

Michigan Education Data Center Service Fee Structure

To offset the costs of providing guidance and data to approved researchers in compliance with the rules of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the State of Michigan’s Department of Education, the Michigan Education Data Center (MEDC) charges the amounts shown below. On an annual basis, MEDC will reevaluate the cost of providing these services to researchers and update the fees shown below.

Fees for MEDC services

MEDC Service Type	FY24 fees for U-M researchers	FY24 fees for all other eligible researchers*
Fee for new projects	\$4,830	\$6,230
Fee for data updates	\$605	\$780
Fee for probabilistic matches Cost per match depends on the match complexity, factors of which include input variables, the number of records to match, and the estimated effort.		

* Please note that the fees shown for all other eligible researchers reflect the cost of services provided by MEDC, in addition to applicable services provided by the University of Michigan.

Service fee billing

Approved researchers will be charged fees for MEDC services starting March 30, 2024. Specifically, all applications and change requests submitted to MEDC on or after March 30, 2024, will be subject to service fees. For projects submitted and/or approved before this time, fees will be applied for (a) annual updates, (b) additional data fields and/or years approved through the MERI amendment process, and (c) probabilistic matches proposed on or after March 30, 2024.

Approved research projects will receive an official approval letter. At that time, researchers will be asked to provide name(s) and contact information for individuals at their institution who should be included on invoices for services. U-M will invoice the approved researcher and data will be delivered after payment has been confirmed/received.

Approved University of Michigan researchers will be billed for the cost of MEDC services but are exempt from paying the cost of U-M administrative services.

Timeline for receiving approved data

After fee payment has been confirmed, new project data will typically be delivered within 20 business days. This does not include the time required for researchers to respond to queries and requests for information. The timeline for probabilistic matches will depend on the complexity of the approved match.

Expectations of approved researchers

Data loaned to approved project teams are owned by the State of Michigan and researchers must maintain strong data security practices. As the project progresses any modifications must be approved by MERI via the established amendment request process. Research findings should be communicated to the MERI 30 days prior to any public release. During the project closeout phase, all raw and derived datasets must be deleted/destroyed.

Explanation of MEDC services

Initial fees for approved projects cover a number of services provided by MEDC over the life cycle of an approved project. These services include feedback provided to researchers during the application, revision, and approval stages. Technical support and assistance services such as assembling and delivering approved data sets, as well as providing clear data specifications are also included. Finally, initial project fees cover the cost of technical systems needed to process research applications, manage their workflow, and securely house highly sensitive FERPA protected data. Fees, however, do not vary based on the length of the project or number of approved researchers working on the project.

Annual update fees cover the costs associated with assembling and distributing additional years of the data already received by approved researchers. This also includes additional data sets associated with project amendments.

Probabilistic matching fees range based on the complexity of the data match, number of records to be matched, and the estimated effort. More specifically, matching fees cover technical assistance services, whereby a MEDC staff member will

consult with the approved researcher on their sample population, the variables used to match, and any other factors that could affect match complexity. Also covered by the fees is the amount of staff time devoted to completing the match and necessary technical systems. It is important to note that MEDC staff will provide researchers with a clear data specification for all input data sets. Approved researchers are responsible for and expected to provide MEDC with input data files that are clean and formatted correctly, prior to proceeding with the match.

Probabilistic Matching Costs

One service provided by MEDC in addition to holding and distributing administrative education records is enabling researchers to join data they hold, such as survey data, to the individual-level data held at MEDC. This probabilistic record matching process requires additional software packages, servers, and staff time and therefore incurs an additional service charge. Because record matching operations vary greatly in their complexity, we assess the cost of matches on a per project basis.

Prior to selecting an effort level for your match, we assess a number of characteristics. Novelty is the first of these and assesses whether the match to be conducted is one that MEDC has previously completed. Novelty is critical to research but it also means developing new matching approaches and code. An example of a novel match would be incorporating distance-based measures into our matching software as this requires integrating geospatial libraries.

We also consider characteristics of the input data. For example, a match with data sourced from an administrative system may be lower effort than a match with data scraped from the internet because the latter is typically less structured. MEDC's matching software will accept any number of fields but the introduction of new data sources incurs both pre-processing and post-processing effort to ensure match quality is high.

The match type is also important. By match type, we are typically referring to the matching variables used. A name-based match is lower effort than a match requiring both names and addresses. The least complex match would be an ID swap where the project dataset has an ID such as UIC that is also used by our State partners. Additionally, MEDC will evaluate whether the requested match is actually composed of several matches. For example, address-based matches involving single-family and multi-unit housing are best split into two matches given differences in the fields available.

Last, we look at the sample population characteristics. Populations that are statewide and/or panel-wide (covering 20+ years) require extra care. Multi-cohort populations or very deliberately honed populations that MEDC needs to replicate to match

your parameters are further considerations. Finally, population characteristics and record count often determine computational processing time, which can impact time-to-delivery.

MEDC staff will meet with researchers who request a match to education records in order to assess the complexity of the proposed match as it relates to the factors referenced above.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the University of Michigan and the State of Michigan

The University of Michigan has a memorandum of understanding with the State of Michigan that allows MEDC to act as a clearinghouse for the state's education data for research. Per this agreement, MEDC has the authority to charge researchers for the services and systems needed to support the Michigan Education Research Institute, including application submission and review, researcher support, database building, and data delivery.

The University of Michigan's Financial Operations and Office of Research and Sponsored Programs have reviewed and approved the fee structure shown above and are authorized to conduct audits of this MEDC fee structure model.

Researcher questions

Please contact the Michigan Education Research Institute (MERI) with any questions you might have by emailing meri@miedresearch.org. Additionally, please copy Nicole Wagner Lam (ncwag@umich.edu) on all MEDC fee inquiries. Thank you.