



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. Eastern. 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. The next VSCP Project Directors' Webinar will be September 10, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET and you can [register here](#) to join the webinar.

Field Services Special Interest Group

What questions do you have regarding field services and data quality? Want to hear about best practices in training your providers? Do you need guidance on quality assurance programs? If so, the Field Services Interest Group monthly meetings can be a great resource. Hear from jurisdictions sharing their experiences and lessons learned in dealing with their internal and external partners on various field services, data quality improvement, and training topics. The Field Services Interest Group meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 3 p.m. ET. Email hq@naphsis.org to join the monthly call.

Systems Special Interest Group

Come ask your technical peers about how they grapple with adjusting their vital records systems to meet the needs of vital records, data partners, and interoperability with other systems. The Systems Special Interest Group meets on the last Thursday of every month at 3 p.m. ET. Email systems@naphsis.org to join the monthly call.

Statistics Interest Group

The Statistics Interest Group meets on the last Wednesday of every month at 2 p.m. ET. This is an opportunity to gather virtually each month to discuss topics of interest related to public health statistics. Please email NAPHSIS at hq@naphsis.org if you are interested in participating.

Birth Data Quality Workgroup (BDQW)

The BDQW meets on the first Thursday of every other month at 2 p.m. ET. This workgroup discusses data quality topics related to natality. If you are interested in assessing and improving the quality of vital statistics birth and fetal death data, contact NAPHSIS at hq@naphsis.org.

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. CDC established COMEC in 2022 in recognition of the important role of MDI for public health.

COMEC Seminar Series

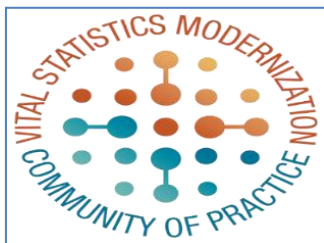
The monthly COMEC Seminar Series is restarting on September 9th at 3:00 ET. The Seminar Series is designed for medical examiners, coroners, death investigators, medical certifiers, and related partners. Upcoming topics include homeless mortality, child death review, consumer products and international death investigations. If you want to receive a Teams calendar invite, please send a request via email to MDI@CDC.GOV.

NNPHI Grants for Infrastructure and Data Modernization Projects

The National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), in partnership with CDC Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies, is offering \$10,000–\$20,000 grants to fund up to three MDI offices for infrastructure and data modernization projects such as implementing a case management system or purchasing equipment (laptops, tablets, etc.). Recipients will also join virtual MDI Connect workshops/trainings. Priority goes to KY, PA, and WI offices, but all states may apply.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis via [SmartSheet](#) until all funds are awarded. Please visit [MDI Connect | CDC Foundation](#) if you would like more information.

Vital Statistics Modernization Community of Practice



The NVSS [Modernization Community of Practice \(NVSS CoP\)](#) is a shared space for learning and innovation. It provides a forum for jurisdictions and their partners to collaborate in the modernization efforts.

Certification Pathway:

- **FHIR Starter:** To support jurisdictions in FHIR integration, the Community of Practice emphasizes the importance of completing pre-certification and certification in the NVSS Certification Pathway. These steps ensure successful FHIR data submissions and demonstrate your commitment to maintaining high data quality standards. Mortality FHIR pre-certification guidance documents are available on the [NVSS SharePoint](#) site. Please email the [NVSS mailbox](#) when you start pre-certification, then email again when you finish. NCHS will then review your pre-certification data and provide the next steps for certification.

Direct Connect:

- **Regular meetings:** The NVSS Community of Practice is pleased to offer recurring monthly and weekly opportunities to connect. Here are some regularly scheduled meetings you won't want to miss:
 - **Main Meetings:** Held monthly on the 3rd Wednesday at 3 p.m. ET, these meetings cover high-level topics, such as FHIR-based interoperability, NCHS-organized testing events, and jurisdictional VRO perspectives on modernizing vital records workflows.
 - **Technical Subgroup Meetings:** Held monthly on the 4th Wednesday at 1 p.m. ET, these meetings offer detailed technical discussions and trainings on tools and resources for NVSS modernization, including upstream and downstream data flows.

- **Weekly Office Hours:** Weekly virtual technical assistance for NVSS Modernization CoP members working on FHIR-based interoperability and modernization efforts. Office hours are "walk-in" and require no advance notification. Unless otherwise specified, these calls will occur every Tuesday from 4 to 5 p.m. ET.

