

Fee Narrative

New Fees for Rapid Health Information Network Research Report WAC 246-460-070 Custom data product fees.

Overview

The Department of Health (department), Office of Innovation and Technology (OIT) administers Washington's Rapid Health Information Network (RHINO) Program.

RCW 43.70.057, effective in 2017, authorizes the department to adopt rules for the collection and maintenance of emergency department patient care data and requires the department to establish and collect a fee for requests for data for research or private use.

How Proposed Fees were Determined

RCW 43.70.057 (5) requires that the department develop a fee schedule that reflects the direct cost of retrieving the data or report in the requested form.

Emergency departments submitting data must have the ability to immediately obtain their own data and aggregate regional and statewide data within thirty minutes of submission of a query for data, once the data is available in the system. The cost of providing data to submitting emergency departments, health care facilities, health care providers associated with emergency departments and to state, local, tribal, and federal officials and agencies will be funded through department resources.

The cost of retrieving data for individuals and organizations engaged in research or private use will be funded through a fee that reflects the direct cost of retrieving the data or report in the requested form.

The department analyzed RHINO staffing costs and the volume and type of requests received in 2024. Due to the nature of the data and requests requirements, each request requires manual processing, including formatting the data and verifying accuracy.

Based on the 2024 review, requests required between 10 and 100 hours to complete. The department is working to improve administrative processes to create efficiencies that reduce the time to complete a request.

Fee Calculation

The fee was calculated based on the hourly costs of staff typically involved in completing a request.

One of the following four positions typically performs the primary work.

Position	Hourly Rate	Indirect Cost
Epidemiologist 2 (Non-Medical)	\$52.10	\$8.54
Epidemiologist 3 (Non-Medical)	\$60.43	\$9.91
Data Science & Informatics Specialist 2	\$58.95	\$9.67
Data Science & Informatics Specialist 3	\$65.06	\$10.67

The average hourly rate for these four positions is \$59.14 with \$9.70 in indirect costs.

Position	Hourly Rate	Indirect Costs
Senior Epidemiologist (Non-Medical)	\$68.34	\$11.21

The combined hourly cost for staff time and indirect costs totals \$155.55, which the department rounded to \$156 per hour (\$59.14 + \$9.70 + \$68.34 + \$11.21 + \$7.16 TE¹).

Proposed New Fees

The department is proposing to create a new rule, WAC 246-460-070 Custom data product fees, to establish fees for customer data request for research or private use.

Based on the costs to operate the program, the department is proposing a single fee of \$156 per hour with a minimum charge of two and one-half hours.

This fee reflects the average hourly cost of the staff positions that perform the work and the required review by a senior epidemiologist. The calculation also includes indirect costs calculated as a percentage of salary and a flat rate for employee expenses for rent, telecom, service desk, and technology subscriptions.

Proposed Fee Language

- (1) The department shall collect non-refundable fees for custom data products to cover the actual cost of retrieving data for individuals and organizations engaged in research or private use of the data at the rate of \$156 per hour with a two and a half-hour minimum for custom data products.
- (2) The department shall waive fees for the following organizations within the state:
 - (a) Local health jurisdictions; and

¹ TE encompasses rent and technology subscription, telecom, and service desk expenses for each employee.

(b) Tribes, tribal organizations, and Indian health service designated tribal epidemiology centers serving tribes.

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