



Cooperative Agreement Corner



Our Cooperative Agreement with the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS) supports activities for jurisdictions. Upcoming opportunities are provided below.

VSCP Directors Webinar

The VSCP Project Directors Webinar occurs on the second Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. ET. You can forward this invitation to others in your office who might be interested, however, you cannot forward your approved registration, as each attendee must register separately. [Register Here](#) to join the webinar on May 13, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET.

NAPHSIS Annual Meeting – Registration Now Open

Registration is now open for the 2026 NAPHSIS Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL. Join colleagues June 29, 2026 – July 1, 2026, at the Sheraton Grand Chicago Riverwalk for three days of connection, collaboration, and conversations shaping the future of vital records and health statistics. This year’s meeting brings together leaders and practitioners to share ideas, explore modernization efforts, strengthen partnerships, and offer practical solutions you can use in your jurisdiction. You will gain actionable insights across systems, operations, statistics, and policy while building lasting professional relationships. Enjoy summer in Chicago along the riverfront as you take part in dynamic sessions, networking events, and meaningful discussions with peers who understand your work. To secure your spot, [Register Here](#).

NAPHSIS Special Interest Groups

NAPHSIS Special Interest Groups offer regular opportunities for members to connect with peers, share best practices, and collaborate on topics related to field services, systems, data quality, and public health statistics. Getting involved is easy. Email hq@naphsis.org to join these groups.

Special Interest Groups and Meeting Schedules

The Field Services Special Interest Group meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 3:00 p.m. ET. The March meeting focused on state practices for death certification, stillbirth and fetal death reporting workflows, and policies around birth record amendments, highlighting variations in responsibilities across funeral homes, hospitals, and certifiers. Members also discussed outreach efforts like Virginia’s New Parent Resource Guide and upcoming resource expo, along with plans for continued discussion on guidance materials and unresolved topics in future meetings.

The **Systems Special Interest Group** meets on the last Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m. ET. The March 2026 SSIG call focused on the capabilities of jurisdictions’ systems. The main points were related to data quality of special characters and diacritical marks if they were stored and a conversation about ADA accessibility compliance. OVS reverifications were briefly touched on.

The **Statistics Special Interest Group** meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. ET. The March meeting focused on how states handle missing cause-of-death and fetal death coding for out-of-state records, with Alaska and Tennessee sharing approaches that rely on NCHS Resident-Occurrence files and direct jurisdiction outreach when needed. Members also discussed a potential NCHS race coding issue affecting Burmese classifications and shared feedback on SAS Viya, with most states preferring traditional SAS or alternative tools for their workflows.

2025 Data Year Close-Out

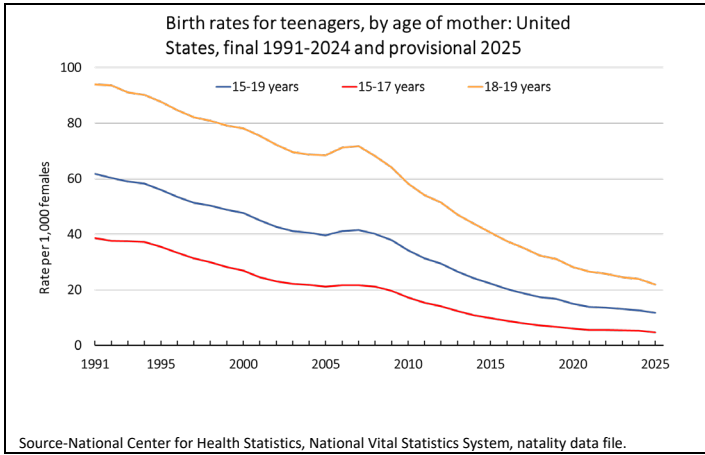
The following table includes the 2025 contract closeout and draft 2025 file release dates. Note that to include a jurisdiction’s most current information in the file release, all corrections and final file deliverables are due no later than the target dates listed. The target dates are highlighted in red, as are the contract closeout dates and the dates for final updates. The dates for final updates are subject to change and may be earlier, depending on the quality of the national file. (Provisional birth data cuts are no longer provided as CDC Wonder will be used.)