- ***There will be three (3) weekly testing event preparation calls during office hours starting on Tuesday, August 19th, from 4 to 5 p.m. ET and ending on Tuesday, September 2nd, 2025. In addition to participating in these prep calls, there is no significant amount of pre-work required to participate in the testing event. Meeting agendas and logistics will be emailed to jurisdictional VROs (and their partners) who sign up for the testing event.***

- **Q3 Testing Event:** The next formal NCHS-organized testing event is scheduled for September 8th - 9th, 2025. We look forward to testing mortality, natality, and fetal death workflows with many jurisdictions. Please also mark the dates for the NCHS Q4 testing event scheduled for December 1st-2nd.
- **Get Ready:** In preparation for the NCHS September Test Event, NCHS has updated the BFDR .NET and Canary libraries. The latest changes target [Birth and Fetal Death Reporting \(BFDR\) IG STU 2.0](#) and [Vital Records FHIR Messaging \(VRFM\) IG 2.0.0](#). Here are links to the latest BFDR .NET v1.0.0-preview.14: [GitHub](#), [NuGet](#), [Messaging NuGet](#).
- **Success Spotlight:** Share your modernization journey! We invite all jurisdictions to submit new articles or share existing "local" stories about your NVSS modernization experiences. Your insights and lessons learned can benefit the entire community. Send your contributions to the [NVSS mailbox](#) and help fellow jurisdictions succeed.
- **For technical support, we've got you covered:** CTE encourages all jurisdictions to post any technical questions related to the mortality workflow in the [#Death-on-FHIR](#) stream on Zulip chat. Natality and fetal death questions can be posted to the [#Birth-and-Fetal-Death-on-FHIR](#) stream. Please include

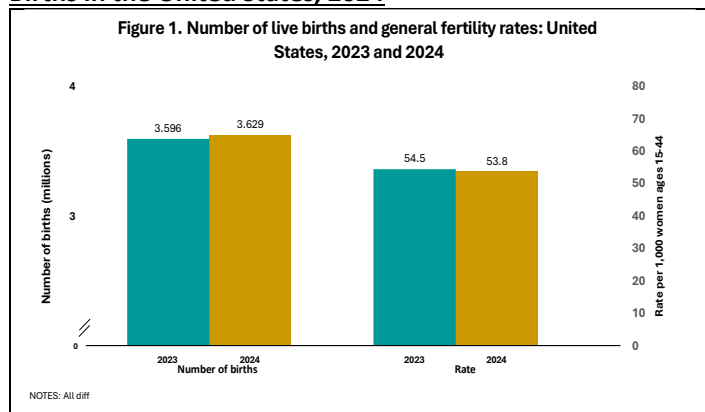
relevant information and attachments when posting issues. For programmatic problems, such as needing assistance with your SAMs account, please email nvssmodernization@cdc.gov. The minutes from the NVSS Modernization Community of Practice Weekly Office Hours meetings are posted weekly in the NVSS CoP Office Hours stream on Zulip.

Acknowledgments:

- **Technical Partners:** Special thanks to MITRE, RUVOS, NAPHSIS, and CTE for their ongoing collaboration in modernization efforts. Their contributions have been instrumental to the success of our meetings and testing events.

Notable Publications/Data Briefs

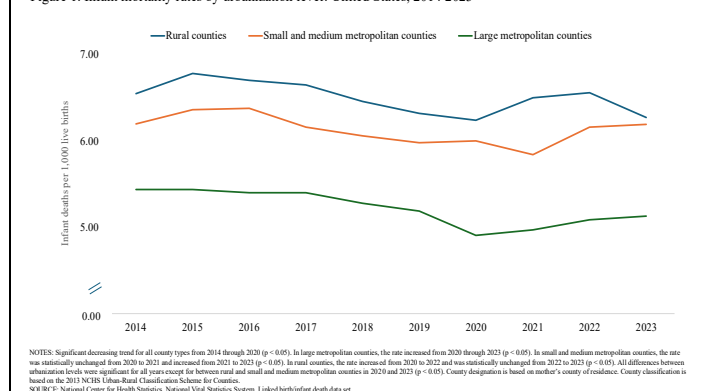
Births in the United States, 2024



This report shows final birth data for 2024. It was published in July and can be found at this link: [Products - Data Briefs - Number 535 - Month July 2025](#). The number of births in the United States increased 1% from 2023 to 2024, to 3,628,934. The general fertility rate declined 1% from 2023 to 2024 to 53.8 births per 1,000 females ages 15–44. Birth rates declined for females in age groups 15–34, were unchanged for women ages 35–39, and rose for women ages 40–44. The primary cesarean delivery rate increased to 22.9% in 2024, and the percentage of mothers for whom Medicaid was the primary source of payment for the delivery declined overall and for each maternal age group.

Trends and Differences in Infant Mortality Rates in Rural and Metropolitan Counties in the United States, 2021–2023

Figure 1. Infant mortality rates by urbanization level: United States, 2014–2023



This report was published in July and can be found at this link: [Products - Data Briefs - Number 533 - June 2025](#). The report presents trends in infant mortality rates among rural, small and medium metropolitan, and large metropolitan counties in the United States from 2014 through 2023. The infant mortality rate declined from 2014 to 2020 for all urbanization levels and had varying trends across urbanization levels from 2020 to 2023. During 2021–2023, infant mortality rates were higher in rural and small and medium metropolitan counties compared with large metropolitan counties for infants of mothers of all age groups and most maternal race and Hispanic-origin groups.

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.

Krystal Colburn departed her position as Assistant State Registrar and VSCP Project Director in Arizona.

Katina Lugo was appointed Assistant State Registrar and VSCP Project Director in Arizona.

Zuheil Figueroa was appointed State Registrar and VSCP Project Director in Rhode Island.

Fiona Weeks was appointed State Registrar in Wisconsin.

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