

California Vital Data (Cal-ViDa) Frequently Asked Questions

1. [How can I create an account to use Cal-ViDa?](#)
2. [Who can I contact for help with Cal-ViDa?](#)
3. [How can I create a birth query in Cal-ViDa?](#)
4. [How can I create a death query in Cal-ViDa?](#)
5. [How do I select or deselect data?](#)
6. [Is Cal-ViDa training available?](#)
7. [What kind of data is available in Cal-ViDa?](#)
8. [How can I create a report of the number of deaths due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)?](#)
9. [Why are the counts generated in my Cal-ViDa report different than counts published by other sources?](#)
10. [How often is data updated?](#)
11. [Which years are available for query?](#)
12. [Why is birth data from prior to 2018 and death data prior to 2014 unavailable?](#)
13. [Why do I see <11 in my results?](#)
14. [What are the Data De-Identification Guidelines?](#)
15. [The Cal-ViDa query tool does not produce the birth and/or death data that I need. What can I do?](#)
16. [How can I access static data, instead of the dynamic data provided by Cal-ViDa?](#)
17. [How can I get more information about the data in my query?](#)
18. [Are there any restrictions on how I can use this data?](#)
19. [How should I cite Cal-ViDa as a data source?](#)
20. [How do I use the drop down menus to make selections?](#)
21. [Why can't I find the city that I'm looking for?](#)
22. [Why can't I find the hospital or birthing center that I'm looking for?](#)
23. [How can I search for all birth facilities in a specific city?](#)
24. [How can I search for all birth facilities in a specific county?](#)
25. [What is the source of the ZIP Codes available for building queries in Cal-ViDa?](#)
26. [How can I access record level data?](#)
27. [This data is not part of the Public Use File. Where do these data come from?](#)
28. [Why can't I generate a report formatted for printing?](#)
29. [Are any records excluded from birth counts produced by Cal-ViDa?](#)
30. [Are any records excluded from death counts produced by Cal-ViDa?](#)
31. [I would like to run these data by month, is that possible?](#)
32. [Why am I taken to the "Query Summary" page after generating my report? What does the "Query Summary" page do?](#)
33. [Why are only 5,000 records displayed on the "California Vital Data Report" page?](#)
34. [Why did my report fail to export to a CSV file?](#)

35. [Why does Cal-ViDa send me back to the log in page?](#)
36. [Can I save queries that I previously created?](#)

How can I create an account to use Cal-ViDa?

1. Select the “Sign In/Register” button.
2. You will see a disclaimer pop up. If you agree with the conditions, select “I agree” to move forward to the account sign up screen. Selecting “Cancel” will take you back to the first screen.
3. On the next page, select “Sign up now” to create an account.
4. On the account creation page, you will be asked to provide your e-mail address, first and last name, organization, and job title (optional). For more information on why and how this information is used, please e-mail CalViDa@cdph.ca.gov.

Who can I contact for help with Cal-ViDa?

For assistance, please e-mail CalViDa@cdph.ca.gov.

How can I create a birth query in Cal-ViDa?

1. Log in to Cal-ViDa.
2. Select “Get Started.”
3. Select “Birth” and then select “Continue.”
4. Select years requested by clicking on “All” or individual years and then select “Continue.”
5. Select either “Place of Residence” or “Place of Birth.”
 - a. If you are interested in statewide counts, select “Generate Report” (see *step 8*).
 - b. If you would like to add additional filters to your report, select “Continue.”
6. On the “Place of Residence” or “Place of Birth” pages select a geographic location.
 - a. If all report options have been selected, then select “Generate Report” (see *step 8*).
 - b. If you would like to add additional filters to your report, select “Continue.”
7. Select desired demographic and/or pregnancy outcome filters and select “Continue.”
8. Review the “Query Summary” page. Select the blue back arrow to edit your selection(s). If you do not wish to make any changes, select “Confirm” to generate your report.
9. Select “Download Report” to export your report as a CSV file. The “Back” button will return you to the “Query Summary” page. Selecting “Start Over” will reset your query and return you to the first page (see *step 2*).

Tip: If the data result in "<11" for your selected report filters parameters, try expanding your search with a larger geographic area or fewer demographic/pregnancy outcome variables.

How can I create a death query in Cal-ViDa?