2025 BIRTH FILE	Final timeline
Contract closeout for 2025 birth data (states)	March 2, 2026
Last day 2025 birth updates accepted (states)	May 11, 2026
Final release of 2025 birth data to Hyattsville (DACEB)	June 8, 2026
2025 DEATH FILE	
Contract closeout for 2025 death data (states)	May 1, 2026
Last day 2025 death updates accepted (states)	June 26, 2026
Pause medical processing for data quality review (DACEB)	July 24, 2026
Final release of 2025 death data to Hyattsville and resume medical processing (DACEB)	September 25, 2026
2025 FETAL DEATH FILE	
Contract closeout for 2025 fetal death data (states)	May 1, 2026
Last day 2025 fetal death updates accepted (states)	August 28, 2026
Final release of 2025 fetal death data to Hyattsville	October 26, 2026

Notable Publications/Data Briefs

Birth: Provisional Data for 2025

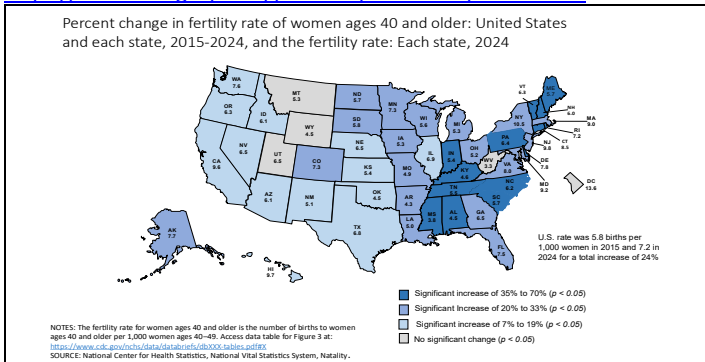
This report was released on April 9, 2026, and can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr043.pdf>.



Findings from this report show that the provisional number of births for the United States in 2025 was 3,606,400, decreasing 1% from 2024. The general fertility rate was 53.1 births per 1,000 females ages 15–44, also decreasing 1% from 2024. The age-specific fertility rate for teenagers ages 15–19 was 11.7 births per 1,000 females in 2025, decreasing 7% from 2024. The cesarean delivery rate increased to 32.5% in 2025 from 32.4% in 2024. The low-risk cesarean delivery rate increased to 26.9% in 2025 from 26.6% in 2024. The preterm birth rate was 10.41% in 2025, unchanged from 2024.

A Decade of Changes in State Fertility Rates for Women Age 30 and Older: United States, 2015–2024

This report was released on April 16, 2026, and can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db556.htm>.



Findings from this report show that the age-specific fertility rate for women ages 30–34 in the United States decreased 8% from 2015 to 2024, while the rate for ages 35–39 increased 5% and that for women 40 and older increased 24%.

By state from 2015 to 2024, an analysis of birth rates by maternal age across the United States from 2015 to 2024 reveals notable differences by age group and state:

- **Women aged 30–34:** Birth rates for women in this age group decreased in 37 states and the District of Columbia. In the remaining 13 states, rates did not change significantly.
- **Women aged 35–39:** Birth rates increased in 35 states for women aged 35 to 39, while five states and the District of Columbia saw decreases. For the other 10 states, rates did not change significantly.
- **Women aged 40 and older:** In this age group, birth rates increased in 46 states. For the remaining four states and the District of Columbia, there was no significant change in rates.

Collaborating Office of Medical Examiners and Coroners (COMEC)



COMEC works to strengthen ties between medical examiners and coroners (MEC) and public health, serve as a resource for medicolegal death investigation (MDI) offices, and assist public health researchers and practitioners in engaging with MECs.

If you would like to receive COMEC’s monthly email updates and an invitation to the seminar series, please email MDI@CDC.gov.

MDI Connect Webinar

May 18, 2026, at 11:00 am - 12:00 pm ET

The CDC Foundation and National Network of Public Health Institutes will present the first in a series of [MDI Connect](#) webinars for 2026.

This webinar will explore:

- What is FHIR?
- MDI data standards
- MEC FHIR pilot projects

Registration is free. The webinar is open to anyone interested in attending and is recommended for audiences new to FHIR, MDI data standards and data modernization.

Register here: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/019d2645bff97317a49b772c1166059d>

Upcoming COMEC Virtual Seminars

The Seminar Series is designed for MEC, MDIs, medical certifiers, and related partners. In 2026 COMEC will have 6 seminars on the second Tuesday every other month and have ABMDI education credits available.

