

Process for Requesting Data from the Iowa Violent Death Reporting System

The Iowa Violent Death Reporting System (IAVDRS) is administered through the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and funded through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Data that is collected is entered into a federal database, the Secure Access Management System (SAMS). IAVDRS desires that the data collected and abstracted by the program be available to community partners to inform the development of strategies to prevent deaths resulting from violence. This document describes the type of data that can be requested and the process for making that request.

Data sources that are used for the IAVDRS are considered confidential. These include death certificates (IDPH Bureau of Health Statistics), medical examiner reports (IDPH Office of the State Medical Examiner), and law enforcement investigative reports (obtained from state and local law enforcement agencies). IDPH has a policy that governs release of confidential public health information. It is posted on the IDPH internet at [this link](#).

Researchers who want access to the data need to follow the instructions for research requests found at this link <https://idph.iowa.gov/PublicHealthData/research-requests>. Processing these requests may take six months or more. For a current estimate of processing time, contact RERC@idph.iowa.gov.

Summary data, which is statistical or aggregated, can generally be released to the public. At times, small count sizes may need to be suppressed (typically represented by an * in a table or chart) or approval to release may be needed from the IDPH Data Management Program or the State Medical Director. When possible and appropriate, the IAVDRS can combine several years of data in order to prevent the need to suppress numbers. Challenges arise when the requestor desires information about county-level or specific population numbers (such as racial/ethnic breakdown).

Someone who wishes to request aggregated data from the program can initiate the process by emailing the [Program Director](#) and making the request. She will determine how long it will take to fulfill the request or follow-up with clarifying questions. The Program Director will then contact the Data Analyst or Program Epidemiologist to obtain the information and once received and approved, forward it to the requestor. Depending on the detail of the request, most can be fulfilled within a two-week period.

If the requestor desires access to data that cannot be made publicly available according to the IDPH Policy for *Disclosure of Confidential Public Health Information, Records, or Data*, a formal data request would need to be made. For more information on this process and to apply, contact RERC@idph.iowa.gov.