1. Log in to Cal-ViDa.
2. Select "Get Started."
3. Select "Death" and then select "Continue."
4. Select years requested by clicking on "All" or individual years.
5. Select time frequency requested by clicking on "By Year" or "By Month." The query tool defaults to "By Year." When ready, select "Continue."
6. Select either "Place of Residence" or "Place of Death."
 - a. If you are interested in statewide counts, select "Generate Report" (see *step 8*).
 - b. If you would like to add additional filters to your report, select "Continue."
7. On the "Place of Residence" or "Place of Death" pages select a geographic location.
 - a. If all report options have been selected, then select "Generate Report" (see *step 8*).
 - b. If you would like to add additional filters to your report, select "Continue."
8. Select desired demographic and/or death details filters and select "Continue."
9. Review the "Query Summary" page. Select the blue back arrow to edit your selection(s). If you do not wish to make any changes, select "Confirm" to generate your report.
10. Select "Download Report" to export your report as a CSV file. The "Back" button will return you to the "Query Summary" page. Selecting "Start Over" will reset your query and return you to the first page (see *step 2*).

Tip: If the data result in "<11" for your selected report filters parameters, try expanding your search with a larger geographic area or fewer demographic/death details variables.

How do I select or deselect data?

Cal-ViDa is designed as a click through process. Clicking on an item will select it, while clicking on a previously selected item will deselect it. Some pages also have a "Clear All" option. When selecting custom geographic or demographic data elements, such as ZIP Codes or the parent giving birth's age, choices can be removed by selecting the "X" on the blue button displaying the selected data element.

Is Cal-ViDa training available?

The Cal-ViDa query tool is designed to be user-friendly and intuitive; however, if you need assistance please contact CalViDa@cdph.ca.gov for support. The Data Analysis Reporting team can help you address your issue and provide you with further technical assistance. There is also a Getting Started Guide available on the [Cal-ViDa Help and FAQ page](#).

What kind of data is available in Cal-ViDa?

The Cal-ViDa query tool contains birth and death vital records data which users can use to create their own custom reports.

Examples of possible queries include:

1. Counts of California births by year.
2. Counts of California deaths by year or month.
3. Counts of births with a low birthweight by county.
4. Counts of leading causes of death by city of residence.
5. And much more!

How can I create a report of the number of deaths due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Deaths which list COVID-19 as the underlying cause of death (i.e., the disease or injury that initiated the train of events leading directly to death) can be identified by selecting “Rankable Causes of Death” on the Demographics and Death Details screen. If “14 Leading Causes of Death” is selected, counts of deaths due to COVID-19 are included in the category “Other.” If “113 Selected Causes of Death” is selected, counts of deaths due to COVID-19 are included in the category “Other and unspecified infectious and parasitic diseases and their sequelae.”

The underlying cause of death categories are based on the cause of death code provided by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). For more information on how NCHS codes COVID-19 deaths refer to the [NCHS COVID-19 FAQs](#).

Other resources for COVID-19 information include the [California COVID-19 data and tools page](#) and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) COVID-19 page](#).

Why are the counts generated in my Cal-ViDa report different than counts published by other sources?

Since Cal-ViDa is updated on a monthly basis, some counts may be higher in Cal-ViDa than in other sources because the data is more current. In other cases, counts in Cal-ViDa may be lower than expected due to reporting delays. For example, deaths that are referred to a coroner or medical examiner for investigation, such as suicides and

Cal-ViDa FAQ

homicides, will take longer to be included in Cal-ViDa generated reports. Similarly, births that take place outside of a hospital will often take longer to be included in Cal-ViDa generated reports.

Importantly, the reports are based on the information provided on the birth and death certificates. For example, with deaths due to COVID-19, Cal-ViDa only includes deaths with COVID-19 listed as the underlying cause of death on the death certificate, whereas other sources may receive reports of COVID-19 deaths directly from hospitals or physicians.

For more information, please refer to the Cal-ViDa Birth Query Technical Notes and Cal-ViDa Death Query Technical Notes documents on the [Cal-ViDa Help and FAQ page](#).

How often is data updated?

New data is added monthly. Data for the current year is current as of two months prior to the current month. For example, a query in March 2020 would include data as recent as January 2020.

Which years are available for query?

For birth, data is available from 2018 onwards. For death, data is available from 2014 onwards.

Why is birth data from prior to 2018 and death data prior to 2014 unavailable?

Due to the significantly different layout of birth data files from 2017 and earlier and the death files from 2013 and earlier, it was not possible to add historic data to Cal-ViDa. There are no plans to add historic data to the query tool at this time. Moving forward, Cal-ViDa will house up to 10 years of data, plus partial data from the current year, at one time.

Should you need older data, please refer to the [California Health and Human Services \(CHHS\) Open Data Portal](#). If the data that you need is not available on the CHHS Open Data Portal, please refer to the [Vital Statistics Branch Data Applications](#) webpage, for more information on how to apply for a tabular data request or a research request if appropriate for your needs.

