

The Texas FSRDC Consortium and Researcher Access

The Texas FSRDC is established and funded under a consortium model. Institutions in the Consortium contribute funding to help cover the operating costs of the RDC and support its activities over the long term. The benefit to consortium institutions is that researchers at member institutions are eligible to have access to the RDC at no cost or at very low cost. This is significant as it allows for greater researcher access in comparison to what would be possible under a model of pay-as-you-go per project (an alternative funding model). The consortium model also makes it easier for researchers to conduct preliminary studies that can lead to larger-scale projects.

Requests for access to the RDC by researchers at non-consortium institutions are welcome. They will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Under normal circumstances, charges for access will follow rates set by the national RDC network and will go toward maintaining the RDC.

Do bear in mind that eligibility to have access to the RDC is just one of several issues that researchers must address before undertaking projects in the RDC. Most importantly, researcher access necessarily involves Census approval of the research project based on a review through the Center for Economic Studies. This is non-trivial issue and the length and nature of the review process is greater for some data sets (e.g., IRS data) than for others.

Other Practical Concerns

Researchers interested in conducting research at the Texas FSRDC should be aware of several additional practical concerns over and above the requirement that research projects *must* be reviewed and approved by the US Census Bureau's Center for Economic Research. One is that analyses must be conducted within the secure computing facility in College Station. Another is that analyses must be conducted using the computer hardware and software available in the RDC environment. Yet another is that research products such as summary tabulations and tables of analysis results must be reviewed by the CES before they can be taken outside of the secure environment.

The key point to bear in mind is that the RDC environment places unusual requirements on researchers as part of the bargain that allows researchers to gain access to the detailed non-public micro-data in the federal statistical system. These should not be underestimated.

Consortium Membership

We invite research institutions in the region and beyond to consider becoming members of the Texas FSRDC Consortium. Consortium membership is clearly the most cost effective way for faculty in an institution to gain access to the research opportunities found in an RDC. Contact Texas FSRDC Director Mary Campbell (via general contact information below) to learn more about the benefits of consortium membership.

Priority Access

Experience at other existing RDCs suggests that physical access to workstation "seats" will not be an issue very often, if at all. Should this someday be an issue, policies will be developed to guide the scheduling "seat" time and the setting of

scheduling priorities for different projects based on criteria set forth by the consortium governing board.

Invitation to Call on the Texas FSRDC Staff for Assistance and Advice

The Texas FSRDC director and staff will provide advice and assistance to help researchers better understand RDC research capabilities, the practical issues involved in gaining project approval and conducting research in RDCs, and rates for access. We encourage interested researchers from around the State of Texas and beyond to consider taking advantage of this important research facility. We will be pleased to provide information and advice regarding all aspects of the research facility and the Texas FSRDC consortium. To seek further information contact:

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