Title: Stronger Together: OSHA and Medical Examiners and Coroners Collaborating to Safeguard Worker Health

Presenter: Dawn L. Cannon, MD, MS, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

When: June 9, 2026, at 3:00-4:00 pm ET

Title: Applied Forensic Epidemiologist Approaches to Heat-Related Deaths

Presenters: Natasha Tully, Pima County Medical Examiner's Office, Kimberly Repp, PhD, MPH, Washington County Medical, and Abigail Grande, MPH, Michigan State University

When: August 11, 2026, at 3:00-4:00 pm ET

The Vital Statistics Modernization Community of Practice



April Updates from the NVSS Modernization Community of Practice

Jurisdictions across the country continue to make steady progress along the NVSS modernization pathway by strengthening systems, participating in testing, completing pre-certification, and preparing for certification and production use of FHIR-based vital records

exchange. The NVSS Modernization Community of Practice (CoP) remains a key forum for sharing knowledge, addressing technical challenges, and supporting implementation across jurisdictions and partners.

Upcoming NCHS-Hosted Testing Event (June 1–2)

NCHS will host the next NVSS FHIR testing event on June 1–2 from 1:00–5:00 p.m. ET each day. Jurisdictions are encouraged to participate as testers for mortality, natality, and/or fetal death workflows.

Testing events are an important part of the modernization pathway, providing jurisdictions an opportunity to validate their systems, identify issues, and gain hands-on experience with FHIR-based exchange in a structured, collaborative environment. These events also strengthen NVSS systems and standards and help guide future development.

Jurisdictions interested in participating should contact nvssmodernization@cdc.gov.

Preparation for the testing event:

- Weekly Office Hours on May 12, May 19, and May 26 will be dedicated to testing event preparation
- These sessions are open to all, but will not follow the usual open Q&A format
- Weekly Office Hours will be canceled on June 2 due to the testing event

New Release: VRDR 4.4.4

A new version of the VRDR libraries (v4.4.4) has been released. This update includes refinements to improve alignment with the implementation guide, address known issues, and support more consistent validation and processing of mortality FHIR messages across systems.

Jurisdictions are encouraged to review the changes and consider testing against this version to ensure compatibility with current tooling and workflows. Additional details, including discussion of specific updates and implementation considerations, are available on the Zulip thread: <https://chat.fhir.org/#narrow/channel/179301-Death-on-FHIR/topic/NCHS.20-.20VRDR.20Library.20updates/with/584275469>

Community of Practice Reminders

The NVSS Modernization CoP offers several recurring opportunities to stay engaged and connected:

- Monthly CoP Main Meeting – Third Wednesday of each month

- Monthly Technical Subgroup Meeting – Fourth Wednesday of each month
- Weekly Office Hours – Tuesdays at 4:00 PM ET

These forums provide opportunities to hear updates, ask questions, share experiences, and collaborate with peers and federal partners across the NVSS modernization community.

Technical Questions and Peer Support (Zulip)

Jurisdictions and partners are encouraged to use Zulip to ask questions, share technical issues, and collaborate with the community:

- Death on FHIR(mortality):
<https://chat.fhir.org/#narrow/channel/179301-Death-on-FHIR>
- Birth and Fetal Death on FHIR (natality):
<https://chat.fhir.org/#narrow/channel/434619-Birth-and-Fetal-Death-on-FHIR>

These channels are actively monitored by NCHS and community members and are often the fastest way to get answers and share solutions.

Stay Connected

If you have questions, would like to participate in testing, or want to get more involved in the Community of Practice, please contact: nvssmodernization@cdc.gov

Vital Staff Spotlights

Jurisdictions may add as many names as they would like to our NCHS Newsletter mailing list! Just send a note to George Tolson at gct1@cdc.gov.

Seth Austin departed his position as VSCP Project Director in Virginia.

Peter Hunt was appointed VSCP Project Director in Virginia.

Jemimah Michel departed her position as State Registrar and VSCP Project Director in Louisiana.

Devin George was appointed State Registrar and VSCP Project Director in Louisiana.

Ama Bikoko was appointed VSCP Project Director in Nebraska.

Daphanie Scandrick departed her position as State Registrar and VSCP Project Director in Georgia.

Cynthia Buskey-Martin was appointed Interim State Registrar and VSCP Project Director in Georgia.

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