Why do I see <11 in my results?

In accordance with the [Data De-Identification Guidelines](#) (DDG) established by the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS), results between 1 and 10 are masked with the “<” symbol to protect individuals’ privacy. A result with zero events will be shown with the number 0.

What are the Data De-Identification Guidelines?

The California Health and Human Services (CHHS) Data De-Identification Guidelines (DDG) are standards that the departments reporting to CHHS must adhere to. Please refer to the [CHHS DDG](#) for more information.

The Cal-ViDa query tool does not produce the birth and/or death data that I need. What can I do?

You may submit a request for preparation of the requested tabular data by completing the [Tabular Data Report Application](#), which will be used to compile the data relevant to this request. As in Cal-ViDa, counts between 1 and 10 will be masked with "<11." Data provided in Tabular Data Reports are subject to cost recovery pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 102230. Once your application is received, staff will provide an estimate for the cost to compile the data and the approximate time needed to prepare the report.

Additional de-identified datasets of birth and death data can also be found on the [California Health and Human Services \(CHHS\) Open Data Portal](#). These datasets are created using counts generated from static annual data files.

For more information on other available forms of vital records data, please consult the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) Vital Records Data and Statistics](#) webpage. Applications and instructions for requesting vital records data and reports from CDPH can be found on the [Data Applications](#) webpage.

How can I access static data, instead of the dynamic data provided by Cal-ViDa?

Static data is available for select annual final counts on the [California Health and Human Services \(CHHS\) Open Data Portal](#). Record level static data is available by request with eligibility determined by a review process. Custom tabular reports using static data are also available by request.

How can I get more information about the data in my query?

Please refer to the Cal-ViDa Birth Query Technical Notes and Cal-ViDa Death Query Technical Notes documents on the [Cal-ViDa Help and FAQ page](#).

Are there any restrictions on how I can use this data?

By accessing this data, users agree to:

1. Acknowledge CDPH as the original data source and cite accordingly in all publications using this data.

Cal-ViDa FAQ

2. Include a disclaimer in any publications based on these data that credits any analyses, interpretations, or conclusions reached regarding the birth or death data to the author, and not to CDPH.
3. Ensure that in any publications based on these data, technical descriptions of the birth and death data are consistent with those provided by CDPH.
4. Not use the birth or death data for fraudulent purposes.
5. Not use the birth or death data to attempt to re-identify any persons alive or dead.

How should I cite Cal-ViDa as a data source?

For suggested citation examples, please refer to the Cal-ViDa Birth Query Technical Notes and Cal-ViDa Death Query Technical Notes documents on the [Cal-ViDa Help and FAQ page](#).

How do I use the drop down menus to make selections?

The drop down menus use a “Type Ahead” search process. For example, when searching by county, typing “S” in the county drop down will select all counties with an “S” anywhere in the name. Typing “Sac,” for example, will return “Sacramento,” and “Santa” will return “Santa Barbara,” “Santa Clara,” and “Santa Cruz.” The type ahead search is not case sensitive, and it also works for numeric data elements, such as ZIP Codes and ages.

Selections can also be made by scrolling down through the drop-down menu and clicking on the highlighted selection. The enter key can also be used to make selections. The drop-down menus also provide the option to select all available options by choosing the “All” selection available at the top of the menu.

Selections can be removed by clicking on the “X” on the button. Clicking on the “X” will remove an individual selection. All selections can be removed at the same time by clicking on the “Clear All” button.

Why can't I find the city that I'm looking for?

The Cal-ViDa city list is limited to cities with a population of 20,000 or greater. City population is based on California Department of Finance population estimates: [Tables of January 2019 City Population Ranked by Size, Numeric, and Percent Change](#).

Note: The city of Jurupa Valley is not currently available in Cal-ViDa because the source data uses a reference list based on the 2010 Census and Jurupa Valley was not incorporated until 2011.

Why can't I find the hospital or birthing center that I'm looking for?

The Cal-ViDa birth facility listed is based on the maternity hospital codes provided in Appendix I of the California Comprehensive Birth File (CCBF) Data Dictionary on the [Vital Records Data Applications page](#). Hospitals or places of birth that are not in the maternity hospital code list are not available for query in Cal-ViDa when searching by birth facility; however, searching by place of birth type will return counts of hospital and non-hospital births by place type.

How can I search for all birth facilities in a specific city?

Using the drop down list, type a hyphen followed by the name of the city to view all birth facilities located in that city. For example, typing “- Oakland” will show “ACMC - Highland Campus – Oakland (Alameda)” and “Kaiser Hospital – Oakland (Alameda)” in the drop down list.

