

Frequently Asked Questions

TOPICS

- [Sponsor and Vendor Accounts](#)
- [Log in IDs and Passwords](#)
- [Health Plan Submission](#)
- [Questionnaire Submission](#)
- [Data File Submission](#)
- [Status Reports](#)
- [Data Use Agreement \(DUA\)](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Sponsor and Vendor Accounts.

Q. I am interested in participating in the CAHPS Health Plan Survey Data Submission System. How do I get started?

A. The online CAHPS Health Plan Survey Data Submission System enables users to submit and view the status of the CAHPS Health Plan Survey data submission.

Sponsors, vendors, and other participants must complete a registration request form by visiting the CAHPS Health Plan Survey Data Submission System. The CAHPS Database will review your request and will send you an email with the information to access the Data Submission System within three business days.

Sponsors that previously submitted data to the CAHPS Database do not have to register for a new account. When the submission system opens, sponsors will receive an email with instructions on re-activating their existing account.

Q. I am a participating sponsor. How does my vendor access my plan information?

A. Sponsors no longer have to give their vendor the account ID and account password to access your sponsor account. To grant vendors the ability to assist you in submitting survey information, you only have to enter the vendor's email address for each health plan in the plan information table, under the "Plans" tab. After you have entered the vendor's email address, the vendor will be granted access to assist you in the submission process.

Q. I am a survey vendor. How do I access a sponsor's plan information?

A. Once you log in you should see health plans you have been authorized to submit information and data for. A sponsor must first provide authorization to you by entering your email address in their plan information table. If you do not see a plan listed that you are submitting data for, please contact the sponsor.

Q. I am a survey vendor with several sponsor accounts. Can I access multiple sponsor accounts at the same time?

A. As of this year, you will be able to view all of the sponsor accounts you are responsible for at the same time. Once a sponsor has assigned a plan to you it will appear in your account. If you do not see a sponsor or plan listed that you are submitting data for, please contact the sponsor.

[Return to Topics](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Log in IDs and passwords.

Q. What if I forgot my Username and Password?

A. Select the “Forgot your Username or Password?” on the Login page. Enter your registered email address and select “Submit.” You will receive an email with your username and password shortly.

For security reasons, we will send the information to the email address we currently have on record. Please contact the CAHPS Database helpline at 888-808-7108 or email CAHPSDatabase@westat.com if you have any problem.

Q. I did not receive an email with my user name and password.

A. Contact the CAHPS Database helpline at 888-808-7108 or email CAHPSDatabase@westat.com.

Q. I am a participating survey vendor. Can I register with the Data Submission System before the sponsor has established an account?

A. Yes. You can register anytime. However you will not have access to sponsor accounts or plans until the sponsor grants you authorization.

[Return to Topics](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Health Plan Submission.

Q. One of the health plans is not listed in the Plan Information Table or in the Submission Status page. Why is this plan not listed?

A. The CAHPS Database is not responsible for entering health plan information for the sponsor. The sponsor account is the primary account and the person who has created a sponsor account is responsible for ensuring that all the plan information is entered in the data submission system.

Q. What is NCQA Org ID and NCQA Submission ID?

A. The NCQA Org ID and Submission ID are provided to you by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) if you are submitting data to NCQA.

Q. What is NCQA Submission ID?

A. If you are submitting to NCQA then enter the submission ID supplied for the plan by NCQA. Otherwise leave it blank.

Q. What is Total Enrollment?

A. Total enrollment is the total number of members enrolled in the health plan (total number of covered lives) as of the date the sample frame was generated.

Q. How is the response rate calculated?

A. The response rate is the total number of completed questionnaires divided by the total number of respondents selected (It's a number x.xxxxxx; 8 spaces total, 6 decimal places). Following the CAHPS guidelines, response rates should be calculated according to the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of completed returned questionnaires}}{\text{Total number of respondents selected} - (\text{deceased} + \text{ineligible})}$$

The CAHPS Database does not exclude respondents who refused, had bad addresses or phone numbers or were institutionalized or incompetent.

[Return to Topics](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Questionnaire submission.

Q. What are the acceptable questionnaire file formats?

A. Acceptable questionnaire file formats are .doc, .docx, .wpd, .pdf, or .rtf.

Q. Why do I submit the questionnaire?

A. The CAHPS Database will review the survey questionnaire that the health plan administered to ensure that it meets CAHPS Standards.

Q. How do I link my questionnaire to a Health Plan?

A. Select the “Summary” button under the Questionnaires tab to access the questionnaire submission page. From the list of questionnaires, select the “Link” button to the left of the name of the questionnaire you plan to link. The following page will allow you to check each health plan you want to associate with that questionnaire.

Q. How do I know if a questionnaire has been submitted and/or approved by the CAHPS Database?

A. Select the “Submission Status” link on the Main Menu and look for the information in the column named, “Questionnaire.” One of the following messages will be displayed:

Blank: A blank cell indicates that no questionnaire has been submitted to the CAHPS Database for this plan.

Pending Review: Indicates that the questionnaire has been received and is being reviewed by the CAHPS Database. The approval process could take a few business days to complete.

Approved: Indicates that the questionnaire has been approved by the CAHPS Database.

