE

20. Can I record information outside the VDE?

No. As a user of restricted-use data you are obligated to protect the confidentiality of individuals and organizations represented in the data. No information may be recorded or shared (e.g., no writing on paper, typing into editing software, taking screenshots or videos, or screensharing) outside of the VDE. Any information you would like to have outside the VDE must go through disclosure review (see “Obtaining VDE Output” on page 6).

21. I need to change my office location. Do I need to let you know about it?

Changes in office locations are not required to be reported unless the new office is outside the purview of the Institution that is a party to the RDU. Please note that the new office location must still meet the criteria for a Secure Project Office as defined in the Data Security Plan (see also FAQ #17).

22. I have a current Restricted Data Use Agreement, but I am changing institutions. Can I continue to work on this project at my new institution?

Yes, but in order to continue using the data in the VDE, a new RDU must be executed with the new institution first. Instructions are in Section VI. of the RDU, specifically:

To notify NAHDAP/ICPSR of a change in institutional affiliation of the Investigator, a change in institutional affiliation of any Research Staff, or the addition or removal of Research Staff on the research project. Notification must be in writing and must be received by NAHDAP/ICPSR at least six (6) weeks prior to the last day of employment with Institution, or as soon as reasonably possible. Notification of the addition or removal of Research Staff on the research project shall be provided to NAHDAP/ICPSR as soon as reasonably possible. Investigator’s separation from Institution terminates this Agreement.

- Execution of a new Agreement for the Use of Restricted Data by both the Investigator and the proposed new institution
- Execution of any Pledges of Confidentiality by Research Staff at the proposed new institution
- Preparation and approval of a new Data Security Plan
- Evidence of approval or exemption by the proposed new institution's IRB

These materials must be approved by NAHDAP/ICPSR before Restricted Data or any derivatives or analyses may be accessed at the new institution.

23. Are RDUAs transferable if a researcher leaves the team and another takes his/her place?

If a research team member no longer needs access to the restricted-use data in the VDE, the Investigator (or designee) should send email to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu to request removal of the user from the VDE. The user's license can be transferred to a new research team member by adding the new member's information in the online system, so an account can be configured. User licenses are active for one year and expire based on the date when originally assigned. Per the Data Security Plan, VDE users cannot share or give their VDE login and password to anyone, including with other VDE users on the same research project. If the Investigator leaves the Institution, the RDUAs are terminated. Researchers remaining at the Institution who want to continue access to the VDE must execute a new RDUAs.

24. Can I have files (e.g., programming code) uploaded to the VDE?

Yes. Email your file to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu. After required checks, NAHDAP staff will upload the file into your VDE workspace and notify you where it is located.

25. How do I amend my approved project?

Investigators that want to extend the scope of their project or request additional waves or years for the data they are using should send their request to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu.

26. How do I add users to my project so they get a VDE account?

Investigators should use the link in the email that notified them of their approval to return to the VDE Management System and provide the new users' information. Please also send the users' CVs to NAHDAP staff by email to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu. New users must be affiliated with an Institution that provided an RDUAs for the project. If not, an RDUAs must also be submitted to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Obtaining VDE Output

27. How will I remove output when I'm ready to present my findings?

Researchers interested in removing output or other non-data files from the VDE may submit a request to NAHDAP, and staff will review the requested files to ensure no confidential information is removed from the VDE. Requirements for a specific dataset will be in the “DisclosureReview” folder in the VDE. Never make the requirements public. Researchers should fill out the Disclosure Review memo in their VDE folder, ensure all output files are placed in the DisclosureReview/Output folder (as described in the Disclosure Review memo), and then send an email to nahdap-vde-support@umich.edu to request an output review. Please include the project number, PI, and file location in your email. **Do not** share any information from the VDE, even simple statistics, in your email. This would constitute a violation of your Restricted Data Use Agreement.

28. How long should I expect the vetting of my output to take?

The target review period is 10 business days for each output review request. Keep in mind that reviews can involve iterations of review and output changes before output is cleared by the disclosure review process and able to be sent to the researcher. The researcher's project timeline should allow for some iteration of reviews. Each request is reviewed in the order it is received. For this reason, users are discouraged from submitting multiple requests at one time. Multiple requests will result in delays, as NAHDAP will review them in order and one at a time.

29. What can I do with the output that is sent to me after it is vetted?

Output within the VDE can only be shared with other approved VDE users on your team within your shared VDE project workspace. Output sent to a researcher after being vetted for disclosure risk is considered public-use and is “cleared” to be shared with anyone outside the VDE. Only the cleared output should be used for publications or presentations to report your results. Never make the vetting requirements public in your publications.