How can I search for all birth facilities in a specific county?

Using the drop down list, type the name of the county within parentheses to show all birth facilities located in that county. For example, typing “(Yolo)” will show “Sutter Davis Hospital – Davis (Yolo)” and “Woodland Health Care – Woodland (Yolo)” in the drop down list.

What is the source of the ZIP Codes available for building queries in Cal-ViDa?

When searching California deaths, the list of ZIP Codes is from the [California Open Data Portal County and ZIP Code References](#) page.

When searching California births, the list of available ZIP Codes in Cal-ViDa was created using a 2016 reference file from the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Statistics of Income (SOI) tax statistics. The reference file and additional information can be found here: [SOI Tax Stats – Individual Income Tax Statistics – 2016 ZIP Code Data \(SOI\)](#). In a future enhancement, the list of ZIP Codes used for birth queries will be updated to match those used for death queries.

How can I access record level data?

In order to access record level data, the user must be affiliated with an eligible research institution and maintain an approved research protocol with the California Health and Human Services (CHHS) Internal Review Board (IRB), the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). In addition, requests for birth data must be reviewed and recommended for approval by the CDPH Vital Statistics Advisory Committee (VSAC) and subsequently approved by the State Registrar. Applications and instructions for all vital statistics data requests can be found at the [CDPH Vital Records Data Applications Website](#).

Please review the requirements for [CPHS housed at the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development](#).

This data is not part of the Public Use File. Where do these data come from?

All of the data in Cal-ViDa comes from information recorded on the child's birth certificate or the decedent's death certificate. Some of the birth information included in Cal-ViDa, such as race/ethnicity and education level, represents demographic information regarding the parent giving birth, rather than the child. Other measures, such as birthweight, trimester prenatal visits began, and estimated gestational age, are reported on the confidential portion of the live birth certificate and recorded at birth.

Why can't I generate a report formatted for printing?

Cal-ViDa reports are available for download as CSV files. These files can be opened in Excel and formatted for printing. Less complex reports can also be printed from the "California Vital Data Report" page. Reports formatted for direct printing are currently planned as a future enhancement.

Are any records excluded from birth counts produced by Cal-ViDa?

Yes – the following records are excluded from all birth counts produced by Cal-ViDa:

- Records with missing State File Numbers (SFNs).
- Records with duplicate State File Numbers (SFNs).
- Records where the child's sex is nonbinary or unknown.

Are any records excluded from death counts produced by Cal-ViDa?

Yes – the following records are excluded from all death counts produced by Cal-ViDa:

- Records with missing State File Numbers (SFNs).
- Records with duplicate State File Numbers (SFNs).

Note: pseudo-SFNs were created for some historical out-of-state records that were missing SFNs to facilitate their inclusion in the Cal-ViDa database.

I would like to run these data by month, is that possible?

Death data can be queried by either year or month depending upon the selection that is made on the "Time Period and Frequency" page.

Birth data can only be queried by year. The ability to search birth data by month is currently planned for a future release.

Why am I taken to the “Query Summary” page after generating my report? What does the “Query Summary” page do?

The “Query Summary” page allows you to review your search parameters, including which data elements have been selected for inclusion in your report. You may go back to a previous page and change a selection or move forward with generating your custom report. The “Query Summary” page allows you to easily review your query with a display of what will be included in your data report.

Why are only 5,000 records displayed on the “California Vital Data Report” page?

In order to allow the Cal-ViDa system to produce complex custom queries as quickly and efficiently as possible, the number of records displayed on the “California Vital Data Report” page has been limited to 5,000. Downloading your report as a CSV file will return all records generated by your query.

Why did my report fail to export to a CSV file?

The generated report may be too large to download. If the Cal-ViDa system times out before all records are retrieved, then it will fail to produce an exportable CSV file. Please reduce the size of the report download and try again.

Some options to reduce the report download size include selecting fewer years for the time period, selecting time frequency "By Year" rather than "By Month", selecting fewer geographic locations if querying by county, city or ZIP Code, or making fewer demographic or death detail selections.

Why does Cal-ViDa send me back to the log in page?

Cal-ViDa times out after 20 minutes of inactivity. After Cal-ViDa times out, you will be sent back to the log in page.

Can I save queries that I previously created?

Currently, it is not possible to save queries within Cal-ViDa; however, this is planned to be included in a future release. While the search parameters for an individual query cannot be saved, the data generated by a Cal-ViDa query can be exported and saved as a CSV file.