Conditionally Approved: Indicates that the questionnaire has been approved by the CAHPS Database as long as certain requirements are met. The details will be provided in an email sent to you.

Rejected: Indicates that the questionnaire has been rejected by the CAHPS Database because the survey did not meet the current CAHPS Standards. All health plans linked to a “Rejected” questionnaire will also show the same status as “Rejected”. If a questionnaire is “Rejected,” you may not submit a data file for any plan linked to that questionnaire.

[Return to Topics](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Data File Submission.

Q. Where can I find the data file specifications?

A. The specifications are located at [2016 CAHPS Health Plan 5.0/5.0H Data Specifications](#).

Q. What is a “header record”? Does the survey data file have to have a header record?

A. The first record in the data file is the “Header Record.” The data file must contain a header record and should follow the current [2016 CAHPS Health Plan 5.0/5.0H Data Specifications](#).

Q. What are the acceptable data file formats?

A. ASCII (.txt) or flat (.dat) files are acceptable data file formats.

Q. The Data Submission System won’t let me submit a data file for one of the health plans. Why?

A. The following steps must be completed prior to data file submission:

1. Provide health plan information for all the required fields.
2. Submit a questionnaire for the health plan for the CAHPS Database review.
3. Questionnaire must be approved by the CAHPS Database.

You will be allowed to submit a data file once the required health plan information is submitted and the questionnaire has been approved by the CAHPS Database.

Q. What happens when I submit a survey data file? How are survey data files evaluated?

A. Survey data files are evaluated online as soon as they are uploaded in order to provide the submitter with instant data file results. The online data file review process can take a few minutes.

Header record review. The header record must follow the [2016 Data Specifications](#) and must agree with the plan-level information provided in the plan information table. For example, the plan type (e.g., HMO, PPO, etc.) in the header record must be consistent with the plan type provided in the plan information table.

Member level records. The member level records must follow [2016 Data Specifications](#).

Detailed reports for both the header record and member level records will be available instantaneously on the submission site for review.

A toggle button is located at the top of the page to allow users to view the header record and member level record reports.

Q. How do I know if a data file has been approved by the CAHPS Database?

A. Select the “Submission Status” link under the Overview tab for the information in the column named, “Data File Status.” One of the messages below will be displayed.

Blank: A blank cell indicates that nothing has been submitted to the CAHPS Database for this health plan.

Awaiting User Confirmation: User must confirm the file submitted is accurate and is the proper file for the health plan before the system can process the header record and member level records.

Passed: Indicates that the data file meets the requirements specified by the CAHPS Database.

Failed: Indicates that the data file failed to meet the requirements specified by the CAHPS Database.

Q. The submitted data file failed, how do I see what is wrong with the file?

A. You can view a detailed report of the data file submitted by visiting the Data tab and then selecting the “Submit” link. Choose the health plan you wish to view and then select “Submit” in the left column. A toggle button is located at the top of the report to allow users to view both the header record and member level reports.

Q. Can anyone that has access to the submission system see my data files or data file reports?

A. Once a data file has been uploaded, it is stored in a secured environment. No one has access to the actual data file. Only the account sponsor and the person that submitted the data file will be able to view the header record or the member level reports.

[Return to Topics](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Status Reports.

Q. How do I check on the status of my submission?

A. To see an overview of your submission, select the “Submission Status” link under the Overview tab. This table shows the status of each component of your submission for all the health plans entered in your sponsor account.

Q. How do I know my submission is complete?

A. Once the data file is approved, the CAHPS Database will review all the components of the data submission such as, Data Use Agreement, Questionnaire, Plan Information and Data file before granting final approval. Final approval email will be sent to the sponsor account within seven business days.

Also, you can view the final approval status by selecting on the “Submission Status” link on the Overview tab.

[Return to Topics](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Data Use Agreement (DUA).

Q. Why do I need to submit a Data Use Agreement?

A. The Data Use Agreement (DUA) is a legal document required by the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ) and its contractual partners to collect and use data for analysis and reporting according to the terms specified in it.

The individual respondent data submitted to the CAHPS Database is defined as a Limited Data Set (LDS) by the HIPPA privacy rules that excludes direct identification of individual respondents. The LDS requires a DUA between the CAHPS Database and the covered entity such as health plan or the sponsoring state agency. The DUA does not require a business associate agreement.

Q. Who should sign a Data Use Agreement (DUA)?

A. The health plan or health system that conducted the survey must sign the Data Use Agreement and send the completed document to the CAHPS Database either by mail or by fax as provided in the cover page of the DUA.

Data Use Agreements signed by vendors will not be accepted.

Q. Where do I send the Data Use Agreement?

A. By mail or fax:

Mail to:
The CAHPS Database
Westat
1700 Research Boulevard
CAHPS Database, RB1103
Rockville, MD 20850
Fax: 301-315-5912

Q. How will I know if the Data Use Agreement was received?

A. Check the submission status table under the Overview tab. Once the agreement has been received, the status under Data Use Agreement column will display "Accepted." Receiving and processing of Data Use Agreements can take up to seven business days.

Q. Where do I get the Data Use Agreement?

A. Data Use Agreement document can be found at [2016 Data Use Agreement](#).

[Return to Topics](#)